

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 46. No.4

APRIL, 1978

WORKING MODELS

I once heard the 'best-man' at a wedding ceremony say during his speech that he thought that the bridegroom would make a model husband. The approving smiles of the wedding quests soon faded when the best-man continued to say that his dictionary gave the definition of 'model' as 'a small replica of the real thing'. It was assumed that his remarks were made in a jocular spirit, but who knows? Many of us could, perhaps, be described as 'model' Christians given the same definition - i.e. 'a small replica of the real thing'. To larger or smaller degree I suppose we could not quarrel with such a description - we are all small replicas of the real thing, some are perhaps unaware of it. That is not to say that we should be proud of it or content with it. Jesus Christ is, of course, the 'real thing' and we have a challenging duty to aspire to the standards that He set. His standard was high and so we must aim high. The scriptures however do not encourage us to think that the standard is so high that we have an impossible task. Consider the following "Be ye holy even as He is holy": "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus": "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you": "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps". Rome wasn't built in a day and trying to emulate Christ will take a lifetime. Knowing that following Christ is the growth-period of a lifetime we should start early and continue seriously. A good starting place is at the beginning and at the bottom. We should start with the humility of mind which assures us that, for the moment, we are but 'small replicas of the real thing.

The word 'model' has more than one meaning, however, and also carries the sense of someone or something worth copying. In this connection most schools of painting employ 'live' models so that the students or disciples can contemplate the model and make as exact a copy as possible. This is, I believe, what the apostle Paul means when he says, in Hebrews (3:1) "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." That is to say, consider the Lord Jesus Christ in thoughtful contemplation. In art galleries we see men and women sitting on the benches in the exhibition halls thoughtfully regarding the great masterpieces of painting. If we have the time and inclination nothing can be more enjoyable or rewarding. Some men sit in the art galleries for blissful hours in such reverie. Jesus had the same thing in mind when He said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow..." or "Consider the ravens..." Observe and consider. Contemplate and examine. Ponder and admire. Study with thoughtful reflection. Some things are admired for their beauty alone, such as a priceless gem or a painted fresco, with no utilitarian purpose being served, but the contemplation of Jesus is that we might not holy delight in Him

but endeavour to be like him and to copy Him. We are not to spend all of our time in contemplation, however for we cannot all afford the Monastic way of life. We are in a modern world and all of our observations of Christ must relate to life and living. Our musings on the beautiful Christ are not for pleasure alone or construed an exercise of purely academic content, but with the purpose that "We may grow more like unto Him". "For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (2 Peter 2:21).

Yes, certainly Jesus left us an example and we should follow in His steps. I suppose that it is impossible to live without leaving an example — an example of some kind. It has been said that we should show a good example firstly because we love God; secondly because our salvation depends upon it; and thirdly because others may follow the example we give. There is tremendous power in examples for good or ill, and we must endeavour to avoid giving an example to others which is unworthy of our Lord and Saviour. It is when we look at the kind of example left by some men (and by ourselves) that we fully appreciate the example left by Jesus. Even in the scriptures we notice a whole variety of examples left, not only by O.T. characters but also by man and women in the New Testament, some to be emulated and some to be avoided.

Jesus set the perfect example in every possible way. By looking at Him and placing the examples of men (and ourselves) alongside His example we can see how far short we fall. If we watch the sculptor at work (say making a bust) we see how intently he gazes upon the subject seated before him and how he adds clay here and takes it away from there; continually referring to his subject. I suppose that, in like manner, we ought to add to our lives the things that are wanting and remove the things superfluous, continually comparing the result with the Divine Model, the Lord Jesus Christ. I suppose that this is what Paul meant when he said, (changing the figure)". Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith". (Heb. 12:1-2). In this way, if we continually look unto Jesus we shall perchance grow more like unto Him. He is the model and we follow the examples of men only in so far as they are followers of Him. As Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Him" (1 Cor. 11:1). We would model ourselves, therefore, on Him.

