

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## CONTENDING EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

In last month's article I mentioned the fact that I had recently sent a friendly letter to a local (and prolific) writer of "Faith Only" tracts and that I would inform readers of any response I received. My letter extended to this tract-writer a very cordial invitation to enlighten me (and, if he so wished, the readers of the "S.S.") as to where in the N.T. Christ, or His apostles, ever taught that converts need "only believe." I had imagined that tract-writers would have welcomed every opportunity of making their teaching much more widely known. After all, it would seem logical that if we go to all the trouble and expense of printing and distributing thousands of tracts, we would surely welcome enquiries, and grasp every opportunity to discuss the contents of the tracts with any interested party. I was not asking for the moon. Neither was I seeking confrontation: I was simply asking for information. Bearing in mind that on each tract the tract-writer supplies his name and address, and solicits enquiries from those who may be "further interested," I felt quite justified in seeking clarification *on the contents* of the tract which, after all, came to me, quite unsolicited, through my letter-box.

The short reply I received was addressed "Dear Friend" but wasn't very friendly and contained a few disparaging remarks about me personally; advising me to read Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-5,16; 1 Peter 3:21 and John 3:16 (all of which have, of course, been dealt with in previous articles, and none of which state that man is saved by "faith only"). The writer also said that he was 'grieved' to note that I evidently did not believe in "the all sufficiency of the once for all atoning work of Christ" (what ever that means) and closed his remarks by refusing any permission for me to print his letter or tracts; and by refusing to enter into any controversy over scriptures because "it is too sacred to do so" and that the whole matter "is now closed." So much for the promise of "Further Information" at the end of the tract, and although the reply was disappointing it was not altogether surprising or anything new. It never ceases to amaze me that many of those who go to great lengths to interest people in the scriptures seem to disappear when a discussion of the scriptures is requested. As I said in a previous article, it seems extremely difficult to get any opportunity to discuss the scriptures with all those enthusiastic tract-writers who spend all their time trying, in the first place to get us interested in the gospel. It's strange but true. Laying aside this disappointing response, I would like, in this article, to consider the reason offered by my tract-writing friend for his refusal to discuss the scriptures: i.e. they are "too sacred" to do so. Are the scriptures "too sacred" for us to discuss, and offer opposing views upon?

## DISPUTATIONS OVER SCRIPTURES

Quite often we hear people say, "I never argue about politics or religion" as if there was some kind of merit in this viewpoint, when, in fact, they perhaps do not have the ability or the necessary information to have a settled view on either subject. I certainly never voted at elections for years because I did not know enough about what the various parties stood for, and even now I'm still not sure. But with the scriptures we are dealing with something written down and unchanged for the last 2,000 years or so, and we should be able to form a judgment on them.

Jesus never ever considered the word of God "too sacred" to argue over. The N.T. shows us that almost everything Jesus said about the scriptures was controversial, and that He spent most of His time in debates about the meaning of scripture. Sometimes the Elders and Pharisees sought Jesus out to have disputations over scripture, and Jesus never ever seemed to refuse to discuss these matters: and certainly never on the grounds that scripture was "too sacred" to be argued over. Quite often Jesus invited and encouraged controversy by asking His auditors "**What thinkest thou?**" (Matt. 17:25) or questions like "**How readest thou?**" (Luke 10:16). On one occasion Jesus said to the Sadducees "**Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures,**" and came to this conclusion after debating the question of the resurrection with them. Such discussions were, of course, going on all the time.

Likewise, the apostle Paul was continually involved in controversy with both Jews and Gentiles. Indeed, immediately after His conversion, we find that Paul "**Spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him.**" We can be sure that Paul's "disputations" with the Hellenists were not about politics or the price of tea, but were always about the scriptures and the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Paul evidently did not think God's word "too sacred" to discuss: but rather too sacred not to discuss. Paul in Athens encountered the Epicureans and the Stoics and had many debates, and also "**disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.**" (Acts 17:17). In short Paul spent all his time in discussions on spiritual things. When Paul was in Ephesus (more than once) he "**went into the synagogue and spake boldly by the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.**" Paul was also in continual disputes over scripture even with his brethren and members of the Church and had an ongoing struggle against the Judaising factions. His love for his brethren in no way diminished his love of the truth. There are several examples but we have space for just one. In Acts 15 we read that "**Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.**" (This, then, was a dispute over the terms of salvation.) "**When, therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.**" And if we read the whole chapter we will find at that eventful meeting of the church at Jerusalem there was "much disputation" between James, Peter, Paul and other leading brethren before the matter was finally settled. It would be easy to produce many similar examples but perhaps enough has been said to show that in N.T. times Christ and His apostles spent all their time in preaching and teaching but also in discussion, dispute and debate over the things pertaining unto the Kingdom Of Heaven. They had to deal with false teachers and convict the gainsayers, and this they could never have done if they had been too dignified to engage in controversy: or had considered the gospel too sacred to argue over.

