

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity  
as it was in the beginning.*

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## “THE PASSOVER PLOT”

HUGH J. SCHONFIELD, author of this book, is well-known for his “Authentic New Testament”—the only modern translation of the New Testament by a Jewish scholar. The book is divided into two sections, One: “The Man who believed He was Messiah.” Two: “The Sources and Growth of the Legend.” Our observations are confined to the former section, which gives its title to the book. The second section deals with contemporary situations and doctrines—historical, political and religious—which are interpreted as supporting the theory here put forth, and explaining how Christianity was “paganised”, as Schonfield claims, by suggesting that Jesus rose from the dead and was therefore divine.

### The Purpose of the Book

Claiming to offer “new light on the history of Jesus” the author states his purpose as “an endeavour . . . to discover who the man Jesus Christ really was” (p.9). He says that, even when a student, traditional Jewish and Christian views about Jesus seemed wrong to him and he wanted “to find out what had been the convictions of his original Jewish followers who acknowledged him as the Messiah” (p.9).

### His Views of Jesus

The author emphatically denies that Jesus was the Son of God—and this accounts both for his theory here advanced and his deliberate attempt to discredit the resurrection. He says: “The traditional portraiture no longer satisfies: it is too baffling in its apparent contradiction of the terms of our earthly existence. The God-man of Christianity is increasingly incredible . . .” (p.10). He represents the traditional Christian attitude to Jesus as “the wish to explain away his (Jesus’) mistakes and extenuate his faults” (p.11). He claims that with a right understanding of Him “we shall not incline to exaggerate or convert him into a paragon of all the virtues” for He could never consistently be “a reflection of the Divine . . .” (p.12). To assert the deity of Jesus, he says, is to “pander to the ignorance and superstition” of the uninformed (p. 10). The belief that Jesus was the Logos is simply “a paganising of Jewish belief” (p. 40).

In keeping with this he emphatically denies the virgin birth: “There was nothing peculiar about the birth of Jesus. He was not God incarnate and no Virgin Mother bore him” (p. 50).

What then is Schonfield’s view of Jesus? The book’s over-all impression is that he believes Jesus was the Messiah. For instance this: “I have often asked my Christian friends, ‘Is it not enough if you believe in the One God, Lord of all spirits, and accept Jesus as his messianic messenger?’ Yet sometimes what he writes gives the impression that whilst Jesus was quite sure about His Messiahship, Schonfield is not fully convinced.

### His View of the Scriptures

He advances the usual “modernist” position. He affirms that we can only apply constructively the knowledge available when we are “uninhibited by a religious compulsion to assume that the records about Jesus were divinely inspired” (p.14). He asserts that Daniel was written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-162 B.C.). He speaks of Old Testament books as “prophetic legends”, and says that when we read the birth-stories of John the Baptist and Jesus we are in “the world of fairy tale” (pp.42, 49). The stories of Jesus’ birth, he would have us know, “are

late introductory compositions" (p.52). They were not written by those whose names they bear. Hardly any section of the gospels escapes destructive criticism, e.g., ". . . we cannot accept as historical certain features of the narratives of the Passion as reported in the Gospels" (p.97). Like every critic in whose steps he follows he rejects every New Testament statement which cannot be fitted into the pattern of his preconceived theory.

Yet, after such destructive criticisms (examples could be multiplied) it is to these same Gospel records that he appeals for support of his incredible theory! In short: he denies any statement which offers evidence that Jesus was the Son of God, or that He rose from the dead; but he seizes upon anything which can be shaped to fit his own theory. And his theory of "the Plot" is based upon just one idea: that Jesus was not Divine. One cannot help wondering what faculty of inspiration enables the author to decide that so much of the New Testament is spurious, or legend, or inaccurate. Whatever it is, the latter are always those parts which support the Christian view that Jesus rose from the dead and is therefore the Son of God.

#### The Messianic Hope

The author explains why the Jewish Nation was expecting the Messiah at the time that Jesus came. Many, on the basis of Daniel's "Seventy Weeks", believed that the "Last Times" had begun. There were other factors combining to make the messianic hope so powerful a factor in Judaism: the Jewish attitude to their Scriptures, the desire to draw out hidden meanings; the savage oppression endured under Antiochus Epiphanes; Jewish sectarianism as represented by Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, each group in its own way striving for holiness according to the Law, thus influencing the whole nation and bringing to the surface a fanatical conviction that the advent of the Messiah was imminent.

There is much of value and interest in his treatment of the contemporary background; but it is incredible how every historical, political and religious factor is "made to fit" the writer's own scheme of things; and this because he begins with a theory which denies the deity of Jesus, then sees support for it in all he reads in the Scriptures. It is usually fairly easy for one to see what he is looking for!

#### The Passover Plot

He sums up the main thesis of the work in these words: "During his lifetime he (i.e. Jesus) could to an astonishing extent because of his personal qualities enact and obtain compliance with the messianic scheme as he apprehended it" (p.42). Jesus sincerely believed Himself to be the Messiah. So, before He began His ministry, He studied intensively, imbibed many of the ideas of the Essenes, "producing a kind of blueprint of the Messiah's mission with the prophetic requirements organised to show a progressive programme of events having their climax at Jerusalem when he would suffer at the hands of the authorities" (p.46).

