

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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WHERE THE TWO'S AND THREE'S

EVERY so often we bump into 'religious' people who like to quote what Jesus said, but try their best to ignore the apostles. "Give us the words of Jesus" they cry, but not the words of Paul. Such claim to be 'evangelicals' who are too busy preaching Christ (and John 3:16) to be concerned with such subjects as 'church membership'; 'apostles' doctrine'; 'fellowship'; 'breaking of Bread'; 'baptism' and who certainly wouldn't soil their lips by discussing divorce, abortion, church discipline, etc. There are those, it seems, who would have been pleased if the New Testament had closed its pages at the end of John's gospel, and who rarely quote from the Acts or the Epistles. A few months ago I wrote to a preacher (who boasted to having preached to 35,000 souls during his week's sojourn in Edinburgh) and said that I hoped that he would preach the full and true gospel at his meetings and that he would include baptism (for the remission of sins) in his sermons. I gave him a long letter, covering every relevant passage of scripture on baptism, and asked him *to show why* he could possibly leave such a subject out of his gospel preaching. He said that he was far too busy preaching the gospel to enter a discussion on baptism and in any case, in his view, baptism "added little to the experience of salvation". Thus I received four lines of 'gobbledy gook' from an 'evangelical' preacher who, with his travelling roadshow, preaches to hundreds of thousands annually. I replied to him, briefly, referring to Heaven's curse upon all preachers who preach any gospel inconsistent with that preached by THE APOSTLES (Gal. 1) and suggested that it was truly strange that anyone should be *so busy preaching a message* that they had no time *to check the accuracy* of the message - strange indeed.

Another type of attitude occasionally encountered, and which I came across again the other day is the claim that we can be true Christians in isolation. Some say that they have such a close relationship with Jesus (He is their 'personal Saviour') that they have no need of 'churches' and can happily be Christians in isolation. This is, of course, quite the reverse of the concern we, as church members, have for isolated members. We are always trying to get *isolated members into closer proximity* of congregations of the Lord's body. We are also concerned, upon the baptising of 'converts' to get them into fellowship with the nearest congregation as soon as possible. We may also know, or have known, church members who because of pique, or a feeling that the church was below par, have preferred to 'meet' in their own homes rather than go down the road and

have fellowship with the church. Is there, then, any validity in the view that Christians can intentionally isolate themselves from their brethren and still function as such?

Let us, then, look at these attitudes in the light of 'that which is written'.

Give me Jesus but Not The Apostles

Those amongst the 'evangelicals' and the denominations generally, who speak in such terms, clearly indicate that they do not understand the connection between Christ and His apostles. It is certainly true that God gave to Jesus "all authority both in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18) and at the baptism of Jesus, by John, God's voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Hear ye Him". Certainly if Jesus had remained in the world until today we would still have Him here to listen to, but Jesus informed his close disciples that soon He must return again into heaven. His sojourn in the world was but temporary. For mainly this reason Jesus delegated some of His authority to his disciples (apostles) and sent them into all the world to preach the gospel. The sojourn of the apostles in the world was likewise just temporary. (The time came, of course, when the apostles died, and left this scene of time, but by that time the word of God had been committed to faithful man and to print.) Just before departing, Jesus made the following promise to his close disciples "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, *whatsoever I have said unto you.*" (John 14:25-27) In the following chapter Jesus confirms that the Comforter would *testify of Jesus and guide the apostles into all truth. All things that Jesus had taught the apostles was to be continually brought to their remembrance by the Holy Spirit, and they were likewise to be guided into all truth.* Who, therefore, can possibly set aside the words of the apostles but yet profess to hear the words of Jesus? Again, in the 'Great Commission' and final instructions of Jesus to His apostles, we see that He placed upon their shoulders the awesome responsibility of teaching all the nations to observe '*all things*' whatsoever Jesus had commanded. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*". (Matt: last verse). Thus the *apostles* were to teach the world *the commandments of Jesus*. The term 'the apostle's doctrine' was used to describe the outworking of this momentous commission, and we read that when the church came into existence (Acts 2) that they (the church members) continued steadfastly in *the apostle's doctrine* and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42). Surely any reasonable person can see, from those very scriptures alone that *the words of the apostle's* were not in any way their own, but were *the words of Jesus*, brought to the lips of the apostles by the activity of the Holy Spirit. The principle is probably best described (in Luke 10:16) when Jesus said to His disciples, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." Those who despise the words of the apostles, whether Paul or any other, despise Jesus Himself. That surely seems to be the intention of these words. George Bernard Shaw said, "Paul was no more a Christian than Jesus was a Baptist: he does nothing that Jesus would have done, and says nothing that Jesus would have said...". Beverley Nichols in his book "The Fool Hath Said" while extolling the virtues of Jesus and the scriptures says that much "was confused in Paul's mind, with a number of emotions which can only be called prejudices, which are no more