## A CALL TO ACTION

But there's more to it than this. Not only did Christ and the apostles actively assert the truth but there is, in fact a sacred and solemn duty laid upon every follower

of Christ to do likewise. Jude exhorts that we should **“earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints,”** and he was directing his words to us all: i.e. **“to all those that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”**

The book of JUDE is thought to have been about the last to have been penned and probably written after the book of Revelation, and Jude (brother of James and half-brother of Jesus) gives us the reason for his urgent call to defend the faith. **“The faith”** was in jeopardy because of the many false teachers in the churches. **“There are certain men crept in unawares,”** says Jude, who are turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and even denying the Lord Christ. We think that there is much false teaching around us today but it is nothing compared to that in the N.T. times. False teachers never come in through the front door, of course, and announce that they intend to lead the congregation astray; but come in the back door and conceal their intentions for as long as possible. Jude says that these false teachers were doomed men but, unless stopped, they would bring about the ruin of many others. Thus the name of Jude’s epistle was that every church member **“should contend earnestly for the faith”** and resist all forms of error. **“The Faith”** that was to be fought for, was the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and members would, of course, have to know it to defend it. Jude is envisaging battle, war, conflict, debate and controversy, and God’s word, rather than being sacrosanct, *was going to be the battle ground.*

Jude cites HISTORY as a witness to the devastation and ruin resulting from the corruption of God’s truth. Firstly he refers to Israel and shows that although initially saved from bondage in Egypt they were later destroyed for corrupting their own faith. Jude’s second example illustrated that even the very angels who rebelled against God are still in chains and awaiting their judgment. Thirdly, history records the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for practices similar to those of the false teachers of Jude’s day. Other cases included Cain, greedy Balaam and ambitious Korah. All had corrupted God’s truth.

Jude closes his short epistle by reminding us that the presence of these false teachers while not surprising (they had been predicted by the apostles and even by Enoch, the seventh from Adam) yet they could not be allowed to destroy the faith, and it was paramount that every Christian should mobilise themselves: indeed agonise themselves, in defence of the truth. Thus, the **“bottom line”** of Jude’s epistle is that **we must all** contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints. That means YOU: and me.

### THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE

As we can imagine, the words **“Earnestly contend for the faith”** have received various interpretations over the last 2,000 years, and oftentimes taken quite literally. There are many instances, but perhaps the Crusaders personify the general attitude, especially of the R.C. Church. Back in 1095 AD Pope Urban II appealed to the chivalry of France (and Europe generally) to **“fight for the faith”**. He described the suffering of pilgrims to the Holy Land and the sorry state of Jerusalem at the hands of the heathen. The response was immediate and thousands of knights flocked to Palestine to free the Holy City from the infidel. The Crusades lasted, incredibly, for 400 yrs. and resulted in the slaughter of countless thousands.

Not much later, in 1215 AD Pope Innocent III found it necessary to **“Defend the Faith”**, not against the infidel, but against the heretic within the R.C. Church. In order to **“purify”** the church he sent delegates to Provence, in southern France to enquire into reports of **“heresy”** (the Waldenses started about then) and by 1248 Pope Innocent IV had a full-scale **“Inquisition”**. These Inquisitions spread to all Catholic countries and the horrors, especially of the one in Spain, are well documented. During the following 600 years countless thousands died as heretics, and although Napoleon

tried to stop these Inquisitions in 1810 they trailed on to 1834, which really is not so long ago.

Our present Queen carries the title of "Defender Of The Faith" a title which was first conferred upon Henry 8th by Pope Leo X. The Papish Bull granting the title in 1521 was a reward for King Henry's treatise on Papal authority when he took the Pope's side against Martin Luther. However, when Henry later defied Papal authority over the matter of his divorce, he would have lost the title had it not been ratified on Henry by the English parliament. English monarchs have claimed it ever since.

Paul, like Jude, certainly saw the struggle with false doctrine as *a battle* but not with knights on horseback. Paul certainly urged Timothy to "**War a good warfare**" and "**Fight the good fight**" but to the Corinthians he described the type of warfare he had in mind, when he said, "**Though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty, through God, to the bringing down of strongholds) casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.**" Paul clearly didn't carry any carnal weapons but he certainly brought down many of the great strongholds armed only with the sword of the Spirit. When he brought to nought the entire religion and worship of Diana (of the Ephesians) his accusing enemies could rightly say that "**throughout all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away much people, saying they be no gods, which are made with hands!**" (Acts 19:26). Paul had no modern means of communication: no T.V. studio, no telephone: no radio: no Fax machine or even a printing press, yet managed, on foot, to cut his way through ignorance, hostility, superstition, cultism, paganism, and idolatry: converting continents destroying numerous heathen religions and establishing a great many churches.

### CONTENDING IN EARNEST

Although Jude's words were not advocating mortal combat they certainly were calling for force; substantial force. MacKnight says, "The apostle did not mean 'contending' with fire and sword but *by arguments* drawn not only from the Jewish scriptures but from the writings of the evangelists and apostles which were all, or most part of them, published before Jude wrote his letter. In the same way that they were to confute and oppose the errors of false teachers. The word "Contend" properly signifies to strive, as at the Olympic Games, that is, with their full force."

Vine confirms what MacKnight says about "Contend" as indicative of serious force. Vine tells us that **CONTEND** is represented by three Greek words. (1) The first is **ATHLEO** which means to engage oneself in a contest, or to "contend" in public games: e.g. "**If a man strive for the mastery (Athleo) he is not crowned except he strive lawfully**" (2 Tim. 2:5). Our English word "athlete" comes from this Greek word. (2) The second Greek word is **DIAKRINO** (*dia* meaning asunder, and *krino* meaning to judge) i.e. to distinguish and decide on any issue, and to separate oneself on certain issues: e.g. Peter "contending" with the circumcisionists in Acts 11:2. (3) The third word is **EPAGONIZOMAI** which signifies to contend about a matter as a combatant (*epi* meaning about, and *agon* a contest) i.e. "**to contend earnestly**" as in Jude 3. The word "earnestly" is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition. This third word gives us our English word "agony": i.e. athletes "agonise" (strain every sinew) to gain victory.

