Believer's Magazine



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Editorial

The world always summons up enough energy to greet each New Year with an enthusiasm that so often masks the drudgery the outgoing year has brought them. Glowing optimism is at least the impression words create, even if deep in the heart despair's icy grip is the felt reality. Hope seems to be in the air and a better year is always in prospect, we are told.

The Christian should face the New Year with the same buoyant energy and sure hope as he would face every new day, his inner man renewed and the certain hope of the Lord's coming before him. But not because men are celebrating a New Year: his outlook should not be calendar-induced but the product of the Spirit's dealings with him. Nor should the Christian be expecting or suggesting that the year or the day will be better or less fraught with uncertainty than the outgoing year.

Let us recognise that frustration and uncertainty are characteristic of man's fallen state. He is frail and so has no hold on this life. He is liable to disease and death. The world of 1998 is to the thinking man fast-moving and perhaps more uncertain than that frequented by his forefathers. Brought to bear on his circumstances are forces he cannot control, not all of which advance his cause. And it will remain so until a Man reigns in righteousness and true peace unseats all that threatens and unsettles.

Yet so many would try to minimise the factors that leave the worldling unfulfilled in his present circumstances and unsure of his future. Politicians offer security; insurance companies peddle their policies; the laughter of fools beckons and alcohol provides a last resort. But the root cause is untouched.

The Christian encounters that world. He boasts not of tomorrow, not daring to speak of trading a year in this city or that (James 4:13). He takes the gifts that enhance each day as from his Lord, not presuming that health or wealth will be his, but ever seeking grace to learn "in whatsoever state" he is, "therewith to be content" (Phil 4:11).

Of course for him there is a refuge from the storms of life, untried by the religious, unflattering to the spirited and the proud, unwanted by the self-sufficient. Simple faith stands where these will not stand and speak of a shelter in "the Rock that is higher than I" even "when my heart is overwhelmed" (Ps 61:2-3). That Rock has withstood the storms of life; it would remain unmoved if the very earth was shaken. And there is honey in that Rock, sweet to the taste of all who have tasted life's bitter disappointments (Ps 81:16). To that Rock that ever follows him into 1998 (1 Cor 10:4) the Christian turns for shelter, for sustenance, for sweetness. Under its shadow he will sit and, whatever his circumstances, with grace confess with another, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight" (Song 2:3).

For the Christian 1998 is not to be greeted with empty words of spurious hope. No hollow ring will mark his testimony to One who "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

TW

Heavenly Things (2)

by Donald Cameron, Muirhead

Our Heavenly High Priest

Having considered a little of the Apostle of our confession (Heb 3:1), it would be consistent with our heavenly calling to look at the Lord Jesus as our great High Priest. The present ministry of the Lord as our great High Priest would be one of prevention, succour and sympathy with the people of God that they be helped toward heaven and home.

The Lord Jesus has now entered into the presence of the Father to appear on our behalf (Heb 9:24). In that intercessory ministry there is a number of points we would note:

1. **High Priestly Association** (Heb 2:13)

Heb 2:13 makes clear the importance of the Lord Jesus voluntarily partaking of manhood, sin apart, with a view to identifying Himself with the many aspects of human experience. The object of that experience was His taking up high priestly service as a glorified and ascended Man at God's right hand (Ps 110:1-4; Heb 5:1).

2. **High Priestly Altitude** (Heb 4:14)

In Heb 4:14 we learn three things:

What the Lord Jesus is – "We have a great high priest"

Where the Lord Jesus is – He is "passed through the heavens"

Who the Lord Jesus is – "Jesus the Son of God".

What altitude is seen in the Lord's return to the glory!

3. **High Priestly Attitude** (Heb 4:15)

The Lord who has passed through the heavens is presently "above all heavens" and has entered into heaven itself for the saints; although having arrived there with such glory, He can still be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

Little wonder the poet has said that there is not a pang which rends the heart, but the Man of sorrows shares a part; indeed many have proved it is the major part. Here we may have sorrow without apparent reason; in the glory we will have the reason without the sorrow.

4. **High Priestly Appointment** (Heb 5:5-9)

We have here a contrast between the historical priesthood of Aaron and that of our Lord Jesus, in particular in relation to His appointment to office. Much is to be learned from reading Exod 28-29 in respect of Aaron's appointment.

He is Son (Ps 2:7)
as meeting the moral requirements of the Father.
He is officially the ascended Man at God's right hand (Ps 110:4).
He is a Man with manhood experience (Heb 5:7).

In Heb 5 there are at least three fundamentally important qualifications in relation to the office of Priest now filled by our Lord. The divine order of these qualifications is:

He is Son (Ps 2:7) as meeting the moral requirements of the Father.

He is officially the ascended Man at God's right hand (Ps 110:4).

He is a Man with manhood experience (Heb 5:7).

We learn that though He were a Son essentially, yet learned He obedience experimentally by the things which He suffered. In a very experimental way He learned the cost of obedience, having never known what it was to be disobedient. How unlike the first man Adam (Gen 3:17-19)!

The result of this complete or rounded experience is that our Lord is constituted author of eternal salvation (Heb 5:9-10; 6:20).

5. **High Priestly Administration** (Heb 10:21 RV)

Having a great High Priest over the house of God we learn of the Lord's administration in those matters that are priestly and spiritual during this period of the grace of God (1 Pet 2:5-9; 1 Tim 3:15-16).

These things were seen as principles in the administration of both Moses the apostle and Aaron the high priest in relation to the tabernacle, then the divide centre on earth, "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:44). See Exod 25 and 40.

In Numbers too we note their activities in relation to the movement of the tribes and their ministries. See Num 10.

Our object in considering the Apostle and High Priest of our confession is that we might develop our spiritual experience to understand and avail ourselves of the preventive character of the heavenly priesthood of Christ.

The Pricelessness of a Human Life

Much in my civilisation destroys individuality: the massing of men and women in large cities, the knowledge I have gained of the teeming millions of the world's population, the vision which science gives of the immense spaces of the astronomer. These oppress me with the sense of personal insignificance. But God is careful of each beating immortal heart. He destroys Jericho; but saves Rahab. He takes David from the sheepfolds. He sends one of the angels from the throne to assure Isaiah that his iniquity is purged. He sees Nathaniel under the fig-tree. He meets Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. I am of greater value to Him than a whole universe of material things. For me He has provided redemption through the shameful death of His beloved Son. To me He has given His quickening Spirit. Never let me dream that I am of trifling account to God.

Selected

Give Ye Them To Eat (3)

by the late Tony Renshaw, Wythenshawe

John omits any reference to the withdrawal to the desert by the Lord and the twelve for a season of rest. He omits the fact that the Lord spent the hours healing the sick and teaching the people. Nor does he mention that it was evening when He eventually fed the people. Instead he provides information absent from the synoptics. When the Lord saw the crowds approaching, He asked Philip, whose home was in nearby Bethsaida, where they should buy bread for the people to eat. Philip did not answer the question but pronounced the venture impossibly expensive, "Two hundred pennyworth (eight months' wages) of bread, is not sufficient for them, that everyone of them may take a little" (John 6:7).

Philip didn't realise that the Lord was testing him, possibly by giving him an opportunity to declare his faith in the infinite resources of the Son of God. Perhaps the Lord gives us similar opportunities to declare our confidence in Him. Do we make better use of them than Philip did? In any event the solution to the problem was near at hand. Andrew spoke up: "There is a lad here..." Leon Morris *(Commentary on John's Gospel)* tells us that 'the word for "boy" is a double diminutive, probably meaning "little boy".' If the boy was small, so were his barley loaves and fish. Indeed the food itself was of small value, for Philo of Alexandria, a comtemporary of Christ and His apostles, wrote that as a foodstuff, barley meal was of "doubtful merit, suited for irrational animals and men in unhappy circumstances"! So everything about the boy and his food seemed little in both substance and value. But the Lord knew all the time what He would do. He knew that He would use this un-named boy and his meagre food in meeting the vast needs of the crowd. "But God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor 1:27-29).

Without John's account, we would assume from the three synoptists that the loaves and fish belonged to the twelve. But this was not so. They belonged to the boy. So at some un-recorded moment he handed them over to Andrew to be given to the Lord. The Lord would never have accepted that food without the owner's cheerful consent. Did the boy begin by offering just one loaf and one fish? They would have been sufficient. Indeed the Lord, the maker of all things, did not need the boy's food at all. But He deigned to use it. The truth is that He lays claim to all our resources. Our gifts, our time, our homes, our possessions, should all be at His disposal. It is wonderful that He allows us to contribute to His work in any way. He could carry on perfectly well without us.

But another principle is illustrated for us here. When the Lord required the twelve to go and see what resources they had at the beginning, He was ensuring that they would learn the paucity and inadequacy of those resources. He wanted them to grasp the

extent of their poverty. We are prone to exaggerate the value of our resources and the quality of our gifts. We attach too much importance to our assumed attainments. What is worse, we tend to diminish the work of others and to overvalue our own ministry. We must learn that in ourselves we are impoverished, destitute of all personal merit and lacking all inherent worth.

"Bring them hither to me" (Matt 14:18). It was only when the Lord took possession of the food that He was prepared to use it. Only then would He make so much of so little. These lives of ours are best yielded to Him, root and crop, body, soul and spirit, unreservedly and without reluctance.

We must give Him the driving seat of our lives if we wish to be of service to Him. We must appoint Him ship's captain and set Him at the helm. We must give Him His rightful place and keep to our proper place. We must take our orders from Him if we wish to be fruitful in His service. And our obedience must be swift and willing. This is illustrated in our narratives: "He *commanded* the multitude to sit down on the grass...He *commmanded* (the disciples) to make all sit down...and they sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties." William Lane writes that "The arrangement of the multitude into table companies and field groups would permit a quick estimation of the number present. Five thousand men was an immense gathering since large neighbouring towns like Capernaum and Bethsaida had only 2000-3000 inhabitants each".

"...looking up to heaven, he blessed (i.e. gave thanks) and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples..." The Lord was never out-of-touch with heaven. It was His Father's house and His homeland. Communion with His Father was unclouded and unbroken, and was the unfailing joy of His heart.

We must give Him the driving seat of our lives if we wish to be of service to Him.

And gratitude for His food was never a formality with the Lord and should never become so with us. Nor should we be hurried or hesitant in bowing our heads in public places, for this simple witness may be a link in the chain of blessing for some observant soul. We are under the gaze of men more often than we realise, and we are never out of the Lord's sight, day or night. Members of the armed services may find that to give thanks for their food and to kneel by their bedsides brings ridicule upon them. But such ridicule may conceal respect for the believer's courage, respect which may lead to conviction of sin and faith in Christ. Not that we are to parade our piety and to behave like Pharisees!

Is There Not A Cause?
(1 Samuel 17:29)

by DC Hinton

When David uttered the above words he expressed an appreciation of the need for some action to be taken for the maintenance of the glory of God which was being brought into shame. Is not this the position today concerning assembly testimony?

The book of Judges presents a lamentable picture of the state of the nation of Israel during days when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud 21:25). Although this is the last verse in the book, the events recorded in chs.17-21 actually took place earlier in the book and show the character of the nation during the whole period covered by Judges.

These were years when the ark of the covenant appears to have been ignored, the only reference to it being in 20:27. This led to the attitude shown to the house of God in 1 Sam 2. They were years of low moral standards. The nation was imbibing the practices of the surrounding tribes and thereby failed to represent Jehovah as they were meant to do. The nation was divided, for it was only as a result of the ministry of Samuel that a measure of unity was regained.

Yet during those years God was working in response to the prayer of a woman, Hannah. He was preparing a man in secret who would bring the nation back to Himself in repentance. (We must remember that the opening chapters of 1 Samuel took place during the times of the Judges. Samuel was born during the same decade as Samson.)

Are we not living in similar days? Many believers, individually and collectively, do what is right in their own eyes, irrespective of what the word of God clearly states. Are we as exercised about the position as Hannah was? Have we considered what kind of spiritual heritage we are leaving for our children and grandchildren? Should not all God's children be burdened about the present position?

Have we considered what kind of spiritual heritage we are leaving for our children and grandchildren?

In the days of the Judges God sent enemies into different parts of the land – Philistines, Moabites, etc. In this way He sought to bring Israel to a realisation of the seriousness of their departure from Him; this should have resulted in repentance and a cry to Him to step in and meet their need of deliverance. But it was not until they obeyed the ministry of Samuel that the Philistines "came no more into the coast of Israel" (1 Sam 7:13).



Is our God acting in a similar way today? Is this why He has allowed the rapid spread of Islam in England, even as He did in North Africa centuries ago? Similarly with the spread of extreme charismatic cults. Is His desire to bring believers everywhere to consider their ways, to repent of their departure from His Word and to sincerely return to ways of pleasing Him?

We will consider this matter in more detail under three headings:

1. The state of assembly testimony today.
2. The causes of this position.
3. What should be done to remedy this situation.

The state of assembly testimony today

Readers will appreciate that this article is an overall view and it is recognised that there are nevertheless areas of encouragement. It is written, not in a spirit of criticism, but in an endeavour to arouse concern and prayer, both individual and collective, regarding the situation.

When we consider the very large number of assemblies that have ceased to exist during the last ten years the seriousness of the position is evident. If this continues where will our descendants find fellowship?

Just as serious is the fact that many of those that remain have only a handful of believers in fellowship and these are often of advanced years. Some are able to continue only because of help from neighbouring assemblies. The days of such gatherings, if things continue as they are, are inevitably numbered.

Then, if we are honest, among those that are left are many where the believers are deeply divided. What is their future where there is no unity?

Even more serious is the position of those companies who have deliberately disobeyed the clear teaching of the word of God. Some have appointed paid pastors; others have agreed that sisters can take part audibly in the assembly gatherings, in clear contravention of the word of God (1 Cor 14:34). The covering of the sister's head, so important as demonstrating the headship of Christ, is so often ignored. In fact a number of such gatherings cannot be scriptural assemblies at all.

There is a lack of separation, both collectively and individually. Some assemblies have been influenced by the ecumenical movement, joining from time to time in interdenominational activities. In some cases this has led to the platform being occupied by those not in assembly fellowship, who therefore do not agree with what we seek to teach and practise. Other believers feel free to have, so to speak, a foot in both camps. Others see no need to keep clear of worldly entertainments while some will engage in politics.

As a result the Lord's Supper is losing its position of supreme importance. It is sometimes curtailed to allow for other activities, or tacked on to the end of a Family Service. Thus God is being robbed, even as Eli's sons robbed Him and Israel did in Malachi's day.

Micah (12)

by JM Riddle, Cheshunt

Chapter 6:8-16

In our previous study, we noticed God's *controversy* with His people 6:1-3; God's *care* for His people vv.4-5, and God's *demands* on His people vv.1-8, where God told his people what He did *not* require from them (vv.6-7), and what He *did* require of them (v.8). We have already considered vv.6-7. We must now consider v.8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" We must look at this in two ways:

God's requirements of His people

a) "To do justly." The word is used widely in the OT. See, for example, Deut 16:19, "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" (see also Lev 15:15,35). So there was to be complete equity, honesty and integrity. We may not be open to bribery and corruption, but it is not unknown for decisions affecting assembly life to be influenced by family and social considerations. The word is used in Prov 16:11 with reference to business transactions: "a *just* weight and balance are the Lord's." God's word must govern *all* our relationships, and *every* aspect of our lives.

b) "To love mercy." This is a divine characteristic. The same word is used in 7:18, "he delighteth in *mercy*." It was a lesson that Jonah sorely needed to learn! (see Jonah 4). Scholars suggest that the word "mercy" conveys the idea of lovingkindness. We are exhorted to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph 4:32). It is most important to maintain "all the counsel of God", but we must do so in the right way. It is sadly possible to be completely orthodox, but so hard with it! There was little mercy in Micah's day, where the princes "eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot" (3:1-3). We must be careful not to practise spiritual cannibalism (Gal 5:15).

c) "To walk humbly with thy God." The NT abounds with teaching on this subject, which emphasises its necessity and importance. For example, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil 2:3). Humility is essentially an attitude of mind. If pride exhibits itself in self-assertion, then humility exhibits itself in self-abnegation. We should notice the Lord's teaching in this connection: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be greatest (perhaps *greater*: see JND margin) in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3).

God's requirements seen perfectly in Christ

a) He did "justly." There was no iniquity in Him. There was no iniquity in His dealings with rich and poor. He displayed no bias towards the higher stratas of Jewish society. The crowds "murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner" (Luke 19:7). He faithfully condemned religious hypocrisy. He was equally faithful at Jacob's well, saying to the woman, "Thou

hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband".

b) He loved "mercy." This is made abundantly clear in John 8: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Blind Bartimaeus proved that the Lord Jesus loved mercy: His cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me", was wonderfully answered. The Lord Jesus completely fulfilled the ancient prophecy, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa 42:3; Matt 12:20).

c) He walked "humbly." The Lord Jesus never sought publicity, and He never performed a miracle for His own benefit. After the healing of the deaf and dumb man, "He charged them that they should tell no man" (Mark 7:36). After the transfiguration, "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead" (Mark 9:9). He always waited the Father's time. Hence we read, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him".

The final paragraph in this chapter is introduced by the words, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." It deals with:

His Punishment of His People vv.9-16

The use of the rod is predicted: "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it...therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee" (vv.9,13).

The recognition of punishment, v.9.

A wise man recognises divine discipline, and its necessity. "And the man of wisdom shall see thy name". This is elsewhere translated, "And wisdom looketh on thy name" (JND). Whilst this passage deals with divine judgment on sin, we must not forget that God disciplines His people in order to produce still greater conformity to His mind and will. Hebrews 12 is essential reading on this subject.

The reason for punishment, vv.10-13.

The conditions required in v.8, were lacking in God's people:

(a) They did not "do justly." There were "treasures of wickedness" through "scant measure." In other words, ill-gotten gains through malpractices in business. There were "wicked balances" and "deceitful weights" (vv.10-11).

(b) They did not "love mercy." We read about "violence" in v.12.

(c) They did not "walk humbly." They were given to "lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth" (v.12). Divine judgment was inevitable: "Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins" (v.13).

The result of punishment, vv.14-16

God's people would be left with unfulfilled expectations. Disaster would overtake them when everything looked so promising. These verses recall Hag 1:6,9. We cannot expect the "joy of the Lord" to be our strength (Neh 8:10), if we live without Him. Sadly, Judah had not learnt from the history of Israel. "The statutes of Omri (he established Samaria as Israel's capital) are kept, and all the words of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels". Although Israel was now in captivity, Judah remained influenced and contaminated by the infection she contracted through compromise (see 2 Chron 21:6 etc). Compromise leads to disaster.

The Drink Offering

by TJ Thompson, Alaska

There are five different pasages which must be read and meditated upon to appreciate the truth of the drink offering. They are Gen 35:14-15; Num 15:1-12; 28:1-25; Phil 2:12-18 and 2 Tim 4:6. Each of these portions mentions this lesser known offering and a knowledge of the context and background of each, will help us to be in the good of it.

An Offering of Appreciation

Wherever this offering is mentioned it seems to do with God's blessings for His people. In Genesis, Jacob seems to be appreciative of the *person and place of God and His purpose.* The Numbers passages suggest increased appreciation of the *person of Christ and His preciousness.* Paul in Philippians rejoices in their witness as the *people of God and their proclamation,* and Paul writes to Timothy of his departure and hope regarding the *parousia of Christ as potentate.*

The Person and Place of God and His Purpose (Gen 35)

The Genesis meditation needs a little understanding of what made Jacob offer a drink offering. First Jacob as a lonely man is leaving, but God had a purpose which included the enjoyment of communion in the place of God's presence (Gen 28:15). However, moral suitability is required for such privilege thus we have Jacob learning by the weary years in Padan-aram with God's discipline there. When the Lord said "Return..." (31:3) it seemed that Jacob got to Shechem in Canaan and settled there, but this was only partial obedience. In His purpose God used this for Jacob and allowed it to condition him to be eager to fully obey when He called again (35:1). Jacob had "settled down" in Shechem and the whole resulting experience brought heart grief over family defilement, deceit and despair (34:30).

When God's call came, "go up to Beth-el..." (35:1), Jacob was instantly aware of the *purity of the place,* and that he was unfit, for he knew it was a place of fear (28:17). God had changed the man and made him ready for progress. Here we should note Jacob's call, "put away", *renunciation* (see 2 Cor 4:2) also his conditions, "be clean", *purification* (1 Pet 1:16). Then "change your garments", *sanctification* (1 Thess 4:3). At Beth-el God revealed a new name *for* Jacob; "Israel", and His new name *to* Jacob; "God Almighty". Jacob was now so morally suited to enjoy the person of the house of God "El-beth-el" that he went back and set up a pillar of stone with his memories of "the stone" back in 28:18. How like our own memories when God met us as crooked Jacobs and revealed the way to heaven from earth, and told us something of His *purpose* for our lives. Does this not make us want to enter into Jacob's joy? "God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went" (35:3). His soul rejoiced in the Lord and in the altar (my acceptance). He now came to Beth-el a *loving* man, and in *appreciation of the God of the place,* and of *His purpose.* It is in this condition that he poured out



his drink offering of appreciation bearing his new name of "Israel". It is significant that on top of this he then poured oil which would speak of the Holy Spirit; it is He who enables us to make moral choices for the enjoyment of our inheritance in Christ. In this renewed spiritual condition his life continued, thus "Israel journeyed" (v.21).

The Person of Christ and His Preciousness (Num 15)

Despite this book setting forth Israel's sad period of wandering, yet in the previous chapter there is an interesting glimpse given: "But Joshua...and Caleb...lived still" (14:38). Alive in an impossible situation; it is in such situations that God revives *hope*. Thus God then spoke *prospectively*, "When ye come into the land" (15:2), and hope was revived through God's *promise* and its *prospect*. In the wilderness they had no oil or wine, they needed to cross over Jordan and into the land to possess their inheritance of vineyards and olive yards. All had to be cultivated before they could enjoy it, therefore *gladness and joy lay ahead*. Here we should remember that Israel's inheritance was a *place*, but ours is the *person* whom the offerings foreshadow. They were given as beautiful types of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. *The Meal Offering* with its fine flour speaking of His life of *purity and holiness*, the *Burnt Offering* of His *death and absolute devotion to the will of God* – these two offerings were inseparable! There was also the *Peace Offering* whereby He made it possible to enjoy *communion with God*. All of these three offerings were sweet savour offerings to God, and in them the offerer was prominent in his presentation by increase and balance of the oil and wine. These types speak of our glorious Lord in various ways, "a tenth deal of flour" (His humanity) mingled with "the fourth part of an hin of oil" (His deity). Here is divine conception by the Spirit of God (Matt 1:20). We speak of *hypostatic union* – "God manifest in flesh". This has "the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering...with the burnt offering...for one lamb" (v.5). As we view all this as one combined offering we rejoice with God in His Son, believing, though we scarce understand the wondrous person in His coming "to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10:7). In v.4 the burnt offering and meal offering are inseparable, reminding us of His spotless purity in life and death Godward. Need we then wonder at the songs which open the Gospel of the peerless Son of Man (Luke).

In the ram as meal offering (vv.6-7) we have Christ seen in his *consecration*, in the oil the Holy Spirit and in the wine that "which cheereth God and man" (Jud 9:13; Ps 104:15). In the bullock as burnt offering (v.8) we have Christ as the *patient enduring one*. Here the drink offering is increased to half an hin of both oil and wine. Our joy in the Spirit will increase with our increased appreciation of Christ.

Books

The Biblical Doctrine of Substitution by Michael Browne; published by Moray Books; price £4.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Great doctrinal truths like substitution were once part of every Christian's diet. Sadly, the clear delineations of precious gospel truth is strangely not as palatable to Christians now as hithertofore. Indeed, with the decline of sound gospel preaching in mainland Britain, so many Christians are aware of the need to distinguish between things that differ.

Michael Browne is of course well known to readers of *Believer's Magazine*. Characteristically, he writes forcefully of this important truth, so misunderstood by many. He tackles the subject by citing not only the text of Scripture but comments on those texts from the pens of various authors, including some who still minister among the saints.

The Biblical Doctrine of Substitution is sub-titled *and a Defence of Divine Sovereignty*. The author deals in the context of his subject with the truth of election and establishes God's right to act in the salvation of a soul. More particularly, he opens up the discussion of corporate or individual election, so much discussed recently. Using again the methodology mentioned above he seeks to show that the NT truth of election as set out in passages like Eph 1 is individual.

Although only 80 pages in length *The Biblical Doctrine of Substitution* is worthy of study by all who love the gospel. It would have been helped by the addition of an index of Scriptures quoted and a bibliography.

TW

Can the Ethiopian Change? by JA Flynn; published by the Sheba Trust; price £6.50. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

The initial impetus for this book came from requests for a record of the commencement of present day assembly missionary work in Ethiopia. It covers an approximate period of forty years and whilst the first seven chapters give a personal perspective of the author's early life and preparation for the service of God, the remaining twenty-three, describe the period since early 1952 when the work commenced.

It is a story of small beginnings and much dependence on God to provide for and protect His servants. There was the initial sowing of the seed before the first evidences of blessing came. Contacts with the people were made in various practical ways. It is clear that here is a book about pioneer gospel work. The preaching took place against the religious background of the Coptic Church and the Muslim Faith. New Testament assemblies were planted under the good hand of God. It has an interesting account of the changes which came with the power of Communism, eventually causing the return home of those who had taken the gospel there over a period of some twenty-six years. Yet there is an encouraging conclusion to this book, given in the account of the return of the author to Ethiopia almost a decade later. Although there had been suppression of the saints gathering, many were still making progress, God is still able to preserve His own testimony! All who are interested in tracing the hand of the Lord in such ways will find this book a useful acquisition.

JRB

Question Box

Question
When we consider that believers today have entered into the labours of previous generations who served the Lord faithfully and established many assemblies. Have we in Britain, lost the pioneering spirit to reach the lost for the Saviour and to establish assemblies?

Answer
It would be both easy and accurate to answer this question with one word "yes". However, it is clear that the questioner is raising a matter which is of great concern to so many of the Lord's people today.

It is true that many of us are now enjoying the hard earned results of the labour of those who were used of God to see, not only souls saved in our areas but, assemblies planted also. It was not easy for them to do this, many worked by day and witnessed and preached in their own areas in the little free time they had available to them. Perhaps the real secret of their success was not just in the zeal they manifested, but in the reality of the conviction they had. They were saints who lived in true communion with God, they carried within their hearts the need of the lost and the glory which is brought to God when sinners are reached with the gospel, and when assemblies are planted on the NT pattern.

It is true that we now live in a day of great wickedness and indifference to the word and work of God. The materialism of our age has affected the ungodly by making them self satisfied, and sadly many of us have been influenced by it too. We have settled down into the lifestyle of the world. It is little wonder that the Lord has restrained His hand in blessing. Yet it is good that over the past year there has been evidence in various parts, that some of the Lord's people are becoming disturbed by these very things, we pray this will result in us humbling ourselves before Him. If we are to see the hand of God amongst us again it will only begin as He deals with us first. God's work *in us* is even greater than His work *through us*. The way we will perhaps pioneer in our day may be different from that by our forbears, but if done in accordance with the scripture and in the power of yielded and earnest lives, we may yet see great things done for God, until we meet the Lord in the air.

JR Baker

Question
What can be done for the indifference of believers to attend <u>all</u> the arranged meetings at their local assembly?

Answer
Both of these questions were submitted by the same questioner and part of the answer to this part has already been given above. Our spiritual condition will largely govern the interest we have in the activities of the assembly and the gatherings of His people. When our hearts grow cold we have a lessened desire to be where the Lord would have us be.

Initially when saints are interviewed for assembly fellowship the true implications of such fellowship should be clearly explained. It is also important that appropriate ministry on these matters should be regularly given. Example by the assembly shepherds and their wives will also be important.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by John Dunlop, Crosshouse

The Christian and Money

Young Christians face financial pressures brought about by living in an increasingly materialistic society. We are grateful to the Bible for sound instruction on how to order our finances and two main areas seem most important.

1. How do I get money?

Since the Christian has standards which are different from the world, options which are attractive to the unbeliever are not open to us. Sources of income must be tested against Scriptural principles.

A Christian should not steal

A number of Scriptures teach this from the Old and New Testaments. The decalogue declares "Thou shalt not steal" (Exod 20:15), while Paul reminds the Ephesian believers that past habits are no longer permitted: "Let him that stole steal no more" (Eph 4:28). This is straightforward teaching, but young Christians should be aware of its scope. I cannot take what does not belong to me, including the time and materials of my employer. I cannot withhold payment for goods I have contracted to purchase. I cannot refuse to pay my taxes or conceal their true amount.

A Christian should not gamble

Betting shops are everywhere, the National Lottery is widely supported while raffles are commonplace. At the same time it is not possible to find Scripture which specifically excludes gambling, so what can possibly be wrong with a "harmless flutter"? As young believers we must understand that there are areas of our christian experience which are governed by principle rather than by "chapter and verse"; this is one of them. We trust in God: we believe in the guidance of the Spirit in our lives; we know that the circumstances we find ourselves in are in His hand and we rejoice in that. To stake our future on things like the speed of an animal or the number on a ball seems so pathetic in comparison. As one has remarked: "We believe in God and not in luck".

A Christian should work

Here then is the way for a Christian to get money. To those at Ephesus who had once stolen Paul writes: "rather, let him labour, working with his hands" (Eph 4:28), while some of the saints at Thessalonica were sitting around waiting on the coming of the Lord and had to be admonished: "if any man would not work, neither should he eat" (1 Thess 3:10). This writer recognises the difficulty of many, believers included, who find it difficult to find employment. The principle remains, however, that work is commended and Christians should not deliberately make themselves a burden to others.

When in work the believer should be an exemplary employee. Timekeeping and work rate ought not to require rebuke while the trust placed in a Christian by an employer must never be abused. The reason is simple. In Col 3 Paul tells the servant: "whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (v.23).

So we earn money by honest labour and having obtained it we face the next difficult question.

2. How do I dispose of it?

Despite the tendency among some to live life without facing up to financial

responsibilities, the young Christian must discharge them in all areas.

Responsibility to the state

In a previous issue we noted the relationship between the believer and government; part of that relationship is about money. Rom 13 deals with taxation where tribute and custom are both to be rendered as appropriate in v.7. This is in keeping with the teaching of the Lord Himself: "Render...unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God, the things that are God's" (Matt 22:21). The government has the right to levy taxation and as believers we have the responsibility to pay. To do otherwise would be to give God that which legitimately belonged to the state, and there could be no honour in that.

Responsibility to the home

Here again we encounter Scriptural principle. From the days of Adam it has been the pattern that when a home was established the head of that household was responsible for the provision of all that was required to maintain the family unit. We must, however, guard against the temptation to see our homes as part of a competition with the world or with the saints. Much better that the home of a believer is a place where the Lord's people are welcome, rather than a matter for pride.

Perhaps some of us have not yet set up homes of our own. There is still no exemption from responsibility. For a young believer to live in the family home, have employment with a regular income and not contribute to the financial upkeep of that home is a matter of concern. "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Eph 6:1) must include all areas of life, even the financial.

Reponsibility to the testimony

Having discharged these responsibilities, the young Christian must now accept a partnership which involves financial sacrifice as well as prayer and practical involvement.

When he wrote to Philippi Paul thanked the believers in ch.4 for sending him money to assist in his work, while the writer of Hebrews encourages us: "to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb 13:16). Communication refers to the sharing of material things and the writer raises the giving of a gift to a very high level indeed; it is a sacrifice which brings pleasure to God.

This giving of gifts complements giving to the assembly to which we belong. In 1 Cor 16 Paul instructs: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (v.2). So here is the source of funding for the testimony of the local company. No fund-raising, no grants from the National Lottery, no collections at gatherings where the unsaved are expected to contribute. If I am in full fellowship with my local assembly then I will fulfil my responsibility to give as God has prospered.

These are searching things in a materialistic world. Around us we see the evidence that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10) but this writer would commend the prayerful reading of 1 Cor 8-9 where in simple language Paul exhorts the saints to be diligent in their giving. The world may indeed love money, but "God loveth a cheerful giver" (1 Cor 9:7).

Regions Beyond

Literature in The Lord's Work in Brazil by Ronnie Watterson

Descalvado today is a town of some 30,000 inhabitants in the interior of the state of São Paulo. While it is by no means the largest state in Brazil, as far as area is concerned, it is by far the most populous and the most progressive. It is the home of over 30,000,000 people, yet assemblies are few and generally small.

"Another Gospel" Deceived Many

When we first came to this pleasant part of the country in 1967, we found ourselves on virgin soul. Of course there had been "evangelical" activity around these parts before we arrived, as there is in every corner of Brazil today, but that only added to the difficulty encountered in trying to do something for God; "another gospel" had already deceived many. The gospel preached by these "evangelicals" (generally called *"crentes"* - believers), offers little or nothing for the soul, but guarantees physical health and material wealth to all who "confess Jesus".

Literature Played Big Part in Gospel

In those early days in Descalvado, we encountered more opposition from the "evangelicals" than from the Roman Catholic priest, but the combined result of their efforts made it almost impossible for us to get people along to meetings. Many a time, meetings were arranged, yet in spite of a full day inviting from door to door, we had no meeting, because no one came along. That is when literature began to play a big part in the work here.

Gospel tracts were given out all around the district, and became a useful means of making known God's plan of salvation. With the tracts, of course there was always an invitation to gospel meetings, as it has always been our conviction that it pleases God, through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Today the picture has changed in some respects. While the people are as indifferent as ever, or perhaps more so, and the religious confusion gets daily worse, we can always be assured of having some lost ones present at our gospel meetings. There are many helpers now, and local saints bring along families and friends, and help to give out the gospel tracts.

The assembly in Descalvado has 33 in fellowship today, and from here the gospel has reached out to other towns, and in some of these there are assemblies too. Harry and Jean Reid spent some time here in the late sixties and early seventies, before moving north. Terry and Dorothy Blackman came to Pirassununga in the late eighties, and then Andrew and Alison Renshaw arrived in 1993. Two brethren from the assembly in Descalvado have been commended to the grace of God for the work to which He has called them, and have moved out to other towns nearby.

One of these is Sr. Belmiro Campos Lopes who now resides in Leme. A little hall has been built there, a few have been saved, and some of them baptised, but there is still no assembly there. The other is Sr. Lizeu Altoé, who, with his wife and young family moved over to Santa Cruz das Palmeiras about 4

years ago. Tent meetings had previously been held there, and some had been saved. Since then an assembly has been planted.

Quite a number of others, while still engaged in their secular employment, give sacrificially of their time in the Lord's work. Space forbids the mention of their names, but their record is on high, and will receive due recognition in that day.

Growth of Assemblies & Need for Magazine With the growth of these little assemblies there arose the need for a magazine, and writing became a must. Reading material that would edify was just about non-existent, and an awareness of this need has led gradually to a much deeper involvement with literature. Not, however, at the expense of preaching. I would still have meetings seven nights a week apart from the nights spent travelling to some small isolated assemblies that seldom see a visitor.

A few years ago, together with our brethren Jim Jardine and Samuel Davidson, we began translating *What The Bible Teaches* published by John Ritchie Ltd. Work is well advanced on this translation, and 4 volumes have already been printed. The fifth one is in the final stages of revision, and within a few days will be given to the printer.

As well as these commentaries, we are working on some other books. *Going on for God* by D Newell and D Hinton, and *Autonomy and Authority* by M Browne have already been printed. *Marriage and the Family* by Dr AJ Higgins is with the printer, and we are busy translating *Lessons for Leaders* by Mr A McShane. Quite a number of booklets, especially dealing with assembly principles have been printed as well. The appreciation shown by many saints here is an ample recompense for the labour involved.

No Resemblance to Scriptural Pattern Sad to say, in many parts of Brazil where a great work for God was done many years ago, and assemblies were planted through the labours of true pioneers, there has been an alarming drift away from the simplicity of those early days. Years of interdenominational activity have wrought havoc amongst those assemblies, to such an extent that, in some places, little or no resemblance to the Scriptural pattern remains.

Brighter Side Yet there is a brighter side to that story today. Mainly through literature, which has found its way into those parts, some saints have been awakened to see their error, and there is, in some places, a genuine desire to get back to the Book. The price to be paid for such a return is very high, but there seems to be a willingness to pay the price, especially amongst the younger generation.

We would value prayer for the assemblies in this land in these difficult days, and for us, as we seek to provide in written form, the help that can go to places where we cannot go, and is being so evidently used of God.

Our Worship, Witness and Walk

(Heb 10:22-24)

by Paul Grieve, South Africa

Because our Lord has opened up a way into the presence of God, the writer of the book of Hebrews exhorts his readers to modify three areas of their lives, namely their Worship, Witness and Walk.

Our Worship

Heb 10:22 states: "**Let us draw near**". While the word "worship" is not actually used here, surely one of the first things we would do on drawing near to God is to worship Him. Three points are made by the writer:

Sincerity This is indicated by the phrase "**with a true heart**". It is all too easy to go through the motions of worship in order to impress our brethren, repeating well-worn phrases parrot-fashion. Whether or not this will impress our brethren, it certainly will not be something that God will appreciate.

Assurance Worship is an act of faith. We cannot see God with our physical eyes, nor can we hear His voice with our physical ears. Nevertheless we still speak to Him and listen for Him to speak to us. We are assured that He is there and is interested in our worship. This is the assurance of faith. It is founded on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has completed the work of salvation and is now our High Priest interceding for us.

Cleansing Only as we are cleansed will our worship be acceptable to God. Two aspects of this are brought to our attention here. The first is "**having our bodies washed with pure water**". This would answer to the washing of the priests' bodies as they were initiated into the priesthood (Exod 29:4). It is that initial cleansing that we receive when we turn to the Lord for salvation. Our Lord referred to this in John 13:10 "**He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet**". It is useless for an unsaved person to try to worship God since he has not experienced that initial cleansing. The second aspect of cleansing is "**having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**". This is the daily cleansing that we should all be careful to undergo in the presence of the Lord. The Lord Jesus also referred to this in John 13:10, using the metaphor of washing of feet. The apostle Paul taught the same in 1 Cor 11:28 in connection with the breaking of bread, instructing the believers to examine themselves before partaking of the bread and the cup.

Our Witness

We are further admonished to "**hold fast the profession [or confession] of our faith without wavering**". Again we are faced with three important points, this time relative to our witness. It should be:

Spoken Confession is always spoken. The word is from the same root word as the verb "confess" in 1 John 1:9 "**If we confess our sins**". The word is derived from two Greek words, *homos* meaning 'same' and *legō* meaning 'I speak'. Literally it means, "What I say outwardly is exactly what I am thinking inwardly". In other words, our witness should be sincere and not merely to impress others.

Steadfast Under duress it is easy to be coerced into saying what those around would want us to say. The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews were Jews who had confessed that Jesus was the true Messiah. Under pressure from the Jewish community to recant, it would have been easy for them to let go of their previous confession. They are being encouraged rather to hold fast what they had confessed and knew in their hearts to be true.

Secure It is noteworthy that the emphasis in our text is not on holding fast to our faith. It is rather the **confession** of our faith that is to be held securely. We are secure in Christ, and, because He is faithful, we should avoid temptation to relinquish our confession when things get tough. His faithfulness is the example we should follow. In His faithfulness He will never fail us. Let us, then, not fail Him, but rather hold fast because we are secure in Him.

Our Walk

Our worship is towards God. Our witness, on the other hand, is towards the ungodly. Our walk, however, in the context is in relation to other believers. Once more three points are highlighted.

In our hearts there is to be mutual love. "**Let us consider one another to provoke unto love**". The best way to be loved is to love. This is not so much something to be talked about as to be deeply rooted in the heart. It is the foundation of all our attitudes and actions. This is the *agape* love that comes alone from God Himself. It has been "**poured out within our hearts**" (NASB). In considering one another, this love is stimulated into action for our mutual edification.

In our hands good works are to be evident. In an attempt to avoid the error of salvation by works we have tended to swing to the other extreme and play down the importance of good works. Perhaps closer attention to the epistle to Titus would help us to keep this aspect of our christian lives in perspective. It is the natural outworking of the love of God in our hearts, where this has been permitted to take control.

In our harmony we should not be inclined to "**forsake the assembling of ourselves together**". Often one of the first signs that someone is drifting away from the Lord is their absence from assembly meetings. Having our **hearts** full of love and our **hands** filled with good works towards our brethren and sisters in the Lord, can never replace meeting together with them in assembly capacity. Indeed, if our hearts are truly filled with love for them, we will want to be with them because of the mutual harmony that exists between us.

The believers are encouraged to exhort one another in the exercise of these three aspects of christian behaviour, in view of the coming day of assessment at the bema of Christ. Today, almost two millennia later, that day is so much closer. We would do well to take the word of exhortation to our own hearts.

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

JANUARY 1
Newtownstewart: Annual Meeting for believers in the Model School, Drumquin Road. Prayer Meeting at 12.30pm. Bible Reading at 1.00pm. Mr Tom Bentley (John ch.15). 3.30-5.30pm. Ministry.
Ardmore Gospel Hall: 7.30pm Ministry, J Burnett, R Thompson.

JANUARY 3
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm Ministry, J Allen.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm J Riddle.

JANUARY 10
Carnlough Missionary Conference
Cloughfern Gospel Hall, 7.30pm, W Ferguson.

JANUARY 12-15
Ardmore Gospel Hall: 8.00pm Ministry, J Grant.

JANUARY 17
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm J Beattie.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm J Flanigan.

JANUARY 24
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm I Jackson.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm J Allen.

JANUARY 26-30 & FEBRUARY 2-5
Cookstown Gospel Hall: 8.00pm Ministry, M Radcliffe, Subject: Tabernacle illustrated by model.

JANUARY 31
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm I Jackson.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

DECEMBER 31
Ballingry: Gospel Hall, Southfield Avenue. Ministry 3.30-5.30pm. Bible Reading 6.30pm (Gal 3).

DECEMBER 31 - JANUARY 4
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street, Wednesday 7.00pm till 9.00 pm, Bible Reading (Acts 20:17-38) J Hay. Thursday, 1st, in Harper Memorial Hall, Craigiehall Street, 11.00am till 4.15pm, Annual Conference: J Flanigan, J Hay, E Hughes, J Stubbs. Friday in Harley Street, 6.30pm till 9.00pm, Report Meeting: Walter Boyd (S Africa), Lindsay Carswell (Brazil), David McAllister (Zambia). Saturday 3rd at 7.00pm till 9.00pm, Ministry: J Flanigan, E Hughes, J Stubbs. Lord's Day 2.30pm till 4.00pm, Ministry: J Flanigan, E Hughes. 7.00pm till 8.00pm, Gospel: J Hay, J Stubbs.

DECEMBER 31 - JANUARY 1
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. Ministry: S Arbuthnot, S Foster. Annual Conference in Hamilton College, Bothwell Road at 11.30am till 3.30pm, S Arbuthnot, S Foster, I Speirs.

JANUARY 1
Ayr: Woodpark Assembly Annual Conference in Belmont Academy, Belmont Road at 1.30pm. A Gamble, S Jennings, J Dickson.
Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road, Annual Christian Conference at 2.30pm. J Grant, T Jones, K Rudge.
New Stevenston: Annual Conference in Holytown Community Centre at 11.30am. B Currie, I Jackson, G Meikle.
Aberdeen: Annual Christian Conference in Victoria Hall at 2.00pm and 5.00pm. S Downs, R Revie, W Stevely. (Also on 2nd).
Kilmarnock: Central Evangelical Church, New Year's Day Conference at 1.30pm. J Cadzow, J Speirs.

JANUARY 2
Denny: New Year Conference in New Masonic Hall, Broad Street, Kirkslap (near the Cross) at 12 Noon. Ministering brethren expected.
Prestwick: New Year Conference in Bute Hall at 1.30pm. S Jennings, R McAdam, J Hay.
Whitburn: New Year Conference in Brucefield Church, East Main Street at 11.30am. T Bentley, M Radcliffe, A Sinclair. Saturday at 6.30pm to 9.00pm and Sunday at 3.00pm and 6.30pm, T Bentley, M Radcliffe.
Abingdon: Annual Christian Conference, 12



Stewartville St., Partick, at 3.15pm. D Cooke, AMS Gooding, T Wilson.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall, New Year Conference in Larkhall Baptist Church, Machan Road at 11.30am. W Stevely, J Stubbs, P Harding.
Auchinleck: Annual Conference at 12.15pm, K Stapley, JR Baker, B Currie. B Currie continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Cowdenbeath: Union Hall at 6.30pm. K Rudge, C Logan.
Innerleven: Gospel Hall, Methil, Annual Christian Conference at 3.00pm. J Grant, M Hunter, W Banks.
Aberdeen: Annual Christian Conference in Victoria Hall, Torry, at 2.00pm & 5.00pm. S Downs, R Revie, W Stevely.

JANUARY 3
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. S Arbuthnot.
Dumfries: Annual Conference in Bethany Hall, Buccleuch Street at 2.00pm. J Gamble, A Sinclair.
Livingston, Deans: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. P Harding, R Miller.
Cowdenbeath: Union Hall at 7.00pm. K Rudge.
Stranraer: Annual Conference in Lewis Street Gospel Hall at 2.30pm. A Gamble, T Wilson.

JANUARY 9
Ashgill: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. E Nelson, Bible Reading (Eph 3).

JANUARY 10
Armadale: Annual Christian Conference in Armadale Academy at 3.00pm. W Stevely, R Cameron, W Banks.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. G Gilmour, R Marshall.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. J Hay, (Eph 3).
East Kilbride: Annual Christian Conference in Threshold, Maxwell Drive, The Village at 3.00pm. G Bull, A McIntosh, P Brandon.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall, Hall Street at 6.30pm. B Martin, S MacDonald.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. T Wilson.
Larkhall: Albion Hall, Montgomery Street at 6.30pm. J Rodgers, S Foster.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall, 141 Main Street at 7.00pm. J Adrain, I Wallace.
Wishaw: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Young Street at 6.30pm. J Grant, M Radcliffe.
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Miller.
Renfrew: Albert Hall, Albert Road at 3.30pm. A Gamble, W Hannay.

JANUARY 17
Ayr: Gospel Hall, 125 Prestwick Road at 7.00pm. R Millar. Bible Reading (Luke 23:27-49).
Bo'ness: Hebron Hall, School Brae at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe, J Baxter.
Denny: Gospel Hall, Westboreland Road at 7.00pm. Ministering brethren expected.
Glasgow, Linthouse: Bethesda Hall, 16 Holmfauldhead Place at 7.00pm. J Dunlop.
Gourock: Bethany Hall Assembly, Drumshantie Road at 7.00pm. J Baker.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall, Howard Street at 6.30pm. S McDonald, T Aitken.
Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. I Jackson, S Foster.
Plains: Elim Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Brown, I Steele.
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Burnett, R Cameron.
St Monans: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Weir.
Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. A McLean, S Grant.

JANUARY 24
Falkirk: Thornhill Hall, Thistle Street at 6.30pm. K Stapley, T Wilson.
Kirkconnel: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S Downs, J Chalmers.
Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road at 7.30pm. J Rodgers.
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall, Silvertonhill Avenue at 6.45pm. A Sinclair, J Sinclair.
Chapelhall: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. H Hunter, B Stapley.

JANUARY 31
Airdrie: Hebron Hall, North Bridge Street at

6.30pm. D Cameron, D Meikle.
Ballingry: Gospel Hall, Southfield Avenue at 6.30pm. Bible Reading (Gal 4).
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street at 7.00pm. D Gillies, T Wilson.
Musselburgh: Gospel Hall, New Street at 6.30pm. J Harrison, R Miller.
Prestwick: Bute Hall at 7.00pm. WEF Naismith, AD Scott.
Uphall: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. W Banks.

FEBRUARY 7
Glasgow, Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton Street at 7.00pm. J Stubbs, R Thomson. Mr Stubbs continues in ministry on Lord's Day at 3.15pm and Gospel at 7.00pm.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall, Hall Street at 6.30pm. Bible Reading & Ministry. S Foster (Rom ch.8 vv.26-39).
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. J Hay, J Grant.
Livingston, Deans: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A Meikle, I England.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. C Stewart, J Paterson (Jnr).
Stevenston: Bethany Hall, Station Road at 7.00pm. J Chalmers, G Gilmour.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, Church Street at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe, B Stapley.
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Place, Missionary Weekend. Friday 6th at 8.00pm. Saturday at 7.00pm. Monday at 8.00pm. N McMeekin, R Plant.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. R Marshall.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. D Gillies.

FEBRUARY 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. J Paterson. Bible Reading (Eph 4:1-15).

FEBRUARY 14
Armadale: Gospel Hall, 8 Masonic Place, South Street at 6.30pm. E Nelson, T Aitken.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. I Robertson, R Thomson. Mr Robertson continues on Sunday at 3.30pm.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. R Gamble (Eph 4).
East Kilbride: Threshold, Maxwell Drive, The Village at 7.00pm. McRoberts Male Voice Choir.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall, 141 Main Street at 7.00pm. A Sinclair, I McDonald.
Larkhall: Albion Hall, Montgomery Street at 6.30pm. B McKellar, I Steele.
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. M Hunter, J McMaster.
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. I Affleck.
Chapelhall: Annual Conference in School Hall, Gibb Street at 3.00pm. R Miller, J Paterson, M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in the Gospel Hall on Lord's Day at 3.00pm and 6.30pm and Mon-Thurs at 7.45pm.
Dennistoun: Gospel Hall, 100 Findlay Drive at 3.15pm. W Banks, A Foster, J Grant. J Grant continues Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

JANUARY 1
Swindon: Penhill Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm, T Ledger, G Stewart.
Ashvale: Evangelical Church, Frimley Road, New Year's Conference at 3.30pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle.

JANUARY 3
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Bethany Gospel Hall, 838 Filton Avenue at 7.00pm. C Rees.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. J Scarsbrook (Matt ch.13).
Crowle, Worcester: Gospel Hall, Old Turnpike Road at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Jarrow: Gospel hall, Cambrian Street. Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Meeting. Bible Reading at 3.45pm (Acts 15:36-40; Gal 2:11-14). Ministry at 6.45pm. T Proffitt.
Kirby: Gospel Hall, Portland Street at 7.15pm. DJ Williams.
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 7.30pm. J Gibson.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. F Beevers.

Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall, 139 Mayow Road at 7.00pm. C Roberts.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. D Sampson.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall, Welland Road at 7.00pm. A Carew.

JANUARY 10
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. J Scarsbrook.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Unity Chapel, 80 Romney Avenue at 7.00pm. A Shearman.
Calne: Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 7.30pm. P Davies.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. R Catchpole.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall, Manor Road at 7.00pm. I Jackson.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. Mr EG Parmenter. Mr Parmenter will minister on Monday at 7.30pm.
Liverpool & District New Year Conference in Bethany, Huyton at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. J Griffiths, P Harding.
Manchester, Gorton: Gospel Hall, Highmead Street at 7.00pm. R Hill.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. P Scarsbrook, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
North Wembley: Uxendon Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
North Shields: Tyneside Children and Youth Workers' Conference in Gospel Hall, Coach Lane at 4.00pm. and 6.00pm. J McMaster, A Pollard.

JANUARY 17
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. P Kaye.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Chelsea Gospel Hall, 79 Devon Road at 7.00pm. P Young.
Burton-on-Trent, Winshill: Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 7.15pm. R Dawes.
Cheltenham: Missionary Conference in Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 4.00pm. and 6.30pm.
Crawley, Nr Winchester: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D West.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. P Richardson.
Glastonbury: Bove Town Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. N Mellish.
Harrow: BelmontHall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 7.15pm. R Hill.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Newsham Park at 7.30pm. SG Baker.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. P Brind.
Manchester, Wythenshawe: Brownwood Hall, Woodhouse Lane at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Riddle.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall, Percy Road at 7.00pm. E Parmenter.

JANUARY 24
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Totterdown Gospel Hall, 15 Bellevue Road at 7.00pm. C Clark.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Stevely.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall, Easter Road at 7.00pm. R McClenaghan.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in David Street. Bible Reading at 5.00pm and Rally at 7.30pm. E Griffiths.
Warrington: Gospel Hall, Manor Street, Golborne at 7.00pm. J Scarsbrook.
Weymouth: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. E Bermejo.
Basingstoke: Gospel Hall, Essex Road at 7.00pm. A Carew.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. P Hedley (also on Monday 26th).

JANUARY 31
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. E Hughes.
Bexley Heath: Bethany Hall, North Street at 7.00pm. D Sampson.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Langford Road Gospel Hall, 39 Langford Road at 7.00pm. E Bermejo.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Larkhill at 7.30pm. K Cooper.
Mansfield: Gospel Hall, Radford Street at 7.15pm. J Riddle.

Withington: Gospel Hall, Mauldeth Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey.
Appledore: N Devon, Bethel, The Quay at 7.15pm. G Hall.

FEBRUARY 7
Birmingham: Charlton Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S McKenzie also on Monday and Tuesday at 8.00pm.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. E Hughes.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Speedwell Chapel, 63 Speedwell Road at 7.00pm. G Payne.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. C Roberts (Matt ch.14 & 15).
Crowle, Worcester: Gospel Hall, Old Turnpike Road at 7.00pm. E Parmenter.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. D Angel.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian Street. Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Meeting. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Acts 16:10-40). Ministry at 6.45pm. W Banks.
Kirby: Gospel Hall, Portland Street at 7.15pm. C Lacey.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. Mr DE West.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Bethany, Huyton at 7.30pm. N Molyneux.
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 7.30pm. Tuesday in Gold Street, Hanslope and Thursday in Hebron Hall, Bicester, H Cooper.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. C Clarke.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall, 139 Mayow Road at 7.00pm. I Crawford.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. P Richardson.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. G Guile.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall, Welland Road at 7.00pm. J Lee.

FEBRUARY 14
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Totterdown Gospel Hall, 15 Bellevue Road at 7.00pm. E Griffiths.
Bury St. Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. H Stewart.
Calne: Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 7.30pm. F Epps.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. D Angell.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. J Baker.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Newsham at 7.30pm. K Baker.
Manchester, Gorton: Gospel Hall, Highmead Street at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. J Coltman. Mr Coltman continues on Lord's day at 4.00pm.
North Wembley: Uxendon Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. R Carnall.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. E Parmenter. Mr Parmenter continues in ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.45pm.
Morpeth: Red Row, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. J Hay. Mr Hay continues in ministry to Thursday at 7.30pm.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Ballymena: I Jackson expected for gospel meetings in Cambridge Avenue January 11th.
Carrickfergus (Sandringham Hall): Meetings conducted by T Meekin and J Hay have been in progress for three weeks at end of November, in this new development area, where there are several hundred privately owned new homes, and where a Sunday School work is carried on. Most nights a few unsaved locals would be present.
Cloughmills: Brethren from Ballinaloob and Clough assemblies have had five weeks of gospel meetings in the Sunday School hall in the village, and were encouraged by the numbers of locals who came.
Crosskeys: At the end of November JG Hutchinson and A Aiken had completed four weeks in the gospel. Meetings continue and have been well attended. Quite a number of unsaved present nightly, including a few RC's.
Rasharkin: A Caulfield and D McGarvey had



five weeks in the Gospel Hall in this hard and difficult village where the assembly is small. Tracts were distributed in the whole area and a few responded to the invitations. One little girl professed.

Clough: Annual Believers Meeting on 15th November, helpful ministry by A McShane, JG Hutchinson, L Steers, N Turkington and J Milne.

Co. ARMAGH

Altnamackin: WJ Nesbitt and J Preston continue in portable hall with a more settled interest, after widespread house to house visitation of the rural area.

Ahorey: R Pickering had a week's ministry meetings at end of November.

Drumacanver: W Boyd (S Africa) had three nights ministry in this border area which was much appreciated.

Lurgan: A McShane will have a week's ministry DV early December.

Co. DOWN

Ballymagarrick: W Fenton and A McClean concluded six and a half weeks in the gospel on 26th November. Good numbers, including many unsaved, attended nightly. The Lord's presence was in evidence. One man professed to be saved, others were concerned. The coming day will declare what has been wrought.

Kilpike: E McCullough (USA) and A Davidson have seen this renovated outreach hall packed to capacity, with large numbers of unsaved attending and blessing in salvation.

Craigavad: D Biggerstaff and other local brethren conducted two weeks gospel meetings and were encouraged in seeing a number of locals attend following visitation of the area.

Newtownards (Movilla Road): Cottage meetings were continuing at end of November with good attendance. Preachers J Martin and B Halliday.

Portavogie (New Road): J Lennox and B Currie have seen some blessing in salvation. Meetings continuing into December.

Ballymacashon: Annual Conference on 1.11.97. Numbers somewhat disappointing. Practical ministry given by R Pickering, JG Hutchinson, S Ferguson, D Gilliland and P Orasak.

Co. FERMANAGH

Maguiresbridge: A Davidson had six weeks in a portable hall, helped in visitation by bro. G McKinley. A large area around Maguiresbridge, Brookborough, Lisnaskea, Lisbellaw and Tempo was covered with tracts and an encouraging number of strangers attended.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL

Trentagh (Nr. Letterkenny): S Patterson, G Stewart and G Harris are having meetings in a mobile hall and are in the fourth week at end of November. Numbers are small, but unsaved are present nightly.

Aughrim: A Aitken (Lanarkshire) had three weeks of well attended gospel meetings. A husband and wife professed to be saved, neither of them having any connection with the assembly. The assembly was very much encouraged.

Ballylintagh: D McAllister (Zambia) was present for one week of ministry on the topic "The Christian in Today's World".

Gortade: D Kane was present for two weeks of ministry on the letter to Philippians.

Limavady: J Hay gave four nights ministry on the life of Josiah.

BELFAST & DISTRICT

Fortwilliam: H Andrews had two weeks in the gospel with encouraging numbers being present.

Shankill: R Eadie and S Maze have finished six weeks of well attended gospel meetings, with unsaved present each evening. One young man showed some interest as they continue for a further week into December.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

Wylam, Northumberland: During September the assembly had an adult campaign with Joe Baxter. Several nights during the fortnight we were privileged to have up to nine unsaved adults attending, this was an answer to prayer.



The assembly was thankful for the support it received from other assemblies in the locality. Whilst Joe was with us, he did a tremendous work on the doors and since his return to Livingston, many have remarked on the letters they received.

WEST MIDLANDS

Quite a good deal of activity in various assemblies during November. C Roberts spent a week with the assembly at Batchley Estate, Redditch ministering the Word, whilst R Collings gave profitable help at Upper Hill Street, Coventry. J Hall and R Pickering, the latter staying on for a few days, spoke at the Conference at Solihull. In the Black County N Mellish was unable to partner D Richards at the Darlastan conference, but the saints were encouraged that A Renshaw (Brazil) was able to take his place. C Lacey continued the Friday Focus Bible Teaching meetings at Stourbridge (Wollaston) and Broadwas (Worcester). The saints at Broadwas were much encouraged by the baptism of three young people all from the same family.

SOUTH-EAST MIDLANDS

Bicester: S Mountstevens had 2 weeks children's meetings in November. Attendance and interest were excellent, with a good number of grown-ups present at prize-giving. The weekly meetings for children continue, with 2 mini-coaches to bring in the children, and the assembly seeks to maintain the good contacts made during these special meetings.

Northampton: Spencer Bridge Road assembly had 2 weeks Gospel meetings by I Jackson from 27th September to 9th October. A number of unbelievers, mostly brought by friends, attended the meetings and listened well to the faithful and clear presentation of the Gospel. On Lord's Day 5th October, a full hall witnessed the baptism of one of the young brethren. Neighbours, friends and the young man's school form master were present for the occasion. Regrettably there were no actual cases of conversion nor have any of the visitors continued to attend the Gospel meetings since, although a family of 3 children have started coming to Sunday School. Prayer continues that the Lord may yet use these meetings to bring some to the knowledge of Himself.

Lord's Work Trust

42 Beansburn, Kilmarnock KA3 1RH
Tel: (01563) 521098 • Fax: (01563) 571215
Charity No. SC008740

Total Gifts received from 1 November 1997 to 30 November 1997

	For the Lord's Work and Workers	Gifts towards Expenses
From Assemblies	45771	2629
From Individuals	26160	1079
From Covenants/Gift Aid	57444	1401
From Legacies	17470	0
From Refund of Tax	0	0
	146845	5109

Includes: £110 Scotland, £100 Shetland, £150 Ireland, £5 Wales

With Christ

Mr Tony Renshaw on 26th October, 1997 aged 67 years. Saved in his late teens in a railway carriage, when returning to Aldershot to complete his National Service, was later baptised and received into assembly fellowship in his hometown of Mansfield. He later moved to Guildford where he was greatly helped by the late RG Lord. Our brother was best known for his life and testimony in the Manchester area where he married his wife Betty Dixon in 1958. He was in fellowship in Wythenshawe assembly until the Lord called him home. He engaged in Sunday School work for many years, gospel preaching and teaching the Scriptures to both old and young and was also associated with the Manchester and district Sunday School Camps and later with the Lancashire & Staffordshire Gospel tents, working amongst both children and adults and was involved in open air preaching almost to the end. He was well known for his articles in Believer's Magazine and Precious Seed, which were much appreciated for their freshness and devotional character. He was a beloved brother, faithful counsellor and guide, kind and considerate to all and devoted to the assembly where he will be greatly missed. Please remember his wife Betty, son Andrew serving the Lord in Brazil and daughter Karen.

Mr William Prentice on 27th October, aged 92 years. Saved in 1915, aged 14 years at Muir St. Gospel Hall, Larkhall, he was in fellowship in Hebron Hall, Larkhall until about 1955. Since then he was in happy fellowship with the saints at Bethany Hall, Ashgill where he served the Lord faithfully. He was much respected by his neighbours and his godly life had an influence on many. His funeral was conducted by his local brethren by whom he was highly esteemed. Prayer is requested for his widow Anne who resides in a local nursing home, also his son Jim and family who are not saved.

Bert Houghton on 10th September aged 64, following a heart attack while ill in hospital in Cornwall. He had been associated with the assembly in Bromborough on the Wirral since he was a young man, eventually serving as the Sunday School Superintendent and latterly as assembly correspondent. A faithful brother, interested in young and old alike. He had been associated with the Merseyside Assemblies Camps for many years. About 250 attended his funeral, among them, over two dozen from his former workplace, also many outsiders from the village. The service was conducted by H Barnes. Please remember his wife Gladys, daughters Christine and Julie and sisters Doreen and Barbara.

Mr William Thompson on 9th October, in hospital after a brief illness, aged 80. Saved at 16, later baptised and received into Ballymoney assembly where he remained as a trusted overseer. He was in charge of a Sunday School, which was started by his father 60 years ago in Stranocum. The very large funeral bore testimony to the high esteem in which he was held. T McCaughan, A McClean and R McKeown took part in the home and J Martin and T McNeill at the grave. Remember his son and daughter, his brother and three sisters all in happy fellowship and some relatives not yet saved.

Mr William Martin on 15th October in hospital, after a short illness, aged

93. Saved on 23rd January 1925 through Mr John Ross. He found peace through John 5:24. Baptised and received into Omagh Assembly in 1927. A gifted, wise and godly overseer, given to hospitality and a lover of the gospel. He and his late wife with their daughter moved to Carrickfergus in 1991, where the funeral took place, conducted by J Martin and helped by H Kirkwood and H Scott. R McIlrea and J Martin spoke at the grave where many unsaved heard the gospel. Remember his son and two daughters who are all saved and a sister, brother and family not yet saved.

Mr Thomas K Jarrett on 13th August, aged 85. Born at Wallasey, but spent most of his life in Birmingham. Saved in his youth, he was baptised and received into fellowship at Dell Road, Cotteridge. With others he was active in Gospel Van Work in the early thirties. He was a skilled printer and for a time managed the Pickering & Inglis shop in Birmingham. He was active in the assembly as an elder, preaching and teaching over a wide area. For the last 17 years he was in fellowship at Quarry Lane, Northfield. He was an able brother, whose help, wisdom and guidance was valued. He will be greatly missed.

Mrs Mary Curran on 8th September. Saved as a young girl and in the Ahorey assembly for many years. Our sister gave valuable help while health and circumstances permitted. Her consistent godly life was marked by acts of kindness to all around her, extending at times to local down and outs as well. She will be much missed by her husband Alec and their son, also her sisters who will all value the prayers of the saints. Her large funeral at Banbridge Cemetery was conducted by N Alexander and J Wishart.

Mr William Mahood was born in Ireland but the family moved to Troon when he was three years old. He was saved as a boy of twelve, baptised in Inverness when in the forces and married Agnes Reid in February, 1942. He was associated with various assemblies in Ayrshire, and these were well represented at his large funeral service. Willie moved to Prestwick some five years ago and endeared himself to the Lord's people in Bute Hall where he enjoyed happy fellowship. He loved the Lord, His Word and His people, and was most generous in every avenue of his life. He was widowed some 13 years ago but on Monday 28th July the Lord suddenly called him home. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Please remember his family in prayer.

Mrs Margaret Morrison called home on the 28th of October 1997. Born in County Cavan and saved over 60 years. She came to reside in Belfast and was received into assembly fellowship. After her marriage, she was received into the Tivaconaway assembly near Kilrea. Later, with her husband she moved to Londonderry and was in happy fellowship for 31 years until her homecall. She was a faithful and godly sister, her only interests being connected with the assembly, a faithful attender and devoted wife. Her husband Robert will need our prayers as will the assembly in Londonderry.

Mrs Anna E. Tinsley on 20th October, suddenly in hospital, aged 59. Saved in 1956 when John Hutchinson had meetings in Banbridge. She was later in Mullafernaghan assembly and after

marriage in Dromore. She was a valued member of the assembly. A quiet, happy, helpful sister, interested in all the assembly meetings and activities. Had the joy of seeing her three sons saved and in assembly fellowship. Will be greatly missed in the assembly and family circle. Prayer valued for her husband and family. Mr WJ Nesbitt and JG Hutchinson spoke at the very large funeral.

Mr James McClenaghan on 22nd October at Faith House, aged 87. Saved in 1928 at meetings in Ebenezer Hall when Mr John Hutchinson was preaching, ever since in happy fellowship. Was most helpful in all associated with the assembly. A quiet consistent man, most highly esteemed in the assembly and with an excellent testimony among the neighbours. His funeral from the Gospel Hall, was one of the largest seen for many years. JG Hutchinson spoke in the hall and D Williamson at the grave. Many not familiar with the gospel heard it at the funeral.

Dr Evelyn Grace Eglington on 27th August 1997, aged 50 years. Our sister was born of missionary parents, Alfred and Ivy Eglington, and spent her early years in the jungles of Peru and also in Norfolk, England, at an early age receiving Christ as Saviour, she began to prepare herself to serve the Lord in Peru. Unable to go to the mission field due to a back injury, she lectured at the M.S.M., later becoming one of the Council members. In fellowship with the believers meeting at Maberly Hall, Highbury, London, it could be said of our sister, "She hath done what she could." The funeral service which took place at Dereham, Norfolk, was conducted by Mr John Flynn (Ethiopia/N Ireland) and Mr John Frost (London).

Mrs Ida Beattie on 12th September 1997 after a fairly long period of illness borne patiently, though she knew much of pain and weakness. Saved in the middle thirties in Glasgow, she came to live in Uddingston in 1945 and was in happy fellowship in the assembly at Union Hall. Her testimony was quiet, consistent and faithful and she loved to gather with fellow saints.