The late brother Crosthwaite used to say that if anyone was going to be a model, they should make sure that they were working models. EDITOR.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM STATISTICS

WE hear a great deal about the decline of religion in Britain, based on the annual figures published by the denominations. However, a closer look at the statistics shows that the situation is not so simple as it seems. Obviously, figures for christenings and confirmations cannot be relied on as any guide to the future church attendance of the candidates, so we need to turn to those denominations which give numbers of adult members.

Certainly there has been a steady decline in overall numbers, dating from about the time of the First World War, which has accelerated in the last decade. However, the effect has never been uniform all over the country, and there is still a higher proportion of churchgoing in Scotland and Ireland. Possibly the decline began in the South-East of England and spread from there.

Moreover, most denominations have a large proportion, perhaps as many as three to one, of elderly people, so inevitably they will have a considerable number of deaths every year. If these deaths are not counted, then gains and losses are much more equal. This means that among younger people, churchgoing is not declining, but standing still.

But here again, the situation differs according to which part of the country we look at. For instance, the Baptist Church had about 5,000 baptisms in 1976; half of these were in the

South-East corner of England, where there are only a quarter of the Baptist churches; the other half were in the rest of England, Wales and Scotland combined. Baptist churches in the Home counties and Berkshire are definitely growing.

Methodist churches, on the other hand, find their best areas for new members to be Liverpool and Carlisle, followed by London South-West, although they are not actually growing anywhere.

Some denominations do not issue figures, but it is interesting to note which of them are able to afford new buildings, and which are selling those they cannot maintain any longer.

Statistics for churches of Christ must be treated carefully, as they are not very evenly spread over the country and cover a comparatively small number of people. Figures for some churches remain fairly steady, while others fluctuate considerably, because some members become unfaithful soon after baptism, and others are only temporarily resident in this country. Nevertheless, we can see that churches in Scotland and Ireland are growing fairly fast, while those in England and Wales are growing, but only just. This, however, is a better result than can be shown by any of the large, traditional denominations in Britain.

(Miss) R. M. PAYNE, Reading.

JONAH

JONAH was a prophet of some importance in Israel, the northern kingdom of 10 tribes of the Jews, in the time of Jeroboam the second, who began his long reign of 41 years in 825 B.C. (2 Kings 14:25). Apart from this reference, all we know about him is :-

THE EVENTS RECORDED IN THE BOOK IN THE BIBLE WHICH BEARS HIS NAME.

1. Told by God to go to Nineveh and preach the message, "Repent or Perish"! This was an assignment of tremendous proportions.
 - a. It would involve a long, arduous and perilous journey.
 - b. Jonah had lived all his life in the little territory of Israel and as a parochial Jew would have had no sympathy with the great outside world.
 - c. Nineveh was a mighty city, capital of a vast empire. Its population at that time is estimated to have been 600,000.
 - d. He would have had no desire to go on a mission of possible mercy to a heathen nation which he abhorred, and which was an enemy of his own nation.
2. Finding the whole idea repugnant, Jonah fled in the opposite direction to Nineveh, even though it involved a sea voyage. The facts of the story may be read in the book.
3. Jonah finally preached to the Ninevites, with wonderful results, but he gave way to jealous disappointment that the city was not destroyed as he hoped it would be.

SOME DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THIS BOOK.

Is it history, or simply a figurative story to convey some spiritual truth. Some question its historical accuracy.

1 It is said that it could not have been written by Jonah nor by anyone else living in his time. The argument is that Nineveh was destroyed in 606 B.C. but Jonah lived around 825 B.C. Now chapter 3:3 says that Nineveh was a great city, so it is claimed that the Writer lived after Jonah's time and was referring back to it. But this is a failure to note the normal meaning of the language, which simply means that when Jonah got to Nineveh he found it was a great city.