This, then, gives us a much better idea of the strength of the words used by Jude and gives his exhortation (that we should "contend earnestly for the faith") a force perhaps previously hidden from us. Do we always "strain every sinew" (like the athletes at the Olympic Games) in the defence of the faith? Do we bring any spiritual athleticism to the cause of Christ, or experience any breathless agony from our pursuit of the truth of God? Perhaps we may feel that its undignified to get involved in controversy, or even just a little bit "unChristian?"

## CONCLUSION

When Martin Luther, (thinking that God had “slipped up” on the question of faith) felt the necessity to scribble the word “only” into Rom. 3:28, he really started something. But we could all do that. We could all have a great time scribbling little words into our N.T.’s, and perhaps an even better time scoring little words out, but it would not really change anything: it would only show how foolish we were. And is it permissible to add the same little word to the faith, in tracts, publish this doctrine over a large area, and when challenged, refuse to discuss the matter on the grounds that it would be sacrilegious? Would we not, rather, regard it as sacrilegious to *add words* (even little words) to God’s sacred record? This is something I’m sure we should all think about.

In summing up; we have seen that Jesus and His apostles never ever regarded the scriptures as immune from debate or argument: indeed the reverse was the case and they spent their lives in discussions about the Kingdom of Heaven. None evaded controversy and most of the apostles died violent deaths on account of their uncompromising stance on God’s truth. John The Baptist was beheaded and Stephen stoned to death, over “controversial” issues, and many other names could be added to the martyr’s hall of fame. And so, not only *is it permissible* to enter into controversy over God’s word, it is *a solemn obligation* in the defence of the truth. As we have seen, Jude placed this responsibility upon each and every one of us when he urged us to **“to earnestly contend”** for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Most of our Lord’s priceless sayings were prompted by controversy and those who would wield the “sword of the Spirit” must expect to have to cross swords with the forces of error. Most of the “armour of God” (Eph. 6) is defensive and protective, but the “sword of the Spirit” is meant to be aggressive to the bringing down of strongholds and with which we must “fight the good fight” and “war a good warfare.” Thus we must be prepared at all times to contend for the faith and (as Peter says) **“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is within you, with meekness and fear.”** (1 Peter 3:15).

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

*“Let her glean even among the sheaves.”* (Ruth 2:15)**“AND THE LIFE”**

**“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”** (John 14:6).

**WE QUOTE – J. C. RYLE****“LET ANY MAN COME”**

**“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”** John 7:37,38.

**“If any man thirst,”** says our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, **“let him come unto Me, and drink.”** There is a grand simplicity about this little sentence which cannot be too much admired. The words are plain even to a child. Yet, simple as it appears, it is rich in spiritual meaning. Like the Koh-i-noor diamond, which you may carry between finger and thumb, it is of unspeakable value. It solves that mighty problem which all the philosophers of Greece and Rome could never solve, – “How can man have peace with God?” Place it in your memory side by side with six other golden sayings of your Lord:– **“I am the Bread of life: HE THAT COMETH UNTO ME shall never hunger: and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.”** **“I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”** – **“I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”** – **“I am the Way, the Truth, and**

the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” – “Come into Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” – “Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Add to these six texts the one before you today. Get the whole seven by heart. Rivet them down in your mind, and never let them go. When your feet touch the cold river, on the bed of sickness and in the hour of death, you will find these seven texts above all price (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 14:6; Matthew II 28; John 6:37).

#### “FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER”

For what is the sum and substance of these simple words? It is this. Christ is that Fountain of living water which God has graciously provided for thirsting souls. From Him, as out of the rock smitten by Moses, there flows an abundant stream for all who travel through the wilderness of this world. In Him, as our Redeemer and Substitute, crucified for our sins and raised again for our justification, there is an endless supply of all that men can need – pardon, absolution, mercy, grace, peace, rest, belief, comfort, and hope. This rich provision Christ has bought for us at the price of His own precious blood. To open this wondrous fountain He suffered for sin, the Just for the unjust, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He was made the righteousness of God in Him (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21). And now He is sealed and appointed to be the Reliever of all who are labouring and heavy-laden, and the Giver of living water to all who thirst. It is His pleasure to give them pardon, life, and peace. And the words of the text are a proclamation to all mankind, – “if any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink . . .”

#### WE QUOTE – HENRY DRUMMOND

##### THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD (Read 1 Corinthians 13)

We have been accustomed to be told that the greatest thing in the religious world is Faith. That great word has been the key-note for centuries of the popular religion; and we have easily learned to look upon it as the greatest thing in the world. Well, we are wrong. If we have been told that, we may miss the mark. I have taken you, in the chapter which I have just read, to Christianity at its source; and there we have seen, “The greatest of these is Love,” It is not an oversight. Paul was speaking of faith just a moment before. He says, “If I have faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not Love, I am nothing.” So far from forgetting, he deliberately contrasts them, “Now abideth Faith, Hope, Love,” and without a moments hesitation, the decision falls, “The greatest of these is Love.”

#### “THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE”

And it is not prejudice. A man is apt to recommend to others his own strong point. Love was not Paul’s strong point. The observing student can detect a beautiful tenderness growing and ripening all through his character, as Paul gets old; but the hand that wrote, “The greatest of these is Love,” when we meet it first, is stained with blood. Nor is this letter to the Corinthians peculiar in singling out love as the summum bonum. The master-pieces of Christianity are agreed about it. Peter says, “Above all things have fervent love among yourselves.” Above all things. And John goes further, “God is love.” And you remember the profound remark which Paul makes elsewhere, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Did you ever think what he meant by that? In those days men were working their passage to Heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments, and the hundred and ten other commandments which they had manufactured out of them. Christ said, I will show you a more simple way.

