

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE OTHER NINE

Probably nothing is more irksome than the apparent ingratitude of others. How often have we been completely disenchanted and disgusted with the ungrateful attitude we perceive in others? When we have gone out of our way to help someone and have scarcely received any acknowledgement of the fact, human nature being what it is, we have been inclined to say, "Well, that's the last time I do anything for him." If God took that attitude with us, I suppose He would do nothing for us, ever again. It is also tragically true that the victims of our ingratitude are often those who least deserve it, and who do most for us: best exemplified perhaps in the average mother tirelessly working her fingers to the bone for a thoughtless and ungrateful family; blind to what is done for them. Man is the 'offspring of God' and as a member of God's wide family is often completely ungrateful, and even oblivious, to all that God (the heavenly parent) does for him. All of us have good reason to be grateful for all the countless blessings which come down to us through the windows of heaven: for God sends the sun and the rain upon the just and the unjust, alike. In general terms, we are all inclined to be economical in our gratitude to our fellow-man, and certainly very sparing in our expressions of thanks to God, for all his many gifts.

Jesus found a similar lack of gratitude towards God even in His day, and, surprisingly, seemed to find it in a greater degree amongst 'the people of God': the Jews. Take for instance, the occasion when Christ cleansed the ten lepers (Luke 17: 11-18). "And it came to pass, as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'Go show yourselves to the priests.' And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice, glorified God. And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and He was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said, 'Were there not ten cleansed'? But where are the nine?"

Some have speculated that this incident gives a fairly representative ratio of gratitude versus ingratitude (i.e. ninety per cent of us are ingrates) but surely the picture is not as rosy as all that. Obviously Jesus was not soliciting thanks for Himself, personally, but **had expected** that all ten lepers would have wanted to give thanks, praise and glory to God for their instantaneous escape from leprosy's grip. And so, of the ten lepers cured, only one showed any gratitude or any desire to thank God, and he was not a Jew (of the people of God) as were the others, but a Samaritan.

And Samaritans were, as we know, regarded by Jews, as 'beyond the pale', dogs and worse than heathen. Is ingratitude a sin, or just an oversight of the thoughtless? Clearly Jesus had imagined that all ten lepers would have expressed thanks.

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

It seems incredible that not even one of the nine Jews felt any promptings to express thanks to their God for their wonderful release from leprosy. How could they have returned to their homes, cured, without showing any signs of gratitude? Surprising though it is: it seemed 'par for the course' at that time, and reflected a general spiritual malaise of indifference and ingratitude amongst Israelites: not entirely new. Indeed, on one occasion, when Jesus had returned to His 'home town' (Nazareth) He was so stifled by the studied indifference and evident ingratitude of God's people that He could do no mighty works there, but healed only a few sick folk (Mark 6:5). They did not regard Jesus even as a prophet but merely as 'the carpenter's son, and this prompted Jesus to say, "Verily I say unto you. No prophet is accepted in His own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias (when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land): but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed save Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city ..." (Luke 4: 24-29). The truth often hurts and we can see again, here, that the Jewish reaction to these 'home truths' from Jesus was rage and anger (even while at worship in the synagogue). Yes, there were many widows in Israel during the famine in the days of Elijah; and many lepers in Israel in the days of the prophet Elisha, but these prophets had so little honour in their own country that they bestowed their blessings elsewhere: on people apparently more worthy: on Gentiles of Sidon and Syria. What an indictment of the Jews by Elijah and Elisha for their hardness of heart, indifference and ingratitude. Whereas Elisha had ignored the many lepers in Israel, Jesus had cured nine at one and the same time, and had received thanks from none of them. Was their ingratitude a sin, or just a thoughtless oversight?

Is it possible that the spiritual Israel of today, the Church, can fall into similar ways, and be just as ungrateful; and by careless indifference fail to give glory to God; and be sparse in its thanks and praise?

The apostle Paul exhorts us (in 1 Thess. 5:18) "**Pray without ceasing, In EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS, for this is the will of God concerning you.**" Evidently it is God's wish or will that we should pray always, and in all things never omit to give thanks for all God's benefits. The psalmist urged that we should "**Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him and bless His name.**" (100:40). And we notice that the leprous Samaritan not only prostrated himself in thanks to Jesus, but with a loud voice gave glory to God.

WHAT SHALL I RENDER?

The ever recurring theme of the Psalms is, of course, to praise God in thanksgiving. Almost all the 150 Psalms contain phrases like "**O Praise the Lord, ye nations**", or "**O Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good and His mercy endures for ever**", or "**O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name, make His deeds known among the people, talk of all His wondrous works**". These random examples could easily be multiplied a hundred-fold, and one wonders what David would think of the rather muted and reserved response, today, of the world and the Church, to the goodness of God. David was not one of those thoughtless and indifferent men who pass through life receiving all, enjoying all and expecting all without ever bestowing a single thought upon the bountiful Giver, and in consequence we find him wondering what he can

give God in return, viz. **“What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits toward me?”** (Psalm 116). Most of us take everything for granted, and, as a matter of course receive the necessities of life without much effort; are rarely without them, don't envisage a time when we won't have them, and don't see any great reason for commenting on them, let alone seeking to thank any great Benefactor for them. But David lived in a society and environment much more tenuous than ours and was much more conscious of God's help and intervention. In this Psalm (116) he recounts how (as on other occasions) he was **“encompassed by sorrows of death”** and how the **“pains of hell got hold upon me”** and how he was in the straits of **“trouble and sorrow”**. **“Then called I upon the Lord”** says David, and **“He helped me; He delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears and my feet from falling.”** Perhaps it is not surprising that, in view of all this, David's natural reaction is expressed in his challenging question, previously mentioned, **“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?”** I say that this was a challenging question and so it was indeed it **challenges all of us**. What shall we render to the Lord, for all His many benefits?