2 The psalm in chapter 2 contains many expressions and ideas similar to some of the Psalms which were written much later, so Jonah must have lived after those later Psalms were written to be able to quote from them. But is there anything against those later Psalms quoting from Jonah's?

3 The matter of Jonah being swallowed by the great fish has been objected to as fact. But consider:—

- a the original language does not say it was a whale, simply a great fish. It need not have been any special fish, for the word “prepared” only means “appointed”.
- b two things were not miraculous, namely, Jonah being swallowed by the fish, and Jonah being vomited up again.
- c the miracle is in Jonah’s being kept alive. To say that God could not do this is to deny God altogether. To say that He would not do it if He wanted to is absurd. To say that He did not do it is begging the question.
- d the three days and nights need not mean more than 26 or 28 hours by Jewish method of counting time, but three full days is not out of the question.

4 The plain, straightforward meaning of Matt. 12:39-41 is that Jesus accepted the historical truth of the book of Jonah.

SOME LESSONS FROM THE BOOK

- 1 That God is the God of all men and things. Nineveh, no less than Jerusalem, was under His scrutiny
- 2 That it is disastrous to try to run away from God, to refuse the duties He would have as do. So don’t be a Jonah.
- 3 That God’s judgments are tempered with mercy. He always accepts genuine repentance.
- 4 That a narrow, bigoted, unsympathetic, self-righteous and unforgiving spirit is a great evil. So don’t be a Jonah.
- 5 That God’s message is greater than the human messengers.
- 6 That merely one act of repentance is not enough. Nineveh later went back to its wickedness (that is, later generations of Ninevites) and the city was destroyed. No generation of people can live on the spiritual capital of its predecessors.

Bro. J. K. ROBINSON, Maylands, Western Australia.

ASK

“There’s love that passes knowledge
Such love for me and you;
'Tis love unto the uttermost,
So patient, strong and true.”

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” Ephesians 3:20.

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God”.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the brethren at Corinth said:—

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” 1 Cor. 9-10.

“the deep things of God” “The love of God”

How can I know the deep things of God? •

Jesus said: “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words

that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" John 14:7-11.

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God".

Do you want to see the Father? "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father".

The love of God surely finds its fulfilment, in the life and death of His only begotten Son. Will you allow me to use two verses we used last month:— "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth". John 1:14.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" 1 Timothy 3:16.

The marvellous unfolding of the love of God, was to be demonstrated by the one, of whom it was said:— "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9:6.

That child was born for a specific purpose, and that purpose was to save sinners. The Apostle Paul said:— "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" 1 Timothy 1:15. Jesus said:— "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Matthew 9:13.

Let us never forget this glorious fact ... GOD GAVE ... because He ... SO LOVED THE WORLD. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16. The price of the sin of the world ... "HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON". "And Abraham said My Son, God will provide himself a lamb" Genesis 22:8. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto Him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" John 1:29, The love of God ... is seen in the Lamb of God.

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God".

God is love ... love ... loves you... love ... loves me.

It is wonderful to know that God loves you, but, the marvellous message to my soul is, the knowledge that God loves me. Consider for a few moments that magnificent verse given to us by the aged warrior of the cross, the Apostle Paul:— "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" Galatians 2:20.

WHO LOVED ME and gave HIMSELF for ME.

Can I grasp this stupendous message, that the Lord Jesus, who died for all, gave HIMSELF FOR ME. ME. ME. ME.

Remember no man is the worse for knowing the worst of himself. W. Riley, makes one of his characters say:— "He takes the raw material of humanity and makes something good out of it". It is said that Socrates, greeted all his new pupils with the words "Know thyself". To know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; of the love of Christ. I must realize a little of the breadth, and length, and depth and height, of my own sinfulness. The word of God takes my photograph, and but for the love of God, and the love of the Lord Jesus, I should be of all men most miserable as I survey the result.

CAN I SAY WITH JOB?—

"How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin" Job 13:23. "Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth". Job 40:4.