Mrs Mary Ellen Kirkpatrick on 26th October 1997 aged 83. Saved as a girl of 14 and after being baptised she was received into the Bushmills assembly. For many years with her husband Harry she enjoyed happy fellowship in the Coleraine assembly where she was highly esteemed as a godly christian, faithful to the Lord and His people. The services in the hall and grave were taken by Sam Jamieson and Sam Ferguson.

Mrs Jessie McBurnie on 9th October 1997, aged 90 years, wife of the late Alex McBurnie. Saved in early life in McDonald Memorial Mission, Renfrewshire. She served the Lord faithfully for several years and was in the assembly in Renfrew for over 50 years. A good sister, noted for her love for the Lord and loyalty to the assembly. Respected in the town for her consistent Christian testimony.

Apology: May we point out that in the October issue, "with Christ" section Mrs McClellan should have been Miss McClellan. Our apologies for this error.

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

PERSONALIA

The Alpha and the Omega (September 1995). A series of 26 articles arranged in alphabetical sequence, dealing with fundamental truths relating to the person of Christ (154 pages). **£5.50**

The Jew: Zion and Jerusalem (June 1997). An outline of historical events from AD 70 to modern times (55 pages). **£3.00**

The Servant of Jehovah: *His Suffering and Glory* and *The Passion Song of Israel*. An introduction to Isaiah chapters 40-66 and an exposition of Isaiah 52:12 - 56:8 (from the commentary, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*). Published September 1997 (30 pages). **£1.00**

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah *- A Commentary*. Published November 1997 (340 pages). **£12.00**

Available from: **M.A. Rudge, 15 Tamar Road, Brockworth, Gloucester GL3 4JR.**

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Change of Address: As from 26th November the new address for Mr Don Rodgers is 8 Kings Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2HD. Tel: (01732) 352948.

Hall Caretaker Required for Shields Road Gospel Hall, Motherwell. Large cottage attached to the hall building is available. Conditions and further information can be obtained on request. Contact: Mr Jack Murray, 43 Neilsland Drive, Motherwell, ML1 3EB. Tel: (01698) 267949.

The cottage joining the Hall at Chagford, Devon, has become available and the saints are praying that the Lord will send someone to help. The cottage comprises of 2 large bedrooms, 2 reception rooms and a newly fitted kitchen. Bathroom and toilet downstairs. Applications to Mr L Aplin, 3 Manor Drive, Chagford, Nr Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 8BH. Tel: (01647) 432602.

Change of Address: Mr and Mrs J Frost are now at 18, The Avenue, Hornsey, London, N8 0JR, Tel: (0181) 8885372.

Change of Correspondent: All correspondence for Fortwilliam Gospel Hall should now be addressed to William Cooper "Shalom" 138 Shore Road, Greenisland, Co. Antrim BT38 8TT. Tel: (01232) 862383.

HOLIDAY HOMES

Cromer, Norfolk: Detached cottage, sleeps 4/5 + cot. Comfortably furnished. C.H., enclosed garden, parking. 1 mile sea. Close to local assembly. Tel. (01263) 511840.

Strathlene, Buckie: 4/6 berth modern caravan to let on select sea front site. Ideally situated for touring the picturesque North East Coast of Scotland. Tel. (01360) 312344.

Bangor, County Down: High quality bed and breakfast run by Christian family. Spectacular view of Marina and Pickie Fun Park. Excellent home cooking, all meals catered for. Guest lounge, no smoking throughout and ideally positioned for town, local churches and amenities. 10% discount for senior citizens when taking half board and 7 night stay. Personal service and comfort assured. Hebron House, 59 Queens Parade, Bangor, County Down, Northern Ireland BT20 3BH. Tel: (01247) 463126.

Isle of Wight: Rowanhurst Christian Hotel. Warm Christian holiday fellowship. All rooms ensuite with teamaking facilities. Brochures from Peter & Eileen Atkinson, 88 Sandown Road, Lake Sandown, PO36 9JX. Tel: (01983) 402663.

Carmarthenshire: Farmhouse B&B. E.M., homebaking. Warm fellowship in home/assembly. Visit Cardigan/Tenby coastlines. Mrs Christine Hartridge, Tyffynnonwen, Cwmbach, Whitland. Tel: (01994) 448726.

Tarbolton: Scoutts Farm, bed and breakfast in Country House, all home baking, also mobile home to let. Convenient to Ayr and close to local assembly. Mrs J Harrison. Tel: (01292) 541218.

Eastbourne: Three-bedroomed holiday home. C.H. Sleeps 5/6. A few minutes walk from the sea. Available all year round. Contact: Mrs Vera Russell, 31 Farlaine Road, Eastbourne BN21 1XF. Tel: (01323) 736341.

Blackpool: Lochinvar Christian Guest House. Join John and Mollie McArdle for a happy holiday with good food and warm christian fellowship, central heating, tea/coffee facilities all rooms. Most rooms ensuite. Special senior citizens weeks: May 10-24; Aug. 23-30. All holidays at 1996 prices. Send for brochure or ring (01253) 351761. 14 Chatsworth Ave., Norbreck, Blackpool FY2 9AN.

Scotland: B&B En-suite available. Ideally situated for touring central and western areas. Murray, Rosedale, 53 Main Street, Calderbank by Airdrie. Tel: (01236) 751797.

Florida: Kissimmee Nr. Orlando. Privately-owned 3-bedroomed villa. Heated pool. Telephone (01899) 220995.

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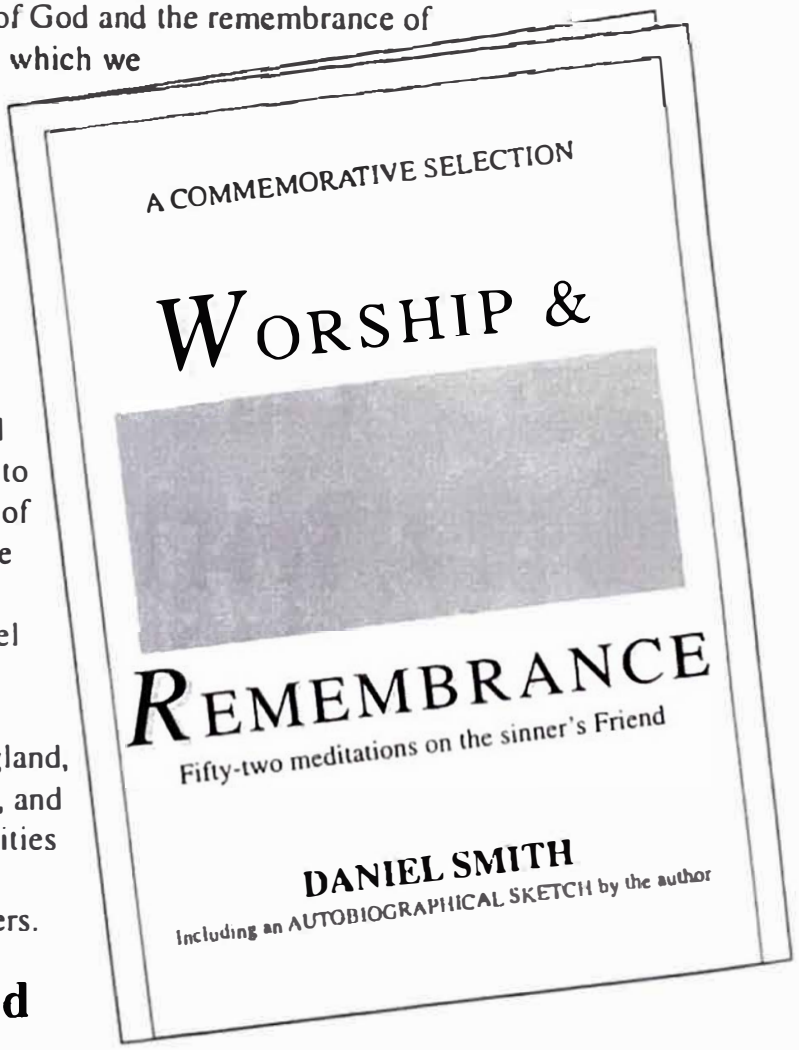
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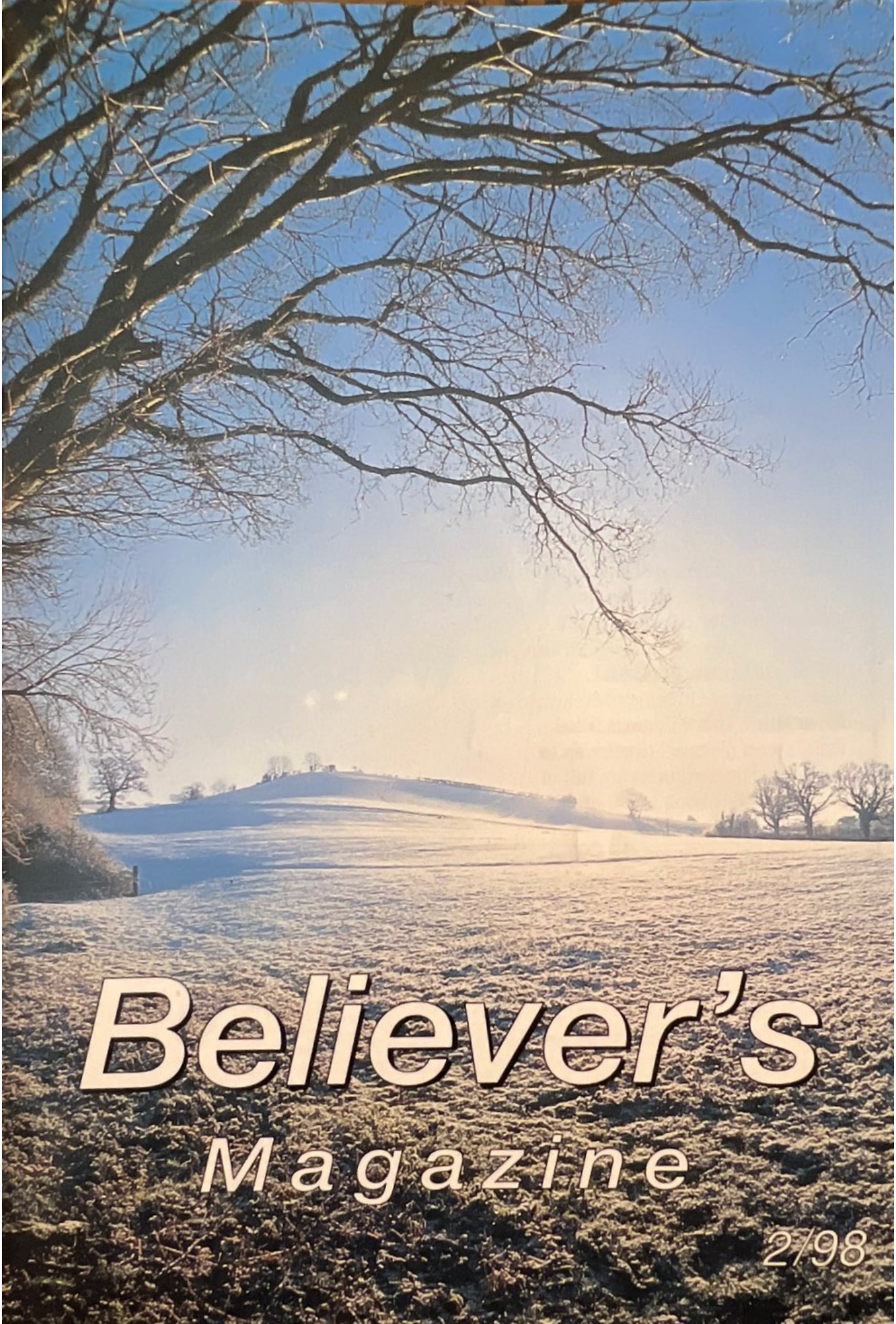
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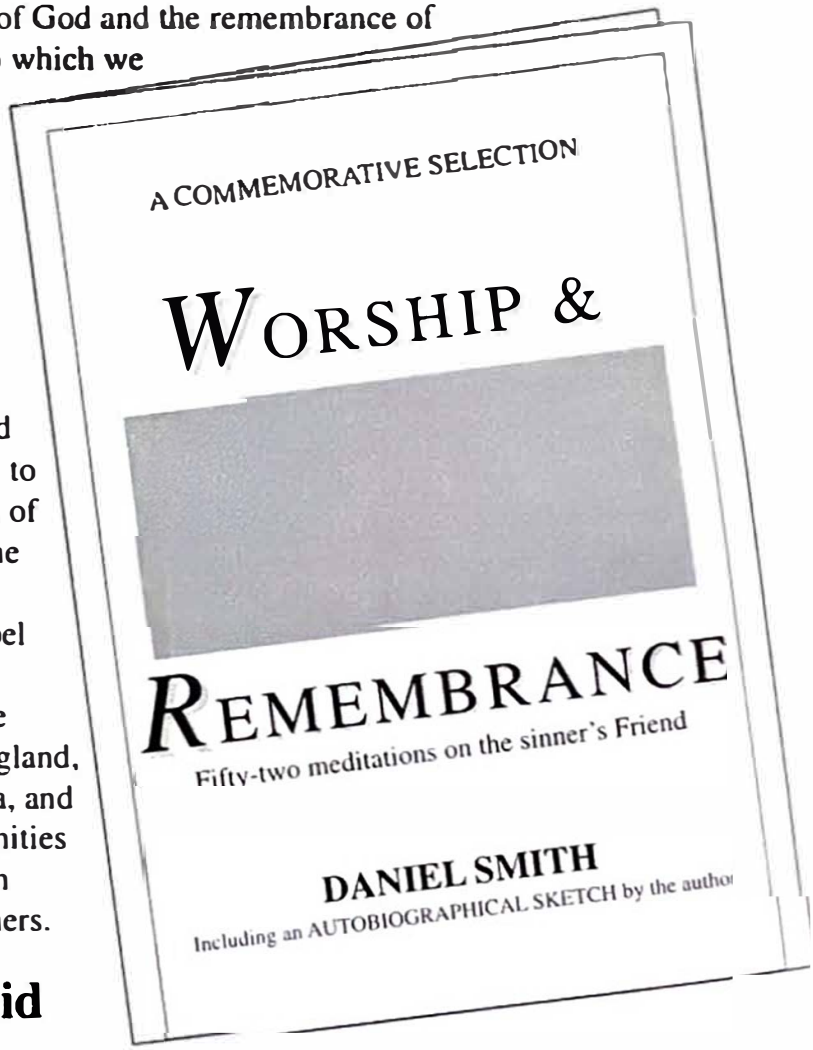
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Believer's

Magazine

FEBRUARY 1998

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Editorial

The apostle's voice, we may reverently suppose, has fallen silent. Tertius, his faithful amanuensis (Rom 16:22), lifts his eyes enquiringly, they rest on one absorbed now in the abundance of the revelation, his soul filled with awe and wonder and worship. When at last he speaks it is in indescribable tones, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (11:33). In these sublime words the Spirit of inspiration assures us that, in the realm of the infinite and eternal, there are things which are forever beyond our ken.

Shall we deny, with others, the wonder of His person because we cannot understand how One should be very God and yet truly human? how the Omnipotent should lie in dependence upon the virgin's breast? how the Omniscient should say, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man...neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32)? how the Omnipresent, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be wrapped in swaddling clothes and lie in a manger? Shall we attempt to explain His miraculous conception in the womb of the virgin? Shall we not rather say with her, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"? We have heard and read expressions like "hypostatic union" and "two distinct natures in one glorious Person". I am not convinced of their helpfulness or meaningfulness. At best they are sincere attempts to express in human terms what in the end is inexplicable. Or shall we question the grace and compassion of His ministry because we cannot explain its paradoxes? Have you never watched, perplexed, at Bethesda's pool and gone away wondering why only one was blessed? How different was that visit in its outcome from the evening scene described for us in Mark 1:32-34 when "all the city was gathered together at the door" and "he laid his hands on *every one of them*, and healed them" (Luke 4:40).

His judgments are the many strands of infinite wisdom and knowledge which, woven together, comprise the fabric of the reason why. His ways are other threads of that same wisdom and knowledge that make up the tapestry of how. "Unsearchable" and "past finding out" surely mean that they defy all human reasoning and elude the most diligent enquiry. It is true that many of the threads emerge briefly to add their lustre and colour to the discernible pattern, but they are soon lost again in the welter of the weaving. For the most part they are alike untraceable. The added exclamation *How* implies that, at least in scenes of time, they are unutterably so.

Shall we doubt with some that the Infinite and Eternal can purpose immutably without infringing at all upon any of the prerogatives of His creatures? When confronted with seemingly-contradictory truths, it is wisdom if we, instead of fancying ourselves to be among the few who understand His ways, resume our seat beside Tertius in Gaius' guestchamber and listen again while the inspired apostle articulates those immortal syllables, "How unsearchable!"

KWS

Heavenly Things (3)

by Donald Cameron, Muirhead

Our Heavenly Hope

Faith is necessary for the existence of our christian lives as believers as Eph 2:8 states; so likewise is our hope. Hope is necessary for the development of character and conduct. We need the patience (or endurance) of hope (1 Thess 1:3); the assurance of hope (Heb 6:11) and the God of hope (Rom 15:13).

Our hope may be viewed as a crucible in which christian character is moulded (Col 1:3-5); hope also motivates to character-forming exercises (1 John 3:3 RV).

While faith may look backward and upward (Heb 11:3; 12:2), hope looks onward in the attitude of anticipation (Rom 8:24-25). Morally we are saved in hope as Heb 11 emphasises in its teaching. Faith appropriates and receives presently while hope desires its object and in patience waits for it (1 Thess 1:9-10). It may be implied that faith is the root of our christian life and that hope is the fruit in our lives as believers in Christ. Faith causes divine regulation in our lives while hope is the regenerating principle in our present calling (Titus 2:13; Rom 15:13); hope's final climax will be at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at the rapture (1 Thess 4:16) and, seven years later, the day of manifestation (Phil 1:6; 2 Thess 1:7) in fulfilment of Daniel's seventieth week (Dan 9:27).

The christian hope may be summarised as follows:

1. the gospel of God is its revelation (Col 1:23);
2. the word of God its authority (Rom 15:4; Acts 26:6);
3. the Lord Jesus its substance (Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1 RV)
4. heaven its incentive (Col 1:5 RV; Heb 6:19)
5. the rapture its attainment (1 Thess 4:14; John 14:1-3)

We may conclude that the work begun objectively in the believer's heart and life by the grace of God (Phil 1:6) will be brought to its conclusion only when we will be with the Lord and that for all eternity (John 14:3; 17:34; 1 John 3:3).

In 1 Cor 15:45-50 Paul refers to glorious features in the "last Adam" which contrast with the "first Adam". He points out that failure in the first creation was because of its federal head Adam and the results in his fallen posterity are "natural", "earthy", "corruptible" and "mortal". But in the last Adam (Christ) we have the features of the new creation which was ever God's first thought from eternity to eternity and in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the individual election and calling of the believer are by grace (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:2) as is the corporate calling of the church (Eph 3:9-11). In the new creation the characteristic words are "spiritual", "heavenly", "incorruptible" and "immortal".

When all the glory of the new creation will ultimately be ascribed to God, even the Father (Rev 21:1-9; 2 Pet 3:13; 1 Cor 15:24), when righteousness will not only be seen but will pervade the atmosphere among men in the eternal state, then the believer will be with Christ and like Christ for all eternity unto the praise of the glory of His grace (Eph 1:6). That will be the great end of the objective work of God in the soul.

Is There Not A Cause? (2)

by DC Hinton

The causes of decline Before we consider a remedy, we need to ascertain if we can what has brought us to this position.

In the days of the Judges the failure of Israel was because they "forsook the Lord God of their fathers...and followed other gods" (Jud 2:12). Here the root of *our* problem. In general our God, our Father and Redeemer and our Lord and Saviour, have not the position in our individual and collective lives to which they are entitled.

Although we confessed our Saviour to be our Lord at our salvation, He has not had the place of absolute supremacy which that involves. His word is not gladly and completely obeyed without question.

Because of this His word has not been taught in all its fulness. Bible Readings, essential for the consecutive study of Scripture, have died out in many areas. "A nice little word" is what is looked for in many cases, and any serious teaching of the Scriptures is described as "too deep".

Many, if not most, have never been taught the truths of gathering and reception. They have never experienced the leading and shepherding of scriptural elders. Often they have seen the clear commands of Scripture "bent" in order to accommodate relatives or friends of different persuasions. Scriptural elders are largely non-existent, yet how great is our concern for this? We seem to be perfectly content as long as the building is opened and the meetings arranged.

The remedy There is an urgent need for us to acknowledge our disobedience and seek forgiveness. We must acknowledge in practice the Lordship of Christ, which involves implicit obedience to His Word. We must turn away from practices which are contrary to His Word, no matter what individual believers may say. We must be seriously exercised that the Lord will raise up scripturally-qualified elders and teachers, and we must be willing to accept their teaching.

David as he saw and heard Goliath rightly said that there was "a cause" for someone to act for God's glory. Are we prepared to do the same?

The seriousness of the situation is no reason for sitting back and doing nothing. David did not simply look at Goliath and lament the position – he acted in faith in his God.

Having acknowledged the present failure we need to turn in repentance to our God and Father with the whole heart (1 Sam 7:3), and put away our "gods", the many things which have come into our lives and thereby displaced our God.

There must then be a return to the serious teaching and practice of the Scriptures. These must be expounded consecutively and believers taught the privileges and responsibilities of being in fellowship.

There also needs to be a greater emphasis upon the judgment seat of Christ where we will each stand. There our obedience to the word of God will be assessed. There our practical acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ will be revealed. We will have no excuse to offer for disobedience.

Give Ye Them To Eat (4)

by the late Tony Renshaw, Wythenshawe

The desert where the Lord fed the multitudes was not wholly barren, for John mentions that "there was much grass in the place" (6:10). When the people reclined in their fifties and hundreds they must have covered many acres, stretching away into the distance. If we assume that the women and children raised the total number of souls to twelve thousand (and there were probably many more), each disciple had to distribute bread and fish to at least a thousand people. The whole operation must have taken several hours. Each disciple had a basket, which he took empty to the Lord, who broke enough bread and fish to fill the basket, enabling the disciples to take the food to the waiting people.

The task may well have seemed irksome and monotonous. The disciples would gradually become weary of the repeated journeys between the Lord and the people. There is a hint in Mark 8:17-21 that they missed the wonder of the two recorded feeding miracles (the five thousand and the four thousand), for the Lord challenged them thus: "...have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve..."

How may we account for the disciples' attitude? Firstly, the Lord had refused to dismiss the crowds so that they could buy food for themselves. That would have avoided this hard work. Secondly, they had just completed successful preaching tours (Mark 6:30), but now they were diminished to being food carriers. Was this fair and fitting? Thirdly, He had brought them to the desert for a rest! Certainly they had rested earlier that day whilst He taught the crowds.

But now they were labouring on an unexpected task which seemed endless and threatened to reduce them to exhaustion. Were they not the twelve apostles? Had the Lord not singled them out for special service and, hopefully, for special status? And surely things could have been better organised, there in the desert! If the crowd had formed twelve orderly queues, they could have collected their food from the apostles rather than expecting the apostles to take it to them.

These may be speculative suggestions, but let us face up to their practical challenge. Godly Christians do not stand on their dignity. They do not seek recognition or assert their rights. They cheerfully take up any service for the Master, however menial it may be and however demeaning it may seem. They efface themselves so that they may exalt Him. They know that there is no higher privilege than to serve Him. They know that He is the best of masters and that He set the ultimate example of humility and self-abasement. How carefully and gently did He wash their feet in the upper room! He came "not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life

a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). "...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Are we satisfied and enraptured by the person of Christ?

But what was the boy doing all this time? Did he stay with Andrew, his new friend, and help him as best he could? It was Andrew who had introduced Him to the Lord Jesus in the first place. Or did he prefer to stay close to the Lord, and watch with eyes like saucers as the miracle unfolded? Either way we can be sure that he did not go hungry. The Lord would see to that. He would ply him with food and would converse with him and make him feel at home, there in the desert. That boy would never regret his generosity.

And surely he never forgot his experience in the desert to his dying day. He would enjoy telling it to everyone who was willing to listen, especially the members of his family. Perhaps as the evening wore on the Lord urged him to hurry off home lest his family should be worrying about him being out late. How absorbing are the narratives of scripture! They tell us just enough to make us want to know more! It would be fine to know more about that boy and about the influence which his encounter with the Lord had on his after life. Perhaps we shall meet him one day, among the citizens of heaven.

The crowds who benefited from the miracle would be unaware at first that it was happening. It was the Lord's policy to avoid publicity. Having given thanks for the food, He proceeded patiently to break it up for distribution. As He filled the disciples' baskets he always had enough and to spare. Now barley loaves were not a luxury. The fish helped to moisten them and make them more palatable. The result of the Lord's action could hardly be more briefly stated: "...they did all eat and were filled". The evangelists do not record this with surprise. The outcome of the miracle was never in doubt. It had presented the Lord with no problems.

"Filled" means "satisfied". No-one left the Lord that evening suffering from pangs of hunger. The disciples "took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full". These were not fragments left over and thrown away. They were pieces broken up for distribution and not used. They were therefore fit for subsequent meals. The Lord's provision fulfilled the promise of Ps 107:9: "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Are we satisfied and enraptured by the person of Christ?

Micah (13)

by JM Riddle, Cheshunt

Chapter 7:1-8

We have already noticed that chapter 6:1-7:20 represents the fourth major division of the book, and can be entitled *Forgetfulness and Faithfulness*. Chapter 6 describes God's *controversy* with His people (v.2), and chapter 7 describes God's *compassion* on His people (v.19). Micah chapter 7 can be divided as follows: (1) Micah's current circumstances, vv.1-7; (2) Israel's coming captivity, vv.8-10; (3) Israel's certain regathering, vv.11-17; (4) God's covenant mercy, vv.18-20.

Micah's current circumstances vv.1-7

Chapter 6 ends with the chilling words, "The statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels". We learn from the commencement of chapter 7 that the situation in Judah caused Micah considerable distress. It was impossible to trust anyone in society, however near and dear (vv.1-6), and the prophet had no alternative but to trust completely in God (v.7).

A) Men are faithless, vv.1-6

"Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grapegleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit" (v.1). Whilst these words evidently introduce Micah's personal lament, they clearly reflect the deep feelings of God Himself. The prophet looked for good and upright men amongst his contemporaries, and found none. It was comparable to a vineyard stripped completely bare, with nothing left for the gleaners (Deut 24:21; compare Jer 5:1-5). Every part of society was affected.

He had no confidence in men generally. "The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net" (v.2). Evil was practised with earnestness and expertise: "Both hands are for evil, to do it well!" (v.3 JND). Micah might have been writing about crime in the twentieth century!

He had no confidence in state officers. "The prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge" (vv.3-4). The word rendered "wrap" means to 'weave' or 'twist'. Today we call it 'sleaze'.

He had no confidence in friends. "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide" (v.5). See JND, "Believe ye not in a companion, put not confidence in a familiar friend". The Lord Jesus fully understood these circumstances. We can discern the "spirit of Christ" in David when he wrote, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Ps 41:9, John 13:18).

He had no confidence in family. "Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house" (vv.5-6). Compare Mark 13:12, and Jer 9:4.

The Lord Jesus refers to this passage in Matthew 10:35-36 when speaking to His disciples about the divisive effect of the gospel. Whilst we know that the

gospel unites families, many of God's people know only too well that it can also divide families. W Kelly observes that "nothing brings out the malice of the heart so much as the pressure of God's grace on men; nor does anything else expose a man to so much contempt and hatred." But the Lord is "as a little sanctuary" (Ezek 11:16) and many of God's people have been able to exclaim, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Ps 27:10).

B) God is faithful, v.7

Although, humanly speaking, Micah had every reason for distress and despair, his lament in vv.1-6 gives place to triumphant faith in v.7: "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." The New Translation renders this, "But as for me, I will look unto Jehovah". Like Isaiah, he says, "cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa 2:22). Micah's one and only resource is God Himself. The believer can cheerfully sing:

> His oath, His covenant, and blood
> Support me in the 'whelming flood:
> When all around my soul gives way,
> He then is all my hope and stay.

But it was far more than an empty technicality. We should notice the intimacy of Micah's relationship with God: "My God will hear me." He evidently enjoyed God's personal presence and help. After all, this was the man who said, "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (3:8). We should notice that Micah's relationship with God promoted:

We should notice the intimacy of Micah's relationship with God

i) *Concentration of vision.* "I will look unto the Lord." Micah had looked around him, and found nothing but discouragement and disappointment. Now he looks in a totally different direction, reminding us of the need to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of (our) faith." The supreme example is the Lord Jesus Himself, who said, "I have set the Lord always before me" (Ps 16:8).

ii) *Continuance of hope.* "I will wait for the Lord." The believers at Thessalonica were noted for their "patience (endurance) of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." We can reassure our hearts that "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

iii) *Confidence in prayer.* "My God will hear me." We must never forget the statement in Ps 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me". The Psalmist evidently met that condition, for he continues, "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer" (see 1 John 3:22, 5:14).

Question Box

Question
What is the meaning of the terms "the iniquity of the holy things", "the iniquity of the sanctuary" and "the iniquity of your priesthood" (Exod 28:38; Num 18:1). In what sense did Aaron and his sons "bear it"?

Answer
The first reference "the iniquity of the holy things" in Exodus 28, was personal to Aaron as the High Priest who ministered on behalf of the nation in the place which they were not allowed to enter. The statement under question is found in the section describing the golden mitre upon which were engraved the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD (v.36). This signified that the High Priest was dedicated entirely to Jehovah. He would therefore always act in light of the holiness of his unique office. He carried the responsibility of the nation before God, and God was able to accept the people's offerings (even though the people were imperfect) because of what He saw in the High Priest who presented them. We today have a Great High Priest who is in the presence of God and functions on our behalf. In this connection we sometimes sing: "Unworthy our thanksgiving, Our service stained with sin, Except as Thou art living, Our Priest, to bear it in".

The other two expressions in Numbers 18 "the iniquity of the sanctuary" and "the iniquity of your priesthood" refer to Aaron and also to the whole priestly house. They teach that when God put these men into a place of special nearness to Himself, He expected from them appropriate conduct in their lives generally. The smallest departure from the will of God was viewed as more serious for them than for the rest of the house of Israel. This had been emphasised particularly in the two preceding chapters where the account of the rebellion of Korah and his companions is given. It is in light of those chapters that these statements should be interpreted.

Today there is no special priestly class acknowledged by God. Every Christian is a priest who is to function in both prayer and worship in the heavenly sanctuary. This present position brings the believer into a closer and more intimate relationship with God than Aaron ever enjoyed. Such privilege brings even more responsibility. What manner of persons "ought we to be".

JR Baker

Question
Have friends who are now with the Lord, a knowledge of what is happening on earth?

Answer
We have no scriptural authority given, for us to say that our friends in heaven know what is transpiring on earth although some have expressed the fanciful idea that they are looking this way. The wise man of the OT declared "the dead know not anything...neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Eccl 9:5-6). This means that they are cut off from all communication with, or knowledge of, things mundane. The account given by our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 16 of both Lazarus and the rich man, makes clear that memory of life on earth is very active in eternity, but gives no ground for further speculation. We know that for them it is "far better" (Phil 1:23), and that they are "present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8)

JR Baker

Books

Maranatha: Our Lord Come by Dr Renald E. Showers; published Friends of Israel; price £7.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Maranatha: Our Lord Come is well-argued case for the pre-tribulation rapture and many other aspects of "those things which are most surely believed amongst us". A 288-page paperback, complete with an index of Scripture references and one of subjects and authors, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* is worthy of study. Rightly we all shie away from describing any book as "A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church"; however the publishers boldly offer that title to this volume.

Dr Showers deals helpfully with subjects every child of God should consider: the relationship of "church saints" to the wrath of God; the Rapture and the coming of Christ with His holy angels, the seventy-week prophecy of Dan 9 and references to the church and Israel in Revelation. Each subject he treats with care, if not exhaustively.

Some reference is made to other viewpoints on future events. However unlike so many apologetic works, the author avoids his treatise becoming dominated with negative comment on error but chooses wisely to offer positive comment on the truth of Scripture rather than on false positions adopted by others. Nevertheless the book deals with many of the difficulties which have troubled some Christians.

Maranatha, Our Lord Come is a book commended to readers. Its publication may cause some to note the dearth of ministry on prophetic subjects and to open once more to fellow-saints the truth of the blessed hope of every believer.

TW

The Most High God by Renald Showers; published Friends of Israel; price £7.50. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Commentaries on Daniel are not freely available; for that reason many will welcome a concise 197-page overview of Daniel's prophecy. *The Most High God* has the added attraction of being written in language that will stumble very few readers as he writes of Christ, Antichrist, the confederate revived Roman empire, the indignation and the millennial kingdom of Christ.

Showers identifies Antichrist with the little horn of ch.7 but sees only Antiochus Epiphanes in the little horn of ch.8. He again finds Antichrist in "the prince that shall come" (9:26) and in the wilful king (11:36). Like the reviewer, not all will agree with every detail of these interpretations but the general outline of his approach to Daniel will prove acceptable to most, the test of a commentator's approach to Daniel being of course his handling of the seventy weeks of ch.9. Like many, the author has been influenced in interpreting this section by Sir Robert Anderson and for that reason is orthodox in his interpretation.

Interestingly a few line drawings are included in the book which help in visualising the visions of chs.2,8. A few charts are also used to set out for example the chronology of the seventy weeks in ch.9. No index is included and only a scant bibliography is provided.

Sadly, few will read this book in an age when even divine truth has to be portion-controlled and prepackaged. Younger believers could do worse than begin by reading *The Most High God* and perhaps develop an appetite for prophetic truth.

TW

Tribute to Mr FE Stallan (1921-1998)
A beloved brother and fellow labourer

Mr Fred Stallan was born and brought up in Glasgow. He was not familiar with the gospel until the age of 19 when a work colleague took him to gospel meetings in Knightswood Gospel Hall where he was saved and later baptised and received into fellowship. He soon became active both as a Sunday School teacher and children's meeting speaker. After marriage in 1947 he moved with his wife Wilma to the Townhead assembly in Glasgow. During this time he participated in the various activities of the assembly as well as preaching over a much wider area throughout Scotland, eventually becoming in great demand in many parts of the U.K. At the close of Townhead in 1959 he met at Summerfield Hall until 1971, when he moved to Linwood.



Our brother's public activities were not at the expense of his local assembly. For more than three years he fully participated in the rebuilding of Linwood Gospel Hall and later for four years conducted a popular Friday night Bible Class to encourage young people in the study of the Scriptures. In later years when numbers became smaller, he curtailed his preaching activity elsewhere. He will be greatly missed at Linwood.

He was a diligent student of the word of God and gave much help from time to time in ministry and Bible readings. He was just as much at ease in large Conference gatherings throughout the U.K. as in smaller assemblies which he often visited. His public ministry was also fruitful. A number of full time servants, known to the present writer, were specifically influenced to respond to the call of God through his ministry.

Over the years Fred Stallan wrote for various assembly magazines, his first contribution to the *Believer's Magazine* being in October 1958. He has also left a heritage in his books *Things Written Aforetime* and *Written For Our Learning*. His final book *Romans*, due for publishing later this year, will complete the Ritchie NT series, *What the Bible Teaches*.

Since retiral in 1985, Mr Stallan has been Secretary of the Lord's Work Trust and also a member of the Editorial Panel of this magazine. In both he has worked beyond the call of duty and will be missed for all he did and for his special blend of dignity and humour in all situations. But most of all he will be mourned by his loved ones. His wife Wilma was a loving, faithful and constant companion through 50 years of married life. She, with his daughters Linda and Moira, their husbands Ian and Gordon, and grandson Justin all deserve our prayers. "Whose faith follow"

JRB

Young Believers

by John Dunlop, Crosshouse

The Christian and the Feminist Movement

In this article we want to look at the current position of the Feminist Movement and its impact on Christians; young sisters in particular. Many have observed that things which begin in the world are seen in companies of God's people in the next generation; and it is certainly true that the Feminist Movement has altered attitudes in British society to the extent that Christendom is giving way and an increasing number of assemblies are under pressure.

Feminism and society

A brief look at the Feminist Movement in the 20th century will reveal that the frontiers have been pushed back in a whole range of fields. Women can now vote on the same terms as men; employment legislation makes it illegal to have sexual discrimination in either recruitment policy or salary levels. And even in sport there are now females participating in what were once traditionally male pursuits. These developments, coupled with the recent upsurge of "Girl Power" in popular music, are seen as a legitimate expression of the growing confidence of women and their equality in all spheres. The difficulty comes, however, when trends that begin in the world intrude into spheres in which they have no place. The word of God and the local assembly are two such spheres.

Feminism and the Word of God

Feminists object to the Scriptures on the ground that they were written by men and only two of them are called after women; this is seen as evidence that the teaching of the Bible is biased against females and so can be ignored. The apostle Paul has attracted most criticism and is condemned by feminists as a man for his age, whose writings have no place in a modern, equal society.

We will look at some of these teachings below but the point to hold on to here is this: the Scriptures are not the product of the imaginations of men. Peter tells us that "...holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (1 Pet 1:21); while Paul is clear that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim 3:16). To suggest, then, that the Bible shows anti-feminist bias is to condemn God who is its author. A further complaint of the feminist cause is that the language of scriptures is masculine in character and that more women could relate to it if the tone was different. A recently published "translation", or perhaps more accurately "version", has sought to remedy the situation and is to be avoided as unhelpful at best and in parts blasphemous. Where He, His, Him or other pronouns relating to God are found they have been altered from the masculine to become feminine or neuter. A divine person is never termed Lord, while beautiful sections such as: "...Our Father, who art in heaven..." (Matt 6:9) receive shameful treatment on the ground of sexism.

While it is wonderfully true that, in the person of Christ, God became man, we are on dangerous ground if we suggest

that God is essentially human; indeed Moses reminds us that "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent" (Num 23:16). We have to be very clear in our study of the Bible, however, that God is referred to in the masculine form - including the Holy Spirit who should always be termed "He" and not "It". To alter the personal pronouns and to rob Christians of the truths revealed in having God as our Father goes right to the heart of the Scriptures. How much poorer we would be were we to lose the typical teaching of the OT seen, for example, in the father/ son relationship of Abraham and Isaac; or the repeated references of the Lord Jesus in parables when He speaks of God saying "a certain man"; or the essential, eternal bond between Christ and His Father.

Feminism and the local assembly

Having made progress in politics, employment and entertainment the perception of the feminist lobby is that "religion" will be as easy to conquer; and Christendom has already given way under pressure with an appeal to Scripture as a justification: "...there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 2:28). On this basis women are already taking on the same functions as men in many of the denominations while there are even those who meet in what were once stable NT assemblies where all barriers have been removed. Let young believers be clear – the feminist movement has no place in a local company of God's people. The text above is not a blank cheque to a vocal minority; rather a wonderful truth that in the context of sonship we all have the same relationship with God. Truth for the family, however, is not necessarily truth for the assembly, where God – not Paul – requires order. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak..." (1 Cor 14:34) is written in plain language; while "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim 2:12) is impossible to misinterpret. In the age of equality, however, that which draws a distinction is simply ignored, while the fundamental teaching of headship is despised; yet it is good to remind ourselves again that "...the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3).

Young Christians, then, must constantly be on their guard so that the so-called advances in the world do not intrude where they have no place. Diversity between the man and the woman in an assembly is not to be seen as old fashioned, the prejudice of Paul or the product of "Brethrenism" in urgent need of reform; but rather it is to be recognised that the well-being of assembly testimony depends on both brethren and sisters functioning as Scripture has instructed. The godly sister will be much more interested in the power of the Spirit than the power of a liberated womanhood; and rather than seeking *her* place will acknowledge *His*.

Regions Beyond

Catholicism in Spain Today

by Eric Bermejo

In an article on Spain written early last year, I began by referring to a book written 400 years ago, Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. By contrast I now draw your attention to something written more recently, namely an article which appeared in the 25th August 1997 issue of the Newsweek International Magazine, entitled HAIL MARY.

In this well researched and very disturbing article, the five authors tell of a growing movement within the R.C. Church aimed at getting Mary officially proclaimed as Co-Redeemer, in time for the millennium. Within the last four years the pope has received nearly $4^1/_2$ million signatures from 157 countries, urging him to exercise his power of infallibility and proclaim, as a new dogma of the Roman Catholic Faith, "that the Virgin Mary is Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix of all Graces and Advocate of mankind".

"If the drive succeeds", say the authors, "catholics would be obliged as a matter of faith to accept three extraordinary doctrines:– that Mary participates in the redemption achieved by her son; that all graces that flow from the suffering and death of Jesus Christ are granted only through Mary's intercession with her Son, and that all prayers and petitions from the faithful on earth must likewise flow through Mary, who then brings them to the attention of her Son".

This the authors perceptively remark, would replace the Holy Trinity with "a kind of Holy Quartet, with Mary playing the multiple roles of daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit"!

Among the notable supporters of this new dogma are the late Mother Teresa of Calcutta, (herself a strong candidate for elevation to the ranks of Roman Catholic sainthood, to whom the faithful also pray), and the pope himself, "whose devotion to Mary", say the authors, "knows no limits". "He rarely", they write, "delivers a homily or issues an encyclical without praising the Virgin Mary, and he routinely uses words like Mediatrix, Advocate and even Co-Redemptrix".

They then go on to make a significant observation, pointing out that "the only time that papal infallibility has been exercised since 1874, (when it was first pronounced as a dogma), was in 1950, a jubilee year, when pope Pius XII defined the dogma of Mary's immediate Assumption into heaven". And now that pope John Paul II has declared a jubilee celebration for the millennium, the authors see it as a "perfect occasion for the defining of this new dogma".

I assume that I have no need to point out to my esteemed readers that such a dogma would be utterly blasphemous, in that it arrogantly flies in the face of the crystal-clear statements of Scripture and constitutes a direct assault upon the unique and transcendent majesty of the Divine Persons. Furthermore it would also be sheer idolatry!

What perhaps I do need to point out however is that, dogma or no dogma, these things are already being taught, believed and practised throughout the vast majority of Roman Catholic countries and communities. And this is very definitely the case in Spain.

Just a few months ago I stood in the Roman Catholic cathedral of Tuy (N.W. Spain), and listened while the priest and his congregation sang their long litany to the praise of Mary, in which every glory imaginable is heaped upon her. And suddenly, there it came again, as clear as a bell and thrice repeated by the priest and congregation. Mary, they sang, is "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"!

This then is the real nature of our warfare in Spain. We do not battle against some minor aberration of the Christian faith, but against sheer blatant idolatry of the most insidious kind. For Catholicism has taken...not a pagan deity...but a central figure of the Christian story, blessed indeed amongst women, and converted her into THE GREAT CENTRAL FIGURE of the Catholic Faith, revered and worshipped by millions with a passionate devotion far surpassing anything ever shown by them to the blessed Son of God. And all in the name of Christianity. That's the fiendishly clever thing about it!

But for all Rome's power and prestige, both religious and political, how does its religion, in practise, help people on their short journey through life and into the great eternity beyond? That's the big and vital question!

I recently stood outside a Roman Catholic church in the town of Ribadavia in N.W. Spain, and spoke to a man whose trade for 50 years had been making coffins! Intrigued, I enquired of him whether, being an expert in the business of death, he could tell me what lies beyond death. He shuffled uneasily and eventually muttered something to the effect that he couldn't really say and didn't think that anybody else could either. I thereupon asked him whether he had never heard the glorious words of Jesus Christ who said in John 11..."I am the resurrection and the life..." (going on to quote the whole of verses 25 and 26 to him). No, he said, he hadn't. "Do you mean to say", I continued, nodding towards the church, "that in all these years they have never told you that?" No, he said, they hadn't. "Then what do they believe in, in that church, and what do they teach you?" said I. His answer shook me. "I don't really know what they teach", said he." "I don't really understand what they say in there, and I don't think they themselves understand it either"!

What a complete mess they have made of the pure, sweet, simple yet glorious gospel of our Sovereign Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Following Mary and their galaxy of saints they have completely missed the way, and led multitudes into an utterly dark, spiritual wilderness.

The Drink Offering (2)

by TJ Thompson, Alaska

We have already considered some aspects of this most suggestive "pouring out" offering and have noted that it always is presented in *appreciation of God's blessings to His people*. Having viewed it in Genesis in relation to the *person and place of God and His purpose,* and in Numbers in relation to the *person of Christ and His preciousness,* we now turn to the third aspect.

The People of God
and their Proclamation (Phil 2:17)

This chapter brings before us the essential *disposition* of saints in collective testimony before God and the world. Consequently he sets forth: Eternity to eternity (vv.6-11). Here we have Christ the *pattern mind for harmony through humility*. This mental balance is described as the function of the saints (vv.1-5). The "lowly mind" is the Christ mind, the "one mind" is the Christ mind, the "like mind" is the Christ mind. The mind of Christ is the fathomless mind of deity expressed in the great mystery of godliness. Manifest in hypostatic union; deity and humanity in one unique person. Here we can watch the outworking of His mind, deity veiled in a body of flesh! Emptied of *altitude* but not *attributes* – man yea, lowly servant man, yea humble man whose *obedience* to God led to the death of the cross.

Paul could tell the Corinthians "Be ye followers (imitators) of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1), but not in the Philippian context where Paul is absorbed by an incomparable Christ, "the prize" set before him. Thus he can say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after" (3:12). Oh that my soul was more and more occupied with Him, occupation with Christ is the secret of peace within and of power without.

Time into eternity (v.17). Here is Paul the *priestly mind;* one completely absorbed with the Lord. (*A Borland* writes "so greatly had he imbibed the spirit of his Lord that in consideration of the saints whose faith he wished to further, he was willing to count his death a joyful libation poured out on the Sacrifice and service of their faith".) This is surely the *high ground* of service because he took the *lowly ground* of his Lord experimentally. Over the years I have gathered some little appreciations of this chapter i.e. Christ–humility; the church–harmony; Paul–sincerity; Timothy–reality; Epaphroditus–fidelity.

And oh that Christ was seen in me
Whose humbling death has set me free
To serve His saints obediently
For Him my Lord and Saviour.

What Paul enjoyed was a life offered to God for the encouragement and promotion of the assembly's *God pleasing* testimony. This is really Romans 12:1 - life a sacrifice and commitment to God for the well being of His assembly, the highest moral illumination by holding forth the word of life. Paul writes; *Always* Christ *magnified* in my body (1:20); *Always obedient* to Christ's ministry (2:12); *Alway rejoice* in the Lord (4:4). Paul appreciated the commission of the Lord



(Matt 28:18-20) and sought to carry it out in his body sacrificed upon the altar (Rom 12:1) unto God, therefore he experienced and enjoyed the "lo, I am with you *alway*", the marvellous experience of the companionship of Christ even when "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim 1:15).

The Parousia of Christ and His Triumph (2 Tim 4:6)

The aspect of the return of the Lord is that of the rapture. Paul has now come to consider his departure and the conclusion of his service for the Lord (all servants must face this some day). Affectionately he, by inspiration, leaves here the last of his three *charges* to Timothy. The first is a charge as to *assembly life* (1 Tim 5:21), the second as to *personal life* (1 Tim 6:13-14). Here it is as to *gospel life* (2 Tim 4:1-5). This is a charge of encouragement to "preach the word" in spite of dangerous conditions and opposition. Last words are very important and some day we each will utter ours concerning our life and testimony. My own Dad spoke the words of 2 Tim 4:7 in closing a meeting in prayer, sat down and immediately passed into the presence of the Lord laying his head upon the lap of my mother. How precious then the words of Paul, his soul was aflame with the Christ of Calvary and the gospel he had proclaimed to the salvation and establishing of assemblies gathered in the Lord's name. Paul was also a *kingdom preacher*, as were the other apostles. In the great epistle on salvation he writes "the seed of David"; his regal right and "the kingdom of God"; its moral aspect (Rom 1:3; 14:17). He also warns sinners to repent (Acts 17:31). Both are later joined together; "the gospel of the grace of God"–this saves sinners, but "preaching the kingdom of God"–sobers saints! (Acts 20:24-25; 28:31).

Paul reviews his days of service which are about to close: they had been *warring days*–a *soldier* who had been enrolled by Christ and is assured that he *pleased* Christ, and *weary days*–an *athlete* who had striven for mastery and would "at that day" receive the "crown of righteousness". But they were also *watchful days*–the *steward* had guarded the faith and would at the review hear "good and faithful". The *aged warrior* concludes the earthly journey with the tough good fight now over, the *agile athlete* comes to the end of the course and the *able steward* giving his last words has kept the faith. In summing up his accomplishments he uses the precious word "joy". He who was the chief sinner and least of all saints, not fit to be called an apostle, was allowed to serve the *great burnt offerer*-"The Christ of Calvary"-the One who saved, strengthened, stood with (v.17), delivered (v.18) and would preserve unto His heavenly kingdom. Thus Paul breaks out into a doxology "to whom be glory for even and ever Amen". Martyrdom concludes his life as a drink offering poured out upon the great sacrifice of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Oh when I am dying how glad (wine) I should be
That the joy of my life was to be poured out for thee.

The Second Man, the Last Adam

by the late WW Fereday

The Bible is no mere collection of religious pamphlets bound together for convenience, but having no particular relation to one another; it is an organic whole, given through many centuries, and through many writers, by one Spirit. It furnishes us with a complete history of the ways of God with men, past, present and future. The future occupies a very large place in the sacred volume, for God has from the beginning kept His eye steadfastly upon the ultimate issue of all His purposes and ways.

The Bible has been frequently described as the story of two men, the first and the second, Adam and Christ (1 Cor 15:47; Rom 5:14). In Adam and in his many representatives have been painfully exhibited the weakness and folly of the creature, no purpose of God having prospered in man's hand; in Christ has been gloriously displayed perfection in every sphere and position that was ever contemptated by God for man. Having learned this–the most wholesome of all lessons, we "glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3).

The history of man in responsibility is interesting, but sad. Adam was set by God to have dominion over all the creatures by which he was surrounded, but he soon dishonoured his headship, and fell into bondage to the Devil (Gen 1:26). After the terrible judgment of the flood, Noah was divinely established in magistracy, but the first thing recorded of him is that he became drunk (Gen 9:6-21). Israel was favoured with the law of God (no nation was ever so privileged, Ps 149:19-20); but they broke the first and second commandments before the tables of stone reached the camp (Exod 32). Aaron and his sons were granted the privilege of priesthood, but all four sons failed apparently on the very day of their inauguration (Lev 10). Royalty was instituted in David, and Israel became supreme amongst the nations, but David's first heir brought it to ruin (1 Kings 11). When God transferred power to Gentile hands, the first holder of it (Nebuchadnezzar) set up a golden image, and flung into the burning, fiery furnace three faithful men because they refused to worship it (Dan 3). When the church was founded, in fulness of divine power and blessing, we soon read of mumuring, and also lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5,6). The history of the ages is consistent in its sadness; man has failed at every point as witness for God in the earth.

God's resource is Christ. His purposes concerning Him were framed before the world's foundations were laid. He has proved His fitness to carry through everything for God by His faithfulness when here in lowly grace. Satan approached the Second Man, even as he approached the first, but he found in Him no response to his temptations (Matt 4; John 14:30). It is God's intention that He shall come a second time. Then will the Father give "all things into his hand" (John 3:35). He will gather

up all the broken strands. All that Adam, Noah, Aaron, David, etc., were meant to be He will be in perfection.

The Second Man will rule for God throughout the millennial era. He will "put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24); and when every insolent tongue has been silenced, and every form of self-will and opposition to God has been stamped out, He will deliver up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, that God may be all in all. As the Head and Representative of all creation He will secure everything for God's glory, and for the blessing of men throughout "God's eternal day". When this becomes true he who sits upon the throne will say, "It is done" (Rev 21:6). Every divine purpose will then receive its full accomplishment, and the Father will rest in His love.

Blessed end to all the wonderful ways of God, often so perplexing even to His own! Glorious triumph over all the power and subtlety of Satan, and over all the weakness and folly of man.

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight,
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail.

JH Newman

PERSONALIA

Hall Caretaker Required for Shields Road Gospel Hall, Motherwell. Large cottage attached to the hall building is available. Conditions and further information can be obtained on request. Contact: Mr Jack Murray, 43 Neilsland Drive, Motherwell, ML1 3EB. Tel: (01698) 267949.

Change of Correspondent for Tullylagan Gospel Hall: now Mr Thomas J Spence, 69 Milburn Close, Cookstown, Co Tyrone, N.I. Tel: (016487) 64722.

Free to Collector: 100+ folding wooden seats in banks of 3 and 4. Contact Mr RA Heaney, 48 Hibbert Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 5AF. Tel: (01229) 823158.

Change of address: Please note that with effect from 5th December 1997, the address of Mr Cyril J Eden, Correspondent, Golbourne Gospel Hall,will be: 2 Thurlow, Sandringham Court, Lowton, Warrington, WA3 2QN. Tel: (01942) 262758.

The assembly in Crawley, Hants, have commended Mr Timothy Beer to the work of the Lord in Zambia. He left the UK in early December and his address is: c/o Mr C Geddis, Loloma, PO BOX 150, Manyinga, Kabompo, Zambia.

Student Accommodation Glasgow & Dundee, Close to city centre Universities. Comfortable, good quality. Glasgow available from early March to June then June annually. Dundee available from June annually. Tel: (01563) 531684.

As from 1st February, Mr & Mrs Colin Raggett (Botswana) can be contacted at 6 Norman Road, Higher Broughton, Salford, Manchester M7 4DJ.

Change of address for correspondent of Mullafernaghan Assembly: Mr Thomas H Alderdice, 87 Killysorrell Road, Dromore, Co. Down BT25 1LD. Tel: (01846) 693276.

Change of address for correspondent of Omagh Assembly: Mr Rodney McElrea, 6 Cranny Grove, Omagh, Co. Tyrone BT79. Tel: (01662) 244325.

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

FEBRUARY 2-5
Cookstown Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. M Radcliffe.

FEBRUARY 7
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. T Meekin.

FEBRUARY 14
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. R McKeown.

FEBRUARY 21
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. M Megaughin.

FEBRUARY 28
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. R Gamble.

MARCH 7
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. N Mellish.

MAY 9
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 1.00-3.00pm. and Annual Believers' Meeting. 3.45-5.00pm. Speakers: J Grant, R Jordan, M Radcliffe.

MAY 11-14
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 8.00pm J Grant.

SEPTEMBER 11-15
Craigyhill Gospel Hall, Larne: Annual Conference.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

FEBRUARY 7
Glasgow, Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton Street at 7.00pm. J Stubbs, R Thomson. Mr Stubbs continues in ministry on Lord's Day at 3.15pm and gospel at 7.00pm.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall, Hall Street at 6.30pm. Bible Reading & Ministry. S Foster (Rom ch.8 vv.26-39).
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. J Hay, J Grant.
Livingston, Deans: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A Meikle, I England.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. C Stewart, J Paterson (Jnr).
Stevenston: Bethany Hall, Station Road at 7.00pm. J Chalmers, G Gilmour.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, Church Street at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe, B Stapley.
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Place, Missionary Weekend. Friday 6th at 8.00pm. Saturday at 7.00pm. Monday at 8.00pm. N McMeekin, R Plant.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. R Marshall.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. D Gillies.
Edinburgh: Gorgie Gospel Hall, 4 Smithfield St. Bible Reading at 7.00pm. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18.

FEBRUARY 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. J Paterson. Bible Reading (Eph 4:1-15).

FEBRUARY 14
Armadale: Gospel Hall, 8 Masonic Place, South Street at 6.30pm. E Nelson, T Aitken.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. I Robertson, R Thomson. Mr Robertson continues on Sunday at 3.30pm.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. R Gamble (Eph 4).
East Kilbride: Threshold, Maxwell Drive, The Village at 7.00pm.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall, 141 Main Street at 7.00pm. A Sinclair, I McDonald.
Larkhall: Albion Hall, Montgomery Street

at 6.30pm. B McKellar, I Steele.
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. M Hunter, J McMaster.
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. I Affleck.
Chapelhall: Annual Conference in School Hall, Gibb Street at 3.00pm. R Miller, J Paterson, M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in the Gospel Hall on Lord's Day at 3.00pm and 6.30pm and Mon-Thurs at 7.45pm.
Dennistoun: Gospel Hall, 100 Finlay Drive at 3.15pm. W Banks, A Foster, J Grant. J Grant continues Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

FEBRUARY 21
Ayr: Gospel Hall, 125 Prestwick Road at 7.00pm. M Radcliffe. Bible Reading (John 19:16-37).
Bo'ness: Hebron Hall, School Brae at 6.30pm. E Taylor, J McDonald.
Denny: Gospel Hall, Westboreland Road at 7.00pm. Ministering brethren expected.
Glasgow, Linthouse: Bethesda Hall, 16 Holmfauldhead Place at 7.00pm. W Stevely.
Gourock: Bethany Hall Assembly, Drumshantie Road at 7.00pm. J Hopewell.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall, Howard Street at 6.30pm. A Cameron, T Wilson.
Plains: Elim Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Baxter, R Miller (Mayfield).
Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. E Hughes, A de Ville.
Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. J Burnett, A Wilson.
St Monans: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Flanigan. Also Mon-Thurs.

FEBRUARY 28
Airdrie: Hebron Hall, North Bridge Street at 6.30pm. S Grant, J Harrison.
Ballingry: Gospel Hall, Southfield Avenue at 6.30pm. (Gal 5).
Falkirk: Thornhill Hall, Thistle Street at 6.30pm. A Mair, N Mellish.
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street at 7.00pm. M Radcliffe, B Stapley.
Kirkconnel: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Cameron, J Stubbs.
Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road at 7.30pm. I Steele.
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall, Silvertonhill Avenue at 6.45pm. J Paterson, T Wilson.
Musselburgh: Gospel Hall, New Street at 6.30pm. G Gilmour, E Nelson.
Prestwick: Bute Hall at 7.00pm. I Wallace, J Hay.
Shotts: Gospel Hall, Dykehead Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. W Wood, J Paterson (Sen).
Uphall: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Chalmers.
Kilbirnie: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, School Wynd at 3.00pm. S Arbuthnot, A Naismith, J Rodgers.

MARCH 7
East Kilbride: Threshold, Maxwell Drive, The Village at 7.00pm. N Hood, H Stalker.
Glasgow, Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton Street at 7.00pm. I Robertson, B Stapley.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall, Hall Street at 6.30pm. Ministry & Report Meeting. R Crozier, G Woods.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. S Grant, E Nelson.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, I Steele.
Livingston, Deans: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. S Arbuthnot, J Sinclair, I Spiers.
Stevenston: Bethany Hall, Station Road at 7.00pm. A Gamble, G Forbes.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, Church Street at 6.30pm. S Brownlie, A McLean.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. I Afleck.
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Place, Bible Study Weekend. Friday 6th at 8.00pm, Ministry. Saturday 7th, Bible Reading at 4.30pm and 7.00pm. Lord's Day 8th March at 3.15pm, Ministry. Monday 9th March at 8.00pm, Ministry: J Allen, Subject - Letters



to the Churches in Revelation ch.2 & 3.
Port Seton: Viewforth Gospel Hall, Missionary Conference at 3.30pm. Mr P Hedley: Italy, Mr J Knowles: Zambia, Mr S Hanlon: Honduras.
Edinburgh: Gorgie Gospel Hall, 4 Smithfield St. Annual Conference, 3.15-5.15pm, Ministry. 6.15-7.45pm. Bible Reading, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28, J Hay, S Matthews.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. S Foster.

MARCH 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. B Currie. Bible Reading (Eph 4:16-32).
Interlink Half-Yearly Missionary Meetings: Maddiston Evangelical Church at 7.30pm & Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie at 7.30pm.

MARCH 14
Armadale: Gospel Hall, 8 Masonic Place, South Street at 6.30pm. G Meikle, I Robertson.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. J Hay, I Gibson. Mr Hay continues on Sunday at 3.30pm.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. J McDonald (Eph 5).
Larkhall: Albion Hall, Montgomery Street at 6.30pm. R Dryburgh, J Cadzow.
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Paterson.
Interlink Half-Yearly Missionary Meetings: Hamilton College, Bothwell Road at 2.00pm, 3.30pm & 7.00pm.
Ashgill: Annual Conference in Public Hall at 3.00pm. J Sinclair, D Meikle, B Currie.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

FEBRUARY 7
Birmingham: Charlton Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S McKenzie also on Monday and Tuesday at 8.00pm.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. E Hughes.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Speedwell Chapel, 63 Speedwell Road at 7.00pm. G Payne.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. C Roberts (Matt ch.14 & 15).
Crowle, Worcester: Gospel Hall, Old Turnpike Road at 7.00pm. E Parmenter.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. D Angel.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian Street. Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Meeting. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Acts 16:10-40). Ministry at 6.45pm. W Banks.
Kirby: Gospel Hall, Portland Street at 7.15pm. C Lacey.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. Mr DE West.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Bethany, Huyton at 7.30pm. N Molyneux.
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 7.30pm. Tuesday in Gold Street, Hanslope and Thursday in Hebron Hall, Bicester, H Cooper.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. C Clarke.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall, 139 Mayow Road at 7.00pm. I Crawford.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. P Richardson.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. G Guile.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall, Welland Road at 7.00pm. J Lee.
Butt Lane: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Banbury Street at 7.00pm. T Galilee.

FEBRUARY 14
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Totterdown Gospel Hall, 15 Bellevue Road at 7.00pm. E Griffiths.
Bury St. Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall,

Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. H Stewart.
Calne: Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 7.30pm. F Epps.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. D Angell.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. J Baker.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Newsham at 7.30pm. K Baker.
Manchester, Gorton: Gospel Hall, Highmead Street at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. J Coltman. Mr Coltman continues on Lord's day at 4.00pm.
North Wembley: Uxendon Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. R Carnall.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. E Parmenter. Mr Parmenter continues in ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.45pm.
Morpeth: Red Row, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. J Hay. Mr Hay continues in ministry to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road. Conference at 3.00 & 6.15pm. D West, R Collinge.

FEBRUARY 21
Beighton, Sheffield: Gospel Hall, Eckington Road at 7.30pm. K Totton.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Bethany Gospel Hall, 838 Filton Avenue at 7.00pm. G Stewart.
Burton-on-Trent, Winshill: Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 7.15pm. C Lacey.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 7.30pm. C Rees.
Crawley, Nr Winchester: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. S Baker.
Glastonbury: Bove Town Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. F Lonney.
Harrow: Belmont Hall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 7.15pm. I Jackson, Mr Jackson continues in ministry Sunday to Thursday at 8.00pm.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Crete Hall at 7.30pm. G Anthon.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. T Ledger.
Manchester, Wythenshawe: Brownwood Hall, Woodhouse Lane. Annual Conference at 3.15pm to 8.00pm. J Riddle, B Osborne.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Atkinson.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall, Percy Road at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. J Baker.

FEBRUARY 28
Bexleyheath: Bethany Hall, North Street at 7.00pm. W Gardiner.
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. D Dixon.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Chelsea Gospel Hall, 79 Devon Road at 7.00pm. P Brind.
Chesterfield: Littlemoor Gospel Chapel, Dunston Lane, Newbold at 7.15pm. J Scarsbrook.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall, Eastern Road at 7.00pm. F Beevers, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Leicester: York Street, Gospel Hall (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. H Cooper.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in David Street. Bible Reading at 5.00pm. and Rally at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.
Warrington: Gospel Hall, Manor Street, Golborne at 7.00pm. R Parnaby.
Weymouth: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. M Browne.
Basingstoke: Gospel Hall, Essex Road at 7.00pm. R Miller.
Withington: Gospel Hall, Mauldeth Road at 7.30pm. J McPhail.
Appledore: N Devon, Bethel, The Quay at 7.15pm. C Hocking.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge

Road at 7.30pm. R Plant.
London W10: Hope Hall, 222 Kilburn Lane, Queens Park at 7.00pm. M Hall.

MARCH 7
Birmingham: Charlton Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. R Johnson.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Speedwell Chapel, 63 Speedwell Road at 7.00pm. G Davies.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. J Page (Matt ch.16).
Crowle, Worcester: Gospel Hall, Old Turnpike Road at 7.00pm. J Baker.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. J Riddle.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian Street. Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Meeting. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Acts 20:17-38). Ministry at 6.45pm. J Dickson.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Bethany, Huyton at 7.30pm. D Locke.
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell. Bible Reading (Titus ch.2) at 4.30pm. Ministry at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Victoria Road at 7.15pm. E Hughes.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. P Young.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall, 139 Mayow Road at 7.00pm. R Plant.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. I Crawford.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. W Gardiner.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall, Welland Road at 7.00pm. K Jennings.

MARCH 14
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. H Cooper.
Bristol: Unity Fellowship Meeting in Unity Chapel, 80 Romney Avenue at 7.00pm.
Bury St. Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. C Stewart.
Calne: Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 7.30pm. P Bees.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. T Proffit.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. P Coulson.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall, Manor Road at 7.00pm. R Hill.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Newsham at 7.30pm. R Parnaby.
Manchester, Gorton: Gospel Hall, Highmead Street at 7.00pm. C Hutchinson.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. F Epps, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
North Wembley: Uxendon Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. A Cundick.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. B Gardiner.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. P Williams. Mr Williams continues Monday at 7.30pm.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ARMAGH
Altnamackin: WJ Nesbitt and J Preston have completed nine weeks of gospel meetings in a portable hall. The whole district was well visited and quite a number of local people came to hear the gospel plainly preached.

Co. DOWN
Annahilt – Hillsborough: (Magheraconluce Road) R Pickering and J Wishart commenced gospel meetings in portable hall on 11th January.
Comber: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken were expected (d.v.) for a gospel effort in the town on 18th January.
Killyleagh: R Eadie and S Maze commenced gospel meetings in the Gospel Hall on 11th January. The assembly here is small and the

area difficult to interest locals. Prayer valued.
Kilpike (Banbridge Area): E McCullough (USA) and A Davidson concluded seven weeks of well attended meetings, and had the joy of knowing of at least two professing to be saved.
Comber: The end of year Annual meeting saw some 160 believers gathered, where practical and devotional ministry was given by D Gilliland and Dr. W McBride.
Gransha: The annual gathering on 25th December was considered a very good meeting with ministry from A McShane, JG Hutchinson, T Gracey, T McNeill, A Davidson and D Kane.

Co. TYRONE
Drumquin: N Woods and S Nelson conducted a series of gospel meetings during November and part of December in portable hall, and saw some locals attending.
Lungs: D Gilliland gave appreciated ministry during first week in December.
Omagh: Annual Conference on 5th Nov. 1997 was well attended and practical ministry was given by A McShane, E McCullough, N Turkington, D Kane, JG Hutchinson and A Aiken. The assembly had a visit at end of November from S Jennings speaking on 'The Visions of Zechariah' using chart.

BELFAST & DISTRICT
Cregagh Street: Annual Conference held on Christmas Day was larger than in previous years, with good practical ministry given by T Meekin, JG Hutchinson and B Currie.
Belfast Christmas Conference: Held as before in the Kings Hall Conference Centre. Was well attended with the hall well filled for each meeting except the Friday night which was a little smaller than the others. The Bible Readings on Ephesians ch.1 & 2 were conducted by D West (Leicester) and S Ferguson (Bangor), with good appreciated ministry on each evening shared by S Jennings, S Ferguson, A McShane, D West, D Gilliland and E Parmenter. Conveners were thankful for a sense of the Lord's presence throughout the conference period.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

HAMPSHIRE
The annual mid-winter gathering at Bethany, the home for elderly saints at Pamber Heath, was held in December, at which a good number of staff and their families and many other interested persons were present. There were several unsaved in the home to sing Christmas hymns and to listen to the Gospel message, preached by one of the trustees. The prayers of the Lord's people would be appreciated that some might be saved as a result of this exercise. Also please pray for the continued well-being of the residents, some now very frail, and for the necessary skill and care given by the Matron and her staff, all most dedicated to the work, and always in need of the prayerful interest of the saints.