DAVID'S RESOLVE

Human nature is not, by any means, all bad, and there is in most normal people a desire to respond, in kind, when they have been on the receiving end of some good deed. If someone goes out of their way to do us a favour we don't readily forget it, and indeed we often seek some way of acknowledging our appreciation in some tangible way: by doing something in return. However, when men reflect upon the **blessings of God** they see them not so much as a favour but as an indebtedness: i.e. it is God's duty to look after us. We see it as God's job to provide for the world, to give the sun and the rain, heat and cold, seedtime and harvest, clothing, shelter and food. It's God's main function and that is why He is there. This common but mistaken view was not shared by David and he understood that man would not live by bread alone, that God's interest in man extended far beyond drinking-water and daily bread and that all God's blessings (material and spiritual) were to be recognised as acts of love, grace and benevolence from a fatherly Benefactor. Even ordinary human parents do not provide for their children simply out of a sense of duty: there is much more to it than that. As Jesus said, if a child asks for bread will a human father give him a stone: or if he asks for a fish will he be given a serpent; or if he asks for an egg will he be given a scorpion: **much more** then will our heavenly Father know how to give good gifts to them that ask Him. And so David muses upon his question **“What shall I give to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?”**

Depending upon the magnitude of the good deed done to us a word of **“Thanks”** is often enough, but as in David's case, sometimes our thanks must take a more tangible form. Many of those cured and restored by the miracles of Jesus were likewise not content just to say **“thanks”** but wanted to follow Jesus and become His servants: the ten lepers notwithstanding. The Psalmist was also quite aware that he could not pay for God's blessings, even if he had been materially very rich, for God owns everything we see around us, and when we leave here we can take nothing with us. David did not intend to throw money at his responsibility (by writing a cheque) but resolved to **give himself** (lock, stock and barrel); by giving God his thanks, praise, love and obedience — a life consecrated to the Lord.

In the latter part of the Psalm David describes how he would render his life to God. He would **“take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.”** He would also **“pay his vows unto the Lord”** and we know that God has no pleasure in those who make vows and do not pay them (Ecc. 5:4). He would regard himself **“as God's servant”** holding himself ever at God's disposal and would offer God **“his sacrifices.”** Thus David's fixed resolve to demonstrate his gratitude to God by consecrating his wealth and energies, his interest and intellect, his affections and obedience

to the service and glory of God. The apostle Paul brought this attitude over into the Christian era when he said, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks unto His name." (Heb. 13:15).

CONCLUSION

Ingratitude is not endemic but fairly widespread. We can all be accused, from time to time, of seeming to be ungrateful to family and friends. And certainly we can all be accused of being less than enthusiastic in our thankfulness to God for all our many blessings. We have much for which we ought to be thankful, and surely this is borne in upon us when we see, on our TV screens, the appalling conditions in the Third World. As the hymn-writer says, if we count our many blessings we shall certainly be surprised at what the Lord has done. We also may agree with the Psalmist that a brief "Thank you" is not enough and that we should exercise our minds upon his question, "What shall I render to God, for all His benefits towards me?" What will we be prepared to do for God, in return for all His constant goodness to us? David's answer involved nothing less than his total commitment: his whole life dedicated to the praise and glory of God. He was not forced into it; he wanted to do it, and would have been satisfied with nothing less. Can we offer less?

Quite often we may actually be grateful although we do not show it. Perhaps the nine lepers were grateful for their cure albeit they did not return to say "Thank you." The omission, however, did not pass unnoticed or without comment and evidently Jesus was quite disappointed when he said, "Were there not ten cleansed. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Let us not be numbered amongst the nine. Let us not sadden God by our ingratitude, or regard His gifts as a right, but rather join with David and ask ourselves the question that he posed, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" What shall we render?

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST — A SAD FACE

"His visage was so marred, more than any man." (Isaiah 52:14).

These word-pictures of the face of Jesus are to be understood as paintings, not photographs. The difference between the two being, the photo gives the outward features, bare and cold merely, but the artist sees the soul behind the face he is painting and puts it upon the canvas. It is faith in the man that gives true human insight. The eye of faith takes in more than the eye of flesh; and the eye of love is quicker in discernment than the physical eye. Place a piece of Beethoven's music before an unmusical man, he will see nothing but dots, strokes and lines; the musician will see melody that thrills and stirs his whole nature. Just in proportion as Christ is in the heart, shall we understand Christ in the book. If faith's vision is keen, and clear, and love's eye bright and strong, we shall see beauty in "the face of Jesus Christ," and shall gaze thereon with rapturous and ineffable delight.

A "VISAGE MARRED"

The picture presented in the words of Isaiah is a sad face — a "visage marred." One translation gives the whole verse thus: "In like manner as many were shocked at Him, so disfigured was His countenance that it was no longer that of a man, and His form that it was no longer human."

