

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## OBEDIENCE

THE importance which God places on obedience has never varied since he created man, even down to this day. It cannot change because, He being a perfect God in every sense, change is not possible. Change is only desirable when the imperfect makes way for that which is nearer perfection. Otherwise change is purposeless and retrograde. In the beginning, while obedience reigned perfection remained. We read (Gen. 1:27) "So God created man in his own image."—the image of perfection.

Sin in the form of disobedience, gained entry into man's mind. Then, perfection being rejected, man's fall was complete (Gen. 3:17.) "Because thou hast hearkened (i.e. to the voice of thy wife) and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life". This stern admonition in the beginning, frees our mind from doubt concerning the mind of God also, in respect to the importance of obedience, which He places before his creation, man. Stress was placed on obedience in the law given to Moses (Deut. 27:10): "Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day." Samuel had to tell Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22).

### Rewards of Obedience

The Psalmist says (103:17-18) "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

The Psalmist is not content to leave us, he continues in the 20th verse to further qualify the excellency of His loving mercy to the obedient in heaven: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word"; (21): "Bless the Lord all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure"; (22): "Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion; Bless the Lord, O my soul." Here David reminds us of the obedience of angels, His creations and dominions which are obedient to His will, and lastly his own soul. Did not David charge Solomon (1 Kings 2:2-4): "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man: and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his commandments and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest and whithersoever thou turnest thyself. That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel." While Solomon was obedient God prospered him in every way. When he rejected God by disobedience and obeyed his strange wives, worshipping their idols, he too had to be punished. God told him the kingdom would be taken out of his son's hand, because of his own apostasy.

Do we need any further proof of the stern disapproval of man's disobedience? We recall the exemplary obedience of Abraham to whom God said (Gen. 22:18) "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice." We are now rejoicing in the realisation of the fulfilment of

that promise. For we know Jesus has come and opened up the way, for all who are willing to take the offer of admission into His kingdom. This blessing too is obtained by obedience. We are in this present day and generation, the recipients of this blessing, in the person of our Saviour.

### Obedience to Christ

Pressing on we come to the gospel age and the words of that seed himself Christ Jesus our Saviour, High Priest, King and great example, (John 14:15): "If ye love me, keep my commandments. If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This is a short explanation of obedience, but a wonderful, detailed account of what it implies, the favours it achieves, the great blessings attached thereto. One must dwell a long time on these few words, before one can hope to grasp, the significance which they embody. John further testifies to the obedience of Christ to His Father (8:29): "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." How noteworthy that obedience ever carries with it due reward. Paul (Phil. 2:8-10) records Christ's obedience to the extreme: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Here again we are compelled to notice the reward coupled with obedience, while we are not called up to go to the extremity which our Lord accomplished. The great example and guidance remains unaltered. It is the same Lord and King speaking through Paul (2 Cor. 2:9) "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things." What must we understand from Paul's words? That our proving will consist of our obedience in its entirety, in all things, not just a few, sorted out perhaps for selfish consideration. Such entire obedience Christ yielded to God. So it must be in our case—complete and undivided submission to God's will and commands. Only this kind of obedience will be accepted, for our God is a jealous God. When He gave a sacrifice on our behalf, it was the perfect sacrifice. When we offer Him our obedience no partial divided obedience will avail, no fence-sitting, for Paul says "in all things." Paul reaffirms this in 2 Cor. 10:5: "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God and bringing every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." Not only words and deeds, but the things preceding word or deed. Even our very thoughts are to be in obedience to Christ; for all thought is the forerunner of word and deed. Therefore when our thoughts are directed, so are our actions controlled and used in accordance with that direction. Paul (Rom. 1:5) attributes to obedience to the faith, the calling to apostleship. If so great a calling rested on the obedience of these men, how can we discount the importance of our obedience to the will of the master in all faith and works?

### Love shown in Obedience

We have left the law given to Moses, with its limitations and penalties, being under a better covenant, one of grace and love. It is only by returning this love, in obedience to His commands that we prove our love to Christ and obtain the blessings which follow our obedience. This we previously observed in John 14. We also noted, in the beginning God said to Adam "because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife." How then can we escape if we hearken to traditions of men instead of to God's Word? If we think to ourselves we can escape due punishment for disobedience, we deceive ourselves. Paul (Gal. 6:7) tells us "God is not mocked." Yet man never tires of rebelling against His perfect ways. Then stands revealed the cause in its nakedness—disobedience. Just plain inexcusable rebellious sin, man's own imagination, trying to thwart the perfect will of his Creator and benefactor. Man is not slow to bite the hand that feeds him, nor ever has been (Deut. 6:11-12): "When thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord." In plenty man ever forgets God.

Having taken a look at the disease it is natural that one inquires into the causes, when disobedience takes the place of obedience.