CUMBRIA
G McCracken and N Smith, young men from East Park Gospel Hall, Glasgow, held a weeks gospel campaign in the Gospel Hall at Askam in Furness, Cumbria. Whilst there was poor support from the local assemblies, the number of unsaved who came to hear the gospel was very encouraging. Eleven adults and four youths attended one night and eleven youths on another night. All asked many questions on the Bible and other beliefs. Children's meetings held the entire week were well attended with good behaviour. Slides were shown on the two trips Gordon has made to Albania, taking relief to the saints in that land. Please pray for the

above and also the small company that are in fellowship at Askam.

SOUTH WALES

Deri: J Baxter spent the month of November with this small assembly. Most nights there were unsaved under the sound of the Word of God. One lady in particular, who was brought to the meeting from Bargoed, was troubled after attending several times. Eventually one afternoon, after the friends and neighbours meeting she told the saints that she had trusted Christ as her Saviour in her home. Door to door visits were excellent with many contacts made. Please pray that there will be much fruit to the glory of God.

Heath, Cardiff: JR Baker held a week giving teaching on the Feasts of Jehovah which was very helpful and instructive. There was a good interest with support from the assemblies in the surrounding area.

SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS

Northampton: Much encouragement was received when a team of brethren led by Stan Burditt, Northampton and Peter Smith, Harrogate, erected a Gospel Tent at the Northampton Hot Air Balloon Festival from 15-17 August '97, the Lord blessing with excellent weather.

This Festival is attended by some 200,000 and approximately 3,000 adults passed through the tent, receiving free refreshments. The visitors were able to look at the Display, read the literature and converse with the workers. Many showed a positive interest. Each family received an 'exit package' containing a Via magazine, a prepaid card for requesting a New Testament, regular Gospel literature or a Bible Correspondence Course, and also an invitation to a Gospel Campaign at Spencer Bridge Rd., Northampton from 28 September to 9 October, conducted by Ian Jackson. A few have returned the cards and are now on a mailing list.

500 children completed a 'Treasure Seekers' questionnaire connected with the Postal Bible School. These are being followed up by Peter Smith. Much prayer was made for this outreach and prayer is continuing that the seed sown may yet yield much fruit.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

The Ayrshire Bible Exhibition was formed in 1986. It has been used in England, Wales and Scotland. During 1997 a number of visits were made to assemblies in Glasgow, North of England, the Western Isles and Ayrshire. Some visits have included the Exhibition being used both in the local assembly halls and schools. One such visit was to Lewis & Harris where 1,200 children visited the Exhibition. Parents were encouraged to attend the Exhibition in the school in the evenings. During the middle week the Exhibition was in the Gospel Hall in Stornaway and was well attended by school pupils and in the afternoon and evening by adults.

Opportunities have been given to place the Exhibition in suitable schools where pupils visited the Exhibition as part of their Christian Education. The response from teachers has been most encouraging, many of them eager to obtain teaching aids which are suitable for the school curriculum on Christian Education. Please pray that an interest in the Bible may be kindled in young lives and that the seed sown will bear fruit abundantly. Plans for 1998 (d.v.) include visits to North of Scotland, England, West Lothian and Ayrshire. There are still dates available for 1998 and bookings are also being taken for 1999.



Assemblies interested in this aspect of the Lord's work should contact: Roy Kilpatrick, (01294) 556912 or James Brown, (01563) 536521.

Kirkmuirhill, Lanarkshire: Ian Robertson had two weeks gospel meetings in September, marking the opening of the assembly's new hall. On the opening night around fifty local people were present and each evening unsaved came. Around one hundred different folk heard the gospel in the hall over this period. In addition the gospel was preached each evening on the streets and during the afternoons many were visited in their homes.

Auchinleck: Jim McMaster and Ian Robertson held gospel meetings in a portable hall in October with unsaved present each evening. Four men who have problems withalcohol addiction attended, three of them regularly. One of them made a profession of faith and needs much care and prayer, never missing a night for two and a half weeks. Please remember him and the others in prayer. One lady came a couple of nights and after the final meeting she told a friend that she would like to be saved. There were children's meetings with one girl showing good interest. We believe a work was done in many hearts during this series. The people mentioned are still attending the regular gospel meeting.

New Stevenston, Lanarkshire: Ian Robertson and Jim McMaster held gospel meetings in November with unsaved present each evening. Children's meetings were good, although on a few occasions some older boys tried to disrupt. Some of them also attended the gospel meetings. Their only hope is Christ. Please pray for those who attended regularly and for a lady whom we visited. She is 34 and has five daughters. Her grandparents were Christians and she attended Sunday School with them. She wept as she was told of the Saviour's love again.

Lord's Work Trust

42 Beansburn, Kilmarnock KA3 1RH
Tel: (01563) 521098 • Fax: (01563) 571215
Charity No. SC008740

Total Gifts received from 1 December 1997 to 31 December 1997

For the Lord's Work and Workers		Gifts towards Expenses
From Assemblies	57385	2988
From Individuals	23642	897
From Covenants/Gift Aid	62292	764
From Legacies	770	0
From Refund of Tax	29275	0
	173364	4649

Includes: £10 England, £5,000 N. Ireland

With Christ

Mrs Tom Moore on 29th October aged 95 years. Saved at 15 years, our sister became concerned about future service for the Lord. This concern took her, along with her husband (Mr Bertie Douglas) to Venezuela in 1924, where they remained until 1935. It was during that year while home on furlough that her husband was called home, leaving her with two children. She settled in Bangor and later married Mr Tom Moore, and together they served the Lord, seeking to win souls for Christ. Since the homecall of Mr Moore she has been lovingly cared for by her daughter and son-in-law. A spiritual sister with a love for souls, she was a help wherever she was.

Mr Edward Farquhar, suddenly on 17th September, 1997, aged 80 years. He was saved and baptised in his teens. Being a fisherman, and working mainly in the west coast, he moved to Ayr, where he was in fellowship at Riverside for a number of years. He then returned to Lossiemouth, where he has continued, apart from a time in Bute Hall, Prestwick. He did not keep the best of health, but was always cheerful, and never complained. Such an attitude was an example to all. Prayer specially requested for his wife Marion, and for all the family.

Mrs Bessie Perrie on 25th November 1997, aged 80 years. She was saved and baptised when 14 years of age and was in fellowship at Victoria Hall, Ayr until her marriage in 1932 to the late Andrew Perrie with whom she was then in fellowship in James St Gospel Hall, Ayr. She moved to the assembly at Woodpark, Ayr in 1988. During her short stay in hospital she pointed a young nurse to the Saviour. She was a faithful member of the assembly and served her Lord well.

Mr James McCleery aged 97. Ballynahinch, Co Down. Saved at 14 years of age and for many years in the assembly at Crossgar. Called home on 6th December 1997 after a prolonged illness. He was not a public man but played an active part in the affairs of the assembly and was very hospitable while health permitted. The Gospel Hall at Carryduff was well filled at his funeral. He was held in high esteem.

Mr Robert Wishart on 6th December in hospital aged 79. Saved when he was 18, soon afterwards was received into assembly fellowship where he remained steadfast until his homecall. For many he was an esteemed member of the Lessans assembly, acting on oversight and in many ways a pillar in the assembly. Latterly he was in Dundonald assembly. He had a real interest in the gospel, preaching on Lord's Days all over the province and at times conducting special efforts, seeing souls saved. His very large funeral was from Dundonald Gospel Hall conducted by Mr R Jordan, Mr J Hutchinson, Mr G Hall. Brethren Aicken and McFeeters shared in prayer. Prayer valued for his family.

Mrs Lily Green on 5th December 1997 aged 88. Saved in 1933 when the late Thomas Graham and JB Jordan had fruitful meetings in Drumaness, baptised and received into fellowship in Ballynahinch, had the joy of seeing

her husband and family saved. She, with her husband Eddie (who predeceased her in 1965) were foundation members of the Drumaness assembly established in 1957, where she continued until her decease. A woman of prayer, of a meek and quiet spirit (which in the sight of God is of great price). She shall be much missed by the family circle and in the assembly. A large company of people heard the gospel at her funeral service taken by S Thompson with her local brethren, A Thompson and I Hoare, sharing in prayer.

Mrs Norah Alexandra Hamilton (born 26th June 1902) on 3rd December 1997. Saved in the year 1926, came into the fellowship of saints at Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Old Park Road, Belfast in February 1927 where she remained until her homecall. Our sister was quiet in her demeanour, ladylike in character, loved her Lord, loved His Word, loved His people. Today we mourn her passing. The large funeral bore witness to the esteem in which she was held. The service was conducted by Mr Denis Williamson, Mr David Kane and Mr Alex Boyle.

Mrs Jean Jackson called home on 30th October in her 90th year. Saved in Belfast comparatively late in life following the death of her first grandson in 1966. Added to Ebenezer assembly and in 1976 became one of the founder members of the company at Ballyduff. A consistent attender at assembly meetings until confined indoors due to failing health. Our sister was one of a passing godly generation who will be greatly missed.

Mrs Agnes Lindsay suddenly on 10th December aged 61 years. Nan as she was affectionately known was saved when she was 12 years old and continued faithfully throughout her life. She served the Lord in the Mission Hall, Rankinstone, then after her marriage she moved to the assembly in Kirkconnel. She later moved to Drongan, Patna and finally Lockerbie where she had happy fellowship for almost 30 years. During her 41 years married life she was devoted to the Lord's work. She will be greatly missed in the assembly at Lockerbie. Her well attended funeral was conducted by G Lind and A Traill with many unsaved present. Prayer requested for her husband and her son and daughter-in-law, her three daughters and their husbands and 6 grandchildren.

Mr Eddie Griffiths suddenly on 8th November aged 91. Saved in 1923 at the age of 17, after a chequered youth, under the preaching of Mr David Matthews of Swansea. He was received into fellowship at Treherbert assembly a year or two later. On marrying his wife Edna, he joined the assembly at Treorchy in 1935 and continued there until his homecall. His deep appreciation of assembly truth, appetite for the Word of God and his desire to show hospitality to the Lord's people never waned during over 60 years despite the oftentimes smallness of the assembly. The sovereignty of God was his encouragement. The well attended funeral was conducted by Mr John Baker and Mr David Williams at the hall and Mr Joe Baxter and Mr Frank Lonney at the graveside.

Mr Wilfred Bibby on 25th September 1997 aged 80 years. Saved as a young man during a gospel campaign in Yorkshire conducted by Harold German and Fred Whitmore. He was baptised and received into assembly fellowship, for the last few years having been a member of the Risedale assembly, Barrow-in-Furness in which he played an active part in assembly gatherings. The hall was full for the funeral service which was also used as an opportunity to present the gospel to many unsaved who attended. "He will be missed; his seat will be empty". Prayer would be appreciated for his widow Hannah.

Mrs Elizabeth Munro on 9th November 1997, aged 80, widow of the late Kenneth Munro. Saved as a girl, baptised at 14 and received into fellowship in Abbott Hall, Dunfermline. For all her married life in fellowship in Glencraig then, when the assembly moved, in Ballingry, she gave unstinting, valuable support to her husband in the testimony locally. Our dear sister showed the strength of her faith in her consistent continuance in times of great sorrow when she suffered the loss of her husband, two sons and a daughter in the last 11 years.

Mrs Fanny McIntosh on 5th December 1997, aged 87. Saved in 1927 during gospel meetings in Londonderry conducted by WP Nicholson. Romans 6:23 was preached. She refused the wages and received the gift. Later baptised and received into assembly fellowship. A wise, quiet, godly sister. Her later years were spent in Tivaconavey assembly. The very large funeral bore testimony to the high esteem in which she was held. She is survived by a son and three daughters. Prayer valued for a daughter and husband not yet saved.

Mrs Anna Chambers of Cregagh St Belfast on 27th December. Born in 1910 and born again in early life at meetings in Moira. Baptised and received into fellowship in Broomhedge. Commended to Cregagh St in 1948 on the occasion of her marriage to Joe Chambers who predeceased her. She loved the Lord and the place where His honour dwelleth and bore a faithful testimony and keen interest in all the activities of the assembly. She was happy to entertain the Lord's servants and the saints. In her last two years she was kindly cared for in Faith House, having received a severe stroke.

Mrs Annie Conley on 3rd January 1998 in her 95th year. Saved in March 1920 at meetings in Killykergan Hall. Shortly afterwards she was received into Killykergan assembly and was there for most of her christian life. A much loved Sunday School teacher for many years. For a short time in Portstewart Assembly and in latter years in the fellowship at Coleraine until her homecall. A christian lady of a meek and quiet spirit who adorned the doctrine. Loved and esteemed by all who knew her worth. Prayer requested for a son, daughter and relatives.

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

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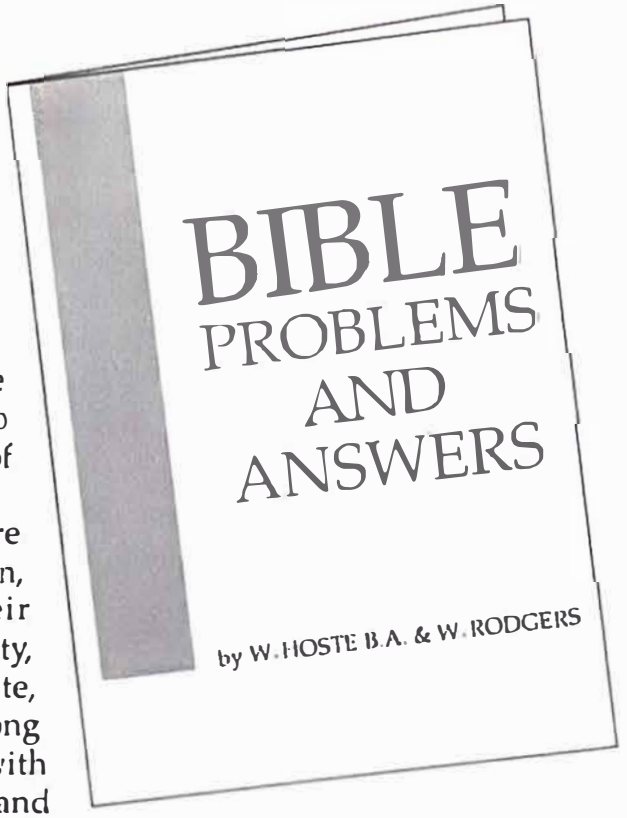
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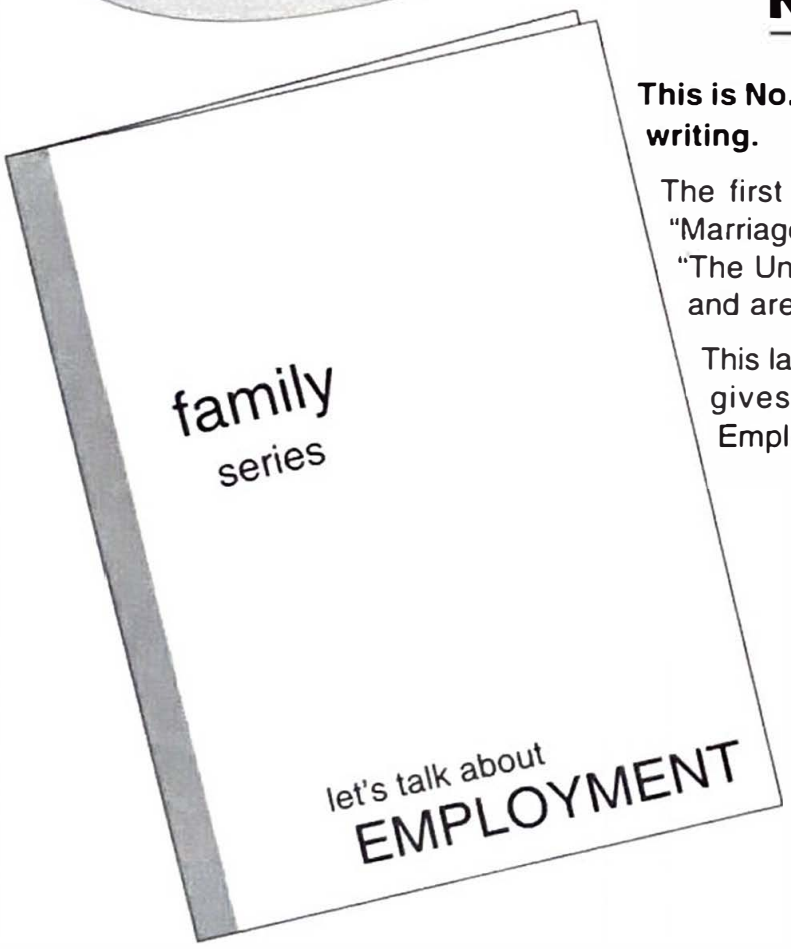
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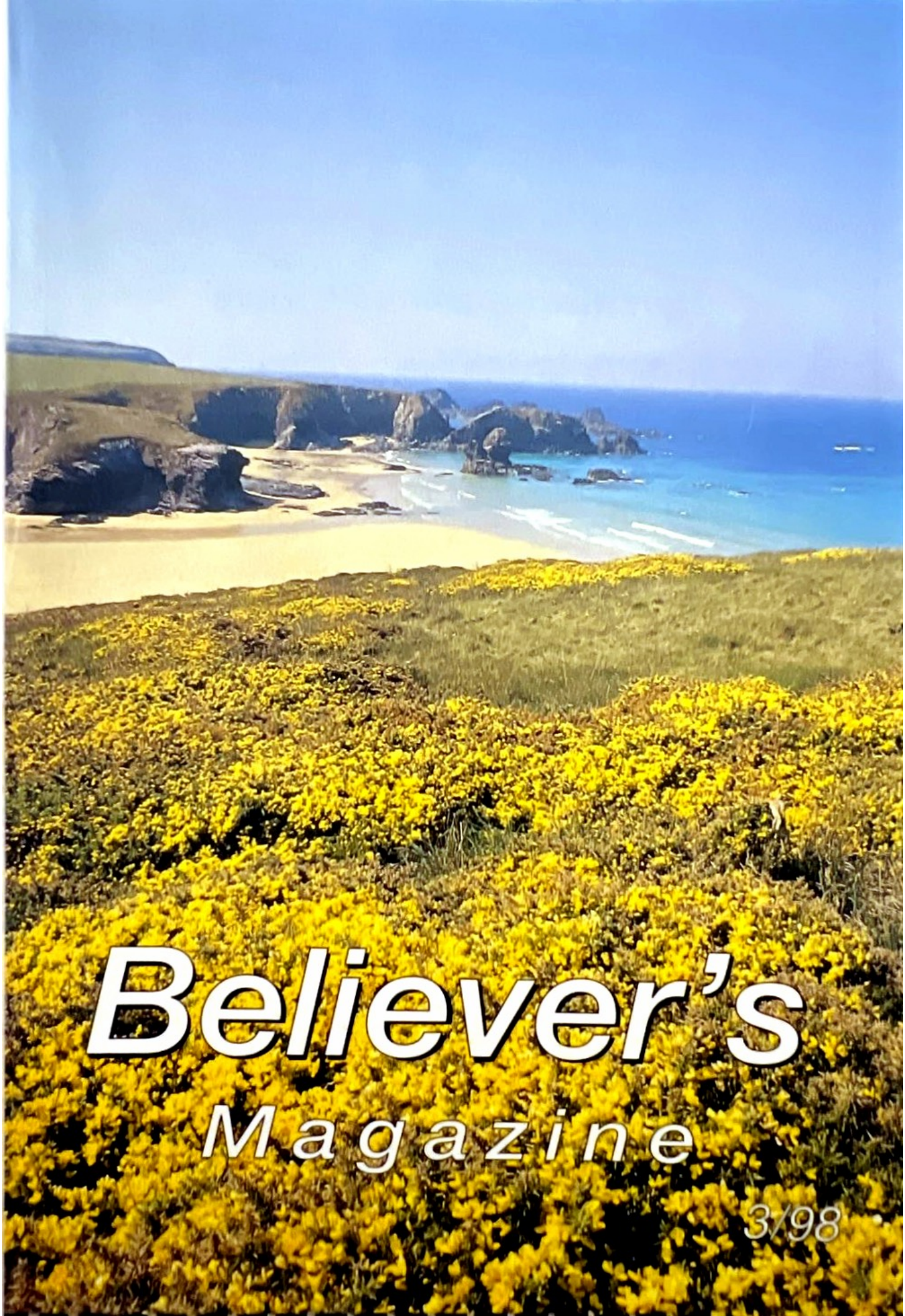
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Believer's

Magazine

MARCH 1998

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Editorial

Over the recent past it has been of interest to note in various conferences and ministry meetings that much mention has been made of the need for revival in our day. Whilst some have the mistaken idea that revival is just an increase in seeing more souls saved, scripture clearly teaches it is a work of God amongst and in His own people. When men of God in the OT felt the departure, spiritual need and lack of fruitfulness of their day they brought the matter into the presence of God and prayed about it. When there was a special movement of the hand of God in past history it has always been preceded by much laying hold upon God. Sincere and earnest prayer is ever the way through which God brings blessing into both the individual and corporate life of His people.

Ps 80 is helpful here. Three times a particular request is made "Turn us again...cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved" (vv.3,7,19). Here it is clear that the Psalmist and the nation are cast upon God to act if they are to be turned toward Himself. It is only if the face of God will shine upon them that they will be saved from their state of departure. We too in our day, need the freshness of power and blessing which can come from God alone. Similarly the prayer of Daniel (Dan 9:17) had a large part to play in invoking God to institute the return from Babylon.

But we must also see that the particular spiritual revivals in the nation of Israel in OT times all resulted in an increased adherence to what was written in the word of God. The first in Hezekiah's day saw the priests and Levites acting "according to the law of Moses" (2 Chron 30:16), the second under Josiah had the same feature, to "offer unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses" (2 Chron 35:12) and the third and greatest of all witnessed the remarkable days of reading from "the law of God" and giving "the sense" and also obeying it to the letter (Neh 8:1,3,6,14,17-18).

It is most significant that every one of the times of revived spiritual interest and activity was preceded by a deep sense of need in the hearts of those who were involved (see 2 Chron 29:4-8; 34:37; Dan 9:3-5). When the Lord heard their confession of sin and failure and knew it was genuine, then He acted.

We are now into another year. The moral corruption all around is greater than many of us have ever known, but sadly, all is not well in many of our hearts. Can we not bring our need into His presence and, like the godly of the past, confess it? Are assembly shepherds concerned about the lack of spiritual fibre in the saints? Is this prayed about with confession and conviction more than just discussing a few practicalities of finance and the fabric of the hall? Let our prayer afresh be, "O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab 3:2).

JRB

David's Great Review (1)
(2 Samuel 23)

by the late FE Stallan

The last three chapters of 2 Samuel are amongst the most intriguing in the word of God. David's last words, and the threshing floor of Araunah have been the subjects of ridicule and controversy for years, yet they remain as ever a source of encouragement and wonder for faithful readers of the scripture. At first reading however, the chapters do seem to be somewhat strange. They are quite unlike the works of famous writers in their composition and their sequence in the book does not appear to be in accordance with the recognised order.

What writer, for example, worth anything in the world of literature would risk his reputation by rounding off the life of an outstanding character like David by penning such words as 2 Samuel 24:25 "and the plague was stayed from Israel"? Would it not be more desirable to reverse the order of the chapters and make 2 Samuel 22:51 the closing word, "mercy to his anointed, unto David and to his seed for evermore"? Or make chapter 23 the final one since it begins so fittingly "Now these be the last words of David"? But it is not so, God is not interested in mere platitudes. If He desires to part company with any person on the note of sin in the life, as He did with both David and the nation of Israel, then we may rest assured that His assessment is just and true. Only let us see that the seeming harshness of such a parting is completely overshadowed by His mercy. While there is sin with all of us right up to the very end, the final victory is with God's people; there is always a sacrifice and an altar. David found it to be so and his confession and plea for the nation in the final chapter shows in a far greater way than ever before what kind of man he really was before God.

While there is sin with all of us right up to the very end, the final victory is with God's people; there is always a sacrifice and an altar.

Before David's relapse and confession in ch.24, there is his review and commendation in ch.23. The last words of David uttered in view of the approaching end must surely remind all that the sober truth is what really matters at the last. And yet they were not the ravings of a dying man in pain or the ramblings of a mind affected by senile decay. If Usher's chronology is correct David lived for a few years after he spoke these last words, and the chapter following shows how alert were his faculties for good and for ill.

It is well to remember however, that messianic hopes formed a great part of the appreciation of the patriarchs and giants of a past age. God was pleased to reveal to certain of His faithful servants truth concerning the coming Ruler of the kingdoms of the world, for instance the promise to Abraham: "And



in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed", a statement upon which we have a NT commentary: "He saith not, and to thy seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal 3:16). Then, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen 49:10). Here Jacob is enabled to utter an outstanding messianic prophecy concerning the coming Prince of Peace, the One from above who will rule over men in equity and provide a haven of rest for the weary and heavy-laden. Even Balaam, in the strange ways of God, was made to amplify the prophecy of Jacob. Instead of a curse upon the people of Israel, he was made to utter, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num 24:17). What a glorious hour that will be for troubled Israel when the sceptre of kingly rule will be in the hands of the star out of Jacob and He will introduce the messianic day in all its brightness, being Himself the "Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings".

How fitting it is that he should speak so highly of God's faithful One before speaking of his own faithful men. Indeed David as a type of Christ will show that the deep regard of his men for him was occasioned by the measure in which he reflected the graces of "David's greater Son". The Spirit of the Lord, then, is seen to be the guiding influence over David's tongue, and yet what was said was not altogether beyond David's own experience and appreciation. Who better than he would know that "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam 23:3)? There is surely a lesson here for those who teach publicly, that they should do so in keeping with what they personally understand from their own experience. So David speaks of the Messiah's character as a ruler, followed by the effect of His coming: "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain".

Yes, indeed this world is a dark scene of no pasture without Christ. But His coming as the light of the morning is sure and certain, and while all creation groans at present, the day of its full emancipation will come when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds. That would be a happy ending to David's messianic prophecy, but he could not contain himself there. Visions of coming glory did not blot out entirely what he thought of himself. "Although my house be not so with God". Despair would probably have gripped him had not the faithfulness of God quickly dispelled the thoughts of his failure. David knew only too well of his past, but he also knew the God that he served, "Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire".

This is the first of a series of three articles by our late brother originally published in 1964. JRB.

Heavenly Things (4)

by Donald Cameron, Muirhead

Our Heavenly Citizenship

The saints at Philippi had three citizenships: Greek historically; Roman administratively and heavenly spiritually. The first was the result of the conquest of Philip of Macedonia; the second the result of the colonial expansion of the Roman Empire under Caesar Augustus; the third through the activity of the Holy Spirit Himself in the Lord's servant Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who preached to them the gospel (Acts 16). Paul saw not only souls saved but baptised and an assembly of God consequently established to give expression and testimony on earth to the heavenly citizenship of the new converts (Phil 3:21).

The Philippian epistle is unique in that it does not appear to deal with any doctrinal error such as we have in Romans, the Corinthian letters, Colossians and Galatians. Indeed the main theme of the epistle would be christian deportment (2:3; 4:1), the subsequent result being that the letter would express the degree of maturity which should be seen in each individual Christian and collectively in the local assembly; above all the perfection seen in our Lord Jesus Christ as the divine example should be evident.

1. The Power for Citizenship

The apostle Paul as the bondservant of Christ Jesus would present to us the power and means by which we can now fulfil in our lives the fact of heavenly citizenship (1:6). Paul states that the work begun in Acts 16 on the day of their conversion will be completed finally in the day of Jesus Christ, the day of future manifestation in glory (2 Thess 1:10). Therein lies the power for heavenly citizenship.

2. The Pattern of Citizenship

The pattern for the believer's citizenship is of course Christ Himself as 2:5-8 would make known. Little wonder the Lord could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" in an absolute and experiental sense. The Lord would then be the pattern for all and beyond all and so render all without excuse in relation to christian deportment whether the three men of ch.1 or the two women of ch.4 or any believer from Pentecost until the rapture (1 Thess 4:16). Each must allow the perfect pattern to have its expression in his life.

3. The Prize of Citizenship

The prize of citizenship as stated in 3:21 is the end product of God's divine enterprise for our lives. It will be the ultimate change into Christ's likeness when the Lord Jesus who is our hope fashions our body of humiliation like to His body of glory.

It is not without significance that in ch.3 that the apostle announces that the "same things" are indeed the "safe" things (3:1) among the many influences which affect christian attitudes and aspirations. To enjoy the "same things" is a good criterion in our present generation with its changing appreciation of divine things. The same things are to be preferred before:

past things with all the ambition once



seen in Saul of Tarsus before his salvation (3:4-8; Acts 9);

present things with all their attainments unless brought under regulation by the authority of Christ (3:9-14);

distracting things from wolves in sheep's clothing as Satan would try to underrate and discourage good heavenly citizenship in our day-by-day living for Jesus, the Christ of God (3:15-19).

Paul the bondservant of Christ Jesus would remind us of the fact of our conversation, citizenship, politics and manner of life which are to be heavenly both in origin and character (3:20-21) for ultimately we will arrive at the divine end according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (3:21).

4. The Principles of Citizenship

These principles are to mark the general practice of those who are heavenly citizens. The terms of endearment of 1:1 allow the apostle to use priestly language in his exercise towards them:

"I beseech"; "I entreat"; "Rejoice in the Lord" (4:2); "Let your moderation (yieldingness RV) be known to all men".

These entreaties cut across all human nature but nevertheless are expressive of the working of the divine nature as seen morally in the Lord Jesus (2:1-8).

We are not to be over-anxious in any matter (4:6-9). On this side of the glory we never can be carefree but we should never be careless in matters related to our heavenly citizenship. The mind can be hedged about by the peace of God and thus protected in prayer; therefore it can be occupied with the character-building elements of 4:8.

The mind can be hedged about by the peace of God and thus protected in prayer

We are fitted to exercise the reflective mind of 4:8 and to progress from the peace of God to the knowledge of the God of peace which is a moral expression of the degree to which here on earth we are marked out by our heavenly citizenship. Paul was able to reflect on both our heavenly citizenship and the apparent lack of things linked to earthly citizenship (4:10-14) and then remind the saints of the divine presence of the Lord Jesus with His saints (4:13) so that he could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me".

The Philippian epistle would teach us many lessons in relation to our multiple citizenship – Philippian, Roman and heavenly. But it is important to learn that the Lord Jesus is in everything we meet the only source of our strength, even when we enjoy the communication of fellow saints in our experience here as Paul did (4:19). Christ is all in all as the sequel of life now in the present (1:2; 3:21) and in relation to our glorious future.

Editorial Changes

The Editorial Panel of the Believer's Magazine and the Directors of John Ritchie Ltd consider it timely to change the editorial arrangements. Accordingly the Directors have invited Mr John Grant, Bridge of Weir, to assume the editorship. He has kindly consented and will become Editor commencing with the January 1999 issue. Both the Directors and the Panel appreciate his willingness to take on this service for the Lord.

The Directors take this opportunity to thank the members of the Panel and are deeply grateful to them for all their work and sacrifice of time in connection with the Magazine over a considerable number of years. Each of them has readily agreed to continue to the end of this present year and will be happy to give assistance in the future.

Mr Grant is commended to you for prayerful support as he engages in this additional sphere of service to the Lord and His people.

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Micah (14)

by JM Riddle, Cheshunt

Chapter 7:9-17

In our previous paper, we noticed that Micah chapter 7 can be divided as follows: (1) Micah's current circumstances, vv.1-7; (2) Israel's coming captivity, vv.8-10; (3) Israel's certain regathering, vv.11-17; (4) God's covenant mercy, vv.18-20. We have already dealt with Micah's current circumstances, which brings us to:

Israel's coming captivity, vv.8-10

Whilst Micah speaks in the first person, he does so "as the representative of the godly remnant, in emphatic contrast to the sinful mass of the people" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, p1872). The paragraph begins with the words, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy", and proceeds to give three reasons why the enemies of God's people would ultimately be confounded. Whilst, with Edom, they "rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction" (Obad 12), that was not the end of the story. "Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Obad 17). The enemy had no reason to rejoice because:

Israel's captivity is not permanent, v.8. "When I fall, I shall *arise;* when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a *light* unto me". Paul refers to Israel's fall and rise in Rom 11:11-15, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy".

The words, "the Lord shall be a *light* unto me", recall Isa 60:1-3, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon the...And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising".

Israel's affliction has a purpose, v.9. "I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, *until* he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness". The Lord will not "plead" the cause of His people and "execute judgment" for them, until He has "washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion...by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isa 4:4). The nation is yet to pass through the unutterable horrors of the Great Tribulation, which will be "like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap" (Mal 3:2).

Israel's enemies will be punished, v.10. "Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets" (v.10). The ancient promise to Abraham will be completely fulfilled: "I will bless them that bless thee, *and curse him that curseth thee*" (Gen 12:3).

Israel's certain regathering, vv.11-17

This section explains and expands the words, "he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness" (v.9). That is, God's righteousness in fulfilling the covenant (see v.20). We should notice:



The rebuilding of the walls, v.11. "In the day that thy walls are to be built". Whilst the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt under the guidance of Nehemiah, the prophecy looks far beyond the end of the Babylonian exile (see Isa 54:11; 60:10-11; Amos 9:11).

The removal of the decree, v.11. "In that day shall the decree be far removed". JND renders: "On that day shall the established limit recede". MC Unger states that the Hebrew is best rendered, "On that day will your boundary be extended". (*Unger's Commentary on the O.T.*, p1874). Compare Zech 10:10.

The regathering of the nation, v.12. "In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain". But notice the parenthetical observation in v.13, "Notwithstanding, the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings". The ultimate resettlement of the land must not blind them to coming judgment.

The restoration of shepherd-care, v.14. "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as *in the days of old*". MC Unger comments as follows (ibid p1874), "The millennial flock is pictured dwelling by itself in the woodland, in the midst of a fruitful field. No longer will the Shepherd's flock be scattered among the pagan nations, but they will dwell as distinct people in their own land". See Num 23:9: "Lo, the people shall *dwell alone*, and shall not be reckoned among the nations". Unger continues, "They not only will feed in the tranquil woodland pastures and fruitful field (Carmel), but also in Transjordan, in the superb pasturelands of Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old, that is, in the time of David and Solomon. That suggests the fulfilling for restored Israel of all of God's promises concerning her prosperity and undisturbed enjoyment of the entire territory promised to Abraham and his posterity, during the Kingdom age (cf. Gen 15:18-21)".

The renewal of divine power, v.15. "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things". When Israel left Egypt, neither human animosity nor natural barriers thwarted the purpose of God. At the end-time, God will intervene when and where it is necessary to achieve the restoration and blessing of his people. (See Isa 11:15.)

The reaction of the nations, vv.16-17. "The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God and shall fear because of thee". In that day, Israel will be "the head, and not the tail" of the nations (Deut 28:13), and say, with David, "Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies" (Ps 18:40).

Books

Spiritual Meditations by August van Ryn; published Kregel Publications; price £6.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Over recent years a number of books from the pen of August van Ryn has been republished by Kregel Publications. All are written simply and deal not exhaustively with familiar passages and books of Scripture. *Spiritual Meditations* is not such a republication.

The Preface unfolds that the present volume was unpublished at the death of the author in his 92nd year. His son discovered "a thick folder which he (the father) had entitled *Homespun Homilies*...random reflection...he had gleaned over sixty years in the Lord's service". The son considers these reflections "will both warm and warn the hearts of the Lord's dear people".

Some 84 brief reflections comprise this paperback of 221 pages. The text of the Scriptures being illustrated or discussed is helpfully given. Most of the anecdotes are interesting but as with so many books that have not been prepared for publication, some judicious editing would have sharpened the focus in some instances and some few pages would have been expunged. However on balance *Spiritual Meditations* does offer some light reading from which profit may be gained.

TW

Day by Day in Prayer; edited by Ivan Steeds; published Precious Seed Publications; price £7.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Day by Day in Prayer is the fifth in the *Day by Day* series giving Scripture readings and meditations for each day of the year. The series has been well received and undoubtedly *Day by Day in Prayer* will be as helpful to God's people. So many saints – and not just the house-bound – find daily readings a blessing.

As with the previous volumes this 383-page paperback comprises meditations from 25 assembly writers.The book is a reminder that God is faithful in providing able teachers to be of help to the saints in a scene that offers nothing for their spiritual welfare.

The meditations published are drawn from the whole of the Bible, beginning in Gen 4:26 and concluding with Rev 22:13-21. As one would expect the approaches of the various writers differ: some offer a clear presentation of the context; others treat the principles revealed in the passage; all offer valuable applications to the lives of the reader.

Day by Day in Prayer is to be welcomed as is any such publication, sound in content and calculated to stir God-honouring exercises among Christians. Our Lord Jesus exhorted His own to pray. Who would suggest that the individual saint needs no further encouragement to pray? Who would question the value to the assemblies of praying saints? There need be no restrictions on its circulation: both in substance and style it will be attractive to the mature saint and the not-so-mature. Rightly the Publishers issue *Day by Day in Prayer* with the simple prayer that it be "a help and a blessing to all its readers".

TW

Question Box

Question
Where was our Lord Jesus Christ born?

Answer
Luke is careful to record that the town where Joseph and Mary lived was Nazareth (1:26), also that it was to Nazareth the angel Gabriel was sent from God, to give notice to Mary of the birth which was to take place from her virgin womb (1:27-35). Luke also explains the national circumstance which caused them to leave their home town and travel to Bethlehem, where the actual birth took place (2:1-7). Matthew's record is in complete accord with this; stating "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea..." (2:1). He also shows that the scriptural prediction from the OT, was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, that the long promised "Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt 2:6), would be born in "Bethlehem Ephratah...of Judah" (Micah 5:2). Thus it is clear that the geographical place was Bethlehem.

The actual place of His birth within Bethlehem is not revealed as far as the writer is aware. We are told that she "laid him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). We must not go beyond what has been written.

JR Baker

Question
Is there some special significance in the title "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob"? I am aware of the place that these great men of God had, but why are they linked together? There are other great worthies such as Enoch, Noah and Moses etc., but such a title is not applied to them.

Answer
When Jehovah initially called Abraham to leave his country, kindred and father's house He made specific promises to him (Gen 12:1-3). Amongst those promises was that of being made a great nation. The years that followed his step of obedience revealed that Sarah his wife was barren and eventually became too old to bear children. Yet from a father whose body was "now dead", from the aspect of procreation, and despite the "deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom 4:19), God miraculously worked to fulfil His promise and after the birth of Isaac the promise of the seed was confirmed (Gen 21:12). Again Isaac's wife Rebekah was barren for 20 years, but the Lord was intreated through Isaac's prayer and after the birth of Jacob and Esau the original promises of seed and nation were again confirmed. From Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel and thus the nation was born. It can thus be seen that the promised line came through these three specific men by divine action and purpose.

The title referred to in the question is found four times in the OT and each of the references is within Exodus chs.3 and 4. They are used at the burning bush and the commission of Moses to lead the nation out of bondage and toward the land which God had originally promised to the patriarchs already mentioned. In the NT it is used five times. Three are in the Gospels and are spoken by the Lord Jesus. The other two are in the Acts; one spoken by Peter and the other by Stephen.

In each context it is used, we can see that the God who originally called the nation in the three men named, and preserved the seed through them by mighty and miraculous power is the living God who led Moses and in NT days sent His Son to deliver the nation and bring it into eternal blessing.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by John Dunlop, Crosshouse

The Christian and The Occult

A young person told the writer recently that she could not start her day without "looking at her stars", while others have told of how they engage in trying to contact what they term "the spirits" as part of an evening of "harmless fun". The dictionary defines the occult as "being characterised by supernatural phenomena or influences" and the examples above are things young believers have to be on their guard against. They are the public face of things which God's word condemns and it is vital that we put them in perspective.

They are a mark of the flesh

This may seem a harsh description of things which appear harmless, but Scripture teaches that an interest in the occult is a clear indication of being motivated by the flesh. Paul writes to the Galatians and tells them: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these..." (Gal 5:19) and in the verses which follow he lists activities which appeal to those who "...shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (v.21). Included in the list is witchcraft, better translated sorcery, which appeals to the senses and should not characterise the believer who ought to walk in the Spirit. The flesh wants to do things, and to have experiences. It want the spectacular, rather than the features which mark the fruit of the Spirit in vv.22-23, so as a young Christian I will avoid the various guises of the occult as being drawbacks to spiritual growth.

They affect all levels of society

Different types of sin are more common in particular sections of society, but the interest in the occult is evident in every area. The activities of Simon the sorcerer give an example of this when Luke records: "To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest..." (Acts 8:10). This trend is seen in the OT and can be traced through till today. When the nation of Israel was about to enter the land, the warning was given that: "...thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations" (Deut 18:9). The abominations referred to were widespread and the people were planning their lives based on the recommendations of wizards, witches, charmers and other occult people and practices. This has echoes in society today.

The horoscope may seem harmless but as an integral part of almost every national and local newspaper it is an encouragement to look no higher than the stars for guidance. "Mystics" abound with claims that they have power to both predict and influence the future while readers of one paper are invited to send their problems to a "psychic agony aunt" who has "powers from the past and a flair for the future".

As it is with the masses, so too with those who lead in nations. In Egypt, Moses had to face not only the opposition of Pharaoh, but also men collectively called magicians (Exod 7-10); while in Dan 2 we find a troubled Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, consulting magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers in order to interpret a dream.

This was not unusual and rulers of all ages have felt the need of advice from these sources. The writer does not suggest that every ruler seeks guidance from such, but it was well known that a recent President of the USA made policy, which potentially affected the whole world, only after consultation with his astrologer. What a dark world we live in. The lesson for young Christians is to be vigilant. Never assume that those you come into contact with are "decent" therefore could not be involved in the occult. From the highest to the lowest in our age there are those who substitute the guidance of stars and spirits for the power of God.

They are associated with the drug culture

In the OT the word "witch" has a root which means "to cut up" and may refer to herbs; while the NT equivalent is "sorcerer" from the Greek which also gives us the English work pharmacy–a place of drugs. Look around you. Society is sinking deeper and deeper into a haze of mind-altering substances and a growing number of young people are involved. This increase in the drug culture seems to go hand in hand with the raised profile of the occult and there is no reason to suppose that the tide will be turned. Indeed the awful events which unfold in the book of Revelation leave society not one bit different: "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (9:21).

Young Christians, particularly those who go to Further Education, may find themselves exposed to these things and it demands conviction and moral courage to be different. Stand firm young believer. Better to stand alone than imitate those who lack either restraint or moral fibre.

They are punished by God

The ultimate end of the activities associated with the occult is to rival the authority of God and draw men away from dependence on Him. The punishment is both certain and solemn. In Lev 20 God sets His face against those who turn to men and women who are involved in the occult (v.6) while the practitioners themselves should be put to death (v.27), while in Revelation: "...sorcerers...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone..." (21:8). The reader will readily see, then, that God does not look on the matter lightly. Rather than being harmless fun, here are activities which draw divine condemnation and judgment, as do those who participate in them.

The occult, then, is a wide-ranging term which covers things like astrology to outright worship of Satan. Most young believers will have the spiritual strength to be able to flee from the obvious, but some may be taken in by the more subtle. Remember this. If I want to know the course to take in life I will find it through praying and reading my Bible. If I have to seek advice then I will turn to older, more mature Christians. If I find myself in company where activities associated with the occult are suggested I will leave, for as a believer I cannot find profit in these things.

Regions Beyond

Persecution and Conversion in Italy

by Eric Bermejo

During this past year it has been our privilege to visit Italy again, and one part of the programme in particular held a very special attraction for us. We were in the Piedmont area of northern Italy, and the good brethren there, knowing the story, kindly arranged one day to take us to Strevi, a place whose name has re-echoed in my ears since childhood, leaving me with the kind of fascination that drives people to cross the globe in order to visit some spot that for one reason or another has become meaningful to them.

Strevi is a small unpretentious country town, important to few, yet important to us for the following reason. My maternal grandfather, Luis Arnera, was born there in the latter part of the last century. There he eventually married; there he set up business as a tailor, and there he and his wife began what turned out to be a large family. But above all things, Luis Arnera was catholic! In fact a convinced and militant Catholic.

Young, energetic and wholly committed to Catholicism, he was outraged when those he perceived to be "Protestants" came to town with a tent mission. He was even further outraged on perceiving that the rather elderly priest couldn't seem to bother himself to do anything about it. Because of this, he and other young men of a similar ilk went to complain to the Bishop, who immediately commissioned them to take matters into their own hands and disturb, hinder and oppose the so called "Protestants" in all ways possible, with a view to forcing them to leave town. This they proceeded to do with a will.

But one night, for a lark, one of Luis' companions pushed him into the tent, and finding himself there, covered with confusion, he just stood and listened. The upshot was that he was converted...really converted! A deep, all-pervasive, life transforming, Saul of Tarsus type of conversion. He was soon fearlessly preaching the gospel to all around him, and even stood on the steps of the church he had once so faithfully frequented, preaching to the folk as they came out of mass, and denouncing the errors of Rome that had deceived him for so many years.

It was now the turn of the priest and the bishop to be outraged. A counter-attack was swiftly mounted which proved wholly successful. The priest absolved all the townsfolk...in the name of the Catholic Religion...from paying off any debts they owed to Luis Arnera (and many debts were owed), and forbade them from doing any business with him. As a result he was ruined, and had no option but to leave, or starve.

He left with his wife and young family for the south of France, (where my mother was subseqently born), and was there much used of God over many years in the spread of the gospel in the Cannes...Vallauris area. Subsequently he would revisit Italy from time to time, preaching the word of life in his home area, and some old folk still remember him. But a Christian work was never established in Strevi. In Rivalta, a mile



or so down the road, yes. But never to this day, in Strevi.

Someone will say, well all that was a long time ago, and things are very different now. Well, just allow me a moment longer. I spoke one night at Rivalta, and at the end of the meeting a certain brother prayed. Later we were told his story. He had been a school teacher teaching, amongst other things, religion. One day, about five years ago, a Bible came into his hands, and reading it alone and without the help of anyone, he was converted. As a result, he began to teach at school what he was discovering in the Bible.

This soon reached the ears of the bishop and the counter-attack was swift in coming. The bishop called this dear man into his presence and ordered him to stop teaching what he was teaching or else he would ruin him. Since the good man did not obey, the bishop did what he had threatened to do. He ruined him! He lost his job, and for two or three years he, his wife and family went through a time of real need and hardship. It is only just recently that he has been able to find a job, and the tide has begun to turn for them.

It is thus the same old story all over again! Be it in the 1890's or the 1990's Rome is still the great enemy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and one would have to be blind not to see it. Do please pray without ceasing for all who labour in preaching the gospel under her baleful shadow.

The Deep Devotion of the Martyrs

We all know what a persuasive power the deaths of the martyrs exerted on the minds of those who witnessed them. So in its just measure and proportion would the dedication of property, time and talents have a similar effect at the present day. It would convince those whom we are anxious to convince of the reality of our faith in that Redeemer and that inheritance, which they now think only a name because of the secular spirit that disfigures the Christianity of too many of its professors. How differently would the unsaved look on our endeavours to publish the mercy of our glorified Lord if the noble spirit of former times were to descend again on the silken age into which we are fallen! Let us never forget that example is far more effective than precept.

AN Groves

Divine Guidance in Acts

by WPW McVey, Brisbane

True to its name, The Acts of the Apostles is full of movement and action. In the opening verses the Lord Jesus gave a brief outline of the programme for the days ahead. He would go up, the Holy Spirit would come down, and the apostles would go out, as His witnesses, even "to the uttermost part of the earth."

For this new work they were promised the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and were expected to follow at all times the path of the Spirit's choice. Personal contacts were the all-important means of spreading the gospel in those early days when modern methods of communication were unknown. How this worked out in practice is well illustrated in the experience of three key figures – Philip, Peter and Paul.

In quite separate incidents, all three were led by the Spirit to truly devout people who already had some knowledge of the God of Israel through Judaism and were willing to learn more, willing to accept that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the long-promised Messiah. Furthermore, because of their station in life, these converts were admirably fitted to make Christ known to others, even to people in other lands.

PHILIP (ch.8) – When persecution was driving many believers from Jerusalem, Philip took the gospel to Samaria and large numbers trusted Christ. He must have been one of the happiest men on earth as Jews and Samaritans, age-long enemies, sat down together as brethren in the Lord.

From such happy scenes "the angel of the Lord" suddenly called Philip to a lonely desert outpost. Soon, however, he saw the reason: a soul in need of spiritual help. "An eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians...had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet" – actually ch.53. What better man to preach the gospel from such a passage than "Philip the evangelist"? And what greater satisfaction could any evangelist have than seeing this distinguished traveller saved, baptised and returning to his native land rejoicing!

We can only imagine the stir in the Ethiopian court when the eunuch returned with the joy of heaven still fresh in his soul. But of two things we can be sure: he was able to move in circles Philip himself could have never entered; and he could share his new-found faith with all he met in a language they understood. It was all part of the divine plan to spread the gospel far and wide, and the full story will only be known when the Lord returns. For the present, however, we share the thoughts of Alexander Whyte: "Who can tell but that Queen Candace, and a great multitude of her...people, will yet be seen...casting their crowns at His feet of whom Isaiah spake, and of whom Philip preached!"

PETER (ch.10) – If the Ethiopian was engaged in reading the Scriptures, here a Roman is engaged in prayer. Cornelius, a centurion stationed in Caesarea, had a vision with instructions to summon Simon Peter, "who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all they house shall be saved".



Left to himself, Peter would never have gone to the home of a Gentile, but he too received a special vision from the Lord which effectively cured him of his Jewishness in this matter.

What followed was literally the experience of a lifetime, with a company of people met for the sole purpose of hearing the word of God, and actually accepting Christ before Peter had finished his message. The Holy Spirit also bore testimony to the reality of the conversions, and the most sceptical had to admit: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life".

But we return to Cornelius. He belonged to the "Italian band", and would normally have returned to Rome after a period abroad. And who can tell where his next posting would take him, together with the message of life he had first heard from Peter? In this way again the gospel was penetrating into places the apostles never reached, even as God intended.

We ourselves have known something similar. In times past many British servicemen first came to know the Lord in the Far East, and then carried with them the story of the cross when posted elsewhere. In later life some actually became full-time workers at home or missionaries overseas.

PAUL (ch.16) – Nowhere is the leading of the Spirit more evident than in the events which brought Paul and his party across the sea and into Europe. (See particularly vv.6-10.) Their first convert in Philippi was Lydia, a cloth merchant from Thyatira in Asia, the very place where Paul had been forbidden to preach!

Like the Ethiopian and like Cornelius, Lydia found the Lord when away from her native environment. It often happens that people are more receptive to the gospel when in a strange place – even as refugees sometimes. Once she and her household were saved and baptised, Lydia constrained Paul and his party to make her home their headquarters, and a great work of grace took place in Philippi at that time. As customers came from far and near to Lydia's place, many must have heard the story of redeeming love for the first time. Indeed, it is quite possible that, as a trader, Lydia herself visited neighbouring towns from time to time, taking with her the message of life. In this connection it should be remembered as a simple fact of history that the doctrines of Islam were first taken to certain countries, not by invading armies or teachers, but by Arab traders.

Paul left behind him in Philippi an assembly of Christians who gave him much pleasure, because of their zeal for the gospel. Twice they sent gifts to support and encourage him during his stormy, yet fruitful, time of service in Thessalonica. Then as in a chain reaction, the converts in Thessalonica "sounded out the word of the Lord" throughout Macedonia and Achaia. The thought of one's converts winning others for Christ must be the supreme joy of every evangelist; it is the one thing that makes preaching worth while.

Jehovah-jireh

by EAR Shotter, Northampton

When considering the life of Abraham it is often with his faithful character that we are concerned. Let us meditate a little on the statement he made regarding God as he named the place where he sacrificed Isaac – JEHOVAH-JIREH (the Lord will see or provide).

At the close of his life Joshua called the tribes of Israel together and said, "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods" (Josh 24:2). In his early days Abram was an idolater, but the Lord had chosen him for Himself.

In his defence in Acts 7 Stephen tells the Sanhedrin that the God of glory appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia before he went to Haran, calling him to give up country, kindred, and his father's house, and go into a land that I will tell thee. Genesis 12 suggests this command while in Haran. Scripture never contradicts itself so that it would appear the time in Haran (meaning very high or mountaineer) was a delay whilst Terah was alive and a repeat of the command was necessary.

Since the Lord appeared to Abram as the God of glory in that earlier day before Haran, this convinced Abram that he could now rely on Him to guide his footsteps to the place of His appointment for him and all connected with him.

The command to leave country, kindred, and his father's house, is accompanied with a promise of blessing in the giving of a posterity when as yet he had no seed, and a command for him to be a blessing to others. "Thou shalt be" should read "be thou", Newberry margin. With this command to leave his native land, he moved to Canaan, though still having Lot with him. There was more than just a promise to Abram here, for Peter in Acts 3 uses it to show that God had in mind the blessing of the Jews by raising up His Son Jesus; and Paul does so in Galatians 3 for the blessing of Gentiles as confirming a covenant in Christ.

Having arrived there he receives the promise of land for his seed to dwell in, though a stranger and sojourner there himself. Still learning from the faithfulness of the Lord, the God of glory, he now implicitly obeys His command, and set up an altar to worship the One on whom he had come to rely.

Lapses, however, do come in, and because of the famine his natural instincts take over and he seeks sustenance in Egypt. Even here the Lord protects him, for as Paul says, "thy seed which is Christ" (Gal 3:16), so Pharaoh was prevented from polluting Sarai through whom Christ his Seed should be born. Also the Lord made Abram heavy with riches while he was in Egypt so that there is not only the promise of a seed, and of a land for the seed, but provision for Abram's need.

Returning from Egypt Abram comes to the place of his altar and place of worship. There had been no altar while he was in Egypt. Now he can worship the One who is guiding him in all things, gradually bringing into place

step by step (and not without allowing seeming difficulties) His purpose for the one who will be called "the friend of God". A new difficulty now appears, yet is given so that the divine command may be completed. Lot is one of Abram's kindred from whom Abram had not yet parted. The riches of Egypt were now so great that those of Abram and those of Lot were too much for the land to contain, and a parting must take place. Lot was given the choice and left for the plain of Jordan and Sodom.

Each aspect of the command is now complete and the Lord renews His promise as to the land and the seed. As to the land it went in all directions of the compass and Abram is told to walk up and down in it, i.e., to possess the promise given him. As to the seed, that would be as the dust of the earth, indicating the natural seed of man – Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return. Abram does as he is told and removes to Mamre, and builds an altar there, and worships the Lord.

Whilst Abram was not involved in the war between the kings in chapter 14, Lot had been captured, and he went to release him. Again the Lord comes through Melchizedek, giving Abram sustenance - bread and wine - and blessing him as being of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. Abram gave the best of the tithes to him.

The king of Sodom asks Abram for the souls, but he could have the rest as a reward. Abram had lifted his hand to the most high God that he would take no reward of the king.

In His wondrous grace the Lord now tells Abram that He is (not will be) his exceeding great Reward. What an honour!

Abram is perplexed that all these promises are given, but held in abeyance. No son of his own and natural ability waning. Who is he to make his heir? Again God promises him a son. Look intently to the heavens, count the stars, so shall thy seed be. A heavenly posterity now!

God is continually working behind the scenes for us to fulfil His own purposes in us.

Abram now says I have nowhere for them, I am a stranger here. The covenant is made. Not a promise from One, but a covenant between two. The covenant victims are taken, Abram divides them, and watches over them, till sundown. In a deep sleep God tells him that after bondage in a strange land, this land where he sojourned would be theirs in abundance. Also, he would be full of days before a peaceful passing. Later his seed would possess the land, when the judgment to the Amorites was complete.

The lesson we are learning is that God is continually working behind the scenes for us to fulfil His own purposes in us – the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Separation

by John Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

The section covering 2 Cor 6:11-18 used to be a frequent passage of scripture in ministry. It was written to the Corinthians as a warning about worldly associations and their dangers. Today, the world has not lost its deceptive appeal, and the line between truth and error is becoming increasingly blurred by those who have "a form of godliness but deny the power thereof" (2 Tim 3:5). Therefore, it is a subject of increasing importance amongst the people of God.

The Qualities of Love (vv.11-13)

It would be easy to use this section of the chapter as a stick with which to beat the people of God. But in the verses that introduce Paul's instruction of v.14 we see a wholly different motive. His appeal is from a heart of love for we see the qualities of love as the open mouth and the enlarged heart. An open mouth is a symbol of free speech, "we speak freely to you, we keep nothing back" (v.11 Wuest), and the enlarged heart indicates that Paul's heart was "widened in its sympathy towards you" (Wuest). It is not an act of love to withhold the warning shout in the midst of danger, nor to allow the believer to "find out the hard way". Whilst the warning may not always be heeded it does not excuse the failure to issue it.

The reason why the Corinthian believers were to heed the warning is given by the apostle in v.13. If Paul had shown his love for them, here and elsewhere, they should reciprocate that love in obedience, as "an answering recompense" (v.13 JND). Love is very practical and it is demonstrated in the simplest ways. As Paul speaks as their spiritual father they should not find it difficult to "make a large place in your heart for me" (Wuest). This "large place" could best be demonstrated by a complete disassociation from unbelievers.

The Questions of Love (vv.14-16)

The five rhetorical questions posed show the incompatibility of believer and unbeliever. The first question shows the effect upon our *walk* (v.14). The apostle is not talking about people but principles. What fellowship can there be between righteousness and lawlessness? They do not pull together, for moral excellence is conformity to the will of God whereas wickedness is not. How "can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). These two, righteousness and unrighteousness, point and pull in opposite directions.

What do light and darkness have in common? The second question concerns our moral *welfare* (v.14). There is no common ground between light and darkness as John clearly teaches. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (John 1:5). Paul is clearly teaching that to attempt to bring these two things together is to seek to utterly destroy the character of one or the other. Our attitude to darkness is shown, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph 5:11).

The third question affects our *warfare* (v.15). The picture is of two opposing forces with two opposing commanders, Christ and Belial. With a command to arms we cannot show allegiance to both. We can apply the words of the Lord, "No



man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Matt 6:24).

"What part (portion RV) hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (v.15). The fourth question challenges our *witness*. The believer has no portion with the unbeliever. The believer's part is heavenly, how can he become so occupied with earthly things? If he does, his testimony can often become irrevocably damaged. Rather, the apostle says elsewhere, "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col 3:2).

The final question is one that affects our *worship* (v.16). The assembly is the "inner temple of God" (Newberry) indicating the presence of God. We are living stones which are "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (1 Peter 2:5). Thus, to bring idols into the presence of God is to insult the name and character of the God we have supposedly come to worship. It shows disobedience to His command (Deut 5:7), a lack of understanding of the examples of biblical history (cp 2 Kings 21:4,5), and a shallow appreciation of the "living God" (v.16).

Quotations from the Word (vv.16-18)

It is significant that Paul summarises not with his own words but those of the word of God itself, "God hath said" (v.16). Paul could not be accused of enjoining his own ideas and prejudices upon the Corinthians; this is "thus saith the Lord" (vv.17,18). Drawing from a number of scriptures Paul shows that we cannot enjoy the fellowship and fatherhood of God whilst maintaining friendship with the world.

The force of the command is emphasised in Darby's translation. "Wherefore come out from the midst of them" (v.17). The Corinthians may not have realised how far in they had drifted. A careful reading of the Gospel accounts of Peter's denial of the Lord show how he "followed afar off", then "stood without", before being "sat down among them". The dangers are as real today as they were then. The serpent has not lost his subtlety.

But the apostle shows that we should not just separate ourselves physically or externally. In adding "and touch not the unclean thing" (v.17) he is emphasising that old practices and errors have to be discarded completely. We should not cling to that which is left behind. The children of Israel left Egypt physically but, sadly, did not leave it mentally or emotionally (cp. Exod 16:3; Num 11:4-6).

In giving up the world and its amusements we are to receive blessings of a far greater character. Perhaps we have been guilty of presenting the truth of separation as a wholly negative principle whereas the converse is true. God will dwell in us, will walk with us along the way as our source of knowledge, will manifest His care over us as our protector and benefactor, and will show His favour to us as the objects of His love. Can the temporal things of the world really be compared with such wonderful blessings?

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

MARCH 6
Dublin: Irishtown Gospel Hall, 57 Irishtown Road. Bible study at 8.00pm. Daniel ch.9.

MARCH 7
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. Question Night.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. N Mellish.

MARCH 13
Dublin: Irishtown Gospel Hall, 57 Irishtown Road, Bible study at 8.00pm. Daniel - a review of the series.

MARCH 14
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. T Meekin.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. J Grant.
Magheracorran Gospel Hall: 1.30pm. Annual Conference.

MARCH 14-17
Bandon Conference: Speakers - J Allen, JR Baker, M Radcliffe, R Hutchinson. Details from TW Webb, Killountain House, Innishannon, Co. Cork. Phone 0044 353 21 775116.

MARCH 17
Aughrim Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. Annual Conference - Speakers: L Russell (Bangor), J Wishart (Armagh).

MARCH 21
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. R Hill.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. Dr W McBride.

MARCH 28
Ballymena Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. Gospel, HS Paisley.
Cloughfern Gospel Hall: 7.30pm. J Strahan.

APRIL 10
Ahoghill Gospel Hall: Annual Missionary Conference at 7.00pm.

MAY 9
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 1.00-3.00pm. Annual Believers' Meeting. 3.45-5.00pm. Speakers: J Grant, R Jordan, M Radcliffe.

MAY 11-14
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 8.00pm J Grant.

SEPTEMBER 11-15
Craigyhill Gospel Hall, Larne: Annual Conference.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

MARCH 7
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Place, Bible Study Weekend. Friday 6th at 8.00pm, Ministry. Saturday 7th, Bible Reading at 4.30pm and 7.00pm. Lord's Day 8th March at 3.15pm, Ministry. Monday 9th March at 8.00pm, Ministry: J Allen, Subject - Letters to the Churches in Revelation ch.2 & 3.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, Church Street at 6.30pm. S Brownlie, A McLean.
East Kilbride: Threshold, Maxwell Drive, The Village at 7.00pm. N Hood, H Stalker.
Edinburgh: Gorgie Gospel Hall, in Gorgie Mission Hall, Wheatfield Terrace, Annual Conference at 3.15pm, Ministry. 6.15pm. Bible Reading, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28, J Hay, S Matthews.
Glasgow, Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton Street at 7.00pm. I Robertson, B Stapley.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall, Hall Street at 6.30pm. Ministry & Report Meeting. R Crozier (Ministry), G Woods (Report).
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. S Foster.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. S Grant, E Nelson.
Livingston, Deans: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. S Arbuthnot, J Sinclair, I Spiers.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, I Steele.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. I Affleck.
Port Seton: Viewforth Gospel Hall, Missionary Conference at 3.30pm. Mr P



Hedley: Italy, Mr J Knowles: Zambia, Mr S Hanlon: Honduras.
Shieldhill: Ministry Weekend, D West. Friday 6th at 7.30pm. Saturday at 6.30pm. Sunday at 12 noon and gospel at 6.30pm.
Stevenston: Bethany Hall, Station Road at 7.00pm. A Gamble, G Forbes.

MARCH 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. B Currie. Bible Reading (Eph 4:16-32).
Interlink Half-Yearly Missionary Meetings: Maddiston Evangelical Church at 7.30pm & Gospel Hall, Kilbirnie at 7.30pm.

MARCH 14
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Paterson.
Armadale: Gospel Hall, 8 Masonic Place, South Street at 6.30pm. G Meikle, I Robertson.
Ashgill: Annual Conference in Public Hall at 3.00pm. J Sinclair, D Meikle, B Currie.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. J Hay, I Gibson. Mr Hay continues on Sunday at 3.30pm.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. J McDonald (Eph 5).
Interlink Half-Yearly Missionary Meetings: Hamilton College, Bothwell Road at 2.00pm, 3.30pm & 7.00pm.
Larkhall: Albion Hall, Montgomery Street at 6.30pm. R Dryburgh, J Cadzow.

MARCH 21
Ayr: Gospel Hall, 125 Prestwick Road at 7.00pm. W Banks. Bible Reading (Rev 5).
Bo'ness: Hebron Hall, School Brae at 6.30pm. A Gamble, B Gamble.
Carluke: Gospel Hall, Church Lane, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. JM Flanigan, J Grant, W Stevely.
Denny: Gospel Hall, Westboreland Road at 7.00pm. Ministering brethren expected.
Glasgow, Linthouse: Bethesda Hall, 16 Holmfauldhead Place at 7.00pm. A Naismith.
Gourock: Bethany Hall Assembly, Drumshantie Road at 7.00pm. JM Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues Lord's Day at 3.45pm and Monday to Thursday at 8.00pm on the "Book of Revelation" with chart.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall, Howard Street at 6.30pm. R Millar, J Dickson.
Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. A Cameron, R Thomson.
Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. P Coulson, I Steele.
Muirhead: Annual Conference in Moorpark Gospel Hall at 2.30pm. T Aitken, J Hay, A Sinclair. J Hay continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Plains: Elim Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A Gibson, J Sinclair.
St Monans: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. W Barr.
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A McLean, Report and Ministry.

MARCH 28
Airdrie: Hebron Hall, North Bridge Street at 6.30pm. R Dawes, I Speirs.
Ballingry: Gospel Hall, Southfield Avenue. Ministry 3.30pm. Bible Reading 6.30pm. (Gal 6).
Falkirk: Thornhill Hall, Thistle Street at 6.30pm. A DeVille, I Gibson.
Glasgow: Anniesland Gospel Hall, 796 Crow Road, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. A Hutt, S McKenzie, J McLatchie.
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street at 7.00pm. J McCormick, W McKinstry.
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall, Silvertonhill Avenue at 6.45pm. A Naismith, J Rodgers.
Kilwinning: Annual Conference in Woodwynd Community Centre, River Walk at 3.00pm. J Grant, J Hay, J Sinclair. J Hay continues in ministry in Bridgend Gospel Hall, Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road at 7.30pm. A Gamble.
Kirkconnel: Annual Conference in

Memorial Hall at 3.00pm. A McLean, J Burnett, J Baker.
Musselburgh: Gospel Hall, New Street at 6.30pm. J Baxter, J Bell.
Prestwick: Bute Hall at 7.00pm. J Frost, J Hopewell.
Shotts: Dykehead Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Paterson (Jnr), T Wilson.
Uphall: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Marshall.

APRIL 4
Glengarnock: Hebron Hall, Glengarnock. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Dunlop, J Dickson, M Radcliffe.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. S Arbuthnot, R Marshall.
Motherwell: Annual Conference in Shields Road Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. H Cooper, J Baker, J Burnett.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. S Grant.
Portessie: Conference in Church Hall, Chancellor Road at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. S Banks, I Jackson, T Wilson.