There is nothing at all conflicting in this picture of a sad face and that which describes Him as "fairer than the sons of men." Certainly the face of Him, whose lips were never compressed with unholy anger, whose brow was never knit with hateful temper, and whose soul was never ruffled with one sinful thought, must have been

loveliness itself. The immaculate purity and unsullied holiness of every thought, word and action, must have illumined his features and imparted a halo of beauty to "His face." John might well say: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth."

Bartley Ellis.

GLORY IS CHARACTER

"Glory is character and nothing less, and it can be nothing more. The earth is 'full of the glory of the Lord', because it is full of His character. The 'Beauty of the Lord' is character. 'The effulgence of His 'glory' is character. 'The Glory of the Only Begotten' is character, the character which is 'fulness of grace and truth'".

Henry Drummond.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and, lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

(John 17:20-23) (RV)

JESUS ONLY

"Am I wounded? He is balm. Am I sick? He is medicine. Am I naked? He is clothing. Am I poor? He is wealth. Am I hungry? He is bread. Am I thirsty? He is water. Am I in debt? He is surety. Am I in darkness? He is sun. Must I face that black and gathering storm? He is my anchor. Am I to be tried? He is my advocate. Am I condemned? He is pardon."

F.G.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

"I would seek no more to make me happy for evermore, but a clear sight of Jesus, my Lord."

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

(There are some in the world, and in the church, who do not believe that our Lord's body was broken at His crucifixion. The following article on the subject, produced by The Trinitarian Bible Society, is re-printed herewith (by their kind permission) for consideration by readers).

Editor

BROKEN FOR YOU

"The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said. Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11 23.24

The problem stated

It is sometimes suggested that the words in verse 24, "This is my body, which is broken for you", are at variance with John 19. 36 "These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall *not be broken*"; and Exodus 12. 46 with reference to the Passover Lamb — "neither shall ye break a bone thereof". Numbers 9. 12 "nor break any bone of it"; Psalm 34. 20. "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken".

Dr. A. T. Robertson in his "Word Pictures in the New Testament", makes a highly misleading comment upon this verse — "As a matter of fact the body of Jesus was not broken (John 19.36). The bread was broken, but not the body of Jesus". The body of a person does not consist only of bones. After His resurrection the Saviour said, "... handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have". (Luke 24.39) The words of John 19. 36 " a bone of him shall not be broken", quoted by Dr. Robertson, are immediately followed by the statement in verse 37, "And again another Scripture saith, they shall look on him whom they pierced". This makes it quite clear that the Redeemer's *body*, His *flesh*, would indeed be broken, but that His *bones* would not be broken. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11. 23, 24 are consistent with this

No contradiction

There is of course no contradiction and no departure from the Passover symbolism. The *bones* of the Passover Lamb were not to be broken. The *bones* of the Lord Jesus Christ were not broken. The *body* of the Passover Lamb was certainly broken, when its blood was shed, and when it was skinned, and when the viscera and internal fat were removed and cleansed before roasting. It is equally true to say of our Lord that, while no *bone* was broken, His *body* was broken, when the crown of thorns broke the flesh of His brow, when the scourging broke the flesh of His body, when the nails broke the flesh of His hands and feet, and when the spear broke the flesh of His side. There was thus a literal fulfilment of the Passover symbolism in that His bones were not broken; and a fulfilment of Isaiah 53 — "He was wounded for our transgressions."

The omission of the words from some manuscripts

Some early transcribers of the Epistles of Paul evidently misunderstood the passage and did their best to remove what they wrongly imagined to be a contradiction. Some just dropped the word **KLOMENON**, 'broken', and left the improbable and incomplete statement, "This is my body for you". Some paraphrased by inserting **THRUPTOMENON** (broken into pieces), and in place of 'broken' some of the Latin versions put 'tradetur' or 'traditur' ('given') in place of 'frangetur' or 'franitur' ('broken') while some borrowed 'given' from Luke 22.19.

This erroneous omission affected the text of papyrus 46 and the Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Ephraemi, but early correctors of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Ephraemi detected the omission and restored 'broken'. Codex Claromontanus (D) has **THRUPTOMENON** by the first hand, corrected to **KLOMENON** by the second.

Hardly any cursive manuscripts support the omission of 'broken'. Among the few exceptions are No. 33 of the 9th century, and No. 1739 of the 10th. The Armenian of Zohrab, Origen, Cyprian, Pelagius, Cyril of Alexandria, and Fulgentius also omit 'broken'. These authorities were followed by Westcott and Hort and others in the 19th century, and led to the omission of the word from the English Revised Version and several 19th and 20th century translations in various languages.

The Received Text underlying the Authorised Version is undoubtedly correct in retaining 'broken'. It has the support of the correctors of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Ephraemi, the "Abschrift" (a 9th century copy of Codex D), G,K,P, (all of the 8th and 9th centuries). The Received Text is also supported by the majority of the Byzantine manuscripts, the most numerous class, the majority of the ancient Lectionary copies, and a considerable number of miniscules which in several respects show a degree of independence of the Byzantine Text. These agree in retaining 'broken' — No's 81, 88, 104, 181, 326, 330, 436, 451, 614, 629, 630, 1241, 1739 mg., 1877, 1881, 1962, 1984, 1985, 2127, 2492, 2495.

The disputed word is also found in manuscripts of the Peshitta and Harcleian Syriac, and the Old Latin — Claromontanus and Palatinus of the 5th century, and

Boernerianus of the 9th. The word is also preserved in the ancient Gothic version of the 4th century, and the Armenian of Usca, and is quoted in the writings of Ambrosiaster, Basil and Chrysostom, all of the 4th century, Euthalius and Theodoret in the 5th, and John of Damascus in the 8th, many of whom had access to manuscripts older than any now in existence.