### What are the Obstacles to Obedience to God?

**Firstly** lack of love towards Jesus. Jesus says (John 14:15) if we have love towards Him we keep His commandments. In the 23rd-24th verses He reaffirms and qualifies the certain reward which follows obedience.

**Secondly**, desiring praise of men, rather than the glory of God ((John 12:42-43). To such it is an easy thing to turn a deaf ear to God's word, accepting the vain traditions of man, rejecting the plain yet profound truth, for a smile or a pat on the back, a few oily words from a glib tongue.

**Thirdly.** Complacency prepares an open way for many of the evils which prevent and oppose Godly obedience. By being complacent, diligent endeavour is ruled out of the desire of the otherwise faithful and obedient child of God. Lethargic disinterest leads to disobedience to those commands.

**Fourthly.** Refusing to study what is the perfect will of the Master. Paul leaves us in no doubt as to the need for study—in order that we apply the truth correctly to ourselves, and ourselves to the truth (2 Tim. 2:5) and in the next verse roundly condemning the vain babblings and traditions of men, which he says increase unto more ungodliness. He writes to the Thessalonians (I. 5:21). "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." One must study before being able to prove any matter. In the 15th verse "See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men." Finally brethren let us love Him who gave himself for us, obeying Him in word and in truth.

J. A. GREGORY.

## ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND THE CLAIM TO UNITY

THE writer has a twenty-lesson Correspondence Course put out by the Catholic Enquiry Centre. Lesson No. 4 is entitled, "The Church is One and Catholic." It refers to a "General Council" in A.D.325 (Nicea), convened to draw up "a short formula on the main beliefs of the Church" and claims that they said, in effect, "You can sum up the Catholic Church in four words." The first of these words, they assert, is this: "It is **One**." This is explained thus: "The Church is **One** — that it **United** and **Unique**."

### Unity is Rare

They suggest the following illustration. Supposing that on some fundamental issue there was unanimous agreement in the United Nations Assembly. Supposing, say, that the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, U.S.A., France, Russia, Germany, Italy and Japan were all completely in accord. And supposing—just supposing, of course!—that this agreement on fundamentals could go on for the next two thousand years. Well, of course, that would be impossible. I quote: "To get agreement on important matters between men of different race, class, colour and an agreement that will last seems quite impossible."

Then follows the claim that is Roman Catholicism's frequent boast: "Now the extraordinary thing is that such an agreement has existed and does exist in the Catholic Church." This alleged unity is made to sound really imposing: "For nearly two thousand years you have had men of all sorts and kinds and classes and nations agreed on a number of very important matters indeed... agreed on their standtrds of conduct... agreed on the authority they should obey..."

### A Fundamental Issue

So the world is asked to accept that the Roman Catholic body is the "One, True Church" because of this complete, and continuing unity in faith and doctrine; unity in all "fundamentals." Well, it is agreed by all that Marriage is a fundamental issue—is the Roman Church agreed about this matter?

"The Daily Express" (5th January, 1966) published nine letters under the heading, "When Protestant Weds Catholic." The paper had earlier printed a report of such a wedding. One of its writers, Ann Leslie, had written an article critical of the Roman Catholic Church, suggesting that this was compromise. The correspondence was as a result of the article, and the letters are introduced with the statement, "Blessed by a Protestant clergyman, a Catholic and Protestant marry in a Catholic Church." The letters—both for and against—are revealing.

### Disunity

The clearest possible evidence of disunity in the Roman Catholic Church is seen in two of the letters published. Each is from a Roman Catholic "priest." Each is in absolute opposition to the other.

#### 1. For Mixed Marriage.

"Rev." Godric Young, O.F.M., of Forest Gate, London, writes:

"I wonder if Miss Leslie really thinks 'take it or leave' is the right attitude for the Roman Catholic Church to bring to the modern world. Is it even really Christian?"

"Objective study, often leading to reappraisal and change, is demanded in many departments of life today. Is this inconsistent with a spirit of deep faith? We

share much more of the Christian faith with people of other Churches than we once realised."

Clearly, this "priest" is for **mixed** married, and **against** Miss Leslie and other Catholics who feel as she does.

## 2. Against Mixed Marriage.

"Rev." Bertram J. Sammons, of the Catholic Rectory, Wisbech, Cambs., writes: "I wish to congratulate Miss Leslie and express my admiration for her article. This is something that needed to be said.

"I don't think for one moment that she is 'in a minority.' I think the vast majority of Catholics think exactly as she does, but they are too apathetic and bewildered to say so." Just as clearly, this "priest" is **against** mixed marriage, and **for** Miss Leslie and those Catholics who believe as she does.

But, in view of this deep division on a "fundamental issue" (and anyone who knows the facts knows that this deep cleavage runs right through the whole denomination) what of the much-vaunted claim to unity of doctrine? Be it noted that these are not two of the so-called "laity," but two representatives of the "clergy" — the undivided clergy!