In other words, He understood clearly all that the Old Testament foretold and deliberately undertook to make it all happen to him. The further one reads, the more incredible the book becomes. Listen to some of the things Jesus is supposed to have deliberately (and secretly) "arranged":

He arranged privately with Lazarus (some time before the event) to have the foal of an ass ready for His triumphal ride into Jerusalem. Of course His disciples didn't know—only Lazarus. But Jesus knew (says Schonfield) that His followers would see this as a fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9—unaware that He had engineered it. He thus provoked the crowds to hail Him as Messiah, so that He would be adjudged guilty of treason against Caesar. He arranged all this, mark you! In this way He deliberately forced the Jewish rulers to have Him crucified. "The chief priests and elders might imagine that they were acting on their own initiative in meeting the threat created by Jesus, but in fact the plotting of the Galilean was progressively reducing them to puppets responding to his control" (p.121). Not just the Romans and the Rulers—even His own trusted disciples were unwittingly used by Jesus in the same way. We are asked to accept that even the betrayal by Judas was deliberately engineered by the Saviour. "A conspiracy had to be organised of which the victim was himself the deliberate secret instigator" (p.132). How could He do this? Once again by a secret arrangement—this time with Mary. He arranged with her that she should anoint Him with the precious ointment, solely to provoke Judas to betray Him—and thus to fulfil Psalm 41:6 (p.134).

#### The Resurrection

What about Jesus' frequent claims—and His followers' insistence—concerning the resurrection? Schonfield offers the old, inadequate theory: **Jesus didn't die on the cross.** What happened then? The answer: **He was drugged—and that by another of those strange, secret arrangements, this time with Joseph of Arimathea.**

Joseph arranged that the vinegar given Him to drink on the cross contained a potent drug. Jesus became unconscious, "to all intents and purposes a dead man" (p. 167). Some of His Judean friends took Him away intending to "revive" Him (the "Plot" was unknown to His Galilean disciples) all according to Jesus' previous, secret arrangement—so that He might fulfil the prophecy of resurrection! But then, through no fault of theirs—or His!—the plan went astray. Jesus died. So His body was buried elsewhere, and in all good faith His Galilean apostles came to be convinced that He had really risen. "There was nothing to tell them what had become of his body. They could not know that the Prophet like Moses had been finally laid to rest like Moses himself in an unknown grave" (p. 180).

One feels like saying with Alice in Wonderland, "Curiouser and curiouser"!

### Appearances to His Followers

Jesus' post-resurrection appearances? The author coolly disposes of the lot! Either they are fictitious—arguments having no basis in reality, produced much later by a church which paganised Christianity by insisting on the deity of Jesus, a resurrection being therefore a necessity—or Jesus' followers mistook someone else for Him. This someone else is usually represented as a "mysterious" Judean disciple who had a message he was unable to deliver to the disciples! "Mysterious" indeed! If we may be forgiven we feel constrained to say, "Mysteriuser and mysteriuser"!

However, one thing Schonfield makes plain—he is convinced that Jesus **did not** appear. There was no resurrection. Again and again the very records to which he appeals shout their evidence that Jesus **did** rise. That testimony cannot be accepted—it does not fit in with the theory of "the Plot". The argument follows this wearisome pattern over and over again: (1) Jesus was not the Son of God. (2) Therefore any suggestion that He rose from the dead is false. (3) Thus any testimony in the gospels that He did cannot be allowed. We suggest that he is truly "putting the cart before the horse." The approach ought to be (1) An honest evaluation of the credibility of the Gospel records. (2) A consideration of the testimony of both the friends and enemies of Jesus. (3) An explanation of the conduct of both, and (4) A conclusion which fits all the facts.

### An Old, Exploded Theory

This is no new theory—that Jesus did not die. Others have used it to try to destroy belief in the resurrection—German critics like Strauss and Klein. Mary Baker Eddy, who wrote something to the effect that "loving hands took the fainting form of Jesus from the cross." They all failed. The theory has been exploded many times, and for all his undoubted scholarship Schonfield does no better than his predecessors.

### Stubborn Facts

The facts do not fit this fanciful and absurd theory of "the Plot." However attractively it is dressed, this is in fact tantamount to asserting that Jesus was dishonest. He secretly arranged to appear to be dead—knowing He was not really to die. He was only drugged. He secretly arranged with a very few fellow-conspirators to be revived—intending then to claim a "resurrection". (One wonders how He would have fared if the "Plot" had succeeded). Imagine One with a body torn, wounded and dislocated as His must have been, appearing to persuade people He had conquered death! Note this too. We are asked to believe that the Judean friends of Jesus were not only a party to this conspiracy, but, when it fell through because of His unplanned death, they allowed His apostles to believe He had risen. And allowed them to proclaim it to the world. And die for it too, no doubt! How can anyone suggest that they could so act and yet be the finest of characters—as indeed, the author himself suggests?

More, is it credible that every event and act in the life of Jesus which so clearly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy was deliberately engineered by the Saviour Himself? How could any mere human being succeed in producing just the right reaction and conduct, in the right person, at the right time and place, always and under all circumstances? **If Jesus could do that then He must have been divine—**for no mere man could so make so many things "happen."

Facts pile on facts in Gospel testimony to give the lie to this theory. We have the fact of the spear thrust into His side. We have the testimony of the centurion in charge of the execution, which in turn convinced Pilate that Jesus was really dead. We have Pilate's conviction also; and Joseph of Arimathea; and the apostles; and the women who went to anoint His body.