No Greek manuscript evidence can be found for 'given' in this verse, and it must be assumed that the Old Latin, Vulgate and Coptic manuscripts which have this reading were affected by an early but misguided attempt to harmonise the passage with Luke 22. 19

The primitive liturgies, which have preserved the words of institution unchanged since the 4th century, all include the word 'broken', thus indicating that the word was to be found in the very ancient copies upon which these liturgies were based.

Rejection of the evidence

The weight of ancient evidence for the authenticity of "*broken for you*" has been gradually concealed by the modern versions. The Revised Version of 1881 has "*for you*" in the text, but a note admits that, "*many ancient authorities read – which is broken for you*" The Revised Standard Version note says merely, "*Other ancient authorities*", while the New American Standard Bible note says, "*Some ancient manuscripts read – is broken*". The N. E. B., N. I. V., the Good News Bible and others omit the words and have no note regarding the ancient evidence for the rejected words.

The omission of "*is broken*" by the New American Bible (R. C.) and the B. F. B. S. "Translator's New Testament" (1973), and the Good News Bible, ensures that ecumenical versions now being prepared in many languages will also omit the words without comment. The antiquity, variety, number and weight of the authorities for 'broken' in 1 Corinthians 11.24 are very substantial compared with the slight evidence for the alteration in the critical editions of the Greek and in the modern English versions. It is interesting to note that the New Berkeley Version retains the correct reading in this passage.

The inspired writers

It is not unlikely that our Lord used both expressions as He delivered the bread to His disciples, and that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew and Mark record only. "*This is my body*"; Luke includes the Saviour's words, "*which is given for you*", and Paul, guided by the same Spirit, tells us that Jesus also said, "*broken for you*". Paul was not quoting from one of the Gospels, for 1 Corinthians 11. 23-25 is one of a number of passages in which Paul very explicitly asserts that he received a direct revelation – "*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you ...*" Paul uses this expression also in 1 Corinthians 15.3 – "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received ...*"; and again in Galatians 1. 12 "*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*".

"Holding fast the faithful Word"

As the modern versions gain more general acceptance among undiscerning readers, there will be an increasing tendency to drop the familiar words – "*broken for you*" – from the communion service, and people who are familiar only with a modern version will not be conscious of their loss. Those who cherish the Bible as the inspired and holy Word of God will desire to preserve its precious truth whole and entire, and are bound to resist the gradual erosion of the words of the Divine revelation.

The Reformation versions all contained the words "*broken for you*" in 1 Cor. 11.24, and the Geneva Bible of 1560 has a note in the margin – "*Signifying ye manner of his death when his bodie shulde, as it were, be torne and broken with most grievous torments ... ye which thing the breaking of ye bread, as a figure, doeth moste lively represent*".

An edition of the Bible in 1590 places beside Beza's Latin translation from the

Greek, the Latin translation of the ancient Syriac made by Tremellius. A Latin note accompanying Beza's Latin is almost identical with that in the Geneva Bible.

The Communion service in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England quotes the words of our Lord as they are recorded by Luke — "*This is my body which is given for you*" — and these words were to be found in the Prayer Books of 1550, 1552, 1559, 1604 and 1662, and continue in use today. For this reason a congregation hearing the abbreviated reading of 1 Corinthians 11:24 in the NRB, RSV, or GNB in a public reading would not be conscious of any change in the communion service, where "*given for you*" follows the Gospel rather than the Epistle.

The Presbyterian Churches relinquished the Prayer Book, but attached great importance to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship. In each of these 1 Corinthians 11:24 "*broken for you*" is specifically quoted in relation to the communion service. This verse is found among the texts accompanying the Confession of Faith Chapter 29 — "*Of the Lord's Supper*"; the Larger Catechism, on Question 168 — "What is the Lord's Supper?"; the Shorter Catechism, on Question 96 — "What is the Lord's Supper?"; and in the Directory — "Let the words of institution be read out of the Evangelist, or out of the first Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 11:23 *I have received of the Lord, etc. to the 27th verse . . .*" (This includes "*broken for you*").

Diminish Not A Word

The Reformed Churches owed much, under God's blessing, to the example and advice of John Calvin, whose works include an article prepared for the use of the Churches of Geneva, entitled — "The Manner of Celebrating the Lord's Supper." The minister says — "Let us listen to the institution of the Holy Supper by Jesus Christ, as narrated by St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians." The familiar words of Holy Scripture then follow, including — "*broken for you*". For more than four hundred years the Reformed churches throughout the world have rightly acknowledged that the words "*broken for you*" constitute part of the Divine revelation. The words have been read, heard, and meditated upon by countless generations of the Lord's people as part of the Sacred Scripture — not merely since the dawn of the Reformation, but since the words first fell from the lips of the incarnate Son of God.

Our generation has witnessed a falling away from the worship of God; a repudiation of the authority and truth of the Word of God, a forsaking of the moral standards of the Word, and the gradual erosion of many vital passages of the written Word itself. This has not come about all at once, but gradually, step by step, and it must be admitted that the process has been aided to some extent by a lack of vigilance on the part of those who profess to be "Reformed" and "Evangelical". The present article is concerned with just one word in one verse of Holy Scripture, but the command of God extends to the preservation of His Word in all parts — *Diminish not a word.*"

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LOOK DOWN.