### Unchangeability

It is often insisted by Roman Catholic apologists that an outstanding characteristic of that body is its "unchangeability." In one of the letters published—from a Roman Catholic—the word is used. The letter-writer speaks of "the shocking slide down the slippery chute to chaos... a heretical-Catholic marriage in a Catholic Church;" then continues, "This is deeply disheartening to many thinking Catholics who valued the **unchangeability** of the Catholic Church."

The writer of that letter obviously begins to feel the difficulty involved in the traditional Roman Catholic position—the claim to unity of faith and unchangeability of practice. Any student of history knows that both are completely false, but one wonders how the hierarchy will deal with situations such as this, likely to become increasingly common, when "the priesthood" is in open and obvious disagreement on fundamentals.

### Infallibility

On this particular point — infallibility — a statement of orthodox Roman Catholic doctrine is found in the C.E.C. Course No. 3 on "The Church." We are told that "the Church is infallible." John 14:26 is quoted to show that Christ promised the apostles the special guidance of the Holy Spirit—of course every student of the New Testament would assent to that. But they then assert that this means that the Church can never go wrong in her teaching as to faith and morals." With which every informed Bible student will heartily disagree. But more. If you ask an informed Roman Catholic what he means when he says that the Church infallibly reveals the will of God, he will tell you that this refers not to the "laity" but to the "clergy." That, he insists, is what the "priesthood" is for, among other things. Well, on the question of mixed marriages which section of the priesthood is infallible—and which isn't?

### Christian Unity

In the so-called "Ecumenical Movement" many religious bodies seem to be hurrying Rome-ward, and the large number of "Protestant" representatives at the Second Vatican Council is one of many "straws" which show the way the wind blows. Large numbers of religious people seem convinced that union with Rome is bound to come—and they are as eager for it as they are convinced about it.

In such a time as this we need to "cry aloud and spare not." Let the world hear the plea for unity—on the only basis consistent with loyalty to Jesus the Lord: by a complete return to the faith, practice and worship delivered to the early church by the apostles of Christ.

The words of the late G. Y. Tickle spring to mind:

"The gospel banner lift on high—We'll plead with one accord,

For union, on this truth alone, That 'Jesus is the Lord;'

Then by our swift obedience prove His power to save and bless,

That men may be constrained to love the Lord our righteousness."

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

# TRAINING FOR SERVICE

## VII: THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS CONTRASTED

IT is truly said that the epistle to the Hebrews is an inspired commentary on the book of Leviticus. The system of the Jewish priesthood and sacrifices as set out in detail in Leviticus is difficult to understand read simply by itself. We know there must be deep meaning in the elaborate details, but, without the New Covenant scriptures we could only guess at their meaning and significance. Indeed, the priests themselves could not have full understanding of what they did and said in the worship and sacrifices. They could only dimly perceive what God was setting forth, foreshadowing, in their services.

Apart from the N.T. the O.T. can be only imperfectly understood. Not only is Hebrews a revelation of those things hidden in Leviticus, but much of the N.T., gospels and epistles, is an unveiling of things in the Old. Peter in his 1st epistle, chapter 1, verses 10-12 writes, "The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed... that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit..., things into which angels long to look." On the way to Emmaus on the resurrection day the two disciples were asked by the risen Christ, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 26,27).

And when the Ethiopian treasurer desired enlightenment upon the portion of Isaiah's prophecy which he was reading, concerning the death of someone "led like a lamb to the slaughter," Philip the evangelist "beginning with this scripture" told him the good news of Jesus. Thus the true explanation of many otherwise puzzling parts of O.T. scripture is to be found in Jesus Christ in the N.T.

We set out below a table showing from scripture the distinctions between the Old Covenant and the New. It is significant that every reference is to the N.T. This is necessarily so, for only the N.T. can reveal infallibly the real meaning of the worship, priesthood, sacrifices and covenant set out in the Old. Under the headings Old Covenant, New Covenant we tabulate the various points of the system of the Jews, with their fulfilment as stated in the N.T.

### Old Covenant

- 1 ITS MINISTRY "holy, just and good (Rom. 7:12). Adequate for its purposes: showed what sin is in God's sight, and that we cannot be justified before God by carrying out Law. Not saved by works of law.
- 2 PRIESTHOOD temporary; of men who were themselves sinful; many priests.
- 3 SACRIFICES blood of animals; offered often (Heb. 10:11) could not take away sin (Heb. 10:3; 8:7).
- 4 IMPERFECT.
- 5 WRITTEN CODE; carved in letters on stone.
- 6 DISPENSATION OF DEATH, of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9).
- 7 SHADOWS, FIGURES, showing forth that which was to come.
- 8 GLORY OF GOD, veiled (2 Corinthians 3:12-16).
- 9 ABOLISHED (Heb. 10:9).