inspired by Christ than by the man in the moon". (p.218). Nichols goes on to relate the many things that Paul said which 'Jesus would never have said'. There are apparently, no limits to the ignorance of the learned. Paul may have been a belated apostle (out of due time) but he was not least among them and received many visitations from the Lord, and was rescued from countless dangers by the Lord, because he was a chosen vessel unto the Lord to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). He was also assured by the Lord, after one of the many attempts on his life, "Be of good cheer Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness of Me also at Rome (Acts 23:11). Unlike the modern doubters like Shaw, Nichols and such others, Jesus had supreme confidence in all that Paul said and did. This is not surprising when we remember that Jesus alone made it all come to pass

Christians Choosing Solitary Confinement

Doubtless we are saved as *individuals*. Repentance and belief in Christ is certainly a very *personal* matter. Part of the current jargon in certain circles is that 'Jesus is our personal Saviour', and one would be hard pushed to think of a more pointless statement. What other kind of Saviour is there I wonder? However, the New Testament envisages *individuals* being 'called out' of the world, *not to remain* as individuals but *to join the ranks* of the saved, to become part of the world-wide general assembly of God. Jesus said that He would build His church, and while that church is composed of individuals, it is, in effect, a *community* of saints with a community of interests. Nearly all the Epistles in the N.T. were written not to individuals but to churches - to communities of Christ. And did not Jesus pray that His followers might be, not in splendid isolation, *but together*, united and welded together into a close fellowship of believers? Indeed Paul (1 Cor. 1:10) urged the brethren in Corinth to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgement and to expunge all influences likely to drive them apart. The early church continued not only in the Apostles Doctrine but also in the *fellowship* (a sharing of giving and receiving). How can we have fellowship with our brethren if we seclude ourselves away? What can we *share* on our own? In Eph. 2:14-16 Paul announces that Jesus is our Peace and that He hath broken all barriers down, even the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, that He might reconcile both unto God, in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. If Jesus slew enmity, and broke barriers down, and reconciled all men in one body (in the church) surely no man should even try replace such barriers, and surely men should seek the blessings of church membership rather than stay apart. The church is the only blood-bought institution - can men ignore it and still please God?

Faithful followers of Christ have a duty to:-

<i>edify</i> one another	(Rom. 14:19)
<i>comfort</i> one another	(1 Thess 1:18)
<i>serve</i> one another	(Gal. 5:13)
<i>exhort</i> one another	(Heb. 10:24)
<i>Minister</i> to one another	(1 Peter 4:10)
<i>admonish</i> one another	(Col. 3:16)

Is it possible that these things can be accomplished by detached Christians? Thus Christians have *functions* to perform which can only be accomplished by coming together wherever and whenever possible. How can we teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs unless we be all gathered together? Even in Paul's time it was *the manner of some* to forsake the assembling of themselves together.

Again, with reference to the Breaking of Bread memorial service instituted by our Lord, did He not say "This do, in remembrance of Me." Assuredly Jesus did not intend His disciples to go to their individual homes to 'do this' but rather to come together into one place. Truly the church separated to preach but gathered together to worship. The smallest meeting possible is for just two to meet together. There must be two 'individuals' at least, to form a lawful assembly in the eyes of God. Jesus Himself made the following wonderful promise "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20). In view of such an assurance, who could afford to remain at home when the church is assembled? Indeed who would want to forsake our trysting place with Jesus? Only circumstances truly beyond our control should come in our way. Does a sailor remain such if he never sets foot in the ship. Can the Christian soldier remain such if he avoids the ranks of the army. In isolation stones are just stones but, joined together, they can constitute a beautiful building - "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ". (1 Peter 2:5).

We must hear Christ but also His apostles, for their words are equally His words. Misfortune or circumstances may isolate us from having fellowship with the saints but surely not something we would choose.

EDITOR

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT

(Sample of Tract produced by Steven Masood for Muslims)

Of all the commandments that God has given which would you say is the most important?

Some would say doing our duty to God and being totally submitted to Him is more important than any other obligation. However when someone asked God's Messiah, Jesus what is the most important commandment he said that it was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."

Now duty is not the same as love. The Bible² says, "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and if I give my body to be burned but have not love it profiteth me nothing".³ A child could do his duty to his teacher and yet not love him. A man might fastidiously perform religious duties and help the poor and yet love neither God nor the poor. Duty alone is not enough. The terror of hell can cause a man be religious. This is not so with love. "There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear."⁴

Our Dilema

It would be foolish for anyone to suggest that we do not need to love God or that some other consideration could be equal to our obligation to love God. We have to love God. This command was given through Moses.⁵ It has been repeated by Jesus¹ but it is not referred to at all in the Quran. It offers an option only; "If ye love Allah ...Allah will love you".⁶

How can we who are tarnished with the guilt of our misdeeds love the Almighty? In terror we contemplate the day of judgement. We can approach God only if He Himself will condescend to help us. This is the dilema we are in.