In his book *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Norman Vincent Peale observes that problem-solvers may be divided into two categories. In the first class are those who look up at their troubles. Unpleasant situations overwhelm them. A small stain in one's life is allowed to taint the whole fabric of living. The second group contains those who look down on their problems. A difficulty is seen for what it is, and is dealt with not from the standpoint of despair and defeat, but success and optimism.

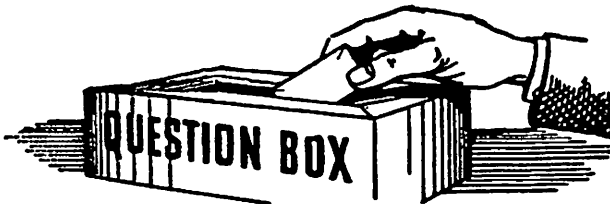
Christianity is designed to place and keep men in that second category. Jesus Christ exemplifies such an attitude. He was continually harassed by the religious leadership of his day. Because he loved the pure truth more than some of his followers did, a multitude of disciples "went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). His closest associates were so blind spiritually, that throughout his ministry they disbelieved repeated teachings about the nature of the kingdom of God (see Acts 1:6).

Furthermore, the Christ lived with the knowledge that his earthly ministry and life would come to a brutal, painful end in a very short while. At times, it would seem, Jesus became discouraged. For example, after a number of followers defected to the world, he asked the twelve betraying, perhaps a downcast mood, "Would ye also go away?" (John 6:67). And that Jesus suffered great anguish shortly preceding and during his crucifixion cannot be denied. Contemplating that rapidly-approaching event, he prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me" (Matt. 26:39). Yet Jesus didn't allow his death to preoccupy him prematurely, nor did he continually mull over some injustices or shortcoming on the part of others.

We do not find a slump-shouldered depressive in Jesus, but rather an optimistic, successful individual, often inspiring those around him. We see a Saviour who tells a paralytic, "Son, be of good Cheer; thy sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:2). We find Jesus shortly before the crucifixion exhorting his confused and fearful disciples, "In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). When Christ was confronted with a difficulty (and he encountered many), instead of anxiously anticipating it or brooding about it afterward, he would approach it riding on the crest of life. At the appropriate time, he dealt with difficulties in an intelligent, decisive manner, experiencing the appropriate emotions. Then Jesus put the problem behind him, and moved on to new challenges. He was God's only begotten Son. Power and glory were his, and he acted as though they were.

Likewise, each faithful Christian is granted tremendous privileges. God works all things for our good (Rom. 8:28). He gives us ultimate success because "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31). In short, through Christ, our Creator has placed us, too, upon the crest of life. To look up at our problems, allowing them to overwhelm us and cause us despair, is to deny our spiritual nature. To look down upon difficulties, dealing with them from a position of power and success, never allowing a brief period of anguish to mar our entire disposition is to live in harmony with what God recognises us to be.

W. Langfield.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Would you please comment on the 'cleansing' of Isaiah the prophet as recorded in Isaiah chapter 6. What significance, if any, does this have for the Church today?"

The passage of scripture mentioned refers, of course, to the call of Isaiah to the Lord God's service. However, I believe it would be wrong to consider chapter 6 in isolation from the rest of the Book, and so to aid our understanding, we must place the incident within the general framework of the Book.

Modern scholarship now seems to agree that the Book of Isaiah is comprised of

two main sections. Chapters 1-39 speak of God's condemnation of the unfaithfulness of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) because of the lapses into sin and iniquity of the leaders and the people: they went in pursuit of other gods, rebelled against the rule of the true God. Yet alongside the condemnatory language used, there runs a thread of the hope of forgiveness and a promise that a remnant of the nation will be saved. It will perhaps help to put the call of Isaiah into context if we refresh our minds as to the state of the nation at that time.

It was the reign of Omri, some 28 years after the death of Jeroboam which plunged Israel deep into the displeasure of God. (1 Kings 16:16ff). Omri established his throne in Samaria, and it was he who married his son Ahab to the Phoenician princess Jezebel. She killed the prophets of the Lord, and established the worship of Baal throughout the land. Surely every Christian knows of the confrontation on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, and how the slaying of Naboth was avenged by Jehu, a general in the army of Jehoram. Jehu appears in Scripture as a cruel and unscrupulous man, and removed all opposition to his own elevation as king. He was to reign for 28 years, and during that time, in order to gain security against Syria, he allied the nation to the growing power of Assyria. (Read 2 Kings 9,10). It was under Jeroboam 11 that the Northern Kingdom reached the zenith of its power, but as so often happens, prosperity brought ease and corruption, and the prophets — notably Amos and Hosea — constantly spoke warnings from God against the immorality of the leaders. Jeroboam's reign was to last some 41 years, and by the end of his reign the Northern Kingdom had not long to last. It is at this point that we must pick up the events of Isaiah 6.

THE CALL

The call came in the year that Uzziah, king of Judah, died. He was made king when he was sixteen years of age and he reigned in Jerusalem for fifty two years. We can pick up a lesson from what the Chronicler says about him, **“And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord . . . and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper”** (2 Chron. 26:4,5); but in verse 16 it says, **“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.”** How quickly our arrogant natures make us believe that we are stronger than God. He usurped the sacred function of the priests and was smitten with leprosy; his son Jotham had to act with him as regent.

