

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## BROTHER MAKIN'S REPLY TO BROTHER BOLAND

BROTHER BOLAND'S article illustrates a major division which exists in the church of Christ today;

- (a) those Christians who insist that their actions are based entirely on scriptural command, example, or inference; who always express the wish to be shown (scripturally of course) where they are unwittingly proceeding along an unscriptural course;
- (b) those Christians who realise that in the majority of cases, decisions have to be made as they seek to be like Jesus and to present the evangel.

There is a characteristic both implicit and explicit in the article which, I feel, is a hindrance to the efforts of Christians to achieve perfection. I quote: "I believe they have acted in their own wisdom and not that of the Lord's." For myself I have, because I recognise that revelation has left us with the *content* of the evangel and not the one and only *method* of preaching that message. Are you, brother Boland, is any man, in possession of the wisdom of the Lord?

The reason the Campbells were quoted was not because they are regarded as having "powers we do not possess"; not because we "lack a true starting point"; not because "the point cannot be proved by scripture"; not because we "have rejected God's law"; not because "our lies cause us to walk after which [our] fathers did walk"; but because we feel that the method of proclaiming the gospel is the duty of every individual Christian, of every group of Christians, of every local community and of the body of Christ in the manner which is best suited to their talents, circumstances and their measure of love for God, Jesus and their fellow men. This the Campbells recognised, this the Campbells stated briefly and succinctly—hence we quoted.

The points stated briefly are :—

- (a) we have the revelation of God;
- (b) the Campbells claim to "speak where the Bible speaks" etc.;
- (c) brother Boland claims to speak where the Bible speaks etc.

Who told the Christians spoken of in Acts 8:4 what methods to adopt—not what *message* to preach, but what *methods* to adopt—as they went everywhere preaching and talking about Jesus? They were left to their own devices.

"Do we want the formation of the Christian Church [an American group of Churches of Christ] in the next two decades?" No. But I am not one to state that there are no Christians in the "Christian Church." What I do not want is the spread of a system which has gained a foothold in Britain—the ministerial system which

limits the abilities of many Christians who neglect their talents because they assume the gospel can be proclaimed only by those who have been professionally trained. What I prefer to see is men who are able—professional men, artisans, etc.—being supported for a period as they devote their energies and skills to the proclamation of Jesus. This is just one method which is *unscriptural* but not *anti-scriptural*. This needs organisation, it needs money, it needs an application of commonsense as we best order the weapons we have available. Are brother Boland's church meetings, business or otherwise, devoid of commonsense?

This same characteristic—a search for a legalistic code around which to build one's actions—is implicit in such phrases as :—

1. "Once we accept the premise that we may do things in the work of the church without scriptural precedence we open the door to do practically anything we like." (para. III);
2. "We have been given a law: it is up to us to observe it and teach others so to do." (para. VIII);
3. "It is for this reason that we have to give implicit [I prefer to obey explicitly those commands which are precise] obedience to God's commands." (para. IV).

There are other similar statements which either state explicitly or imply that we must do only those things for which we have "scriptural precedence." Let us see how unscriptural, *i.e.* without "scriptural precedence," some of our methods of doing necessary things are. It is a fallacy to equate what is non-scriptural with what is anti-scriptural. "The only way to please God is to do just what He has commanded or has given an approved example to do and no more." (para III). I cite the practice of congregational worship to illustrate how it is necessary to lean on expediency, workability, tradition and convenience. The revelation of worship is so important that, if brother Boland is correct in his assertion quoted above, we would expect to find a multiplicity of specific instructions concerning worship. There is a multiplicity of such instructions, but the wonderfully enervating characteristic of these is that they permit individual interpretation :—"I appeal to you . . . to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." This is the worship of the Christian stated in general terms : an exhortation to eschew conformity to this world, but no precise instruction as to how one should do this. Communities meet every first day of the week, scriptural precedent is here not lacking, communities enjoy sharing (fellowship), giving financially, congregational hymn-singing, praying, and the exposition of the apostles' teaching. We certainly have a record of the early church enjoying such so called "acts of worship." Are the experiences of communities of saints scattered throughout the world today the image of the experiences of Christianity at the beginning? I am persuaded that this is not so.