There are questions too which have to be answered—and cannot be answered by ignoring the facts. It will not do for the author to get over the problem of how the disciples got the body out of the tomb by saying, simply that there was no

guard to stop them. There was a guard—and the tomb was empty. Also, how could so many of His disciples, none of whom had expected to see Him alive again, how could so many be so completely convinced they had seen Him, yet all so completely mistaken? We wonder too how the writer would deal with Paul's assertion that "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Corinthians 15)? No doubt they were mistaken—it was that same "mysterious" friend of Jesus—or maybe this too was a falsehood made up by the church (Paul perhaps?) bent on paganising the faith?

Our faith is that Jesus was more than man—that He was truly the Son of the living God. This faith is based on a solid fact of history: that He rose from the dead, demonstrating His deity (Romans 1:3-4).

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead. . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:17-20).

A. E. WINSTANLEY

[A further article on Section Two of "The Passover Plot"—"The Sources and Growth of the Legend"—will, God willing, appear in the "S.S." in the near future. Ed.]

## CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN FORMER YEARS

II: THOMAS AND ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

IT was in 1763 in County Down, Ireland that Thomas Campbell was born, and twenty five years later, 1788, in County Antrim his illustrious son Alexander was born. These two, father and son, were destined to play a most important role in the history of the churches of Christ. In 1809 Thomas Campbell produced his now famous "Declaration and Address," which since that time has become almost the Magna Carta of churches of Christ, especially of the Disciples of Christ in America. Then in 1837 Alexander Campbell produced his masterpiece of New Testament literature, "Christian System," which to-day stands supreme as an exposition of New Testament teaching.

These two men spent the greater portion of their lives in the United States. In 1832 they linked up with a Barton W. Stone and an evangelist Walter Scott, who had broken with the Baptists for his views on New Testament Christianity, and formed what was known as the Christian Church or Disciples of Christ. Before we pass on we mention some of the great debates this fine pioneer Alexander Campbell engaged in. His first was as a Baptist minister in 1820, with a Presbyterian minister on Infant Baptism. This established him as a debater and able exponent of New Testament doctrine. Other outstanding debates were with the Roman Catholic Bishop Purcell in 1837; and in 1843 in a debate with another Presbyterian, N. L. Rice. Campbell ably defended New Testament Christianity. His most outstanding debate, however, was with the renowned atheist of that time, Robert Owen, in 1829 on the topic "Christian Evidence"; after silencing his opponent, he used all that remained both of his own time and that of his opponent in a twelve hour speech dealing with Christian Evidence!

To return to our subject: it will be seen that although churches of Christ were known to have made their presence felt as a religious body in the early 1800's, for upwards of two hundred years many groups identifying themselves as churches of Christ had been in existence. It was in the early days of the 19th century that they really did begin to establish themselves as an organised movement: for instance in Wales some twelve churches were formed with a total membership of 488. Later a church at Wrexham was discovered that had been in existence some seven years without knowing anything at all about other churches of Christ or even the Scotch Baptists. In Dec. 1837 this church received a letter from a church at Shrewsbury as follows:

"We, the New Testament Church in Shrewsbury, are very glad to hear of your coming into the glorious liberty of Jesus Christ. . . . We wish to inform you that although the small society of Christians in this place are not the followers of Alexander Campbell, yet we have been much edified and comforted by his writings as far as we have seen them. We have never had any connection with Scotch, Calvinistic, Arminian, or any other Baptist, yet we have been immersed into the Body of Christ, and we continue steadfast in the Apostles doctrine, the fellowship and breaking of bread, and in prayer, praising God, on every first day of the week."

The first Co-operative Meeting of the churches of Christ was held at Edinburgh, in the South Bridge Hall, on the 18th and 19th of August 1842. This heralded their beginnings as an organised body and from that time they grew steadily. It was

said of them that, "From the beginning of the Movement the Churches of Christ have insisted upon a high moral standard for all their members," and those who had moral lapses had to undergo the discipline of the church.

At this stage a few notes on individual churches may be of interest: at Summer Lane, Birmingham, on April 1st 1889, a tea and social meeting was held to bid farewell to Bro. Thompson, who had as an evangelist laboured with the church for eight years. The attendance at the meeting was 400 and the meeting was presided over by Bro. David King; a purse containing £29 10s. was presented to Bro. Thompson in recognition of his services. His wife was presented with a vase of flowers on behalf of the sisters. A note in the "Christian Advocate" of that same year intimated that the church at Brighton hoped soon to commence their new church building. The church at Loughborough reported opening of their new building on October 5th 1889, at which 180 sat down to tea. An evening meeting was presided over by Br. James Leavesley, and addressed, mark you, by Brethren Chapman, North, Richardson and Bambury! After which, the report goes on to say, a very enjoyable evening was spent. We venture the question, How would present day congregations react to a meeting addressed by four speakers and a chairman? It could be said, "There were giants in those days," both at giving out and taking in.

It is also of interest to know that the churches of those days had their controversies. A very lively discussion took place in the "Christian Advocate" of 1889, on "Amusements in Sunday School," too lengthy to go into here. A further report from Brighton records progress on their new building and an appeal for help in raising £120 towards the cost. A report from Kentish Town speaks of the work of R. K. Francis in an evangelistic effort, a social meeting being held on October 16th, addressed by Bro. Francis. We quote the report: "Our Brother's words were of Trumpet tone, urging us to stand fast in the Faith once delivered unto the saints, and not to depart from the Apostolic faith and practice by the conflicting enticements around. The report bears the initials R.S. but we venture the opinion they do not represent Bro. Roy Scott, the present Secretary of the Kentish Town church, who nevertheless worthily upholds those same principles today and so effectively serves the church at this present time.