Isaiah would, no doubt, be aware of the infidelity of the people in their relationship with God, but through the ages even to the present day, people have never realised the extent of their sinfulness until it was pointed out to them quite clearly and unambiguously; Isaiah was about to learn that very important lesson, and in the process he was to be given a vision of the glory of God.

His first mention is of God sitting upon His throne, **‘high and lifted up’**. A recurring condemnation of that nation by God was that a succession of leaders had not removed the ‘high places’. We today, of course, believe that we can worship God wherever He dwells, and as He dwells in our hearts by faith (through Christ and the Holy Spirit) we believe that a specific place is not necessary for the worship of God. However, it was not so in the idolatrous worship of the Canaanite nations; they built their altars and shrines in prominent places and these became known as the ‘high places’, so despised by God. Unfortunately, God's people copied the worship of the heathen nations around them and so time and again incurred the displeasure of God. This was a blemish even on the good rule of King Jehoshaphat in that **“nevertheless the high places were not taken away”** (1 Kings 22:43). God seemed intent on showing Isaiah that no matter how high the altars of idolatrous worship were placed, they were still in the ‘basement’, so to speak, when contrasted with the exaltation, majesty, and power of the true God. His majesty and power encompassed all nations, His glory was unmatched by any heathen god.

Isaiah was then instructed as to how God viewed arrogance and pride, those ten evils much-practised by His chosen people. He saw the seraphim around God's throne: each one had six wings; two to cover the head, two to cover the feet, and two for flying; four wings for humility before God, and only two for utility. He was learning about the arrogance, pride, and self-sufficiency of a people who had neglected the God who had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt, had supported them in their occupation of the Promised Land, and who wanted to sustain them under His benign care. The seraphim reminded him that God was the Lord of hosts, and that His glory filled the whole earth. It was at this point that Isaiah came to realise the extent of his own sinfulness, and the exceeding sinfulness of the whole nation. The vision was not in vain.

The cry of Isaiah was one of true repentance. He knew that he was a man of unclean lips, and that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. How did he come to this realisation? **"for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"**. He could not remain, of course, in the presence of God being 'unclean', so one of the seraphim took a 'live coal' from off the altar and touched his lips with it, saying, **"thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged"**. The Hebrew word for 'lip' in the O.T. usually refers to the lips as organs of speech, e.g., **"the fruit of the lips is praise"**. So far as Isaiah was concerned, he was to be the messenger of God to the nation, and sullied lips would not do for the pristine purity of the message which God wanted delivering, i.e., that the divine decision regarding the fate of the nation had been made, and that judgment was about to be given.

That which touched the lips of Isaiah is also important to our understanding. In the time of the Judges an altar could be a single pillar of stone (Jg. 6:20), but generally it was a collection of unhewn stones (see Ex. 20:25; Dt. 27:5). The primitive idea was that the deity dwelt in the stone, and would be offended if the stone were broken. Isaiah 6:6 says that the seraphim took a 'live coal' or 'ember' from the altar, but the Hebrew word used, 'ritspah', literally means 'a hot or burning stone', or, to put it another way, a 'living' stone. Surely Isaiah realised that this meant that the **living** God would be with him in whatever he undertook, for he cried out in response to God, **"Here am I; send me"**. So Isaiah was sent with God's message, and chapters 6, 7 and 8 indicate God's judgment against Israel. Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, made an alliance and wanted Judah to join them (it should be noted that at this time 'Israel' and 'Ephraim' had become synonymous terms, so powerful had the tribe of Ephraim become). Ahaz of Judah declared himself a vassal of Assyria, and the final judgment of God was worked out when Sargon 11, king of Assyria, laid siege to, and captured, Samaria, deporting all the leading inhabitants. So the nation of Israel ended; Judah also had to pay a price, but that is another story. The reader must look to the second section of Isaiah's prophecy (ch. 40-66) in order to see the extension of God's love and mercy to his chosen people, and to the out-working of the Messianic prophecies on into the N.T. culminating in the new Israel of God, the Church.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE CHURCH

What we have said up to now has been, of necessity, just a brief and sketchy record of events, but there are some important lessons for us today.

We must always realise that God will act decisively against infidelity and contravention of His will by His children. Sometimes our arrogance and pride lead us to believe that we are masters of our own eternal destiny, but doesn't the confusion and chaos of our world today teach us that we cannot even control our **immediate** problems. Let us never attribute to God the confusion which reigns in our world; the wounds are self-inflicted, and if we destroy ourselves then it is by our own actions. Surely the acts of God's chosen people in earlier days proves this to us.

I also believe that we must realise that the Church is not a spiritual edifice built by God for our pleasure **in spite** of ourselves. We have been cleansed from sin to serve the living God, and we serve Him as 'living stones' not as inanimate ones built into an unresponsive edifice. Our sacrificial altar, as it were, is Christ, and praise be to God, **He lives**. We must echo the words of the Hebrew writer, "**We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle . . . Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come**" (Heb. 13:10-15). Let God be true in all things. Let the Church be strong in upholding His will. Let us, with all our strength, promote His benign rule throughout our world today. Thus shall we please Him, and that is surely what we want to do.