Good News - The Injil - Al-Basharah

According to the Bible God himself has taken the initiative. "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us."⁷ You see "God is love".⁸ The Quran also calls God "Alwadud" - the loving one.⁹ We don't have to love God to make Him love us. He already loves us and we know that He loves us because He sent His Messiah to be the sacrifice (qurbani) for our sins. "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ (i.e. the Messiah) died for the ungodly, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; for peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us".¹⁰ This should make us love Him.

These are the Facts

The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would die as a sacrifice for our sins approximately 700 years before it happened. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He hath put him to grief when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."¹¹

Approximately 1,000 years before Christ Jesus died, King David said that God would not allow His holy one to see decay.¹²

If Jesus had not fulfilled these prophecies he would have been an imposter.

God's Messiah, Jesus is risen from the dead. He is ascended into heaven. He did sacrifice himself on the cross for you. God does love you and this is how He enables you to love Him. "We love because He first loved us."¹³ Do not spurn His love!

Now it is up to you

God's Messiah was willing to die and be buried for you.

You must be willing to "die" to your old self for him and be buried by baptism into water, rising to walk in the new way of life.¹⁴ "Dead to sin, alive unto God in Jesus Christ".¹⁵

No Terror of the Judgement

"Herein is love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is so are we in this world."¹⁶

References:

- | | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Matt 22:36-40 | 2. "in which there is guidance and light" Quran 5:44-46 | | |
| 3. 1 Cor 13:3 | 4. 1 John 4:18 | 5. Deut 6:4-5 | 6. Quran 2:195; 3:31 |
| 7. 1 John 4:10 | 8. 1 John 4:8 | 9. Quran 11:90; 85:40 | 10. Romans 5:6-8 |
| 11. Isaiah 53:10 | 12. Psalm 16:10 | 13. 1 John 4:19 | 14. Romans 6:4 |
| 15. Romans 6:11 | 16. 1 John 4:17 | | |

Any queries please contact: Jama'at al-Masih, Tel. 061 865 4242

GLEANINGS

"Let her glean even among the sheaves." Ruth 2:15

GET YOUR FOOT ON THAT LADDER NOW

"IF you look critically at the wondrous Cross, you will see in it nothing but common wood. The Cross is best discerned through penitential tears. Viewed thus, it is indeed the ladder to the skies; its foot rests on Calvary but its head is lashed to the throne of God. Get your foot on that ladder now!"

"Christ is the ark of our safety. You have wings like a dove. Oh fly to the ark! There is no other refuge for these guilty, storm-tossed souls of our: Bishop Hall

quaintly says, 'The dove was a true citizen of the ark.' May we be true citizens of the Ark!"

"It is always better in Christ's service that things should cost than that they should pay."
Dinsdale Young

HIS GOODNESS NEVER ENDS

"Thank God for all things received this day;
For Food, for strength, and work, and time to play,
For conversation with faithful friends
Thank God! His goodness never ends."

Maurice Cox

WE QUOTE - WILLIAM JAMES

"In almost any subject, your passion for the subject will save you. If you only care enough for a result, you will most certainly attain it. If you wish to be rich, you will be rich; if you wish to be learned, you will be learned; if you wish to be good, you will be good. Only you must, then, really wish these things and wish them with exclusiveness, and not wish at the same time a hundred other incompatible things just as strongly."

PRAY FOR THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

"The world is one of the enemies that we have to fight with, but a vanquished and overcome enemy, and like a beaten and forlorn soldier; for our Jesus hath taken the armour from it. Let me then speak to you in His words: "Be of good courage," saith the Captain of our salvation, "for I have overcome the world." You shall neither be free of the scourge of the tongue, nor of disgraces (even if it were buffetings and spittings upon the face, as was our Saviour's case), if you follow Jesus Christ. I beseech you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus, keep a good conscience, as I trust you do. You live not upon men's opinion; gold may be gold, and have the king's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men. Happy are you, if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet you are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of heaven's image, and sealed by the Spirit unto the day of your redemption. Pray for the spirit of love; for "love beareth all things; it believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