### New Covenant

- 1 A "better" covenant (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). "Better" used in Heb. 12 times — "better promises" etc. Ministry "much more excellent" (Heb. 8:6).
- 2 Eternal priesthood (Heb. 7). Divine; High Priest sinless Son of God. One Priest (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 10:12).
- 3 Blood of perfect Son of God. "without blemish or spot" (Heb. 9:12-14). Offered once for all (Heb. 10:10, 12). Cleanses conscience, "frown all unrighteousness" (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:9).
- 4 Perfect (Heb. 7:19; 9:9, 11; 10:1; 11:40)
- 5 Laws in minds and hearts (Heb. 8:10 fulfilling Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3).
- 6 Dispensation of life and righteousness (2 Cor. 3:6; 2 Cor. 3:9).
- 7 Heavenly things (Heb. 9:23 and whole chapter).
- 8 Revealed (2 Cor. 3:17, 18; 2 Cor. 4:6; John 1:14; 14:9).
- 9 Established (Heb. 10:9); everlasting (Heb. 13:20).

## Read 2 Corinthians 3: 7-9

The superiority of the New Covenant to the Old is summed up in 2 Corinthians 3:9-11: "For if there was splendour in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendour. Indeed in this case what once has splendour has come to have no splendour at all, because of the splendour that surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendour, what is permanent must have much more splendour."

## QUESTIONS

1. What is meant in referring to the Covenants by "the letter of the law?"
2. Sometimes people speak as though the "spirit of the law" is greater than fulfilling the letter. Show from 1 Corinthians 3 that no such meaning is intended.
3. Compare Mark 15:38 with Hebrews 9:8, and show how one passage explains the meaning of the other.

NEXT MONTH'S STUDY: THE DISPENSATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

## PREACHING CHRIST

"FOR the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." ". . . Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." "They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." "And he commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." "They ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." "This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." "We preach Christ crucified." "Then Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them."

We have deliberately omitted the locations of the scriptures quoted in the first paragraph because the casual reader of the Bible can recognize them as quotations from the Bible, and any preacher who may read them should know where they are. And, knowing them as we do, it is remarkable to the point of being wonderful how they are obviously ignored in so much of the preaching which we do.

### Knowing Only Christ Crucified

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," he, as evidently intended by the Holy Spirit, laid down a good rule for practice by all who pretend to preach. Albert Barnes (in his *Notes on the New Testament*), makes the following observations on this text:

"This should be the resolution of every minister of the gospel. This is his business. It is not to engage in the strifes and controversies of men; it is not to be a good farmer, or scholar merely; not to be a man of taste and philosophy, and distinguished mainly for refinement of manners; not to be a profound philosopher or metaphysician, but to make Christ crucified the grand object of his attention, and seek always and everywhere to make him known.

"He is not to be ashamed anywhere of the humbling doctrine that Christ was crucified. In this he is to glory. Though the world may ridicule; though philosophers may sneer; though the rich and gay may deride it; yet this is to be the grand object of interest to him, and at no time, and in no society, is he to be ashamed of it.

"It matters not what the amusements of society around him; what fields of science, of gain, or ambition are open to him, the minister of Christ is to know Christ and him crucified alone. If he cultivates science, is to be that he may more successfully explain and vindicate the gospel. If he becomes familiar with the works of art and of taste, it is that he may more successfully show to those who cultivate them the superior beauty and excellency of the cross. If he studies the plans and employments of men, it is that he may more successfully meet them in those plans, and more successfully speak to them of the great plan of redemption."

The preaching of the cross is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success. That which has in it much respecting the divine mission, the dignity, the works, the doctrines, the person and the atonement of Christ will be successful. So it was in the time of the apostles; so it was in the time of the Reformation; so it has been in all revivals of religion. There is a power about that kind of preach-

ing which philosophy and human reason have not. Christ is God's great ordinance for the salvation of the world; and we meet the crimes and alleviate the woes of the world just in proportion as we hold the cross up as appointed to overcome the one and to pour the balm of consolation onto the other.

### Products from Preaching Christ

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter, by divinely inspired reasoning, concluded, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Christ had been preached, and by that preaching men were convinced that he was the crucified and resurrected Son of God. On the basis of that conviction, about three thousand of them immediately repented and were baptized for the remission of their sins. But that was not the end of their actions which the preaching of Christ produced.

Without years of patient instruction in the virtue of joy in the heart of the Christian and without a lectureship on the theme, "The Joy of the Christian," those people were supremely happy. Why? Not because they were convinced by the teaching of Jesus, but because they were convinced of the person of Jesus—who he was and what he was.

Without a "Unity Meeting" or an "Exploration of the Areas of Agreement and Disagreement," those people were of one heart and one soul. On what basis? On the basis of the wholehearted and unanimous agreement that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Without cajolery, flattery, overpraise or even threatenings; and without a series of studies on "The Necessity of Church Attendance," those people "continued daily in the temple." Why? Because they were convinced that Jesus Christ had died for their sins and such action would be one of the least of their expressions of gratitude.