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" Job 42:5,6.

CAN I SAY WITH DAVID? :-

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest". "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities". "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me". "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise". Psalm 51: 4, 9, 10, 17.

CAN I SAY WITH ISAIAH?:-

"For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them". Isaiah 59:12. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away". Isaiah 64:6.

CAN I SAY WITH JEREMIAH?:-

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. 17:9

CAN I SAY WITH THE PRODIGAL?:-

"I have sinned" Luke 15:18.

CAN I SAY WITH PAUL? :-

"As it is written. There is none righteous, no, not one" Romans 3:10. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. "Romans 3:23, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin". "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I". "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh.) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not". "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:14, 15, 18, 24.

CAN I SAY WITH JOHN? :-

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his world is not in us". 1 John 1:8-10. DID I SAY WHO LOVED ME and gave HIMSELF FOR ME. He sees me at my worst ... yet, loves me with His best. He does not only see me as I am ... but as I can be ... in Christ, a new creation.

SINNERS Jesus will receive!
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall!

Sing it o'er and o'er again:
'Christ receiveth sinful men';
Make the message clear and plain:
'Christ receiveth sinful men'.

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... "The Lord direct your hearts into the Love of God".
May the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

LEONARD MORGAN.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE DAVID DOUGAL

We were all saddened to learn of the passing of brother David Dougal, on 2nd March, 1978. He died quietly in his fireside chair.

Stalwarts of the faith are passing from us into the presence of the Lord.

Before entering the work of full-time preaching, Brother Dougal was a coalminer. In that harsh world, battling against the forces and powers of nature, he learned the lessons of patience and perseverance, so essential in a world of opposition to God's word.

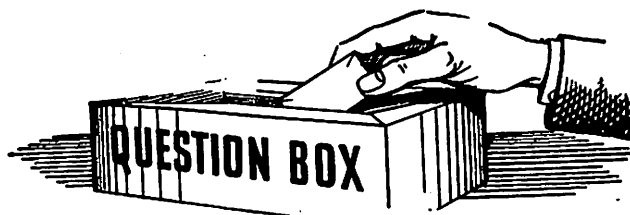
In his preparation for the work of preaching, he was ably helped and directed by our late Brother Walter Crosthwaite, with added help from some brethren then called 'The Old Paths Committee'.

On New Year's Day, 1952, he was introduced in to the Slamannan District churches as their new evangelist, a work he continued until he retired; a few years ago. His work among the churches was of great value and very much appreciated. He was a welcome visitor to the fishing communities in the north of Scotland and assisted them when the fishing fleet moved to Yarmouth, Visits to congregations in England were frequently made.

His stewardship was one of faithfulness and the esteem in which he was held was evidenced in the large number of brethren and friends who attended his funeral service. How many souls he succoured on his journey – helped by his hands and his prayers, we may not know; still this we read (words of excelling grandeur) – "He walked with God, while yet he walked below".

We commend to the Lord's care, sister Dougal and all other members of the family, in their hour of sadness.

E. JESS



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"I am a young brother in Christ, and I am a little concerned by your answer to a question in the November issue (1977) of the S.S. You said, "We must understand, of course, that conversion goes before pardon". I find this arrangement of words to be misleading; would it not have been clearer to say, "one cannot be converted until he has received forgiveness?" Furthermore, the essence of the question was are we saved now. You merely demonstrated that a man can be lost after having been saved".

I believe it is absolutely necessary that we should all understand each other, particularly when we are dealing with salvation. That is why I would like to examine the points which have been raised, in a little more detail.