In conclusion, I think I should point out to any reader who may not be a Christian in the way the N.T. teaches, that there is only one way to please God in response to the Gospel. We must believe (and 'believing' always implies 'doing' in the Bible), we must repent and confess Christ as Saviour and Son of God; we must then be baptised (immersed in water) for the remission of sins, and then we must strive throughout our lives to live the Christian life according to God's Word. That is the God-given way to become a citizen of the new Israel of God, the Church.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden,
20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, WS3 6ES)

THE WORD OF GOD

Here are a few good points to remember about God's Word and the chapter and verse of the Bible where they are found:

I. **What is the word of God?** John 17:17 tells us that it is **the word of truth**. Ps. 119:105 says it is a **lamp and light**. Luke 8:11 says it is **the seed of the Kingdom**. In Peter 1:23 we read that it is **the incorruptible seed**. Eph. 6:17 teaches us that it is **the sword of the spirit** and Heb. 4:12 adds that it is **quick and powerful**. John 6:63 says it is **the spirit and the life**. We find in Acts 13:26 that it is **the word of life**. 2 Cor. 5:19 tells us that it is **the word of reconciliation**.

II. **What does the Word of God do?** In 2 Tim. 3:15 we read that it makes one **wise unto salvation**. James 1:21 tells us that it **saves the soul**. In Acts 20:32 we find that it **builds us up**. It **discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart** according to Heb. 4:12. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 we are taught that it **completely furnishes us unto every good work**. John 15:3 tells us that it **cleanses us from the evil** and it **makes one free** according to John 8:32. It tells us **how to behave ourselves in the house of God**. (1 Tim. 3:15). James 1:25 we find that the New Testament is the **perfect law of liberty** and in Heb. 10:19-20 that it **contains the new and living way to heaven**. The old law was only temporary in that the sins of the people were rolled forward a year at a time and that done by the shedding of the blood of animals. (Heb. 10:1-4). It required the shed blood of the sinless, stainless, spotless Son of the Living God on Calvary's cruel cross that mankind might be saved eternally in heaven. There is now a **NEW and living way to heaven**, although it is more than 1900 years old, (Heb. 10:19-20). The old way was done away at the cross and it was superseded by the new way.

III. What is the new way?

1. Hear the word. Mark 12:29; Rom. 10:17.
2. Believe it. John 8:24; Rom. 10:10.
3. Repent of sins. Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30.
4. Confess Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10.
5. Be baptized for the remission of sins. Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16;

Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21.

6. After these things are done we must live the Christian life as God directs. When we come to the river of death we can go across unafraid, there to enjoy the sunlight of God's eternal love. We, as Christians, are sometimes prone to neglect the **last major point** in this new way – Rev. 2:10 sums it up – **BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.**

C. Cleveland

THE CONTENTIOUS ATTITUDE

William Barclay once wrote, “. . . any argument in which the Christian is involved must be carried on in a tone and in an atmosphere which God can hear with joy. No debates have been so acrimonious as theological debates. The tragic thing is that no differences have caused such bitterness as religious differences.” Too often in our zeal for “the faith,” we develop a contentious attitude.

One possible example of such people would be the church at Ephesus as described at the end of the first century. Jesus through John said, “I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first” (Rev. 2:4). This “first love” could mean that their first enthusiasm and zeal were gone, but in light of their present works, patient endurance, toil etc., this is very unlikely. Most commentaries prefer the meaning here that their continual fight against false teachers had killed their love. In defending the truth they had become bitter and hostile. They were doctrinally sound, as we would say, but their attitude was deplorable.

Too often we are this way. One elder in the church recently remarked to me, “If we would go after the world with as much zeal and time as we have to fight one another, it is no telling what we could do.” This reminded me of a statement I had read by Charles Caleb Colton: “In politics as in religion, it so happens that we have less charity for those who believe the half of our creed, than for those that deny the whole of it.”

When we disagree, then, we should strive to not be disagreeable or to have the contentious spirit. “**Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you know how you ought to answer every one.**” “**Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with *gentleness and reverence***”

S. Williams.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 7	2 Kings 5:1-19	Luke 17:1-19
July 14	Genesis 19:1-29	Luke 17:20-37
July 21	Proverbs 30:1-14	Luke 18:1-27
July 28	Isaiah 53	Luke 18:28-43

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Many commentators see in Luke 17:22-37 statements concerning the second coming of Jesus. I personally do not concur with their views as I am persuaded that these words have everything to do with the destruction of Jerusalem

by the Romans in A.D. 70 and nothing to do with the return of Christ at an unknown day. For example, I give you one reason for taking this position.

In I Corinthians 15:51-52 we are told how quickly the end will come when Jesus returns to judge the world in righteousness: “**We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**”. Please note that great transformation will occur “**in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . .**” How then do these words square

with what Jesus said as recorded in Luke 17:31: "In that day, he who shall be on the housetop and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him not return back", if one believes that they refer to the same event. Dear reader, surely it was pointless to give such warnings if there was no opportunity to act.

We read: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left" (17:34-36). What does it mean here: "the one shall be taken?" Reference to Matthew 24 will answer this question for us. In verses 39-41, the record says: "And he knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left." I submit that the clause: "and took them all away" (verse 39) refers to the death of people and the word "taken" in the following two verses has the same meaning. Albert Barnes commented: "The word taken may mean either to be taken away from the danger—that is, rescued, as Lot was (Luke 17:28,29), or to be taken away by death. Probably the latter is the meaning."

OFFENCES

Jesus said: "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea, than he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against you seven times in a day and seven times in a day turn again to you saying, I repent; you shall forgive

him" (17:1-4).