#### “LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THAT LAW”

If you do one thing, you will do these hundred and ten things, without ever thinking about them. If you love, you will unconsciously fulfil the whole law. And you can readily see for yourselves how that must be so. Take any of the commandments.

**“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”** If a man love God, you will not require to tell Him that. Love is the fulfilling of that law. **“Take not His name in vain.”** Would he ever dream of taking His name amiss if he loved Him? **“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”** Would he not be glad to have one day in seven to dedicate more exclusively to the object of his affection? Love would fulfil all these laws regarding God. And so, if he loved Man you would never think of telling him to honour his father and mother. He could not do anything else. It would be preposterous to tell him not to kill. You could only insult him if you suggested that he should not steal – how could he steal from those he loved?

#### **“CHRIST’S ONE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE”**

It would be superfluous to beg him not to bear false witness against his neighbour. If he loved him it would be the last thing he would do. And you would never dream of urging him not to covet what his neighbour had. He would rather they possessed it than himself. In this was **“Love is the fulfilling of the law.”** It is the rule for fulfilling all rules, the new commandments, Christ’s one secret of the Christian Life. Now Paul had learned that; and in this noble eulogy he has given us the most wonderful and original account extant of the summum bonum.

#### **THE BIBLE SPEAKS**

**“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”**

**“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”** (1 John 5:11,12).

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

### **THE PASSOVER – WHAT IS ALL FUSS ABOUT?**

Controversy over the Passover dates back to the time of the apostles. To many the debate has appeared to be about pointless arguments about dates and the keeping of Holy-days, but in reality it has been a smoke-screen to attack the things that the apostle Paul considered to be – **“of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”** (1 Cor. 15:3). The following has been written to show the history of the debate and why the issue is something that should still concern us today. In the hope that the whole question can be more easily grasped, by those not immersed in the finer details of the subject, it has been written on a ‘stand alone’ basis. To help further towards understanding the issues raised, propositions are put forward and then challenged to prove their validity.

**“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** So proclaimed John the Baptist in launching Christ’s ministry (Jn. 1 v .29). The peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation began with Abraham who sacrificed a lamb in place of his son, his only son whom he loved (Ge. 22:12), and ended with the death of Christ on the cross. The release of the Children of Israel from Egypt was finalised by the sacrificial killing of the spotless lambs. The new children of God exist only because of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The whole history of God’s dealing with man revolves on the fact that **“without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins”** (Heb. 9:22). The symbolism that God used in bringing this point home to His people is all lost if we start to separate the Old Testament teachings from their fulfilment in Christ. To question the tampering of the details of history of the Passover, then is not engaging in foolish controversies or disputes about the law (Tit. 3 v8), but strikes at the very foundations of our faith – the death of Christ and the fulfilment in every detail of the many messianic prophecies, that prove, without doubt that **“Truly this was the Son of God”** (Mt. 27:54).

**The First Proposition** then is:-

**“Before leaving Egypt the Israelites ate unleavened bread on the evening of Nisan**

14. Sacrificed the lamb on the following afternoon, still Nisan 14 and applied the blood to the door posts. Then on the evening of Nisan 15 ate the lamb, with unleavened bread. The following morning still Nisan 15 they left Egypt and went to Rameses.

**The Second Proposition is:-**

“That Jesus ate the unleavened bread with His disciples on Thursday evening, was crucified on Friday afternoon, was buried later that same afternoon. Spent all Saturday in the grave. Rose from the dead early on Sunday morning.”

**The Third Proposition is:-**

“That the timing of the events in proposition 2 matches those of the first Passover as set out in proposition 1.”

#### PROPOSITION 1

- a) On Nisan 10 Moses commanded that they take an unblemished one year old lamb (Ex. 12:32)
- b) On the evening of Nisan 14 they were to eat unleavened bread (Ex. 12:18: (erev))
- c) On Nisan 14, before the beginning of Nisan 15 the whole of the house had to be purged of leaven (Ex. 12:15)
- d) On the afternoon of Nisan 14 they were to slay the lamb (Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:5 [beyn-ha-arbayim]; Deut. 16:6 [bo-shemesh])
- e) They then were to put the blood on the lintels of the door (Ex. 12:7)
- f) That night (Nisan 15) they were to eat the flesh (Ex. 12:8 [layil]; Lev. 23:6)

#### JEWISH DEFINITIONS OF TIME

To understand the above quotations it is important to understand that the Jewish system of keeping time is different to what we are now accustomed to. The meanings of the words they use to define periods of time briefly are:-

##### DAY

When God created the world he stated that a day comprised of an evening (erev) and a morning (boker) (Gen. 1v5), the day then begun at sunset and finished at sunset. Rabbi Yaakov Culi's Torah Anthology says on Ex. 12v6 “The (daylight) day is divided into three unequal parts: morning, noon, and afternoon (boker, tzohoraim and erev in Hebrew). The first third of the day (until 10 a.m. in a 12 hour day) is considered morning. During this period the sun is obviously toward the East. The next two hours (from 10 a.m. until noon) are considered tzohoraim. This is the time in the day when the sun shines most strongly illuminating the sky. Hence the term tzohoraim indicates light as in God's instruction to Noah. “You shall make a skylight (tzohar) for the ark.” During this time of day the sun is in the middle of the sky, just like a ‘skylight’. From (12.00) noon until sunset is afternoon. In Hebrew this is referred to as erev. The Torah literally states that the animal should be sacrificed ‘between the two evenings’ (Beyn-ha-arbayim). The first of these two ‘evenings’ is immediately after noon, when the sun begins to appear to move toward the western horizon. The second is when the sun actually sets.”