I do hope that I have not confused anyone by the statement "We must understand, of course, that conversion goes before pardon". Let us analyse this statement. Conversion is man's part of the salvation process – pardon is God's part. All I have said is that before God will remove the burden of the guilt of sin I must be converted. Conversion means, on man's part, turning from something to something else. In the christian sense it means turning from sin to the true and living God. How am I converted? Paul explains this in his Roman letter, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form (standard) of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17,28). What is it that I obey from the heart? Well, the gospel, of course. When am I converted? When I have obeyed the gospel. When am I made free from sin? When I have been converted. On the Day of Pentecost Peter told the people, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). So if conversion means obedience to the gospel,

which it undoubtedly does, and pardon means God remitting my sins, which it surely does, then all I am doing in making the statement. "conversion goes before pardon", is agreeing with Paul and Peter who both teach precisely that. On the basis of that reasoning, it would not be clearer to say that one cannot be converted until he has received forgiveness, nor would it be true.

My young brother then goes on, "Furthermore, the essence of the question was are we saved now. You merely demonstrated that a man can be lost after having been saved". Well, let's state the question as it was originally put to me". "Men today in the church are discussing whether it is correct (and scriptural) to say that we are already saved, yet many scriptures indicate differently and that he who thinks he stands should beware lest he fall. What comments could you make on the matter?" So far as I understood (and still understand) the question, two points are being put forward, (i) are we saved now, and (ii) can we be lost.

If the reader will look at the top of page 129, I said, and I quote, "But if the Bible is the revealed will of God, which it undoubtedly is, then when a believer does things in accordance with God's will (as revealed in the Bible) then pardon and salvation are assured. What the Bible does not teach is that salvation is assured for all time in spite of what we may do subsequent to our obedience of the gospel". What I said there was that man could be assured of salvation now. I hold to that. What I will not subscribe to is the doctrine 'once saved, always saved'.

Furthermore, in my conclusion I listed these points:-

- 1 It is possible for us to be in a saved condition and we ought to have the assurance that this knowledge brings in saying that we are saved.
- 2 As long as we work at our salvation with the help of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with God's word, then we shall never fall.
- 3 If, on the other hand, we forsake God, then our salvation is in jeopardy. If we put our hands to the plough, and look back, then we are not worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

I thank our brother for his interest and concern. It is vitally necessary that we should all speak the same things. But I hope that I may have convinced him, and possible others, that I am not merely demonstrating that a man can be lost after having been saved. I believe that we have the assurance of salvation now, when we have obeyed the gospel. I also believe that the assurance will remain so long as we continue to grow in Christ. But I also understand that Satan is always striving to subvert the gospel and destroy the child of God. May we see to it that so far as we are concerned, he never succeeds.

"The scriptures talk about a unicorn. Was there such a creature? It also talks of a 'leviathan' in Job, and a 'Behemoth'. Are these extinct?"

It is always interesting to be asked questions which demand a fair amount of research in order to supply the answer. This helps both the reader and also the one who answers the question; This question is such a one and I would like to thank the questioner for asking it.

The Unicorn

In the annals of expressive art, the unicorn is depicted as a fabulous animal resembling a horse, and is characterised by a straight horn on its brow, the hide being now represented as white and smooth, though earlier bestiaries show it partly coloured and shaggy. Biblical references may derive from the use in the Septuagint version of the word which may have meant the rhinoceros or wild ox. Ancient writers allude to their swiftness and strength. In the book of Numbers, in an allusion to the Divine Leader, we read, "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" (Num.23:22). The same expression is also used in Num. 24:8. So according to these scriptures the unicorn was a beast of great strength.

The horn was said to serve as a preventative to poison. It is reported that in the Middle Ages the unicorn represented virginity and was frequently used in artistic depictions.

The unicorn appears also in heraldry: here the horn is always twisted like a spiral. Originally two unicorns supported the royal arms of Scotland, one of which was transferred by James I to the arms of Great Britain as supporter sinisters. So it appears that there was such an animal as the unicorn, but in its original form unlike the artistic expression of today. Originally, it would have been in the form of the buffalo or wild ox.