Some Christians seek to prove that the activities we share on Sunday are scriptural, *i.e.* this is what the early church did. We are told *how* to give, not *when* to give, not how much to give—the more we give the better we shall do our work,—not *what* to give for. We give money because our commonsense tells us that the functioning of any community needs money; we give on the first day of the week because our commonsense tells us that this is a period when it is convenient to collect from Christians meeting at the table of the Lord; we give as much as we are able because by doing so we become more effective as a unit in proclaiming the gospel. All this is self evident. There is not one iota of authority for taking a collection for any particular purpose. This does not argue that a collection of money on Sunday is wrong. The method is incidental to the need. I go further : the method cannot be condemned if the heart of the individual is attuned to the mind of God.

I am making the point that Christians should object to the quotation of scripture for doing things when they are not remotely connected with our traditional pattern. It is more honest to cease quoting substantiating scriptures for all we do, and to admit that we do certain things because they work, they are convenient, and the methods

employed suit our abilities and circumstances, and that our limitations allow us to pursue these methods. I am assailed for appealing for a man of ability to set the wheels in motion; for appealing to the commonsense of Christians; for writing an article which appeals to men's opinions. In answer to these criticisms I direct your attention to a situation in the Corinthian church: "Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers." In spite of giving the congregation a solution to their problem, *i.e.* to suffer wrong, Paul appeals to them in the words, "can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood?" Man's wisdom or the wisdom of God?

Using Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15; we have erected the fabric of our congregational hymn-singing. It is good to sing in unison; it is good to express reverence to the Creator in song; it is a moving and enjoyable experience to hear a large, or small, congregation express their commitment to God as disciples of Jesus as we sing hymns together—but it is not following scriptural ritual to sing congregationally. The passages quoted suggest that everything we speak, (except singing?), should be a sacrifice of praise. This is certainly more than congregational hymn-singing. Eph. 5:19 is not an apostolic command which governs our group singing. It was an injunction to the Ephesians telling them how they should behave in contrast to the brawling, lewd, suggestive, Bacchanalian behaviour of the followers of pagan gods and rites. Col. 3:16 prompts me to suggest that it would be more scriptural if at our meetings Christians, singly, taught and admonished by intoning a psalm a hymn for the benefit of the rest of the community, while they listened reverently to the teaching of the psalm or the hymn. I enjoy, as well as the next Christian, the experience of shouting forth my commitment to God with the rest of the congregation, but I submit that this practice which has become interwoven into our "worship ritual" is based on tradition and convenience.

We give money on the first day of the week because we find it convenient; the method works and is a traditional method, but it is not the only method; we sing congregationally because it is an acceptable tradition to do so. It is an expedient. If we use workable, convenient, traditional and expedient methods to give and to sing I am persuaded that the honest-minded Christian is at liberty to use workable, convenient, traditional and expedient methods in areas of worship where the method is not precisely stated. I define "areas of worship." In the language of Jesus and his disciples in the early church every thought and deed of those in Christ, out of a sense of reverence for God was an expression of worship. There was no distinction between that which was secular and that which was spiritual. In the early church there was no exact, precise all-exclusive ritual which was observed Sunday after Sunday, for the simple reason that the "whole body" (Gk. *Soma*—existence), was offered as "a spiritual sacrifice" and whatever was done was an expression of worship. I suggest that because of this understanding of worship, and since I am of the opinion that nowhere in scripture is there outlined an all-exclusive method of preaching the gospel, I have the right to preach Jesus in the most effective manner that I know and am capable of participating in. If a group of Christians organise themselves to preach the evangel they have liberty to do so, and so may a group of local communities.

"Idealistic and realistic doctrines cannot be compatible." This statement together with others of similar purport in brother Boland's article, particularly "Let us always hope but never expect that great numbers will come running into our churches . . ." (para. II) reduce one to despair, and would drive one to depths of greater despondency if this is a generally held current opinion in the body of Christ. Here is a negative expression of a damaging concept to the progress of the community. Of course we are concerned with numbers, the larger the better. The body of Christ is concerned with :—

- (a) the increasing maturity of individual members of the body;
- (b) the replacement of dead members by new members and their consequent maturing;

The former is achieved by the free flow of the apostles' teaching; the latter by the proclamation of the evangel.

God was concerned with numbers: read Matthew 28:16-20—"disciple all nations"; the maturing process followed—"teaching them to observe all things."

Paul was concerned with numbers—"Him [Jesus] we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ"; the Acts of Ambassadors of Christ records a period in history when inspired men and Christians "went everywhere" preaching Jesus, because they were concerned for people. One cannot divorce the striving for an increase in numbers from being a necessary adjunct of the activities of members of the body of Christ. Please, eschew this damaging concept that a body which depends on continuous renewal of membership is not concerned with numbers. The faith has once for all been delivered to the saints who were told to contend earnestly for that faith—a contention which would be all the greater if the numbers were greater.