We bring our article to a close on a topical note. They were evidently affected by take-overs even in distant times: the "C.A." of December 1889 intimates that that issue is the last one and urges its readers to support its successor in the coming year.

[We are indebted to "The History of the British Churches of Christ," by A. C. Watters and to a book loaned to us by Bro. R. E. Scott for much of the material in this article.]

H. BAINES

## TRAINING FOR SERVICE

### VI: THE NEW COVENANT

WE have drawn attention to the two great divisions of the Bible—the Old and New Covenants, or Testaments as they are termed in our printed Bibles. We have only to glance at the well-used Bible of any Christian to discern that the New Testament is much more thumb-marked with greater usage than is the Old. As an example, my own copy of my study Bible, the Revised Standard Version, is much more worn, even on the outside edges of the pages, at the N.T. portion than are the pages of the O.T. So that I can find almost exactly, from opening the book at the division between the cleaner and the more soiled pages, the division between the two great portions of scripture.

Why should it be that one part of the Bible is much more used and worn than is the other, if, as we believe, the two parts are the word of God and equally infallible? Why are the great majority of the gospel messages we listen to based upon passages in the N.T.? Why, especially, do those who teach the church almost always give their messages from the N.T., particularly from the epistles?

When we speak of the "New Covenant" (or "New Testament", whose writings contain, and in a sense are the New Covenant) we imply that there is also an "Old Covenant". The very adjectives "Old" and "New" imply that one passes away and the other takes its place. That is in a word the contrast between the two: really one fulfils the other; one is the shadow, the other the substance; one is the promise, the other the fulfilment. The Old Covenant was with the people chosen by God, the Jewish nation, although the covenant with them foreshadowed and promised the grace and blessings of God to be bestowed upon all nations. The New Covenant is with God's new chosen people, the "new Israel", the "Israel of God", Christians. The Old Covenant applied to the "dispensation" of Moses, the repre-

sentative of the Jews; to the children of Abraham by fleshly descent. The New Covenant was brought into being and applies to the "gospel age" or "dispensation", the "dispensation of grace", as contrasted with the "dispensation of law". (We shall learn more about "dispensations" in a later study).

The Greek word from which we get our word "testament" or "covenant" is **diatheke**. In the A.V. it is mostly translated "testament", but in the R.V. and more recent translations it is rendered almost entirely by "covenant". In our last lesson we saw the meaning of covenant in the O.T. In some of these covenants the blood of a slain animal was sprinkled upon those making the covenant. So Aaron the high priest sprinkled the children of Israel with the blood of an animal offered to God in sacrifice, as a token that they were brought under this covenant of God with His people.

#### **Christ's Use of the New Covenant at the last Supper**

The four records of the New Covenant being typified are in Matt. 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20; and 1 Cor. 11: 25 (this last is really the first N.T. record of the breaking of bread). In each of these passages Christ states or indicates that the New Covenant is brought into being and sealed with or in His blood. As the people of the Old Covenant were brought under that covenant by the blood of the sacrificed animal being sprinkled upon them, so the people of the New Covenant are God's people by coming under the covering of Christ's shed blood. By His blood we are brought into New Covenant relationship with God. Jesus speaks of it as "my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke) and says that His blood is shed "for the remission (forgiveness) of sins" (Matthew).

Heb. 9: 11-23 teaches that, as under the Old Covenant the blood of animals ceremoniously cleansed the sinful people, "much more shall the blood of Christ who offered himself without blemish" cleanse from sin to serve the living God. For "the blood is the life" (Gen. 9: 4; Lev. 17: 14). Sin is so dreadful in the sight of an all-holy God that it needs life (blood) to show its sinfulness. We must be made to realise that sin is exalting self over the Lord of all. Under the Old Covenant sinners were shown that sin was no light thing; that slain, innocent animal was a witness to what sin costs. Under the New Covenant even more so we are taught this awful cost, in that only the blood of God's Son, God Himself manifest in flesh, could avail to cleanse from sin. We cannot be sentimental about this, nor be so horrified that we turn from the shedding of Christ's blood as revolting. It is horrible and revolting, but the horror and revolt should not be against God but against the sin which caused God even to be ready to go to the lengths of offering His Son as the guiltless sinbearer of others' sins.

"The first covenant (the Old) was not dedicated without blood" (Heb. 9: 17). The writer goes on to show, indeed, that "without shedding of blood is no remission".

#### **Christ as Mediator**

Under the Old Covenant Moses was the mediator, the means through whom men approached God and by whom God gave His blessings to men. In the New Covenant Jesus Christ is both sacrifice and mediator (1 Tim. 2: 5). His death secures forgiveness of sins of those brought under the New Covenant, but also "the redemption of the transgressions under the old" (Heb. 9: 15). This is a wonderful statement: even though sacrifices of animals were offered for sin under the Old Covenant, these could never take away sin. Redemption for those under Old and New Covenants is through Jesus Christ. All those sacrifices in the O.T. are of value by being types of the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world".

Next month's study will contrast side by side the Old and New Covenants.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. We are often accused of making too much of the New Testament and too little of the Old and even of regarding the Old Testament as no longer of any use. How would you answer this criticism?
2. Was the death of animals and of Christ necessary in order that sins might be forgiven? Why does not God forgive without any such sacrifices?
3. Read the accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper in Matthew, Mark, Luke and 1 Corinthians 11. How did Jesus link His coming death with the drinking from the cup?

## “THIS DAY . . . .”

THE version of the N.T. published for the first time a few months ago, has several renderings of Luke 3:22, two of them are printed here. The first, from the text of the book, reads: “Thou art my Son, my beloved, on thee my favour rests.”