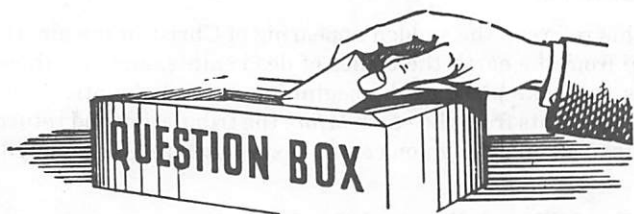
Samuel Rutherford

FILLED WITH WISDOM

"'And when the Sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the Synagogue; and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him?' When the same thing was asked at the wisest men in another dispensation, he answered them that if they had given their hearts wholly up to wisdom, as he had done, she would have come and dwelt in their hearts as well as in his heart. And our Wise Man made much the same answer when He said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me. And if any man will do His will that man also shall know of the doctrine. The Holy Child had this greatest of all happiness that His heart always turned instinctively to know and to do His Father's will. Whatsoever things were true, whatsoever things were honest, whatsoever things were just, whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were lovely, and of good report, He instinctively and immediately thought of those things. That was His whole wisdom both as a child and as a youth. And he grew every day in that wisdom, till He was filled with that wisdom every day. The light of wisdom that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, lighted up this young man's whole inner life with a clearness, and with a strength, and with a beauty, that all ended in making Him the Light of the world. He was so full of wisdom that His Father, for His reward,

has taken Him and has made Him of God to us our wisdom, as well as our righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Alexander Whyte

SELECTED BY LEONARD MORGAN



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Would you please comment on the theory of the millennium with mass conversion of the Jews who will then become the 'head of the nations' and not the 'tail'. These ideas are brought forward as Bible truths on all sides."

The proof-text for theories regarding the teaching on the millennium is to be found in Revelation 20 vv2-7, but before we comment on these verses we would do well to define the terms we are going to use.

The word 'millennium' is of Latin origin ('mille' - thousand; 'annus' - years) so quite simply it means "thousand years". Those groups who insist on a *literal* interpretation of *all* scripture, particularly the O.T. scriptures, take the millennium to mean that Christ will return to reign on earth for a thousand years. Perhaps if we briefly define the major facets of the teaching we shall be able to understand a little better.

Amillennialism - this is a term which is used to designate 'no millennium'. This does not mean that those who *do not* hold to the literal interpretation of Revelation 20 discount the passage entirely; they view it as being *symbolic* and hold that view just as strongly as the literalists hold *their* view. I suppose we could say that in the main, Churches of Christ hold the 'symbolic' interpretation of Revelation 20.

Postmillennialism - this theory teaches that the coming of Christ will be *after* a 'golden age' of righteousness and peace ('post' - after). Therefore, the theory is that the 'golden age' or 'millennium' is *part of* the Church period in Biblical history. Alexander Campbell expected that the restoration would overthrow sectarianism and usher in the golden age. He produced a paper known as "The Millennial Harbinger".

Historic Premillennialism - this theory teaches that Christ will come *before* the thousand year reign begins (pre - before). This view has been held in some shape or form since about the second century A.D. hence the word 'historic' to distinguish it from more modern theories.

Dispensationalism - this more modern theory is attributed to J. N. Darby and others. The reader will recall that we mentioned some time ago that J. N. Darby joined the Brethren around 1827 and by 1830 he was considered to be the leader of the Plymouth Brethren. He is sometimes referred to as the 'father of modern dispensationalism'.

The Great Tribulation - this theory describes a period of seven years of unequalled tribulation in the world. Quoted texts are: Daniel 9:24-27; 12:1; Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:25-26. During this period, God begins to deal with Israel again. The seven years is sub-divided into two periods of 3½ years each. During the first 3½ years the Jews return to Palestine, rebuild the Temple, re-introduce animal

sacrifices, and make a covenant with Antichrist. At the end of the first 3½ years Antichrist breaks the covenant and inflicts terrible persecution on the Jews, and is finally destroyed by Christ at His coming. This heralds the start of Christ's reign on earth, the millennium.

The "rapture" - this refers to the sudden appearing of Christ in the air. He will snatch (or rapture) from the earth the bodies of dead saints, and also those who remain alive. This will take place at the beginning of the tribulation, i.e., Jesus will come to take the saints from the earth *before* the tribulation and return *with them* to take up His millennial reign on earth. Texts cited are 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

Pre-Millennialism and the Jews

In order to understand the teaching of premillennialists we must examine the so-called proof texts which they use. Rev. 20:2-7 are the foundation verses. This passage of scripture, say the premillennialists, *must* be interpreted literally, thus a literal interpretation would give us a basis of their teaching. So here it is.

The millennium is the period of time between the resurrection of the just and the unjust; it is also the time of Satan's binding. Then will be ushered in the everlasting kingdom of Christ. There will be a visible return to the earth and the nations will be ruled and judged by Him. The 'just' saints will be raised and will rule *with* Him. This is the start of the millennial reign. At or near the close of the present age, and just before the millennial reign, Israel will be returned to Palestine and all the O.T. prophecies will be fulfilled concerning them (the view is

that the O.T. prophecies *do not* refer to Christ but to the Jews). There will be a national conversion and restoration of the Jews. Jesus will re-occupy the *literal* Davidic throne from which He will reign. After the millennial reign Satan will be loosed and will muster his forces for a great battle (Armageddon) in the Valley of Esdraelon. Satan will then be cast down for the last time. There will then be the Great White Throne judgment and death and Hades will be cast into the lake of fire. Such is the view of the premillennialists. It is evident, according to their teaching, that the Kingdom and the Church are *different* entities.