In this contention for the faith we have entered a real battle with the evil one. We have lined ourselves on the side of Jesus, a man "who went about doing good." Our faith in the ideal, Jesus, prompts us to strive realistically to achieve the standard He would have us achieve. If the standard, is "doing good," and I maintain that it is, we must enter the realms of realism to achieve this. In striving to reach this maturity of character and action we have our "faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." As we preach Jesus, either singly or with the group, this becomes a real exercise as we face the problems of the proclaimer. What can be more realistic than the fight of Christians attempting to overcome sin? We have to depend on expediency in daily living, this I maintain being part of our worship and our "spiritual [reasonable] sacrifice."

Bro. Boland's article raises many issues both relevant and irrelevant to the original plea. The local congregation and its autonomy is an issue which is thrust in front of the reader as sacrosanct. What does one mean by such a statement as "the only acceptable group is the local church?" Revelation informs us that we have all been reconciled in one body through the cross: "we are no longer strangers but fellow citizens and members of the household of God." The whole structure, based on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the chief corner stone, is joined together. Christians are built into this one body for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. "The only acceptable group," brother Boland, is not "the local assembly." Where does the body of Christ figure in this? If members of the body (local communities within convenient geographical distance of each other) wish, they have every right, as members of one body, to join their efforts and energies and direct these to a single goal; other matters of great local significance must sometimes of necessity be submerged in the pursuit of the chosen priority. Let me quote a simple example: four churches decide to preach the gospel in "virgin territory"; they personally evangelise; they arrange co-operative public meetings; one community after starting upon the venture decides to arrange, during the period of joint effort, alternative meetings. This is not done in competition with the joint venture but as an expression of local autonomy—it still is damaging to the joint venture and as such should be relegated to the co-operative venture. This is the way co-operation would modify the operations of local assemblies. This is not a manufactured example to suit my argument; it has happened and I know that the joint venture suffered.

One other matter touching on "congregational autonomy"—not a scriptural phrase—and religious racialism. If the circumstances of a nation produce a practice which I believe not to be sanctioned in the New Testament, I shall be a racialist as regards that practice. Let me explain by quoting an example. American Christians have introduced a practice into this country which I believe is inimical to the teaching of Jesus, a direct contravention of his commands. I refer to the practice of using individual cups at the Lord's table. I have no wish to re-open discussions in the columns of the "Scripture Standard" of the "container question." I cite it merely as an example of congregational autonomy run riot. I believe that Jesus meant we had to follow precisely the method of sharing enjoined on the disciples. American Christians have distorted this practice and their example has been followed by communities in Britain. Because of this distortion I am anti- this American practice. But the more salient point here, in my opinion, is that local communities have not the right to insist

that their autonomy gives them the authority to foster a practice which is inimical to the conscience of many Christians, and at the same time maintain that the method of sharing is not a matter of faith. No, brother Boland, each local assembly has not the right to decide its own actions, because the individuals who make up a local community are part of something greater than a local congregation: they are members of one body, entrusted with the edifying of other members of the same body.

Contained in the article under review are two practices which must be condemned:—

- (a) a facility for tearing statements from their circumstances; and
- (b) a cluttering of the article with texts which for their relevance and efficiency in use depend upon the reader accepting the interpretation brother Boland places on these texts.