Long before those people had time or opportunity to hear or see any disquisitions on "The Christian and Prayer," "The Prayer Life or a Disciple," "The Subjective Influence of Prayer" or any other of hundreds of finely drawn distinctions concerning prayer, they "lifted up their voice to God with one accord." Prayer, to them, was one of the most natural of all impulses to proceed from a full and complete conviction that Jesus Christ was the crucified and resurrected Son of God.

Many preachers, though most confess that it is done with some distaste and do so apologetically, are forced by conscience to preach occasionally on "The Giving of Our Means." We have a "series" of six or seven lessons on the subject which we present to congregations occasionally (without much telling effect). But, even as we do so, we never fail to wonder if perhaps we are hoeing from the wrong end of a long row. Those first Christians, the products of the "preaching of Christ" on Pentecost, without being favoured with a series of lessons like mine, released title to all of their worldly possessions for the sake of the cause of him who had been preached to them. They believed!

With the apostles spending most of their time defending their faith before the rulers of the people and other unbelievers, there was no time for a series of seminar studies on "How to do Mission Work," "Co-operating for Missions," or "How to do Personal Work." They simply went "everywhere preaching the word," and Philip went down to Samaria and "preached Christ." They had a faith in Christ that could not be quieted and a zeal that could not be stilled.

Nothing in the foregoing is intended to depreciate any preaching on any Bible subject or any matter of faith to any disciple of Jesus Christ. But it is intended to be a demonstration of what we believe to be a fundamental truth: namely, that people are not going to be affected to any depth by what Jesus taught or caused to be taught until and unless they believe in Jesus himself. And when they have believed with all of the heart that Jesus Christ is in reality the Son of God, some of the natural products of that faith will be obedience, joy, unity, zeal, prayer, worship, liberality and an overwhelming desire to preach Christ to others.

### The whole family in heaven and earth. Eph. 3:15.

Our union with Christ has become the dominant experience of our lives; and because we share Him together, distinctions of race and rank are utterly eclipsed. And the more we experience our unity with Christ, the more we experience our oneness with each other.

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH 1966

6—Job 1:6-22	Luke 22:24-38
13—1 Kings 19:1-18	ḡḡ 6ḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ
20—Daniel 7:1-18	Luke 22:54-71
27—Psalm 22:1-11	Luke 23:1-25

## SIFTED BUT NOT LOST

(Amos 9:9)

"I WILL sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the ground."

Our Saviour's mind was saturated with Scripture. He had the mind of the Spirit of God through whose power it was written, so we can hardly avoid seeing in Luke 22:31 a reflection of God's word by Amos. Besides, the contemplation of Jerusalem by Jesus, a town so physically beautiful, would rouse feelings about its fate—a fate due to its profound spiritual darkness, its ugly atmosphere of betrayal, conspiracy and hate. The threats of a just God written so accurately centuries before were so soon to be carried out.

The recurring outcrop of human selfishness and ambition followed immediately upon the warning of betrayal (Luke 21:21-23). It came like sacrilege into that last sacred earthly meal and talk. They certainly knew a crisis was at hand, but each disciple wanted to be superior to his fellows. Do we think this strange? We are often guilty of the same, unconsciously perhaps. Gently, firmly and wisely Jesus rebukes them again and teaches His frequent lesson. He is giving always, and this time mentions His own example of unremitting service. We see in 22:27 a reference to the service He had rendered in washing their feet (John 13) but of course He was always serving them in other ways as they stayed and journeyed together.

The word rendered "benefactor" (22:25) was often inscribed on coins bearing the image of rulers. It would be well known to the disciples, and they knew how seldom it really meant anything good. How very far from this was His lordship over them. How very far from this must be their standing before one another and before men. Ambition for the highest places in Christ's kingdom must be: to become great—be a servant; to become first—be a slave (Matt. 20:26 & 27). However they must not want the titles "Rabbi," "Father" or "Master" (Read Matt. 23:1-12). Such an attitude forbids the struggle for mastery, which has soiled so often the pages of nominally Christian religious move-

ments. Pride in human traditions with no divine authority still stands right in the way of real unity—and union otherwise is a hollow mockery. Even the "Restoration Movement" is dogged with pride in men, organisations, etc., none of which can be justified. What have we restored? divisions! The Saviour's lesson is still very much needed. If the Saviour's question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find THE faith on the earth?" is affirmatively answered, it will probably not be where we think but in all sorts of odd corners unsuspected.

We trust the disciples were abashed and ashamed, and it seems so from the further words of Jesus—words of kind praise and gratitude. They had continued with Him through the days of withdrawal and now of bitter antagonism—they were in fact with Him because they had decided to "go, that we may die with Him" (John 11:16). But they need not worry about position. The Father's kingdom was theirs (Matt. 5:3-16). They are to be the arbiters of their nation's fate—and a wider domain besides, the Gentile world. However, they are all to be shaken, shaken to the "roots" of their being. Satan had permission to do this. Please note the plural "you" in verse 31 and the singular pronouns in the following verse—or read Phillips' translation, which brings out the points in mind.