The second, a footnote to the text, reads: “My son art thou, this day have I begotten thee.” For a comment on the textual statement, please see December issue of this magazine, page 137.

Having in mind the second of these references I wrote in that December issue this line: “The word ‘begotten’ is a scriptural word well chosen for what it represents.” So it seemed to me for a short while, then I became unsettled as to its being a well-chosen word. What was it the word represented? What did the sentence mean? As it is really a question as to the meaning of one word, what did the word “begotten” imply?

When it comes to the meaning or spelling of a word our “house of refuge” is the dictionary. Spelling, in fact, is not much of a bugbear to me, I am thankful to say; the true meaning of a word can be very elusive, and occasionally, when caught, needs careful handling to be fairly captured. What does “begotten” mean, as applied to a young man specifically said to be about 30 years of age? and dated for that one day, specifically?

The dictionary is one we have used for twenty years, and has proved itself a faithful help in times of trouble. What does “begotten” mean? The word quoted in the dictionary, reduced to its root, is given as “beget”. The first definition of beget is given as “produce”. We replace the word beget with produce and thus we have the perfect sentence for the understanding of what is written in the Scripture phrase: “This day have I produced thee”—to a waiting world, may we add?

And how produced? Think! Think of those incidents which stir the interest of all who read the Bible—old as well as young. For instance those incidents shortly before the birth of Christ. Think of Zacharias, the priest to whom a son was promised and he could not believe it, and became dumb because he doubted. The child was born and became John the Baptist. An angel visited Mary and though she was not married she bore a child, who was Jesus. Mary, though she bore a child was still a virgin, because the child she bore was the Word who became flesh and dwelt amongst men.

So he lived until about 30 years of age. This child now grown up lived for 30 years in a state of comparative isolation—and John was preaching in Judaea.

That these two—as may well be supposed were well acquainted with each other is seen by the words each muttered to the other when they met, as it were “I come to thee, you come to me—and the reply made “thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness”—and the younger was baptised by the elder.

These and many other things like them are the things by which God “produced” the results he desired. Jesus was baptised, and His ministry was entered into.

A real question does arise about the translation of this word “begotten” in place of “produce”. Why was begotten refused in 1961 and then accepted by a minority later?

Why was the word “begotten” used for a word which meant “produced” and made sense of a passage which otherwise is nonsense.

Questions which should have an answer.

W. BARKER.

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

FEBRUARY 1966

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|-------------------|-------------------|
| 6—Psalm 110       | Luke 20:41 - 21:4 |
| 13—Deut. 28:58-68 | Luke 21:5-24      |
| 20—Daniel 9:20-27 | Luke 21:25-38     |
| 27—Exodus 12:1-20 | Luke 22:1-23      |

“O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM”  
(Matt. 23:37)

THE Jerusalem now seen by those who can spare time and money for the worthwhile trip to the land where our

Saviour lived and died and rose again is not the Jerusalem in which He preached, for the present walls and buildings are the work of later builders, among whom were Hadrian and the Sultan Omar. However, the site must be by and large the same. We propose in this short article to study the words of the Saviour recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, including His prophecy respecting the doom of that great city as viewed from the mount of Olives by Himself and His disciples.

We must realise what a wonderful sight the temple and the city must have been, beautified and reconstructed as it had been by the ambitious and arrogant

king Herod the Great. The Temple was then one of the wonders of the world. It was looked upon with awe and wonder by the Jewish nation, and with reverence for its place in their religion by all true believers in Jehovah. The Law of Moses, which was indeed the Law of God, required as an essential part the central point for the worship. We can then understand the disciples and others around Jesus drawing His attention to its magnificence. Of all the solid and permanent things in life the city and temple would be regarded as indestructible.

The Saviour said "There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be throwndown." We understand there were stones 70 feet long, 10 feet wide and eight feet high in the construction of this edifice—surely a rash prediction?

So the disciples, at least four of them, possibly joined later by the others (Mark 13:3), asked questions on three points—When? How signified? When and how signified the end of the age? The threefold enquiry involved the thought of the destruction of the buildings they were admiring, and the coming of the Saviour, of which He must have spoken from time to time. There is a sense in which He comes when judgments are executed by the divine wrath, and doubtless this is what the disciples understood.

At the time there was a general peace in the Roman dominions but it was broken well before 70 A.D., when Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Wars were threatened and strife increased. Four emperors suffered violent deaths in the short time of eighteen months, and war in different parts broke out in consequence of the unsettlement. Famines occurred in various places including Rome, Palestine, Greece and Babylonia, before Jerusalem was besieged. Meanwhile in Judæa and among the Jews in general there was always the chafing under the Roman rule against civil and military domination, resulting in false prophets and false Messiahs. Josphus writes, "The land was overrun by magicians, seducers and imposters, who drew the people after them into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God."

Christians were to pay no heed whatever to such claims, neither had they any excuse to do so as they knew the true Messiah, and of His coming there could be no mistake "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27). However, such signs might be manifested

as to tempt them. We know how fully the Saviour's warning of suffering, betrayal, death, scourging, condemnation and imprisonment was fulfilled among the early Christians. Their steadfastness assured them of much more than bodily safety—eternal security!