Brother Boland has for some reason concluded that I should have scriptural precedent for quoting the figures of "ten churches" and "sixteen hundred pounds." Read again paragraphs 2 and 3, page 66, of the "Scripture Standard," June. The sum quoted on the basis of two shillings per head per week is stated as a minimal figure which could be reached by such contribution as described above, and not as a minimal for preaching the gospel. I do not cite "ten churches," or twenty, or every church as the only basis for concerted activity. Such activity could be on the basis of ten dedicated Christians. There is in Wigan a class of men and some women committed to a deep study of the documents of the Bible: they meet weekly. There is no reason why this group should not discuss ways of preaching Jesus; give of their money—let us have no more talk about money not being necessary for the presentation of the gospel;— implement methods of proclamation. There is no reason why this group should not offer support to men for varying periods; there is nothing to prevent this group of men and women drawn from different congregations (by your reasoning, brother Boland, this makes us an "unacceptable" group) from using their skills, time, and energy to organise a teaching programme for young Christians; or direct their energies to the welfare of, say old, sick and lonely people. This is the co-operation I wish to see implemented. When, oh when, will the legalistic attitude of the individual who best belongs to the period when Moses as representative of His people, communed with God, allow Christians to implement that which is so essential to the lives of disciples—the exercise and expression of love for their fellows in creation? Paragraph XXV of the article is marked by the insertion of a series of scriptural passages which have little relevance as criticism of the original article. I have seen this practice so abused that one is always wary of the use of texts which have, as used by brother Boland, such a general interpretation and application. Very often I have been party to conversation where such practice has been used to beat and belabour Christians into a fluidity from which the "other party" hopes to mould a "party man." According to the article the texts instanced from Amos, Joel, Hosea and Psalms are quoted as relevant and supportive of brother Boland's opinions of my motives and my writings. Unfortunately one has to accept the interpretation placed on these texts by brother Boland. I do not. I prefer to view these passages in the circumstances of the period of their writing. They were written at a time when pagan kings and princes, idols of gold and silver had replaced the glory of God in the lives of His people. You are perfectly right to say we ought to have "no lack of knowledge," but according to Hosea 4 this knowledge was for the "inhabitants of the land, the people of Israel." Passages so specific should not be rendered almost meaningless by giving them a generality which they were never meant to have, as I see it. If people do or say things that I disagree with I could quote the selfsame passages quoted by brother Boland. What it boils down to is whose interpretation is right? This is why I feel that such use of scripture is meaningless, positively damaging in many instances, because their relevancy depends on accepting the other man's interpretation of their use.

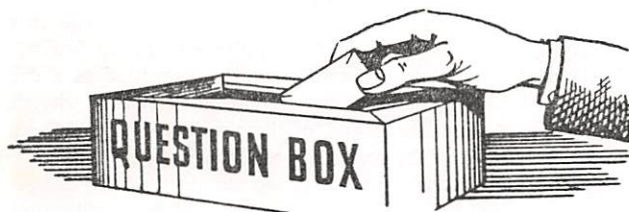
Space introduces limitations. I have tried to be positive in this letter by hinting where worthwhile activities could result from the convention of Christians. May I

address my closing remarks to fellow Christians in Wigan? In doing so perhaps brother Boland feels I have neglected some worthwhile point he has raised; if so and if he contacts me I shall continue correspondence with him.

We in Wigan have our differences. These are magnified because we are largely dormant in our activity in the gospel. We are being driven into opposing camps because we do not depend to any great extent on mutual activity and edification; we have numbers; we do not lack some ability; we are all committed to a love of Jesus; we depend on God as our Father. Now is the time to harness that which we have in a concerted effort for Jesus. We are geographically adjoining, and we have in our possession that which is able to bring men into a right relationship with God—the evangel, that which was preached on the day of Pentecost by Peter. Armed with this message and a zeal to communicate it to other people we can become a force to be reckoned with. This plea is not the mere parochialism of a Christian living in Wigan, but the earnest prayer of a Christian who feels that as members of one body we have a duty to work in concert.

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Conducted by  
James Gardiner

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What happens to the dead? The O.T. scriptures teach that flesh becomes dust and the spirit goes back to where it came from (Eccl. 12:7; Job 34:14 etc.) In the N.T. we have such passages as 2nd Cor. 12:1-4; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9, as though a change might have come about since the death and resurrection of our Lord. Please explain.

The questioner presumably means what happens to a person when physical death comes? because people can be dead in more senses than one—they can be spiritually dead. Eph. 2:1: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." This must be a severe body blow to those who believe man is totally physical and wholly mortal. In Gen. 2:17 God said to Adam concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ". . . for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," yet Adam did not die *physically* the day he ate thereof, but he died to God spiritually that day. So care is required in deciding exactly what kind of death is referred to. Not only must we be careful regarding the meaning of "death." In considering this question we must also be careful of the way we define such terms as "man," "life," "soul," "spirit," "mortal," "immortal," "destroy," "grave," "hell" and several others, because a true definition is obviously a vital necessity, as is an honest appraisal of the context in which such terms are used. We spend one third of life asleep: yet sleep is still a mystery to man. Death, and its consequences, is in many respects similarly a profound subject and we can but sift out from the scriptures relevant truths and try to fit them together to provide a general picture. God has not revealed all, but as much as we require to know.