The Behemoth

This is probably from the Hebrew behemah, which means 'beast'. It has also been suggested that the name is a derivation from the Egyptian p-ehemau, which means 'hippopotamus' or 'water-ox'. It is mentioned in Job 40:15 as follows, "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox". Certainly the word means 'a large beast', and if it is the hippopotamus which is referred to, which seems most likely, then it is not extinct.

Leviathan

This is mentioned in the same context in Job 41:1 ff. where the scripture reads, 'Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?' The word itself means 'a great water animal' and in the margin of the A.V. the word 'crocodile' is printed. Some mythological sources refer to leviathan as a many-headed sea dragon (or Latan, as it is sometimes called), but if we read Ps.41 carefully I think we shall agree that a large water animal such as a crocodile is referred to. If this is the case, then I think we must conclude that this also is not extinct.

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1978

7-Exodus 3:1-17	Hebrews 11:23-40
14-Proverbs 3:1-18	Hebrews 12:1-17
21-Exodus 19:9-27	Hebrews 12:18-29
28-Psalm 118:1-17	Hebrews 13

THE HEROES OF FAITH

The concluding thought in chapter 10 leads naturally to further words on the question of faith, and we have in chapter 11 one of the most inspiring chapters in the Bible. We have occasionally complained of the chapter divisions but largely they help, and these man-made divisions are of almost incalculable advantage. We thank God for the man or men who did the great work. The "definition" of faith is in character with the literary quality of the whole letter. Commentators and translators alike have endeavoured to give us exact English words in explanation but perhaps we can without the slightest reflection on the divine word simply by saying "Faith makes the unseen seen, and the incomprehensible understood". Our chapter deals with what faith enables mankind to do, that is of course faith in God, faith in the truth He reveals.

This month's readings present us with the faith of Amram and Jochebed who saved their child by the amazing strategy of the ark of bulrushes. We believe they were in despair as to how to conceal the child any longer from the authorities, and committed themselves and him to God's care. The womanly pity of the princess, and Miriam's care made Moses a Prince in Egypt, and in spite of his rash and ineffective murder, he became God's prince to lead God's people out of slavery to become a nation for God's own possession — this too after 40 years preparation in the desert land as a shepherd. So may we quote "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform".

The catalogue of the faithful and their works undoubtedly refers to some outside the accepted Scriptures who survived and overcame the fearful persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes who was determined to destroy both the religion and the people of Israel about B.C.150. The heroism of the Maccabees sustained by faith in God secured the survival of the nation in preparation for the coming of the Saviour.

The Exemplars

We are now reminded that we may regard those who suffered by reason of their faith but triumphed even unto death, as an example to be followed. The picture appears to be the racing track where as competitors we

run, watched by those who went before, and having our eyes upon the supreme example, Jesus Himself. We put every effort into the race by exercising self-control, not taking on burdens which would hinder the great purpose of winning the reward. We have no scriptural grounds for supposing that those who have gone before are actually watching us, but the picture is stimulating, if a little daunting – and we are not competing against one another. In comparison we have certainly not “resisted unto blood”, but many of our dear brothers and sisters behind iron and bamboo curtains have done and are doing so at the present time. Let us never forget them in our prayers. “Striving against sin” we must NOW.

Chastisement

That we all need this at times we would all admit, though perhaps with reservations for self-righteousness is a subtle fault, and very common. Everyone wants to appear his best, and there is a continuing need for humility. We are “born to trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7), and it can do us a power of good if we are rightly exercised thereby (12:11). The acceptance with gracious patience of what we are called on to endure can be a great help to those about us who are getting weary and experiencing the weakness of old age or bearing heavy burdens. ‘Righteousness’ is a fruit we should always be bearing.