Certain specific instructions were given to guide them when the crisis upon Jerusalem was to culminate. Jerusalem was to be encompassed with armies (Luke 21:20) the abomination of desolation to stand in the holy place (Matt. 24:15) "where it ought not" (Mark 13:14); then all heeding the words would flee in haste "to the mountains" (Luke 21:21). So, as the Romans closed in to begin their siege, and just before "John of Giscala had shut the gate of Jerusalem, and Simon of Garasa had begun to murder all fleeing out" (Farrar's "Life of Christ"), the Christians went out and those in Judæa hastily fled across Jordan into the caverns and hills to safety. After that the fearful sufferings of the besieged and the murder and rapine by the enraged Roman soldiery began and continued. It is said that Titus originally intended to starve the city into surrender but the obstinate ferocity of the defenders compelled him to press on and step by step destroy the city house by house. Finally the Temple itself was set on fire, the gold on the roofs melted and flowed down into the lower stones, and these were (as it were) scraped off the site and thrown down.

While this terrible tragedy was inevitable Christians prayed that their flight should not be in winter nor on a sabbath—the winter for hardship and the sabbath for restriction of movement or persecution for breaking of the law. The centuries old warnings of God as written in Deuteronomy (see 28:53 etc.) were fulfilled to the letter, and the scattering and selling into slavery came to pass. It is recorded that 1,350,000 perished, and 97,000 were sold into slavery. The time of the war was shortened by the need for Titus to get back to Rome, and so many who would otherwise have perished were saved.

The portents of this dreadful historical event are in some measure the same as those which will herald—indeed already do—the end of the present age. For instance, by 70 A.D. it is practically certain that all the civilised world had heard the gospel, whereas only now are the unexplored regions of New Guinea and Central Africa hearing it. Again the generation that heard Christ speak had not passed away when their city was destroyed, but the race (same word in the original) will not have passed away when the Saviour comes again. Strange things happened in the



natural heavens as the time of destruction of Jerusalem drew nigh, and in the political heavens likewise; so it will be, and is now, when the end of the age approaches. Let us look up because our redemption draweth nigh. "But watch ye at every season making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36).

R. B. SCOTT.

hearts sank when we saw the house again, we had forgot that with its two bedrooms, it had 15 doors, a big concrete working space taking up half the kitchen, and a large black fireplace (more like a furnace) in the lounge-cum-dining-room, separated by a large arch-way which blocked out the light making the rooms dark and poky. The one bright spot was the sun lounge that had been built on to the back of the house.

So for the last 10 months we and the builders have lived in dust, sand and cement, doors being bricked up, walls being knocked down, having no place to sit comfortably, but now out of utter chaos have emerged built-in cupboards, a lovely fireplace in a sunny lounge; but lots more to be done. We hope that when you hear from us in 1966 we can report all settled in a completed home. We had hardly time to unload when we were into the work, John ploughing and planting fields, chapel preaching, week-end preaching in the villages; and me teaching women and children, going on women's fellowships and all the varied aspects of mission life, including stumbling out in a dressing gown at 4.45 a.m. in answer to an urgent knocking on our door, to be greeted by a smile from flashing white teeth in a happy place face. "Please can you help me with uowers for the boys' boarding?"

At the time of writing our son John is home from boarding school. This has been another adjustment we had to make: he had always been with us at home, but moving to the mission meant boarding school. It is wonderful to have him, and we try to arrange our Sunday village meetings so that we can call at the school (50 miles away) and take him with us for a few hours, giving him help in his spiritual life which he doesn't get at school.

You have shared with us the joys and the funny side of our life. Now a sorrow that I experienced and came home and cried on John's shoulder about. I teach African children at Farm Schools and recently one of these classes was dissolved by the farmer. When arriving as usual to teach, some of the children were standing waiting with sad faces, with none of the eagerness showing that had always been there before. I stood there helpless, unable to do anything to bring the pleasure they had shown when hearing stories about Jesus. A lost opportunity.

Now from the sad to the frightening. We were out in a village preaching and teaching when someone rushed up and asked us to come and see a very sick man. I grabbed the box of medical supplies and rushed into a little dark mud hut, followed by John. But there in front of us was not a near-dying man as we expected, but a mad man, tied

## CORRESPONDENCE

### RADIO SCOTLAND

From the beginning of this year Radio Scotland has been broadcasting on 242 metres medium wave. The transmission comes from a converted light-ship situated in the North Sea three miles out from Dunbar, and has a coverage from Inverness to Newcastle and over to Northern Ireland. This gives a potential listening audience of nearly ten million in this area—everyone of whom deserves to hear the Gospel of Christ.

After protracted negotiations we have gained a peak listening period (Sunday evenings, 10.30-11) and invite all Christians wherever they may be to help in this inspiring work of bringing Christ to Scotland. All who would like to support this work should send their contributions to Claud Parrish, 19 Riccarton Mains Road, Currie, Midlothian. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to "Herald of Truth."

[The letter below has been forwarded to the "S.S." by Bro. Paul Jones, and is of particular interest in the present circumstances in Rhodesia.—Ed.]

Nhowe Mission, P. Bag 4, Macheke, Rhodesia, C. Africa.

Seasons Greetings to You.—As our whole way of life has changed this last year, so in future will our way of greeting you at the year end. We have made two major decisions in our married life, the first nine years ago when we became Christians, and the second in January this year (1965) when we gave up our jobs to enter the mission field. Our year has been such a change and to us so interesting that we felt we would like to share it with you and we are hoping to do this each year in the same way.