#### What Is Man?

The constitution of man seems the logical point at which to begin a study of what happens to the dead, and at once we are on controversial territory, for not all men are agreed on man's constituent parts. Man was of course made a little lower, in the life strata, than the angels and 1 Thess. 5:23 says, "I [Paul] pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We all know what the body is and no one argues about this, but with reference to "spirit" and "soul" some would define the former as "breath" and the latter as

"animal life." The fallacy of the former is seen in such passages as, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," [breath] where I am sure Jesus was not intending to say that asthma sufferers had any cause to be happy! In Acts 17:16 we read that Paul's "spirit was stirred within him." His *breath* was stirred within him? Similarly it must be erroneous to suggest that soul means "animal life" and that Gen. 2:7 says that when God breathed into man's nostrils "man became a living soul" (animal life). A living animal life? Can there be a dead animal life? It is important therefore that we be not misled by unsound definitions of "soul" and "spirit," because our understanding of both has a direct bearing on our study of what happens to the dead. The soul and spirit are part of the man but not part of his body. In Matt. 10:28 Jesus said to the twelve, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

#### Body

When death ensues or supervenes a separation of man's constituent parts takes place. The physical (now inanimate) body goes to the tomb and eventually disintegrates, returning to the dust from which it was made. The intelligent and spiritual part of man goes back into God's care, consciousness being an inherent attribute of the spirit of man—Ecl. 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." James confirms this by saying, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Jas. 2:26. Nowhere do we read, however, that the spirit without the body is dead. It is nevertheless suggested by some that when man dies he goes into complete oblivion and extinction because he is wholly mortal. It is said that Ecl. 9:5 is a scripture which fosters this belief: "For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten." If however we read to the next verse we come to a salient phrase which gives an important qualification to what has just been said: "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done *under the sun*." Chap. 9 mentions "under the sun" several times and certainly man, after death, has no further participation in activities "under the sun" or in human and earthly emotions. Psalm 90:10 says that we "fly away" from such things. Man's lifeless corpse in the grave certainly "knows not anything," but man is more than flesh and bone.

#### Soul and Spirit

Our interest must centre therefore, on the spirit and soul. The two are so closely akin that it is extremely difficult to separate them and we must consider them *unum quid* as the spiritual part of man which goes to the place of departed spirits at death. The writer to the Hebrews (4:12) in describing how incredibly sharp and powerful the word of God is says that "it is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is as easy to separate the marrow from the joints as it is to separate soul and spirit, and only a spiritual scalpel can do it. Soul and spirit leave the body at death. Jesus and Stephen commended their spirits to God at death, and it is too absurd to believe they were referring to their breath. Indeed Stephen asked Jesus to receive his spirit (Acts 7:55-60) and we know where Jesus was at that time—at God's right hand. Similarly the soul is referred to as surviving the body at physical death (Matt. 10:28 already referred to) and Rev. 6:9-11 "And . . . I saw the souls of them which were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" They had died and were no longer on the earth, but still much alive, conscious and with the propensity of memory. See also 1 Kings 17:22, where Elijah brings back to life a dead boy: "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came into him again and he revived"; and 1 Sam. 28:14-15 where the witch of Endor brought up Samuel to Saul from the dead "an old man . . . and covered in a mantle." There is certainly no thought or conscious activity in the grave—the

body merely moulders back to dust. The body is simply the vehicle in which a person lives and is carried. Peter says, "Yea I think it mete, as long as I am in this tabernacle [tent] to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." (2 Peter 1:13-14). There is much supplementary evidence along this line. Take, for instance, the case of Dorcas in Acts 9:39. We are told that after she had died she was washed and laid in an upper chamber. Some of the disciples heard that Peter was in the locality and sent for him. "When he was come into the upper chamber many of the sorrowing widows showed him the garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them." But she was still there in the upper chamber, someone might say. Her body certainly was but she (Dorcas) was somewhere else. I suggest she had gone to the place of departed spirits. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Where did Jesus go that day? His *body* certainly went to the tomb but He went to the place of departed spirits. We must study the word "paradise" carefully. Paul was torn between two desires—to live and be with his brethren, or to die and be with Christ. Phil. 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." If the grave meant extinction for Paul then he would have had no such dilemma. In Matt. 22:23-32 the Sadducees, who did not believe in angels or the spirit and believed man to be wholly mortal, tried to confound Jesus on the question of the resurrection. Jesus replied that at the resurrection we shall be like the angels of God in heaven. Jesus also said, regarding the dead, that the 'dead' are very much alive for God is not the God of the dead but of the living. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and although those men "died" many years before, they are very much alive, not on the earth, of course, but somewhere else. This very important fact helps us to understand better the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-32) where we read of Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah. Matt. 17:9 calls it a "vision" but there are different kinds of vision and this one is from the Greek *horama* and means "an appearance." Jesus certainly did not talk to wisps of mist nor was he guilty of perpetrating a shabby deceit upon Peter, James and John, but he actually spoke to these two men (remembering that Elijah never saw the grave but was transferred bodily). 2 Peter 1:16-18 provides God's own confirmatory seal on the event as being a very real happening indeed.