Contrasts and a Warning

Many contrasts appear in this letter. The Saviour is contrasted with men and angels. Animal sacrifice is contrasted with the most wonderful sacrifice of all. The earthly tabernacle is contrasted with the heavenly throne. We now see a contrast in approach to God. We can appreciate the terror of the Israelites when earthquake, fire and thunderous voice faced them at Sinai, and all this we are quite sure was necessary for their good. It is astonishing that the effect wore off so soon on that very occasion, and they fell into sin within forty days. How very different is the approach of the Eternal God in the person of His Son! The writer here mentions spiritual realities which cannot be seen or heard but are nevertheless equally real to faith.

“Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, City of our God!
He whose word can ne'er be broken
Formed thee for His own abode”.

The material things affect the senses, but the spiritual things affect the soul. The example of Esau is given because he did not appreciate this at all. He gave no thought to what he was giving away. What was the good of the birthright which involved the worship of the true God? He was hungry for food. We are warned that the material universe will finally be shaken, but we have a permanent kingdom, unshakable. The satisfaction of the moment must be put aside for the satisfaction of a service to God in reverence and awe. There was no remedy for Esau's profanity. He fell back from the grace of God through the failure of the moment, and could not recover (12:15). So we are warned of the final shaking (12:26 & 27).

Outside the Camp

Christians are in the world but not of it. There must be times in our lives when we are reproached for Christ's sake. This must have been especially the case with the Hebrew Christians. Some years ago we baptised a Jewish young man. So soon as his mother knew of this, she gathered his things together, forbade him the house and threw them out after him. In these tolerant times of much indifference to religion this sort of thing does not happen here, but it is happening elsewhere. There is assurance that ‘the Lord is our helper’ in such case, and comfort in the fact that Jesus Himself was rejected and put to death as a criminal outside the city. If we are rejected for behaviour that the world thinks stupid or ridiculous, we are in good company.

Our Sacrifices

Briefly stated these are “the sacrifice of praise” by our lips, “doing good”, “contributing”. Jesus is our sacrifice, and as we serve Him and offer worship together we are partaking of the altar on which He died for us, a sin offering, of which under the old covenant the worshippers could not partake. We can partake if we are identified with Him in acceptance of belief, repentance and obedience, initially in baptism, thenceforward in a sanctified life.

R. B. SCOTT.

There is a destiny that makes us brothers
None goes his way alone.
All we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Haddington, Scotland: The church here again rejoices and gives praise to God at the immersion of three souls. On the evening of Wednesday 8th March, 1978, Mrs. Anne Ewen (daughter of Bro. and Sis. James R. Gardiner): Mr. Alan Broad and Master Alan Broad (husband and son of sister May Broad) obeyed their Lord in baptism. We hope and pray that they will remain always faithful and fruitful in the Lord's service. We again thank the brethren at Tranent for the use of their meeting-house and baptistry. Miss Mary Murdie.

IN RED CHINA

The Communists not only rule the bodies of men but master their minds as well. Some 200 million copies of the last volume of Mao's works have appeared in Chinese. The book will now be published in the Mongolian, Tibetan, Uighur, Kazakh and Korean languages and in Braille.

What more can be done to spread the Word of God?

The Chinese Bible, with its hundreds of thousands of characters is written by hand by underground Christians, but they lack paper, ink and oil for their lamps. Under the best circumstances Christians have only a part of the Bible.

Many Chinese Christians have long since died under fierce terror. The brethren are very poor; they work for a bowl of rice and a pittance a day.

Pray that God will guide as to further possibilities of giving help;

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS PERSECUTED

Kravtchenko Nikolai, a Soviet soldier, wrote: "Officers beat me, not for failing in my military duties, but for my religious convictions. The same thing which happened to Ivan Moiseev (the soldier who was tortured and killed because he belonged to Christ), could happen to me. A hearty Christian greeting to all those who love the Lord".

Volodia, another soldier said: "On Sunday morning at 11.00 they called me for interro-

gation because of my faith. I looked at the time and shed tears of joy - I knew that you were all gathered at that time and that at least one of you would mention my name before God. I felt better; I knew that God would help".