It is hard for us—if it is possible at all—to realise what the judgment, crucifixion and burial of Jesus meant to these simple-minded, sincere and affectionate men. It was these qualities which qualified them, and they did not have the handicap of "higher" education. Here they were, faithful to Jesus without understanding that there was to be a glorious victory beyond the trial, and now to be plunged into the depths of despair. Their outstanding representative, Peter, was to bear the biggest blow, enough to knock the strongest out completely. Hence surely the prayer, so earnestly made by Jesus, and so fully answered by the complete humiliation and deepest repentance of Peter. They were all shaken and their faith eclipsed. Peter followed afar off after striking the blow for which he was rebuked. John followed, apparently sheltered by some kind of private acquaintance at the High Priest's house. Peter's interest led him into temptation. More prayer at the Saviour's request might have saved him from this (23:40 & 46). Here his boast of faithfulness was forgotten—"let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:22), and alas! his personal safety had priority.

A glance from the prisoner (22:61) brought to mind Peter's fearful weakness, and what he suffered in remorse and repentance we cannot tell—until the joyful news came "He is risen" and the



risen Saviour granted him a personal visit (Luke 24:34). Peter's love and his shattered faith were fully restored. Then came home to him the Saviour's assurance of His prayer, and the instruction "When thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren" (22:32). Again in that interview by the lake we have Peter's duty put before him threefold "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep (John 21:15, 16 & 17). His letters reflect his appreciation of divine instruction, perhaps particularly 1 Peter 5:3 and 2 Peter 1:12-14, which please read.

R. B. SCOTT.

**LOVE—FIRST PRIORITY**

Surely it is proof of the utter fall of man, that though we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and we realise something of the tremendousness of the sacrifice and the cost of our redemption, yet so often we do not love Him and we do not put Him first, and we do not seek fellowship with Him, and walking with Him as the first priority.

L. F. E. Wilkinson.

**A STORY WITH A MORAL**

A MAN is employed to sell clothing. The goods are plainly marked and, of course, belong to the merchant—not to the clerk.

A customer asks the clerk for a reduction in price, and the clerk grants it. Later, the clerk is called in by the merchant, who says, "You sold a suit to a customer for a price lower than the marked price?"

"Yes, sir," replies the clerk.

"Whose goods are these?" asks the merchant.

"Yours," says the clerk.

"Were they plainly marked?" continues the owner.

"Yes," replies the clerk.

"Your part, then," says the merchant, "is to sell my merchandise at my price. If I want to give it away—that's my business, but you are not authorised to do so.

There is a moral here: Salvation belongs to Christ. He purchased it with His own blood. The terms are plain. The preacher is just a clerk in the store. He offers the merchandise (the gospel) at a marked price (conditional). If the customer (sinner) will accept, it becomes a matter between the sinner and Christ. If Christ desires to save a man without obeying the gospel terms, that is His (Christ's) business—not that of the preacher.

People frequently ask, "Can one be saved without being baptised?" We know what the Bible says: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved"

(Mark 16:16). So there is really only one way to find out if one can be saved without baptism: Die and try it! But what if Christ will not "cut the price"? It will be too late, and too bad.—Selected.

Stepping heavenward is simply following the plain path of duty, which always leads upwards.—Selected.

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN FORMER YEARS**

(With apologies to Bro. Harold Baines)

READING the two articles under the above heading in the "S.S." has induced me to write of events in my own experience which link up most unexpectedly with Bro. Baines' contribution.

My father, Joseph Barker, came to Heanor, Derbyshire, as a young married man, shortly after I was born. Most of my younger days and school holidays were spent with my grandparents in Loughborough.

The church, as I recall it, was then very much of a family affair, being comprised of three large families, much related by marriage and church ties. There were the Pritchards, Cartwrights and Barkers, with their husbands and wives, sons and daughters. William Cartwright — I should think the most intelligent and best read of the older people—was interested all the time, I remember, in the church and in social matters, becoming the first Labour councillor to be elected mayor of a very ancient borough. Not of interest to many of our members today, but he was of great service to the Loughborough community.

However, none of this would have appeared had it not been for a comment by Bro. Baines about a book he saw and handled(?) and from which he had drawn information: concerning a debate between Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell.

We had a copy of that book in our home when my father died. His interest lay in the two combatants; Owen, as the inaugurator of the now great Co-operative Movement and Campbell as a great leader of the Churches of Christ, with which community my father was associated from early manhood, his mother and many members of a very large family being in my young members of the Loughborough church.

The book referred to, I struggled to read, at what age I cannot recall. Nor can I remember much about it. Except for one incident—which is remembered very well, and is worth telling.