#### The Rich Man and Lazarus

In the question of the dead, Luke 16:19-31 must be referred to. Be it a parable or not (and it is difficult to accept the view that it is a parable) the picture presented is clear enough. Both men went, it seems, to the place of departed spirits at death. Notice the remarkable references to physical faculties—the cries, the thirst, the tongue, the tip of the finger and the facility of memory in recalling the fathers house and five brothers. Abraham (a parable?) said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."—a rather pointless statement if the dead are extinguished and unconscious. We must heed the word of God in our lifetime because after death it will be too late.

What happens to the dead? I think these few scriptures suffice to indicate to us that, at death, the constituent parts of man separate. The body goes to the tomb and returns to dust, awaiting the resurrection. The soul and spirit (the intelligent and conscious part of man) goes back to God and to the place of departed souls and spirits there to await the resurrection and the *formal* judgement day (albeit Luke 16 suggests a pre-judgement). This was as true of the O.T. age as it is now. The changes wrought in Christ were not changes affecting the aspect of *physical death* but rather that he brought about a hope of escape from that eternal spiritual death, through His atoning sacrifice and to substitute eternal life in the mansions of glory for lasting shame and perdition.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland).



# BIBLE STUDY

## VI: BY SUBJECTS

STUDY by subjects is closely related to study by words, dealt with in the previous article. Some of the greatest Bible subjects or topics are summed up in a word, for instance Love, God, Father, Son, Word, Deity (Godhead), pre-existence, reconciliation, atonement, salvation, faith, repentance, conversion, baptism, church, regeneration, restoration, retribution, creation, eternity, hope, trust. Even this lengthy list by no means exhausts the great doctrines or topics of scripture.

A Bro. White, formerly in the church in Earlestown, Lancashire, and now long dead, devoted many years to compiling a notebook of great New Testament subjects, carefully indexed and referenced. A separate symbol was adopted for each subject, these symbols being marked in the margin of his N.T. When one had some knowledge of these symbols it was possible to pick out every reference to a specific subject through its symbol. Bro. White's notebook contained every reference in the N.T. to that subject. Bro. White showed his compilation only to a few, and it is a great pity that his devoted labours were not more widely known.

As helps to Bible study by subject we shall find such Bibles as Thompson's Chain Reference and Dickson's Bible easy to use, and informative. Such works are of great assistance in helping us to focus our scattered thoughts as regards scripture topics. They are carefully and comprehensively indexed. We shall find it useful, also to consult Bible dictionaries and encyclopaedias under the topic we are studying. A special study edition is issued of the Revised Standard Version, with a useful index to words and topics.

The inexhaustible riches of the word of God are perhaps nowhere more clearly realised than in searching the scriptures on these subjects. We may be even daunted at the wealth of material God's word contains on many matters we are studying, and we shall find that we can make only a selection of references. But we shall also find that the very looking up of what the scriptures say is a great stimulus to faith and confidence in the authority, inspiration and unity of the "divine library."

C. MELLING

Next month: STUDY BY PERSONS

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

OCTOBER 1968

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 6—Isaiah 62           | Matthew 21: 1-17  |
| 13—Malachi 2: 17-3:18 | Matthew 21: 18-32 |
| 20—Isaiah 5: 1-17     | Matthew 21: 33-46 |
| 27—Daniel 3: 8-26     | Matthew 22: 1-22  |

### THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

We must recapitulate in order to give this incident the place in the gospel story it should have. A poet has expressed effectively the pathos and paradox in a hymn —

"Ride on! ride on in majesty!  
In lowly pomp ride on to die  
Bow Thy meek Head to mortal pain,  
Then take, O God, Thy power, and  
rain."

He has in another verse the striking thought of "Angel armies in the sky" looking on, who at a word could have destroyed the enemies of the Son of God and righteousness. Twelve legions of angels to confound the plotters were close at hand but not called upon (Matt. 26:53). But the scriptures must be fulfilled, and the gospel of divine love made possible.

The blind men called "Thou Son of David have mercy on us" (Matt. 20: 31) and many of the pilgrims travelling towards Jerusalem with Jesus had just that thought—This is the Son of David, the promised King, who shall deliver the people of God out of all their troubles. We can hardly realise what a wonderful thought this was to them. Under the Roman yoke they suffered and hated. Here was the man who would release them and restore the glorious kingdom as

it was in the days of David and Solomon. The conception was almost exclusively material, but the kingdom of heaven which the prophet Jesus of Nazareth practised and preached was spiritual. The gigantic bubble of national material pride was to be utterly deflated before the designs of a holy God could be even begun in the hearts and minds of men so far astray.