##### NIGHT (layil)

“The darkness he called night” (Ge. 1:5)

##### EVENING (erev)

The start of the Jewish day commencing after sunset (Ge. 1:8)

The close of the day from noon to sunset ((Ge.18:13)

##### AFTERNOON

A term only found once in K.J.V. (Jud. 19:8) in which it means the declining of the day

##### MONTH – Jewish

From the new moon (as seen in Jerusalem) to the new moon (i.e. approximately a period of alternate 29 and 30 days).

##### YEAR – Jewish

A period of 12 or 13 lunar months. The religious year ran from Nisan 1 (Spring) and



the civil year from Tishrei 1 (Autumn).

#### THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

“In the first month, on the 14th day of the month at evening you shall eat unleavened bread until the 21st day of the month at evening” (Ex. 12 v18). Rabbi Yaakov Culi’s Torah Anthology says “Although the Torah earlier said that ‘you shall eat unleavened bread’ (12:15) there was no indication at what time it must start . . . Here the Torah states that Passover begins on the evening of the 14th of Nisan.” The eating of unleavened bread on the evening of the 14th of Nisan is never referred to as a ‘feast’ that expression being confined to the evening of the 15th (Num. 28:17) [note! Feast is not in original of Ex. 12:17].

#### UNLEAVENED BREAD

A shortened form of “**First day of unleavened bread**” (Ex. 12:17) or used as a generalism for the Passover (Ex. 12:18).

#### FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

- i) The eating of the lamb on Nisan 15 (Lev. 23:6)
- ii) Another term for the Passover (Ex. 34:18; Ex. 23:15)

#### PASSOVER

is used to :-

- i) define the killing of the lamb (Ex. 12:21; Lev. 23:5)
- ii) eating the roast lamb (Ex. 12:11)
- iii) a feast of seven days (Ez. 45:21)

The feast which in Palestine ran from the 14th day of Nisan to the 21st of Nisan and outside of Palestine to Nisan 22 (see Rabbi Yaakov Culi’s Torah Anthology on Exodus 12 v18).

As our use of the term ‘Christmas’ is very loosely used to describe periods of one day to several months, so the terms defining Jewish feasts have not been wholly consistent since they were instituted centuries ago. It is therefore important to get back to what the original terminology meant to prevent any confusion on the matter.

#### CONCLUSION

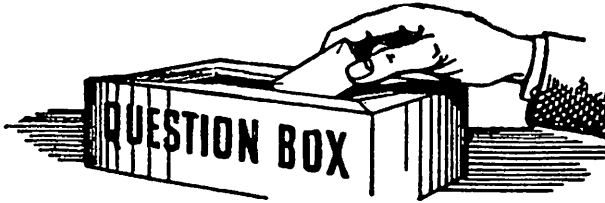
From the above it seems clear that the first proposition has ample support from the Old Testament scriptures, but before leaving the subject a look at what Rabbi Yaakov Culi’s Torah Anthology has to say about the Egyptian cults beliefs may be of interest. And show that the keeping of God’s pattern to the letter (just as the Lord commanded, so did they [Ex. 12:28]) can have impacts on those outside of the church that we cannot comprehend.

“The Egyptian calendar was based on phases of the moon, but instead of beginning a new month with a new moon, they would begin it with a full moon, 14 days after the new moon. The first month of their calendar is as Nisan. This entire month was celebrated as a holiday, with the slaves being freed from their tasks, so that they would be free to worship the Egyptian sheep god, representing Aries. A sheep, representing a god, was paraded through the streets of Egypt, followed by a huge procession. Incense burned around this sheep, and its fragrance wafted over the entire city. As the sheep was led through the city on its high platform, people would gather and try to touch it . . . Pre-eminent in these celebrations were the first born sons of each households. They would serve as priests, and would be highly honoured. The sheep was sacred to the Egyptians and during this month they did not eat any meat for fear of eating sheepmeat. The Jews roasting their lambs over an open fire would cause the odour to spread right through the city. It would be expected that the Egyptians would be deeply angered at this desecration of their god. This followed by the death of the following mornings priests would demonstrate to them the powerlessness of their deities”.

As Aries, the first sign of the Zodiac, and this is his month, the Egyptians worship

of the stars must have suffered an impact far above that we can imagine today even with our appreciation of what death of their firstborn would have had. The Jews first Passover then rocked the foundations of the world they lived in. It is time to see what effects the Jewish last Passover had on the ensuing generations. This will be pursued in the following articles.

Brian Boland,  
1 Chapel Lane,  
Midgley, Halifax. HX2 6XG.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“What sort of qualities should we be looking for as the Church moves into the 21st century?”**

Some Christians tend to look upon ‘the Church’ as some grand institution over and above themselves. I would like readers, in the context of this question, to refer the qualities to themselves *individually*, because the Church is only what we are. I hesitate to say this, but I firmly believe that the Church in the British Isles will grow numerically weaker if some of the problems we now face are not addressed. So we must look, and not be surprised at what we see.

**“BE YE DOERS . . .”**

For most of us, the mind can conceive more than the body can perform. So far as we as Christians are concerned I prefer to call this ‘idealistic Christianity.’ A dreamer or a visionary seldom becomes a good practitioner. The all-consuming themes of God and His glory as revealed in His word make the student want to go on studying and philosophising for ever. Theologians have spent incalculable time trying to develop their abstruse ideas **about** God, so much so, they have forgotten what the **message** of God is.