APRIL 11
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Harrison.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

MARCH 7
Birmingham: Charlton Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. R Johnson.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Speedwell Chapel, 63 Speedwell Road at 7.00pm. G Davies.
Crewe: Bethany Gospel Hall, Lime Tree Avenue at 7.00pm. A Fairf.
Crowle, Worcester: Gospel Hall, Old Turnpike Road at 7.00pm. J Baker.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. J Riddle.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian Street. Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Meeting. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Acts 20:17-38). Ministry at 6.45pm. J Dickson.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Bethany, Huyton at 7.30pm. D Locke.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. J Page (Matt ch.16).
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell. Bible Reading (Titus ch.2) at 4.30pm. Ministry at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Victoria Road at 7.15pm. E Hughes.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. P Young.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall, 139 Mayow Road at 7.00pm. R Plant.
Waltham Abbey: Eastbrook Hall, Broomstickhall Rd. Conference at 4.00pm. & 6.15pm. D Hinton.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. I Crawford.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. W Gardiner.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall, Welland Road at 7.00pm. K Jennings.

MARCH 14
Barrow-in-Furness: Risedale Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. E Parmenter and C Lacey.
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. H Cooper.
Bristol: Unity Fellowship Meeting in Unity Chapel, 80 Romney Avenue at 7.00pm.
Bury St. Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. C Stewart.
Calne: Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 7.30pm. P Bees.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. P Williams. Mr Williams continues Monday at 7.30pm.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at



7.00pm. P Coulson.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall, Manor Road at 7.00pm. R Hill.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Newsham at 7.30pm. R Parnaby.
Manchester, Gorton: Gospel Hall, Highmead Street at 7.00pm. C Hutchinson.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. F Epps, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
North Wembley: Uxendon Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 4.30pm and 7.00pm. A Cundick.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. B Gardiner.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. D Stevely.

MARCH 21
Blackburn: Gospel Hall, New Wellington Street, Mill Hill at 7.30pm. A Sinclair.
Bristol: United Ministry Meeting in Chelsea Gospel Hall, 79 Devon Road at 7.00pm. A Maunder.
Butt Lane: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Banbury Street. Conference at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. C Peake, J Coltman.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 7.30pm. P Bees.
Crawley, Nr Winchester: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Glenville.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. J Scarsbrook.
Eastbourne: Marine Hall at 7.00pm. J Allen. Mr Allen continues 23-27th at 7.30pm.
Glastonbury: Bove Town Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. I Rees.
Harrow: Missionary Conference in Belmont Hall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 4.00pm and 7.00pm. B Jenkins, C Raggett.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall (off Granby Street). Annual Spring Convention at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. W Gardiner, M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in Crete Hall at 7.30pm. S Smith.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. A Wiseman.
Manchester, Wythenshawe: Brownwood Hall, Woodhouse Lane at 7.00pm. T Galilee.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall, Percy Road at 7.00pm. J Riddle.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. H Hatt.

MARCH 28
Appledore: N Devon, Bethel, The Quay at 7.15pm. J Gardiner.
Basingstoke: Gospel Hall, Essex Road at 7.00pm. E Taylor.
Bexleyheath: Annual Conference in Bethany Hall, North Street at 3.30 pm & 6.30pm. D Hinton, D Dixon.
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. A Young.
Bristol: Speedwell Fellowship Meeting in Speedwell Chapel, 63 Speedwell Road at 7.00pm.
Crowle, Worcester: Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Dixon, S Downs. Mr Dixon continues Monday to Thursday.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. M Horlock.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall, Eastern Road at 7.00pm. J Coltman, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Liverpool & District Christian Rallies in David Street. Bible Reading at 5.00pm. and Rally at 7.30pm. D Meikle.
London: Hope Hall, 222 Kilburn Lane, Queens Park at 7.00pm. R Carnall.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. P Kaye.
Trent Vale: Gospel Hall, Claytonwood Road at 5.30pm. Postal Bible School Prizegiving.
Warrington: Gospel Hall, Manor Street, Golborne at 7.00pm. J Hall.
Weymouth: Bethany Hall at 7.30pm. B



Osborne.
Worksop: Gospel Hall, Church Walk at 7.15pm. H Mason.

APRIL 4
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. R Curtis.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. D Steveley (Matt ch.17).
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 7.30pm. W Stevely.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. D Spence.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road at 7.00pm. G Woods.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm and 6.15pm. T Proffitt.

APRIL 10-13
North Shields: Tyneside Easter Conference weekend in Gospel Hall, Coach Lane, Friday and Monday at 2.30pm & 6.00pm. Saturday at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe, J Riddle, D West.

APRIL 10
Basingstoke: Annual Conference, Carnival Hall, 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle, C Lacey.
Brierfield: Easter Meetings Good Friday at 11.00am. R Parnaby.
Glastonbury: Good Friday Conference G Payne.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall, Good Friday Conference at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. D Meikle, R Miller.
Manchester, Withington: Gospel Hall, Mauldeth Road at 7.30pm. S McKenzie.
Shoeburyness: Easter Conference at Shoebury Hall, Wakering Avenue at 4.00pm & 6.15pm. T Ledger.

APRIL 11
Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. M Hayward.
Cardiff: Heath Gospel Hall (Curll Avenue) off Whitchurch Road. Annual Easter Conference at 3.15pm and 6.30pm. J MacDonald, D Gillies. J MacDonald continues Lord's Day, Gospel at 6.30pm and Ministry at 8.15pm.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.

APRIL 13
Bicester: Hebron Gospel Hall, Banbury Road, Easter Conference at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. I Jackson, T Ledger.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Ballymena: At the end of January gospel meetings in Cambridge Avenue conducted by I Jackson (Eastbourne) had been in progress for three weeks. There was a good interest in the meetings which were well attended. God gave help to preach clear, plain scriptural messages and some have professed.
Carncullagh (Near Stranocum): T McNeill and R McKeown have been getting encouraging numbers into the outreach hall in this country district, where a Sunday School and gospel testimony is carried on by the Ballycastle assembly.
Parkgate/Doagh: W Fenton and W Martin commenced gospel meetings in a portable hall erected between these villages on 1st February.
Ahoghill: Annual Conference and Period of Ministry Dec 29-Jan 2. Speakers – E Parmenter, J Burnett, R Thompson and D Gilliland. Challenging helpful ministry. D Long, formerly of Angola, expected for



ministry first week in February.
Buckna: Annual Conference December 26th. Large meeting. Profitable ministry by A McShane, JG Hutchinson, B Currie, K Stapley, N Turkington and R McKeown. During January a week of ministry by J Allen was well attended, and the helpful ministry much appreciated by the assemblies in that area.

Co. ARMAGH
Clonroot: S McBride has commenced ministry meetings on Prophetic Subjects, illustrated with a large chart. Nice numbers attending to date (end Jan.)

Co. DOWN
Annahilt (Hillsborough): R Pickering and J Wishart continue in the gospel in portable hall. Fair numbers, with some locals coming. The area is being well visited with tracts.
Comber: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken have had a good start to the gospel series, with numbers of unsaved from christian families attending and showing a measure of interest. Also some locals coming in. They expect blessing.
Donacloney: B Glendinning and R Fairly have commenced a gospel series in this village.
Killyleagh: R Eadie and S Maze are continuing in the gospel with fair numbers, although response from the local people is disappointing.
Lisburn (Plantation): T Bentley and J Palmer have seen blessing early in the meetings. Good attendances.
Shanaghan: A McShane and D Gilliland commenced here on 4th January and are seeing good numbers nightly, with many unsaved attending. The preaching is with freshness and power.
Dromore: J Allen had a week of profitable ministry with the assembly from 19-23 January.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL
Manorcunningham: S Patterson and G Stewart plan to have a short spell of meetings in their mobile hall (commencing 26th January).

Co. TYRONE
Newtownstewart: Annual New Year's Day Conference again, was well attended.T Bentley conducted the Bible Readings and JG Hutchinson, R McKeown, A Davidson and A McShane shared in the ministry, which was considered a profitable time.
Cookstown: M Radcliffe had two weeks of very instructive, Christ exalting ministry on the Tabernacle, illustrated by model and chart.
Corrick: S Jennings gave appreciated and helpful ministry for one week 19-23 January.

BELFAST & DISTRICT
Laganvale: End of year ministry meeting saw the hall filled, with profitable ministry by A McShane and JG Hutchinson.
Albertbridge Road: End of year/New Year ministry and Bible Readings held in Avoniel Leisure Centre on 31st December and 1st January. The Readings were conducted by WJ Nesbitt and S McBride and dealt with "Baptisms of the New Testament", "Breaking of Bread" and "Prayer". The ministry was shared by D Williamson, F Sweeny, A Davidson, B Glendinning and S Ferguson.
Laganvale: R Pickering hopes to commence in the gospel on 22nd February.
Newtonbreda: WJ Nesbitt and A Nesbitt expected for gospel meetings mid February.
Whitehouse: J Lennox and B Currie have just commenced in the gospel (end Jan).

With Christ

Mrs Helen Booth affectionately known as Nellie, on 17 November 1997 aged 77. Saved at 11 years of age in 1931, baptised and received into assembly fellowship in 1937 in Peterhead. She always showed a lovely cheery smile and gave great encouragement to all. Nellie took ill while on holiday with her husband and friends at Queensferry, and was removed to St Johns Hospital, Livingston when the Lord called her home. Her testimony during that time was very commendable. She is greatly missed by all.

Mrs Ila Forbes on 30th December 1997 aged 87. Saved 70 years ago at gospel meetings conducted by Mr T Campbell and Mr R Beattie in a portable hall in Strabane before the gospel hall was built. She was received into the assembly at Donemana where she continued until the Lord took her home. A very faithful sister who took a deep interest in all the activities of the assembly. She was held in high regard by all who knew her. The funeral services were conducted by Mr D Lowry, Mr N Coulter and Mr R Pickering.

Mrs Gladys Gillespie on 7th November 1997 aged 55 years. Saved 22nd July 1951 aged 13. Our sister met with the Needed Truth Assemblies before coming into assembly fellowship in York Street Hall, Peterhead in 1981. She endeared herself to all in the assembly, and to all she came into contact with she displayed a bright testimony. She bore her illness with great courage and christian dignity. This was evidenced by the very large attendance at the funeral. She is sadly missed by her devoted husband and also her son and daughter.

Mr Jack Hammond was called Home on 22nd December, 1997 from Machermore Castle where he had been receiving respite care. Saved and baptised in his late teens, he was in happy fellowship with the saints in Evangelistic Hall, Galston, for sixty years. He was a loving and caring Christian gentleman, who, although not a public speaker, would often express his deep appreciation of the beauties and grace of the Lord Jesus. He and his late wife, Winnie, were devoted to each other and to their Saviour. They are both remembered with much affection. His greatest desire was that his niece, Margaret, and her family would be saved. Please remember them in prayer.

Mrs Mary Hay on 26th July 1997 aged 85 years. Saved at the age of 14 during a series of gospel meetings in Prince Street Hall, Peterhead. Baptised and received into Assembly fellowship in Prince Street Hall and later York Street where she continued until her homecall. For the last few years of her life she was unable to attend for health reasons. Our sister was a good woman and highly esteemed by us in the assembly.

Miss H Kelly suddenly 25th January, aged 61. Saved when JG Grant had meetings in Boveedy in 1949. Since that time our sister has enjoyed fellowship in the Killykerghan assembly, where she was loved and highly esteeemed. Her testimony in the area was excellent. The very large funeral was an indication of the esteem in which she was held. JG Hutchinson and A Aitken were responsible for the services.

Mrs Jean Jamieson on 27th September 1997 aged 63 years. She was saved as a young woman while attending tent meetings in Coleraine during 1959, when the preachers were J Milne and H Paisley. Shortly afterwards she was received into the Coleraine assembly where she remained in happy fellowship until her homecall. The large funeral services were conducted by J Fillis and W Caldwell from the Coleraine assembly. Prayer requested for her husband Tommy, four sons and four daughters.

Mrs Kathleen Laverty on 21st January aged 70 years. She came from an R.C. background, and a few years after her



marriage began to read the Bible in secret. Alone in her home she trusted Christ, and to her great delight found that her husband working in Belfast had done the same. Soon she was baptised and received into the Coleraine assembly, but four years later moved to the Ballylintagh assembly where she took an active interest in the sisters' missionary class. Prayer requested for her husband and family, some of whom are not saved.

Mrs Ethel McCauley on 10th December 1997 aged 67. Saved in October 1954 at meetings in Shanaghan Hall, conducted by the late Charles Flemming. Later received into the assemby where she enjoyed happy fellowship until illness prevented her attendance at the meetings. A christian lady, she was loved by all who knew her, faithful to the assembly and the truth of God. Her home was open to the Lord's people and many enjoyed her hospitality. Left behind an unblemished testimony evidenced by the large funeral. Mourned by her husband and family, some of whom are not saved. Prayer requested for those not saved.

Mr Neil McPhail on 25th November 1997 in his 90th year. Converted in adult life, he was associated with the saints in Union Hall and Balmore Hall, Glasgow but was in fellowship with the Dennistoun assembly for the last twenty years. A faithful brother who loved the Lord's people, he was greatly involved in hospital visitation and was a most diligent distributor of gospel tracts through personal contact.

Mrs Elsie Menzies on 17th December aged 74, after a long illness patiently borne. Saved under the preaching of Harry Burness in 1949 and received into fellowship in Cullen soon afterwards. Her warmth and kindness endeared her to all. She maintained a bright Christian witness while enduring much pain and weakness. She looked not on her own things but on the things of others. The large funeral, with many from the local community attending, indicated the respect in which our sister was held. Remember her husband Sammy, and family in prayer.

John Mornin aged 85, beloved husband of Isobel suddenly passed into the Lord's presence January 24th 1998. He led an active assembly life in different parts of Northern Ireland. His latter years were spent in the Heathmount assembly, Portstewart: an elder who rendered godly counsel, and who was highly esteemed. His passing leaves a place difficult to fill. Mrs Mornin would value prayer for a daughter and son, a son-in-law and daughter-in-law and two grandchildren not saved.

Mrs Norris on 28th January aged 103. Saved 70 years ago when Mr R Peacock was distributing scriptures in her area. For many years she was in the assembly at Londonderry, but since 1962 she was a faithful member of the Straidarren assembly. She was loved and respected by all and had a good testimony in the village of Claudy where she lived. Among the many who attended the funeral were those who would not normally hear the gospel simply presented. Prayer requested for family members not yet saved.

Mrs Ruby Passmore on 4th January, 1998, aged 87. Saved in her teenage years she was in happy fellowship in the Dennistoun assembly for over 70 years, where she bore a consistent testimony throughout her life. For 25 years, she faithfully served as hall keeper in the old meeting place in Porch Hall, and was seldom, if ever, absent from all assembly gatherings until the last few years of her life.

Mrs Rose Smith on 17th October 1997. Saved in early life, and in fellowship for many years in Ebenezer Hall, Glasgow until its closure in 1976, when with her late husband, she then met with the believers in Dennistoun. Over the years she was most faithful in her attendance at the assembly gatherings, and took a keen interest in the prayer chain ministry.

Mr Albert Spence, very suddenly on 17th January in his 80th year. Saved in 1941 at Faith Mission Meetings near to Growell. Very soon afterward he was received into Donegall Road assembly, Belfast. A very bright, happy christian, he taught in the Sunday school and helped in all the assembly meetings. He had an excellent testimony amongst his neighbours and had the joy of seeing his son saved and in the Bangor assembly. Mr McShane and Mr J Hutchinson spoke at the funeral services. Prayer valued for the assembly where he will be greatly missed.

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

PERSONALIA

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All correspondence for Frances Street Gospel Hall, Newtownards, Co Down, should now be addressed to David McFeeters, 140 Killinchy Road, Comber, Co Down, BT23 5NE. Tel: (01247) 871872.

Change of correspondent: for Solihull Gospel Hall. All correspondence should now be addressed to Philip Bees, 5 Ann Road, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6EP. Tel: (01564) 823197.

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Ministry of the Word, 2.00-4.30pm.
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Reports of the Lord's Work in Foreign Lands
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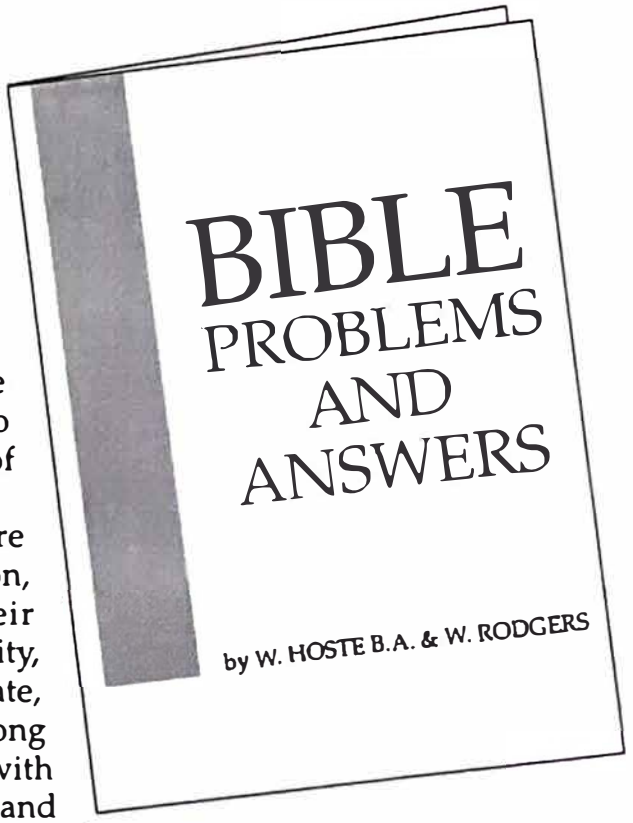
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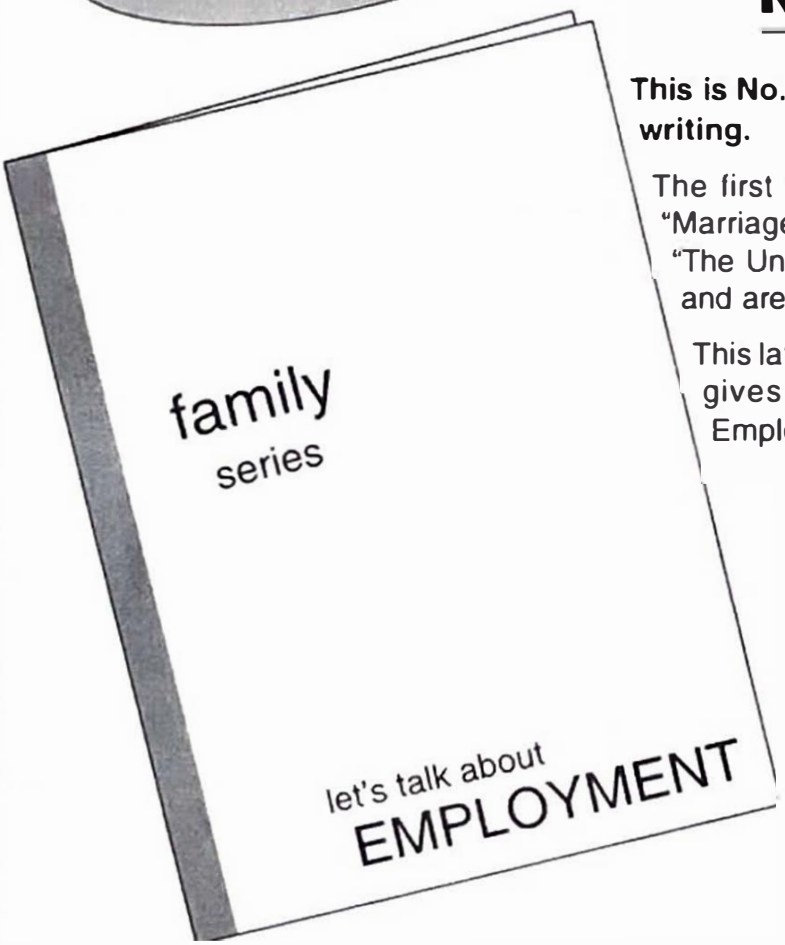
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4/98

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Believer's Magazine

APRIL 1998

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Editorial

"The Lord give mercy" to all who, like Onesiphorus diligently seek out in order to refresh those who are in chains for the cause of Christ (2 Tim 1:16). Such are ashamed of neither the gospel nor those who at great personal cost preach it. They know by name the prisoners of the Lord. They see themselves as bound with them.

Who can tell how comforting it is to that brother imprisoned in China to hear the whisper that saints in Britain or Canada are praying for him? How are hearts uplifted in Pakistan or Liberia or Indonesia or wherever unjust persecution for Christ's sake pertains by a visit from some who understand the doctrine, "...whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor 12:26).

Pressures, both moral and spiritual, there are in the West. But the fear of imprisonment and physical abuse is not an ever-present phenomenon. But we remind ourselves, such harassment has been the norm of christian witness since Stephen's martyrdom. And elsewhere it still is. There are those who have endured more than afflictions; "a great fight of afflictions" (Heb 10:32). They have tasted reproach and identified themselves with those under reproach (Heb 10:33); indeed they had been made the cheap theatre of their fellows (AV "gazingstock"). Always at great personal cost and at risk to their safety, they have shown compassion to those in prison.

So far none of our number in the West have in recent days been martyred, so that it could be said of us "...ye have not yet resisted unto blood" (Heb 12:4). Intelligent believers would immediately grasp that the term "not yet" falls far short of promising that we will die in our nest (Job 29:18) surrounded by our children's children.

May be for the first time in the experience of saints in Britain and USA physical sufferings and christian testimony will be connected as they already are elsewhere. Then the preciousness that attaches to the connection of sufferings and glory will be appreciated as never before. We know that Rom 8:17 makes that connection; 2 Tim 2:12 makes that connection; 1 Pet 4:14 makes that connection. But the value of that golden linkage cannot be fully evaluated whilst the long period of rest enjoyed by Western Christians continues.

Many in other nations have long since realised that the only path to the glory leads along the vale of tears; it is the way of suffering. They are acutely aware that they follow Him who "was taken from prison and from judgment" (Isa 53:3,8). They know that they are where Jeremiah once languished. They face what Peter and Paul and John knew. Perhaps they recall the divine commentary on others who in an earlier era trod the thorny path of faith, "God is not ashamed to be called their God" (Heb 11:16). Be assured that God is not ashamed to be called the God of these who face the privations that follow open unashamed witness for Christ.

TW

David's Great Review (2)
(2 Samuel 23)

by the late FE Stallan

The great review of Hebrews 11 has many striking comments in its citation. Think, for instance of "Of whom the world was not worthy", or "the time would fail me to tell"! So great was the list and so varied were the deeds of God's mighty men and women of past days, the time and space were not sufficient to tell out their exploits for God in the pages of Holy Writ. But that list is very much longer now. Down here a tablet of stone with little inscribed may mark a spot on earth as the resting place of some valiant one for God, but up there all is recorded. As with David's mighty men, the patch of lentils, the time of snow, the glass of water, are all noted and await the unveiling of a greater day of review than David's by far. May the thought of such a day encourage God's people to enlist His help to perform exploits for Him and so ensure an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

David's review begins by mentioning mighty men as individuals and then names those who worked together as groups. How valuable to note this lesson at the commencement! At all times there have been those who have pressed on alone, they have felt better engaged in solitary service. Some have been forced into this but whatever the reason we may rest assured that God has a place for individuals in His great harvest field. There is ample scope for missionary enterprise, tract distribution, visitation of the sick and scores of other worthy labours for those who hear the call of God to move out in faith. But there are others who like the support of brethren of like mind. They would rather labour in harness as Paul, Silas and Timothy did, than appear on the scene like Apollos. The main point of course, is to get to know one's own gift and the will of God covering its use. After that. Obedience in willing service will ensure a worthy reward at the great day of review.

Obedience in willing service will ensure a worthy reward at the great day of review.

Pride of place in David's gallery was given to Adino the Eznite who is linked with the slaying of eight hundred. A comparison with 1 Chron 11 may reveal that he was *personally* responsible for three hundred. One thing is certain, as chief of the captains and first on David's list of mighty men, he must have been an outstanding man of valour and one very near to David's heart. It seems from 1 Chron 11 that he was the leader of the three who broke through the ranks of the Philistines to fetch water for David from the well of Bethlehem. Here we see a marked difference between Adino and another of the chief captains, Joab the son of Zeruiah, David's sister. Joab was a warrior who fought well in battle, but the main

issues of his life revealed his proper character. He was a man of shady deeds who thought more of himself than of David. His rebellion at the end was a just summing up of the bent of his life. How different were Adino and his two companions! They were so near to David in his time of rejection in the cave of Adullam that they knew, as it were, the secret longings of his heart and were prepared to risk life and limb to please their master. We should remember, a greater than David is now rejected, but how many are so near to Him in communion as to hear His longings and be prepared to satisfy them at all cost.

The second worthy was Eleazar. From verse nine it seems that on one occasion David and his three mightiest men stood alone against the Philistines while the men of Israel fled. If so, we can fully understand the depth of David's appreciation for such men. Side by side they defied the enemy and at this time Eleazar so distinguished himself that his deeds of merit were marked out for special mention. He used the sword so mightily and for so long that his hand clave to it. Now it is stated emphatically that "the LORD wrought a great victory that day", so a proper conclusion is that Eleazar wielded the sword by the power of the Lord and in that action he was so identified with the sword that he could not lay it down. Ephesians 6 comes quickly to mind. Today there is no wrestling with flesh and blood but a warfare with spiritual wickedness in high places for which conflict, believers are supplied with the armour of God. The last item of armour is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, or better the sayings of God. It is not so much the Bible as the use of the proper portion of it applicable to the special trial in hand with strict personal conformity to the scripture quoted. Our Lord used it like this against Satan in the wilderness. In the temptation of stones into bread He quoted from Deut 8 "Man shall not live by bread alone...". Satan knew He believed every word of that scripture, and that He would be conformed to it to the very end. It was therefore the sword of the Spirit without a doubt.

The third of "the three" was Shammah. Associated with his name was a piece of ground full of lentils, and a great victory by the Lord. It seems clear that food was in short supply at that time but Shammah stood in the midst of that piece of ground to defend it from the Philistines, and the Lord was ready to uphold him in preserving it. As with Eleazar the people had fled and he stood alone. No doubt they would gladly partake of the lentils when the danger hour had passed. But the great lesson here is that God is interested in our small affairs and will uphold those whom few appreciate. Gideon proved the same in a similar experience. The day will declare how precious to Him has been the preservation of a small thing than the occupation of a large thing in which He has no interest.

The Perfection of God

by SS Nicholes, Cwmbran

Whatever our finite minds can take in of the perfection of God, and His ways. He is infinitely greater than our noblest thoughts. Whether we consider Him in creation, or in providence, or in redemption, we bow in worship and declare with the psalmist, "O my God, thou art very great" (Ps 104:1). It is our desire in this article to meditate on the perfection of God in relation to the believer.

He is infinitely greater than our noblest thoughts

His Way

Firstly we consider 2 Sam 22:31, "As for God, his way is perfect". It was towards the end of an eventful life, that David, as he reviewed God's dealings with him, declared, "his way is perfect". In the next chapter he admitted that his "house was not so with God", thus acknowledging failure; indeed his sin is well documented in scripture. But, as he considered God's dealings with him in grace and indeed in government, he could say, "As for God his way is perfect". When in ch.24 he was given a choice of chastisements for his sin in numbering the people, he said, "Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord for his mercies are great and let me not fall into the hand of man". He had learned by experience the truth "As for God his way is perfect".

As we look back over our little lives, we too, must admit failure, but can say in the language of Rom 8:28, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose". God said in Isa 55:8 "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways". In Ps 77, Asaph ends with the words, "Thy way is in the sea" and, whilst we may not always trace the way of God in the stormy seas of life, may we learn to say with him in the words of v.13, "Thy way is in the sanctuary". Moses was a man of the sanctuary, and God made known his ways unto him and His acts unto the children of Israel. "As for God his way is perfect".

His Work

In Deut 32:4 Moses in his song said, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he". The works of the children of Israel in the wilderness were far from perfect, for the next verse reads, "They have corrupted themselves...". Numbers graphically records their failures. But as Moses reviewed God's way with His people, he could say, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect".

In Deut 4:31 Moses wrote "He is the merciful God": in 7:9 He is the faithful God: in 7:21 He is the mighty God: in 33:27 He is the eternal God and 33:26 there is none like God.

His Wisdom

In Job 37, Elihu said to Job, "Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and

consider the wondrous works of God...the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?" In the previous chapter we read, "He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee, Behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom." As poor Job thought on these things, he said, "He knoweth the way that I take." In our times of trial and difficulty, we too can say with the hymn writer, "His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim, He knows the way He taketh and I will walk with Him." In the hustle and bustle of life, it is good sometimes to stand still and consider the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in wisdom. What perfection is seen in His creation! In chs.38-41 we have some eighty questions by God as Job "stands still and considers." As we, too, gaze up into the night sky and see the countless numbers of stars moving with precision in their courses, our minds go to Ps 147:4, "He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them all by their names." In the same context we read, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." So the One who, in the perfection of His wisdom, is in control of His creation, is able to control these lives of ours. In NT language we can echo with Paul in Rom 11:33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord or who hath been his counsellor or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever Amen."

His Word

In Ps 19 we read, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul" and in James 1 it is described as "the perfect law of liberty." As far as the law of Moses was concerned, we read in Deut 5:22, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly and he added no more." Words that tell of the completeness and finality of the Ten Commandments.

His Will

It is in Rom 12:1-2 that it is described as "a perfect will" as far as the believer is concerned: "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service: and be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God." It was the prayer of Epaphras that the believers should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col 4:12). Paul wrote, "This is the will of God even your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3). "Doing the will of God from the heart," says Eph 6:6. For the will of God in relation to the believer, is good and acceptable and perfect.

How we could multiply scriptures confirming the perfection of God in His Way, His Work, His Wisdom, His Word and His Will.

The Gate of Sodom

Lot is a settler. He sits in the gate of Sodom, solid and stately, built of stone, with bars of iron. He is absorbed in the trade, the toil, the intercourse, the politics, the ambitions of the hour. He scarcely asks anything more spiritual and heavenly. Let me beware. What if my chief affection is for the world with its unmistakeable advantages and tangible gains? What if my eyes have no far-away look, but are shrewd and sharp, noting every chance which can profit me? The gate of Sodom is a dangerous and unbecoming home for one whom Christ has redeemed with His precious blood.

Lot is also a legalist. He allowed the angels to draw near where he was, and then he rose up to salute them. It was ceremonious. It was formal and precise. His heart did not beat any faster. So far from a disappointment, it would have been a relief to him if the travellers from the world of light and life had not halted at his side. I pray that my Christianity may not be smitten and spoiled by a similar coldness. Is my soul imprisoned beneath a coating of ice? Even when I thank my Redeemer for the great redemption, is there no touch of eagerness in my gratitude?

Selected

Lord's Work Trust

42 Beansburn, Kilmarnock KA3 1RH
Tel: (01563) 521098 • Fax: (01563) 571215
Charity No. SC008740

Total Gifts received from 1 February 1998 to 28 February 1998

For the Lord's Work and Workers		Gifts towards Expenses
From Assemblies	50860	2446
From Individuals	15930	673
From Covenants/Gift Aid	72496	1546
From Legacies	1526	0
From Refund of Tax	42436	0
	183248	4665

Includes: Anon £664.35, Wales £5.

Micah (15)

by JM Riddle, Cheshunt

Chapter 7:18-20

In our two previous papers, we noticed that Micah chapter 7 can be divided as follows: (1) Micah's current circumstances, vv.1-7; (2) Israel's coming captivity, vv.8-10; (3) Israel's certain regathering, vv.11-17; (4) God's covenant mercy, vv.18-20. We have already dealt with the first three paragraphs in the chapter, which brings us to:

God's covenant mercy, vv.18-20

In the closing verses of the prophecy, we learn that God will act in grace and loving-kindness towards His people on account of the patriarchal covenant. We should notice the following:

He will reveal His love, v.18

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." The final words can be translated, "he delighteth in loving-kindness" JND.

The existence of His love for Israel. Love is its own motive, and we have only to read Deut 7:7-8 for confirmation: "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you". It is helpful to notice the context in which this wonderful statement is made. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth", v.6. But as CH Mackintosh *(Notes on Deuteronomy)* observes, "It is the settled purpose of God that 'no flesh should glory in his presence.' All human pretension must be set aside. He will hide pride from man." God reminds His people that He chose them, not because of personal merit, but because He loved them. We sing:

> Chosen not for good in me,
> Wakened up from wrath to flee.

The provision in His love for Israel. The basis on which God can rightly "pass by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage" is clear from Romans 3:24-25, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission (passing over) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God..." We must never forget that the efficacy of the work of Christ at Calvary extended backward through time, as well as forward. We must not forget either in this connection that whilst the OT sacrifices had no intrinsic value, they certainly had an extrinsic value. By offering the appropriate sacrifice, the Israelite put himself in a position to benefit from the death of Christ, even though that great work was not accomplished at the time. Men and women have only, and will only, be justified on the basis of His finished work at Calvary. Israel's ultimate salvation and blessing rests on exactly the same basis as our own.

No wonder Micah could exclaim, "Who is a God like unto thee"! These words first occur in Exod 15:11, "Who is like unto



thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" God is incomparable!

He will remove their sins, v.19

"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea". Notice the change from "us" to "their". The remnant will be "all righteous" (Isa 60:21). Other prophets contribute to the theme: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies...be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments" (Zeph 3:12-15). "In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve (JND, whom I leave remaining)" (Jer 50:20). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek 36:25).

It has often been pointed out that the place into which Israel's sins will be cast is the very place where the Saviour suffered for sins. Israel's sins will be "cast...into the depths of the sea", and the Lord Jesus cried under divine judgment, "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me" (Ps 42:7). The "greater than Jonah" cried, "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and thy floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me" (Jonah 2:3).

He will ratify the covenant, v.20

"Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old". It is interesting to notice that the passage in which God describes His love for Israel, continues with reference to His promises to the patriarchs. Moses told Israel that the Lord loved them and chose them (i) "because the Lord loved you" and (ii) "because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers" (Deut 7:8). We must never forget that the promises made to patriarchs were unconditional. Whilst Israel lost the joy of her inheritance and relationship with God through disobedience and unbelief, "Lo-ammi" (meaning 'not my people') is not for ever, for "in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos 1:8-11). Every promise of God, whatever its scope and subject, will be fulfilled in Christ, for "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Cor 1:20).

We can sing *now*, what Israel will most certainly sing in the future as they contemplate the grace and loving-kindness of God:

Great God of wonder! all Thy ways
  Display the attributes divine;
But countless acts of pardoning grace
  Beyond Thine other wonders shine:
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Books

The Outpouring by Elmwood McQuaid; published Friends of Israel; price £6.50. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

It has often been noted that John's Gospel presents the Messiah in relation to the Feasts of Jehovah. *The Outpouring*, sub-titled "Jesus in the Feasts of Israel", develops that thought in a brief 160-page exposition of John's Gospel.

What the author attempts is demanding. He is intent on providing the reader with an insight into both the scriptural background of the particular Feast and the actual ceremonies performed in the first century AD, these the result of the human mind adding to the requirements of the Feasts of Jehovah. To offer such overviews and at the same time to address the teaching of the Gospel is difficult within the scope of a small paperback but more so if the reader's attention is not to be diverted from the Lord and His teaching.

The author also faces, perhaps not altogether convincingly, identifying the particular feast which provides the backcloth to John 5. He considers it to have been the Feast of Trumpets but does not answer the obvious question: why does the Spirit of God not disclose the identity of the Feast?

Not surprisingly some sections of *The Outpouring* are more cohesive than others. Nevertheless throughout the author's acknowledgement of the Lord's person and work are unquestionable and much of profit is in the interactions he presents between the Lord and the Feasts. Although lacking an index or scriptural references, *The Outpouring* is an interesting and profitable book.

TW

Eight Days that Changed the World; by Don M Aycock; published Kregel Publications; price £5.70. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Eight Days that Changed the World is a meditation on the eight days from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, the so-called Easter Octave. The author reflects on the great events of that period and illustrates them with personal and historical incidents to highlight some of the great changes those eight days have brought.

The author accepts the inspiration of Scripture. For that reason he does not avoid the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:14). Wisely he teaches that the cursed fig tree was a sign of the state of Israel at that time.

Not always are his illustrations as helpful as they might be. The reviewer questions the wisdom of citing a tale of a Comanche girl who sacrificed her doll to the Great Spirit, a sacrifice, it is claimed, brought the flowers to bloom after a drought. No matter the moral of the story, heathen practices are to be deplored. Again, it must be questioned whether the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem was indeed "like Mardi Gras in New Orleans". Nevertheless many valuable lessons are taught in the book and many of those lessons amply illuminated by apt illustrations.

The worth of *Eight Days that Changed the World* does not lie in its exposition of Scripture but is in its helpful descriptions of Jewish customs like the Passover supper and in the simple applications of the events of the Eight Days to christian experience. For that reason it will appeal to a wide readership.

TW

Question Box

Question

Is it scriptural to speak of a "limited atonement"? and apart from the actual term, could some aspects of this matter be dealt with from the Scriptures in the answer.

Answer

Although this subject was dealt with in the magazine in August 1996, it seems that its importance is such that further space should be given to it. The alleged doctrine of limited atonement is not at all supported by scripture. The error springs from the fact that those who advocate it deal with the scope of the atoning work of Christ by means of human logic, arguing that the Lord Jesus only suffered for the elect and therefore only bore the penalty of so many sins, these being the sins of those who have believed, such believers being predestinated in a past eternity. They argue that if the Lord suffered for the sins of any others then God is logically deprived of the right to punish those others, since that would involve double punishment, the one substitutionarily of Christ and the other meritoriously in the unbeliever's own person. But human logic in divine things is very dangerous. Such natural thought produced "the mother of God" heresy and other like errors.

The sufferings of the Lord Jesus should not be considered mathematically, so much punishment for so many sins. They should not be considered quantitatively bur rather qualitatively, having regard first, as to who it was who suffered and then what He suffered. He is an infinite person and in consequence anything that He endured must have been of an infinite nature. Immediately one "limits" the atonement he ceases to make it infinite. It is not possible to put a limit to the potential benefits of His death.

This is to be seen in the fact that the Spirit of God is careful to use the prepositions *anti* and *huper*. "He gave his life a ransom for (*anti* - instead of) many" (Matt 20:28). This is substitution and in the nature of things substitution is limited to those who benefit by it. But "Christ died for (*huper* - on the behalf of) the ungodly". This has to do with His propitiatory work and is unlimited. In it, it is true, the possibility of substitution is envisaged, but if it is not appropriated by faith it is of no benefit to the one who refuses it. Where the first person pronoun, either singular or plural is used, the thought of substitution is to be found. So, He "gave himself for (*huper* - on behalf of) our sins" (1 Cor 15:3). This is the confession of faith which springs from personal application of the benefits of that death.

It is, of course, true that Christ died for the elect, but His death is never so represented in scripture as though He died for them only and not for others. "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). In that death of Christ there is a sufficiency to meet the need of the whole human race. Thus the preacher must "Go into all the world" and preach to the "whosoever". Sadly, all do not avail themselves of this, a thing foreknown by God but not predetermined by Him, and certainly not a thing that limits the potentialities of the death of Christ.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by John Dunlop, Crosshouse

The Christian and the Work of the Assembly

In this concluding article of the current series we want to look at a matter which should be of great concern to the young believer - the work of the assembly, and three questions are vitally important if the work is to progress in a God honouring way.

Manpower: Who does the work?

In many assemblies there is a decline in numerical strength and increased opposition around. Despite these difficulties, however, there are two words which are keys to answering the question - "only" and "every".

"Only" reminds us of the truth of separation - the Christian has come apart from the world, including the religious systems, and will not make common cause with the ungodly.

The early chapters of Ezra present a scene of activity and in chapter 4 an alliance is proposed by those claiming a common desire after God; but the leaders of the people were wise: "Ye have nothing to do with us; but we ourselves together will build" (v.3). To claim the name of God was not enough to make the inhabitants of the land suitable partners in the work.

Paul teaches the same truth when he urges separation from the unbeliever (2 Cor 6:14-15) and then from false religious systems (v.16) before bringing the two together: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (v.17).

The truth of separation, then, is one of the most basic in our Bible and has practical implications. Despite numerical weakness it is not possible to share the burden with the denominations, for an assembly cannot make alliance with companies where things are taught and done which contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. "Every", meanwhile, speaks of personal responsibility; in all local assemblies it is the task of every member to ensure that the work is carried on.

When Paul writes of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 he outlines their variety and their necessity. What is clear, however, is that: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man" (v.7). There is not a brother or sister without spiritual gift and though, like Timothy, we need to stir it up on occasion, that gift should be at the disposal of the Lord to use in the work of the assembly.

An assembly is either a sailing ship with all hands on deck, or a cruise liner, with room for passengers on board. As a young believer I must look at my assembly and see how I view it.

Money: Where does it come from?

The numerical decline of assemblies puts a strain on finances, particularly when this comes on top of having an aging company. There are many assemblies with only a small number of brethren or sisters in employment.

In a previous article we noticed some principles of Christian giving and to these we simply add this word of caution: the finances to carry on the work of God must come from the people of God. It was the redeemed who brought the materials for the

construction of the tabernacle: it is the redeemed who support the work of the assembly.

Some of the denominations now apply to the Lottery Board for grants to aid with repair and restoration work. Collections are sometimes uplifted where the unsaved have easy access to the place of contribution. Sponsored events and fund-raising activities are now an accepted part of most "churches". We have to examine the Word of God to test these things.

John sums up the general teaching of Scripture when he writes of the means of support for the early workers: "For his name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John v.7). The unsaved were not permitted to share in the financing of the work of God in early days, and so it remains.

Methods: How do we do things?

Perhaps young believers in every generation have wondered why things in an assembly are ordered in particular ways or done in a certain manner. Let's be frank. Some things are done out of habit and custom! As an example we could take the gospel meeting where the writer is not aware of any Scripture which says that the format is hymn, prayer, hymn, intimations, Scripture reading, hymn, gospel message. There is, however, a verse which should be the watchword for every gathering of every company: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40), and the above pattern is adopted by many because it brings decency and order to the meeting. This is how it should be, for the work of the assembly must be carried out with dignity and reverence and not in a slipshod, haphazard way.

In the work of the Lord we should always keep the objective in view. We want to see salvation, spiritual progress, the assembly strengthened and God glorified. This is good and proper, but we will have to be careful in how we achieve this. Around the middle of the last century a politician named Cavour wanted to unite individual states to form Italy so he told lies, issued orders publicly he withdrew privately and raised money for troops against the orders of his superiors. He justified these things by saying that his cause was great and that the end justified the means. We remind ourselves that the work of the Lord is greater than any scheme of man and that this standard does not apply. In the work of the Lord the end does not justify the means, rather, the end dictates the means. With this in mind the young believer will be able to consider these questions. Can the gospel be watered down to make it more acceptable? Is it appropriate for the sisters to have their head uncovered to attract more unsaved to the meeting? Can we neglect sections of the Bible to make it more appealing?

So the work of the assembly is done by every member of the assembly, funded without recourse to the unsaved and carried out in ways that are in keeping with the dignity of the work. As young believers we will want to make our full contribution to all these things that the work may be strengthened till He come.

Regions Beyond

Highlights of an Indian Visit - part 1

by Michael Browne

Every statistic about India is impressive. Its population approaching one billion means the sub-continent is posed to pass China as the world's most populous nation by the millennium. Daily 45,000 babies are born! There are 330 million children, and 1,650 languages are spoken within its borders, and 190 religions reach out for the hearts of its citizens. Christians form a tiny 2.5% of the population, of which only a small number will be true believers. What a task this minuscule number have to witness for our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was my privilege once again to visit this great nation in January/February to both preach and teach the Word of God. This was done in fellowship with some of the estimated 2,000 total of assemblies in India today.

Meetings Overflowing with Believers In Andhra Pradesh (826 assemblies) meetings were, as usual, overflowing with believers coming in from the surrounding district and swelling the numbers in Vuyyuru to over 5,000 during the three days we were there. During that weekend 41 new believers were baptised. We had about 300 elders and village evangelists for a 3 day conference at Bapatla. This was the time of the Hindu festival of "pongol", and the nearby temple with its horn amplifiers blasted out a single repetitive "mantra" for hour after weary hour - the "vain repetition" of the heathen (Matt 6:7). Then in Guntur, at the Maranatha Gospel Hall, we had a two day (all day) ministry conference convened during the Muslim "Ramadan" fast, when again clusters of horn amplifiers from the nearby mosque screeched out instructions for the 'faithful' from 3 am. onwards at regular intervals, making sleep impossible!

In His Spare Time! A dear brother from Vijayawada came to see me, a lecturer in botany at a government college. During his spare time he has seen an assembly planted in a nearby village, Gullipudi, and about 40 believers are now breaking bread with over 60 attending the gospel meetings. I visited this village and stood on the site where they are building a new hall, and commended the work into the hand of our mighty God. These Andhra believers are tireless in their gospel labours, and the Lord is granting them fruit. Would to God we could see such zeal and results home here in Britain.

Maoist Revolutionaries In one remote district in Andhra meetings had been arranged in what turned out to be a Naxalite stronghold! Naxalites are Maoist revolutionaries who control huge districts in Andhra State and regularly murder officials, and blow up state facilities. There are 17 small assemblies in this area, and about 300 believers were expected to gather. It was during the run-up to the Indian general election, and the People's War Group (PWG) of the Naxals, were determined to disrupt the polls. They had just blown up the telephone main exchange, gunned down two leading political candidates, and threatened to blow up every polling station in their district if anyone dared to erect them! As they regularly take hostages, a foreign missionary would have been a prime target and afforded them maximum propaganda nation-wide. So when we arrived at the end of

the single track road 30 km from the main highway, and realised the vulnerability of our position, decided on an immediate return to Hyderabad (6 hours back the road). We prayed, left my evangelist-interpreter, Ananda-Rao, to take the meetings, and on the way out met a whole platoon of heavily armed police heading back up the road we had just come from! The believers in Hyderabad - Secunderabad agreed I had made the correct decision in getting out of the Naxalite district - and I enjoyed a few days of mainly gospel meetings with a rapidly growing assembly in these twin cities.

Remarkable Story of Sacrificial Labours This assembly is another remarkable story of sacrificial labours by brethren doing gospel work in their spare time. Samuel John, who earned a Ph.D. in physics and teaches in a degree college - was exercised about the labourers in their neighbourhood working on building sites. Helped by his two brothers and Christians from their assembly, they commenced gospel meetings among them. That was about 7 months ago, and today they have seen a new assembly planted which has grown to 45 breaking bread, and about 100 press into his house listening to the gospel. I had nightly gospel meetings there, and the crowd listened intently to the word of life.

Most of the converts are from a Hindu background and are illiterate. In addition to instructing them in the faith, which they do by systematic teaching several times a week, they are now commencing literacy classes to teach them how to read their Telugu bibles. No full-time evangelist is involved in this work, it is conducted and maintained entirely by the after-work activities of these gospel-minded believers at real personal sacrifice. They presently meet in a house, but showed me a site (where we prayed for the Lord's blessing and provision of needed finances) upon which they hope to erect an open-sided hall to accommodate 300 or more. They estimate in 2-3 years at their present rate of growth, to have an assembly of 200 strong!

Increased Violence The Indian General Election is going on even as I write. If the Hindu nationalist Bharitiya Janata Party (BJP) get a majority and come to power, it will mean a very bleak future for Christians and all minority religious and ethnic groups in India. There is already increased violence against Christians there, mostly the work of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) the ruthless bully-boy miltants of the BJP, and some Christians have been martyred.

Believers Attacked and Beaten One Sunday evening earlier this year, believers from the Malad assembly in Bombay, were distributing tracts and preaching in the streets. Suddenly a group of Hindu extremists armed with sticks and iron bars surrounded them, snatched away their tracts and Bibles, piled them in a heap in the gutter, then ordered the Christians to trample on them, which was refused. The militants grew violent and attacked and severely beat the believers. They screamed at them, "You Christians are foreigners, and are trying to convert Hindus, and rule over India!" They were then driven out of the street with blows and abuse, and warned never to return. This sort of incident is not uncommon in India today.

Among the Corinthians

by WPW McVey, Brisbane

"...falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in [RV, among] you of a truth" (1 Cor 14:25).

What Paul envisages here can only be described as ideal assembly conditions: God magnified, the saints edified and a newcomer convicted and converted on the spot.

Unfortunately things were far from ideal in Corinth when Paul wrote. The world, the flesh and the devil had conspired to sow many a weed of evil among the believers there. Hence the corrective note which runs through the epistle, with several pointed references to wrongs "among you."

1. DIVISIONS AND CONTENTIONS – *"I beseech you...that there be no divisions among you...for it hath been declared unto me...that there are contentions among you"* (1:10,11).

It must have nearly broken Paul's heart to learn that his name was being used to foster division among the saints in Corinth. No doubt Apollos and Peter would have been equally displeased. Most of all, the Saviour Himself would have denounced those who were using His name in a purely factional spirit. By their very baptism, Paul insisted, they had all been publicly linked to Christ and so to one another. When in ch.3 he again refers to their "contentions," he does so under the name of "strife," which clearly proved how carnal and immature they were. Though full of their own importance, they were behaving like children, thinking only of their standing before men rather than God, and concerned about this life more than the future. When the heart is fixed on Christ and the eye on things eternal, many controversies will die an early death and others will never see the light of day.

2. MORAL SIN – *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you"* (5:1).

How different is the report here from the one in ch.14. Sin, not God, was among them – and shocking immorality it was, even by heathen standards. Yet the church was amazingly at one in this matter, condoning what they should have been unitedly condemning. Can we not trace a sequence of events here which is typical and almost inevitable? When the members of an assembly are preoccupied with themselves and jockeying among themselves for position, gross moral sin can easily creep in undetected and even remain unjudged. But Paul had "judged already" the dishonour done to the Lord's name. He therefore invoked his apostolic authority and called for immediate action: "put away from among yourselves that wicked person." This was simply demanded by what he had earlier taught about the holiness of the assembly as "the temple of God" (3:17).

3. FAULT (DEFECT, DEFEAT) – *"There is utterly a fault among you,*



because ye go to law one with another" (6:7)

Instead of turning to God with their differences, they were behaving like men of the world and going to court, even before heathen judges. Paul blamed them for their inability to settle such matters inside the assembly, and blamed them even more for seeking arbitration elsewhere. No matter which party won at court, they were all spiritual losers, and it was a major defeat for the assembly as a whole. Paul's words about litigation are quite clear, but their wider implications are often ignored. Some would never go to law over their grievances, but have no compunction whatever about airing their assembly problems publicly, seeking sympathy and backing from saved and unsaved alike. This too is a grievous fault. It is just the spirit of Corinth surfacing in another form.

4. DIVISIONS AND HERESIES – *"I hear there be divisions among you...also heresies among you"* (11:18,19).

What Paul calls heresies here are listed among the works of the flesh in Gal 5:20, and by their very nature were divisive. They did not necessarily involve false doctrine (as modern usage of the word implies) but were pet theories and side-issues peddled among the Christians by would-be teachers in a self-willed way. Such men will inevitably create tensions in any assembly, lower the spiritual tone, and cause the saints to "come together, not for the better, but for the worse." The link here with the solemn words about the Lord's supper in the following section should not be overlooked.

5. DOCTRINAL ERROR – *"How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead"* (15:12)

Paul dealt with this error in masterly fashion, bringing forth things new and old in the spirit of Matt 13:52. He first went back to the basics of the gospel, and then stated that the Lord Jesus by His resurrection had become "the firstfruits of them that slept". So it was only a matter of time before the dead in Christ would join Him – "the second Man" – in glorified bodies in heaven. But Paul had also a new revelation for them, a fresh "mystery" concerning the return of Christ for His people. "We shall not all sleep," he said, "but we shall all be changed, in a moment..." That is to say, Christians who are still alive at the time of the rapture will not need resurrection at all – for they will never die. Here surely was something to strike a fresh chime in the belfry of their hearts, and cause fresh outbursts of praise to God. What a Man! What a mystery! And, what a moment!

Once in Colombo I saw an obituary notice which ended: "to meet again never, never, never..." – 17 nevers in all. How different, I thought, is the blessed hope of the Christian, who can answer all the *nevers* of men with one precious *ever* from the Scriptures – "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Jehovah-jireh (2)

by EAR Shotter, Northampton

Our meditation in the last issue showed how the God of glory was leading Abram by the various commands, promises, and a covenant made with him. Ten years had now passed since these had been made, and he had left Haran, and still there was so sign of a seed. Once more the natural took over, this time through Sarai, who together with Abram was longing for the promised seed. She tempted him to gain it through Hagar her handmaid. The last lapse represented the world; and this the flesh. The time for the seed, however, was not yet, and Ishmael became a sorrow to Abraham in later years. He was 86 years old at this time.

Another thirteen years pass, and the God of glory comes to Abram again, this time as the God of encouragement. He said, "I am the Almighty God" (*Shad* meaning power), the El-Shaddai–the All-Sufficient One. 'Almighty' is plural, and God singular, so that God is telling Abram He is the Triune God who has all power and sufficiency for all his needs. He then tells Abram to walk before Him, and be upright, or complete in his ways.

As He is about to make a new covenant with Abram (high or exalted father) God changes his name to Abraham (father of a multitude). All self-exaltation taken away, but a plenitude given him. This second covenant is not made with possessions on Abraham's part but with persons. Possessions had come from Egypt - the world; and persons from Hagar - the flesh. These things remain as a reminder to leave them, and trust the Almighty God. The covenant is an everlasting one, and so is circumcision – the cutting round of the flesh.

Sarai (my princess) is also renamed Sarah (princess), again removing the possibility of self-exaltation, but giving plenitude. This to both of them now past the age of producing offspring. Abraham laughs and inwardly doubts the prospect as does Sarah when the three men came to the door.

Ishmael had been born, why not him for the seed? Because of his trust in God, God promised to bless his son Ishmael, but he came of natural birth and therefore not of faith. The covenant was to be with Isaac the child of promise or faith. God now left Abraham, who took all his household, with Ishmael and himself and circumcised them. Circumcision was to be eight days after birth, and Isaac was the first to so implement the covenant.

Again, the Lord appeared, this time as three frail, mortal men to whom Abraham could show hospitality and converse in a respectful, but friendly manner. They told Abraham when the son would be born. After this the Lord conversed with Abraham about Sodom while the other two of the company went to Sodom. We cannot enlarge on this except to say that in rescuing Lot, God considered Abraham.

Another lapse occurs as Abraham went to Gerar of the Philistines, and God steps in on his behalf, warning Abimelech (father-king) not to touch Sarah whom he had taken, so stopping

her from being polluted, as He did before in Egypt. Abimelech reproved Abraham who prayed for him and his people were healed.

Now the divine time has arrived and Isaac is born. A feast is held and Ishmael mocks. Much to Abraham's sorrow, and yet as part of his kindred Abraham has to cast him out.

We come now to what may be called the crowning experience in the life of Abraham. The offering up of Isaac his dearly loved son. This is at the direct command of the God in whom he had come to trust over the years. Twenty-six years had passed since the birth of Isaac, during which time, because of the divine promise and the nature of the birth, Abraham's love for Isaac had grown very deep. He was the gift of God to him in a very special way.

God now asks him back, not as a sin offering in which Abraham would have been involved, but as a burnt offering which was wholly for God, nothing for Abraham.

Without delay, early next morning the party set off to the place God would show him, and to it they came leaving the servants in the valley and Abraham and Isaac went both of them together to the mountain top, Isaac bearing the wood, but Abraham the fire and the sacrificial knife. What a picture of Calvary, where Jesus went forth bearing His cross! The altar is built and Isaac bound; the sacrificial knife is poised, and Abraham recognizes Isaac as dead in actuality not figuratively as some versions have, for to Abraham Isaac was dead and given back to God who said, "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only Son from Me".

The voice from heaven calls and Abraham received him back from death, which Abraham had conceded. Isaac as a type of Christ would have taken His prerogative (John 10:17-18) had the knife pierced him.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh". Abraham died in a good old age, full of years or satisfied.

Whether in valley or mountain top this God is our God and He will be our guide.

Turning to ourselves we see the God of glory, or the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6); the God of promise – all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen (2 Cor 1:20); the God of encouragement - I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee (Heb 13:5); the All-Sufficient God – my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19); and the God of resurrection – the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, (1 Thess 4:16-17). Brethren, whether in valley or mountain top this God is our God and He will be our guide even unto (or over) death (Ps 48:14), Jehovah-jireh.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (1)

by John Gillespie

"For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2)

These stages are clearly punctuated by The Holy Spirit in the Gospel according to Luke.

First Stage **Conception: Holiness** (Luke 1:35)

"That holy thing that shall be born shall be called the Son of God"

I.

An angel-visitor was sent
With tidings from before God's face
'Twas Gabriel, hero, speeding went
To Mary, daughter of God's grace,
At home in lowly Nazareth
To bear the news with reverent breath:
"Behold thou shalt, in truth, conceive
Within thy womb". At once believe!

With what complete obedience pure
She yielded to the call of heaven.
The favoured maiden, chaste, demure
Lent ear to strangest message given.
What cost! of sheer, perturbed surprise
The sudden interview gave rise.
What cast of mind, "How can it be!"
Within an instant answered she:
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Amen! according to Thy word".

II.

Oh miracle of mercy long forecast
In words of ancient, primal prophecy!
First breathed within the garden of man's fall:
"The woman's seed shall bruise the Serpent's head".
Without a man the virgin child shall be
Assuredly the Christ of history.
Then came Isaiah's plain, prophetic verse.
Pekah and Rezin never would prevail
'Gainst Judah, nor the line of David fail:
"The Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.
His name by her be called Immanuel".

III.

Now Mary of Luke's pensive page exclaims,
"How shall this be since I know not a man?"

Conception inconceivably divine!
All things are possible with God alone.
What is His name and what name to His Son?
None has the understanding of the Lord,
And none the knowledge of the Holy One.

"How shall this be?" Let this be known to thee,
(Men are but gazers on Infinity),
"The Holy Spirit now shall brood on thee,
Power of the Highest's shadow cover thee,
That Holy Thing that shall begotten be
Be called the Son of God" most certainly.

Conception, so inscrutably divine!
"Lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze"
The priest shall spread the vail before the ark
To foil unhallowed scan of Holy Things,
And Cherubim shall bar the way to stem
Intrusive cravings of the carnal mind.
Oh Sacred Mystery! Man dare not pry
Lest he before the Lord should duly die.

Oh Light and Love and Life invisible
Within the virgin's womb: Oh sacred depths,
This reverent silence of the secret dark!

Conception, so almightily divine!
Mysterious putting forth of gracious strength,
Not in the manner or the mode of men,
But working out the pattern of His Will.
God wrought His human frame, we know not how,
"Knitting as one" both bone and blood, and clay
In virgin's womb from earliest pre-birth day
Jesus was found in fashion as a man,
The incarnate God, "which from this time began"
From timeless "Being" did on earth "Become",
From "Form of God" to "Form of Servant" here.
No thought of His from Him was e'er withheld
Who wrought with secret power so curiously:
"Power of The Highest", Sacred Mastery!

Conception pure, so holily divine!
"Who can bring Holiest pure from the impure?"
"The Holy Spirit now shall come on thee,
That Holy Thing that shall begotten be
Be not one whit less white than Seraphim
Extolled in praise: thrice-echoed Holiness:
Holy in life, in death "Thine Holy One",
And now upon the throne the stainless Son,
"Holy and True". In virgin's womb conceived:
"That Holy Thing is of the Holy Ghost".
"Power of the Highest's shadow covers thee,
That Holy Thing that shall begotten be
Be called The Son of God" eternally.

Oh awe-inspiring, praise-begetting, self-effacing holy Mystery!

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

APRIL 4
Ardmore Gospel Hall: 7.00pm. Missionary Conference. Speakers: D Long, Dr S Emerson, P Grieve.

APRIL 10
Ahoghill Gospel Hall: Annual Missionary Conference at 7.00pm. Paul Grieve, Colin Raggett, Bryan Jenkins, Harry Reid.

APRIL 11-15
Belfast Annual Easter Meetings in Ulster Hall, Belfast.

MAY 2
Bellaghy Gospel Hall: 12 noon, Annual Conference.
Portstewart Gospel Hall: 3.30pm. Annual Missionary Conference.

MAY 4
Limavady: 11.30am. Annual Conference and Bible Reading.

MAY 9
Mullaghfernaghan Gospel Hall: 1.00pm. Annual Conference.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

APRIL 4
Glengarnock: Hebron Hall, Glengarnock. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Dunlop, J Dickson, M Radcliffe.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. S Arbuthnot, R Marshall.
Motherwell: Annual Conference in Shields Road Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. H Cooper, J Baker, J Burnett.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. S Grant.
Portessie: Conference in Church Hall, Chancellor Road at 3.00pm. S Banks, I Jackson, T Wilson.

APRIL 11
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Harrison.

APRIL 18
Barrhead: Annual Conference in Carlibar Community Centre, Carlibar Rd at 3.00pm. R Cargill, J Hay, A Sinclair.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Kildrum Ring Road at 7.00pm. W Barr (Eph 6).
Dunfermline: Hospital Hill Gospel Hall. Annual Conference in Dunfermline High School at 3.00pm. J Baker, J Stubbs, R Thomson. J Stubbs continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Grangemouth: Albert Hall, Myreton Road. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Dickson, I Robertson, B Stevely.
Lossiemouth: Annual Conference in Town Hall, High St at 3.00pm. J Riddle, M Radcliffe, R Miller.
Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. L Craig, B Martin.
Shotts: Annual Conference in Dykehead Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. S Foster, A McLean, I Steele.

APRIL 25
Aberdeen: Fountain Hall Assembly, Woodside. Annual Conference in Woodside Primary School, Clifton Road at 3.00pm. J Harrison, A Gamble, C Lacey. C Lacey will continue in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Kilbarchan: Friday 24th at 7.30pm. Bible Reading, D West (Romans 12:1-8). Saturday, Annual Conference in Memorial Hall, Steeple Square at 3.30pm. J Baker, J McDonald, D West. Sunday at 2.45pm.



& 6.30pm.
Livingston: Annual Conference in Almondvale Gospel Hall, Nigel Rise, Dedridge at 3.00pm. J Buchanan, J Cadzow, S McKenzie.
Musselburgh: Annual Conference in Fisherrow Coast Mission, New Street at 3.30pm. J Hay, I Speirs, J Stubbs. Mr Stubbs continues Sunday to Thursday in ministry.

MAY 1-3
Cullen: Friday 1st, Report meeting in Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Raggett. Saturday 2nd, Annual Conference in Town Hall at 3.00pm. J Grant, R Thomson, T Wilson. Lord's Day, 2.00pm-4.00pm. A McLean, C Raggett, R Thomson.

MAY 2
Dreghorn: Annual Conference in Greenwood Academy at 3.00pm. J Burnett, J Hay, A Sinclair.
Lanark: Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. A Prentice, J Sinclair, I Steele.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.

MAY 9
Ayrshire Missionary Conference: to be held in Woodpark Evangelical Church, Woodpark Road, Belmont, Ayr at 3.00 pm. R Riddle, D Robertson, M Browne.
Blackburn: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Bathgate Road at 3.30pm. R Revie, W Park, W McKellar.
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Flanigan. J Flanigan continues Mon-Thurs, ministry.

MAY 16
Dunfermline: Conference in Abbot Hall, Wilson's close (off Maygate) at 3.00pm. J Buchanan, I Hall, C Hutchison.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

APRIL 4
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. R Curtis.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. D Steveley (Matt ch.17).
Milton Keynes: Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 7.30pm. W Stevely.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. D Spence.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road at 7.00pm. G Woods.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Smith.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall at 4.00pm and 6.15pm. T Proffitt.

APRIL 10-13
North Shields: Tyneside Easter Conference weekend in Gospel Hall, Coach Lane, Friday and Monday at 2.30pm & 6.00pm. Saturday at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe, J Riddle, D West.

APRIL 10
Basingstoke: Annual Conference, Carnival Hall, 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle, C Lacey.
Brierfield: Easter Meetings Good Friday at 11.00am. R Parnaby.
Glastonbury: Good Friday Conference in Bove Town Gospel Hall, G Payne.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall, Good Friday Conference at 3.00pm & 6.00pm. D Meikle, R Miller.
Manchester, Withington: Gospel Hall, Mauldeth Road at 7.30pm. S McKenzie.
Shoeburyness: Easter Conference at Shoebury Hall, Wakering Avenue at 4.00pm & 6.15pm. T Ledger.

St. Albans: Lattimore Hall, 7 Lattimore Road. Easter Conference at 3.30pm and 6.30pm. S Downs, D Tinkler.

APRIL 11

Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. M Hayward.
Cardiff: Heath Gospel Hall (Curll Avenue) off Whitchurch Road. Annual Easter Conference at 3.15pm and 6.30pm. J MacDonald, D Gillies. J MacDonald continues Lord's Day, Gospel at 6.30pm and Ministry at 8.15pm.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.

APRIL 13

Appledore: Bethel, The Quay, Easter Conference at 3.45pm and 6.15pm. C Lacey.
Bicester: Hebron Gospel Hall, Banbury Road, Easter Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. I Jackson, T Ledger.

APRIL 18

Burton-on-Trent, Winshill: Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 7.25pm. P Scarsbrook.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 7.30pm. R Rabey.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill St at 7.30pm. G Gordge.
Crewe: Bethany Gospel Hall, Lime Tree Avenue. Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. F Lonney, P Bees.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. J Bennett.
Harrow: Belmont Hall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 7.15pm. N Patel.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. N Toll.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. D Ogden.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall, Percy Road. Bible Reading at 7.00pm. D West.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 3.30pm and 6.00pm. G Payne, J Scarsbrook.

APRIL 25

Chickerell: Gospel Hall in the Willowbed Hall, Putton Lane at 3.30pm and 6.00pm. P Atkinson.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. I Jackson.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall, Eastern Road at 7.00pm. E Parmenter, also on Sunday at 4.00pm.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Roberts.
London: Hope Hall, 222 Kilburn Lane, Queens Park at 7.00pm. I Walker.
Manchester: Swinton Assembly at 6.00pm. R Thomson, J Paterson. Also on Sunday at 8.00pm.
Mansfield: Gospel Hall, Radford Street at 7.15pm. H Cooper.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. E Hughes.
North Leigh: Oxon, Annual Conference in Windmill Gospel Chapel at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. C Rees and D Stevely.
Warrington: Gospel Hall, Manor Street, Golborne at 7.00pm. G Bourne.

MAY 2

Birmingham: Northfield Gospel Hall, Quarry Lane. Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. I Jackson, D West.
Douglas: Switzerland Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Illminster: Gospel Hall, West Street,



Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. C Lacey, J Riddle.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue. Annual Conference at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. J Stubbs, M Browne.
Milton Keynes: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. R Miller, J Chalmers.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. B Osbourne.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. J Coltman.

MAY 3
Biddulph: Biddulph Gospel Mission, St Johns Road at 7.00pm.

MAY 4
Eastbourne: Marine Hall at 3.45pm and 6.00pm. E Parmenter. Also on Tuesday at 7.30pm.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Hall.
Mansfield: Radford St Gospel Hall, Annual Conference in the Baptist Church, Rosemary St at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle, D Spence.

MAY 9
Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. D West.
Burton-on-Trent, Winshill: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. K Rudge, J Griffiths.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. A Cundick.
Crawley, Nr Winchester: Annual Conference at National Transcommunications Ltd., Crawley at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. R Hill, J Burnett.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. W Gardiner.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road. Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. E Honeyball, P Coulson. Mr Coulson continues on Lord's Day at 4.00pm. and Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Red Row: Morpeth, Hebron Hall. Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. R Miller, D Holmes.
Teignmouth: S Devon. Gospel Hall - Annual Missionary Conference at 10.30am and 2.15pm. (buffet lunch).
Totting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London. Missionary Conference at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. S Davies and other.