It is not easy to be certain of the series of events of the week which culminated in the cross, but consideration of the four gospels gives us all the details we need without a schedule, so to speak. We shall assume that Jesus and the twelve arrive at Bethany on the Sabbath (Saturday), and the fact that He is coming to the Feast of the Passover has become well known (John 12:12). Pilgrims making the journey a little early and outrunning the crowds walking with Jesus and His immediate disciples have gone into the city with the news that "Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" is on the way. Many who had seen and heard Him at other feasts and in His ministry were there and expectations were aroused to fever pitch. It is said that up to a million Jews from all parts came to Jerusalem for the feasts. Rebellions against the Roman domination had taken place before, and thousands of deluded men had gathered to a false prophet and perished. But thousands more would be ready to make any sacrifice in such a cause—we remember some had already thought to "follow" Jesus in such an adventure (John 6:15). Hence hundreds of people were ready to come out and meet Him, and those coming via Bethany and Bethphage, and those journeying with Him began the two miles' procession on the day after His arrival at Bethany. It was surely "the common people" who formed the crowd. The short retirement on the other side Jordan was over, and He was now going into certain danger. A price was on His head, as John records (11:55-57; 12:9-11) and even Lazarus was in danger too.

The prophecy of Zechariah (9:9) was well known to the scribes, and probably to most other Jews. Jesus in choosing His method of entry into Jerusalem was quite definitely declaring His Messiah-

ship. The people recognised this by their acclamations and the shouts of welcome and witness to the raising of Lazarus (John 12:17). The Pharisees recognised it and asked Jesus to disclaim the title (Luke 19:39 & 40), and received the answer they deserved. We wonder whether the miraculous nature of that ride astonished the crowds, for He rode upon the foal of an ass "whereon yet never man sat" (Luke 19:30), amid a scene of excitement at which a well seasoned street horse would have reared and bolted. The stones did not cry out but the dumb animal owned its Master, and carried Him calmly into the noisy and crowded streets—and probably into the Temple courtyard. The Temple rulers were the Chief Priests, Sadducees, and they made their protest when even the children rejoiced and praised the One Who had said "Suffer the little children to come unto me" and had lovingly clasped them to His bosom (Mark 10:16). The eighth Psalm Jesus quoted to them sets forth God's glory in the heavens and relates it to man as the crown of His creation—"little lower than the angels"—whose life and glory begins at the breast and develops as children. Their simple unpremeditated joy puts many of the learned to shame. They were plotting to destroy the Son of God; the children were singing His praises.

The excited multitude heard no call to war. "He looked round on all things," "left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there." (Mark 11:11). So could He be "the Son of David?" Too many thought not, in spite of His works and His words. "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not" (John 1:11). But read the next verse!

R. B. Scott

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Dewsbury.**—October 15th to 27th, Mission with Bro. Frank Worgan. Details will be sent to the churches but please note Gospel Meeting at 6 p.m. on Saturday, October 19th, preceded by tea at 4 p.m.

**Loughborough (Oxford Street).**—We thank God for one more added to the Lord's family here. Clifford Stones put on Christ in baptism on Wednesday, August 7th, at Morley. Clifford's parents, and other members of the family, are faithful members of this congregation. We commend our new brother to the blessing of God, confident that he will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We rejoice to report the baptism of Mrs. Alice Howard on Lord's Day, August 18th. Mrs. Howard had already impressed us greatly by her sincerity and honesty of heart. We know that she will be "a channel of blessing" to many, and commend her to the grace of God. Brethren, pray for us.

P. D. Hill

**Wigan (Scholes).**—On Lord's Day, August 25th, Bro. Richard Ratcliffe was appointed an elder in the congregation, thus joining Bren. James and Carlton Melling in this work.

Bro. Ratcliffe was added to the church thirty-six years ago, and since then has served the congregation at different times as teacher and superintendent in the Bible School, in teaching the church and preaching the gospel. In addition Bro. Ratcliffe has had much experience in serving congregations other than at Scholes. His daughter and son, both married, are also in the church. We pray God's blessing on him and on the church under his guidance.

## OBITUARY

**Buckie.**—We record with sorrow the passing of Bro. Alex Stewart on Saturday, 31st August. Bro. Stewart was of quiet disposition and loved by his brethren. Until ill health took him he was regular in attendance at the Lord's table, and at all the other meetings. We commend his dear wife and his family to our heavenly Father, and give thanks to Him for long years of life lived in service, love and devotion.