Generally speaking, we in the Church have talked, discussed, and debated ‘ad nauseam,’ as if intellectual seeking is much more important than practical doing. Our faith, we say, has led us to the highest echelons of spiritual appreciation of the Divine, but in many cases it has not reached the Abrahamic proportions of being able to lay **everything** on the altar: **“Faith without works is dead, being alone.”** Do you think Peter’s vision at Joppa would have been of any effect if he had not **gone** to the household of Cornelius? “Ah,” you say, “that was a special case. That was the Gospel being made available to the Gentiles.” Quite so, but he had to **go there**, and when he got there, he had to speak words which God had revealed to him. Was Peter’s command to ‘go’ any greater than the command **“Go ye into the all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?”** We have to go, and we have to use words that God has revealed to us in His word. God communicated with Peter by a vision; is it any less a communication from God to us if it comes through the written word? I would say that we in the Church were, among the most Biblically-educated people. But we must get our priorities right; the ‘sword’ of knowledge can be a double-edged weapon. Lack of knowledge can lead us unto all kinds of trouble; on the other hand, greater responsibility always devolves on the one **who knows**: **“He who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”** I suppose we could consolidate that statement by using another Biblical expression, **“To whom much is given, much is expected.”** It

is said that Lord Nelson motivated his men by saying "England expects." Well, God expects us to join battle with sin, wearing His armour, and using every talent which we individually possess.

**"THE RIGHTEOUS ARE BOLD . . ."**

The proverb from which the sub-heading is taken reads, **"The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion"** 28:1. This means that the righteous are courageous, enterprising, confident. Avid television viewers may be familiar with the fictitious Captain Kirk and his starship 'Enterprise.' His mission in space is "to boldly go where no man has gone before." Well, the righteous are **not** fictitious, but the message for us is the same, 'to go boldly' wheresoever the Master may lead.

Paul, in his Ephesian letter, says **"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel"** 6:19. He asks for the prayers of the saints that he might be able to do this. If ever there was a time when the Christian should speak up courageously for his Lord, it is now. We are well aware that when people ridicule and blaspheme His name, the weak heart may faint when put to the test. When I feel like that, I am always strengthened by the words of Jeremiah the prophet. He said that the word of the Lord was made to him a reproach and a derision daily, and that he wouldn't speak any more in His name, but then he goes on, **"But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding back, and I could not."** We have an unpopular ministry, and the chances are that we shall be unpopular when proclaiming the message, but when did God ever invite us into the popularity stakes? Jesus told His disciples, **"They shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues you shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them."**

For the sake of Christ. Yes, we must take **Him** into the 21st century; the 41st also, if it comes to that. When we, through the eye of faith, see Him staggering under the weight of the cross; the agony of His suffering as He was nailed to it; we have to echo the words of the poet,

See, from His head, His hands, His feet;  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Ashamed of our Saviour? No, we are like Paul, **"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."** HE has said that He will never leave us nor forsake us, the reason being, **"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."** The Church must be strong in taking God's message to an increasingly evil world, but we have to remember that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. So let us be strong and confident. Let us take the message boldly, not only in words but so that the message might be seen in us. We are the house of Christ, the Hebrew writer says, **"if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end."**

**"THY WORD IS . . ."**

We dare not enter the 21st century without the word. "Well," you say, "that's pretty basic. Of course we wouldn't." But I mean the word as it really is; the message of eternal life in Christ Jesus, and not just as a sermon-prompter. I have heard preachers boast about the Bible being the world's best-seller; that may be so, but to millions who buy it, it is just a talisman-on-the-shelf; an icon, if you will. We have all heard people who, in extremity and a seemingly hopeless situation, have cried out "God help me." What we have to do is convince them from the word about the hopelessness of sin, and not to offer hope in social palliatives. We must guard against the insidious liberal idea that though the word has a message for every age it must necessarily change with every age.

I am now an old man (well, oldish) and some tell me that my ideas are rooted in the past, but as a Christian I don't understand that. What is my past? God is my eternal past, present and future. He has given a revelation which is, like Himself, timeless and unchanging. How dare I have the temerity to attempt to change the unchangeable. Don't misunderstand me; I have never been slow to respond positively to techniques which will facilitate the promotion of God's message. Methods and techniques can change; the message itself **musn't**. We are seeing an explosion in the field of information technology which, I believe will blossom to undreamed of proportions at the turn of the century. Can this be used in the service of God in order to spread His message? The day for preaching, I believe, will never end; there can be no substitute for person to person contact. But I have heard preachers say that in the past the building of roads by the Romans facilitated the spread of the Gospel; perhaps at the advent of information technology is another such opportunity.

Dedication to the word is a necessity. To the Christian it is our spiritual food and drink. It is God's rich table at which we dine. It is, like the Lord's Table, something we should not need to keep on re-dedicating ourselves to. I have heard Christians say on Lord's Day, "We need to re-dedicate our lives to Him", or, "We need to recharge our batteries every time we come around the Table." What have we lost that we need to re-dedicate? Why have our 'batteries' become 'flat'? Could it be that we have not really dedicated ourselves to the word. It is God's power because it contains God's revelation. Has the Holy Spirit lost His power through the word to influence our lives? Every time we turn to it we find comfort, strength, courage. Our dedication to it should grow, not diminish. The power it gives should be our 'transport' of delight as day follows day. O yes, we **must** take the **undiluted** word into the 21st century. It is the only constant thing in an inconstant world. It is our Book of Life, and, we pray God, for the lives of countless others in the future.

(All Questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,  
Winstanley, Wigan. WN3 6ES)

## TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1994

The following balance sheet shows a shortfall in income when compared to expenditure. While there are adequate funds it is apparent that an increase is necessary to maintain a working balance. An increase was implemented with the January, 1995 issue.

I would like to thank everyone for their support. It requires a certain amount of hard work to publish and distribute the magazine each month and your appreciative comments make it all worthwhile. I am fortunate to have help each month with the distribution and posting which lightens that load considerably.