Are Christian prisoners and all families suffering for Christ's Sake prayed for in YOUR Church regularly?

From: "Voice of the Martyrs".

OBITUARY

The church at Wallacestone suffered a great loss when Bro. David Dougal fell quietly and peacefully asleep in Jesus at his home on March 2nd, 1978 at the age of 70 years. While his faith, patience and influence will be missed throughout the whole district, his empty seat at Wallacestone is one which we can never hope to fill. Active to the last in preparing the Bible Study lessons and in teaching the brethren new tunes with which to praise God, he took his full share of the preaching and teaching plan for the church, with the result that his passing will be sorely felt.

Bro. Dougal's life, which is well known to all, is summed up I believe in the words of the hymn he loved to sing,

Shut in with God, the weary world forbidden,
 Shut in with God, for one blest hour.
 Shut in with God and in his bosom hidden,
 To know his saving, keeping power.
 Shut in with God, my soul desires to be
 Alone with him, who gave himself for me.
 In holy union and sweet communion,
 Shut in with God, shut in with God.

James Grant, Secretary.

THANKS

Dear brethren and friends,

I would like through the pages of the S.S. to thank you all for the cards and other tokens of love and sympathy shown at the passing of my beloved husband, Bro. David Dougal. They were much appreciated and a source of enormous comfort and consolation in my great loss. I pray God will richly bless you for your expressions of goodwill and love. On behalf of myself and my family,

Sis. Annie Dougal

WHAT IS MAN?

In everything both great and small
 We see the hand of God in all
 And in the miracles of Spring
 When everywhere in everything
 His handiwork is all around
 And every lovely sight and sound
 Proclaims the God of earth and sky
 I ask myself "Just who am I?"
 That God should send His only Son
 That my salvation would be won
 Upon the cross by sinless Man
 to bring fulfillment to God's plan
 For JESUS suffered, bled and died,
 That sinners might be sanctified
 And grant God's children such as I
 Eternal life in that Home on High.
 A Sister from Blackburn.

BORROWED BOOKS

Some considerable time ago brother David Chalmers, Dalmellington, Ayrshire, loaned out two of his books - "An Outline of My Life" by James Anderson, and "For His Name's Sake". Brother Chalmers is not now sure just to whom he gave the books but asks that the two brethren get in touch with him (or write to me). Therefore brethren, have a look through your bookcases and if you come across these books of brother Chalmer's please let him know. On the other hand, if any brother has a copy of either of those two volumes which he would be willing to give to our brother please let him, or I, know. Surely we

must return books we borrow. Thank you. Brother Chalmer's address is 62 Ness Glen Road, Dalmellington, Ayrshire.

CORRESPONDENCE CLASS

The Early History of the Church of Christ
 or the Acts of the Apostles.

Chapter 19.

- 1 Where do we find Paul now?
- 2 Why did Paul ask, 'Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?'.
- 3 If the baptism of John the Baptist was right, in that Jesus submitted to it, how was it questioned in the case of these twelve persons?
- 4 On being baptised in the name of Jesus, these men received the gifts of tongues and prophecy. Why?
- 5 Do believers immersed in to the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit receive the seal of the Spirit in our days?
- 6 Why did Paul hire the schoolroom of Tyrannus?
- 7 Describe the incident recorded in verses 13:20.
- 8 Describe in your own words, verses 21-41

(Answers to Edward Jess, 34 Charles Street, Penicuik, Midlothian, Scotland).

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICES PER YEAR - POST PAID

UNITED KINGDOM	....	....	....	....	£1.50
COMMONWEALTH	....	....	....	....	£1.50 (Surface Mail)
					£2.00 (Air Mail)
CANADA & U.S.A. (Dollar Bills)	....	....	....	....	\$3.00 (Surface Mail)
(Please add 50 cents to cover Bank charges)					\$4.00 (Air Mail)

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY
 Tel. No. Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd.,
 Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. 07737 (Langley Mill) 2266