Burial services were conducted by Bro. Sam Hunter and Bro. George Reid.

John Geddes

**Hindley.**—Sister Doris Morgan passed away suddenly September 22nd, 1968.

Fuller notice and appreciation next month.

### COMING EVENTS

**Kentish Town.**—Anniversary meetings Saturday, October 5th, 3 p.m. and 6.30, followed by mission with Bro. A. E. Winstanley for two weeks.

**Birmingham.**—The church at Summer Lane, Birmingham, hope to hold their 103rd Anniversary on Saturday and Sunday, 12th & 13th October. Tea will be at 4 p.m. on Saturday and the evening meeting will commence at 5.30 p.m.

We give a cordial invitation to all who can be with us and feel sure the time will be well spent. Anyone who would like to spend the whole week-end in Birmingham should contact Bro. H. Hardy, 67 Broomhill Road, Perry Common, Birmingham 23.

The speakers on Saturday, 12th, at 5.30 p.m. will be Bro. Joe Nisbet from the church in Belfast and Bro. J. Wilkinson from the United States of America, D.V. M. M. Mountford

**Newtongrange.**—Church of Christ, St. David's, Newtongrange: Annual Social 12th October, 1968. Tea 4 p.m. in hall; the meeting proper will start at 5 p.m. in the meeting-place. Speakers: Bros. Tom Kemp (Hindley) and Jack Nisbet (Haddington). We extend a hearty invitation to all who would like to meet with us and support us on this occasion.

Change of secretary, Church of Christ, Newtongrange: Maurice Ferguson, 17, Lawfield Road, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian. 'Phone Dalkeith 2899.

**Tunbridge Wells.**—October 19th-27th: Campaign for Christ with Bro. J. Nisbet (Belfast) preaching.

Saturdays, 19th & 26th at 6.30 p.m.

Sundays, 20th, 6.30 & 8 p.m., 27th at 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday (22nd & 24th) at 7 p.m.

A welcome is extended to any to join with us over this period that souls may

be reached. If any would like to come and help us "door knocking" or distributing literature please contact us for details. Write: D. L. Daniell, 34, North Farm Road, High Brooms, Tunbridge Wells, or telephone T.W. 23864.

**Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).**— Monday, October 21st to Sunday, October 27th: Seven meetings for Christians and non-Christians, Petticoat Lane, Ince, near Wigan. All meetings will begin at 7.30 p.m. Refreshments will be available after each session.

Monday, Oct. 21st: Film, "Martin Luther" (if available).

Tuesday, 22nd: Gospel Meeting — "Faith Alone": John Dodsley.

Wednesday, 23rd: Bible Study: Teach-In led by John Dodsley. Subject, "Faith Alone."

Thursday, 24th: Gospel Meeting: "Except"—John Dodsley.

Friday, 25th: Hymn-Singing led by local Christians, followed by a supper.

Saturday, 26th: Gospel Meeting: "Can we agree?"—John Dodsley.

Sunday, 27th: Gospel Meeting: "The Voice of the Son of God." Address by John Dodsley.

During the above period the community at Ince plan to spend time visiting homes in the locality, carrying the "good news" to people. We would appreciate help in this task. If you are available

for a time please contact the secretary to the congregation—E. Makin, 95, Haigh Road, Haigh, Wigan. If you wish hospitality it can be provided. If you cannot help with the visiting, please attend our meetings; everybody can pray for our efforts.

**East Ardsley.**— Anniversary week end on Saturday and Sunday, October 26th & 27th.

Saturday: Devotional meeting at 3 p.m.; Tea at 4.15. Evening meeting at 6 o'clock. Chairman, Bro. Philip Partington (Morley); Speaker, Bro. L. Channing (Aylesbury). Bro. Channing will also serve the church on the Lord's Day.

We give a hearty invitation to all who can come and celebrate with us.

**Nelson (Southfield Street).**—Don't forget our 50th Church Anniversary on November 16th and 17th, when A. E. Winstanley will be the speaker.

Saturday: Tea at 4.30, Thanksgiving Meeting at 6.0.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread, 10.30; Scripture School, 12.0 noon; Evangelical Witness, 6.0. Please let us know if you are coming.

### MARRIAGE

On July 20th, 1968: Geoffrey F. Mills to Thelma J. M. Smith, of Brighton Church. Address: Dean Gardens, Portslade, Sussex.

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