Alexander Campbell has written: " 'Offences must come;' and if possible, they must be healed. To cut off an offender is good; to cure him is better; but to prevent him falling is best of all. The Christian spirit and system alike inculcate vigilance in preventing; all expedition in healing offences; and all firmness in removing incorrigible offenders. It teaches us to regard all offences as acts of impiety or acts of immorality; sins against our brethren, or sins against God alone; the omission of right, or the commission of wrong."

An outstanding book on the subject of Offences is the late Carl Ketcherside's *A Clean Church*. Under personal offences he wrote: "The reasons for limiting private offences in scope and of providing for their settlement before they reach the public notice are these:

- 1) To make for ease of adjustment of the difficulty. The more people who become entangled in an affair, the more involved it becomes.
- 2) To limit the influence of trespass on the lives of weaker brethren.
- 3) To keep the church from being distracted from its major task of saving humanity.
- 4) To keep the world from blaspheming the gospel of Christ.

God's arrangement being what it is, he who makes public a private offence, without applying all corrective remedies, violates God's law and thwarts the divine purpose. His sin may become greater than the original offence against him. It is amazing how members of the Body will side-step the divine provisions. Only those who love the church more than personal vindication will suffer in silence."

JESUS AND CHILDREN

We read: "And they brought unto Him also infants, that he would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked Him. But Jesus called them unto Him and said: 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I

say unto you. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (18:15-17). These words have been used to justify infant sprinkling. For example, they are quoted in the *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland* under the heading "Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to Infants". Of course, to read infant baptism into this passage is to read into it something that simply is not there.

David King many years ago wrote a pamphlet entitled *Why Baptize the Little Ones?* In it he wrote: "No one for two hundred years after the birth of Christ ever named infant baptism, so far as evidence has reached our time. No Greek or Latin Father of that period ever used the word baptism with allusion to babes. Tertullian, who flourished about two hundred years after the apostles, is the earliest writer who mentioned the baptism of infants, and he names it to oppose it. 'Our Lord says indeed, Do not forbid them to come to me. Therefore, let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they understand; when they are instructed whither it is they come; let them be made Christians when they know Christ.'"

Personally, I believe that "little children" are in the kingdom of God. Jesus said "... for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (v.14), or, "the kingdom of heaven is composed of such." As Adam Clarke has commented: "A great part of God's kingdom is composed of such literally; and those only who resemble little children shall be received into it . . . Christ loves little children because He loves simplicity and innocence; he has sanctified their very age by passing through it Himself—the holy Jesus was once a little child."

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Riches in the Bible are not condemned as such. What is condemned is the love of money (I Timothy 6:9-10). There is no denying that this young ruler laboured to keep the commandments of God (18:21). Mark in his gospel record

made an interesting comment: "The Jesus beholding him loved him . . ." (10:21). However, He went on to say: "Yet you lack one thing: sell all that you have and distribute unto the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (v. 22). We go on to read: "And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful; for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And they that heard it said, Who the can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (23-27).

Some points to note here are:

- 1) Riches are a danger.
- 2) Earthly riches are a great obstacle to salvation.
- 3) Riches tend to make a man selfish.
- 4) Riches must not become an idol which displaces God.

The comment of the disciples (verse 26) must be seen in the light of Jewish thought at that time, which was that prosperity was equated with goodness, Jesus' teaching was a challenge to this view.

Ian S. Davidson,
Motherwell.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Kirkcaldy: The Kirkcaldy Annual Social was held on the 6th April. We would like to thank all who came to be with us on that day. Our grateful thanks also go to those who took part in the programme. We all enjoyed our times spent with brother and sister Nisbet over the week-end.

I would like to thank all those who notified us of the intended numbers for the Social, either by post or telephone. This small gesture helps greatly when trying to cater for a crowd. A fine day of fellowship was had by all.

Ruth Moyes (Sec.)

GHANA REPORT

In the past month I have received many letters from Brother Bill Cook. One of Brother Cook's tasks was to assure the Brethren that the money that had been sent to Ghana had been used as directed. Before beginning the Ghana Appeal I was informed some appeals in the past had sadly gone wrong and caused more problems than they solved. The feedback from Ghana I admit has disappointed me, but I am very happy to report this month that the money sent to date has been accounted for. About 95% has been used as directed and the other 5% wisely used, with discretion for unforeseen problems. I received an eight page financial report from Bill with a breakdown of the allocations. Bill has taken some Brethren to Opticians to get glasses. He has very briefly informed me of another new congregation at Aflao, on the TOGO border. I have received many photographs in the past month which shed a new light on my understanding of the problems that are facing the Brethren in Ghana. One photograph in particular shows the church building in Huhunya. It consists of six wooden poles in the ground about seven feet high which forms a rectangle. This is boarded, like a spar and space fence to five feet high. The roof is corrugated iron. Nevertheless, the church is growing in Ghana. God does not dwell in fine

buildings, but in the hearts of those who love and obey Him.

I have received some letters from Brethren in Ghana who have asked me to express their thanks to those who have contributed to the appeal and uplifted their spirits.

Bill has now had the time to travel around and give a better overall view of the needs of our Brethren in Ghana. With the agreement of the Brethren that he has met with to date, the appeal this month and probably for a few months to come will be for money for the spreading of the Gospel Message in Ghana.

Donations should be made out to "Graeme Pearson Ghana Appeal" and sent to 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel: 0383 728624.

Oh, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains (Shakespeare on strong drink).

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