### BALANCE SHEET FOR 1994

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Bank Account 1/1/94	1503.86	Printing	3624.00
Bank Interest	34.24	Postage	705.00
Subscriptions	2569.72	Bound Volumes	208.50
Gifts	1285.90	Reading Cards	50.60
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	3889.86	Bank Account 1/1/95	805.62
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Balance	5393.72		5393.72
	<hr/>		<hr/>

J. K. Kneller (Treasurer)

I have examined the books, receipts, etc., and find them to be correct  
and in good order.

J. H. Currie (Auditor) 26th January, 1995.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Apr 2	Judges 13:	Acts 27:1-26
Apr 9	Jonah 1:	Acts 27:27-44
Apr 16	Psalm 107:23-43	Acts 28:1-15
Apr 23	Isaiah 6:	Acts 28:16-31
Apr 30	Genesis 19:15-29	Jude

### PAUL'S EVENTFUL JOURNEY TO ROME

LUKE, the beloved physician, was with Paul on the journey to Rome. The "we" passages clearly indicate this. There are other interesting people who feature in this portion of scripture. There is JULIUS, the Roman commanding officer, who escorted Paul to Rome. He was of the Augustan Cohort. This was a special corps, which acted as liaison officers between the Emperor and the provinces. He must have been a man of long experience with an excellent military record. He treated Paul with great kindness. Next, we have ARISTARCHUS, another fellow-traveller. He was the one who was seized by the mob in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He had journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem, probably as an official Thessalonian delegate with the collection (Acts 20:4).

Later he became Pauls fellow prisoner of war (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). PUBLIUS of Malta is described as the "chief man of the island" (Acts 28:7). (Luke gave him the correct political title). Paul healed his father, among many others.

Let us consider some of the places mentioned in these chapters of Acts. There is SIDON, an ancient Phoenician city situated north of Tyre. Sidon was sixty-seven miles from Caesarea. It was a city with a long history and is first mentioned in the book of Genesis (10:19). The Assyrians had exacted tribute from Sidon; the Babylonians had besieged and captured it; the Greeks, under Alexander, had simply taken it; and the Romans had granted it local autonomy. It is interesting to note that Jesus during His ministry had visited the

coasts of Sidon (Matt. 15:21; Mark 7:24). MYRA was one of the chief cities of Lycia, a province of Asia Minor. Today this famous port is called Dembre by the Turks. CNIDUS in Asia Minor was one hundred and thirty miles from Myra. It was a city with a good harbour. Under the Romans, Cnidus had the status of a free city. FAIR HAVENS was a small bay on the south coast of Crete. Today it is the modern Kalo Limenes. It is too open for an ideal winter harbour. MALTA is an island in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea south of Sicily. The name means "refuge." It was originally a Phoenician island, but later was inhabited by Sicilian Greeks. After the Greeks it fell under Roman control. Paul spent three months here and his visit has never been forgotten by the islanders. Indeed, the supposed site of his landing is today called "St. Paul's Bay." RHEGIUM (modern Reggio di Calabria) was a port-city on the Italian shore of the Strait of Messina. It was an old Greek colony, the importance of which was through its position in relation to the navigation of the Strait. PUTEOLI was a port of Rome. It is modern Pozzioli. Originally a Samian colony, it probably fell into Roman hands in 338 B.C. and rapidly became an important arsenal and trading port. APPII FORUM was a market town and staging post on the Via Appia, forty-three miles from Rome. The poet Horace described it as a "place packed with barges and extortionate inn-keepers." THREE TAVERNS was a station on the Via Appia thirty-three miles from Rome. It is mentioned by Cicero in his writings.

ROME is a great city with a fascinating history. Michael Grant has written: "Imperial Rome has seemed, to the people of many later centuries, a particularly enthralling and moving theme, and that is what it remains - unique, terrible, and rich in allurements and astonishments." F.R. Cowell has commented: "Rome, goddess of the earth and of its people, without a peer

or a second, amazed the world. Its astonishing history was the story of the growth of a small collection of village huts of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. into the vast metropolis of the first century A.D. onwards, which in some of its aspects was more splendid than anything that had been seen on earth before or since." Rome is built on seven hills – Capitoline, Palatine, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal and Quirinal. At the centre of the city was the Forum, which, under the Empire, was a centre for religious and secular spectacles and ceremonies and the site of the city's most imposing temples and monuments. E.A. Judge has written: "In New Testament times Rome was in full flush of her growth. Multi-story tenement blocks housed a proletariat of over a million, drawn from every quarter . . . The Caesars themselves had furnished the heart of the city with an array of public buildings perhaps never equalled in any capital. The same concentration of wealth provided the overcrowded masses with generous economic subsidies and entertainment. It also attracted literary and artistic talent from foreign parts."

We read: "**For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ**" (28:30-31, N.I.V.). Such dedication is an example to us all. Paul knew the meaning of life and wanted to share it with others. May all of us in Christ strive to do likewise.

#### THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

**AUTHOR:** Jude or Judas, probably the younger brother of Jesus and James (Galatians 1:19; Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).

**DATE:** uncertain, but may be around A.D. 70.

**PURPOSE:** "Evidently Jude had been planning to write a more general statement about the gospel to this group of churches, when news of the sudden appearance of a devastating heresy

prompted him to dispatch this stern warning" (Henry H. Halley).

**POINTS:** "The letter makes use of Jewish apocryphal literature and is unique among the canonical N.T. books in doing so" David H. Wheaton. "There have indeed been times in the history of the church when Jude was not far from being the most relevant book in the N.T." (William Barclay). "Jude is a fiery cross to rouse the churches" (James Moffat). "One of the most remarkable things respecting this epistle, is its resemblance to the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter (Albert Barnes).

#### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

We read: "**Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints**" (verse 3). The Greek verb translated "earnestly contend for" is *epagonizesthai*. Please note that it contains the word "agonize", which is from *agon*, a contest. "The word was used to describe a wrestling match in the Greek games. When a challenge was flung out, someone stepped forth and accepted it, and the two of them grappled with each other until one was vanquished . . . The saints are encouraged by Jude to pick up the glove flung down by a blatant challenger. To do so is to accept an invitation to a contest, not of skill but of perseverance and endurance" (Carl Ketcherside). But what was the issue? "**The faith once (for all) delivered unto the saints.**" Here we come immediately upon a contentious matter, because the phrase "**the faith**" has been the subject of much debate. Alexander Campbell wrote: "The faith', sometimes means the truth to be believed. Sometimes it means 'the belief of the truth' . . . that faith in Christ which is essential to salvation is not the belief of any doctrine, testimony, or truth, abstractly, but belief in Christ; trust or confidence in Him as a person,

not a thing." Dear reader, this subject is worthy of a great deal of study and meditation, especially as a good number of brethren today equate the faith with the compilation of the N.T. scriptures and postulate that one is not in the faith who does not understand, as they do, every minute point of doctrine.

#### THE FALSE TEACHERS

Jude warns the saints about false teachers or enemies of the faith. They were out to destroy everything the community of Christ stood for. Really, they were servants of the devil. Many commentators have identified them with Gnosticism and I would not dispute that after a year's study of the subject. Gnosticism was a gigantic challenge to the ancient faith (much like humanism today). Yes, the faith is also being assaulted today. But the great tragedy is that many brethren are still fighting one another instead of the enemies who are all around us.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

### PAPUA, NEW GUINEA APPEAL

As many of you know my late husband Reg and I were missionaries in Papua New Guinea for almost fourteen years. Eleven of these years were spent with the Waria tribe in a remote mountainous area. Reg was an engineer by profession, and as well as preaching and teaching the Bible, he also put his engineering skills to good use. He constructed an airstrip with the voluntary help of the local people, on the top of a mountain plateau. This meant that we had to walk for only two hours through the bush instead of two and a half days as we had done for the first two years. This has been a great blessing to the people of that area. He also designed and built a church building to seat three hundred, from trees donated by the brethren. He also persuaded the Government to start a primary school there. I took care of the medical side of things and there is now

a Health post on the airstrip with Government sponsored health workers.

In December, 1992, Reg's consultant allowed him to return to Papua New Guinea to visit and encourage the brethren we had both grown to love. There are three congregations in the Waria valley and there are no paid preachers. The brethren have been on their own since we left in 1986, and are carrying on the work of preaching and teaching and making patrols into other areas with the gospel.

I would like to return to the Waria valley in June of this year for a period of two to three months. The brethren are short of clothing and medicines, and it costs far too much to send them from Britain to the other side of the world. I can buy both of these items in Lae when I arrive. However I need funds to buy these things and also to help with my expenses. If any congregation, ladies class or individual, would like to help in this cause, please write to me at the address below.

Sincerely,

Ruth Coles.  
6 Heimdal Gardens,  
Glenrothes, Fife. KY7 6TZ.

---

#### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. What did the people do as they listened to Ezra reading the Law?
2. Where did Amos come from?
3. King Saul came from which tribe of Israel?
4. Who was the ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus by night?
5. On what island did Paul heal the father of Publius?
6. Who was the son of Enoch?
7. Apollos came from which city?
8. How long did Jacob live with Laban?
9. How many wives did Solomon have?
10. Who prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah?

**ANSWERS**

1. They wept (Nehemiah 8:9).
2. Tekoa (Amos 1:1).
3. Benjamin (1 Samuel 9:1).
4. Nicodemus (John 3:1-2).
5. Malta (Acts 28:1,8).
6. Methuselah (Genesis 5:21).
7. Alexandria (Acts 18:24).
8. 20 years (Genesis 31:38).
9. 700 (1 Kings 11:3).
10. Micah (Micah 1:1).

**COMING EVENTS**

**TRANENT SOCIAL**

18th March, 1995

Speakers:

**Jimmy Grant & John Dodsley**

**ANNIVERSARY MEETING**

Kentish Town, London

Our 124th Anniversary Meeting  
on 7th October, 1995 at 3 p.m. & 6 p.m.

**KIRKCALDY SOCIAL**

Saturday, 15th April, 1995  
at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker : M. Heinemeier

**BUCKIE SOCIAL**

Saturday, 6th May, 1995

Speaker: Jack Strachan, East Kilbride  
All Welcome

**GHANA APPEAL**

The feedback on Twi Bibles was very positive and we exhausted the present stock of the National Bible Society of Scotland and sent Twi Bibles to two churches in Ashanti region. We have presently placed an order for 100 (we have enough money in the Ghana Appeal account to purchase these, there was a good response for this work) and we are awaiting details of the next production. One congregation mention that they used Fanti Bibles and we managed to obtain 15 from the Bible Society and sent these out.

There are still congregations who are building meeting places and are requesting assistance in the purchase of building materials. We could do with some assistance in this area and also with medical funds.

We thank those who have individually given clothes and who have helped in the past month in sending parcels directly to Ghana, this was very much appreciated. The funds collected since the start of this appeal currently stands at £51,378.97.

Graeme Pearson.

**Kentish Town, London:** We are happy to report that Esther Gan was baptised into Christ on Monday, 16th January, 1995. We pray for God's blessing upon her as she enters her new life in Christ.

Dorothy Proud (Sec).

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