The flaws in this teaching are readily apparent. The book of Revelation opens by the words, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto his servants things which must *shortly come to pass*. (Rev.1:1). How do the literalists answer that one? Much play is made about Jesus being designed as 'King of the Jews'. (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 2:2; 27:11,37). Well, the Bible records that Jesus came to 'the lost sheep of the House of Israel', but it is equally true that the same kind of literalism which is still being insisted on, prevented the Jews from accepting Him when He trod the earth.

Another view held is that God promised David that his throne would be established for ever, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:16. Read also vv 12-17). Furthermore, they point to the promise of Jesus to His disciples, "Verily I say to you, That ye which have followed, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:27-30). It is also stated that the 'regeneration' is a parallel to Acts 3:21 which says concerning Jesus, "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of *restitution of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began".

At this point we must apply scriptural logic. The 2 Samuel passage tells us that 'the Davidic throne shall be established for ever', so if we are to understand that the Lord reigns on earth on the literal Davidic throne during the millennial period, then the millennium must last for ever, and *that* must be a contradiction in terms. If we can say *when* Christ was on the throne of His glory, then we shall know when the regeneration is, so let us explore this reasoning. After His resurrection, Jesus joined Himself to two men on the road to Emmaus; two despondent men who were more than a little confused. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of understanding, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and *all* the prophets, he expounded unto them in *all* the scriptures the things concerning *himself*" (Luke 24:25-27). Paul wrote to Timothy about the Church being the 'pillar' and 'ground' of the truth, and then went on, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). This scripture obviously refers to the advent of Christ and salvation through the Gospel, in other words, spiritual re-birth (regeneration - see Titus 3:4-7). At His ascension, He took up His reign on the 'throne of His glory', and the Hebrew tells us *where* that is and *when* He went there, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). So Christ, after His death, burial and resurrection went to occupy the throne of His glory; *that* throne is at the right hand of God in heaven; the regeneration is the spiritual re-birth of those who obey the Gospel; they comprise the citizens of the Kingdom over which Christ rules, and that Kingdom is the Church. It follows then that the Apostles are *now* ruling in the regeneration, and will continue to do so until the final consummation of all things, and that is, says Paul, "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

The reader may be forgiven for thinking, 'If it was the purpose of Jesus to restore the literal throne of David, why did He not offer it? Furthermore, as we have said, the Kingdom is now established in the form of the Church, "Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church". Christ is reigning now. The restoration of the Jews to the rebuilding of the Temple and the offering of animal sacrifices is inconsistent with the *spiritual* teaching of Jesus; it is also against the plain teaching of the Hebrew letter. This letter teaches that the New Covenant is an everlasting one, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the *everlasting covenant*, etc." Furthermore, the student of the Hebrew letter will know that there are repeated warnings against returning to the O.T. pattern.

Well, this answer has only scratched the surface of this important question, but we hope that it will encourage a deeper study of it. I suppose that recent events in the countries in the Middle East will encourage predictions about Biblical prophecies which some say are futuristic and are as yet unfulfilled, but the reader should keep well to the fore of his mind the *real* purpose of the sacrifice of Christ, i.e., the restoration of the soul from sin, and eternal fellowship with the Divine nature. Obey the Gospel, and leave the rest to God.

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Hayfield, Wigan, Lancs.)

TREASURER'S REPORT

I have prepared a simple report and balance to show the current state of the 'Standard's' finances. We have again managed to publish for another year without any special appeals for help and we greatly appreciate your support which makes this possible.

You will see in the balance sheet that our income almost equalled our expenditure. This is, of course, very pleasing but I would like to draw your attention to the make-up of our income and in particular to our dependence on gifts from brethren. When this is taken into account our position is not so good. We are very grateful to brethren for their generous gifts and wish to thank them all. We were especially grateful to receive a single gift of £600. Without this we could scarcely have finished the year. Taking this into account Bro. McLuckie and I decided we had no alternative but to increase the price if we were to continue to publish for another year.

Due to the fall in the pound against the dollar we have not needed to increase the overseas rates this year. The current subscription rates are printed on the back page of each issue.

Finally, I would like to thank the sisters who have responded to my appeal to adopt a subscription for one of the free copies we send overseas. We appreciate your concern and thank you on their behalf.