We and all our worldly goods arrived in a confusion of goats bleating, ducks quacking, hens cackling, a monkey screeching, dogs barking and a grand finale mother rabbit in her hutch on top of the lorry bringing forth her family. It was dark when we got there and our

around the waist with a rope, the end put through a hole in the wall and secured by a stake on the outside of the hut so that he couldn't run away. After swallowing hard and letting our hearts beat back to normal, we tried to help but realised he needed to go to hospital 100 miles away, so John made arrangements for this. You will be interested to know that after treatment for pressure on the brain and malnutrition, the doctor has written to us that he is well on the way to recovery, but we will check for ourselves when next we go to that village. Medical treatment is part of our work, for many times we are the only medical aid they ever receive, living as they do so far from hospitals.

Mission work is not all peaches and cream; there are times of discouragement and frustrations when it seems our work is to no avail, then we feel we have made a great mistake and wish we hadn't made that second decision. Then something happens that makes us proud and happy to be doing the work that we have set our hearts on doing. We wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year.

Love,

JOHN, RITA & JOHN, JNR., HANSON.

#### "THE CUP OF BLESSING"

Letters from brethren in Great Britain show that the question of the cup in the Lord's supper is causing much disputing in that peace-loving country. This question truly calls for no long debating if we accept the principle that Bible things be done in Bible ways.

The scripture has it thus, "And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you." (Mt. 26:17—Amplified New Testament). It may be argued that this was before the church was established. This is true, but the scripture still has it thus, "*The cup of blessing [of wine at the Lord's supper] upon which we ask (God's) blessing, does it not mean [that in drinking it] we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ?*" (1 Cor. 10:16—A.N.T.; italic is mine). They used *one cup*. They drank of or from one cup.

If argument for individual containers on hygienic purposes has any weight at all, then argument on economic reasons for withholding the cup from the congregations stands also. After all it is only a little sip, and who does not practice cleanliness these days? Or do we forget that a strong healthy body defies brief attacks. Should a brother or sister not have the sense to keep away from that flock if he or she develops a contagious or an infectious disease till recovery? If attendance is very necessary, it is here, I would support the pouring of the wine from the one container into

a separate cup during the ministration for the patient alone till he or she recovers.

In Nigeria it is not individual containers, but a number of cups for the whole church. The cups available are filled as they are emptied until all have drunk. Some churches use one container. In Cameroon the church in Kumba uses one cup, and the one in Mbonge has three little cups for about fifteen members. No-one has complained, and should an argument arise later, we will stand for the one cup of blessing in which I see so much true love and fellowship. Why should the brethren risk a disruption over a thing which is so easy to settle?

God bless you. In His service,

D. N. ELANGWE, Bible Training College, Ukpom Box 35, Abak, Nigeria.

#### CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

Once again it is my pleasant duty to report progress in connection with the above fund, and again may I, on behalf of our African brothers in Christ, thank all those who have come to the aid of our appeal for help.

Only a few churches have as yet responded to the appeal but those which have given have been most generous. Financial help has recently come from Slammanan, Dunbar, Plymouth and Had-dington—two churches having given £50 each. We say "Thank You" brethren and we hope that in 1966 many other churches will decide to give a little to this good work and help the fund reach its goal. Fifty pounds of the fund has had to be utilised for emergency expenses of Brother Elangwe, but notwithstanding this withdrawal, the fund has reached the sum of £319 4s. 8d.

Mention must again be made of the sterling work being done by our brethren in Australia who are, independently of the above fund, helping the work in this particular section of Africa. Perhaps our most active supporter in Australia is our dear Sister Chaffer from Melbourne, Victoria. Our sister, who has worked hard for the Cameroons Fund from the beginning, is 89 years old and is confined to bed—but her horizons are broader than her bed posts, and her heart is bigger than her infirmity. She is an inspiration to all who have the honour to know her and we thank her and all our Australian brethren for their ready support and help.

Please consider this matter seriously, brethren, and remember our African brethren in your prayers.

All contributions, large or very small, gratefully received by James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Had-dington.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Loughborough.**—Our young people's weekend (January 14th-16th) was a wonderful time of blessing and encouragement. On the Friday night Bro. P. Partington (Ince) gave a very fine lesson on "The Christian's approach to love, courtship and marriage." This was followed by a period of discussion, in groups. On Saturday afternoon four young brothers formed a forum and answered questions previously sent in by young brethren. This was felt to be an extremely useful session, and those who served presented much helpful teaching. Saturday evening's meeting was on the theme: "The Young Christian in the Modern World." Philip Hardy (Birmingham); David Woodhouse (Kirkby); Tom Hurcombe (Ince); and Douglas Melling (Scholes, Wigan) spoke in turn on the following subjects: "At Study"; "At Work"; "In the Home"; "In the Church." The material presented had obviously been carefully prepared and gave much food for thought—to young and old. On Lord's Day, Bro. Michael Gaunt served in the church, and the worship, study, praise and prayer were truly a "mountain-top experience."

Providing food for those present on the Saturday (well over 100 at the evening meeting) was no small achievement, but a group of young Christians made a great job of this. Some thirty young brethren stayed for the weekend, and as always, our own sisters rose splendidly to the occasion in providing hospitality. Praise God for all such seasons of blessing and help.

A. E. Winstanley

**Loughborough (Oxford Street).**—The meeting of Evangelists held on Monday, December 13th, 1965, was well attended by brethren from churches in the Midlands and from further south. Brother Philip Partington presided and ten-minute addresses were given by three Evangelists. Bro. F. Worgan spoke on "Improving the Effectiveness of our Gospel Meetings"; Bro. C. P. Slate on "Every Christian doing Evangelistic Work"; and Bro. A. E. Winstanley on "Encouragement to Evangelise." There was also a forum in which four brethren dealt with questions on Evangelism. It was agreed by all that this meeting did much to strengthen fellowship and to encourage us all to do more for the Master we serve.