MAY 16
Beighton, Sheffield: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Eckington Road at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Wallace, R Revie. Sunday at 3.45pm. R Revie. (Report on Ethiopia).
Calne: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Oxford Road at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle, A Griffiths.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 7.30pm. I Jackson.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. P Young.
Harrow: Belmont Hall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 7.15pm. R Catchpole.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. L Cline.
North London Missionary Conference: to be held in Woodberry Down Baptist Church, Vartry Road, Seven Sisters Road, Tottenham, N.15 at 10.00am-6.00pm. A Catchpole, J Fox, D Gilpin, R Hutchinson (others to be announced).
Portsmouth: Annual Conference in Copnor Gospel Hall at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. R Marshall, F Beevers. R Marshall

continues in ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.

Rhos-on-Sea: Bethany, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. E Hughes, T Ledger.

Shillingstone: Portman Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. A Maunder and J Griffiths.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM

Ballymena: The assembly in Cambridge Avenue was much encouraged by gospel meetings conducted by I Jackson. The meetings were well attended, and continued with interest for four weeks, and during that time 8 professed, including a young man and his wife.

Carncullagh: Gospel meetings by T McNeill and R McKeown in the "Outreach Hall" continued for seven weeks. The meetings were most encouraging with quite a number of locals coming in. One man and a girl from the Sunday School professed.

Parkgate (near Doagh): A portable hall erected for these meetings has been filled to capacity most nights as W Fenton and W Martin preached the gospel. Meetings well supported by assemblies in the area and consequently a good number of unsaved young people present nightly. Some showing concern.

Ahoghill: A week of good and profitable ministry by brother DB Long (Angola) was much appreciated.

Crosskeys: The assemblies in this area enjoyed a week of helpful ministry given by brother J Baxter from Scotland in February. He also had a night of ministry in several other assemblies in the north of the province and in New Road, Portavogie when in N Ireland.

Co. ARMAGH & Co. MONAGHAN

Erryroe: S McBride has just commenced gospel effort in this border area.

Bleary: J Stubbs has started a week of ministry on 'The Life of Abraham'.

Clonroot: S McBride had three weeks of ministry on the book of Daniel. Numbers were encouraging and meetings considered helpful.

L Carswell of Brazil has had a number of report meetings throughout Co. Armagh.

Co. DOWN

Annahilt (Hillsborough): R Pickering and J Wishart concluded five weeks in portable hall, and were encouraged with a thirteen year old boy professing. Numbers built up over the period.

Comber: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken were continuing into the seventh week at 1st March. Three have professed to date and others are concerned.

Killyleagh: R Eadie and S Maze are being encouraged. One man has professed, and others attending nightly are concerned. The meetings are in the eighth week at 1st March.

Lisburn (Plantation): T Bentley and J Palmer continue in the gopsel into March. Help and power being experienced in the preaching.

Shanaghan: A McShane and D Gilliland finished six weeks of well attended meetings on 15th Feb. A time of sowing of the good seed which will produce a harvest.

J Grant (Scotland) had a week of ministry in each of the following assemblies – Ballywalter, Ballymagarrick and Wallace Avenue (Lisburn).

Co. LONDONDERRY

Limavady: W Fenton is expected for two



weeks of gospel meetings commencing 19th April.

Coleraine: J Allen had one week of challenging and comforting ministry based on the judgment seat of Christ.

Co. TYRONE

Aughavey/Kingsmill area: S Maze and R Eadie commenced gospel meetings in portable hall on 8th March. Prayer valued for blessing in this country area.

BELFAST & DISTRICT

Ballyduff: N Emerson and H Andrews have finished three weeks in the gospel with good numbers attending, including unsaved being brought by friends. One lady has professed faith in Christ.

Cregagh Street: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken expected for gospel meetings on 19th April. Prayer valued.

Laganvale: R Pickering has commenced in the gospel. A number of unsaved have been in, and there is help to preach each night.

Newtownbreda: WJ Nesbitt and his son Andrew continue in the gospel with some unsaved present, as well as friends of the believers who are being brought along each night.

Whitehouse: J Lennox and B Currie continue with encouraging attendance, and some students present, although response from the area is somewhat disappointing.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

Isle of Man: G Woods continues with visitation in Douglas and Onchan, helped by local brethren and with Seed Sowers in rural areas. Prayer valued for children's meetings in the Pulrose Housing Estate during the Easter holidays.

MIDLANDS

Coventry, Upper Hill Street. The assembly appreciated a visit from J Baker (Penarth) who ministered practical help from the account of the Good Samaritan.

Redditch, Batchley Estate. E Parmenter spent a week with the assembly ministering from John's Gospel. Very interesting and practical ministry appreciated by the assembly and some who came from elsewhere.

Stoke on Trent. The Titles of Jehovah were the subject of good ministry given by M Radcliffe which was appreciated over the four nights.

Birmingham, Northfield: R Plant conducted a children's campaign each morning of the weekday half term at Quarry Lane. There was an encouraging number of children each day, who behaved very well, listening attentively to the messages. R Plant also gave three evenings of ministry. The whole occasion was a great encouragement to the assembly.

Broadwas on Teme: C Lacey has continued the Friday Focus Bible Teaching meetings which have been well attended, and created considerable interest in the subjects. (Similar meetings have been held at Wollaston in Stourbridge.)

SCOTLAND REPORTS

George Meikle and Roy Marshall have been labouring for the last few weeks in the village of Kirknewton, near Edinburgh, in fellowship with the small assembly there. There has been a good response in visitation, with some villagers attending, and hopes of others. We value the prayers of the saints for the Lord to prosper the work in the salvation of souls.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mr Bill Craig on 27th December 1997 aged 69. Saved as a boy, from early years he engaged in all aspects of assembly testimony. He had a good knowledge of the scriptures and loved discussing them. As a faithful elder in the Hurst assembly, he devoted himself to it. Following his retirement he helped several Homes, particularly Bethany, Pamber Heath, where he will be missed. He bore a remarkable testimony throughout his illness, especially during the final weeks. He was widely known and loved and this was evidenced by the large attendance at his funeral. He is survived by his wife Kath, two sons and daughter-in-law.

Alex Crawford on 21 February aged 88. Saved in 1928 through the lovely truth of Hebrews 10:12. Associated with the assembly at Ballymagarrick for the greater part of his life, and for the past fifteen years in Carryduff (formerly Knockbracken). He loved the gospel and supported it and participated in the breaking of bread gatherings. Predeceased by his wife in 1988. He is survived by one son and two daughters. His large funeral service was held in Carryduff Gospel Hall where many unsaved from all walks of life heard the gospel simply presented.

Mrs Nellie Geddes on 23rd December 1997 aged 88. Saved in early life, baptised and received into fellowship for over 60 years in the Gospel Hall, Buckie, where she remained until her homecall. A consistent attender at the meetings until confined indoors over the last few months. A pleasant, quiet, godly sister, loved and esteemed by all. She will be greatly missed.

Mrs Annie Hinds on 21st January aged 82. Saved as a girl in her teens and baptised and received into the Matchett Street assembly, Belfast, where she remained for 55 years serving the Lord with tireless zeal. She will be remembered for her kindness in visiting the sick, the aged and those in need. She also knitted blankets and collected clothing for distribution in needy lands and like Dorcas she was full of good works. Prayer will be valued for her husband Sammy and her foster-daughter Catherine.

Mrs Evelyn McGookin on 5th November 1997 aged 92 years at Prospect Christian Nursing Home, Ballymena. Mrs McGookin was saved at gospel meetings in Cookstown in 1945. She was later baptised and received into fellowship in the Cookstown assembly. A loving mother and a faithful sister in the Lord. She loved walking from her home up the long street to meet with the Lord's people. Mr Matthew McKillen and Mr William Taylor shared the funeral service with her son Victor who read the scriptures.

Mrs Jean Weaver on 15th January 1998 aged 69 years. Born in Birmingham she attended the Sunday School at the

assembly in Park Lane, Aston where she was saved, and later baptised, and received into fellowship. Early in her married life she moved to Pype Hayes assembly then Broadmeadow, Moseley and finally Quarry Lane, Northfield. A very meek, gracious sister, faithful to the Lord, a real homemaker with a deep concern and love not only for her family but others as well. She graciously bore ill health as a result of heart trouble in her latter years. She will be missed by many.

PERSONALIA

Hall Caretaker Required for Shields Road Gospel Hall, Motherwell. Large cottage attached to the hall building is available. Conditions and further information can be obtained on request. Contact: Mr Jack Murray, 43 Neilsland Drive, Motherwell, ML1 3EB. Tel: (01698) 267949.

Logos School - Limassol - Cyprus require a Primary teacher and also a teacher of Mathematics up to "A" level standard for session commencing 1st September 1998. Please contact Mr I Ross, Logos Trust (UK), 39/41 Market St., St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9NT. Tel: (01334) 475539.

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

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Refreshments, 12.45pm.
Ministry of the Word, 2.00-4.30pm.
Refreshments, 4.30pm.
Ministry of the Word, 5.30-7.30pm.

Tuesday 14th April
Reports of the Lord's Work in Home Lands
11.00am-1.00pm.
Reports of the Lord's Work in Foreign Lands
2.30-5.00pm.
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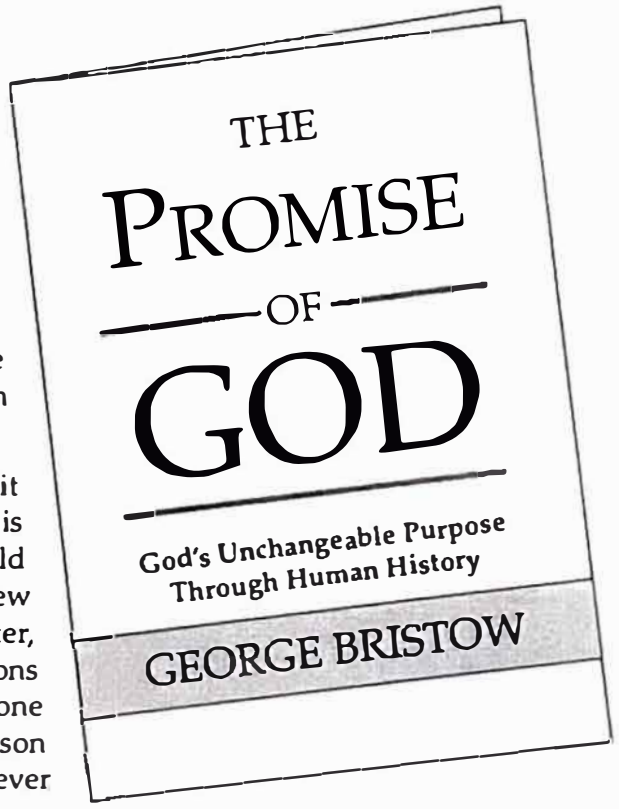
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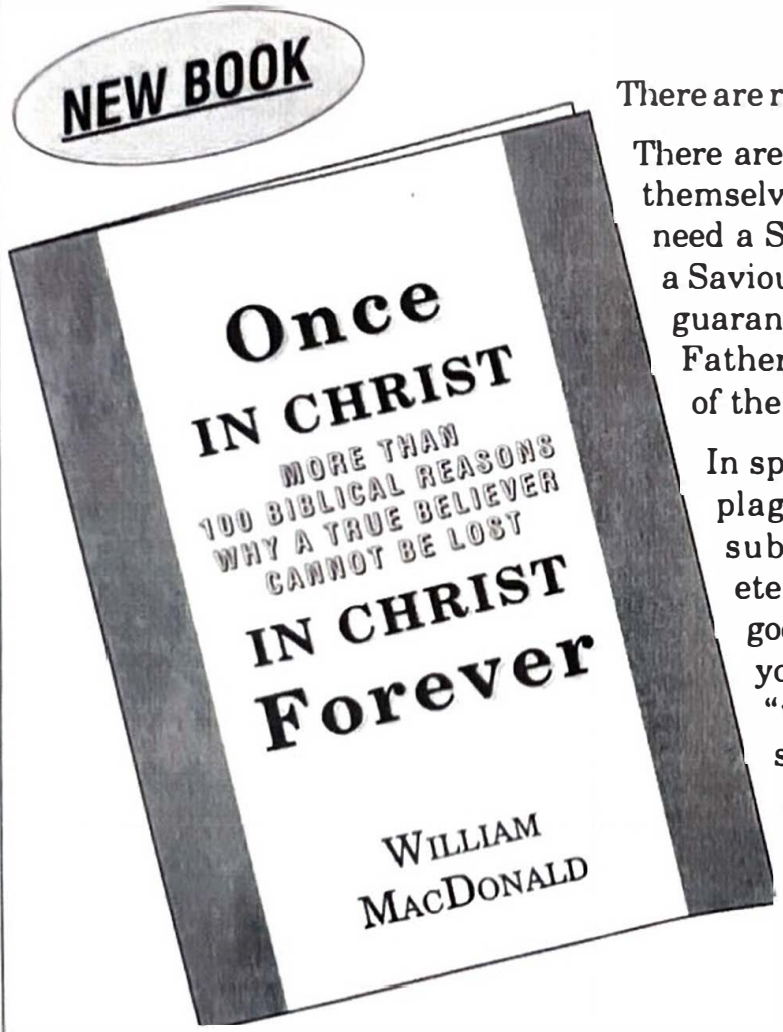
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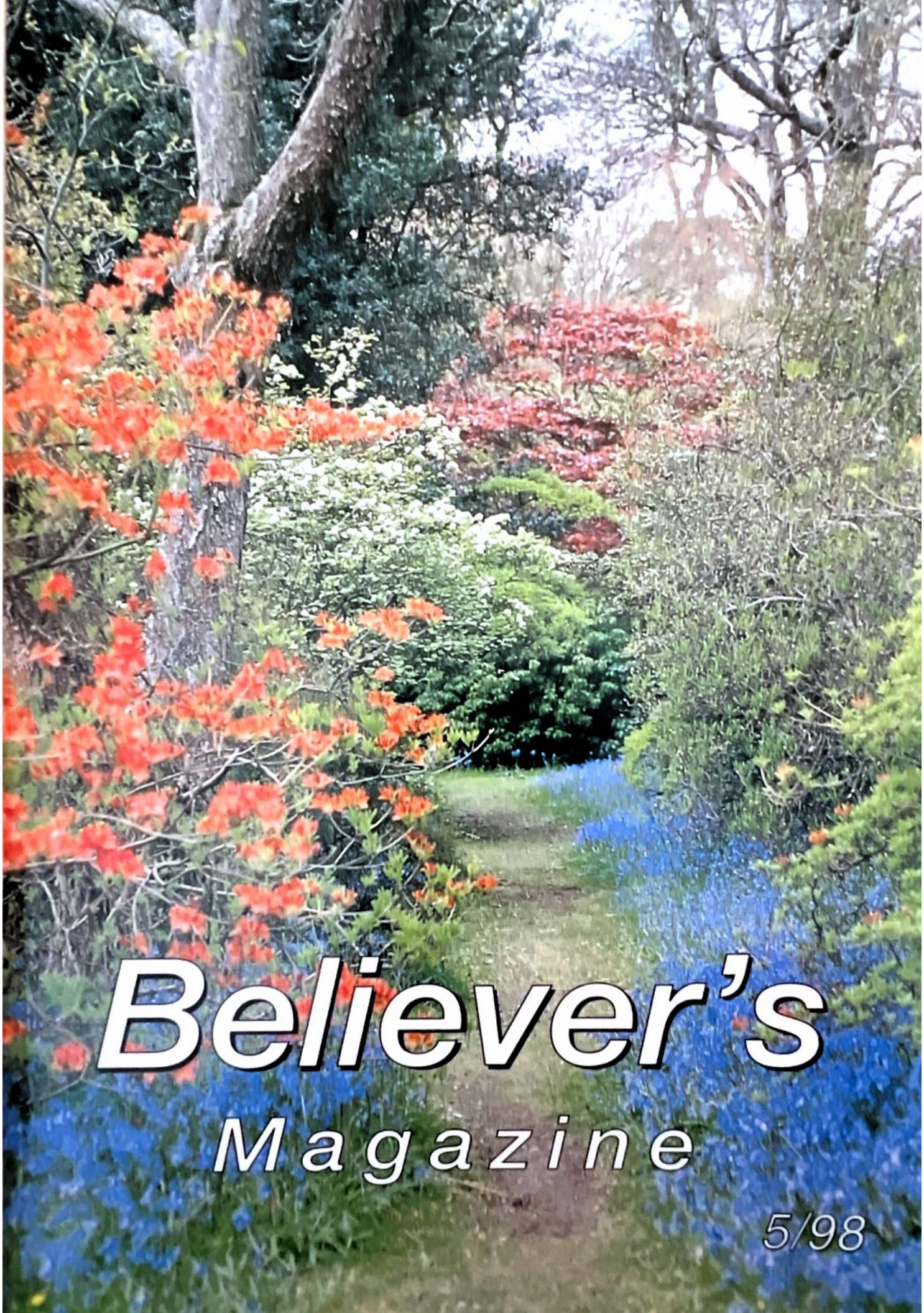
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Believer's Magazine

MAY 1998

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Editorial

"Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him" (Mark 1:41)

Have you ever noticed that of the dozen times the word compassion occurs in the Gospels not one is found in John? That is not to say, of course, that as the Son of God He was never moved with compassion. Indeed, Mark reminds us that the Servant of whom he writes is the Son of God (1:1). The answer lies in the design of the Gospel. In John the miracles have a *sign* value that men might believe; they are manifestations of the glory of Christ, of the works of the Father and of the glory of God.

What a wonder it was that "there came (literally *there cometh*) a leper to him". How unlike the ten who but "stood afar off; and lifted up their voices". Perhaps the present tense suggests the degree of wonder that Mark felt. Matthew and Luke wondered too; they show it by the use of the word *behold*. He was unclean, an outcast from society, consigned to a several house outside the camp, commanded to put a covering upon his upper lip and to cry, "Unclean, unclean". How keenly he felt it all is displayed in his approach; beseeching, and kneeling and saying.

The fact that he came shows how sure he was that the Lord would cleanse him. I have often heard it said that his plea, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean", while expressing confidence in our Lord's ability, betrays an element of doubt as to His willingness. Preachers contrast it with that distraught cry, "If thou canst do anything, help us" which our Lord tenderly rebukes, "If thou canst believe". Does it not rather indicate that he knew he had no merit of his own, no claim upon Christ? Neither his birth into the elect race nor his appalling need gave him any right of cleansing. If he should be healed it would be on the basis of grace alone.

"And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him". We might ask how Mark knew that He was so moved. Did it beam from His face and shine from His eyes? The leper felt it in His touch. There are at least two words that Mark might have used: the one means *to finger*, the other *to fasten onto*. Mark chose the latter. I do not suppose that He kept on touching him, nor that He held on to him, simply that He touched Him without hesitation, without reserve, without drawing back. How much we communicate ourselves in the simple handshake! By some only a hand is proffered, by others the whole heart.

How would you or I feel if a leper were to come to us? for there are many moral and social lepers in our day. I must confess to feelings of withdrawal; I trust they do not show. Genuine compassion was one of the early lessons as He made those first four disciples to become fishers of men. Would that we could learn it. Then perhaps it would be true of us, "They came to him from every quarter".

KWS

David's Great Review (3)

(2 Samuel 23)

by the late FE Stallanl

The cave of Adullam has long been a talking point. The expression has been used rightly and wrongly to describe the position of groups who have separated themselves from others and have taken up a stand apart. The appellation "Cave of Adullam", is wrongly applied when it is used disparagingly. If those who use it to emphasise the discontented nature of those who came out were to think a little of what was involved, they must surely realise that their own position becomes immediately a wrong one when they credit a cave of Adullam to others. David was at Adullam and God was with him there. The centre of attraction for the discontents was a man who was out with God's approval. All else in the nation was positionally wrong when God's man was out of his true place. Adullam, therefore, was a sanctified spot and those who gathered there were not considered as debtors and discontents but as friends of the man who was God's anointed. Not only so, but David proved his true character there when he acknowledged that God alone was worthy of the great sacrifice made by his three mighty men when they brought water from the well of Bethlehem at the risk of their lives. In that action, God was glorified, David was honoured and the three worthies had their names indelibly recorded as heroes in God's holy Writ.

As the great review proceeds it is most striking to notice that Joab's name appears three times. Firstly we read of Abishai, Joab's brother; then of Asahel, the brother of Joab, and finally of Nahari, armour-bearer to Joab. How salutary to have one's name mentioned so many times in a roll of honour as a means of identifying others for praise and yet be altogether without mention as deserving of the slightest acknowledgment. Here Joab's two brothers and his armour-bearer are marked out and the mighty captain of David's host is completely ignored. Ironically, too, there is one mighty man mentioned by name between the names of Joab's two brothers, Benaiah, and he was the man appointed by Solomon to slay Joab for his treachery at a later day. Ironically, again, the last man in the list, Uriah the Hittite, was the man whom Joab placed in the forefront of the battle that he might perish and so make his wife Bathsheba available for David. Uriah died in honour, although shamefully wronged. Joab died in dishonour and although he clung to the horns of the altar and looked for mercy, there was none for him.

Apart from the high drama of all these things there is one great lesson that cannot be ignored. In this short life the great ones of time are not necessarily the great ones of eternity. Rather be an armour-bearer in time with eternal gain than an armour-wearer in time with eternal loss. The values of heaven are strictly accurate when it comes to reward.

Abishai's claim to fame in David's final record is a very strange one. This nephew of David, regardless often of personal safety, served his uncle

through every season of adversity, yet his mention in the annals of war is restricted to the slaying of three hundred men at one time. At the other end of the scale is his brother, Asahel, and he is placed high on David's list, although his only claim to fame seems to have been his steady pursuit of Abner on one occasion which cost Asahel his life. How strange it all seems! Abishai's years of consistency glossed over, save one mighty deed, and Asahel brought to the head of a list of thirty great men, although forgotten by David at the time of his unfortunate death. What does it all mean? Is there a mistake in David's assessment? The answer, it is submitted, is found in the matter of Abner's death (2 Sam 4:30). Joab and Abishai were associated in the shameful act of calling Abner back to Hebron where he lost his life at the gate of the city of refuge. Joab was the prime mover of the dark scheme and leading actor in its perpetration. As a result the blood of Abner's house was declared to be upon Joab's head which came to pass governmentally during the reign of Solomon. In all this Abishai was merely an accomplice, but it seems clear that most of his life of service was nullified as a result of his part in the matter. How sad it is that such a good life should be so marred and so many fine actions covered over and forgotten because of one major fall. But in the reckoning of David Abishai had to pay the price. He was still a mighty man and chief of the second set of three, but one deed only was selected for his commendation. On the other hand Asahel, who had no part in the shameful act of his two brothers, and who seemed to do very little deserving of special mention, was given a place of honour in the great review.

In this short life
the great ones
of time
are not necessarily
the great ones
of eternity

After mentioning Abishai, the record goes on to bring in Benaiah, the second man of the second set of three mighties. Then we note a very strange omission. The third man of the third set is neither mentioned in 2 Sam 23 nor in 1 Chron 11. Is this another case of a good life marred by some sin that David should fill the place but not mention the name? The unknown warrior here is really a mystery despite the attempts of some to link him with Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty and over the thirty (1 Chron 12:4). On the other hand perhaps space has been created for a servant not known by any name but nevertheless a man of valour in the eyes of David. The main point is

that David knew the man and he was sufficiently outstanding in his ways to be put in harness with Abishai and Benaiah to make up a trio of famous men. We cannot miss the suggestion, surely, that David's greater Son knows all His servants by name and in the coming kingdom will grade every man according to merit. Then shall well-known and unknown be linked together, everyone receiving a just reward for deeds done and words spoken while in the body.

Benaiah, it would seem, came from a family noted for great deeds and acts of some importance in David's estimation. At least here was a worthy son, and as David thought on his own sons and how many of them had failed him, it must have impressed him exceedingly. Many a father whose sons have not risen to expectations must look on the promising sons of others with mixed feelings. Joy at progress of others, no doubt, but sorrow at the failure at home to carry on the good work.

How minute can be the detailing of the Holy Spirit! The two men of Moab who fell at the hand of Benaiah are called "lion-like men", or as the margin has it, "lions of God". Then as a follow-on, a lion in a pit in a time of snow was slain by this mighty man; two most remarkable feats, especially the latter, as there are very few who have faced the king of the beasts and survived. Samson rent a lion but it was not in a pit in time of snow, it was in a vineyard, a breach of his nazariteship, while he was on his way to see his Philistine wife, an unequal yoke, so there was little glory in his action. One wonders, however, in Benaiah's case wherein lay the necessity of descending into a pit in time of snow to face a lion. Surely not bravado, as David's last words under the influence of the Holy Spirit would not countenance such a thing. Perhaps someone had fallen into the pit and rescue was the reason for Benaiah's action. And so we could go on allowing conjecture to capture our imagination. But we must refrain. Lion-like men of Moab, a lion in a pit and an Egyptian five cubits high with a spear like a weaver's beam; these are the wonders selected by David under the Holy Spirit's control to mark out Benaiah for special mention. He was a mighty man without a doubt and he well deserved the praise as a leading man amongst the mighty men of David, Israel's greatest king.

Finally, what shall we say in closing of David's great review? Only a foretaste of a greater one to come which will embrace every man and woman in Christ from the beginning to the end of the age. No deed of merit will be fogotten then; indeed, many small works and words reckoned too small for consideration will be owned by the great reviewer of all our lives as having been done for Him. Let us all then seek to live our lives down here in the light of eternity and so earn for ourselves special mention from the One whose commendation matters most of all in the end.

When the Glory is Departing

by Crawford Gribben, Ayr

When a movement which was once well-blessed by God slips into decline, it is tempting for its members to attempt to refuge in the sovereign power of God. The defence is raised that it is "a day of small things", and that as "salvation is of the Lord" we do wrong to look for reasons elsewhere. Too often precious doctrines cloak indifference and apathy.

As supporters of those assemblies which historians have described as belonging to "the Brethren movement", we have not escaped the general decline in spiritual standards which today chokes conservative and evangelical fellowships. Readers need no reminder of empty gospel meetings or of fading Sunday schools. The godly are tired of false prophets who tell them that all is well when all is plainly far from well. When the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?

They ought to turn to the Scriptures, and when they do they find that their forebears often experienced conditions like these. Throughout the OT, the cycle of spiritual blessing and spiritual decay was repeated time after time. These things were written for our learning, we believe; and the correspondence between their times and ours should shake our foolish complacence.

Isaiah records that when God places young leaders over a nation, it is a sure sign that it is under judgment (3:4). 2 Chronicles records the ages of a succession of young rulers in Judah, some better than others, but all of whom were failures in their responsibility to cleanse the land of "will worship", the strange fire of uncommanded ritual and pagan idolatry. The circumstances of godly Josiah's death evidenced his failure to heed the prophetic word (2 Chron 35:22) and commenced the last stages in God's dealing with that nation. There followed a spate of partial judgments. Judah was shamed in monarchs deposed and taxes exacted by foreign powers (36:3,6); shamed that the consecrated articles were stolen from the temple and mocked before the idols of Babylon (36:7,10). God's judgments intensified as His covenanted people ignored His warnings, refused to leave their abominable lifestyles, and repelled the entreaties of God and His spokesmen (36:12,16).

The chapter describes God's compassion and His people's intransigence (36:15-16), and details each step toward that awful verdict of "no remedy". Divine judgment began with the house of God, its members and its articles (36:17) and reached in its scope to include every part of the nation (36:20). This was desolation indeed.

As we look at our own times, we see a similar move of God. Tony Blair boasts of being the youngest Prime Minister this century. The Princess of Wales, who habitually consulted astrologers and flaunted a series of irregular relationships, was buried as "a sister in Christ" in certain hope of the resurrection: the integrity of the gospel was mocked in a funeral which drew larger TV audiences than almost any other broadcast ever made. Nevertheless, as the public reaction proved, God pressed the reality of death on the minds of millions. But, within weeks of these events, the media has moved on to the Spice Girls' lastest record or a rollover jackpot, and the popular mind is diverted

again. The United Kingdom has consistently failed to recognise God, and the collapse of our empire has paralleled the downward spiral of church attendance, never mind genuine professions of faith. To complete the analogy with Judah and Israel, even our borders are changing. These latest attempts to forge a separate identity for Scotland and Wales could indeed be the expected realignment of Europe along the borders of the old Roman empire. (This is not to suggest that the UK enjoys a uniquely elect position; simply a reminder that righteousness establishes a nation.)

But this is no excuse to turn again with renewed fascination to the difficulties of Daniel's seventieth week. The truth is that we may not have time. There is always before us the warning that any group gathering as a New Testament church may fail in its potential and incur the rebuke of God. There is even the possibility that their lampstand – the spiritual presence of Christ among His people – may be removed (Rev 2:1-7). The problem with this Ephesian church was not that they had not separated themselves from false teaching, or that they had not laboured, for they are commended for faithfulness in precisely these areas. Neither had they accepted the Nicolaitans – and do not we also congratulate ourselves on our lack of a paid clergy? But the problem in the Ephesian church was of far greater consequence – they had left their first love. This problem might not be so obvious at first glance – at least not when we look horizontally. But from the heavenly view, their love was gone, and that was reason enough to justify their extermination. Precise ecclesiology gives no indemnity from judgment.

God is every bit as active in closing local churches as He is in establishing them. We like to think that we are indispensable to God, that the Great Commission cannot be carried out without the involvement of our assembly. Actually God would rather remove a witness which points more to its own failure than it does to His glory. "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor 11:30). Our responsibility is clear. The Lord Jesus exhorted the Ephesians to remember the place from which they fell. Jeremiah, immediately preceding the exile, exhorted the Judaites to "Ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it" (6:16). In Ezekiel's vision only those who "sigh and cry over all the abominations" would be exempt from God's judgment (9:4). Zephaniah promised that God would gather "those who sorrow over the appointed assembly" (3:18). God remembers those who mourn over His clouded glory (Mal 3:16).

When the church is in ruins, we can either rejoice that our interpretation of prophecy was correct, or we can mourn for the eclipse of God's glory in those groups which gather under His name. One attitude congratulates ourselves. The other honours God. In a day when the assemblies are lower than ever, it behoves us to reconsider our attitude, and individually and collectively to "repent and do the first works". God cares more for His own honour than He does for our continued existence. That, at least, should be a sobering thought.

Timothy

by John Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

The purpose of this article is to look at certain facets of this young man's character as he worked alongside Paul the older and more spiritually-experienced man. For those older and more experienced in years we can see the characteristics of the men to whom we should look for the maintenance of the testimony. To those younger we can learn how to grow to become men capable of bearing the responsibilities of assembly life.

His Fitness:

"I have no man likeminded" (Phil 2:20). This word *likeminded* occurs nowhere else in the NT. It is literally translated *equal souled* and suggests close human relationship. It suggests that Timothy was of the same spirit as Paul, a man of power and wholeheartedness. The OT provides the commentary for this reference when it says: "a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and we walked into the house of God in company" (Ps 55:13-14). Of Timothy Paul could say, he has the same interest in spiritual things, the same desire for the furtherance of the gospel, the same care for the saints.

His Feeling:

"Who will naturally care for your state" (Phil 2:20). Timothy was a man who had a real shepherd-heart for the flock of God. Darby translates this phrase: "care with genuine feeling how ye get on". This is a care that is painstaking, genuine, sincere, and which shows no secondary regards for self. When was the last time we wept over the assembly of the Lord's people and the Lord's work? Remember the apostle's own words later in this epistle: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil 3:18).

There is a basic selfishness in our society where everyone seems to be pursuing personal gain at the expense of others. That philosophy can rub off on the Lord's people: "For all seek their own" (v.21). How sad that there should be so many people who become so preoccupied. Here is a man who stands out as different from the rest. But what made Timothy different? Phil 2:4,5: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus". Timothy had yielded to the ministry that Paul taught here and that was so perfectly illustrated in the life of the Lord.

His Faithfulness:

In 1 Tim Paul writes concerning deacons: "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (3:10.) He confidently says of Timothy, "ye know the proof of him" (Phil 2:21). They knew from observing him in the past, he had been with Paul on his first visit to Philippi (Acts 16). Like tried gold, Timothy had been through the crucible, the crucible of Christian experience. Timothy had been tested and approved. In 1 Cor 4:2 Paul wrote: "Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful". In v.17 he gave them

such a man: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord". It is not without significance that Paul sent Timothy to an assembly renowned for its unfaithfulness and laxity in spiritual things. Two marks of faithfulness are suggested. First, Timothy was "faithful in the Lord". Faithfulness demands recognition of the Lordship of Christ. The Lordship of Christ is His absolute authority over us. We cannot do as we please. The second mark of faithfulness is given in the phrase that follows: "who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ". Timothy was faithful because he had marked the ways of a faithful man and sought to follow. Paul could say later in the epistle: "Be ye followers (imitators) of me, even as I also am of Christ" (11:1). If we want to be faithful in our lives for the Lord we should seek out faithful men - men who not only teach the book but live the book and manifest the Christ of the book.

His Friendship:

In 1 Cor 4:17 Paul describes Timothy as "my beloved son". It brought Paul particular joy to see Timothy growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. When Paul returned to Derbe and Lystra he found him "well reported of by the brethren which were at Lystra and Iconium" (Acts 16:1,2). We see in Phil 2:22 that Timothy was a man who loved the fellowship of the Lord's servants and the Lord's people. He not only loved them but sought to labour with them in the furtherance of the gospel.

His Fervency and Fruitfulness

"He hath served with me in the gospel" (Phil 2:22). Timothy was not a spectator. His interest in the Lord's work was that of a man who got involved, one who was fruitful in his service, having been given and having developed his gift. In 1 Thess 3:2 he is described as a "minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ" one able to "establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith". He was a preacher, a teacher, and a pastor.

Timothy's ministry was threefold:

1) A Ministry of Consolidation: "to establish you" (1 Thess 3:3),
2) A Ministry of Comfort: "to comfort you" (1 Thess 3:2),
3) A Ministry of Correction: "who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ" (1 Cor 4:17).

But let us not forget that Timothy was also a fearful man and one afflicted by "often infirmities" (1 Tim 5:23). He was not a mere copy of the apostle Paul. Timothy was wholly different in his character and manner of life but, says Paul, "he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do" (1 Cor 16:10). He might be different but that did not mean that he was in any way less useful in his service to the Lord. We may not be men of the stature of Paul or Timothy but that does not mean that we cannot shoulder responsibility and enable the testimony of the Lord's people to continue.

Books

Understanding 1 & 2 Chronicles by John Heading; published Walterick Publishers; price £8.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Readers of *Believer's* will recall with appreciation the name John Heading, a brother who until his homecall was much used in both written and oral ministry. From his pen have come many helpful books. This volume *Understanding 1 & 2 Chronicles* was published first in 1980 and rightly the publishers consider that another generation has arisen who should be introduced to the ministry of John Heading.

Understanding 1 & 2 Chronicles may not be the work from John Heading most in demand; however as its sub-title *The House of God and Its Service* would indicate, no more controversial area of doctrine requires clear unambiguous statement than the House of God and for that reason the re-issue of this book is to be welcomed.

In a paperback of 405 pages it is impossible to offer verse-by-verse exposition. But the author by careful selection of material, still manages to deal at length in the first half of the book with the priestly courses, the Levites, the singers and the porters, to deal with the psalms used in the journeying of the ark and to seek to relate Zion both to OT and NT passages.

In the second half of the book, again briefly the histories of men like Solomon, Asa, Uzziah and Josiah are considered, not just in the historical context of their day but NT parallels are drawn for our understanding.

Helpfully one or two diagrams giving genealogies are included as is a very rudimentary diagram of the temple. The re-issue of the book would have given opportunity to provide a few more diagrams related to the temple and to a better standard.

The publication of *Understanding 1 & 2 Chronicles* is welcomed and may be used to encourage younger brethren to study once more the historical books like 1 & 2 Chronicles and to find for themselves the lessons an earlier generation discovered and valued. *TW*

How Sweet the Sound by Noel Davidson; published Ambassador; price £7.99. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Sub-titled "The absorbing story of John Newton and William Cowper, their lives, their hymns and their lasting legacy to the christian Church". *How Sweet the Sound* surveys the adult experience of two men whose lives were intertwined over the larger part of their lifetimes.

The dependence of particularly the weaker William Cowper on his friend and for many years close neighbour John Newton is not always recognised. Nor is it always acknowledged that their hymn-writing was the more prolific because they encouraged each other. Noel Davidson presents a balanced view of the intriguing relationships among the two poets, Mary Newton and the other Mary, Mary Unwin, whom Cowper planned to marry. However the reader is left less than sure that the whole story of the two households has been fully told. Were Newton and Cowper really able to spend twelve hours of almost every day together?

The developing ministry of both the poets is sketched in by the author. In a paperback of 270 pages little else is possible, especially when (and understandably) examples of their hymns are included. But the main lack in that regard is the connection of the poetry and the poet's circumstances. Davidson does attempt to do so to some extent but perhaps the distance of 200 years makes it difficult to offer more than mere suggestions.

The reviewer commends this volume to a wide readership. It celebrates the heritage of hymns two godly men left. It marks too the mercy of God to Olney, the little town where they laboured and where later they felt unwelcome. *TW*

Question Box

Question

Since we believe in the autonomy of the local assembly can you give some help on the following matters. (1) Why in Acts 15 do we have a delegation from the assembly in Antioch going to the one in Jerusalem to discuss doctrinal issues? (2) In the same chapter there is reference to "the church" (v.4) and "the whole church" (v.22). How could the thousands who had been converted at Pentecost and subsequently, meet in one place at Jerusalem? (3) If assemblies are truly autonomous, how far can we go "in fellowship" without bordering on denominationalism, or systems of men? (4) Is it correct for a neutral assembly to arbitrate in another assembly's problems?

Answer

There is a mistaken notion that the so-called delegation referred to in Acts 15 went up from Antioch to ascertain the views of the brethren there before a decision could be made. Reference to v.2 shows that the wrong doctrine taught in Antioch had been immediately disputed in the assembly there. This helps us to learn that problems of a serious doctrinal nature should be dealt within the assembly at the time they arise. It was after this the assembly determined that both Paul and Barnabas, who had taken the major part in the disputations, and others from the assembly at Antioch, should go up to Jerusalem.

It soon became clear that the assembly at Jerusalem was troubled with the same wrong doctrine (vv.4-5), and the following verses show that after the disputation, in which Barnabas and Paul took part, the matter was settled satisfactorily. We should particularly note that the assembly at Jerusalem admitted in the letter which they sent to Antioch, that the wrong teaching came from their assembly (vv.23-24). It is thus clear that the visit to Jerusalem was to help correct the matter where it arose. It was not to look for the opinions of a so-called "mother assembly".

With regard to the great number of saints who gathered in the Jerusalem assembly, it should be remembered that great numbers had been dispersed at the time of the persecution which "arose about Stephen". We read "they were all scattered abroad...except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). Thus when the term "the whole church" is used (Acts 15:22) there would have been a much reduced number.

Concerning autonomy, it should be remembered that in the days of the NT there was no such thing as a denomination. Each new assembly was planted as described in scripture and fellowship was enjoyed with all who in every place did "call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1:2). Because today there are whole sets of churches, so-called, who gather to the name of a man or a doctrine, should not debar those who in NT simplicity seek to gather to the Name of our Lord Jesus from having fellowship with those who do the same elsewhere. Collective names should never be accepted or used. Terms such as "Christian Brethren" or even "The Brethren" have no foundation in scripture, the use of such implies another denominational type arrangement.

It is not scriptural for an assembly to arbitrate or interfere in another assembly's problems. Each local assembly is responsible to God for its spiritual conduct and obedience to the Word of God.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
1) ABRAM THE HEBREW (Gen 14:13)

Introduction

In this series we are going to look at the lives of some Bible characters, whose circumstances when they were young were very different from those they knew as adults. God changed their lives completely in order to bring about His purposes, but each one of them had to be prepared to allow this change to take place. For young believers today, God might have great plans, but like those we are going to study, they have first to listen to and obey Him, so that He can bring about His purposes.

Background

Abram was born and bred in the city of Ur, Gen 11:31, Acts 7:2, but ended his long life over a thousand miles away living in a tent and moving from place to place in Canaan. According to archaeologists, Ur was one of the most well-developed cities of its day in terms of social, intellectual and architectural advances. Evidence of the general level of the wealth of the city has been found in the priceless treasures that survived in the excavated graves of its kings. The excavated remains of the city itself revealed evidence of a complex canal system that connected the city to the nearby river Euphrates. However, most impressive of all are the remains of the impressive religious buildings, including the great ziggurat which Abram would have seen every day of his younger life, for it dominated the city. The city and its temple-tower were embellished by the work of architects, builders and many skilled craftsmen, cp. Heb 11:10 JND. The city deity was Nannar (sometimes called Sin) the moon god whose consort was Ningal, but the sun and water gods were also worshipped (see Rom 1:25), all with great public ritual and ceremony, and the family into which Abram was born would have certainly taken part in such worship (Jos 24:2, 14,15). Ironically, the city could well have been completely destroyed when, as some historians now tell us, the city of Ur was overwhelmed by the Elamites in about 2,000 BC, i.e. just before Abram died in Canaan! This great and prosperous city offered Abram the best that earth could provide in his day, a full life in a fascinating city. But God called him out of the best, and promised him better - a nation of his own, a country and a city designed and built by Himself, Heb 11:10. The only price would be living a separated life in a tent while he and his family waited for these promises.

The God of Glory Appeared

What moved Abram was a vision of the God of glory, Acts 7:2,3, who originally called him while he lived in Ur, telling him to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee...and in thee shall all

families of the earth be blessed", Gen 12:1-3.

However, the only movement he made to begin with was at the behest of his father Terah, who took him and the whole family, including Lot, to Haran, and "dwelt there", Gen 11:31, meaning that he intended to stay! Haran was not too different from Ur: it too was a centre of moon-god worship and a busy commercial city which was on a major east-west trade route, so however spiritually uncomfortable the partly-obedient Abram might have felt, the rest of the family would still have been quite at home. However, Abram did not leave Haran until he was seventy five, when his father died. While at Haran he had done well, v.4, and eventually left with "the souls that they had gotten in Haran", v.5. However, according to Schofield, Haran means delay, and so it was for Abram, and it was family ties that held him back. When he did move, he went straight to Canaan, and first stopped at Sichem, on the plain of Moreh. Having crossed over the Euphrates, he was for ever after the man who had crossed over from beyond the river, that is *the Hebrew.*

All around him Abram saw the Canaanites, but at the same time he saw the Lord, who promised, v.7, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD", v.7. His life then became a life of faith, when he learned to fully "trust and obey". By faith, Abraham "went out", Heb 11:8; "sojourned", v.9 and "offered up Isaac", v.17, guided by faith and hope, not knowing where he went and not having received the promises. Abraham gave up his country, Lot, Ishmael, and in a sense Isaac, all for the sake of these promises.

Abraham gave up his country, Lot, Ishmael, and in a sense Isaac, all for the sake of these promises

Final thoughts

Abraham was slow to obey God to begin with, and made many mistakes, but we must always remember that he did not have few good influences in his life. Indeed, until he met Melchisedek, Gen 14:18, he had probably never met anyone who had been brought up to believe in God and worship Him only! All the early influences in his life were negative, and held him back. His father had to die before he could follow God's instructions; Lot eventually went his own way, and was no encouragement to his uncle and Abram's wife was little help to him either. So he had to learn the hard way–from his own mistakes. However, God was long-suffering with him, and eventually faith triumphed in his life and God used him fully, cp. Heb 11:8 and 1 John 5:4. God wants us to learn to "trust and obey" in the same way!

Love for the Law of the Lord

Psalm 1

by EL Lovering, Ilfracombe

Psalm 1 has generally been regarded as a preface or introduction to the rest of the Psalter. It describes God's commendation of the godly and his condemnation of the wicked. The godly man is first described on the negative side and secondly on the positive side. It asserts that true "blessedness" is dependent upon moral and spiritual experience.

His Associations

He is not governed by the counsel of the ungodly whose only authority is their own will, nor is his conduct moulded by that of habitual offenders, nor his company among the scoffers and cynical liberalists who mock at holy things. As has so often been observed there is here a definite progression. The man who lends his ear to the counsel of the ungodly soon finds his feet carrying him into by-path meadows, and finally his whole being is "at home" in the environment of evil and even "sitting in the seat of authority" of those who scorn God's holy laws.

How different was the life of Enoch who "walked with God" and was promoted to glory. Walking with God, his aim was in the right direction; between God and himself there was complete agreement, for two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, (Amos 3:3). In his walk there was acceptance of the Lord's will and he was attuned to the Lord's step. He did not hasten before with fleshly zeal, like Peter wielding his sword, nor lag behind through lack of knowledge as those who "have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge" (Rom 10:2). There were those like Paul who, though surrounded by idolaters, *stood* on Mars' Hill and proclaimed the true and living God (Acts 17); or, like the loyal and loving band of Marys, *stood* at the cross when others had fled (John 19:25). It was Mary the sister of Martha who "also *sat* at Jesus' feet and listened to His word" (Luke 10:39). It is well to remember that "the Lord confides in those who fear him and makes his covenant known to them" (Ps 25:14).

His Occupations

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night".

The study of the Word is not to be an onerous duty but a constant enjoyment

We must not forget the "but" which introduces us to the Hebrew expression implying a strong contrast: "nay but", "on the contrary". Spurgeon writes, "he is not 'under' the law as a curse and condemnation but he is 'in' it and delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights to meditate in it, to read it by day and think upon it by night. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night



of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. The 'law of the Lord' is the daily bread of the true believer". The study of the Word is not to be an onerous duty but a constant enjoyment. It is regrettable that in so many of today's christian activities the Word of God is not given the prominent position it once held.

His Aspirations

He is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season". This is no wild tree planted at random but one chosen and cultivated for the joy and pleasure of the planter. It exists not only for its foliage and flowers but for its fruit. Planted by the rivulets of water its life and growth are assured and unaffected by the seasons and circumstances of life. There will be no fading foliage nor failing fruit. The highest aspiration of the godly man is to bring forth fruit and in this we are reminded of our Lord's words to His disciples: "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can ye except ye abide in me...he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit...herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:4-8). The prospect of the righteous is not to be measured by the changing standards of the world but by the commendation of the Eternal. It is not outward prosperity that the Christian most desires and values but one of lasting worth. By contrast, instead of the tree planted, the wicked are worthless as chaff; easily carried away with the wind. They are unable to stand the test of judgment and therefore are excluded from the assembly of the righteous. The Lord recognises with discriminative discernment and appreciation the way of the righteous but the plans and ambitions of the wicked shall come to nought.

"O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps 119:97).

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The Epistle to Philemon (1)

by Cyril Cann, Glastonbury

This letter has been described as "the sweetest letter ever written". It is a private communication between two believers couched in kindly, affectionate language. From a human perspective, it was never intended for general circulation but the Holy Spirit in His divine wisdom has been pleased to include it in the pages of Holy Scripture and has thus given it the widest possible circulation and established for all eternity the principles it contains and teaches. These principles are of more than academic interest: they are directly relevant to the lives and circumstances of believers today. This paper attempts to examine some of these principles.

The Writing of the Letter

It was written to Philemon who was a believer of some wealth and standing, who with his wife Apphia and son Archippus, had shown considerable kindness to believers in Colosse. For example, gatherings of local believers were held in their house. Philemon is spoken of in the highest possible terms in the letter: "love and faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and towards all saints" (v.5); "we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the hearts of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (v.7).

The letter was *written by the apostle Paul*, a dear friend of Philemon who had been the instrument of Philemon's salvation: "thou owest unto me thine own self beside" (v.19). Paul is now an elderly gentleman confined to a prison because of his testimony to the things of Christ: "being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v.9). In his physical frame he bore marks of his sufferings in the cause of Christ. When forced to defend himself before those who criticised him at Corinth, he wrote: "in stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in deaths oft" (2 Cor 11:23).

We see a frail man with limited eyesight but with sharp intellect and burning desire to preach the gospel of Christ to the unsaved and irrepressible urge to communicate to believers the truth the Holy Spirit had revealed to him. God, in His grace, had not allowed Paul to become totally isolated but allowed him regular contact with other much-loved believers. In the letter we have reference to Timothy (v.1) and "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner" also "There salute thee...Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas..." (vv.23, 24).

The letter was *written about Onesimus*, a slave of Philemon. His name means profitable but in early days he was anything but profitable. He robbed his master and fled to Rome, the metropolis of the day, where he met the apostle Paul. The scriptures are silent on how this came about. Could it be that he had got into further difficulties in Rome and served a period of imprisonment? What we do know is that God in His sovereign power overruled and achieved the miraculous: amongst the teeming thousands in

Rome, Onesimus came into contact with the particular man who not merely knew Philemon his master but was also a dear friend of his. The result was that Onesimus was wondrously saved.

When circumstances allowed Onesimus to leave Rome (was he released from prison?) there were matters with which he had to deal. Despite his desire to remain with Paul and the latter's desire that he should remain, Onesimus had a moral and legal obligation to return to Colosse to put matters right with his master. So it was that the letter was written as an explanation of Onesimus' changed and repentant situation and an indication to Philemon and believers at Colosse of the need to work out their new relationship with Onesimus who was not only slave to Philemon but also a brother in the Lord: "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (v.16). The letter to Philemon was accompanied by a letter from Paul to the church at Colosse.

Opening Greeting and Salutation (vv.1-3)

"Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v.1). It is interesting that Paul does not remind Philemon of his apostleship as was his normal form of address. This sets the tone of the whole letter. It was Paul's wish to entreat rather than command. He is appealing to the kindness of a dear friend so his words are tender and gracious.

Paul does not complain about his condition nor his circumstances. He does not perceive of himself as confined by the power of Rome but by the divine will and purpose of his Master (Christ Jesus JND the One who was from above) whom he served so faithfully as a bondslave. He was there as the servant of Christ and was able to rest in the assurance that the future, be it release or execution, was in His hands.

"Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house" (vv.1,2). There is a beautiful harmony about this address. Paul's perception of Philemon, his family and the Colossian assembly is of believers bound together by bonds of love (the word "beloved" is used twice), desirous of serving the Lord (the terms "fellow labourer" and "fellow soldier" are used) and, as a local assembly, bearing corporate testimony to the truth of God.

"Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (v.3). This is Paul's salutation. As such it is a commendation to them out of his own experience: he knew the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in his own experience and could, therefore, commend this blessing to others. We must not think that by stating these qualities Paul (or any other human person) could impart them. Only One could do this. He appeared amongst His own and said, "Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36) and had power to impart His peace to the terrified disciples.

Regions Beyond

Highlights of an Indian Visit - part 2 by Michael Browne

India is a predominantly rural nation. 75% of the population live in the countryside in over 600,000 villages. This means that the bulk of evangelism will be village evangelism, carried out by simple, sacrificing, hardy, and faithful village evangelists. The village evangelist is the back-bone of assembly endeavour in India today. There are approximately 1,143 commended full-time evangelists from assemblies in India, and the majority of them are labouring in villages and small towns.

Village Evangelism As an example of how they work, I spoke with an experienced evangelist living and working in the Nellore area of Andhra Pradesh, brother Suvarna Raju. From the assembly in the town where he lives, Gudur, the brethren have systematically reached out to 34 villages in the surrounding countryside. They regularly go out with teams of up to 25 brethren, covering a radius up to 40/50 kms around their town. Within that area they have still to reach another 150 villages. On visitation days they work from 6am-9pm, visiting villages, tracting every house, selling NT's and other literature, and preaching in the streets and markets of the villages. When they have completed the remaining 150 villages, they will then extend the radius to 90 kms.

RC's Converted In Cochin, Kerala, in the deep south of India, there is a steady growth in the Ernakulam North assembly which now numbers 150 in fellowship, and where there is some kind of meeting every day of the week. One brother, a poor tailor, sacrifices two days of work every week to serve the Lord in personal visitation evangelism. It is this kind of commitment that is blessed by the Lord, and numbers are being added to the assembly as a result. Brother Anthony, ex RC priest converted to Christ, devotes himself full-time to work among mainly RCs, and many of them are coming to saving faith. He has written a small book exposing the unscripturalness of the RC Mass, and this book has been widely read by RCs in the Cochin area. However, the Operation Mobilisation ship *Doulos* which was due to visit Cochin in early February, refused to sell brother Anthony's book for fear of offending the RCs. The assemblies therefore told them that unless they reversed this decision and also withdrew certain other books containing what they believed to be error, there would be no co-operation with their Cochin programme. Some of the elders were also unhappy at the methods of evangelism the *Doulos* teams of young people were employing, namely their drama presentations. They felt this would adversely influence assembly young people, and was moving away from dependence upon the Word of God as the true focus of evangelism.

A Slum Assembly My final week in Bombay was spent with the Santa Cruz assembly in ministry. One memorable day was spent visiting a slum assembly in the Bombay suburb of Khandivili which we had been instrumental in helping with practical support when it was first planted a few years ago. Built atop one of the city's enormous rubbish tips, below which is marshland, the filth,



squalor, and living conditions of the people of this clapboard jungle of misery and deprivation is beyond description! One feels polluted simply walking down its narrow loathsome alleys, littered with rotting rubbish among which mangy half-dead dogs scavenge, and stinking of urine and excrement. No foreign missionary could survive long in such conditions - but a Malayalee evangelist and his wife have opted to live there, and are raising two children - a girl of 12 years and a boy aged 8 years - in such an environment for the sake of the gospel. No wonder the evangelist's wife contracted tuberculosis a few years ago, but after treament is now free of the disease. There is a price to pay for this kind of sacrificial labour for Christ, but what a reward in that coming Day!

A little assembly of 15 members now gathers to the Lord's Name to break bread on the first day of the week in this horrible slum, and 30 are regularly attending other meetings, and they have a thriving Sunday School. The meetings are conducted in three languages, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi, and after initial opposition from militant Hindu extremists who stoned them and broke down the little hall they first erected, they have won through, by the Lord's goodness, and are now left alone.

Salute Their Courage For reasons of Hindu militancy the evangelist still cannot openly preach in the crowded slum markets or lanes. He visits houses –one family per tiny dark room–talks about Christ and salvation, and leaves literature, and people come to the meetings in the large room down one of the filthy side lanes off the main muddy market lane of the slum, which he has named Bethel. This room, used as the assembly hall, is the cleanest place in the whole slum. Brother Babykutty, the evangelist, and his family, live in a small partitioned space at the back of the hall. It was a privilege for me to visit and see this work in that dreadful slum, and enjoy the tea and the little cake the evangelist's wife prepared for us, and to pray and commend them to the grace of the Lord before we left. But I confess, I was glad to get out of that terrible atmosphere of poverty, filth, and wretchedness unspeakable. But they live there - and do so willingly, by choice, because of the love they have for the Lord and for the people living at surely the lowest possible level of human existence and misery. I salute their courage and dedication, and admire their zeal, but freely confess I could never do this myself. Pray for them, they are surely princes among the saints, of whom the world is not worthy.

Pray for his Sight Will you pray please for brother Kripa Shankar, an evangelist working in Benares, who has been persecuted, beaten, threatened, and constantly harassed by Hindu extremists, but through whose faithful labours an assembly has been planted in this 'holy' centre of Hinduism. He has just written to say, "It seems the days of my active service for the Lord are closing. I have cataracts in both eyes, and the doctors say that surgery is unlikely to be successful. Your prayers are valued." Our brother is an albino with very weak eyes.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (2)

by John Gillespie, Falkirk

Second Stage **Birth: Dependent Lowliness, yet Saviourhood withal.**

(Luke 2:7-20)

Lo now "that Holy thing" is born a babe.
"This morning see the glory of the Lord"!
A round white hoar-frost thing and wondrous small
Has come to ground at Bethlehem, House of Bread.
'Tis manna down from heaven! This tender fall
Is that from which earth's hungry flock is fed.

This morning out of Bethlehem He comes–
Ephratah least of Judah's many towns.
Yet "He comes forth in time first unto Me".
Though from of old in History renowned,
Yea, from the everlasting years 'twas He
On heaven's eternal throne was ever crowned.

But, now He of a lowly woman come
Appears her firstborn to the world of men.
The lowly babe is bound in swaddling bands
And gently in a lowly manger laid
Cradled in lap by tenderest heart and hands.
Treasured by Mary mother, nurse, and maid.

Oh lowly grace, dependent trust, profound!
"Thou wert His God who took Him from the womb,
And safely kept Him on His mother's breast",
For she with infant care could find no room
Where at the Inn she might the safer rest.
Man from the outset dared on grace presume!

"Ye shall behold the glory of the Lord"!
Bethlehem lowly first to hear the news.
Unclassified, it fell on mortal ears:
All people, Gentiles, Magi, shepherd, trade,
Kings to His rising with their gifts appear.
Oh little town grown big by news you made!

This dawn! Oh see the glory of the Lord!
And shepherds on their night-watch in the field.
The Angel of the Lord arrives with blaze
Of glory circling them. This light arrayed
Filled them with awe, and darkly, sore amaze.
Heaven stilled their hearts: "Fear not", the Angel said.



"Good were the tidings brought, and great the joy
Bestowed on the wide universe of men:
For unto you is born this very day
In David's city, Judah's Bethlehem,
A Saviour who is Christ, the Lord alway".
The splendour of this news transfigured them!

Heaven's morning-paper beamed the Banner-lines:
"Glory be unto God in highest heaven".
He who disclosed the swaddle-manger sign
Was hosted now in skies but newly riven
Teeming with angels' voice where all combine
To chant, "Glory to God for Christ be given".

"Here at Ephratha, lo, of it we heard.
We found it in the pastures of the wood.
Let us go even now to Bethlehem,
Our wondering eyes shall well inform the mind".
Their journey wrought both grace and truth in them,
Wonder in other hearts, from what they find.

Here, see the page of prophecy unfold:
"The woman's seed"; "The Saviour of the world";
"Virgin's Immanuel"; "The Lord is there";
"A tender plant"; "Jacob's ascending Star".
Prophetic words that down the ages were
Have now become in Him the things that are.

"There is a time for birth, a time to die.
There is a time to laugh, a time to cry".
There is a time for saints to shout and sing,
A time to search the depths of things divined.
The shepherds their antiphony now bring,
But, Mary treasures thoughts within her mind.

She ponders them in silence of the soul!
Thoughts of His birth with thoughts of death ensue,
And with prophetic eye would see Life's whole,
Then sadder thought would pierce her spirit through.
May we our song for Bethlehem now raise,
Yet feel with Mary sorrow blent with praise.

No birth like His to bring such joy to earth!
No Saviourhood through Him apart from death!

My Servants the Prophets

by John Rudd, Kirkconnel

Isaiah prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah, Jeremiah in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah unto the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, to the carrying away captive in the fifth month. Hosea, Amos, Micah and Joel all prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah. Their messages were to the kings of Israel and Judah.

Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah.

The lesson from these lists is that the leaders of the Lord's people are held accountable by God for the conduct of the people. The letters to the seven churches in Rev 2 and 3 confirm this. The seeds of Israel's departure had been sown in the house of Micah (Jud 18:30). There were occasions when there was departure on the part of the king and although he repented there was no remedy for the people whose hearts had been led away. Thus the voices of Ezekiel and Daniel were heard from the captivity.

Isaiah speaks to the nation in a leprous condition: "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores" (1:6). This is emphasised in the leper-king Uzziah in the year of whose death Isaiah had a view of the glory of God, and saw not only himself as leprous but also the nation: "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (6:5). It is interesting to note that in every case of failure God has Christ and His work before Him. Isaiah was given a demonstration of this: the live coal taken from the altar for his cleansing showed that God can cleanse on the basis of sacrifice. Ch.53 shows that Isaiah had learned this lesson. Again, as he turned from the wicked king, he saw the Seed of the woman: "Behold a virgin shall conceive" (7:14) and also in ch.9: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (v.6). Christ is very much seen in Isaiah as the Kinsman Redeemer.

Jeremiah was the one voice in Judah and was against every man (1:18) but it was he who entered into the feelings of God in regard to the desolations: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam 1:12); "I am the man that hath seen affliction" (3:1). Like the Lord he wept over Jerusalem and he asked, "How doth the city sit solitary?" (1:1). He also wept for Josiah, who commenced his reign in such a wonderful fashion yet ended it in such ignominy when he entered into mortal combat, thus ending the hope of Judah. However, it was also given to Jeremiah to look away from the desolations and see David's Lord, the Righteous Branch, who will reign and prosper: Jehovah Tsidkenu (23:5-6). He also saw Israel in the good of the new covenant

(31:31) when the heart of stone will be taken away.

Daniel was taken captive in the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He saw that glory of Theocracy which was for Israel taken from the nation and given to Babylon, the head of the nations, ushering in the Times of the Gentiles. However, his gaze was directed to Christ as the stone cut out without hand, which will smite the image and fill the whole earth (ch.2). Daniel, a young man of the princes of Judah, taken captive and made a eunuch, could doubtless enter into the feelings of his Lord: "Take me not away in the midst of my days" (Ps 102:24) and again, "And who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa 53:8). Knowing the word of the Lord by Jeremiah, he knew that 70 years of captivity were ordained by God. However, such was his faith, he believed in hope when there seemed no hope, as Abraham had. He renounced the flesh counting God to be faithful and thus became Daniel the beloved (9:23) and is addressed as the son of man which is a title of dominion (8:17). Daniel saw the dominion, which was lost in Adam, regained by Christ, and the glory of Theocracy lost by Israel restored through the Son of man (7:13-14). Just as the posterity of Adam changed their glory (Rom 1), so Israel's glory became Ichabod. Although in David and Solomon we have a picture of the sufferings and the consequent glory of Christ, yet the underlying desire on the part of the nation for a king was for fleshly reasons and not to enthrone God's king: "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). Their intent was to become like other nations. Nevertheless, God came to dwell in that house which was the consummation of all the treasures of the conflict from the wars of the Lord, those dedicated things that were under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren (1 Chron 26:26-28). How soon in the reign of Rehoboam was the kingdom divided (1 Chron 10) and the gold taken by Shishak, king of Egypt, which Rehoboam replaced with brass (1 Chron 12:9-12).

Does not this compare readily with the visions of Daniel? He saw the head of gold degenerate into iron and clay. Also when God put glory on man, like the devil he grasped after greater glory only to fall. How good to turn to One who, subsisting in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped after (Phil 2).

Ezekiel, like Daniel, was taken captive by the Chaldeans. He was a priestly young man in his 30th year, the year he should have been entering into his sphere of service. He saw, with God, the profanity of the sanctuary and prophesied against it (chs.8-9). His prophesy was a quickening word in the dry bones (ch.37), and he saw the return of the glory of the Lord (43:4; 44:4) with the Lord's presence: Jehovah Shammah (48:35).

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

MAY 2
Bellaghy Gospel Hall: 12.00 noon. Annual Conference.
Portstewart Gospel Hall: 3.30pm. Annual Missionary Conference.

MAY 4
Limavady Gospel Hall: 11.30am. Annual Conference and Bible Reading (see special notice).

MAY 9
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 1.00-3.00pm. Annual Believer's Meeting. 3.45-5.00pm. Speakers: J Grant, R Jordan, M Radcliffe.

MAY 11-14
Mullafernaghan Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. J Grant - Ministry.

MAY 30
Fortwilliam Gospel Hall: Annual Conference 7.00pm. Ministry: T Wilson, T Meekin.

MAY 31
Fortwilliam Gospel Hall: 4.00pm. Ministry; 7.00pm. Gospel; 8.30pm. Ministry; Speakers at all these meetings: T Wilson (Scotland), T Meekin (Glengormley).

JUNE 1
Fortwilliam Gospel Hall: 8.00 pm. Ministry: T Wilson, T Meekin.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

MAY 1-3
Cullen: Friday 1st, Report meeting in Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Raggett. Saturday 2nd, Annual Conference in Town Hall at 3.00pm. J Grant, R Thomson, T Wilson. Lord's Day, 2.00pm-4.00pm. A McLean, C Raggett, R Thomson.

MAY 2
Dreghorn: Annual Conference in Greenwood Academy at 3.00pm. J Burnett, J Hay, A Sinclair.
Lanark: Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. A Prentice, J Sinclair, I Steele.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.

MAY 9
Ayrshire Missionary Conference: to be held in Woodpark Evangelical Church, Woodpark Road, Belmont, Ayr at 3.00 pm. R Riddell, D Robertson, M Browne.
Blackburn: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Bathgate Road at 3.30pm. R Revie, W Park, W McKellar.
Greengairs: Annual Conference in Primary School at 3.30pm. I Robertson, A Sinclair, J Chalmers.

MAY 16
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Flanigan. J Flanigan continues Mon-Thurs, ministry (note change of date).
Dunfermline: Conference in Abbot Hall, Wilson's Close (off Maygate) at 3.00pm. J Buchanan, I Hall, C Hutchison.
Newmains: Annual Conference in Newmains Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. A Gamble, A Prentice, J Cadzow.

MAY 23
Forres: Annual Conference in Applegrove Primary School, Orchard Road at 3.00pm. J Brown, J Sinclair, W Stevely.

MAY 30
Carluke: Gospel Rally in Carluke Gospel Hall. Prayer at 3.30pm. Open Air, 4.00-5.30pm. Interval, 5.30pm. Ministry at 6.00pm A Carew, R Marshall.

JUNE 6
Gardenstown: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. J Hay, A Gamble, A Carew.



Mayfield: Conference weekend - Friday 5th, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. J Paterson (senior). Third epistle of John. Saturday 6th, Annual Conference in Mayfield Combined School at 3.00pm. T Meekin, A Meikle, J Paterson.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. I Grant.

JUNE 13
Greengairs: Gospel Rally in Greengairs Gospel Hall. Prayer at 3.30pm. Open Air, 4.00pm. Interval 5.30pm. Ministry at 6.00pm. A Carew.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

MAY 2
Birmingham: Northfield Gospel Hall, Quarry Lane. Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. I Jackson, D West.
Douglas: Switzerland Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Illminster: Gospel Hall, West Street, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. C Lacey, J Riddle.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue. Annual Conference at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. J Stubbs, M Browne.
Milton Keynes: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Caledonian Road, New Bradwell at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. R Miller, J Chalmers.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. B Osbourne.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. J Coltman.

MAY 4
Eastbourne: Marine Hall at 3.45pm and 6.00pm. E Parmenter. Also on Tuesday at 7.30pm.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Hall.
Mansfield: Radford St Gospel Hall, Annual Conference in the Baptist Church, Rosemary St at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Riddle, D Spence.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road. Commencement of Gospel campaign at 7.30pm. G Meikle.

MAY 9
Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. D West.
Burton-on-Trent, Winshill: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. K Rudge, J Griffiths.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. A Cundick.
Crawley, Nr Winchester: Annual Conference at National Transcommunications Ltd., Crawley at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. R Hill, J Burnett.
Ely, Cambs: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. W Gardiner.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Osborne Road. Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. E Honeyball, P Coulson. Mr Coulson continues on Lord's Day at 4.00pm. and Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Red Row: Morpeth, Hebron Hall. Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. R Miller, D Holmes.
Teignmouth: S Devon. Gospel Hall - Annual Missionary Conference at 10.30am and 2.15pm. (buffet lunch).
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London. Missionary Conference at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. S Davies and other.