INCOME	£	£	EXPENDITURE	£	£
Bank Balance b/f	465.89		W. Barker (Printer)	2481.31	
Cash in hand	<u>101.46</u>	567.35	Postage	399.84	
			Stationery	19.71	
Subscriptions	1851.10		Bank charges	<u>30</u>	2901.16
Gifts	981.12				
Bank Interest	<u>48.15</u>	2880.37	Bal. Dep. A/c	476.53	
			Bal. Cur. A/c	96.92	
			Cash in hand	26.28	
				<u>599.73</u>	
					3500.89
			Cheque not drawn		<u>53.17</u>
					<u>3447.72</u>
					<u>3447.72</u>

Treasurer J. K. Kneller
Auditor J. McLuckie
1st January 1984

SCRIPTURE READINGS

APRIL 1984

1—Isaiah 34	Rev. 18:21-19:10
8—Daniel 12	Rev. 19:11-21
15—Ezek. 33:1-20	Rev. 20
22—Isa. 65:13-25	Rev. 21
29—Ezek. 47:1-12	Rev. 22

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

THIS analogy is used to describe the uniting of God with His people in eternity because nearly every society understands marriage, wedding, feast, etc. The church still awaits this great day. She has to be ready. "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a

chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints" (Revelation 19:7-8).

Think of what is involved in marriage - unity, intimacy, sharing and joy. I am led to make this point. Every saint has been given the earnest of the Spirit in his heart. In the Greek the word for earnest is *arrabon*. It means a guarantee, a first instalment, a pledge. In modern Greek it is the word for an engagement ring. There is a great lesson here. The gift of the Holy Spirit is, therefore, a foretaste of the fulness of life which the Christian will one day live in the presence of God, a foretaste of the very life of God Himself, and a pledge and a guarantee that some day God will fulfil His promise and enable the Christian to enter into that life.

The earlier verses of chapter 19 deal with the "Hallelujah Chorus in Heaven." I can never read them without recalling Handel's *Messiah*. (In fact, I have the score of this popular choral work on my desk as I write this article). What is staggering to me is the fact that Handel wrote his *Messiah* in just twenty-four days. Yes, twenty-four days! It was given its first public performance in Dublin in 1742. How near he came to emulating the heavenly chorus I do not know. However, I do think it was pretty good human effort.

The Rider upon the White Horse

The rider is Jesus and the white horse is symbolic of his being a victor. His name is called "The Word of God". In the Greek, God is *Theos* and Word is *Logos*. That is how we get our word theology. The Christian's theology, therefore, is not a set of propositions, but a person.

Jesus is also "KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS". Is there anyone greater?

Victory is achieved over Satan, the beast (Holy Roman Empire), and the false prophet (Muhammad) (19:20 and 20:10). They "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (20:10). That is hell!

The Millennium

David John George King was born in London in 1819. He was to the Restoration Movement in Great Britain what Alexander Campbell was to the Movement in the U.S.A. King was a voluminous writer, and one of the many pamphlets he published was that entitled: *The Resurrection of Saints and Sinners at the Coming of the Lord, and the Metaphorical Resurrections of the Millennium*. I have just read it over for the fifth time. It has helped me greatly in my understanding of the Millennium.

His conclusions on the subject are these: "First Resurrection - rise of Christ's party after a long time of depression". (The martyrs live again in the persons of their successors. "Second Resurrection - rise of Satan's party who were slain with the sword proceeding out of the conqueror's mouth, after a depression of a thousand years during which Satan was bound" (by the chain which is the word of God). "Subsequently, the resurrection of saints and sinners at the appearing" (and setting up of the great white throne). Could the elevation of the Christian party have begun at the Reformation? That last great spiritual battle (20:8-10), has it still to come?

The New Jerusalem

The first city ever built was called Enoch, named after Cain's son (Genesis 4:17). Probably the oldest-surviving city in the world is Damascus, capital of Syria. It was in existence in Abraham's day. Speaking of Abraham, all his life he looked for a city, a city

which has foundations whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). He never found it in his wanderings. But now we read of it in the book of Revelation. Note that it comes "down from God out of heaven..." (21:2-10). This ties in with Paul's statement to the saints in Galatia. "...For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:25-26). Actually, the name of this city is given in the very last verse of the book of Ezekiel. It is called *Jehovah-shammah* (The Lord Is There).

We should read carefully in these chapters of those entitled to enter the city and those who will be left outside. Dear reader, with whom will you be numbered? There is a time coming when it will be too late to change for the better (22:10-11).

The precious stones are used to describe the glory of the city. C.S. Lewis once wrote: "There is no need to be worried by facetious people who try to make the Christian hope of 'Heaven' ridiculous by saying that they do not want 'To spend eternity playing harps'. The answer to such people is that if they cannot understand books written for grown-ups, they should not talk about them. All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolic attempt to express the inexpressible... Gold is mentioned to suggest the timelessness of Heaven (gold does not rust) and the preciousness of it. People who take these symbols literally might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to lay eggs."