Tom Stones.

**Slamannan District.**—The New Year social gathering was held at Seafield on January 1st, 1966, under the presidency of Bro. John Wood, Dennyloanhead.

There was a large attendance and our thanks are due to the Blackridge brethren who were responsible for the catering arrangements.

Bro. Wood welcomed all present and exhorted all to "seek first the kingdom of God" and resolve to put this desire first in our lives in 1966. This was a message for the church.

Bro. David Dougall, our first speaker, took as his text Phil. 4:4, urging us to "rejoice in the Lord" and as this first day of a new year was looked upon as a day of rejoicing, it can and should continue every day in the life of the Christian. Bro. David reminded us that Christians should be the happiest people in the world and no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in we should always rejoice in the God of our salvation.

Bro. Alf Marsden, Wigan, posed the question, "How do you Build?" and outlined the experience of Nehemiah during the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. We must stop and see the right way and walk therein. We must build on the rock, the true foundation. We, like Nehemiah, will come up against opposition, but if all brethren come together and work together, God will be with us. Let us be obedient to the word of God and not be persuaded to do otherwise.

We were favoured with choir pieces from the Wallacestone brethren, male voice pieces, solos and a duet by members of the Wallacestone, Slamannan, Motherwell and Kirkcaldy churches.

We look forward to a happy and prosperous year in the work of the Lord.

H. Davidson.

## OBITUARY

**Beulah Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield.**—It is with much sadness that we record the passing of one of our older members, Bro. Will Longden, on December 13th, 1965, at the age of 75 years. Bro. Longden had been an active member of the church at Beulah Road since its inception and had been in Christ for nearly 60 years. He had fulfilled the offices of treasurer, deacon and elder of this congregation and carried out his duties with zeal and faithfulness. His love of singing was evident and we shall miss his voice singing with ours in praise of his Lord when he loved. Our sympathy is with them who were near and dear to him, and their comfort is in the hope and trust of our Lord's promise that one day we shall all meet Him and praise Him throughout eternity.

Our brother was laid to rest on December 15th. The service at the meeting-room and at the graveside were carried out by Bro. Robert Macdonald.

T. Woodhouse

## COMING EVENTS

**Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).**—Holiday week-end special meetings April 8th-11th, 1966. Lectures, discussions, Gospel meetings, etc. Accommodation gladly provided for visitors. These special meetings will mark the beginning of a gospel mission to be conducted by Bro. C. P. Slate, of Wembley. Meetings nightly from April 8th to 17th, 1966 (D.V.). Fuller details later.

**Aylesbury.**—Gospel Campaign, April 17th-24th. Preacher, Bro. W. N. Jackson (Ipswich). Meetings every evening. All brethren who are able to come are invited to assist us in this campaign.

**Young People's Week-end,** May 28th-30th. Special programme on the Saturday; a recreational programme on the Monday.

**Bible School,** July 24th-August 7th. Lectures and classes, Monday-Friday of each week.

Further details of the above will be given later.

**Loughborough.**—The church intends to conduct an intensive CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST, the Lord willing, during the period Saturday, March 5th to Lord's Day, April 3rd, 1966. Preachers in this campaign will be Donald Daugherty (Paris), and Andrew Gardiner (Edinburgh).

The purpose of this notice is to beseech you brethren, to remember this effort often in your prayers, that it might bear fruit in the salvation of many souls. We also urge any who can to make plans to come and be with us, and to work in the effort to extend the Kingdom of Christ in Loughborough.

If you can come please let us know at once. Write to Mr. T. Stones, 34 Holefield Avenue, Loughborough, Leicestershire, England. Fuller details will be announced later. Tom Stones.

**Ilkeston (Burns St.)**—Gospel Effort, April 9th to 23rd, 1966 (D.V.).

This effort will include the holiday weekend, April 9th to 12th.

Preacher: A. E. Winstanley (Loughborough).

Tea: Saturday, April 9th at 4.15 p.m. Times of meetings etc. in next issue. Your prayers and presence and help will be greatly appreciated.

**Tunbridge Wells.**—Anniversary weekend, May 14th-15th, when the speakers will be Bro. R. B. Scott (Kentish Town) and Bro. V. Hunter (Wembley).

Gospel Campaign, May 14th-22nd. Preacher, Bro. V. Hunter (Wembley). Full details later.

We urge all who are able to be with us to help in the spreading of the gospel in this town. Please pray for the work here.

Information: D. L. Daniell, 38 Hopwood Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel. 23864.

## EVANGELIST WANTED

The Churches in the Slamannan District desire to employ a second full-time Gospel Preacher, and would like to hear from any brother willing to labour for the Lord in this area.

Any interested should write to Hugh Davidson, 11 Rosslyn Avenue, East Kilbride, Glasgow.

## WEDDING

On December 18th in the meeting-house of the church at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Bro. Joseph Layland, of Scholes, Wigan, and Sis. Norma Pritt, of Blackburn. Bro. John Pritt officiated.

## "S.S." TREASURER

Paul Jones, "Harmony," Wade Close, Hill Rdware, Nr. Rugeley, Staffs.

There is not a telephone number at the moment but we will publish it as soon as the post office are able to install.

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**EVANGELIST FUND:** Contributions to R. McDONALD, who is also Secretary of Conference Committee, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, York.

**NYASALAND Mission:** Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

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