MAY 16
Beighton, Sheffield: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall, Eckington Road at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. J Wallace, R Revie. Sunday at 3.45pm. R Revie. (Report on Ethiopia).
Calne: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall,

Oxford Road at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. J Riddle, A Griffiths.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall, Newton Road, Hesters Way at 7.30pm. I Jackson.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. P Young.
Harrow: Belmont Hall, 37-39 Pinner Road at 7.15pm. R Catchpole.
Johnstown: Rehoboth Gospel Hall, Conference to be held in Community Centre, Moreton Estate at 2.30pm. and 5.30pm. J McMaster, P Harding.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall, Vincent Road, Leagrave at 6.30pm. L Cline.
North London Missionary Conference: to be held in Woodberry Down Baptist Church, Vartry Road, Seven Sisters Road, Tottenham, N.15 at 10.00am-6.00pm. A Catchpole, J Fox, D Gilpin, R Hutchinson (others to be announced).
Portsmouth: Annual Conference in Copnor Gospel Hall at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. R Marshall, F Beevers. R Marshall continues in ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Rhos-on-Sea: Bethany, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. E Hughes, T Ledger.
Shillingstone: Portman Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.15pm. A Maunder, J Griffiths.

MAY 23
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.15pm. H Stewart, A Wiseman.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. K Totton.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Grant.
Mitcham Junction: Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. A McLean.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. R Hutchinson.

MAY 30
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall, (off Granby Street) at 7.30pm. P Scarsbrook.
London: Hope Hall, 222 Kilburn Lane, Queens Park at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.

JUNE 6
Blyth: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, Devonworth Place, Cowpen Estate at 2.30pm. M Radcliffe, J Grant.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Maunder.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. H Barnes.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. J Dickson. Mr Dickson continues Monday to Thursday at 8.00pm.

JUNE 13
Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. E Parmenter.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. D Spence.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. J Coltman.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Parkgate/Doagh: Meetings in the portable hall in this area, conducted by W Fenton and W Martin, have continued for nine weeks. Excellent numbers attending nightly including many unsaved. Several have professed, others anxious.
Randalstown: The "Outreach Hall" carried on by the Clonkeen assembly was the venue for two weeks meetings conducted by M Radcliffe. He had a model of the Tabernacle and used it as a basis for his ministry, which was helpful and appreciated by the believers. Meetings were interesting and well attended.

HS Paisley on a visit to the province for



meetings also gave ministry for four nights in Cambridge Avenue, Ballymena, and in several other places as well.

Co. ARMAGH & Co. MONAGHAN

Ahorey: H Andrews had two weeks gospel meetings in January with good attendance by locals and other assemblies. There was blessing in salvation.

Erryroe: S McBride continues in the gospel with good interest and some local people attending. Prayer would be valued for this needy border area.

Chapman's Store (between Portadown and Armagh): H Paisley (Canada) has had two weeks of prophetic ministry on the book of Daniel (illustrated with large chart). The ministry, intermingled with gospel, has been most searching and profitable with blessing in salvation. Numbers have been extremely large and growing nightly. The three Lord's days were for the preaching of the gospel. Monaghan Annual Conference was held on 17th March with large number gathered for the ministry of God's Word. Speakers were D O'Hare (France), A McShane, T McNeill, J Stubbs, D Kane and E Russell. Considered to be a good meeting.

D O'Hare (France) has had a number of appreciated reports throughout Co. Armagh.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL

Magheracorran: The Annual Conference was considered helpful with ministry from A McShane, S Ferguson, D Kane, R McKeown, T Flanigan and S Patterson.

BELFAST & DISTRICT

Ballysillan: R McLuckie had two weeks gospel meetings which were well supported by the assembly, also a number of outsiders came in. The seed was faithfully sown.

Laganvale: R Pickering had three and a half weeks in a special gospel series. God gave help to preach each night and unsaved were present, some showing deep concern.

Newtownbreda: WJ Nesbitt and his son Andrew still preaching with sustained interest and freshness in the meetings. The hand of the Lord has been seen in salvation.

Parkgate: S Ferguson and N Turkington continue in the gospel. One boy has got saved and others in his family are attending and showing interest.

Whitehouse: J Lennox and B Currie have had a series which was well attended, with a number of students from a neighbouring college present. Saints encouraged as God blessed in salvation.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

WEST MIDLANDS

Visits to Broadwas on Teme by R Dawes and R Catchpole have resulted in good challenging ministry, whilst at Crowle, J Dixon and S Downs spoke at the Annual Conference. J Dixon stayed on for a week of ministry meetings which were appreciated. Southcrest Chapel, Redditch had the help of A Linton at their 23rd Annual Conference. He took up "The Hope of the Church", "Israel Today" and "The Church in Heaven" as the subject of his ministry. The Birmingham Missionary meetings took place in March at various venues over a number of days.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

George Meikle and Roy Marshall have concluded the special meetings in the village of Kirknewton, near Edinburgh. The whole village has been visited, as well as the nearby village of East Calder, with some who had previously attended returning one or two nights. We value the prayers of the saints for the contacts made, and those who heard the message.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mr G Ackford on the 19th February aged 84 years. Saved when 12 and baptised at Wolseley Road Gospel Hall, he faithfully served the Lord in the assemblies of His people in the Plymouth and Cornwall area until his homecall. Our brother moved to Saltash in 1949 and faithfully served the Lord in the assembly there for 49 years, always taking a keen interest in children's work. Our brother will be sadly missed. Please remember his family in prayer.

Mrs Sheelagh Bell beloved wife of David and mother of Michael and Allistair, called home on 28th February 1998 aged 52 years. Her godly consistent life bore testimony to her Lord and Saviour whom she trusted at the age of 11. She endeared herself to everyone and her caring disposition brought help and comfort to many. She took every opportunity to serve her Lord reaching children with the gospel both in the town and Sunday School. Her illness was borne with faith and courage. She will be greatly missed in the assembly at Whitehead, County Antrim.

Mrs Bessie Brown on the 5th of March 1998 aged 81 years. Saved when seven years of age in Motherwell. The family moved to Blantyre where our sister was received into fellowship and continued there till 1943 when she married. For the next 54 years, she was in happy fellowship at Olive Hall then High Parks Gospel Hall, Hamilton. A sister beloved who continued steadfastly till the Lord took her home. She has left us an example to follow. Prayer would be valued for her husband Alf and the members of the family.

Mr Victor Brown, Magherafelt, on 19th March 1998. Our brother was returning from a visit to a bereaved sister, and while driving his car, was suddenly called home. Saved when a youth, he was in fellowship in the Aughrim assembly for many years, where his interest, exercise and godly testimony were much appreciated. He loved to do visitation work and also took an active interest in the work of the Gideons. He is very much missed by his wife and family, for whom prayer would be appreciated.

Mrs Margaret Clarke on 12th December aged 86 years. Our sister was in fellowship in the Bathgate assembly until her marriage to her late husband William, after which she moved with him to the assembly at Livingston Station (now Deans). She was a true help-meet to her husband, and given to hospitality. Our sister loved to be at all the assembly gatherings until her last few months which were spent in a nursing home. She is missed in the assembly.

Mrs Violet Gibson on 8th March aged 71 years, after a short illness. Our sister was saved while attending tent meetings at Derriaghy in 1957, was baptised and received into the assembly at Wallace Avenue, Lisburn the following year, where she remained until her homecall. She was faithful to the assembly, with a pleasant disposition which endeared her to many, she will be greatly missed. The



very large funeral was a fitting tribute to a christian lady. Please remember her husband and family in prayer, some of whom are not yet saved.

Mrs Jess Graham: in her 91st year. Our sister was called home from Crosshouse Hospital on Friday 20th March. Saved as a girl, she was in assembly fellowship for 70 years. Until a year ago, she was able to meet with the saints at Irvine on a Sunday morning. Her place is now empty and she will be missed.

Miss Ivy Little on the 17th February aged 78 years. Saved when a young girl, she was baptised and received into the fellowship of the assembly in Blyth where she continued all her life until her homecall. For many years she was a Sunday School teacher. A quiet consistent sister, she is greatly missed.

Mr D McCullagh on 13th March after a long illness borne with courage and a great sense of peace. Saved when he was 13 at meetings conducted by Mr S Lewis. Soon after, our brother was received into the assembly at Lisbellaw, where he continued steadfastly all his life. He was a real help in the assembly, which is very small and will be greatly missed. The very large funeral was a fitting tribute to our brother. Prayer valued for his wife and family, his aged mother, and also the small assembly.

Miss Mary McLauchlan on 20th March aged 92. Saved while still young, she bore a good testimony in Barrhead. After many years with another company of believers, our sister was received into fellowship at Chappell Street Gospel Hall in 1969. For some years she resided at Machermore Eventide Home, before more recently moving to a residential home in Houston. She was a sister known for great kindness to others.

Miss Margaret Stewart: called home on Monday 9th March from Crosshouse Hospital, in her 90th year. In earlier days she was associated with the assembly in Springburn, Glasgow, but came to Irvine 16 years ago and was received into fellowship at Central Gospel Hall, Irvine. In recent years she was unable to attend any meetings, but appreciated visits made to her home by members of the assembly.

PERSONALIA

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Gospel Hall, St. Andrews: Summer Campaign from Saturday the 18th July to Friday the 24th July 1998. Speaker expected Mr Dan Gillies from Luthermuir. Ministry Meeting on Sat. 18th at 7.30pm. Ministry Meeting Lord's Day the 19th at 3.00pm. From Monday 20th to Friday 24th (both dates inclusive) the Ministry is at 10.00am. and the Gospel Meeting at 8.00pm. Some places for young believers in assembly fellowship. Please contact Mr Ian Ross, 41 Market Street, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9NT. Tel: (01334) 475539.

Change of address: As from 25th April 1998, the address of Mr & Mrs Alex Wiseman will be: 14 Lavender Road, Bournemouth BH8 0PX. Tel: (01202) 859179.

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1.30pm. Interval for refreshments
2.30-5.00pm. Ministry of the Word
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5.30-6.30pm. J Grant will give a report
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3 Ballyquin Road, Limavady

Craigyhill Gospel Hall
Larne

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11th-15th September 1998 (d.v.)

SUBJECT: Hebrews chs.5:11 to 10:18

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Mr. E Parmenter, Mr. S Ferguson

For details of accommodation
in Rathmore House contact:
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Tel: (01574) 274070

Gospel Hall
Malcolm Road, Lurgan

Annual Conference and Bible Readings
10th-15th October 1998 (d.v.)

SUBJECT: 1st Timothy chs.1-6

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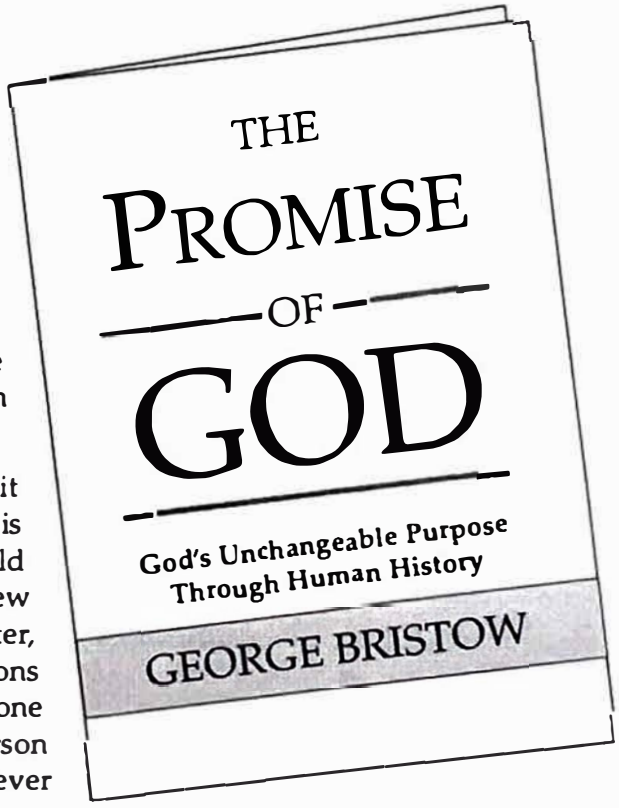
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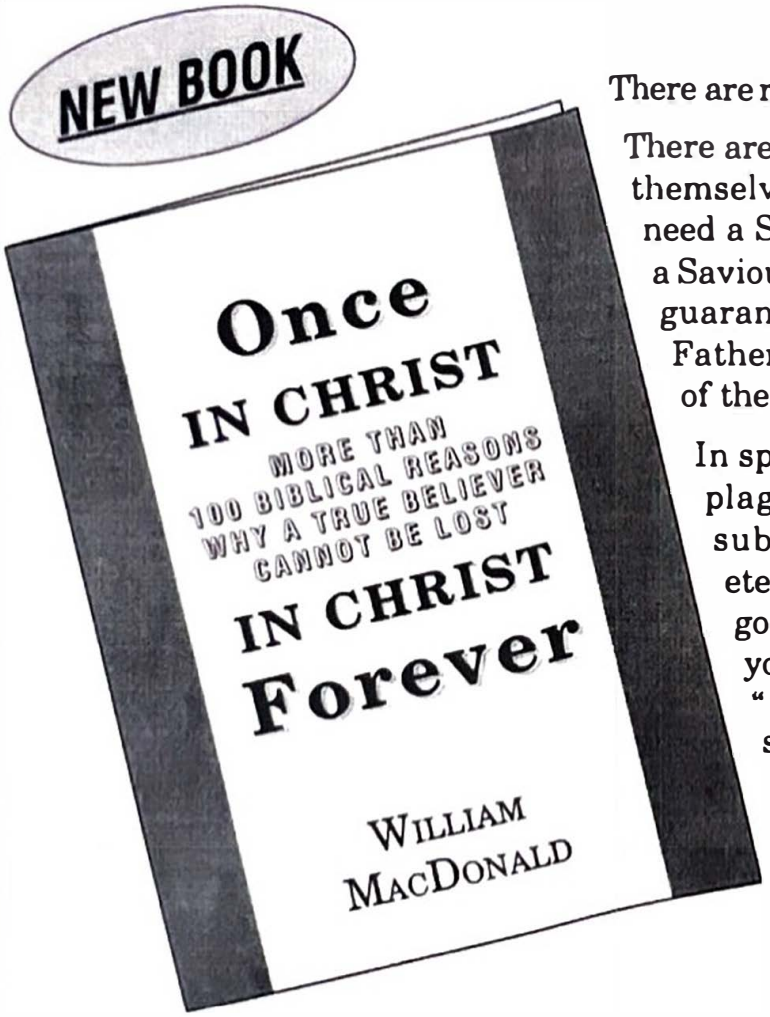
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Believer's Magazine



6/98

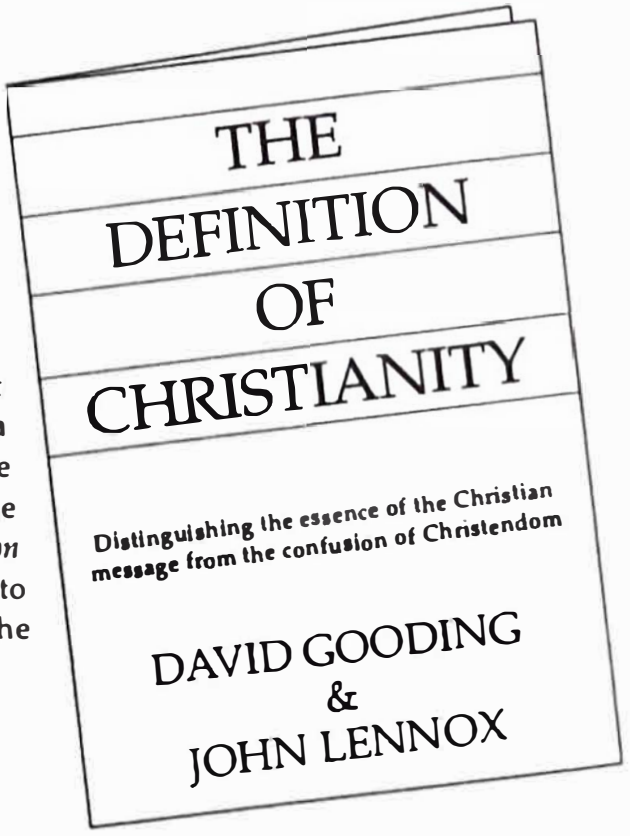
NEW BOOK

THE DEFINITION OF CHRISTIANITY

Distinguishing the essence of the Christian message from the confusion of Christendom

DAVID GOODING & JOHN LENNOX

The famous Indian philosopher and statesman Mahatma Gandhi was once asked why he did not join the Christian church. He replied: "Which one?" Undeniably, from a world-wide point of view, modern Christendom presents a very confused and confusing picture. One reason is this: in the course of history many superstitious additions have collected about Christianity like barnacles on the hull of a ship. It is often difficult to distinguish the original message that constitutes the permanent core of Christianity. *The Definition of Christianity* is designed to help the reader to grasp the historic facts at the heart of the Christian gospel.



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Believer's

Magazine

JUNE 1998

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Editorial

Initiatives for the establishment of peace are taking place at present in various parts of the world. Such efforts have often been marked by failure, for true and lasting peace will never be enjoyed on earth until the return of "the Prince of peace". This does not absolve the people of God from their responsibility to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim 2:2). Our influence on national and public life is to be exercised in the sanctuary, not the ballot box.

Such events cause us to remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt 5:9). Peace is divine in its origin, thus five times in the NT we read of "the God of peace". The apostle reminds us that "God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18). But this work spoken of is a righteous one, the problem which hindered true peace was dealt with and a sound basis was laid for peace to be restored (see vv.19-21). Whenever we are involved in helping to make peace this must be remembered and applied.

A clear example of an unsound reconciliation is found in 2 Sam 14. Joab was himself a carnal man, but we know from the NT that it must be they "which are spiritual" who help in any form of restoration. He effected the eventual return of Absalom but did it by concocting a false story for a woman to tell to David. Little wonder that the reconciliation was false. Absalom was "brought to Jerusalem...and...dwelt two full years...and saw not the king's face" (2 Sam 14:23,28). Further, we see that even when he was later brought into his father's presence it had no lasting benefit because his heart had not been changed. The following chapter shows that he soon began to steal the hearts of the men of Israel and led a conspiracy against his father which resulted in David fleeing from the capital city.

There is a great need for saints to constantly foster peace amongst the Lord's people in each local assembly. Such an attitude is a mark of sonship ("children" is really "sons" in Matt 5:9). Our Lord Jesus did this to His own disciples when He said "have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50), and the apostle Paul likewise exhorted the saints to "be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess 5:13). It is easier to divide the saints than to hold them together. We are warned to "mark them which cause divisions" (Rom 16:17), this can be done through wrong doctrine as the passage shows, or it can be through personal factors, each is displeasing to the Lord and harmful to the testimony.

How can the believer enter into the joy of being a peacemaker? To live in the good of Phil 4:6 will give the experience of the following verse. Hearts and thoughts which are guarded by the peace of God will be a great influence on others and if the "things" of v.8 are practised, there will be the experimental knowledge of the presence of the God of peace.

JRB

We Shall See Him

by the late Bill Craig, Hurst

The eye is not satisfied with seeing–as a general statement this is true because the human spirit craves with a longing that is not satisfied. Poor Eve saw, and the consequences were dreadful: the lust of the eye had conquered, and through her and her husband sin came into the world. There are, however, times when sight can be satisfied. Jacob, in his ardent love for Joseph, experienced this: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (Gen 46:30). Men used to say, "See Naples and die!" Jacob had lived for Joseph; Joseph's death (as reported by Joseph's brethren and believed by Jacob) brought desolation and he had no more wish to live. But what a transformation took place as hope flooded into the once desolate heart of the old patriarch: "Joseph is yet alive!" At a later date the astonished women heard the statement, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt 28:6).

The Lord was always frank with His disciples, laying the conditions faithfully before them. He told them frankly that trouble was ahead: it meant death for at least some of His disciples, such as James and Peter, but He also offered a note of hope and triumph: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" (John 16:22). This was pre-figured in the resurrection period: "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20).

The sight of the Lord wrought a sensational transformation in the life of Saul of Tarsus. Daniel saw a heavenly vision and his comeliness was turned into corruption. Saul saw the heavenly Lord and the things which he had treasured until then were immediately esteemed as corruption. Moses knew this blessed re-assessment –he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater treasures than the treasures of Egypt. Why? Because he had seen Him who is invisible.

John the Baptist, thrilled with the sight of the Lord, exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36). The apostate spectators at Golgotha beheld the Lamb of God and "beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned" (Luke 23:48). How sad the statement of the Lord Jesus: "ye also have seen me, and believe not" (John 6:36). They were unlike their father Abraham who rejoiced to see Christ's day and saw it and was glad.

The apostles were privileged persons –each one had seen the Lord Jesus. This must have encouraged them often when persecution was rife. We might well wish that we could say that we have seen Him. But Thomas was told that there was an added blessing for each one of us "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Peter comments on this condition–"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory". This was the happy lot of Horatius Bonar as he

wrote:

"When I shall gaze upon the face of Him,
Who died for me, with eyes no longer dim
And praise Him with the everlasting hymn
I shall be satisfied! satisfied".

This was the man who took his daughter to see Queen Victoria when she visited Scotland. Afterwards he observed: "you saw the Queen but you were not changed". (We need more Christians like him today!). Even the humblest believer can look forward to that wonderful event "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Firstly we shall be like Him. This will enable us to see Him as He is. Not for us the humbling experience of that Pharisee zealot who blinded by the sight was led by the hand into Damascus. For us eternal day shall dawn, the darkness will be past and the true light, whose glory we experienced on earth, will burst upon us, flooding our spirits with the heavenly ecstasy. His servants shall see Him–what an undeserved privilege. It might have been otherwise. We know of many who will see Him and incurable remorse will eat into their souls. "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev 1:7). Satan's master man will see Him and be consumed by the brightness of His coming. Moses said so terrible was the sight of God's glory that he exceedingly feared and quaked, but he lived. The Beast and his ally will not be so–everlasting death awaits them in Gehenna.

Job knew the blessing which can be experienced but cannot be adequately described "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5). Still in the grip of the loathsome disease he had this wonderful boast. Soon the dear soul was praying for his friends and then wonder of wonders, his troubles were over. "The LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends" (Job 42:10).

To see the Lord will be an awe-inspiring sight. John wrote: "when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (Rev 1:17). But he was not dead and was to see much more. The Book of Revelation was to be the record of what he subsequently saw and heard and as he closed the record left for posterity, the servant of the Lord exclaimed "Even so, come, Lord Jesus". The visions of Revelation had whetted his appetite for more. May it be our wish always to be like Him, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (2 Cor 5:2).

How shall I meet those eyes
Mine on Himself, I cast
And own myself the Saviour's prize
Mercy from first to last!

Our beloved brother Craig was called into the presence of the Lord on 27th December 1997 – JRB

Isaiah's Three Beatitudes

by Bert Cargill, St Monans

Throughout Scripture we read of the blessedness (really the happiness) of people who do certain things. Probably the best known of all Beatitudes are the ones in Matt 5:3-11 where our Lord describes the features of the true subjects of His kingdom. Theirs are "blessednesses" (happinesses) which are so different from this world's, even as His kingdom also is so different. Another beautiful and significant group of "Blesseds" is in the Psalms, beginning with 1:1 and ending with 146:5.

The prophecy of Isaiah contains three "Blesseds". In this book of warnings and promises, impending disasters and anticipated glories in the future, he breaks off to announce three present blessednesses–of those who wait for the Lord (56:2). In our day it is no less blessed to be doing these things. True happiness really is to be found in them.

Waiting for the Lord

"Blessed are all they that wait for him" (30:18). As the years and the centuries pass, happy are all those who continue to wait patiently for the Saviour coming. The fulfilment of His promise draws ever nearer: "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb 10:37). God's people have a sure expectation of future glory, based on His word and guaranteed through His Son, Him in whom every promise of God is "yea and Amen".

But while we wait in expectation of the future and its glory, it is blessed also to wait on Him each day - wait in His presence for Him to direct each step of our journey and each avenue of our service. Such waiting, we are assured, will renew our strength to do this service and to take these steps (Isa 40:31).

Instead of waiting for God, however, many in Isaiah's time were going elsewhere for help. Egypt had strong horsemen and many chariots (31:1). Going there for help seemed to guarantee safety from the threatening Assyrian invader, they thought. But that was the way to disaster–trust in "men and not God...flesh and not spirit" (v.3).

For believers today, that is still the way to disaster and utter disappointment. The world of men, the might and wisdom of the flesh, hold out offers of help and advice again and again. It is popular and, to man, quite normal to seek and accept it. But it is fundamentally flawed and ultimately weak. Direction for our lives and guidance for God's service must not be obtained there.

The direction, guidance and support we need is always available to us from God and from confidence in His word: "in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (30:15). If the world and its ways have been explored, it is only in "returning and rest shall ye be saved". Even if and when we have not been waiting for Him, He has been waiting for us–to be gracious to us (v.18), to show us the way in times of adversity (v.20) and in times of

uncertainty (v.21). Blessedness and happiness do come to all that wait for Him to guide, protect, and provide.

Working for the Lord

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters" (32:20). Psalm 126:6 describes the joy of the sheaf-bearer. Our verse tells of the blessedness of the seed-bearer; for there will be no sheaves to bring in if no seed is sown.

The seed is the word of God (Luke 8:11). If it is not sown, the Spirit (Isa 32:15) will have nothing to work upon to produce the work of righteousness which is peace and "assurance for ever" (v.17). Therefore it is so important–and so blessed–to be a seed-sower. It is God's work to bring salvation via the seed sown; it is ours to sow "beside all waters".

All kinds of people in all kinds of places need the gospel: respectable and down-and-out; young and old; rich and poor; moral and immoral; intellectual and uneducated; at home and abroad. Many will not want it; there may be no evident results ("vintage fails", v.10); there will be difficulties, frustrations, and opposition ("thorns and briers", v.13); conditions may be unfavourable ("hail coming down", v.19). But cast your bread upon the waters–you will find it after many days (Eccl 11:1). And as you do it today you will experience that blessedness of working for the Lord.

Doing the will of the Lord

"Blessed is the man that doeth this..." (56:2). All around us, people are doing their own thing, so many abandoning all respect for God and for His standards. Many professing Christians even are prepared to "adapt" their thinking to accommodate error and disregard Scripture. 2 Timothy 3 says it would be like this in the last days. But what are we doing?

Our verse from Isaiah says, "Blessed is the man that doeth this..." Doing what? Doing justice and equity (v.1)–our deeds are righteous; keeping holy things holy (the sabbath, v.2)–our attitudes are sanctified; keeping evil at a distance (v.2)–our lives are clean; choosing the things that please God (v.4)–our hearts are true. It is blessed to do all this!

Self is fickle, others are fallible, God is fully reliable

Today, as ever, God's people are presented with choices. The choice is often to please ourselves (Rom 15:1), to please others (Eph 6:6), or to please God (Heb 11:5). Self is fickle, others are fallible, God is fully reliable–His will has been made plain in His Word. True blessing and happiness, for now and for eternity, are promised to all who "choose the things that please me", says God, and who, as the servants of Christ, in everything are "doing the will of God from the heart".

The Counterfeit of Christ

by P Harding, Manchester

Under this heading we are thinking of the coming Antichrist. There are many passages in the scriptures which bring before us this person but we will only look at a few passages in Daniel and the Revelation. We are fully aware that the word antichrist can be looked at in two ways–(1) a counterfeit of Christ and (2) one opposed to Christ. Both of these will be true of the coming Antichrist.

The description of the Antichrist, Daniel 7

We believe that the little horn in this chapter represents the Antichrist.

The circumstances of his rise, vv.7 and 24 show that he cannot arise until the ten kingdom confederacy is in existence. "Little horn" (v.8) - this indicates that he arises in an insignificant way.

The consequences of his rise, vv.8 and 24 show that having gained a position within the confederacy he will attack and subdue three kings. He will either reinstate or replace these three kings, for Rev 17:16-17 show that ten kings agree to give him the kingdom. It may be that having subdued three kings he is then in a position to make the covenant with the many of Israel which commences Daniel's seventieth week! He must be in a position of authority to make such a covenant.

The characteristics that mark him, His appearance will be most imposing, attractive to the hearts of men. As such, he is in contrast to the Lord Jesus Christ in the eyes of men–"no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa 53:2).

"Eyes like the eyes of man" (v.8)–Speaking of discernment, vision–intelligence and powers of penetration –the sum of worldly wisdom–the sum of all that the world is looking for. His vision and outlook will be great and his ambition will know no bound. This is what is worshipped in the world today. His discernment will be fascinating. His wisdom and intellect to work out his schemes will be captivating. All his powers of penetration, wisdom and intelligence will be used to further his own ends. What a contrast to our blessed Lord who could say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4:34).

"A mouth speaking great things" (v.8)–He will be a brilliant orator with ability to sway the masses. He will use this ability to fulfil his own ambition. His satanically devised schemes will be made plausible by his oratory so that the people will be eager to carry them out. A marked contrast to "the gracious words" of our blessed Lord (Luke 4:22).

"Whose look was more stout than his fellows" (v.20). More imposing–proud, stern, resolute yet fascinating. Other kings there will be but he will be despotic and arrogant yet more appealing to men. Such a contrast to the Lord Jesus Christ who could say, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29).

"He shall speak great words against the most high" (v.25). He will use his powerful oratory to blaspheme

the Name of God. Bitterly opposed to God and the things of God he will take every opportunity to speak against God and further his own ends in seeking to elevate himself above God. So different from the Lord Jesus who could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth" (John 17:4).

"Made war with the saints" and **"shall wear out the saints of the most high"** (vv.21 and 25). He will be opposed to the people of God. He will make war against the saints of that coming day (the Church is not in view) and will "prevail against them" (v.21). He will wear them down by constant harassment and persecution. The increase in the pace of life, the multiplication of duties, the opportunities held out for advancement and materialism are all part of Satan's plan to wear down the saints today. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt 6:33). The enjoyment of fellowship with God is vital for every believer.

"Change times and laws" (v.25). He will seek to stamp out all that is of God and introduce something completely different. It could be that he will try to change the calendar that bears testimony to the first advent of Christ. He will seek to introduce laws which will popularise sin and lusts of every kind. It may also be a reference to abolishing marriage and setting aside family relationships instituted by God at the beginning.

Daniel 8

Many feel that the "little horn" in this chapter has reference to Antiochus Epiphanes who showed his contempt for the Jews and their religion by slaughtering a sow in the temple and placing its blood upon the altar. He was known as "the desolator". However, although this passage may find a partial fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes it is looking forward to the great desolator who is yet to come "at the time of the end" (v.17).

We notice the similarities with ch.7: –*a.* 8:9 "little horn"–ch.7:8 "little horn"; *b.* 8:9 "waxed exceeding great" and 8:24 "his power shall be mighty"–ch.7:8 "three of the first horns plucked up" and ch.7:24 "he shall subdue three kings"; *c.* 8:10 "waxed great, even to the host of heaven" and 8:24 he "shall destroy the mighty and the holy people" –ch.7:21 "made war with the saints" and ch.7:25 "wear out the saints"; *d.* 8:12 "cast down the truth to the ground"–ch.7:25 "change times and laws"; *e.* 8:23 "understanding dark sentences"–ch.7:8 "eyes like the eyes of man"; *f.* v.25 "magnify himself"–ch.7:20 "more stout than his fellows" and ch.8:25 "he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes".

Both are called a little horn; both become great; both subdue and destroy; both persecute the saints; both exist in the same period; both are opposed to the truth; both magnify self and dare to stand against the Lord. We therefore judge that Daniel 7 and 8 are descriptions of the same person–Satan's counterfeit of Christ–Satan's supreme man.

Epaphras

by J Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

There were many believers in New Testament times whose contribution to the work of the Lord was considerable if relatively inconspicuous. Epaphras was such a man. His work is mentioned in only four verses of Scripture in Colossians and Philemon but his commitment bears the commendation of the apostle Paul. I wonder whether when the divine assessment is given it might be discovered that the work of such men has accomplished far more than those whose names and faces have been far more prominent.

His Loyalty (Col 1:7)

Paul describes him first as "our beloved fellow-bondman, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you" (JND). He was loyal to Christ, and to the apostle. The price of such loyalty was, from the words of Philem 23, his liberty.

His Love (Col 4:12)

Epaphras was a Colossian and he not only had a love for the Lord but he also had a particular exercise in relation to the assembly there. The salutation was not the simple gesture of the western world. Thayer's Lexicon describes it as "not merely a slight gesture and a few words, but generally embracing and kissing". It is used in this way as Paul took his leave of Ephesus in Acts 20:1 and as such it is a token of the respect and affection in which Epaphras held his fellow saints.

His Labour (Col 4:12)

As Paul was able to commend the Thessalonian saints for their labour of love we see how Epaphras' love motivated him: "labouring fervently for you" (v.12). The words indicate a zeal and intensity about the prayer life of this man commensurate with contest, struggle, and wrestling. Prayer was real and costly to him because of the danger he perceived the Colossians to be in. Epaphras had learnt from Paul the significant lesson that, though imprisoned and restricted, there was a work that could be done for the Lord. The apostle could say: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you" (2:1). Think too of the agony that gripped the Saviour when in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: cf. Luke 22:44.

His Longing (Col 4:12)

What was the subject of this prayer of Epaphras? "That ye may stand perfect" (v.12). It is right that we should spend time in prayer for the salvation of sinners. Do we continue to pray as earnestly once they are saved? Epaphras did. He sought strength for the Colossians that they may remain firm against the onslaught of error. As such they needed conviction about the truth they had received, an assurance that penetrated their hearts as well as their minds.

His Liberality (Col 4:13)

What depth and breadth there is to the heart of this man! Paul describes him as having "a great zeal for you". Trench describes this as labour that "does not stop short of demanding the soul strength of a man; and this exerted to the uttermost". Note too that it was "for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis" (v.13). There was no partiality in the zeal of Epaphras. His concern extended across the Lycus valley and, like Paul, he laboured for them all.

Books

Something of My Life by James G Hutchinson; published Gospel Tract Publications; price £6.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Fifty years of public preaching is a long time. Rightly every Christian would acknowledge any who has consistently and acceptably served the Lord over such a period. The author of *Something of My Life* is one such whom most readers will remember and respect for such service. To have a brief account of these years in a case-bound 137 page volume will be of much interest to all who have been stirred by the gospel preaching of James Hutchinson.

With great care the author's pathway is traced from youth to being one of the few surviving preachers of his generation. That care notes where he preached, often for how long and makes some assessment of the results which accrued.

Of interest too is the growing list of preachers with whom the brother preached. Although a number in the list are with the Lord, it is fascinating to recall the many who carried the word of life to village and town and city. And of all on the list the author speaks commendably; indeed on several occasions he is able to testify that he never exchanged an angry word with this or that preacher. Any lower standard would be unworthy of a servant of Christ.

One other commendable feature of this book is the recognition by the author of so many who were exercised to bring the gospel tent or meetings to their local area, often because they had a burden about relatives. The publication of *Something of My Life* may stimulate many more with such a burden.

TW

Playing with Fire by Alex Robertson; published Barratt Ministries Publications; price £8.00. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Playing with Fire, sub-titled "the use and abuse of music" is a 239-page paperback from the pen of a classically-trained musician who read music at Cambridge University and studied the viola at the Royal Northern College of Music. He writes from a concern that music is compromising Christians, even music from those professing to be christian.

Robertson warns against the mind-control techniques all musicians can exercise. To him "the differences between the world's culture and today's christian 'counter-culture' are mostly cosmetic". He notes that the world had country music, then there was 'christian' country music; the world had rock, then there was 'christian' rock; the word had rave, so 'christian' rave arrives. He believes that it is all too easy for the same dangerous traits that lurk in heavy metal and other extremes of the world's music to be present in the Christian's imitation of these very styles.

Playing with Fire is not a particularly well-structured book. Perhaps understandably the content of the three main sections overlaps; at times helpfully the overlaps are cross-referenced. The author's position in respect of music seems in places a little ambiguous. But although with some reservations, the reviewer respects the cautions being entered by an author better qualified than the reviewer to assess the dangers ever present in a world obsessed with music.

TW

Question Box

Question

We read that Christ "went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometimes were disobedient" (1 Pet 3:19-20). What is the meaning of vv.19-21? Some teach that Christ went and preached to the disobedient spirits after being "put to death in the flesh". If this is so, what were the results of such preaching?

Answer

In v.18 the writer is telling of the persecution and suffering of the saints and has emphasised that such suffering should only be for "well doing" and never for "evil doing" (vv.12-17). He then shows that Christ suffered "for (concerning) sins", only once, also that the sins for which He suffered were not His own, it was the case of a righteous man suffering "on the behalf of" unrighteous ones. This was in divine purpose, it was to "bring us to God", but suffering alone could not make this possible, thus there is reference to His death. Much controversy has arisen here over the terms "in the flesh" and "by the spirit". Many varying views are held and all seem to attract varying degrees of difficulty. It should be noted that neither "flesh" nor "spirit" are preceded by the article and on this W Kelly comments as follows "The anarthrous form points to the *character* of the points specified". There are many examples in scripture where the context makes clear that the Holy Spirit is in view, yet the article is omitted, (see Rom 8:4,9,13; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:22). The correct sense is given if we say that our Lord Jesus was put to death 'in respect of flesh' and it is the present writer's conviction that this refers to the fleshly activity of those wicked ones who perpetrated their evil acts at Calvary. He was quickened 'in respect of Spirit', describing the spiritual activity and power of that blessed person of the trinity in the resurrection.

Taking this view, it can be seen from v.19 that it was in the power of the Holy Spirit that the preaching alluded to, was given. Some believe that it took place down in Sheol, but such preaching could not have offered deliverance to the lost ones there as the Lord had previously taught that the great gulf was already fixed (see Luke 16:26). Others believe it was to herald to OT saints the triumph of His victory and then to deliver them from Sheol, but the preaching is stated to have been to the antideluvian disobedient ones in prison. Another view is that the spirits are fallen angels, but do we ever read of preaching to angels? Nor do we read of Christ ever preaching in Sheol.

It is submitted that the preaching took place in the period before the flood. Just as we read in this same epistle of the prophets who had the "Spirit of Christ...in them" (1:11), so it was the Spirit of Christ in Noah that preached for those many years when the hearers were disobedient. The result is that when Peter wrote his epistle they were by then "spirits in prison".

The waters of the flood bring us to think of baptism in v.21, this is the type (figure) of death and resurrection in association with Christ. It is the demand of a good conscience toward God.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
2) MOSES THE SERVANT (Jos 1:13)
Introduction

In this series we are looking at some servants of the Lord whose circumstances during their early lives were very different from those in their later years, when the Lord eventually used them in His service. Here we are looking at Moses, who like Abram also had to leave the country where he was brought up before God could use him. Moses was brought up to be a potential sovereign, but he ended up as a servant. Not that he failed to reach his potential, for in becoming a servant of the Lord, he did something that would have a longer-lasting effect than even the greatest act of a pyramid-building Pharaoh–he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the border of the Promised land, so fulfilling God's will.

Moses' birth and early life

When God was going to bring about his promise to Abraham regarding the children of Israel, Acts 7:17, He first prepared His servant, but He was in no hurry in doing so, since it took forty years. When Moses was born, he, like any other male Hebrew child at the time, should have been killed. However his parents, when they saw that he was "fair to God", Acts 7:20 Young's Literal Translation, as well as being naturally beautiful, Heb 11:23 JND, hid him "in faith" for three months. No doubt we all know the eventual outcome of the familiar story–"Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son", Acts 7:21. Moses was obviously saved from certain death when God used his beautiful face to win the heart of his parents, and his sad cry to win the heart of the princess.

Like any Egyptian princess's son he became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and he was "mighty in words and in deeds", v.22. At forty, he must have been quite an energetic, impressive person! All along he seems to have been aware of his real origin, and at the age of forty, "it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel", v.23. He tried to intervene for good in a certain matter, but got a rude shock when he was rebuffed by them, "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not", v.25. It seems this action came after a real personal spiritual crisis–"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward", Heb 11:24-26. However, he had not realised that his privileged upbringing had not properly prepared him for service among God's people, even though his heart was now for them. The well-known result was that he had to flee the country, since his action meant certain death, cp. Exod 2:15 and 4:19.



God's call

Forty years later, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, commissioning him to go back and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. However, the man who ran away from Egypt at the age of forty was a very different person from this eighty-year old out in the desert. In Egypt he was characterised by "mighty words and...deeds", but in the desert he told God that he was not now eloquent, but rather was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue", Exod 4:11. Clearly after forty years in obscurity he "supposed" nothing, but was now totally dependent on God to provide the means of bringing about His people's good. God's provision for the task included a miraculous rod, and Moses own brother Aaron as a spokesman, for he could "speak well", v.14, and "he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God", v.16. But "thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs", v.17. Moses was to be helped by Aaron, but was also personally gifted by God with the rod.

Eventually Moses and Aaron went together to Egypt and spoke to the children of Israel, who "believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped", v.31. They had obviously now accepted Moses as the Lord's servant.

Moses spent forty years in Egypt learning to be a somebody, and then forty years in the desert learning to be a nobody!

Conclusions

Moses ended his life acknowledged as "the servant of the Lord", Deut 34:5, a far higher distinction than that of "the son of Pharaoh's daughter" and any other title he might have gained in Egypt. The greatest lesson that young people can learn today from his life long ago is that this world's wisdom alone is of little use in serving God, and in fact it might, as in the case of Moses, put wrong suppositions into their minds, however sincere we might be about serving the Lord's people. As one has well said, Moses spent forty years in Egypt learning to be a somebody, and then forty years in the desert learning to be a nobody! Education alone will never fit us for the Lord's service among His people: added divine gifts; the complementary gifts in others, and experience in life properly equip us.

The power of Egypt came to grief in the Red Sea, but the power of God took Moses and the people through on dry land, Heb 11:29. Our faith does not stand "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God", 1 Cor 2:5!

The Holy Scriptures (1)

by Malcolm Davis, Leeds

Their Inspiration

The Bible itself claims to be inspired in such verses as 2 Tim 3:14-17 and 2 Pet 1:21, and 2 Tim 3:16 asserts that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God". The last five words of the statement translate one Greek word which could be more accurately rendered "God-breathed". This means that the words of Holy Scripture are breathed out by God Himself, so that they can communicate the very life of God to the human soul and are literally the Word of God to man.

2 Pet 1:21 reveals that the inspiration of the Scriptures includes a human element in its implementation as well as a clearly divine element, for it states that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost". In this statement the Greek word for "men" is *anthrōpoi,* "human-beings", rather than *andres*, "male persons", although the ending of the word indicates that that was true also. The idea of being "moved by the Holy Ghost" is that of being "borne along" like a sailing ship by the power of the sea winds, and so under the full control of the Holy Spirit of God, thus eliminating all possibility of human error.

What did this mean in practice for the writers of Holy Scripture? Simply this, that although they may have used ordinary historical sources, as Luke in the prologue to his Gospel of the life of Christ states that he did, and although other writers related their own real experiences in life, as the Psalmists did in poetical language with all its ordinary figures of speech, all of this was done under the full control of the Holy Spirit. Scripture was not produced by mechanical dictation. Rather, all its writers were specially-prepared by God through His dealings with them during their lives to fulfil the task of composing various parts of the collection of separate books which now form our Bible, and in the act of writing them they were divinely-preserved from all error. It is the human element in the composition of scripture that can alone account for the wide variety of literary styles which are found in the different books of the Bible. It is the divine element in the composition of scripture that can alone account for its absolute truth and power to change lives.

The divine element in inspiration alone accounts for other notable features of scripture also. Thus in 1 Peter 1 we read that the OT prophets did not understand all that they predicted concerning the sufferings and glory of Christ, but were told by the Lord that their prophecies were not intended to be understood until the dawn of the age of grace in which we believers in Christ live today. The fulfilment of all their prophecies of the first coming of Christ as related in the NT encourages us to accept all scripture as inerrant and infallible, true from beginning to end in every detail, as it claims to be in such passages as Ps 119.

Again, it is "All scripture" that is said to be inspired; not just the thoughts, but the exact words used. In theological language this is described as "plenary and verbal inspiration". In fact, every letter in the original manuscripts is vitally important to convey its message



to us. For example, in Gal 3:16 the apostle Paul is at pains to point out the vital significance of the use of the singular word "seed" when referring to Christ as the "Seed of Abraham" mentioned in OT prophecy in Genesis 15 and other similar references.

This view of inspiration is not affected by the fact that the scribes who copied the original autographs of scripture sometimes made mistakes in their work, because it is only the original text that is verbally-inspired. The science of textual criticism is necessary to help us to establish what that original text was, and, when used with caution, is a legitimate aid to Bible study. The ordinary Christian believer's "sixth sense" of what is true or false in doctrine according to 1 John 2:27 can also be a help when deciding which textual variant of a particular verse of scripture is most likely to have been original.

The real danger to the understanding of scripture lies in the realm of so-called literacy or higher criticism as developed chiefly in Germany last century and transmitted to the rest of the world since then. For Higher critics were not believers at all, but rationalists who usually denied the miraculous element in scripture, including all predictive prophecy. They subjected scripture to their own reason, whereas believers submit themselves to the authority of scripture alone. This authority we accept as absolute because of the truth of verbal divine inspiration. For Scripture is self-authenticating, that is, it carries its own authority, conviction, and power to the sincere reader or hearer. It creates faith, new birth, and godly lives in a way that no other set of books has ever done, and as such needs no defence or apology, but simple acceptance as it stands and implicit obedience to its every word as the voice of God Himself to our souls.

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The Epistle to Philemon (2)

by Cecil Cann, Glastonbury

Paul's appreciation of and affection for Philemon (vv.4-7)

Some suggest that Paul had an ulterior motive in mind when praising Philemon. In this way Philemon would be better disposed to comply with Paul's requests regarding Onesimus. This savours of hypocrisy and must be rejected. There was a true bond of affection in the Lord between Paul and Philemon. They held each other in highest esteem.

"I thank my God (always)" (v.4). Vincent in his words studies associates the word "always" with Paul's thanksgiving rather than with his prayers; hence the reading "I thank my God always". What a lovely way to commence this expression of true affection! Philemon was a man of integrity and faithfulness to the things of God and the character of his testimony constantly came to mind. Paul then goes on to explain why this was so.

"Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints" (v.5). This is a powerful statement which is presented in the form of a cross-reference: "faith" relates to the Lord Jesus and "love" relates to fellow believers. The suggestion is that the two components are inseparably linked and the latter depends upon the former. Philemon's love for fellow-believers was never at the expense of his faithfulness to the things of God; his faithfulness to the things of God encouraged his love for all believers. The truth of God's word is always balanced and harmonious. This was reflected in Philemon's testimony and recognised and appreciated by Paul.

"Making mention of thee (remembering thee) in (at) my prayers" (v.4). Remembering is associated with recall and we tend to recall the things that we perceive as being of greatest importance. At Paul's time of private prayer and meditation, the fragrance of Philemon's character and testimony readily came to mind and stimulated thanksgiving and praise.

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in you in Christ Jesus" (v.6). This verse indicates the prayer of Paul for Philemon. He prayed that Philemon's testimony might become even more effectively the vehicle for the communication of the things of Christ to the glory of God. The word "effectual" suggests supernatural power. There was no such thing as theoretical or academical truth as far as Paul was concerned. If it really is truth it must have a practical issue.

Remembrance of this characteristic of Philemon's testimony brought joy to Paul even in that dismal prison where he was confined when he wrote. He continues, therefore: "we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the hearts of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (v.7).

Matters relating to Onesimus (vv.8-21)

"Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin (order) thee that which is convenient (appropriate/befitting)" (v.8). Paul's position and experience as an apostle (the title is used in Paul's letter to the church at Colosse) might allow him

to order or demand that Philemon comply with his request and no doubt Philemon would have responded favourably to such an approach. But Paul does not order and the reason is relevant and important. He had learned from Christ's example that the manner in which a request is made helps determine the nature and quality of the outcome. Paul is following the precedent of Christ on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius when He needed to speak to Peter about his love for Him. The disciples were cold, fatigued and disappointed when He greeted them on the shore in the early morning. It was only after a fire of coals and a suitable meal and rest had been provided that the Lord Jesus graciously spoke with Peter. We read: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" (John 21:15). The outcome was that Peter's love was never in doubt again. He bore faithful testimony to Christ and (tradition asserts) died as a martyr to His cause. Paul sought an equally favourable, willing response from Philemon and pleaded on the basis of their affection for each other and common knowledge and experience of the love of Christ: "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (v.9)

"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me" (vv.10,11). His plea was for the unprofitable Onesimus whom he had led to Christ. Onesimus had shown by his conduct that his profession of faith in Christ was real. Salvation/new birth of a soul is a secret work of the Holy Spirit. It is primarily a personal matter between God and the individual. We can make judgment about it only on the basis of what we see and, sadly, sometimes we are terribly wrong! According to Matt 13 we can make judgment about the germination of the good seed of the gospel only when we see the fruit of that germination. Paul rejoiced in the evidence of spiritual fruit in Onesimus' life. But more...

"Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own heart: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered to me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy benefit (good deed) should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly" (vv.12-14). Paul would dearly have loved Onesimus to remain with him, but progress in the things of God is a matter of integrity more than convenience. Integrity in the things of God required that Onesimus, the poor, unprofitable, guilty slave, return to put things right with his master Philemon. The only evidence of spiritual life is spiritual growth. Onesimus' progress in spiritual matters is seen in that with full knowledge of what the legal consequences might be for a runaway slave, he returned and submitted himself to his master.

Regions Beyond

Pioneer Assembly Planting in Botswana

by Ian Rees

With gratitude to God, Rebecca and I testify to His faithfulness over 13 years service, with its joys, trials, and abiding fruit, in Botswana.

Francistown We moved to Francistown in late 1986, after language study in Serowe. Francistown is the second largest population centre in Botswana, and is strategically placed as the hub of the north. It is both a government administrative and commercial centre and is also an important centre for the second-largest tribe in Botswana, the Kalanga.

Beginnings of Assembly Work in Francistown When we moved to Francistown in September, 1986, there was no assembly, no assembly believers or property. We began the work with a Sunday School (SS) which met in our home. Sixteen children attended our first SS but when we left Botswana in 1997, there were over 200 in the combined SS and Bible Class, including a large group of about fifty deaf and dumb children. I was approached by the Chairman of the Botswana Society for the Deaf in 1991, who suggested the deaf children living in hostels near our Hall should attend our SS instead of being bussed to the Catholic church. He himself had once attended a Gospel Hall SS in the south of England, though is now an ardent Roman Catholic. Rebecca taught the first group of deaf and dumb children, and other sisters have since been involved, who now continue this work. We thank God for the children who have memorised Scripture and heard the gospel of the grace of God, some professing faith in Christ.

Gospel Preaching The first Gospel meetings were also held in our home. After several months there were professions of faith, some leading to baptisms. The first to be baptised was Charles van Dyck, a Ghanaian, who left the Anglican Church where he was a warden, eventually becoming an esteemed elder in the assembly. He and his family are now back in Ghana. They need prayer as they try to start an assembly in that needy land. We used a swimming pool for the first baptism, that of Dr Mompati, who had by then joined us in Francistown. Gradually the gospel and ministry meetings held in our living room, spilled over into the back garden, where we sat under a cloth awning, shielded from the sun. We did not break bread in Francistown for eighteen months, until we saw God was blessing the work.

The Bookshop We soon opened a Christian Bookshop in Francistown, the nearest being five hours away in Gaborone. We opened in an upstairs room with the grand total of six titles! Peter Marewa, the second to be baptised, has over the years been a valuable help in the Bookshop, taking increased responsibilities. The Bookshop has relocated twice, and the present spacious premises is run by Mrs Anne West, in fellowship in the assembly. She is a gifted and energetic lady, who had quadrupled the turnover of books since we left.

The Hall Building of the Hall commenced in 1989, and it was opened in 1990. It seats three hundred, and is often full at SS functions. The Lord



wonderfully provided for the building which was opened without debt. God is faithful. In subsequent years we built Sunday School classrooms around a square in the centre of which is the outdoor baptistry–recent news indicates the believers continue to make good use of it.

Maun and Selebi-Phikwe For a year or so, until the Halsbands from Canada moved to Maun, brother Dan Nguluka, a commended Zambian brother, and I held a monthly meeting in Maun for students, who had been saved under Dan's preaching. This entailed over five hours driving distance for both of us. Sid and Karen Halsband subsequently began breaking bread there with some of those students. Jane Motlaleselelo and her husband, Selelo, saved in Francistown, are now based in Maun.

We have also given regular help to the assembly in Selebi-Phikwe, an hour and a half south of Francistown. This was begun in a Zambian brother's home, and considerably helped by Albert Horan. John and Margaret Rutter moved there from Francistown at the invitation of the saints. John is presently attempting to register the assembly in keeping with the law of Botswana. Pray for him as he tries to register without Bible School certificates (which are insisted upon by the Registrar), and as he draws up an assembly Constitution which will be acceptable to the Registrar. Some requirements officially insisted upon by the Registrar, such as voting rights in the assembly, are serious hurdles for all assemblies seeking to register in Botswana. We provided the plans for the building of the Hall there, and the first phase has been built.

Livingstone, Zambia Over the years, we have been able to help the believers in Livingstone. As a result of a series of meetings given several years ago on the New Testament assembly, followed by their own conviction from Scripture, a number of godly men from a CMML group left to form an assembly after the New Testament pattern. This new assembly continues even today, meeting in a schoolroom and calling themselves Livingstone Gospel Hall. Over the years since the formation of this assembly, we have sought to strengthen the brethren, and leave them good literature, David and Priscilla MacAllister moved there a few years ago. Pray for them, as they help the assembly and build a Hall.

UK Relocation We returned to Bath, one of our commending assemblies, in March of 1997. Our early return to the UK was necessitated by a breakdown in my health. Our children have settled into British schools fairly well, though it was difficult as all but one was born in Africa. Adam and Nathan were baptised here in Manvers Hall a month ago, for which we thank the Lord. The brethren in Manvers have encouraged us to continue full-time in the Lord's work, here in UK. We are thankful to the Lord for this expression of confidence. We have learned many lessons in Botswana, proved the Lord there, and hope to continue in His service here in the homeland, in His will. Do pray for the saints in Francistown, Maun, Selebi-Phikwe and Livingstone.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (3)

by John Gillespie

Third Stage **Circumcision: Obedience** (Luke 2:21)

What bloody rite is this
That old as Abraham is,
That made meek Moses to his wife
"Bridegroom of blood" by edge of knife?
And now the very infant mild
On eighth day after birth,
(Forgotten all the new-born mirth,
The grace and love of such a child),
Suffers and seals the covenanted rite.

Not only of a woman come
To Gentile as to Israelite,
But, under law He came. The sum:
That He obediently might be,
Now circumcised, Servant for truth of God,
First coming to His own scattered abroad,
And all God's promises for them procure.

So coming He in all things sure
Was like unto His brethren made.
And now identified with carnal blade
Enters the way of pain and blood.
What early sign is this of holy rood!
The babe beset with wound and blood could lie
In cradle; yet the Cross where He would die
Lay stretched before Him. There He would give
His blood in death for men that they might live.

But what of man uncircumcised, what do
Outside all covenant right, and not a Jew?
The fleshly nick can be a vaunted boast.

'Tis keeping God's commands that matters most.
True circumcision alone is of the heart,
Not in the letter, but the spirit's part.
He is a Jew who outwardly is one,
No thought of race, by love's obedience won.
They only now are circumcised indeed
Who have put off the heart's impurity,
And have put on the Christ's simplicity,
Better than any legal cut or creed.

For them is gone the mutilating dread!
And all who once were spiritually dead
Through mere uncircumcision of their flesh,
And not enclosed within the covenant mesh,
Are now in Christ so truly circumcised
In lip and ear and heart thus purified
With His own holy circumcision of life.
Not made at all with manual tear of knife.

"We are the circumcision who worship God",
Our heart's devotion by the Spirit led,
Who find all joy in Christ. (The flesh is dead
By surgery of crucifixion wrought,
Not in the punctuality of rite
On eighth day kept with flint). My glory be,
All else forbid, in the dear Cross of Christ
Which slays me to the world and it to me.

Let no man glory in my flesh one scar
That may the law of Christ my Master mar.
No other stigma let my body wear
Than brand-mark of the blest Lord Jesus bear!

Questions Disciples Ask

by J Grant, Bridge of Weir

What are they among so many?

The need was great and resources seemingly inadequate. Five thousand men to be fed, and only five loaves and two fishes to satisfy this large multitude. Little wonder that Andrew asked the question "what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). Philip had already declared that two hundred pennyworth of bread, a large sum of money, would only be sufficient to give each of them a little.

In a day when many assemblies are faced with smaller numbers and when the need around us is so great, many ask the same question as they seek to fulfil the commission of the Master.

What lessons the disciples were about to learn. They were making the mistake of measuring what was available without taking the Master into account, but would see that the problem of resources only existed until all was given to Him. Yet how little they had available. It was the meal for a young lad, not even what would satisfy a grown man. The moment when the two fishes and five loaves were given into His hands, however, all changed, and the apparent limitations disappeared.

They watched with wonder as He kept on breaking the bread until everyone present was supplied. The One who created all things is not restrained by material resources. So it is with us. Resources which we have and keep for ourselves are limited in what they can accomplish, but when we give all into the hands of the Master it is He who ensures that we meet the need which He has placed before us. These servants had to learn that He never charges us with a responsibility without ensuring that it can be carried out. When resources are inadequate, the little which we have becomes much when given to Him.

Moses travelling from the desert to confront Pharaoh, Samuel as a lad in the tabernacle girded with a linen ephod, Gideon threshing wheat by the winepress, Shamgar with his ox goad, David with his five stones approaching the might of the giant of Gath, eleven men scattered as their Lord was crucified and three men setting out alone from Antioch, are all examples of what impossible tasks can be accomplished when our little is given to Him.

But if with so little we work for God, how effective can that work really be? We noted Philip's opinion that a great amount of money would only provide a little for every one present. When the Master works how different is the outcome. Not now a little for everyone, but enough to fill them all. "When they were filled" is how John marks the end of the meal. The supply coming from the hands of the Lord is never meagre and He never leaves any unsatisfied.

When, therefore, we feel the weakness of the numbers in our assembly, the weakness of our health, the limited material resources at our disposal and say "what are these among so many", let us determine to put all that we have into the hands of the One who makes much out of little.

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

JUNE 8-11
Killycurragh Gospel Hall: 8.00pm. Ministry, J Hay.

JULY 26-31
Portrush Gospel Hall: Ministry, D Gilliland.

AUGUST 23-28
Portrush Gospel Hall: Ministry, T Bentley.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

JUNE 6
Gardenstown: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. J Hay, A Gamble, A Carew.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 7.45pm. J Allen. Mr Allen continues in ministry Monday to Friday at 7.45pm.
Mayfield: Conference weekend - Friday 5th, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. J Paterson (senior). Third epistle of John. Saturday 6th, Annual Conference in Mayfield Combined School at 3.00pm. T Meekin, A Meikle, J Paterson.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. at 7.00pm. I Grant.

JUNE 13
Greengairs: Gospel Rally in Greengairs Gospel Hall. Prayer at 3.30pm. Open Air, 4.00pm. Interval 5.30pm. Ministry at 6.00pm. A Carew.

JUNE 20
Bo'ness: Hebron Hall, School Brae. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Baker, I Grant, J Riddle. Mr Riddle continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Kirkmuirhill: Gospel Rally in Kirkmuirhill Gospel Hall. Prayer 3.30pm. Open Air at 4.00pm. Interval, 5.30pm. Ministry at 6.00pm. T Wilson.

JUNE 27
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road. Prayer at 3.30pm. Open-air meeting at 4.00pm. Ministry at 7.00pm. J Hay.

JULY 4
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. Bible Study Week until Friday July 10. Sat & Mon to Thurs 7.30pm. Sunday 3.30pm. and 6.30pm. Mon-Fri 10.30am.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

JUNE 6
Blyth: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, Devonworth Place, Cowpen Estate at 2.30pm. M Radcliffe, J Grant.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Maunder.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. H Barnes.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. J Dickson. Mr Dickson continues Monday to Thursday at 8.00pm.

JUNE 13
Bury St Edmunds: Lancaster Gospel Hall, Tollgate Lane at 7.00pm. E Parmenter.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel, High Street at 7.00pm. D Spence.
Ely: Cambs, Gospel Hall, Ship Lane. Missionary & Homeworker Report meeting at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. T

Bentley, C Geddes, J McMaster, J Short.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St at 7.00pm. R Maffey.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. J Coltman.

JUNE 20
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Collings.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. D Spence.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Leicester: York St Gospel Hall, off Granby St at 7.30pm. E Griffiths.
Swindon: Penhill Gospel Hall, Penhill Drive at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.
West Mersea: Assembly Hall, Annual Meetings at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. T Proffitt, A Wiseman.
Weston-Super-Mare: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Hobbs (visits to Albania illustrated with slides).

JUNE 27
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Riddle.
Hurst: near Reading. Annual Conference in Hurst Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. and 6.30pm. C Lacey, W Gardiner, M Hall.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St at 7.00pm. J Grant.
London: Hope Hall, 222 Kilburn Lane, Queens Park. Annual Conference at 3.30pm. and 6.15pm. A Gamble, I Jackson.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. F Beevers.

JULY 4
Barnsley: Mottram Hall at 7.30pm. J Riddle.
Douglas: Isle of Man, Switzerland Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. F Whitelock.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St at 7.00pm. D West.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 730pm. P Bees.

JULY 11
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. E Honeyball.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. DOWN
Portavogie: April 9th. The annual conference was packed to capacity and the word was ministered to profit by A McShane, WJ Nesbitt, J Burnett, J Paterson, N Turkington, S Ferguson and D Kane.
Annalong: A Davidson had a week of well attended ministry meetings on prophetic subjects, concluding 24th April.
Rathfriland: R Fairley and B Glendinning commenced gospel meetings in hall at School Road on 26th April with encouraging interest and attendance. Prayer valued.

Co. ANTRIM
Ballybollan: J Thompson and N Fleck commenced gospel meetings in the gospel hall on 26th April. Interest in attendance and in the district encouraging. Prayer valued.
Ballywatermoy: Annual Conference on 25th April was held in the more spacious surroundings of Cullybackey High School. Much larger than usual, and considered a good meeting. JG Hutchinson, R Jordan, J Dickson and T Meekin shared in the ministry. J



Dickson continued the following week in the gospel hall with helpful teaching.
Clough: S Jennings had a week of Bible Readings with the assembly here.

Co. ARMAGH
Armagh: S McBride and T Wright hope to commence tent meetings at end of May some four miles from the city on the Portadown Road.
Ahorey: The assembly purpose to be at Marlacoo Lake each Sunday at 4.00pm. for gospel open air June-August.
Lurgan: A McShane and M Radcliffe hope to commence in the gospel in mid May.

Co. MONAGHAN
Erryroe: S McBride is continuing into the eleventh week of gospel effort (end April) with this small border assembly. Some nights hall has been packed plus ante-room. Quite a few local people have been coming. Prayer greatly valued.

Co. CAVAN
D Gilliland and R Eadie hope to have a gospel series in a farm house on the border of this county. Prayer valued for this effort.

Co. LONDONDERRY
Coleraine: HS Paisley (Canada) expects to commence tent meetings on 17th May.

Co. TYRONE
Aughavey: Gospel meetings were continuing at end of April, with some blessing, conducted by R Eadie and S Maze in a portable hall.
Drumlegagh: A Davidson and N Woods are having gospel meetings in portable hall. It is twenty-six years since the gospel was preached in the immediate area. Meetings started 3rd May. Prayer appreciated for this needy area.
Killycurragh: S Patterson and T Wallace have seen God's hand in blessing during seven weeks of gospel meetings. A man and a woman professed to be saved. Believers were encouraged to see locals attending who had not been in the hall before. The word was faithfully preached with power.

BELFAST & DISTRICT
Cregagh Street: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken have had an encouraging start to their gospel meetings in this hall. Meetings commenced 19th April.
Belfast Easter Conference: Held again in the Ulster Hall, Belfast from 11th till 15th April. Ministry of the Word was shared by JG Hutchinson, D Kane, S Ferguson, J Burnett, WJ Nesbitt, T Thompson (Alaska), A McShane, J Stubbs, J Flynn, N Louden, S Jennings, T Meekin and N Turkington.

Reports of the Lord's Work in homelands were given by R Eadie, G Stewart, T McNeill, and S McBride, and reports of work in foreign lands were given by C Raggett (Botswana), P Grieve (S Africa), T Thompson (Alaska) and W Halliday (Africa). Numbers were very good with a large number of young people present and the conference was considered good and profitable. On the final evening the gospel was faithfully preached to a large audience by JG Hutchinson.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Harrogate: The Ayrshire Bible Exhibition spent 15 days in Harrogate. The first 12 days in Woodfield Gospel Hall, saw 530 children attend from 16 junior schools plus over 100 adults. It was then moved to a local Church of England High School for 3 days. Nearly 600 students aged 11-16 were given guided tours during the 5 day lessons. Each child received gospel literature and prayer would be valued for follow-up school visits to take assemblies and to present some 70 Bibles to winners of the worksheets.

LANCASHIRE

Brierfield: Folowing the visit to Harrogate the Bible Exhibition visited Hebron Hall, Brierfield for 5 days. During this period over 450 school children and their teachers were conducted round the exhibition. In addition approximately 150 adults visited during the day and evening sessions. Arrangements are now being made for R Plant to attend morning assembly at the 7 schools at which Bibles will be presented to those pupils with the best worksheets. It was also encouraging to see many Asian children visiting the exhibition. The prayers of the Lord's people are valued.

Believers were encouraged following their annual conference at Bove Town Gospel Hall, Glastonbury on Good Friday, April 10th. Afternoon and evening sessions were well attended with profitable ministry on 'The Priesthood and Consecration of the Believer' and 'Lessons on Revival from the book of Nehemiah' was provided by Mr G Payne of Swinton, Manchester. Mr Payne also addressed the Sunday School Easter Family Service on Easter Sunday afternoon. The message was challenging and those present included a good number of parents and friends of the children who attend the Sunday School.

WEST MIDLANDS

A number of conferences and ministry meetings were held in the region over the Easter Holidays.

On Good Friday J Coltman and C Hutchison spoke at Sheldon in South East Birmingham whilst on the following Monday D Bees and P Bees ministered the word across at New Street Erdington.

Down at Coventry N Patel and R Collings spoke at the Church Street annual conference. At Upper Hill Street D Gillies had three nights on the Book of Zechariah, with further ministry at a later date by G Gordge on the Lord's Power in Miracles from Matthew 8.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

George Meikle and Roy Marshall have been spending the month of April visiting and distributing the Word of God in the villages of Thornhill, Gargunnock and Kippen, near Stirling, and also with a view to village meetings in the future. The prayers of the saints would be appreciated for the Word of God to prosper, and for future guidance.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mr William Atcheson on 30th March aged 85 years. Our brother was saved for over 50 years and for most of his christian life was in happy fellowship in the Portavogie assembly where he was loved and appreciated by all the saints. Faithful to the assembly and consistent in life and testimony until, after a short stay in hospital he was called home. His wife pre-deceased him five years ago and now they are together in the home of the saints. Prayer requested for family relatives.

Ellen Bunting on 12th April aged 90 years, in Sydney, Australia. Born Ellen Crawford in Belfast and saved at the age of 21 and received into Ballymagarrick assembly. Married William Bunting, evangelist and first editor of the Assembly Testimony magazine. A diligent homemaker, hospitable and faithful to the Lord. Her husband pre-deceased her in 1966 and she spent the last ten years with her daughter Doreen in Australia. The funeral was from Bexley Gospel Hall conducted by John McDowell and Raymond and Victor Wilson.