The River and Tree of Life, etc.

Rivers have always fascinated me. The geography teachers at my Secun-

dary school could always hold my attention when we studied the various aspects of rivers. My interest has never waned. Proof of this is the fact that I recently read Jack House's *Portrait of the Clyde*. In that book he deals with the various sources of the Clyde. (The source has been a subject of great debate). His suggestion is that Daer Water, south of Elvanfoot, is the true one.

The apostle John here reveals the true source of the "pure river of water of life" - the throne of God and of the Lamb. What a source!

The tree of life is mentioned. I am immediately drawn to Genesis chapters 2 and 3. "The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:9). "Then the Lord God said (after Adam's sin), 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever' — therefore, the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed cherubims at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3:22-24). We also read in Chapter 22: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (verse 14). Think of that within the context of "Human Rights" about which we hear so much today.

The Old Testament Scriptures end with the word "curse". The New Testament Scriptures end with the statement: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen". What a contrast!

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell

HOW MUCH TIME IS LEFT?

A man's house was burning. At the first sign of smoke he had rushed out to buy a fire extinguisher. Before he returned, the roof and walls had collapsed, destroying his furnishings.

A man's doctor warned him of a bad heart condition. From the doctor's office he went immediately to the insurance salesman, but he was refused in his attempts to provide financial protection for his wife and children.

A man was endowed by God with a strong healthy body. Because his appetite was stronger than his moral convictions, he squandered his powers until dissipation brought him to weakness. Then disease struck, and without normal reserve of strength the surgeon could not cure what ordinarily would have been a minor ailment.

A man had a Bible, knew the church was interested in him, had friends who regularly encouraged him to live more for God. With consistency he made reasons not to, while his conscience grew fainter, and the black wrong and white right faded into medium gray. When the critical temptation came, he was only faintly aware of it, and certainly he had no moral reserve to resist it.

David said it this way; "For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach unto him" (Psalms 32:6).

Jesus said the same thing in describing the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25, and the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7:24-47.

When the operation begins, it is too late to take vitamin pills. When the battle begins, it is too late to train the troops. When the flood waters rise, it is too late to find a rock foundation. When

Satan tempts, they only can resist who have prepared themselves properly.

Memorize that verse now; when you need it you won't have time. Worship God this Sunday; when you need that strength you won't have time. Repent of that sin now; when the Lord comes you won't have time. Renew your broken connection with the church now; at your funeral you won't have time. Become a Christian now; in the judgment it will be too late.

Selected

NO DEVIL

Men don't believe in a devil now,
As their fathers used to do;
They reject one creed because it's old
For another because it's new.

If the devil is voted not to be,
Is the verdict therefore true?
Someone is surely doing the work
The devil was thought to do.

They may say the devil has never lived,
They may say the devil is gone,
But simple people would like to know
Who carries the business on.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S ENEMIES

When Abraham Lincoln was criticised for being too courteous to his enemies, and told that it was his duty to destroy them, he replied, "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

Seen on church Bulletin Board "God is alive and well - Visiting Hours each Sunday 11 a.m."

AN APPEAL-CAN YOU HELP?

Greetings from the faithful brethren in Ghana. Once again I am pleased to write to readers about the Churches of Christ which are willing to follow the

"Old Path". On our arrival in Ghana, (my wife and I) we decided to meet with the congregations in Accra, even though we knew they believed not in the practice we are following; with a view of putting them in the doctrine and practice pursued by the early Church. Unfortunately, our attempts have failed.

Seeing that we were fighting a losing battle, we decided to turn our attention to another area. We therefore moved further afield to the congregation I worshipped with in my village while continuing to pray for those we have departed from. We found that they were searching for the Truth and so we had no problem unfolding the Truth to them. We continued further to the Regional Capital of the Eastern Region, Koforidua, where we found them also receptive.

At the time of writing there could be found in the Eastern Region, four congregations with three hundred and fifty persons total worshipping excluding the one in our home, every Lord's Day.

One of the problems facing these congregations is communion wine. With the closure of Ghana - Togo border and the lack of foreign exchange resources, they sometimes meet without being able to partake of the Lord's Supper. We shall therefore be grateful to any brother or group of persons who can assist to solve this problem.

We once received a pint bottle of concentrated grape juice which diluted to one gallon of ordinary juice. This type of grape juice would be much appreciated since it would cost less to mail and also less customs duty here in Ghana. Anyone who wishes to assist must send the item to the following addresses which would be shared with the sister churches:

1. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,
P.O. BOX 50, KOFORIDUA, GHANA.

2. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, c/o
MISS KATE AWUKU, P.O. BOX 13,
ADAWSO-AKWAPIM, via
KOFORIDUA, GHANA.

3. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, c/o
D. ARKU-MENSAH, P.O. BOX 2048,
ACCRA, GHANA.

All items must be insured as items uninsured are pilfered at the post office.

The brethren are working under harsh economic conditions so do remember them all in your prayers. We often feel like running away from this country, especially when we find that there is no way of getting simple and common items like bread and sugar and flour and margarine. But in all these difficulties we believe that the Lord will provide. After all the wild animals in the country are fed by Him daily.

The Lord be with you all
D. ARKU-MENSAH AND FAMILY
Canadian High Commission,
P.O. Box 1639, ACCRA, GHANA.

BELIEF : (19)

Immersion of Believers in Christ

THE importance of finding out the true meaning of the terms used in the New Testament (originally written in Greek) will be obvious to every sincere seeker after the truth. Who would not be anxious to ensure that obedience to Christ's commands is carried out exactly as the Lord wished them to be carried out? The importance of the issue involved, namely the salvation of the soul, is such that our Lord said, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Obedience to instructions

Our Lord says that salvation is consequent upon belief in him and obedience in baptism: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be

saved." Peter compares this with the salvation which came to Noah as a result of his obedience to God's instructions (1 Peter 3:20-21).

Baptism like Noah's Ark

Noah built an ark to save himself and his family. Peter says that they were saved by water (the Flood); then continues, "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us". Why were Peter and his brethren saved? Was it not because they had obeyed the instructions of Jesus to believe and be baptised?

This applies today

How can men and women be saved today? By implicit obedience to the same instructions of our Lord to *believe and be immersed* (that is what 'baptised' means).

Acts 8:35-39

In proof of this let us study the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8. Let God's words speak for themselves (Proverbs 8:8-9).

Verse 35: 'Philip preached unto him (the eunuch) Jesus.'

Verse 36: "They came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised?'"

Verse 37: "Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

Verse 38: "And . . . they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him."

Romans 6:3-5

Paul says:

Verse 3: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death."

Verse 4: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Verse 5: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection." (See Mark 16:15-16. Compare Colossians 2:12-14).

Be immersed

In view of such unassailable proof that the action of baptism is immersion (a burial or planting followed by resurrection; a going down into and a coming up out of water)—how can a sincere believer do anything else but be immersed in obedience to Christ's command? Yet it does sometimes so happen, and some prefer to obey the "doctrines and commandments of men" in spite of the Saviour's own grave warning. (See Matthew 15:8-9).

Surely it is obvious that false doctrine obeyed will never save anyone. Only the teaching of our Lord will avail, and he has said, "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved."

Exercises in Belief

Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Luke 7:30; 11:28; Romans 4:7; John 6:27-29, 36; 11:25.

W. BROWN

(To be continued)

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Swaziland, Africa: My wife Angela and I made a trip to the mountainous areas of Swaziland where I had the opportunity to preach the gospel at the new English-language congregation at Mamzini. While in Swaziland a typhoon hit the country - the first in living memory - and there was destruction of some bridges, roads and houses. We got bogged down with a vehicle on a bush road which had become a river. The mud was up to the back bumper. There are about thirty churches of Christ in Swaziland.

Chester Woodhall

COMING EVENTS

The Annual Social of the church at Newtongrange will (D.V.) be held on 29th September, 1984, at the meeting-house. The Chairman will be bro. Joe Currie but the speakers yet to be notified. Due to special circumstances we have had to arrange the Social for September rather than October which is when we usually have it. Please amend diaries to suit.

A.P. Sharp. (Sec.)

ANNUAL SOCIAL

Tranent church intend, (D.V.) to hold their Annual Social on

Saturday 31st March 1984
at 4 p.m.

in the School Dining Hall

Speakers: J. McLuckie, Tranent
A. Sharp, Newtongrange.
All Welcome

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Brighton, Sussex: Our Anniversary Meeting will be held, God Willing, on Saturday, 31st March, 1984

Speakers:- R. B. Scott
D. Daniell

Tea at 5 p.m.

Speakers begin at 6.30 p.m.

CHANGE OF TEL. NO.

The Telephone Number of Allan Ashurst is now (061) 865 4242. Brother Steven Masood can usually be contacted during 'office hours' (except Mondays) at the above No.

EXACTLY RIGHT

A preacher wrote to a wealthy and influential businessman soliciting a donation to a worthy cause. He received a curt refusal which ended by saying, "As far as I can see, this 'Christian business' is just one continuous give, give, give."

After a brief interval the preacher wrote back and said, "I wish to thank you for your letter and for the best definition of the Christian life I have ever heard."

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

IT has been said that a Christian is
A mind through which Christ thinks
A heart through which Christ loves
A voice through which Christ speaks
A hand through which Christ helps.

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