In the course of the debate Owen quoted the last words of Christ to His disciples, as written by Mark. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Owen de-

clared those words to be unjust. You cannot condemn a man because he does not believe what you say. That statement rang true to me—and it is perhaps the reason why it is remembered, when so much else is forgotten. I can see myself waiting for Campbell's answer. He agreed that a man cannot be condemned for unbelief; but he said a man can and should be willing to believe. It is unwillingness to believe which brings condemnation. That is the perfect answer.

W. BARKER.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Bro. Melling.—In the November issue of the "S.S.," I made the statement concerning the cups:—

"It is by necessary inference we know that it contained the fruit of the vine. Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that it was or could be grape-juice. This should be noted by brethren. The grape-vine is not common in every country. Some climates are unsuitable for its cultivation, but they can grow other vines such as Brother Worgan mentions, 'black-currant,' etc. Therefore black-currant or similar fulfils the condition."

Since writing the above, a good brother in England has written to me questioning my statement on the use of black-currant wine on the Lord's table. He seems to have more knowledge of botany than myself. I therefore made enquiries from the Dept. of Agriculture and also from the Dept. of Scientific Industrial Research (Plant Diseases Division). They advise me that the black-currant plant is a bush and NOT a vine. It is therefore a mistake to use black-currant wine on the Lord's table.

Personally, I am neither a gardener nor a botanist and having knowledge that black-currant wine had been used by some brethren aforesaid, I had taken it for granted as being lawful.

This correction does not, of course, alter the point I had made that "Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that it was or should be grape-juice. This should be noted by brethren. The grape-vine is not common in every country. Some climates are unsuitable for its cultivation, but they can grow other vines. . . ."

Of course in these modern times, grape-juice is easily obtained in any land. This has been made possible by up-to-date methods of preserving, packaging and transportation.

SAM WILSON.

76 Daventry Street, Waterview, Auckland, S.W.3, New Zealand.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Aylesbury.**—On Monday, 31st January, a special meeting was held here on the general theme of "Evangelism." The subject was introduced by Brethren A. E. Winstanley (Loughborough), and V. Hunter (Wembley). Bro. R. A. Hill (Liverpool) was the chairman. This was followed by a panel discussion, with Brethren I. Burgin, L. Channing, L. Crouch, R. Limb, P. Slate and F. Worgan constituting the panel. Some very thoughtful questions were submitted and a very interesting and profitable discussion was held. We not only thank the evangelists who were present, but all the brethren from other churches who supported the meeting. L. Channing.

**Blackburn, Hamilton Street.**—We rejoice that another precious soul has been saved for the Master. On Lord's Day, January 16th, Lynn Walton, one of our Sunday School scholars, upon her confession of faith in Jesus Christ was baptised into her Lord. She was received into the fellowship of the church on Lord's Day, January 23rd. We pray that though she be young in years her life shall be given in service to Him who gave His life for her, and that she will be kept faithful to the end. To God be the glory. Jim Pritt.

**Blackburn (Mill Hill).**—The church rejoices in further proof of the power of the gospel. Mrs. and Miss Cunliffe expressed their desire to obey the teaching of God's word and upon the confession of their faith were immersed into the name of Jesus and added to the Lord's people here. We greatly appreciate the help and co-operation so kindly given by the church at Ince. Our earnest prayer is that our two sisters will assist us in the Lord's work in this part of His vineyard, as they remain faithful to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

## OBITUARY

Brother James Brown, formerly of Edinburgh and Dunfermline, and latterly of Kenilworth, Warwickshire, died in Maidstone, Kent, on January 27th, aged 68 years. The funeral was at Maidstone, on January 29th, the writer officiating. Our brother was taken ill suddenly on January 24th, on the evening of the day he arrived in Maidstone

for a stay of a few weeks. He suffered a severe stroke, and never regained consciousness.

Brother Brown was a quiet, unassuming disciple. He was not one who "engaged in public work," but his faithfulness to Christ spoke volumes to all who really knew him. The writer is just one of many who can testify to the fact that he preached through practical acts of helpfulness, kindness and love—and testify also that though he never "preached from a platform" he was well able to "give an answer . . . for the hope" he had in Christ. "Happy are the dead who die in the Lord . . . for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

The unexpectedness of his illness and death greatly shocked our sister, but she was greatly helped by the love of her family, and the assurance of the loving prayers of her brethren. We commend her, and her loved ones, to the grace and comfort of our father in heaven.

A. E. Winstanley.

**Birmingham: Summer Lane.**—On Thursday, 23rd December, 1965, Sister Lottie Smith was laid to rest. She had attained the great age of ninety-two, and had been a very faithful worker until old age robbed her of her opportunities. She is sadly missed by the sisters of the Women's Meeting where she had been a very active committee member. We remember her family with sympathy, and know that they can look back on her life as one well spent. P.J.

**Ilkeston.**—It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Sister Ethel Brown, who fell asleep on January 10th, at the age of 69 years.