Mr Tom Caldwell on 28th March, aged 81. Saved in his late twenties, he was baptised and received into fellowship in Cambuslang. Later in Baillieston, Newton Mearns and for the last 17 years in the Chappell Street assembly Barrhead. An ardent student of the Word, he bore a good testimony throughout his life. He was regularly at the meetings till about 18 months ago. He and his wife Ella moved to Auchlochan where she was able to care for him in the period of his increasing weakness.

Mr Tom Hartley on 14th April, aged 74. Saved in his early teens and soon after received into the assembly in Quilly, Co Tyrone. In 1942 he was commended to the Londonderry assembly and took an interest in all aspects of it. In later years he was seen as a wise guide and esteemed overseer. On his retiral he moved to Portrush, continuing his active interest in the assembly there. He was a christian gentleman, esteemed and loved by all, the large funeral being a witness to this.

Mr William (Billy) Jones on March 4th, aged 81. Ever appreciative of his personal salvation since being saved in his teens through Isa 53:5. Billy bore a bright testimony to his Lord both among his business associates and the saints with whom he met, first in Ahorey and then in Enniskillen. His words of encouragement, his gospel interest and his practical generosity,

indicating a deep devotion to his Lord, will be greatly missed. The family have sustained great loss–prayer is specially requested for his widow.

Mrs Margaret Lawrence on the 27th February aged 97. Our sister was saved in 1919 following the preaching of Fred Elliot. She was baptised and received into fellowship at Assembly Hall, Aberdeen in 1922. In 1948 along with her husband James they were received into the fellowship of Holburn Gospel Hall. Our sister was widowed in 1971 but continued faithfully in her attendance at the assembly gatherings, until old age prevented this. Although absent she continued her fellowship and interest in all aspects of the assembly until the Lord called her to higher service.

Mrs Agnes McCready on 24th March. saved as a young girl at meetings conducted by Mr Moneypenny. Afterwards baptised and received into Pound St, Larne and latterly associated with Craigyhill assembly where she bore a good testimony. Mr Brian Glendinning and Mr Thomas Meekin shared the funeral service.

Mrs Martha McCullough on 16th March. Saved under the preaching of Frank Knox in Ballynashee as a girl of 16. Along with her husband James, who was saved during the same series of meetings, our sister was received into fellowship at Ballynashee. Prayer requested for her husband and family who appreciated the large attendance at her funeral, which was shared by M McKillen and W Wylie.

Miss Doris Scott on 26th March. Saved in early teens at tent meetings conducted by Mr Frank Knox. A faithful life-long member of Adam Street assembly in North Belfast sharing with sister Nan a deep interest in the preaching of the gospel. Though quiet and reserved, Doris had a consistent public testimony in her shop beside the Hall and abounded in hospitality to the Lord's servants. The funeral services were taken by brethren Albert McShane and Sam Ferguson.

Mrs Rita Stalker, called home suddenly but peacefully on 22nd March aged 77. Rita was saved, baptised and received into fellowship in her early teens in Grangemouth assembly where she gathered faithfully until her homecall. Widowed at the age of 24, she was a dearly loved mother, grandma and great grandma. A very gifted organist, she used her talent well and will be sorely missed for this, and for her interest and commitment to the Lord's work. The large funeral bore witness to the esteem in which she was held.

Mrs W Stewart (Lily) peacefully on 3rd April. Our sister was brought up in the Cookstown area and was saved



when 16 through the influence of a Sunday School teacher. Soon after she had the joy of leading her twin brothers to the Saviour. Residing in Ballymena from 1934 along with her husband, she enjoyed fellowship in the assembly in Cambridge Avenue being a regular attender at the gatherings as long as health permitted. Our sister was actively involved in the sisters' missionary class and was a real help meet for her husband.

Mr John Wilson on 21st March. Saved at the age of 21 and received into fellowship in the Wellington Street assembly, Ballymena, moving later to Harryville when the assembly was established there in 1951. He was an overseer, also the missionary correspondent, and for 40 years taught in Tully Sunday School. His personal exercise brought a gospel tent to his farm in 1946 and some blessing resulted from this. A monthly meeting was then commenced which still continues. The very large funeral bore witness to his testimony in the district.

PERSONALIA

North Devon: believers on holiday will find a warm welcome at the Bethel, The Quay, Appledore. Letters of commendation appreciated. Breaking of Bread 10.00am. For further details, please contact (01237) 474466.

Change of correspondent for the Gospel Hall, Mottram St, Barnsley: now Mr John M Clegg, Hebron Cottage, 176 Penistone Rd, Shelley, Huddersfield, W Yorks, HD8 8HZ. Tel: (01484) 607787.

Wanted by Lunda Bible Revision Team. One copy of "The History of our Bible" by PJ Hunt published by Ladybird Books Ltd, Loughborough. KE Barker, Box 11637, Chingola, Zambia.

Visitors to the Isle of Man welcome at the Gospel Hall, Switzerland Road, Douglas. For times of meetings and accommodation contact Mr M Justice. Tel: (01624) 832769.

As from the end of April, the assembly meeting at Regent Place, Illfracombe will cease to gather. With the homecall of our brother Ken White, numbers have become too few to continue. The assembly would like to thank all the visitors who gave their help and fellowship over the past years.

For Faskally House - help required for dining room etc. 15th-19th June and 24th-28th August 1998 (d.v.) - might suit students/young people. Please phone Christine (01796) 474411.

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Christian Books New & Secondhand (including Brethren authors/publishers). Send 38p stamp for lists to Berith Publications (BM), 6 Orchard Rd, Lewes, E Sussex, BN7 2HB.

HOLIDAY HOMES

The publishers cannot be held responsible for any difficulties which may be experienced by those responding to these adverts.

Aberporth, West Wales: 2 secluded beautifully furnished and fully equipped 2 bedroom chalets, each sleeps 5. Available throughout year in peaceful unspoilt country 4/5 mins from sandy beaches - no pets. Tel: Pauline (01443) 209208.

Blackpool: Lochinvar Christian Guest House. Join John and Mollie McArdle for a happy holiday with good food and warm christian fellowship, central heating, tea/coffee facilities all rooms. Most rooms ensuite. Special senior citizens weeks: May 10-24; Aug. 23-30. All holidays at 1996 prices. Send for brochure or ring (01253) 351761. 14 Chatsworth Ave., Norbreck, Blackpool FY2 9AN.

Bushmills: Self catering accommodation available 1 mile from Bushmills, Co. Antrim. Tel: (012657) 31401.

Caravan/camping: Bring your caravan, dormobile, tent, to our mini site at Valleyview, Killough, Kilmacanogue, Co Wicklow (usual facilities). Convenient to shops, mountains and sea. Contact R Rowan - Tel: 01-2829565 (from UK & N.I. 003531 2829565).

Carmarthenshire: Farmhouse B&B. E.M., homebaking. Warm fellowship in home/assembly. Visit Cardigan/Tenby coastlines. Mrs Christine Hartridge, Tyffynnonwen, Cwmbach, Whitland. Tel: (01994) 448726.

Carnlough: N. Ireland, Bethany House on Antrim Coast. Ideal for touring nine glens and giants causeway. Open all year round. Christian fellowship, home cooking. C.H. all rooms. En-suite available. James & Mary Aiken, 5 Bay Road, Carnlough. Tel: (01574) 885667.

Co. Cork & Kerry. Holidays in the beautiful south west of Ireland. All dates available. Full colour brochure. Contact Chris Brown, (01455) 290563.

Cottage available at Helions Bumpstead again. Tel: (01440) 730288.

Co. Wicklow: 17 miles Dublin. Convenient to Glendalough, Powerscourt Gardens, mountains and sea. Christian home situated in scenic area. Bed & Breakfast (three rooms ensuite). Mabel Rowan, Valleyview, Killough, Kilmacanogue. Tel: 01-2829565 (from UK/N.I. 00353 1 2829565).

Cromer, Norfolk: Detached cottage, sleeps 4/5 + cot. Comfortably furnished. C.H., enclosed garden, parking. 1 mile sea. Close to local assembly. Tel. (01263) 511840.

Fermanagh Lakeland, N Ireland. Christian Guesthouse set in heart of Fermanagh Lakes, en-suite rooms, one ground floor. Tea-making facilities, good food, homely atmosphere. Mrs Joan Moore, The Olde Schoolhouse, Killadeas BT94 1RE. Tel: (013656) 21688.

Florida: Kissimmee Nr. Orlando. Privately-owned 3-bedroomed villa. Heated pool. Telephone (01899) 220995.

Helhoughton, Norfolk, two bedroom flint cottage in small village. C.H., and fully



equipped. Sleeps 4/5. Warm welcome at assembly in Burnham Market. Easy reach of coast and places of interest. Further details from Martin Jones, Tel: (0181) 3008602.

Isle of Wight: Rowanhurst Christian Hotel. Warm Christian holiday fellowship. All rooms ensuite with teamaking facilities. Brochures from Peter & Eileen Atkinson, 88 Sandown Road, Lake Sandown, PO36 9JX. Tel: (01983) 402663.

Mid-Devon, Great Foldhay Farm, Zeal Monachonim, B&B £14pp. E.M. optional. Quiet valley, large garden, non-smoking. Mrs Sylvia Kimber. Tel: (01363) 82885.

Modern six berth caravan near Polzeath, Cornwall. Two bedrooms, bathroom, quiet woodland park. Tel: (01752) 851742.

Morecambe: Silverwell is open all year for you. Some ensuites, known for good food. Offers to church groups, discounts for over 60's in May and June, and families in July and August. Details: Graeme Last, 20 West End Rd., Morecambe, Lancs. LA4 4DL. Tel: (01524) 410532.

Newtownstewart, Co. Tyrone. Modern Farmhouse B&B. En-suite available. Ideally situated for touring. Mrs E Beattie. Tel: (016626) 61421.

Portleven, Cornwall: Carn Del Christian Guest House. Right on seafront in area of outstanding natural beauty. All rooms have magnificent sea views. Most en-suite. Warm fellowship. Tel: (01326) 562431.

Portrush/Bushmills: Brown's Country House:
1. Friendly Atmosphere
2. Food Superb
3. Facilities all en-suite
Phone for full details, Mrs Jean Brown: (012657) 32777/31627.

Portstewart: Student accommodation. Flat to let on promenade from 1st September '98 to end of May '99. Tel: (01265) 42443.

Portstewart: Luxury bungalow available with outstanding sea views from all front rooms - 4-5 bedrooms, sleeps 6-8. Only 2 minutes drive from beach. Brochure from S & T Moore, 11-15 Bridge St, Coleraine. Tel: (day) 01265 53300, (evening) 01849 479626.

Scotland: B&B En-suite available. Ideally situated for touring central and western areas. Murray, Rosedale, 53 Main Street, Calderbank by Airdrie. Tel: (01236) 751797.

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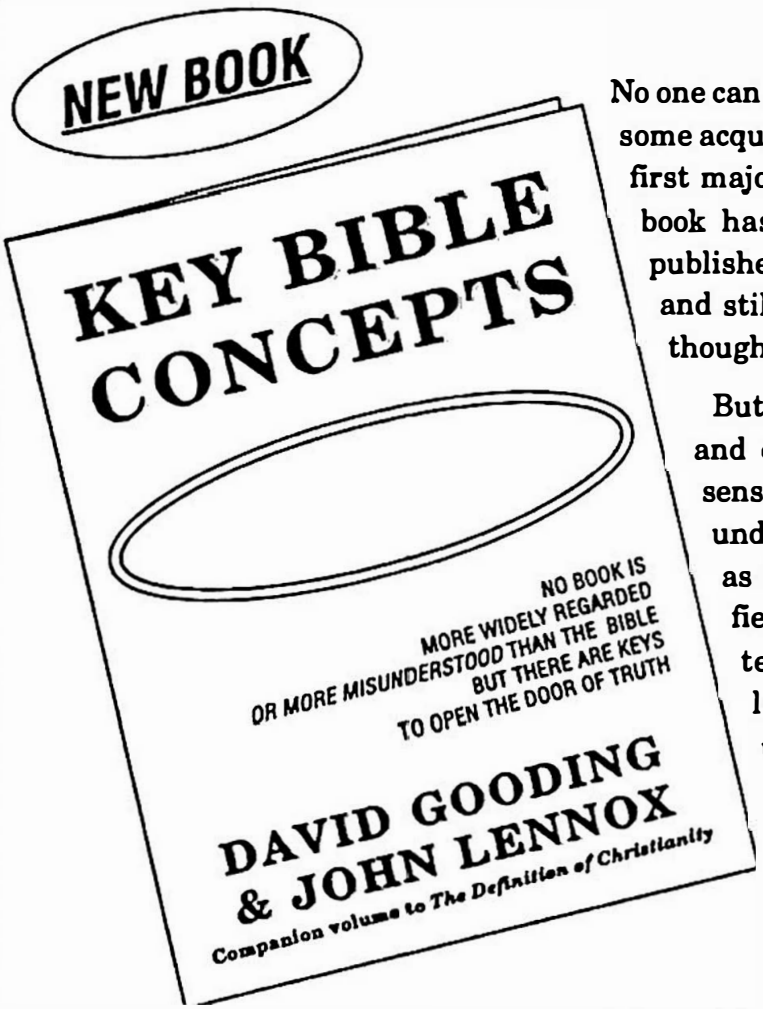
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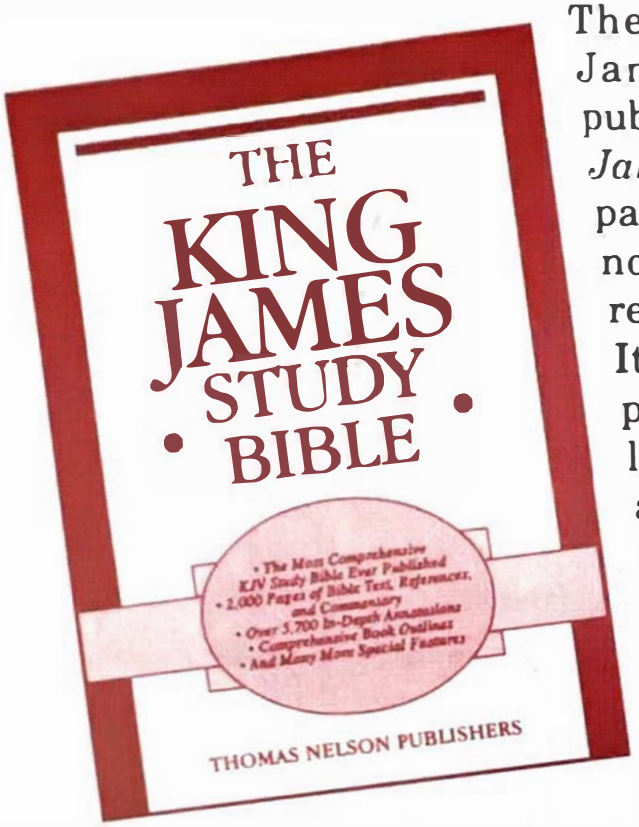
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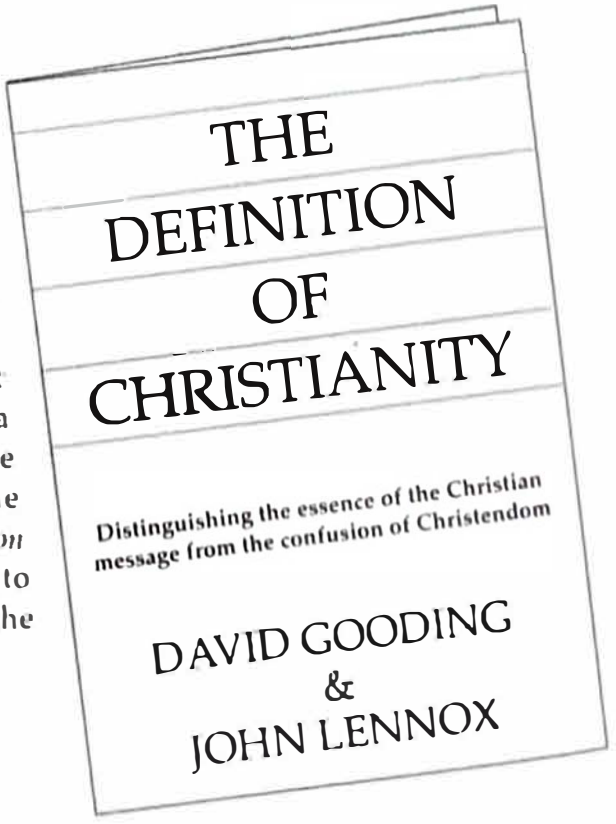
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Believer's

Magazine

JULY 1998

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Editorial

Gadara witnessed it. Jerusalem would have been confronted with it in Saul of Tarsus. Even Crete became aware of it. And many another place from then until now has struggled to explain it: the power that transform lives, "the power of God unto salvation". O to see it more in evidence.

Yet every generation does witness God at work in the lives of men and women. Sometimes the results are as spectacular in one as notable as the man of Gadara. Sometimes the change is marked in the lifestyle, habits and demeanour. That is the story of Crete where God worked on the most unreliable of material to produce men and women whose lives were to reflect the wonder of the grace of God. Let us not be driven in despair to conclude that God is any less powerful or any less disposed to begin the daunting task of shaping previously-worthless lives.

We know ony too well from our own experience that the work of conforming us to Christ is not completed in the moment of salvation. The gospel does immediately change more than destiny but it is the beginning of the great work, not its end. God will continue to work to make that saint more like his Lord. Grace alone could *reach* in salvation and grace will continue to *teach* that the individual saint might manifest Christ (Titus 2:11-12).

That patient heart that in grace teaches His own expects the taught to manifest the same patient forbearing with the newly-saved and the same gracious application of the Word and the grace to enable the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts in a life that had been the very prey of such base forces. What a test of the shepherd heart! What a test of the teacher's skill!

There is no answer to addressing the deficiencies we detect when we have to face the features of Crete or Gadara in the world's just-in-time training. Let there be no ambiguity about this matter: no crash course in counselling, no seminar for leaders, nor top-up training for pastors would provide what only the Spirit of God can develop over a period of years and often painfully through a curriculum of bitter experiential learning in the school of God. There are no short courses under the Spirit's discipline.

But we need those who will draw alongside the lambs of the flock and will feed them with food convenient. Especially where the power of sin and the marks of shame have been evident, the shepherd's burden will be great. Grace is able to lay a foundation in that soul, a foundation on which a God-honouring life can be built. But the laying of that foundation may be slow as God builds for eternity. What we might try to rush through, the all-wise God may take months over. Too often we are not in harmony with the great work He is continuing and our demeanour manifests itself in features as unseemly as those we despise in the slow learner He is graciously moulding. For that reason grace must continue to teach us also.

TW

The Prayers of Elijah

by the late Bill Craig, Hurst

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are – what a comforting thought! Yet he was a man who saw miracles such as we cannot hope to see. The limitations of the flesh, for Elijah, were overcome by his prayer exercise.

Private Prayer: It is after Elijah's private prayer, unrecorded in the OT, but stated in James' epistle, that Elijah comes on the scene. He is introduced as an inhabitant of Gilead (1 Kings 17), a terse description of a man perhaps insignificant to his contemporaries but known to his God. The Lord always raises up the man for the moment: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samson and Samuel are but a few examples. Elijah's character, so liable to faults, was fortified by his communion with God. The man of prayer is easily recognized; the precious metal, although rare, defies counterfeit by its quality. Gold passes the acid test, but fool's gold, although like the genuine article superficially, fails, and is exposed for what it is.

How valuable is the contribution of men of prayer and what a wealth of experience behind them! Such cannot come but by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). It was said of George Muller that he found the first twenty minutes of prayer the most difficult – many of us would find twenty minutes of prayer an unusual achievement. While Saul went from bad to worse, what was Samuel doing? He was crying to God all night. When David Livingstone's servant came into the hut he found his master dead in the attitude of private prayer. Elijah prayed in private and proclaimed in public the message that he had received from the Lord. Well did the poet write:

"Let him see thee with thy God
He will not forget it afterwards".

Public Prayer: A vast crowd had gathered. Royalty was there, and the popular priesthood. But thank God for the dissenter: one solitary figure stood there. But one with God is a majority, and eight hundred and fifty prophets of the false god Baal were there to spend their last day on earth witnessing the truth of God and the errors of their ways. Calmly Elijah beckoned for the people to draw near. His first question was discouraging and the people said nothing in reply. The altar was rebuilt, the wood and the sacrifice were laid in order and the whole was thoroughly soaked in water until the trench around the altar was full to the brim. Then Elijah prayed...succinct and effective, the prayer was quickly answered. Down came the fire, and sacrifice, altar and water disappeared in the supernatural course of events. Elijah's faith had been vindicated. What was the result? The Baalish priesthood was removed from Elijah and the stage was set for the drought to finish.

Persevering Prayer: Here we see a reversal of events. Elijah having prayed, pronounced that the rain would cease. Now he tells Ahab that rain is imminent and subsequently prays for rain. Then he climbed to the top of Carmel – a vantage point – to view the

results of his prayer. With his face between his knees he prayed. Naaman dipped six times to no avail; Elijah prayed six times with no apparent answer. But the seventh time was different: Naaman was healed; Elijah was heard – no sensational answer, just a cloud like a man's hand, but sufficient for Elijah, the man of faith's purposes. The message of faith to Ahab forecast a downpour. Persevering prayer had prevailed. The Lord said "though he bear long with them" (Luke 18:7). Perseverence is seen clearly in Acts 6:4: "we will give ourselves continually to prayer". And how timely is the apostle's exhortation: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph 6:18). Men ought always to pray and not to faint; he that fainteth in the day of adversity his strength is small.

Personal prayer: Elijah fainted in the day of adversity. Like many of us, he turned from his occupation with the Lord who had answered by fire and with water, and became tragically obsessed with self. Jezebel threatened "thy life". Elijah echoed "my life". Seven thousand men, including faithful Micaiah the son of Imlah, were still available to Jehovah, yet Elijah asserted "I only am left". How sad when we become obsessed with trivial personal matters when speaking to the Lord. Too often we forget to whom we are speaking. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccl 5:2). Elijah's prayer was "take away my life". His prayer was not granted. "Ye ask and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss..." (James 4:3). What if God had granted his request? A corpse in the desert could have been buried by unearthly hands as was Moses. But God had better things in store for his servant. The unanswered prayer had a lovely aftermath.

"Oh joy, oh delight should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory
When Jesus receives His own".

"Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven". God had ignored the peevish prayer of His disconsolate prophet!

We must not leave our consideration of Elijah on a depressing note. In James he is obviously linked to quality of prayer. His first prayer, of which we know so little detail, was certainly effective. His fervency was beyond question as he bowed with head between his knees on a later occasion. His whole spirit was involved and he saw results. But even in times of weakness, let us take comfort from the poor father who cried "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief". In the conscious weakness his prayer was still recognized in heaven. Conscious of his weakness he still rejoiced to prove that "all things are possible to him that believeth".

A Rod and a Branch

by S Grant, Bridge of Weir

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa 11:1)

It is little wonder that the prophecy of Isaiah is referred to as the Gospel according to Isaiah. The book is full of references to the coming Messiah, His character and kingdom, with some of the most delightful prophetic descriptions of the Lord Jesus contained within its pages. Often the introduction of the Messiah is dramatic, like a bolt of lightning illuminating the stormy night of Israel's rebellion and God's subsequent judgment.

Isaiah was speaking historically to the nations of Judah and Israel as a prophet. He condemned the sin of the nation, warning of the drastic consequences should they persist in their conduct, and speaking of their ultimate deliverance through repentance. Although some of his prophecies were partially fulfilled in the days in which he lived, there can be no doubt that he spoke prophetically of a coming Saviour, who would deliver the nation from the darkest day of its history and establish His kingdom.

Some confusion can arise when reading Old Testament prophecies, such as Isaiah's, due to the absence of the Church age in their prophecy. Thus the advent, suffering and establishment of the kingdom are seen as one continuous sequence of events, with no gap of 2,000 years or more between His suffering and earthly kingdom. It is important to bear this in mind when reading this and other prophecies.

Isaiah employs beautifully descriptive language to describe the advent of the coming King. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots".

If a King is to arise from among the nations, then surely he will come from the house of that noble king David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, mighty in battle, the man after God's own heart. Had not God promised that the throne of David would be established for ever? And yet it is the name of Jesse and not David that the prophet employs. Furthermore, this chosen line, so illustrious in its history, is described as a stem, just like the stump of a once mighty tree now apparently lifeless and obscure.

How true this was in the days in which Isaiah prophesied. The victories of David's reign, the glory of Solomon's kingdom were only distant memories to those who listened to the words of the prophet. The nation had often rebelled against God. The kingdom of twelve tribes was long since divided and at enmity. Idolatry was rampant and the evil of many kings was surpassed only by the greater evil of their sons, until God would allow it no more. Truly the house of David had become like the stump of a mighty tree.

The contrast to what has gone before our verse towards the end of ch.10 cannot be overlooked, the link being in the usage of the word "and" at the beginning of our verse in ch.11. The prophet in ch.10 had graphically described the time imminent in the history of the nation, when the armies of Assyria would surround the walls of Jerusalem with Sennacherib at



their head. They would appear like the "forests of Lebanon" (10:34) in all their apparent strength and glory.

What a contrast to the royal line of David! Only a stump of a once mighty tree, yet out of this seemingly dead stump comes the King who will establish His kingdom. Just as David arose from the obscurity of the house of Jesse so too will this king arise from obscurity in the nation. Just a rod, a shoot, and yet a shoot which will grow and develop and prosper in parched and barren conditions, "a root out of a dry ground" (53:2).

And so Luke records that Caesar Augustus in Rome issued a decree and a woman and man, unnoticed by all on earth, made their way from Galilee to Bethlehem, through ground which was truly parched, conquered by Rome and ruled by Herod, a man whose origins and right to rule the ancient people of God contrast so clearly with those of the true King.

What then of the royal line whose preservation was promised by God? Mary and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem. The Imperial armies of Rome were ignorant of the occasion, the court of Herod unaware, the Sanhedrin blinded by their dogma and the people of the nation uninterested. In the outside place, with no room for them in the inn, the fulfilment of our verse takes place. "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger" (Luke 2:7).

Just a shoot, a green shoot which grows up like a tender plant, a shoot which becomes a fruit-bearing branch. What a beautiful development is prophesied by Isaiah.

The contrast with the strong forests of Lebanon is continued by the prophet. Whereas there is development with the shoot, the forests of Lebanon are hewn, lopped and cut down. In ch.37 Isaiah records the partial fulfilment of this prophecy when the angel of the Lord destroyed the armies of Assyria outside Jerusalem, leaving 185,000 men slain. How much greater will be the victory of the Lord in a coming day when the armies of the world will gather against Jerusalem. Then the forests of Lebanon will truly be cut down.

This shoot which grows into a branch must bear fruit. "The spirit of wisdom and understanding...counsel and might...knowledge and the fear of the Lord", (ch.11 v.2) and central to it all the Spirit of the Lord like the central stock of the golden lampstand, rests upon Him. Righteousness, faithfulness and equity characterise His kingdom and nature itself will acknowledge His rule with the cause of the curse suppressed by his rod of iron. Thus the "wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (11:6).

Just a shoot, a green shoot out of an apparently dead stump. What glories await this tired old earth when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (11:9).

The Counterfeit of Christ (2)

by P Harding, Manchester

Daniel 8 (cont)

The Place he will arise from He will arise from one of the four divisions of the old Grecian empire (v.8 with v.9). He "waxed very great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" (v.9). He must, therefore, arise from the north west section of the old Grecian empire. This would link him with the Assyrian of Isa 10-14 where we learn that Israel will be smitten by the one they trusted in. We learn that the title "king of Babylon" is used of the Assyrian in Isa 14:4, 25 and that the rulers of Babylon were called kings of Assyria (Ezra 6:22; Neh 9:32). We also note that the king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) is linked with the north (Jer 1:14; Ezek 26:7). We thus conclude that the little horn of Dan 8 will arise from the north west of Israel and is the Assyrian and the king of Babylon of Isa 10-14, and the king of the north of Dan 11.

The Purpose he reveals "By him the daily sacrifice was taken away" (v.11) - this can only refer to what will take place in the midst of Daniel's seventieth week mentioned in Dan 9:27 "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease". He will stamp out all forms of worship except worship directed to him and thus to Satan. We therefore conclude that this little horn is the coming prince of Dan 9:26.

The Power he displays "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power" (v.24). Many have taken this to refer to another nation which will support him and give him the power to carry out his plans. However, this seems very unlikely from the context of the passage. We judge that it refers to him being empowered by another, i.e. empowered by Satan. This would link him with the first beast of Rev 13 who receives his power from the dragon (Rev 13:4).

The Particulars that describe him

"Of fierce countenance" (v.23). He is resolute, he is determined, he is going to carry through all that he wills. The Lord Jesus came to do the will of the Father (John 6:38).

"Understanding dark sentences" (v.23) Understanding things which have been in darkness or which belong to the darkness – things which are satanic. He will have access to the things of Satan. What a contrast to our blessed Saviour "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3), and could say "I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (John 3:38).

"He shall destroy wonderfully" (v.24) He shall marvellously destroy. This could have a reference to the way he destroys his enemies. However, the word 'destroy' often indicates to corrupt (Gen 6:11-12; Mal 1:14; 2:8) and the word 'wonderfully' is translated singular in Lev 27:2 regarding purpose. Thus it could well indicate that his singular purpose is to corrupt or to destroy by corruption. He will seek to corrupt and fill the world with lawlessness. How different from the Lord Jesus Christ who went about doing good (Acts 10:38).

"And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper" (v.25). By his

policies he will cause an increase in material things which will draw men after him. The word 'policy' carries the thought of understanding and the word 'craft' has the idea of deceit – with his satanic intelligence he will not only bring about material prosperity but he will also cause deceit to prosper. The world is looking for prosperity in material things even if it is at the expense of moral and ethical corruption. How different from Christ "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet 2:2), "who knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21) and in whom is no sin (1 John 3:5).

"He shall magnify himself" (v.25). He will be full of pride and consider he is the greatest and thus he will devise plans to glorify himself. This links him with the son of perdition, the man of sin who "exalteth himself above all that is called God" (2 Thess 2:4). What a contrast to our blessed Lord who humbled Himself (Phil 2:8) and who could say "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29). Are we like our glorious Lord and Saviour or are we marked by pride?

Thus we conclude that the little horn of Dan 7, the little horn of Dan 8, the coming prince of Dan 9, the king of the north of Dan 11, the Assyrian and the king of Babylon of Isa 10-14, the man of sin of 2 Thess 2 and the first beast of Rev 13 are one and the same person – the Antichrist, Satan's supreme man, Satan's counterfeit of Christ who is God's Supreme Man.

Revelation 13

The first beast of this chapter speaks of a person although we must see that there is an intermingling of the kingdom with the king, thus many statements would be applicable to both.

His Appearance vv.1-2 The appearance of the Antichrist upon the scene. We see here his rise to power.

"Out of the sea" (v.1). The sea would speak of the turbulent mass of humanity (Psa 65:7; Isa 57:20). He will arise to power out of the moral, social and political turmoil of a coming day.

"Having seven heads" (v.1) Similar to the dragon in chapter 12 showing a link between the two. Seven heads would suggest complete governmental control – he will be a political genius.

"Ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns" (v.1). Horns speak of power and crowns (diadems) speak of regal dignity and authority. He will attain to political greatness and receive political authority and power as stated in v.2.

"The name of blasphemy" (v.1) Really names of blasphemy. He will make great religious claims taking to himself titles that belong to God. The whole ten kingdom confederacy will be blasphemous but its head, the beast, will be the sum of blasphemy. Many have taken names that belong to God alone but the beast will be the sum of all that has gone before. The coming anti-christian system will have for its head the Antichrist.

"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (v.2). His power (might to accomplish his plan), seat (throne – royal dignity and outward splendour) and authority (legal power) comes from Satan.

The Golden Thread of Inspiration

by P Nicholson, Sydney, Australia

Revelation 1	Isaiah 48-49	Calvary
v.1 To shew...things which must shortly come to pass	48:5 Before it came to pass I showed it thee	John 14:29 I have told you before it come to pass
v.4 Peace from Him	48:18 Then had thy peace been as a river	John 20:19 Peace be unto you
v.5 First begotten	49:5 Formed me from the womb	John 18:37 To this end was I born
v.5 Prince of the kings of the earth	49:7 Kings shall see and arise princes also shall worship	Matt 27:37 THE KING OF THE JEWS
v.5 Unto him that loved us	48:14 The Lord hath loved him	John 19:26 By the cross ...whom he loved
v.6 To him be glory	49:3 I will be glorified	Luke 23:47 The centurion glorified God
v.8 I am Alpha...the beginning	48:16 From the beginning	John 8:28 Then shall ye know that I am
v.9 ...isle that is called Patmos	49:1 Listen O isles	Luke 23:33 The place which is called Calvary
v.11 I am...the first and the last	48:12 I am the first. I also am the last	John 18:5 Jesus saith "I am he
v.15 His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace	48:10 I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction	Ps 102:3 My bones are burned as an hearth
v.15 His voice as the sound of many waters	48:18 The waves of the sea	Ps 42:7 At the noise of thy waterspouts
v.16 Out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword	49:2 He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword	Matt 27:50 Jesus cried...the rocks rent
v.16 As the sun shineth in his strength	49:10 Neither shall the heat or sun smite thee	Luke 23:45 The sun was darkened
v.17 Laid his right hand upon me	48:13 My right hand hath spanned the heavens	Matt 27:38 Thieves...one on the right hand
v.18 I am he that liveth	49:18 As I live...the Lord	Mark 15:29 In three days

Books

Philippians by HA Ironside; published Loizeaux Brothers; price £7.25. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

HA Ironside's *Philippians* was first published in 1922 and is now reissued with a helpful Profile including an analysis of Paul's letter to the Philippians from the pen of John Phillips.

Over the intervening years since 1922 many have profited from the practical approach adopted by the author. There is no reason to believe that present-day readers would be any less helped by this short 90-page paperback.

The present reviewer suggests that young believers in particular will find HA Ironside's *Philippians* a very useful introductory volume to use. The more critical might comment that its sub-title "To Live is Christ, to Die is Gain" is perhaps not as fully developed a theme as the reader might have expected but nevertheless young saints will find little difficulty in grasping Ironside's teaching and every encouragement to live for Christ.

TW

Dictionary of the Later New Testament edited by Ralph P Martin and Peter H Davids; published InterVarsity Press; price £32.99.

By any standards *Dictionary of the Later New Testament* is a huge reference work. Its 1,289 pages contain contributions from a large number of contemporary scholars who would be considered conservative by the academic world. The editors would claim that the Dictionary is intended for those "who are seeking to rediscover their ancient roots in the soil of the first two centuries of the christian era". They go as far as asserting that "it lays the foundation for budding students of the NT".

The reviewer could not share entirely this view. He is respectful of the scholarship that offers a view of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background to a phrase like "the new heavens" or the various presentations of creation within the NT. It is also of interest to read of the title Saviour as it would have been received by first-century listeners.

However as well as scholarly articles on such matters there are major articles on important themes such as the death of Christ and outlines of books like Revelation which the contributor sees as prophecy. In such articles not every subject is dealt with to the satisfaction of the reviewer.

Dictionary of the Later New Testament is the third in a series of Dictionaries published by InterVarsity Publications. No doubt it will be well received by those to whom a more academic approach is attractive. However many readers of the Believer's would not find the cost of the Dictionary repaid in its contents.

TW

Question Box

Question

The article in the March issue "Divine Guidance in the Acts", underlines the truth in the Acts and Paul's letters that the exercise to serve was solely and personally the servant's. In light of this teaching how can we justify the present arrangement of 'speaking by invitation', bearing in mind that in many instances this is based on popularity and personal opinion?

Answer

The helpful article mentioned, cited three examples of divine guidance in the book of Acts. It should be noticed that the servant of the Lord in each case was directed by the Spirit of God to take the gospel to a new sphere. There was no possibility of Philip receiving an assembly invitation from Samaria, God was guiding his feet to where there was no assembly, the gospel was preached and many were saved. The same is true of both Peter and Paul.

But it should also be noted within the same book that as NT assemblies were planted the servants who went out in service were not in any way "freelancing". Their exercise to serve was not solely their own, it was in fellowship with the assembly to which they belonged. The truth of commendation of the servant by the assembly is clearly taught (see Acts 13:1-3; 15:40; 16:1-2: 2 Cor 3:1; 1 Tim 4:14). If a servant has no account-ability, which assembly can administer discipline when necessary? No servant is above the assembly, he either serves within it or out from it, and we have instances in the Acts where the servants returned back to the commending assembly and "rehearsed all that God had done with them" (Acts 14:26-27). On more than one occasion they stayed a long time at home before they went away again (see v.28 also 15:35).

It is true in some areas that full-time evangelists move from one assembly to another in response to invitation. In such cases there could be little exercise on the part of God's servant. The NT teaching and pattern suggests that such servants moved in places where there was no assembly, and engaged in pioneer work in the gospel. The three examples from the Acts in the article in the March issue illustrate this.

It is wrong if invitations to speak in assembly gatherings are made on the basis of personal friendship or opinion. The other end of the scale leaves every meeting open to the servant's exercise. Neither extreme is as near to the NT pattern as the proponents each claim. The shepherds in the assembly are, according to scripture, primarily responsible for its spiritual food. They and local teachers should supply this. Visits from outside servants should also be encouraged by shepherds who are aware of the need for ministry which is richer and fuller than local gift can supply. These principles are seen in Acts 11 when Barnabas went to Antioch, not solely on his own exercise, "sent forth" by his assembly at Jerusalem, and then subsequently went specifically to Tarsus to "seek Saul" and "brought him" to teach the believers in the new assembly.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
3) DAVID THE KING (1 Chron 17:16)
Introduction

David was the last person you would have expected to be anointed as the future king of Israel: he was the youngest of eight brothers, he lived in the small town of Bethlehem Ephratah, which was "little among the thousands of Judah" (Mic 5:2) and his father Jesse was already an old man (1 Sam 17:2,6). When Samuel turned up looking for a special son to anoint, David's father said he was "the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep", and so to Jesse and his family he was the least likely to be someone exceptional. However, the Lord had already looked on his heart (1 Sam 16:7) and found "a man after his own heart" (1 Sam 13:14). Saul, the man with all the right physical attributes had been rejected by God, and although Samuel was impressed by Saul's height, the Lord was delighted by David's heart, even though he was only a youth! Eventually "Samuel ...anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" (16:13).

David and Saul

When Saul wanted someone to soothe his troubled spirit, David was suggested by one of his servants. He had seen David and described him not only as "cunning in playing", but also "a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him" (1 Sam 16:18) – clearly the anointing had given him special powers. David was sent for, and Saul "loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer" (v.21) and when asked, he played the harp when Saul was troubled, and "the evil spirit departed from...[Saul]" (v.23).

By the time a major Philistine invasion took place, David had returned home to looking after his father's sheep, but his three elder brothers Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah, had gone off to join Saul's army. The nearest David got at first was to take supplies to them. He arrived early in the day, just as the armies were amassing for their daily confrontation, each shouting their particular battle cries. Having left the things he had brought with the keeper of the goods, he went to look for his brothers. (Notice that David was careful with the little things that he was entrusted with: he left the sheep and the goods in the right hands– faithfulness starts with small things!)

Goliath the giant came out of the armies of the Philistines, and threw the Israelite army into confusion, scattering them with his blood-curdling, blasphemous cries. David wanted to know "who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (v.26). Eliab his eldest brother heard him, and probably feeling embarrassed, asks David if he knew what he was saying. However David persisted and eventually word reached Saul, who sent for him. David in all

sincerity said, "let no man's heart fail because of...[Goliath]; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (v.32). Saul protested that he was only a youth and Goliath was a man of war from his youth. However David immediately acknowledged that "the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (v.37). All Saul could say was "go, and the Lord be with thee". Saul then did what he knew best, he followed his natural inclinations and offered David his own armour, but David soon laid it aside and said "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them" (v.39). He had however proved God in the matter of his sling, and with this he went forward to victory.

The rest of the story is one of the most well-known in the Bible, but the lessons are very important. David was upholding the honour of the Lord's name and that of Israel, being incensed by Goliath's language. He put aside human ideas and trusted in the God who had helped him in the past, using means that he had tested. His challenge to Goliath was "thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands" (vv.45-47). David was jealous for the Lord's glory: he was only an instrument in His hands.

David was jealous for the Lord's glory: he was only an instrument in His hands

Conclusion

David had learned to trust the Lord early in his life, and had proved Him in everyday things which had taken place well away from the public eye. Then, when the opportunity came, he was ready for public service for God. Being a simple shepherd boy had proved no disadvantage, for in Psa 78 we are told that "[The Lord] chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands" (vv.70-72) see also 2 Sam 5:2. It was all good training!

The Holy Scriptures (2)

by Malcolm Davis, Leeds

Their formation

This involves the question of the canon of Holy Scripture. How can we know which books are verbally-inspired of God and which are not? Briefly stated, it is the inherent divine authority of scripture that convinces the believing reader. But, also, there are clear indications in the words of Christ Himself and His apostles of what the body of accepted scripture was in their lifetimes. For, regarding the OT canon, we have the testimony of our Lord Himself in Luke 24:44, where He speaks of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is a way of describing the complete OT, the so-called Hebrew Bible, as agreed upon in the second century B.C. The Law refers to the entire Pentateuch, The Prophets embrace the historical books from Joshua to 2 Kings, and the prophetical books from Isaiah to Malachi. The books of Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Lamentations, and Daniel, were not placed in this division of the Hebrew Bible, but formed part of its third major division, the Sacred Writings, or Hagiographa, to which the Psalms gave their name, probably because they formed the largest book within them. The remaining poetical books were included in this third division. The order of our OT derives from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT made in the second century B.C. and often used by the early Church. The OT canon was formed between about 1,400 and 400 B.C., whereas the NT canon was formed about A.D. 40 and 100, a much shorter period.

Regarding the NT, it is again the words of our Lord Himself to His disciples as recorded in John 14:25-26; 26-27 that lead us to expect further scripture to be written and added to the OT. This leads us to expect the Gospels and Acts. John 16:12-13 states that the Holy Spirit would reveal to them all the truth, which implies that there was further truth to be revealed. We find this truth in the epistles, especially regarding the formation of the Church and all other *mystery* doctrines relating to the present age of grace. The Holy Spirit would also reveal to the Apostles "things to come", which we find both in the epistles and in the Book of Revelation.

Elsewhere in our NT we find that the apostle Paul claimed divine authority for his writings in 1 Cor 14:37 regarding local church order, and the apostle Peter confirmed this claim in 2 Pet 3:15-16. The exact constituency of the NT canon was not fully settled until the second half of the fourth century A.D. at so-called Church Councils in A.D. 367 in the east and A.D. 397 in the west. These councils confirmed the twenty-seven books of our NT as being worthy of recognition as scripture. Books written by apostles and their close associates were quite readily accepted, a few books were not accepted by all for a much longer time, whilst apocryphal books were never fully accepted by true believers as inspired scripture. Today the united judgment of Spirit-filled Christians regarding the matter ought not to be lightly dismissed. So that we can rest assured that the canon of scripture was written and closed by about the end of the first century A.D. with the completion of the revelation concerning Christ and His Church.

Regions Beyond

Church Persecution in China

by Paan Ming-to

A visit to family members living in Beijing earlier this year, gave opportunity (we hoped) to also contact believers in the "house-church" movement of China. With this in view, an address and telephone numbers were provided from contacts in Hong Kong. In addition, Chinese gospels plus literature were kindly provided by the Scripture Gift Mission in London for our private distribution while there.

Totalitarian Police State

All telephone calls to house-church contacts while in Beijing had, for security reasons, to be made from outside the house, because the family members visited had their telephone tapped, their office bugged and their car number known to the Public Security Police. While looking peaceful and increasingly westernised on the surface–underneath the trendy new-look veneer of modern China, lies all the deadly paraphernalia of a rigid, totalitarian, Police State.

In the event, the local Chinese evangelist whose number we had, was not available; and being warned about recent government harassment in the Beijing area against house-churches, felt it would be unwise as foreign visitors to turn up at a church gathering without a personal introduction. We could so easily compromise the local believers and bring them more trouble. So we accepted the position as being overruled by the Lord and had interesting contacts through the distribution of the gospel literature we were carrying.

In shops, on the streets and in the parks and tourist beauty spots, we made contact with local people and distributed God's Word.

In Beijing, two separate groups of Cantonese tourists were surprised and delighted when we spoke to them in their own language and gladly accepted our literature.

Grateful for Bible

An older Beijing resident, spoken to in the Summer Palace Gardens, was thrilled to be given a gospel of Matthew. He told us as a boy he had been brought up in Nanking where he studied in a Christian Mission school and had been taught the Bible! Now he had the Bible in his hand again, and was very grateful.

In the central China city of Xian, two university girl students approached us in the street and asked if they could practice their English on us! They too gladly accepted NT portions, and invited me to come and speak at their university if I had the time!

Church Position Grim

But the overall church position in China is grim, especially for the unregistered "house churches" which have proliferated especially since the late 1970's.

There are two groups of Protestant churches in China today–the recognised government-approved Three-Self Patriotic Church movement and the unregistered "house-churches" who refuse to accept central government control and so meet clandestinally, in homes, houses, barns and behind closed doors as illegal Christian Churches.

The Three-Self Patriotic church–meaning self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing–is by its very name, self-centred, state manipulated, and a politico-religio institution. It is the lackey church of a secular, God-denying Communist State.



Its leaders and ministers are communist trained and must submit all sermon material to communist cadre overseers before permission to preach it can be obtained!

40 Million Membership

According to official Beijing estimates, there are about 15 million Three-Self church members. On the other hand, it is conservatively estimated the unregistered house-church membership to be at least a mammoth 40 million!

This is the reason the central Beijing authorities are presently doing their utmost to stamp out this unauthorised movement in their midst. "They fear what they cannot control", one ranking expatriate told me in Beijing. But they are helpless against the moral and spiritual influence of tens of millions of Christians, seeking to live out the life and teaching of Jesus Christ day by day across China and gossip the gospel across the land!

Even though the present head of the government Religious Affairs Bureau, Ye Xiaowen, a hard-line communist and fanatical atheist, has intensified the harassment and persecution against true believers of the house-churches since his appointment in 1995, Christians are multiplying in China more than in any other country in the world.

Church meetings have been brutally broken up, worshippers beaten, and prominent members, both men and women, arrested and imprisoned. They have been subjected to the latest method of state duress, "reform through labour and education", to force them to abandon their faith or agree to cooperate with the official Three-Self Church movement–all without success. The true church continues to multiply.

Three Reasons for Non-compliance

One of the house-church leaders gave three reasons why they cannot comply with government dictates to merge with the state-approved church.

Firstly, because Christ is the Head of the true Church and therefore they cannot acknowledge any other headship, least of all a godless, atheistic state-controlled institution.

Secondly, membership of the Church of God is on the ground of the applied blood-sacrifice of a crucified Redeemer–so they cannot have fellowship with those who know nothing of redemption through faith in Christ's blood.

Thirdly, they must proclaim the untrammelled word of God apart from any State censorship of their gospel message. Therefore, it is impossible to co-operate with or recognise any spiritual legitimacy in a church which makes these requirements impossible.

Several million Bibles have been printed in China over the past several years with government approved foreign church aid. However, these Bibles are only available to members of the registered Three-Self churches, and even then are woefully inadequate for the vast numbers requiring them. For the remaining millions of the unregistered house churches, their only source of supply is the fine trickle of Bibles smuggled in by visiting overseas Christians and the valiant attempts of the hundreds of independent evangelical churches of Hong Kong to take in on a regular visitation programme thousands of copies of the Word of God.



Chinese Bible on CD-ROM

In 1996, an American Christian computer programmer saw his chance to introduce ordinary computer business software into China through CD-ROM discs. He obtained permission to freely distribute his business software through an international computer exhibition held in Beijing in the summer of 1996. However, in addition to his business software, he also programmed the entire simplified-character Chinese Bible onto his CD-ROM discs, with full instructions for down-loading and printing it! He also included a full gospel message and several gospel hymns in the Chinese language. He was able to produce 9,400 such CD's all containing the complete Chinese Bible.

These discs were programmed to automatically bring up the Chinese Bible four days after initial use, with complete on-screen instructions to down-load the Bible in a readable format. This would make every disc owner a potential Bible publisher! He trusted God to sovereignly overrule the distribution of these discs so that some would fall into the hands of true believers around the country.

He was wholly successful in his plan. The discs were all given away within two days and feedback from China indicates some at least are in the hands of Christians. This means that in several centres in China today, believers from house-churches are able to down-load and print Bibles and Bible portions at will. With the proliferation and duplication of these Bible discs, the problem of Bibles for the unregistered churches of China will be greatly alleviated.

Let us all *pray* for the persecuted saints in the land of China. May the exhortation of the apostle's charge in Hebrews 13:3 force us to our knees as we remember our fellow-believers there.

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body".

(The writer has used his Chinese name for obvious reasons of security, so as not to implicate those still in China.)

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The Epistle to Philemon (3)

by Cecil Cann, Glastonbury

"Perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself" (vv.15,16). These verses are a lovely presentation of Onesimus' new position as a believer. In reality the situation was very complex and would need to be worked out carefully and graciously. He remained a bond slave and had obligations to his master as such, but he was also brother in Christ to Philemon and other Colossian believers as well as to the apostle Paul himself. How poignant are the words of v.17: "if thou count me a partner, receive him as myself". A poor unworthy, unprofitable bondslave enjoyed equal standing before Christ and in Christ, with beneficent Philemon and the apostle Paul. How delightful is the grace of our God!

"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in the Lord. Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you" (vv.18,19). These are very touching words. It is generally thought that the apostle Paul, because of poor eye sight, sought the help of an amanuensis to write down what he uttered or dictated. There are, however, occasions when the apostle indicated clearly that he had written with his own hand thus emphasising the importance of what was written. For example: "Ye see how large a letter (lit. with what large letters) I have written unto you with mine own hands" (Gal 6:11); "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds" (Col 4:18) and the instance before us which Paul wrote as guarantor of Onesimus to Philemon: "I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (v.19).

It was the ultimate guarantee as far as Philemon was concerned. Not because of Paul's wealth (the scriptures suggest only his poverty) but rather because of Paul's character and integrity and the mutual regard and affection Paul and Philemon had for each other. A guarantee is only as good as the guarantor and in Philemon's eyes, Onesimus had the best guarantor. Paul hoped, in the will of the Lord, to visit Colosse and requested that Philemon prepare him a lodging (v.22). He (Paul) was willing to back up his guarantee with his presence.

Concluding greetings and salutations (vv.22-25)

It was a greeting from Paul and his associates in Rome at that time. Epaphras is called a "servant of Christ Jesus" in Col 4:12 and "fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus" (v.23). Mark, over whom there was conflict between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39), was being prepared by the Holy Spirit for the special work of writing the second Gospel which was addressed to Romans who had physically crucified the Lord Jesus.

Aristarchus was a faithful companion of Paul and his name is mentioned three times in the book of the Acts (19:29, 20:4, 27:2) in this connection. Demas was to disappoint Paul. Paul was later to write to Timothy, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Tim 4:10). Luke, another faithful companion, would pen the third Gospel and also the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (v.25). The benediction relates to grace, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". Whatever their backgrounds and they were varied (successful business-man and rich benefactor, unprofitable but saved bondslave, believers at Colosse, companions of Paul at Rome and the apostle himself) their position and fellowship together was on the basis of grace; equally members of the body of Christ and joint heirs of God's goodness.

Three Relationships Indicated in the Letter

There is a matter of considerable importance and relevance to us as believers which has interspersed our consideration of this delightful letter. The matter is that of relationship. Within the letter the Holy Spirit directs attention to three kinds of relationships which we do well to consider.

A Secular Relationship

The reference is, of course, to the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus as master and slave. However magnanimous, generous and kind Philemon was, he was still the master and despite the transformation in Onesimus he was still the slave.

Slavery was built into Greek and Roman culture. The master owned the slave. The slave was required to fulfil the requirement of his master however hard, horrendous or degrading it might be and the master was allowed to ill-treat, abuse, punish and even kill as was his whim or fancy. Greek history contains accounts of the sale of thousands of slaves in a day and agreement within the senate for the killing of hundreds of slaves because one had murdered his master. Greek philosophers such as Aristotle saw this master/slave relationship as the foundation of Greek society.

This was in sharp contrast to the teaching of the OT about slavery (for example Lev 25:39-42) and to that which Paul taught under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Writing to Ephesian believers he says, "Servants (bond servants Newberry) be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ...and ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" (Eph 6:5-9). He writes in similar words to believers (including Philemon) at Colosse: "Masters, give unto your servants (bond servants) that which is just and equal; knowing that ye all have a master in heaven" (4:1). In Philemon's day, slavery and christian living based upon christian truth could not exist together. There was conflict between christian testimony and the morals and standards of the day in which Paul wrote.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (4)

by John Gillespie

Fourth Stage

Presentation to the Lord (after 40 days) : Consecration

(Luke 2:22-24)

And now dear Mary after fortieth day
With pious, law-abiding heart, her way
Did take with Joseph to the temple door.
They brought their birds as offering of the poor.
No lamb had they, yet lacking in such kind,
Pure would she be of body as in mind.

They brought the swaddled babe from suckled breast,
Jesus, the child, by heaven's protection blest.
And with devoted will of one accord
They gratefully present Him to the Lord.

Glad consecration by "the first-born gate"
With incense sweet, while on the altar grate
The birds of sacrifice in holy fire
Were burned to satisfy divine desire.

But see! there stood a man, just Simeon,
Alone. The Holy Spirit rests upon
Him, who waits for Hope of Israel's throng,
With promise that he doubtless should e'er long
See the Lord's Christ in time before he dies.

There in the temple court he now espies
The child by parents brought. With warmest charms,
His welcome made, he took without alarms
The manger-child into the cradle of his arms.

By this a holy priest was made of him.
He blessed his God! The world he knew grew dim.
One sight of Christ set free his soul for home.
Like Jacob learning Joseph "Live", therefrom
He would depart for that bright world to come.

The vision of the Lord filled out his ken.
With out-reach heart he loved his fellow men!
Now that Salvation to himself appeared
In Christ, to him the world became endeared.
He then exclaimed, though heavenward hastening on:
"Mine eyes have seen the Radiance of The Dawn.
All peoples, Israel, Gentiles of the night
Shall share His Grace, His Glory, and His Light".

These listeners saw this "Watcher of the Morn",
Simeon, His vision of the babe but born,
His song – "Nunc dimittis" – their wonder fed.
He now blessed them, and unto Mary said:
"Upon this child shall many rise and fall,
A Stepping Stone, A Stumbling Stone! But all
Who trust in Him shall not confounded be,
Yet, He Himself beset with enmity;

And as for you, the spear that shall pierce through
The flesh of Christ, from cruel Roman, Jew,
Shall be the sword that in thy sorrow's smart
Will pierce with keenest pain thy lonely heart".

Lo! Asher's happy Anna from the North
In city-temple felt and spoke His worth.
As inmate of the sacred court she came
With Simeon prompt to praise Jehovah's name,
And speak of Jesus unto all of them
Who sought Redemption of Jerusalem.

And when all things according to God's word
Had been fulfilled, Jesus, "called holy to the Lord",
Was borne by parents north to Galilee
And into Nazareth, from despot free.
But, not from shame of townish calamny.
From earliest days barbs of reproaches keen
Fell on His sinless soul, Jesus the Nazarene!

Longing for the House of the Lord

Psalm 84

by EL Lovering, Ilfracombe

It is generally agreed that this psalm is descriptive of a caravan of Israelites either returning from exile to Jerusalem or on its way up to one of the regular feasts. It bears comparison with Ps 42, also a Korahite psalm, but differs in that it is a song of joy in the dwellings of the Lord of hosts, whereas the former is a lament because of exile from the house of God. It is then, a pilgrim psalm and may be divided into three strophes each ending with Selah.

His soul's adoration, his heart's affection and his physical activities all reach out for the living God

The Pilgrim's Passionate Expectancy (vv.1-4)

"How lovely (lovable) are thy dwellings, O Lord of hosts". The first reaction of the pilgrim as he anticipates the vision of the temple is the wonder of its beauty. Unable to describe its loveliness he uses the Hebrew plural of majesty and greatness, "thy dwellings". His whole being cries out not only for the building itself but for the living God, the supreme object of his longing, who, to the Israelite was associated with the place. His soul's adoration, his heart's affection and his physical activities all reach out for the living God. No longer is the believer confined to any one place for our Lord promised that, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18:20).

Where'er men seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground
Cowper

The pilgrim not only loves the temple as an object of beauty but as a place of strength and safety. He reflects upon the fact that "even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God". The sparrow, the worthless bird, "are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" (Luke 12:6), and the swallow, the wandering, restless bird, find their confident rest in the altars: the brazen altar, a type of Christ's redemptive work upon the cross in expiation of sin, and the golden altar, His resurrection and work of intercession. Those who dwell in God's house will be constantly praising Him.

The Pilgrim's Practical Experience (vv.5-8)

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion" (RV), or "who have set their hearts on pilgrimage" (NIV). The pilgrim whose heart is set on Zion is prepared to endure all the difficulties and hardships of the journey for the

anchorage of his faith is in God himself. "Passing through the valley of Baca, or Weeping, they make it a place of springs". Here is the activity of faith, to which the Lord responds and the early rain covers the dry and hollow places. To suggest as some do that the way of the godly is always one of glorious sunshine is indeed a fallacy and not taught in scripture. Such teaching often ends in frustration and disillusionment. In the vicissitudes of life there is always the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). Physically men go from strength to weakness but in the assurance of faith the pilgrim goes from strength to strength confident that everyone of them will appear before God in Zion. The Saviour has promised, "Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:20). God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you, so we say with confidence 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid'. What can man do to me?" (Heb 13:5,6).

The Pilgrim's Prayerful Exclamation (vv.9-12)

"Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed...for the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (vv.9,10). "Pilgrims need both sun and shield, for the cold would smite them were it not for the sun, and foes would haply destroy them if they were without a shield. Heavenly pilgrims are not left uncomforted or unprotected" (CH Spurgeon). We remember that this was the song of the Levite, "a psalm for the sons of Korah". Those who had once aspired to the priesthood, with disastrous consequences would now "rather stand at the threshold of the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness, for one day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere". He is satisfied with his divinely appointed office, though it may be of the humblest nature, rather than occupy a position of note in the tents of wickedness. The house of God is a permanent dwelling, the tent of wickedness of a temporary nature. One has observed that rather than choosing the humblest office, here was a man who was choosing the highest, the best, for his was a position of authority and of the greatest responsibility. The tents of wickedness had nothing to compare with such a privileged position. Those are thrice blessed who "dwell in thy house", (v.4), "whose strength is in thee" (v.5) and whose "trust is in the Lord of hosts" (v.12).

Saviour, if of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name;
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

John Newton

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

JULY 13
Ballybollan Gospel Hall: Believers' Meeting 12.00 noon.
Kingsmills Gospel Hall: Believers' Meeting in tent 12.30pm.

JULY 14
Ballymagarrick Gospel Hall: Believers' Meeting in tent 1.30pm.
Bleary Gospel Hall: Believers' Meeting 12.00 noon.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

JULY 4
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St. Bible Study Week until Friday July 10. Sat and Mon to Thurs 7.30pm. Sunday 3.30pm. and 6.30pm. Mon-Fri 10.30am.

JULY 18
St Andrews: Gospel Hall, 41 Market Street, Gospel Campaign and Bible Study Week until Friday 24th. Ministry Saturday at 7.30pm. Lord's Day at 3.00pm. and 10.00am. Monday to Friday inclusive. Gospel Lord's Day at 6.30pm. and 8.00pm. Monday to Friday inclusive.

AUGUST 15
Girvan: Stair Park Gospel Hall, Henrietta Street. Annual Christian Conference at 3.00pm. J Paterson, M Radcliffe, D Gilliland.
Inverurie: Annual Conference to be held in the Town Hall at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. R Cargill, J Grant, W Stevely.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

JULY 4
Barnsley: Mottram Hall at 7.30pm. J Riddle.
Douglas: Isle of Man, Switzerland Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. F Whitelock.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St at 7.00pm. D West.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Bees.

JULY 11
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. E Honeyball.

JULY 18
Eastbourne: Marine Hall, Missionary Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. Also Monday and Tuesday at 7.30pm.
Swindon: Penhill Gospel Hall, Penhill Drive at 7.30pm. T Ledger.
Weston-Super-Mare: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Roberts.

JULY 25
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. J Coltman.

AUGUST 1
Isle of Man: Switzerland Road, Gospel Hall, Douglas at 7.00pm. R McKeown.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Stewart.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Dawes.

AUGUST 8
Morpeth: Red Row, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. A Carew.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM

Ballybollan: J Thompson and N Fleck completed five weeks in the gospel at end of May. They continue as some unsaved are attending.

Larne (Craigyhill): S Ferguson and J Fleck are getting fair numbers nightly in their gospel meetings.

Co. ARMAGH

Lurgan: A McShane and M Radcliffe conducting gospel meetings with some interest.

Near Richhill: Tent meetings have commenced by S McBride and T Wright. Some strangers attending. This is considered to be a very difficult area for the gospel.

Co. MONAGHAN

Clones: R Eadie and D Gilliland continue in the gospel with good numbers nightly.

Drum: Annual Conference on Monday 25th May. Speakers H Andrews, J Kelso, DB Long, R McLuckie and L Mullan.

Co. DOWN

Bangor (Bethesda): R Pickering had two weeks in the gospel at end of April. The word was faithfully preached and the area visited with gospel tracts.

Cardy: W Boyd commenced tent meetings at end of May in this country area.

Drumlough: The Annual Conference on 20th May, though smaller than in previous years, was considered profitable, with ministry by WJ Nesbitt, D Kane, A Mitchell, B Glendinning, T McNeill and T Wright.

Ballymacashon: Annual Conference on 30th May–Considered a good meeting with the hall well filled. Ministry by HS Paisley, D Gilliland, S Ferguson and M Radcliffe.

Co. FERMANAGH

Ballinamallard: During the month of May the assembly convened four Wednesday evening gospel meetings, with reasonable response from locals.

Enniskillen: The half-yearly Ministry and Report meetings were held on 16th May. Refreshing ministry by D Gilliland and M Radcliffe. Reports from R Wilson, G Orr and W Ferguson.

The assembly had three Friday evening gospel meetings during the month of May when T Wallace was responsible for the preaching. A number of locals attended.

Co. LONDONDERRY

Coleraine: Tent meetings conducted by HS Paisley are being attended by large numbers including local folk. There has been blessing in salvation. Meetings to conclude on 7th June.

Limavady: Annual Conference 4th May. Large numbers attended the Annual Conference. The Bible Reading was conducted by J Grant. The speakers at the Conference were T McNeill, J Grant, D Gilliland and J Wishart.

The Conference was brought to a

close by a report given by J Grant on the Lord's work in Glasgow.

Co. TYRONE

Drumlegagh: Gospel meetings continue with some locals attending. Gospel preached faithfully each night by A Davidson and N Woods.

Dunemana: R Pickering in tent meetings in this difficult area. Prayer valued.

BELFAST & DISTRICT

Clarawood: R Pickering had two weeks gospel meetings at the beginning of May in this large estate. Good response from locals. The assembly here has a good rapport with the people. (There is no other church within this 600 house estate.)

Cregagh Street: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken have completed six weeks in the gospel. Attendance very encouraging, with a number of young people present each night. God was pleased to bless with the salvation of one woman. Local interest was disappointing.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

WEST MIDLANDS

The Annual Conference at Quarry Lane, Northfield, Birmingham was very profitable with ministry from I Jackson and D West. The assembly at Batchley Estate in Redditch concluded their latest series of Saturday night ministry meetings with very helpful ministry from R Collings. At Solihull a similar programme came to an end with help from B Osborne.

Southcrest Chapel, Redditch was the venue for the Postal Bible School, National Day, which looked back over its forty years of activity. Workers from a wide area were present including brethren from Ireland. AT Shearman gave ministry to conclude the day.

SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS

Bristol: S Mountstevens had encouraging children's meetings at Parson St. Gospel Hall. Forty attended including teenage girls who had very sincere questions concerning what the Scriptures say as to morals and the modern way of life. Some attended the gospel meeting on Lord's day. Several parents came on the final evening, including a father banned from the local school for aggression, who participated enthusiastically in the quiz. A Sunday School was commenced after last year's effort, and several young people have been added to the company with the ability and desire to continue the work.

New Bradwell, Milton Keynes: The Sunday School in Sid Mountsteven's own assembly has seen blessing in consistent attendance though numbers are not great, with several also attending the gospel meeting. On Thursday evenings 30-40 children come to our brother's home, mostly from sad home backgrounds. After a disturbance at home (a regular occurrence) one 10 year old boy said "Uncle Sid, I can't stand much more of this!" We need to minister the Lord to these souls. Our brother asks for prayer, especially for one or two tent efforts in July and August.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mr Bernard Andries of Mechelen, Belgium, on 12th April aged 89. Saved and baptised when 17, he steadfastly served the Lord and His people all his life. A respected leader among the Flemish assemblies, he loved the assembly and faithfully maintained and encouraged NT assembly principles. During the German occupation in the 2nd Word War, he shepherded God's flock in the face of adverse conditions and at real personal sacrifice. A man greatly beloved, he will be missed greatly. Married for 69 years, he is survived by his wife Antoinette, 94 and his family.

Mr James Black, Co Donegal, on 1st May aged 69 years. Saved at tent meetings conducted by Mr S Patterson and Mr G Stewart in 1969. Soon after baptised and received into Maheracorran assembly where he continued steadfast until his homecall. The very large funeral conducted by Mr S Patterson and Mr R Wilson was an eloquent testimony to a life well lived. Prayer valued for his wife and family and also the small assembly.

Mrs Lilian Brierley on 8th March aged 88 years. Saved in Dublin as a girl, her life was eventful from the start, emigrating later to New Zealand. She went from there to the Congo and married Frank Brierley in 1935. They laboured fervently for the Lord together, moving to Zambia in 1950 and continuing there until 1981 then returning to New Zealand they finally settled near their family in the UK at Bromsgrove in 1988. She was absolutely dedicated to her Lord and to service for Him right until the end. A remarkable woman and a wonderful example of what a missionary should be.

Mrs Lily Cunningham on 26th April aged 84. Saved at Mr S Thompson's meetings and for very many years in the Annalong assembly. Was loved and respected by the believers and had a good report of all. As long as health permitted she was a regular attender at all the assembly gatherings. Prayer valued for her two sons and their children. Messrs F Reagan and JG Hutchinson spoke at the large funeral services.

Mrs Rachel Glasgow on 17th May aged 92 years. Saved 71 years ago at a meeting conducted by Mr John Glasgow in Cookstown Gospel Hall. She was received into the assembly and as long as health permitted was a faithful attender at all the meetings. She was held in high regard by all who knew her. The funeral services were conducted by Mr S McBride, Mr D Kane, Mr G McKinley, Mr J Thompson. Mourned by her daughter and family circle.