She had not been in good health for a long time, but her death was not expected so suddenly. She was a fine Christian in every respect, always willing to help and support those in need, especially the sick. It was a pleasure to visit her home where cheerfulness and love were shown. She was a sister of great charm.

Our deepest sympathy is for her husband, left to mourn her loss. We commend him to the care and comfort of our heavenly father, who alone is able to succour and console. The funeral service was at the Markeaton Crematorium, Derby, conducted by the writer. F.G.

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**PALESTINE TOUR**

In response to a number of requests, a tour of Palestine is being organised. The tour will be for 15 days; either May 3rd-18th or May 12th-27th, whichever is the more convenient for the majority of the members of the party. Travel

will be by Britannia aircraft, from Gatwick Airport, London. Only first-class hotels will be booked. The tour will include visits to most of the major sites in Jordan and Israel, and will be by private cars in Jordan and by coach in Israel. The charge, inclusive of air travel and hotels will be 112 guineas. There will be three optional extras, including a visit to Petra. No other expense will be incurred except a small charge for visas, and of course personal spending. Will those interested please write as soon as possible, indicating which of the two periods they would prefer, to: L. H. Channing, 10 Mandeville Road, Aylesbury, Bucks.

**AN APPEAL FROM TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

Dear brethren.—Our new meeting-place was opened on May 15th, 1964, but there were still several jobs to be completed. Two of these jobs still wait to be done. They are the provision of a car park, and boundary wall. Every six months since the building was completed the local council has written concerning the car park (not a luxury, but a condition of building permission). A recent estimate shows that a car park can be provided for £200.

The congregation here is aware of its own responsibilities in this matter, but feels that with its existing loans it cannot undertake any more financial commitments yet. Neither do we forget the splendid help received in the past, for which we give thanks to those who contributed, and glory to God who enabled it.

It is for this reason we feel we must appeal to our brethren in other places for help in this matter. If you are able to help in this matter please write or send to: Derek L. Daniell, 38 Hopwood Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Yours for the church. D. L. Daniell.

**HYMN BOOKS**

THE sum of £315 is still owing to the Evangelistic Fund, of which Bro. Robert Macdonald is treasurer. From this fund money was advanced in 1957 to pay for the printing of the books. From sale of the books all but the sum outstanding has been repaid.

Bro. Fred Hardy, who has been responsible for distributing the books, reports that 1,400 copies of the cloth edition are still available. These are offered to the churches, to clear off the debt, for 4/9 each, plus cost of carriage. This appeal is made to show our gratitude to Bro. Macdonald, and the brethren responsible for administering the Evangelistic Fund, by repaying the amount still owing, in purchasing the remaining hymn books.

Inquiries and orders to Fred Hardy, "Windyridge," 73A Bridge Street, Morley, Yorks. Tel. Morley 3255.

## COMING EVENTS

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

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

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

Further details of the above will be given later.

**Ince-in-Makerfield (Lancs.).**—Special Gospel Effort: Friday, 8th April to Sunday, 17th April, 1966. Meetings nightly at 7.30 p.m. Preacher: Bro. C. P. Slate, of Wembley.

Holiday Weekend Programme:—

Friday, 8th April: 2.30 p.m. Questions Answered Session; 4.30 p.m. Tea; 7.30 p.m. Gospel Meeting.

Saturday, 9th April: 10 a.m. "The Inspiration of the Bible." Talk by Bro. Frank Worgan; 12 noon Lunch; 2.30 p.m. Panel of brethren to answer questions and discuss the morning's talk; 4.30 p.m. Tea; 7.30 p.m. Gospel Meeting.

Sunday, 10th April: 10.30 a.m. Bible Classes; 11.30 a.m. Breaking of Bread; 7.30 p.m. Gospel Meeting.

Monday, 11th April: 10 a.m. "Being a Christian in 1966." Talk by Bro. G. Lodge; 12 noon Lunch; 2.30 p.m. Panel of brethren to answer questions and discuss the morning's talk; 4.30 p.m. Tea; 7.30 p.m. Gospel Meeting.

Accommodation gladly provided for all who wish to spend the weekend with us. Write, at once, giving details, to Bro. Brian Stevens, 2 Wigan Road, Ormskirk,

**Ilkeston: Burns Street.**—Gospel Effort, April 9th to 23rd, 1966. This will include the holiday week-end April 9th to 12th. Saturday, April 9th: Tea at 4.15 p.m. Evening: 6 p.m. Gospel Service. Meetings will be held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. All week-nights at 7.30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays at 6 p.m.

Preacher for the mission, Bro. A. E. Winstanley (Loughborough).

Your presence and prayers will be greatly appreciated.

**Dewsbury.**—Special Whit Weekend Meetings in conjunction with a Mission to be conducted by Bro. Frank Worgan, May 28th to June 5th.

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

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

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

**Change of Address.**—Bro. and Sis. Barrie Sharpe and family, 31 Storer Road, Loughborough, Leics.

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