Mr Douglas Gittings Drummond Hall, Bournemouth was called home on Monday 20th April. For 50 years he had taken an active part in the assembly and for the last 30 years was one of the elders and also correspondent. Many assemblies in the area benefited from his comprehensive knowledge of God's word

as he preached the gospel and ministered. Our brother was well known to the many holiday visitors to Bournemouth. The large funeral conducted by Mr G Griffiths and Mr E Parmenter indicated the love and respect in which he was held.

Mrs Ethel Hamilton on 28th February 1998 aged 81. Our sister was saved 10 days after her husband on 21st April 1955 and lived in the good of this for 43 years serving the Lord with her husband in both Dromore and Apsley Street assemblies. Ethel was a quiet godly sister much loved and respected by all who knew her. The large company gathered at Dromore Gospel Hall heard Mr Jim Allen give words of comfort and counsel, while at the graveside Mr Roland Pickering gave a challenging gospel message.

Mr William Alexander Morton on 12th May aged 81. Saved at home in 1954, baptised and received into fellowship in Dromore assembly. The following year went to reside in Lisburn where he was in happy fellowship in the Wallace Avenue assembly until his homecall. After a prolonged illness when faithfully cared for by his wife, he was called home. A quiet unassuming brother, a willing worker and most faithful in tract distribution. The large crowd attending the funeral bore testimony to the esteem in which he was held. Remember in prayer his wife and family.

Miss Lydia Nutt passed peacefully into the presence of her Saviour and Lord on April 22nd aged 88 years. Our sister was saved early in life and was in happy fellowship in the Limavady assembly. A quiet, consistent christian, she was an example to all and loved to talk about her Saviour and His saving grace. When failing health prevented her attendance at the meetings she continued to support the gospel efforts prayerfully and practically. Please pray for her relatives who lovingly visited and cared for her and will miss her.

Mrs Violet Sharpe on the 12th January aged 98 and saved for almost 60 years. She, with her late husband William Henry were in happy fellowship in Drum assembly, Co Monaghan. A quiet, godly and consistent sister. The funeral services were shared by Messrs J Kells, R Eadie, R Pickering and N McMeekin.

Mr Samuel Smyth on 14th April in hospital aged 75. Saved through John 6:37 on March 10th 1943 while William Bunting was preaching in Edenderry. Later baptised and in Edenderry assembly, also in different assemblies before spending the past ten years in happy fellowship in Harryville, Ballymena. He loved the Lord, the assembly and the gospel and was a wise brother. The large funeral was conducted in the home by James Martin and by William Fenton at the grave with Mr Jennings, Mr Ballintine and Mr McKillen sharing. Remember his widow, and family in prayer.

Mr James Stockard on 7th April aged 79. Saved Christmas Day 1938. Enjoyed

fellowship in Matchett St, Joseph St and Ebenezer (1958-1971) assemblies in Belfast. During a term of business in India from 1954 to 1956 he contributed much to the Bethesda assembly in Calcutta. When he moved to Newtownabbey he went to Cloughfern assembly where he was an elder and was very much appreciated for his Bible ministry. He was also well known throughout N.I. for his faithful gospel preaching. Greatly missed by his daughter Gillian, and her family. The large funeral service was conducted by J Flynn and P Warnock.

Mr William Tinsley on 15th March aged 69 years. Our brother was saved in 1952 during meetings in Dromore conducted by the late William Bunting. He was in fellowship in Australia for 12 years before returning to his home area where he was in the Plantation assembly. He was one of its founding members, continuing there, while health permitted, until his homecall. The funeral services were conducted by Mr W Nesbitt and Mr H Paisley. He will be much missed in the home and in the assembly.

Mr Sam Wylie on 7th April aged 77. Saved in August 1939 during gospel tent campaign conducted by the late Mr Harold German. Baptised and received into fellowship at the Gospel Hall, Uddingston shortly afterwards where he continued till his homecall. A quiet brother with a happy disposition who had a good testimony where he worked. His presence will be missed in the small company.

PERSONALIA

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Christian Books New & Secondhand (including Brethren authors/publishers). Send 38p stamp for lists to Berith Publications (BM), 6 Orchard Rd, Lewes, E Sussex, BN7 2HB.

Change of Correspondent: All correspondence for Bethany Hall Assembly, 13 Whinknowe, Ashgill, ML9 3AP, Lanarkshire, should be addressed to: Robert English, "Crimmond", 24 Whinknowe, Ashgill, Lanarkshire, ML9 3AP. Tel: (01698) 882644.

Change of Address: Dereham Christian Fellowship, "Beechurst", 8 Commercial Road will be changing address as from Sunday 31st May. Their new address is 35 Neatherd Road, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 2AE.

Torquay, Tor Hill Gospel Hall, Tor Hill Road. Believers on holiday in the area will be assured of a warm welcome. Letters of commendation appreciated.

The assembly formerly known as Cheetham Gospel Hall, meeting at 2 Dornton Walk, Cheetham, Manchester, has now re-located. The new address is The Gospel Hall, Venwood Road,



Prestwich, Manchester, M25 9UH.

Visitors to the Isle of Man welcome at the Gospel Hall, Switzerland Road, Douglas. For times of meetings and accommodation contact Mr M Justice, Tel: (01624) 832769.

As from 3rd August Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Lane from Chennai, India will be in the UK for six weeks.

HOLIDAY HOMES

The publishers cannot be held responsible for any difficulties which may be experienced by those responding to these adverts.

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Bushmills: Self catering accommodation available 1 mile from Bushmills, Co. Antrim. Tel: (012657) 31401.

Carmarthenshire: Farmhouse B&B. E.M., homebaking. Warm fellowship in home/assembly. Visit Cardigan/Tenby coastlines. Mrs Christine Hartridge, Tyffynnonwen, Cwmbach, Whitland. Tel: (01994) 448726.

Cottage available at Helions Bumpstead again. Tel: (01440) 730288.

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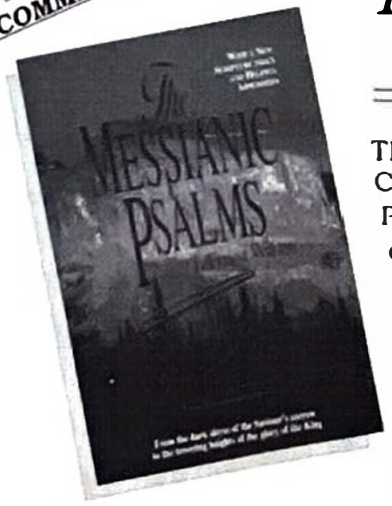
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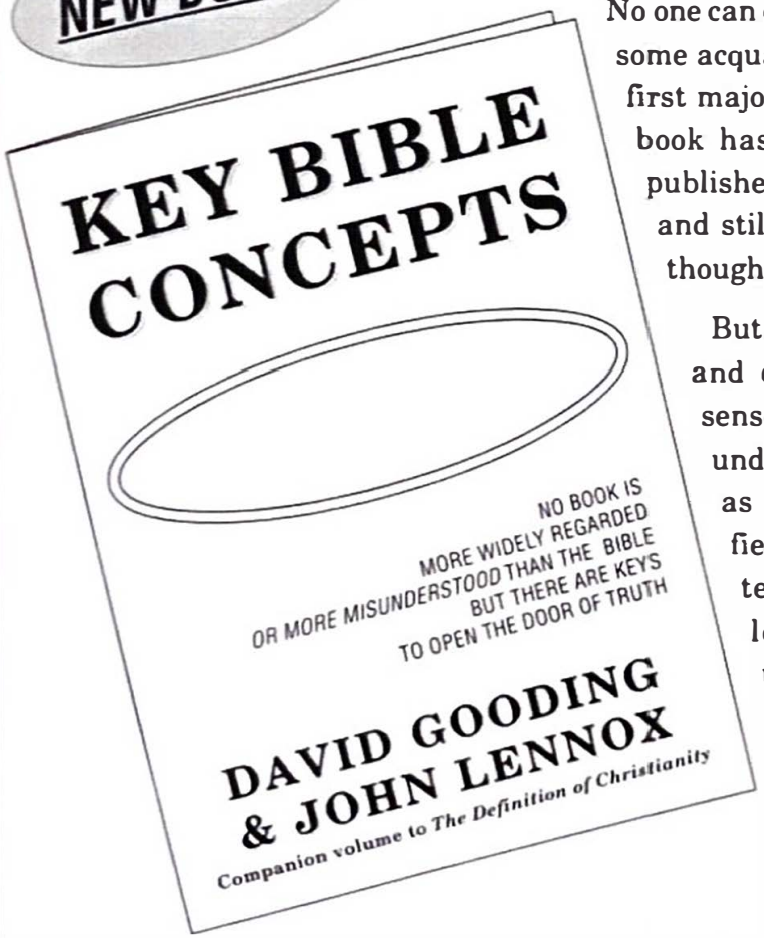
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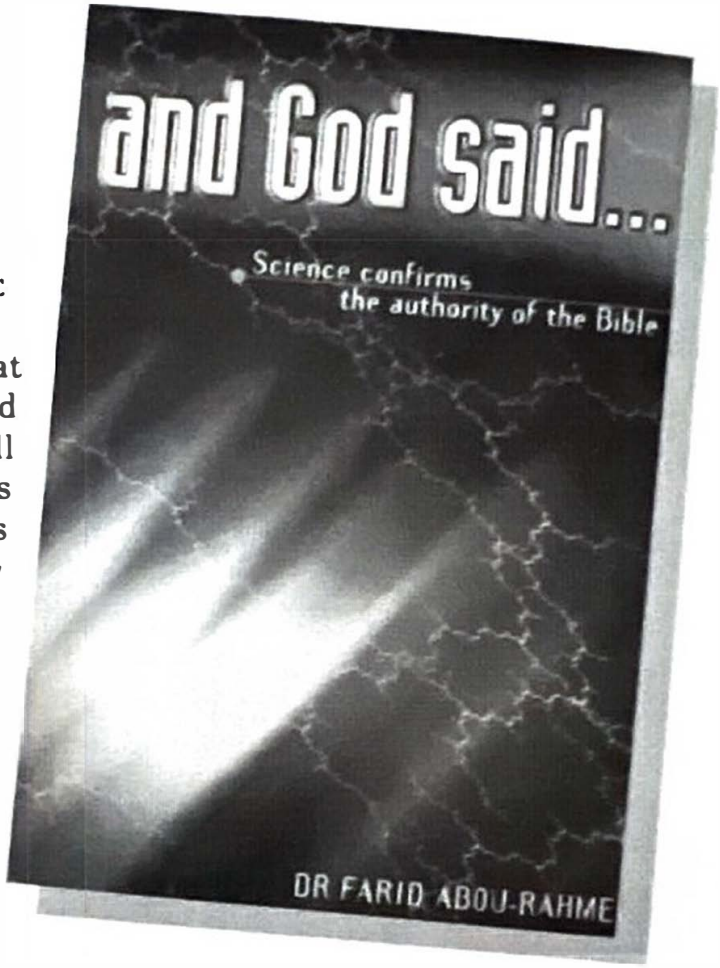
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Believer's Magazine

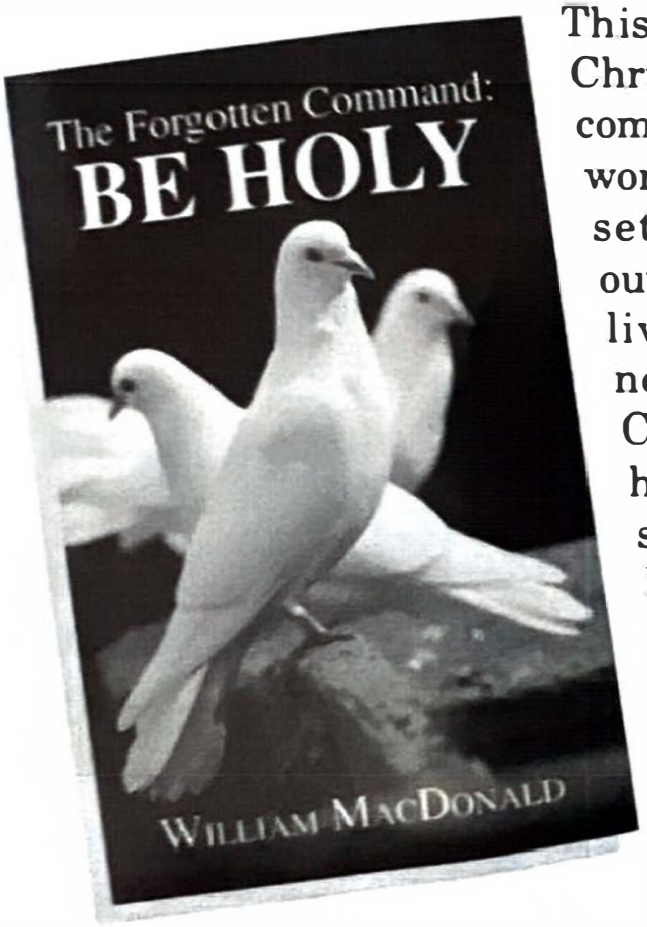


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Believer's

Magazine

AUGUST 1998

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Editorial

"Martha served" (John 12:2)

That is all that is said of her here, and this is the last time she appears on the page of Scripture. She was serving in Luke 10 as well, only there she was flustered and ventured a hasty word of fretful complaint: "Lord, dost thou not care?" Yes, she called Him Lord, but she complained nevertheless. It was the sincere cry of a distracted heart. She was cumbered. The word means *to drag about*. She was being pulled hither and thither; she was being pulled apart. We can readily identify with her feelings; today we speak of stress. It is easy to be flustered, even in the service of God, and when we are flustered we tend to say things altogether unworthy of Him and of ourselves.

The Lord Jesus had talked to her about it that day. He had explained to her the need for times of quietness and instruction and devotion, a need that must take precedence over even urgent toil. Now "Martha served". Perhaps she served a larger company; perhaps she served in less familiar surroundings (was it not in the house of Simon the leper?); but she served without complaint. Had she simply learned to bite her tongue and soldier on? or had she learned a vital secret that day? Surely it is the latter. Her Lord had taken her, as it were, to the door like the Hebrew servant of old. She would serve Him forever.

Of course, Martha is not the focus of John's narrative. Our text is but a passing remark. But what an important remark it is! I do not know how Martha must have felt if, as I suppose, she was living when Luke's Gospel became current. Sometimes we are inclined to forget that Scripture is about real people, with real feelings. There it lay, faithfully and necessarily recorded by Luke; necessarily because the Lord Jesus has had to speak to many about the same matter from that day to this. But it was not the whole story; there came other days.

It was many years later that John wrote his Gospel. Perhaps Martha had long since gone to her reward. As he wrote he came to a priceless gem, the story of a woman who had treasured up her most precious possession for an undisclosed purpose. Borne along by the Holy Spirit, he inserted the words "Martha served". He used the imperfect tense: Martha "was serving". It was the summary of her life from that eventful day, the Spirit's final tribute to a woman who had heard the words of Christ, and had yielded unreservedly.

How easy it is to become cumbered, even in the service of God; how easy always to be engaged in or preparing for some exercise, and to neglect personal communion with Christ. How easy it is criticise others for not doing their fair share, as we perceive it. But when last did I pore over Scripture as one listening to His voice, or adoring His person? I love His gentle words, "Martha, Martha!" Would that we could hear them, then perhaps at the bema it will be said of us, "Martha served".

KWS

Christ in Isaiah

by the late Bill Craig, Hurst

Isaiah's prophecy has had a partial fulfilment in the NT. He has been termed the evangelical prophet. There are more references to Isaiah's prophecy in the NT than any OT book and the Lord's own use of and quotations from Isaiah during His public ministry amplify that pointing forward to His day and generation as a Child born and a Son given as seen in Luke and John's Gospel. His name was called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. We sometimes sing "Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love and power that mortals ever knew and angels ever bore, all are too mean to speak His worth, too mean to set the Saviour forth." He is also great David's greatest Son, the antitypical Solomon and will be Sovereign over the universe and Saviour of the world. There are many names that describe His Blessed Person; in one verse alone in ch.9 He is described by five names which we have already mentioned: Here are eight others.

1. **A Son (9:6)** - "Unto us a Child is born and a Son given". "God so loved" that God so gave from out His heaven so pure His only Son, beloved One, to make salvation sure. "God so loved" that on the cross, in pain and agony He gave his Son, to be the one to die instead of me. As Abraham gave his only Isaac, his well beloved son so God gave Him up to the shameful death of the cross for you and me. Herein is love not that we loved God but that He first loved us and gave His only Isaac, His only begotten Son as a sacrifice to God as a whole burnt offering a savour of a sweet smell and a sacrifice acceptable to put away our sin. He bore our sins in His body on the cross of Calvary.

2. **A Stem (11:1)**- or Shoot of Jesse: "and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom, and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord". He was a Stem and Shoot of the branch of the lineage of Jesse. He is indeed called a branch in ch.4, "In that day shall be branch of the Lord be glorious and beautiful and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent". This title "the Branch" is four times mentioned in the OT and amplified in the four Gospels. Here Isa 4 corresponds with Matthew's Gospel; Zech 3:8 ("I will bring forth my Servant the Branch") corresponds with Mark's Gospel; Zech 6:12 ("Behold the man whose name is the Branch") corresponds with Luke's Gospel and Isa 4 also corresponding to John's Gospel, "the Branch of the Lord".

3. **A Stone (28:16)** - "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone" a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, "he that believeth shall not make haste". He was the stone which the elders of Israel refused, rejected, disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious as 1 Pet 2 tells us. "He was the stone cut out without hands" (Dan 2:34) which smote the image upon his feet and broke them in pieces. He was a stone cut out without

hands at His birth, no man had a hand in that, a tried stone in life; a foundation stone in death; a living stone in resurrection.

4. **A Sovereign (32:1)** - "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment". He was born a King of the Jews. Many have been born to succeed to become a king but He was specifically born a King. He is going one day to become King of kings and Lord of lords. The government is going to be upon His shoulder and of the increase of His government there shall be no end. He shall rule and reign in this world forever.

5. **A Shadow (32:2-3)** - "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land". He is our rock which has been cleft for us as a rock of defence, a rock for a hiding place under whose shade sunbeaten travellers could find comfort and shelter from the burning sun and find rest and peace, safety and security from the elements.

6. **A Shepherd (40:11)** - "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd and gather the lambs with His arm and carry them on His bosom and gently lead those that are with young". The eastern shepherd went before the sheep to lead and guide the sheep who had to follow the shepherd. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me". In the shepherd psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd", the whole psalm rests and depends upon those five words. He leads and feeds His own sheep, He leads by the quiet waters and the green pastures and furnishes a table by His strong arm of love. He was the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His friends, He is also the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd.

7. **My Servant (42:1)** - "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon Him He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles". He was the true and perfect Hebrew servant who loved his master and would not go out free but pledged himself to serve forever. He delighted to do his Master's will and finish His work to his entire satisfaction. He served faithfully. "My servant the Branch" is seen in Mark's Gospel. Here and now we are privileged to be His servants so let us occupy diligently until He comes for us and even afterwards His servants will serve forever.

8. **A Saviour (43:11)** - He was sent of the Father to be "the Saviour of the world". "There is no other God beside me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none else beside Me"; "Look unto Me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else" (43:21-22). "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end" (45:17). "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publiseth salvation, that saith unto Zion Thy God reigneth" (52:7).

David and his Mighty Men

by JR Blair, Vancouver

This chapter falls into three simple divisions, which we would like to consider. In the first division, vv.1-6, we have **a man reigning**. A man who indeed had known rejection, but was now on the throne of Israel. This is towards the close of his reign, and we have some of his reflections about himself, and what should mark a true sovereign. He speaks of himself as the man who was raised up on high. The word for man, is a strong man, and surely in leadership strength is one of the requirements, if there is to be proper and orderly rule. He next mentions himself as the anointed of the God of Jacob. This would be looking back to the day when he was called from following the sheep, brought in before Samuel, and anointed with oil as king in the midst of his brethren. This is followed with the words, the sweet psalmist of Israel. This sweetness was distilled from all the difficulties and trials that he had passed through in the preceding years, and flows out of the Psalms as we read them, it permeates them, and flows like honey out of the rock.

He goes on to speak of what should characterize rulers. This is under the direction of the Spirit of God, not just his own ideas. This will have its true fulfilment in David's greater son when he comes to reign. Two things are mentioned in v.3, he must be just in his rule, and in the fear of God. The result of this would be as the light of the morning, cloudless. As the tender grass springing up after a refreshing shower. In v.5, he recognizes failure in his own house, but there was the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. Again pointing us forward to the coming of Christ when a king shall reign in righteousness.

In the second section of this chapter, vv.6-7 we have **men in ruin**, the sons of Belial. No names are given to identify these men, unlike the names of those mighty men who follow in the last section, they are likened to thorns not be be handled. If this is to be done, it must be done with an instrument like a fork, at arms length, to be gathered together to be burned. We could look at some examples of this type of man, for they are to be found in these two books. Two notable ones would be the sons of Eli, Hophi and Phinehas. They were immoral and ungodly men. Immoral in relation to those women who gathered at the door of the tabernacle, ungodly in relation to that which was divine, namely the offerings. Was it William Kelly who said, there are no sins so serious, as those relating to the things of God. Another would be Nabal the Carmelite, such was he that a man cannot speak to him. Then there was Sheba the son of Bichri, who after the Absalom rebellion, was bent on dividing the nation. It is signficant that we have this name Belial mentioned only once in the New Testament (2 Cor 6:15). The unequal yoke is in view, and one of the statements is, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Considering the character of those men we have mentioned above. We do well to avoid

the entanglements of the unequal yoke, which can only bring disaster to the Christian, be it marriage, social, business or otherwise. They came under the solemn judgment of God. Whose end is to be burned.

Let us consider them, and follow their example of courage and devotion to the Lord

The final section of the chapter, vv.8-38, is a lengthy section. Here we have **men in reward**, now associated with David reigning. The mighty men of David, what an inspiration to read the feats of these men. Mr Sydney Maxwell used to say when he was feeling a bit discouraged he would read this chapter, and it gave him a real lift. Space does not permit to deal with these on an individual basis, but rather to look at some of the characteristics that marked them. Some years previous to this when these men gathered to David in the cave of Adullam in his rejection, they were described as being discontented, in debt and distress. Hardly the calibre of the men that we read about here. What had wrought the change? There can be but one answer, David, the strong man, the leader who gave these men the encouragement to do exploits for God. In the first three men mentioned we see how single-handed they defeated a large number of the enemy. Normally speaking the odds were staggering, yet by the help of God they overcame the foe. If we see *courage* in the first three men, surely in the following incident of three who, while in the cave with David, we have *devotion*. They heard his longing for a drink, from the well of Bethlehem, by the gate. This was a familiar place to David, historically it was the place of redemption. Here Boaz redeemed the property of Elimelech, and Ruth to be his bride. Now it is the place of refreshment, but a garrison of the Philistines. At great risk to their lives, they broke through the ranks of the enemy, drew water from well, and brought it to David. In response to that, he could not drink it, it was the blood of those men. He poured it out as a drink offering to the Lord. Again we ask, What inspired these men to such action? I think, not only of David's leadership, but go back to that so familiar scene in the valley of Elah, where this same man went down to face the giant Goliath, who had paralyzed Saul, Jonathan and the armies of Israel with such fear, helpless for forty days. He defeated that foe, and delivered them on that memorable day. They could never forget it. May we never lose sight of the one, who fought a greater fight, against a greater foe, the devil. We have been set free forever, He deserves our devotion. Space does not permit, to continue looking at these men. Let us consider them, and follow their example of courage and devotion to the Lord.

The Counterfeit of Christ (3)

by P Harding, Manchester

Revelation 13 (Cont)

His Wound vv.3-4 *"One of his heads as it were wounded to death"* (v.3). We have stated that there is an intermingling of the kingdom and the king in this chapter. In v.1 the seven heads speak of complete political power, in Rev 17 the seven heads are mentioned to link John's revelation with Daniel's vision (Dan 7) but here in v.3 we believe that the head mentioned refers to the king and not the kingdom. We feel that he is also mentioned in Rev 17:11 as "the eighth, and is of the seven". It seems that because of his position and power, and maybe his cruelty, there will be a successful plot to assassinate him, Isa 14:18-19; 32:27; Zech 11:7; 13:6 may well refer to this. To the amazement of all he is brought back to life–"his deadly wound was healed" (Rev 13:3,12,14; 17:8). Thus God allows a counterfeit of the resurrection to fulfil His own purpose. The result will be that "the world will wonder after the beast" (v.3) and they will worship him and the dragon, and will say " Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (v.4). This will be a blasphemous use of Exod 15:11 "Who is like unto thee".

His Blasphemy vv.5-6 *"A mouth speaking great things and blasphemy"* (v.5). He will blaspheme God–the Person and Word of God, he will blaspheme his name–the Name of God; he will blaspheme his tabernacle–the dwelling place of God; he will blaspheme them that dwell in heaven–heaven's dwellers (v.6).

His Aggression v.7 *"make war with the saints"*. There will be saints in that day seeking to live for God and these the beast will persecute. Many of those dear saints will seal their testimony for God with their blood. He will "overcome them"–not morally or spiritually but physically as Rev 11:7. This will mean for those saints persecution, imprisonment, torture and for many death. How do we measure up to this? Are we faithful in our testimony? Would we be prepared to suffer for the testimony of God? Surely this verse is a condemnation of any laxity or indifference in living for God in our lives.

His Appeal v.8 *"All that dwell upon the earth"*. All the earth dwellers–those who will have rejected God and who will be solely taken up with this life. They will see in this man the sum of all they desire and will think that he will provide all that they long after. Thus they will worship him.

The counterfeits and contrasts

Some counterfeits or similarities: Prince of princes (Dan 8:25)–the prince that shall come (Dan 9:26); the Lord has many crowns (Rev 19:12)–the antichrist will have ten (Rev 13:1). Christ is shown riding upon a white horse (Rev 19:11)–the antichrist is seen riding upon a white horse (Rev 6:2); the Lord Jesus will be the object of universal worship (Phil 2:10)–the antichrist will receive world-wide worship (Rev 13:4). Christ was revealed at an appointed time (Gal 4:4)–the antichrist will be revealed in his time (2 Thess 2:6).

Some contrasts:

Christ (Matt 16:16)–antichrist (1 John 4:3); the Seed of the woman–the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15); the Lamb (John 1:29)–the beast (Rev 13); the Son of God (Mark 1:1)–the son of perdition (2 Thess 2:3); the Righteous One (1 John 2:1)–the



lawless one (2 Thess 2:3); the Truth (John 14:6)–the lie (2 Thess 2:11); the Lord humbled Himself (Phil 2:8)–the antichrist will exalt self (Dan 8:25); rejected by men (Isa 53:3)–accepted by men (Rev 13:4); came in His Father's Name–comes in his own name (John 5:43).

The designation of the antichrist

The seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15); Asshur (Num 24:24); the Assyrian (Isa 10:5-12); the king of Babylon (Isa 14); the spoiler (Isa 16:4-5; Jer 6:26); Gog (Ezek 38 and 39); the little horn (Dan 7 and 8); the coming prince (Dan 9); the vile person (Dan 11:21–who, we believe is the king of v.36 and also the king of the north); the idol shepherd (Zech 11:16-17); the man of sin (2 Thess 2:4); the lawless one (2 Thess 2:8); the lie (2 Thess 2:11); the antichrist (1 John 2:22); and the beast (Rev 13:2).

We know that many feel that not all the above do refer to the same person but we believe they do. This man is going to have supremacy over the world. There cannot be another power that is equal to him for he is Satan's supreme man. Our blessed Lord is God's supreme man, the true King priest–the antichrist is Satan's counterfeit. The Lord has many titles and fills perfectly many offices–Satan's counterfeit has many descriptions and he will have many offices.

The duration of the antichrist's supremacy

(i) Dan 7:25–time (singular), times (dual) and the dividing of time (singular) = $3^1/_2$ years.
(ii) Dan 9:27–in the midst of the week (week of years) = $3^1/_2$ years.
(iii) Dan 12:7–time (singular), times (dual) and a half = $3^1/_2$ years.
(iv) Rev 11:2–forty and two months = $3^1/_2$ years.
(v) Rev 12:6–a thousand two hundred and threescore days = 1,260 days = $3^1/_2$ years.
(vi) Rev 12:14–time, and times, and half a time = $3^1/_2$ years.
(vii) Rev 13:5–forty and two months = $3^1/_2$ years.

The destruction of the antichrist

This is referred to in a number of passages:

(i) "he shall perish forever" (Num 24:24).
(ii) "I will break the Assyrian in my land" (Isa 14:25).
(iii) "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel" (Ezek 39:4).
(iv) "they shall take away their dominion, to consume and to destroy it" (Dan 7:26).
(v) "he shall be broken without hand" (Dan 8:25).
(vi) "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (desolator)" (Dan 9:27).
(vii) "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan 11:45).
(viii) 2:8 "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess 2:8).
(ix) "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet...These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev 11:5).

Thus the antichrist will perish at the hand of our glorious Lord when He returns to the earth and Christ will reign supreme–"He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

Walking in Ephesians (1)

by J Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

The early chapters of Ephesians contain a wealth of doctrinal truth relating to the purposes of God. The later chapters emphasise very practical matters relative to the believer's walk and warfare. The purpose of these articles is to examine the seven references to our manner of life and conduct, for in the word walk the apostle has in mind the character of our lives as a whole.

The Contrast of Courses (Ch.2)

The first two references present a contrast between the believer's unregenerate state and what he has become or been constituted as a consequence of divine grace.

"In time past ye walked according to the course of this world" (v.2). Here is God's summary of the character of our past life. As to its direction, we were consumed by temporal and material things; in its nature and power, we were dominated by the prince of the power of the air; as to its activity, we demonstrated a moral resistance to God. Although Paul states this of Gentiles, "*ye* walked", he adds of his fellow Jews, "Among whom *also we all*" (v.3). There is nothing to commend either to God as worthy recipients of His grace, nothing to draw out a demonstration of divine love.

Against the background of human sin the mercy and love of God is set in stark contrast. Equally the outcomes of divine grace are also contrasted. Whereas once we were "children of disobedience" (v.2) we are now "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (v.10). Those who once walked "according to the prince of the power of the air" (v.2) are now "his workmanship" (v.10). Equally, those whose course was once "according to the age" (v.2 JND), wholly limited to earthly things, are now prepared of God to follow a different course. Whilst Paul draws that contrast in truth, it might be questioned whether the contrast is as evident in practice.

When Paul says, "we are his workmanship" (v.10) he is speaking of divine creation, the second creation dealing with the spiritual rather than the physical. In the first creation Adam was made for the service and fellowship of God (cp. Gen 2:15; 3:8). In new creation God had a similar thought in mind, not now directed towards a physical creation but a spiritual one to and through whom these good works are to be manifest. As we are "created in Christ Jesus", so to each one of us is given "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (4:7). The risen Christ has saved us and empowered us to fulfil a service for Him in the assembly of His people as well as before our fellow men and women in testimony. This is what He has "ordained", or "prepared" (AV margin), us for.

In the sweep from the eternity to eternity of divine purposes in ch.1 Paul teaches us what we have been constituted "before him" (v.4). This is the wonder of our fellowship. Here in ch.2 there is a different sphere, "in them" (v.10), that is the sphere of good works, and these are to be evident before men. This is our service.

Books

Once in Christ, In Christ Forever by William MacDonald; published Gospel Folio Press; price £7.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

It is no new phenomenon for Satan to attack the believer's faith in his Saviour. For centuries Satan has attacked when the shield of faith is down. So often when he finds an inroad, he plants doubts about the certainty of eternal salvation with the express purpose of robbing the child of God of the joy that should always accompany salvation. *Once in Christ, In Christ Forever* addresses the glorious truth of eternal salvation and offers "more than 100 Biblical reasons why a true believer cannot be lost".

It is admitted that seldom is such truth taught by teachers of the Word. Happy is the people who seldom hear that truth because they seldom experience doubts. Sadly doubts arise much more often than the truth is taught. Gospel Folio Press are to be congratulated for publishing *Once in Christ, In Christ Forever* at a time when few books currently in print adequately address this subject.

This 208-page paperback deals helpfully with the key passages on the believer's security and in a six-page index lists the passages treated. The author also, perhaps not quite so clearly, identifies a number of the errors circulating among professing Christians and the source of those errors.

William MacDonald's style is clear and uncluttered. He makes his points in simple language and at times with clear illustrations. *Once in Christ, In Christ Forever* is no different in this respect from other volumes from the same pen and undoubtedly will be well received.

TW

Boyd's Handbook of Practical Apologetics by Robert T Boyd; published Kregel Publications; price £9.30. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

No Christian should have any difficulty subscribing to the view that the Word is accepted by faith. For that reason he would not expect the Bible to be written as a science text-book but would acknowledge that the Author of that Book would unveil Himself and His ways as it pleased Him and not as men might have expected. However few Christians would not benefit from some explanation of some aspects of the Scriptures.

Boyd's Handbook offers answers to some of those questions which arise as the Word is read: Why does David mention tears being kept in a bottle (Ps 56:8)? Who were the Hittites? What do we learn from Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt? These frequently asked questions Boyd answers helpfully.

He also answers questions like the age of the earth and deals with medical issues linked with the Law. The use of crucifixion is addressed and details are provided about Roman imprisonment. The value of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Bible-related matters are also included.

Boyd's Handbook of Practical Apologetics is a helpful book from which a reader might glean. However in recommending to younger Christians a book like this Handbook, it should always be pointed out that the Scriptures in themselves are what builds up the soul. Gathering interesting facts about the Bible is no substitute for hiding the Word in the heart.

TW

Question Box

Question

John records many instances when the Lord Jesus spoke of His "going away". In some of the sections it is hard to know if He was referring to Calvary, or of returning to Heaven and His Father.

Answer

As always the answer to such questions is found in the general context in which the statements are made. It is true that throughout John's record we learn of a number of references the Lord made to His "going away" and most of them refer to Him going back to His Father in heaven. There is on some occasions an additional reference to the fact that He would go there by way of the Cross, with all that it involved.

In the synoptic records the emphasis is upon His going to Jerusalem to suffer and die and to be raised again (Matt 16:21; 20:18-19; Mark 10:33-34; Luke 18:31-34), and little hint is given beyond this. Luke does speak of "the time...that he should be received up" but further elaboration is not given.

It is from John's inspired record we learn that the Lord Jesus lived with the prospect in His heart that He was going to return to His Father in heaven. The progress of references are of great interest. In the discourse in ch.6, following the feeding of the 5,000, He emphasised the great fact that He came down "from heaven" (vv.33,38,41, 42,50,51,58), and at the end of it introduced the subject of ascending to "where he was before" (v.62). In the following chapter He said "I go unto him that sent me" (v.33), and later in the temple it is again clear He was speaking of heaven in saying "whence I came, and whither I go" (8:14). This, and His frequent reference to "the Father" (vv.16,19) raised questions from the Jews which revealed they did not understand what He was saying and leads on to one of His references to the Cross (vv.21-22,27-28).

The subject is taken up again in the upper room ministry where the Lord is speaking within hours of His sufferings and death. It is evident that He is enjoying the prospect of His return to the presence of His Father. Here He is saying to His own what He had said to the Jews (13:33). They could not follow Him to heaven just then. His words to Peter in v.36 imply the necessity of the work of redemption at the Cross. Peter could not follow Him to those scenes of sorrow, he would in fact deny the Lord at that time. But Peter would eventually follow Him to heaven.

The mentions in ch.14 are more to heaven than Calvary. The preparation of the place (vv.2-4) must include the latter but He had to go into heaven as our Forerunner before we could be there (Heb 6:20). Vv.12 and 28 are indisputably heaven as are the remaining mentions (16:5,7,10, 16, 17,28; 17:11,13; 20:17).

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
4) DANIEL THE PROPHET (Matt 24:15)

Introduction

Daniel was brought up in Jerusalem, and like all the other young people in the city, he was subjected to very different spiritual influences. No doubt the example of old king Josiah was still remembered and "his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the LORD" (2 Chron 35:26). However, the present king, Josiah's son Jehoiakim, was known for "his abominations which he did" (2 Chron 36:8). As we shall see, Josiah's goodness had the greater effect on Daniel, but nevertheless, Jehoiakim's abominations brought the wrath of God on all the people of Jerusalem, and they were besieged by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. He captured the city and took away to Babylon among others, some of the young men of the royal and aristocratic families.

Some of these youths were selected on the basis of their physical features and intellectual ability for further education in Babylon, and were offered all the advantages of the best diet available – the king's own. Then at the end of a three-year training course, they were to enter the king's personal service. Among these were Daniel and his three companions, and of these four it was Daniel who "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan 1:8 RV). However, when he approached the prince of the eunuchs who was in charge of them, he asked that they might all be excused the king's food and drink (no doubt having convinced the others).

Daniel's faith

Daniel's way was prepared by God "to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs" (v.9). Although he was originally fearful of such a course, he accepted Daniel's challenge to "prove thy servants...ten days; and let them give us pulse [vegetables] to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants" (vv.11-13). Daniel's faith is rewarded, because "at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse [vegetables]" (vv.14-16 RV). Daniel knew that although the meat and drink was the best that could be had, they had probably been previously offered to idols; cf. 1 Cor 10:25, so the plain uncompromising diet was better.

To their already-acknowledged abilities, "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all

visions and dreams" (v.17). With this extra ability they were able to come out top of the king's personal examination, and the king himself "found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm" (v.20). The four were faithful to God, and He was faithful to them.

God's faithfulness

The king's forgotten dream was the first test of Daniel's God-given prophetic ability "to understand visions and dreams". The troubled king had asked his wise men to remind him of the dream and then tell him what it meant. Of course this was beyond those wise men, who even with the king's terrible threats and generous promises, found the task impossible, claiming that no-one could do such "except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (2:11). The angry and furious king threatened them all with death, and this threat eventually extended to Daniel and his friends, who although not present at the time, came under the same sentence.

Daniel sought an audience with the king; asked him for time, and went home and requested his companions "that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret" (2:18). God answered their prayer and "the secret [was] revealed unto Daniel in a night vision" (v.19). He then told Nebuchadnezzar that "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (v.28). He informed him of his forgotten dream, which turned out to be momentous in its significance. It was of an image with a head of fine gold, a breast and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of brass, with legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay, these various parts representing all the important succeeding empires. The vision ended with "a stone...cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (v.34). Daniel explained every part of the dream, as he did for the later king Belshazzer (see Dan 4). God later blessed him in many other ways, but also allowed his faith to be tested.

Conclusions

Daniel's life was in many ways the very opposite of Abram's. He was brought up under a godly influence, but was taken away to a far-off, idolatrous country. However, once there he immediately stood up for his principles, and God honoured his bold stand. He became a good influence to others, and was faithful in all kinds of situations, whatever the cost. Unlike Abram, he was unable to live the same kind of separated life, but like most of us, had to live in the world, even though he was not of it, and he sought to honour God in that situation. God was then equally faithful to him, honouring him in this world in putting him at the top of the civil service, although Daniel was never a politician.

The Holy Scriptures (3)

by M Davis, Leeds

Their Preservation

This aspect concerns the transmission of the Scriptures since their original composition to our own day and generation. Although the original autographs of the Scriptures are lost, many copies of them survive on parchment, papyrus, paper, and leather. There is also very substantial agreement between the surviving copies despite differences in detail. It is necessary to compare the differences in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts in order to discover the most likely original text of scripture. This task is called 'textual criticism'. It does not destroy the doctrine of verbal inspiration, which relates only to the original autographs. There is sufficient in the text beyond serious doubt to allow us to say that we have the text of scripture very substantially as it was originally given. God has so blessed to our souls what has come down to us that we can be sure of this.

Nevertheless, some textual difficulties remain in both Testaments. The Hebrew text is obscure in a few places and the meaning of a few words is not known with certainty. No major doctrine would be removed from scripture by any of the differences or obscurities and it is certainly true to say that the manuscripts of the Bible have survived in better shape and numbers for both Testaments than have manuscripts of ancient Greek and Latin classical authors. Both the Jewish and Christian scribes have done a remarkable job in transmitting the text of Holy Scripture down to us today, no doubt under God's providential hand.

The translators of the Bible into English in the sixteenth century had far fewer manuscripts of both Testaments to compare than we have today, but the majority of the more recently-discovered manuscripts very largely confirm the text already known. For instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 are probably about a thousand years older than most other Hebrew manuscripts of the OT, but there is still very substantial agreement between the older and newer sets of copies. Also, the present writer can confirm that the many thousands of Hebrew Bible manuscript fragments discovered in the Cairo Genizah in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century, contain a text that is virtually identical with the so-called Massoretic Text as known until that time.

Further, some very early Greek manuscripts of the NT text, many on papyrus, have been discovered during the past two centuries, besides some very large manuscripts such as Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Vaticanus, and Codex Sinaiticus. There are differences from the so-called Textus Receptus, 'Received Text', of the medieval scribes, but nothing very fundamentally different. The Received Text was probably the best available to translators in the sixteenth century, but it is not necessarily always to be preferred to that of all other manuscripts of the Greek NT discovered since then. A prayerful comparison of both traditions by believing scholars should be made in each case of difficulty with impartiality.



Sometimes the newer manuscripts clearly have a preferable reading, but, equally, sometimes the older tradition has a quite acceptable reading when considered in the light of the rest of scripture and should be retained.

The summarized evidence for the text of scripture can today be found in several critical editions of the Greek NT and the Hebrew and Aramaic OT, also in the footnotes of some more recent translations into English.

God has preserved His Word down the centuries despite all opposition and attempts to destroy it in days of persecution and hardship for His believing people, so that we can appreciate its timeless truth today!

In His Presence

The secret of Christian holiness is heart-occupation with Christ Himself. As we gaze upon Him we become like Him. Do you want to be holy? Spend much time in His presence. Let the loveliness of the risen Lord so fill the vision of your soul that all else is shut out. Then the things of the flesh will shrivel up and disappear and the things of the Spirit will become supreme in your life. We do not become holy by looking into our own hearts. There we only find corruption. But as we look away from self altogether, "looking unto Jesus", as He is the object in which we delight, as we contemplate His holiness, purity, love, and compassion, His devotion to the Father's will, we shall be transformed, imperceptibly to ourselves, perhaps, but none the less surely, into His blessed image. There is no other way whereby we may become practically holy, and be delivered from the power of the flesh and of the principles of the world.

HA Ironside

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The Epistle to Philemon (4)

by Cyril Cann, Glastonbury

There is no conflict within our society between slavery and Christian testimony but there are other conventional, secular values which place us as believers in positions similar to those faced by Philemon and Onesimus. We are challenged in our day as they were in theirs and we must beware of accommodating to the norm of a godless society which challenges the truth of God as revealed in His word. Christian truth must not because it cannot, be adjusted to modern standards and ideas. We cannot be isolated from secular relationships but we do well to examine these relationships and ponder them in the sanctuary so that we obtain correct scriptural perspectives on them.

An Assembly Relationship

The letter contains a number of references to relationships between believers: those who were with Paul in Rome and who sent greetings to the Colossian assembly; believers at Colosse - Philemon, Apphia, Aristarchus and "the church in thy house" (v.2). Paul was anxious not merely that Onesimus should put things right with his master, but also that he should be received by believers at Colosse: "above a servant, a brother beloved" (v.16).

Paul seemed to have a very favourable opinion of the character of the assembly at Colosse and relationships within it (Col 1:4; 2:5). He appears confident that Onesimus would be well received (Col 4:9). Relationships between believers was such that differences, particularly social differences, could not survive.

It is extremely sad when various differences (even social differences) spoil relationships between believers. None is superior to another in the context of the local assembly. The position of each rests upon the same foundation: guilty sinners who have obtained forgiveness through faith in Christ. We are what we are by grace and not by earthly status. In Rom 11, the apostle Paul develops the metaphor of the church as a body with Christ as its Head; and we read: "every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (v.3).

We have an example of social differences affecting relationships within an assembly in 1 Cor 11. At (social?) gatherings prior to the Lord's supper there were those who were hungry and those who had eaten well and even those who were drunk! Apart from its impropriety, this affected assembly relationships and we read: "despise ye the church of God and shame them that have not?" (v.22). Corinthian believers had already been challenged by what had been written in the earlier part of the letter: "what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?" (4:7).

It is interesting to note that the qualities which marked Philemon also marked the Colossian assembly. Compare Philem v.5, "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward



the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints"; with Col 1:4, "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints". How richly the faithful testimony of Philemon had influenced relationships with and between believers in the assembly so that qualities of humility and love could develop and provide the context within which division could not survive.

An Eternal Relationship

Paul must have thought much about the remarkable way in which God had worked and brought about the salvation of Onesimus. The little cameo of Onesimus' life was a remarkable reflection of the provision God has made in Christ for mankind generally. Sin had come in and marred the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus; it had distanced them when the latter fled to Rome and the matter could not be set aside but had to be resolved. God in sovereign knowledge, power and grace intervened and provided one (Paul) to be the instrument of Onesimus' conversion and reconciliation to his master. Onesimus' true repentance is seen in his change of mind. The one who turned his back upon his master and his face towards Rome is seen returning and his face is towards his master with his back towards Rome!

The picture is familiar to each believer. We have been brought home to the blessings of the Father's house. All is of grace and based upon the person and work of the One we now know as Saviour. The nature and character of the relationship into which we have been brought should delight our hearts. The work of salvation has been completed and cannot be added to nor can anything detract from it; the demands of God's righteous throne have been propitiated eternally. So we read concerning Christ that "once in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26).

For this reason, believers have become beneficiaries under a new covenant which is an eternal covenant. Christ, when requesting that believers remember Him at the Lord's supper, refers to the cup as "the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). This implies an old covenant and an old covenant which had been set aside because it failed. The reference is to Exod 24 where God entered into a conditional covenantal relationship with His people. The condition was that they keep the word of their confession relating to the Law: "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (v.7). The covenant was established by the blood of sacrifice. It did not and could not continue, not because God had changed in any way but because the people could not keep their side of the agreement. Any covenant involving men must fail. The new covenant is unconditional and is based upon the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. It is sealed by His blood and is underpinned by His person and work

Continued on page 251

Regions Beyond

Varanasi–Pioneer Work in North India by William Walker

Varanasi (Benares) in northern India lies on the southern bank of the great River Ganga (Ganges), the Hindu's most sacred river. The presiding deity of the city is Vishvanath (Shiva), regarded by Hindus as the Overlord of the Universe. The antiquity of Varanasi goes back to at least the middle of the first millennium BC. Since time immemorial the city has served as a centre of religious pilgrimage and a seat of learning and culture. This city, sometimes described as the navel of world Hinduism, is wholly given over to idolatry.

My wife Maureen and I arrived in Varanasi in 1951. Certain important considerations had prompted us to move there following our marriage in 1949 in Bihar, where our work had been amongst Bengali and Santali speaking assemblies.

Our first reason for going to Varanasi was to give help to our colleagues Alex Smith and his wife Olive, and Robert Duff, who had begun a good work in the city but needed relief as they were planning to go to UK for a much needed rest and change. We came to strengthen that work and extend it, if at all possible. A second reason for going was that we had already made a start at learning Hindi, the national language, and Varanasi was an ideal place to further our studies and gain a deeper understanding of the Hindu mind. We were soon joined by Ian and Rita Hall of Bombay, with whom we worked happily until our return to UK on leave in 1953.

Stronghold of Satan Our early impressions of life in this great stronghold of Satan were those of deep spiritual oppression. This continued with us, in varying degrees of intensity, throughout the whole length of our stay there. Prayer was always difficult and communications with the people complex and tiring. As time went on, we were acutely aware that evil forces were at work to undermine our faith and confidence in God. We preached in the open air, distributed gospel literature to Hindu pilgrims, visited the students in the famed Benares Hindu University, regularly witnessed in the villages around and across the Ganges, all it seemed, to little or no effect.

One young Bengali student, whom we baptised on confession of his faith and after careful instruction, was overcome by sin and fell away. Our first child, a little boy, died shortly after birth and was buried in the Asighat Christian Cemetery in the city. Yet despite these setbacks and disappointments, we had prayed and believed the Lord would honour our faith in Him and one day raise up a witness in the city which would continue. How this would come about we had no idea. After our leave in the UK in 1953 we returned to our field in the Santal Parganas, Bihar.

Brilliant Young Student But imagine our joy and delight to learn many years afterwards, that in 1968 a brilliant young student in the University of Varanasi, Kripa Shankar by name, had come to faith in Christ from a very orthodox Hindu background. He eventually became an Advocate and was practising law in Bombay when God spoke to him and called him to return to Varanasi to work amongst his own people.

He was commended by the assembly at the Fort Meeting Room in Bombay and began his work for the Lord in Varanasi



in 1975. Since then he has been a most faithful servant of Christ and a fearless witness to the citizens of his native city, enduring fierce opposition and stoning – of which he bears the marks in his body to this day. He has also, under God, established a fine assembly near the gates of his old university, and we have had the privilege of visiting him there and taking part in the ministry several times over the years.

God willing, brother Reggie Jebb and I hope to visit him again in October of this year, after attending a Conference of believers in Asansol, Bengal at the beginning of the month. Kindly remember us in your prayers.

The following letter, written to HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, in 1996 from a humble Indian brother living in Madhya Pradesh, was sent to Michael Browne recently by the author. It is an example of faithful heart exercise "for kings, and all that are in authority".

Most Honoured Sir, Hearty and cordial greetings to you in the worthy Name of our great God and Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. I am constrained to write a few lines to you. The God of love has graciously burdened me to do this as I believe you are doing things in ignorance.

"Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgments and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed" (Isa 56:1). "Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant...Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Mal 2:14-15). "Blessed is the man that doeth this" (Isa 56:2).

Remember your great, great, great grandmother, Queen Victoria. Peace reigned during her reign. The sun did not set on the empire during her rule. She feared God and obeyed His word. Remember King Edward VIII – he lost his kingdom and King George VI reigned instead. I am sure you know the reason. After your mother, Queen Elizabeth, you should be enthroned if you obey the Word of God and follow Him faithfully.

I beg of you, don't be foolish like your grand uncle, Edward. I entreat you to repent and return to the God of glory, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming soon. Read what the Word of the Lord says, "Woe to the rebellious children...that take counsel, but not of my Spirit" (Isa 30:1). Be like your great ancestor, Queen Victoria, who was promoted to glory and gained an eternal reward.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can cleanse you from all sin if you repent and receive Christ as your Lord and Saviour. If you have already divorced Princess Diana, go to her and ask for forgiveness and receive her as your life's partner. I urge you to make haste. May God forgive you and establish your kingdom. I am praying for your salvation and await your reply. May God bless you and your family.

I remain honoured sir, your well-wisher and the humble servant and ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. (P.V.D.)

This letter was acknowledged by St. James's Palace, and its contents brought to the notice of His Royal Highness.

Assembly Identity – Its Titles and Terms

by T Bentley, Malaysia

Titles defining the local assembly
(Notes of a Bible Reading held in the Paramount Assembly Conference, Malaysia, May 1998).

The local assembly is distinguished from all other gatherings by the designations given to it in the Scriptures. The word "church" in its original Old English form, meant a congregation, and was never used for a building. It being a perfectly good word, carries the scriptural thought of a company consisting of called out believers gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Church of God 1 Cor 1:2
– Ownership
Eight times this title occurs in the NT. On each of these occasions a local church is in view. The term must never be considered as being co-extensive with the expression "the body of Christ". The Body is inclusive of all believers, whereas the "church of God" is not (see eg. 1 Thess 2:14; 2 Thess 2:4). In 1 Tim 3:15 another significant title emerges: "church of the living God" which distinguishes the assembly from every other religious gathering in Ephesus.

2. Churches of Christ Rom 16:16
– Sovereignty
The local assembly is a testimony to Christ. It is there that He is acknowledged as Head. He is responsible for its control and provision. Headship is what He is to us. Lordship is the same truth, but stresses our subjection to Him. Note particularly that the term "church of Christ" does not appear in the NT.

3. Churches of the Saints 1 Cor 14:33
– Character and Composition
This title teaches that the company is composed entirely of sanctified believers, saints without exception, distinction or classification, thus no evidence of officialdom or clerisy appears. Moral purity is also in view. While the local assembly is composed only of believers, it does not follow that all believers in the locality are included in the NT concept. The sole ground of gathering is clearly stated in Matt 18:20.

4. Churches of Galatia Gal 1:2
– Geographic Location
See also 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 8:1; Gal 1:22. It is important for us to note this standard formula. When a province or an area is in view, the word "church" is always in the plural. It is never used to embrace the aggregate of assemblies in an area, which makes such terms as "the church of England" or "the church of Malaysia" foreign to the teaching of the NT. The Scripture knows nothing of a confederation of churches in a region, national or universal union. The use of what may be termed scriptural titles, such as "assemblies of God" does not affirm their scripturalness.

5. Churches of the Gentiles Rom 16:4
– Ethnic Composition
Such a title reflects the purpose of God in the Gospel and indicates the harmony of the assembly with the divine Mind.

Terms describing the local assembly

The various figures or symbols used of the local church reveal the purpose which God intends the assembly to fulfil in service and in testimony for Him.

1. House of God 1 Tim 3:15

– Authority and Behaviour

The term *oikes* means literally a household, dwelling or inheritance. Here we learn that the assembly is *the sphere of heavenly administration*. Note the first mention of the term in Gen 28 by which we learn *the government of an indwelling God*. Our whole manner of life is regulated by divine principles whether we be, men, women, overseers, servants, widows, rich or poor.

2. Temple of God 1 Cor 3:16

– Holiness and Purity

The word *naos* identifies a shrine, sanctuary or inner temple. The assembly is the *sanctuary of heavenly awareness*. Much can be gleaned from the OT use of "temple" that will enrich our concept of this symbol. Privilege is seen in holy reverence, priestly service and a deep sense of the Lord's presence. The figure emphasises *the glory of an indwelling God*, which prepares us for the announcement against those who would defile the temple of God.

3. God's Building 1 Cor 3:9

– Edification and Toil

Oikodome points to a house in building, suggesting progress from patient toil. The assembly is *the structure of heavenly architecture*. It takes character from the foundation, being designed to bear witness to the wisdom and glory of its Architect. The figure denotes *the greatness of an indwelling God*, so let us be careful *where* we build; *what* we build and *why* we build. Proper building will bear likeness to the Lord; *gold* His inherent glory; *silver* His inestimable giving; *precious stones* His inimitable graces.

4. God's Husbandry 1 Cor 3:9

– Cultivation and Production

The assembly is a *georgion* a tilled field. The assembly is *the scene of heavenly abundance*, being a spiritually productive allotment of God's creation. Here the teacher is seen as having especial responsibility to "dress" (Heb 6:7), that will promote growth and produce for God. Obviously the figure stresses *the goal of an indwelling God*. One plants and another waters, both united in the unity, vitality and conformity of the assembly with nothing divergent in either practice or principle on the part of those who function in this capacity. Hence the value of an accredited ministry in these diverse times.

5. Flock of God Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4

– Frailty and Responsibility

Poimnion points to a little flock, dear to Him who purchased it for Himself. The assembly is seen as here being composed of *sheep of heavenly affection*. It indicates the propensity of saints to wander and emphasises the need of them to be shepherded (Prov 27:23). The figure endorses *the guidance of an indwelling God*.

Continued on page 251

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (5)

by John Gillespie

Fifth Stage

Growth : Wisdom and Grace (Luke 2:40)

The Son of God became a child,
Prospered and grew "a tender plant",
Rooted where all was barren, wild:
"The desert blossomed jubilant".

Full from the garden of His life,
Hid to yon private northern view,
Without a thorn, or pruning-knife,
The bud burst forth in season due.

See measured, threefold growth instilled,
Perfect in body, part and whole,
Strong in His spirit, wisdom filled,
Treasured by God with grace of soul.

Made like to us, divine surprise,
Elisha's miracle of grace:
Mouth to our mouth, eyes to our eyes,
And hands to hands, face answering face.

What love in lowliness see here,
Lips, eyes, and hands, likeness in deed!
He stooped to us and stretching near
"Man-child" became to match our need.

Took to Himself that body frame
Prepared by God, and with us thence
"Partook of blood and flesh the same"!
Yet, sinless, shared experience.

So like unto His brethren made,
Though God the Son, as Man He grew,
From infant form in manger laid,
Such as "the First Man" never knew.

So soon The Spirit rests on Him,
Filling a vessel undefiled
With wisdom, rising to the brim,
God's favour, too, rests on the child.

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

SEPTEMBER 5
Carryduff: Annual Conference at 7.30pm. D Craig, A Farrell.

SEPTEMBER 19
Portavogie: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

AUGUST 15
Girvan: Stair Park Gospel Hall, Henrietta Street. Annual Christian Conference at 3.00pm. J Paterson, M Radcliffe, D Gilliland.
Inverurie: Annual Conference to be held in the Town Hall at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. R Cargill, J Grant, W Stevely.

AUGUST 22
Bishopton: Conference in Bishopton Community Centre at 3.00pm. W Banks, A Foster, J Riddle. Mr Riddle will also speak Sunday 4.00pm. and Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm. in the Gospel Hall.
Irvine: Conference weekend. Ministry meeting, Friday 21st at 7.30pm. Mr J Sinclair. Saturday 22nd, Annual Conference at 3.15pm. B Cargill, S McDonald, J Sinclair. Sunday at 3.00pm. J Sinclair. Mr Sinclair continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

AUGUST 29
Dingwall: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. J Baker, J Campbell, W Woods.
Forth: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. S McDonald, J Sinclair, J Hay. Mr Hay continues in ministry until September 3rd at 7.30pm.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road, Friday 28th at 7.30pm. G Forbes. Saturday 29th, Prayer at 3.30pm. Open Air Meeting at 4.00pm. Ministry at 7.00pm. G Forbes.

SEPTEMBER 5
Annbank: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, 1 School Brae at 3.15pm. J Baker, R Cameron, F Reid.
Kinross: Annual Conference in Kinross Primary School at 3.00pm. T Wait, G Forbes, D Gillies. (Note change of venue).
Kirkmuirhill: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, 62 Vere Road at 3.30pm. T Aitken, M Radcliffe, W Stevely.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. J Dickson.

SEPTEMBER 12
Bellshill: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, Johnstone St at 3.00pm. B Cargill, A Prentice, A Sinclair.
Interlink Missionary Meetings: Friday 11th in Gospel Hall, Kirkcaldy at 7.30pm. and Bethany Evangelical Church at 7.30pm. Saturday 12th in Hamilton College at 2.00pm., 3.30pm. and 6.45pm.
Larbert: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. G Gilmour, J Stubbs, T Wilson.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

AUGUST 1
Isle of Man: Switzerland Road Gospel Hall, Douglas at 7.00pm. Ministry, R McKeown.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Stewart.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Dawes.



AUGUST 8
Morpeth: Red Row, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. A Carew.

AUGUST 22
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. W Gardiner.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. D Hands.
Swindon: Penhill Gospel Hall, Penhill Drive at 7.30pm. H Coles.

AUGUST 29
Chesterfield: Littlemoor Gospel Chapel, Dunston Lane at 7.30pm. S Baker.
Treorchy (Mid Glam): Annual Conference in Junior School, Glyncoli Road (turn alongside Lion Hotel) at 2.30pm. and 6.00pm. Platform open to ministering brethren.
Wylam: Annual Conference weekend. Saturday 29th at 7.00pm. Monday 31st at 2.30pm. and 6.00pm. in Methodist Church. R Miller, M Radcliffe.

SEPTEMBER 5
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. A Maunder.
Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Scammell.
Prescot: Prescot Gospel Hall, Evans Street. Annual Conference at 3.30pm. and 6.15pm. S Baker and A Gamble.
Trent Vale: Swan Lane Gospel Hall, Claytonwood Road at 7.00pm. S McKenzie.
Waltham Abbey: Eastbrook Hall, Broomstickhall Road. Conference at 4.00pm. W Gardiner.

SEPTEMBER 12
Redditch: Annual Conference in Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. K Rudge, M Horlock.
South Shields: Hebron Hall, Annual Conference in Maxwell Hall, West Stevenson at 2.45pm. and 6.00pm. R Miller, J Riddle. Mr Riddle continues in ministry on Lord's Day at 8.15pm. and Monday at 7.30pm.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London. Ministry Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. R Dawes, A Carew.
London, Hornsey N.8: Annual Conference in Alexandra Hall at 7.00pm. A Cundick.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Ballybollan: J Thompson and N Fleck in tenth week of gospel meetings at end of June. Some concerned regarding salvation.

Co. ARMAGH
Armagh: A McShane and D Gilliland purpose DV commencing gospel meetings in a tent about a mile and a half from Armagh centre in Newry Road area, starting 2nd August. Prayer valued.

T Sloan (Norway) gave a most interesting and challenging report of his work, and will be in a number of other venues throughout the next few weeks in this country.

Lurgan: A McShane and M Radcliffe have completed some six weeks (end June) in the gospel with sustained interest, and blessing in salvation.

Portadown: Tent meetings during July/August by E McCullough and A Davidson.



Pray for blessing in this needy town which has suffered much from political unrest.

Richhill: S McBride and T Wright continue in gospel tent work in this area. Quite a few strangers have come, and the numbers have steadily increased. One lady has professed to be saved.

Co. MONAGHAN

Clones: The saints here have been greatly encouraged as our two brethren R Eadie and D Gilliland continue in gospel effort. Good numbers have attended, along with quite a few strangers. One lady has professed salvation.

Co. DOWN

Bangor (Central Hall): Annual open air meetings on sea front for two weeks commencing 5th July conducted by R Pickering.

Dundonald (Brooklands): P Brandon had two weeks of well attended gospel meetings with blessing in salvation. Many locals heard the gospel clearly presented. The meetings concluded on 21st June.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co DONEGAL

Coleraine: HS Paisley was present for three weeks of gospel meetings in a tent pitched on the outskirts of the town. On average there were between two and three hundred present each night including unusually large numbers of unsaved from many walks of life. Quite a number professed to be saved, including a young man whose mother had been saved at the previous tent meetings conducted by Mr Paisley in Coleraine during 1959.

Gartan: S Patterson and G Stewart continue in their mobile hall in the country district of Gartan near Letterkenny. Numbers attending are small but the seed is being sown.

Killykergan: J Lennox and B Currie are expected for tent meetings commencing on 26th July.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

WEST MIDLANDS

Birmingham, Small Heath: This year's annual conference at Herbert Road saw help from J Coltman and S McKenzie, with the latter speaker staying on for a week of meetings. A helpful time.

Burghill: This small assembly in rural West Herefordshire was greatly encouraged by a visit from C Roberts. He stayed for a number of days, with helpful and challenging ministry. Support from elsewhere was very heartening too.

Malvern: R Hill and K Rudge spoke at the annual conference. Good ministry with encouraging support from other assemblies.

Prestwich, Manchester: The Lancashire Gospel Tent was pitched in a park in Prestwich for the first three weeks of June. The evangelists were I Robertson (responsible for the adult work) and I Campbell (responsible for the children's work). Despite the wet weather, the children's meetings were well attended with good behaviour. A number of the children were hearing the gospel for the first time. It was encouraging that one boy made a profession. Several adults from the

locality came to the meetings. A lady in her 80's, who had been attending a local gospel meeting on a regular basis, made a profession. After three weeks the tent was taken down and the meetings moved to the hall where the assembly who met at Cheetham are now meeting. The hall is in Prestwich and apart from a visit by the tent on two previous occasions, together with children's meetings in various schools, it is an area where there has not been a testimony before. The meetings continued for one week in the hall. Several of the children from the tent attended the children's meetings with a number of children local to the hall attending as well. Unfortunately the meetings were not well attended by adults. Subject to receiving permission it is hoped God willing to hold children's meetings throughout the winter months in a school which is near to the park.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

Fraserburgh: During April, Jack Hay had four weeks of gospel meetings in the Gospel Hall. The meetings were well attended, with unsaved people present each night, and one man professed faith in Christ. The Word was preached clearly and faithfully, the local assembly was encouraged and blessed, and greatly appreciated the support and help of local believers during the campaign.

Peterhead: During March, George Forbes conducted two weeks' children's meeting which many attended regularly. He also visited schools and was well received. The interest was most encouraging, and one boy trusted the Saviour. We are sure the Lord will give the increase from the seed sown so earnestly.

From April 19-May 6, Archie Carew conducted a series of gospel meetings. The local assembly was much encouraged by the effort and by his personal zeal in the gospel, including his knocking on doors every afternoon inviting people to the meetings. There were open air meetings, and prayer meetings before and after each gospel meeting in which our brother preached very well and many unsaved people attended. Two women trusted the Saviour and another was restored.

Forres: During April-May, Dan Gillies had five weeks' gospel meetings when good numbers came to hear the message faithfully preached. The local believers worked well before and during the meetings, and support from other assemblies was much appreciated. A lady was saved in her home after the first meeting and was baptised soon after. A husband and wife from nearby Aberlour were saved in their home during the fourth week, and their son and his wife and daughter have since been at the gospel meetings and show an interest. In all of these cases God had been working in their lives for some time.

Sam Matthews is again tracting and visiting the villages in Speyside, and had just started tracting in Aberlour prior to the meetings in Forres. God is working, God is able, please pray on especially for new contacts and those visited over the years.

Children and teenagers: Remember in prayer the many opportunities which have been and are being taken this

summer to reach and teach many hundreds of young people in camps at Faskally House and elsewhere, and in "Holiday Clubs" in many local assemblies throughout the country. Pray too for young ones who profess salvation that they may be preserved and encouraged in their christian lives.

Continued from:
The Epistle to Philemon page 241

and believers come into its blessing because they are found "in Christ" (2 Cor 1:21). This is why it is referred to as a "better covenant" (Heb 8:6) and an "everlasting covenant" (Heb 13:20) and indicates that as believers we have been brought into the benefits of an eternal relationship with Christ. Hence He could say, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27).

God's dealings with Onesimus through His servant Paul would have brought to their remembrance as well as to the remembrance of believers at Colosse and Rome the reality, security and joy of eternal relationship with Christ.

How delightful is this brief letter we have been considering. How gracious is the Spirit in that its intimacies and principles are allowed to form part of the written statement of the truth of God for our learning. As believers we should be challenged in our difficult day, as were Paul and his associates in theirs, about the development of appropriate relationships and rejoice that these are undertaken within the context of the great eternal relationship with the God of glory into which we have been brought by grace through faith in Christ.

Continued from:
Assembly Identity – Its Titles and Terms page 245

6. Body of Christ 1 Cor 12:27
– *Unity and Harmony*
Soma is the body as of a whole person. With the definite article being absent, it is the local assembly that is in view. It bears the characteristics of the Church which is His body.

7. Epistle of Christ 2 Cor 3:3
– *Legibility and Clarity*
Epistole is a message, easily deciphered, an epistle readily read. The assembly is to be as transparent as a readable epistle, in teaching, living and serving. All this in the power of the Spirit who is Lord.

8. Chaste Virgin 2 Cor 11:27
– *Chastity and Fidelity*
Parthenos is a young woman awaiting marriage in fidelity to her betrothed. The assembly must exercise vigilance lest it be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Serpent is ever anxious to beguile, that the saints may be diverted into a path of infidelity to the One to whom we are to be linked eternally in nuptial oneness.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Matthew Black on 28th May. Saved in his late teens and baptised and received into fellowship at Ketterkenny. Later came to Scotland where he and his wife set up home. He continued in happy fellowship with the saints in Airdrie until his homecall. His real interest was trying to get the unsaved under the sound of the gospel. Sadly missed by his wife and family.

Mr Wilfred (Bill) Beddows on 11th February aged 86 years. Saved in adult life, and received into fellowship with the saints in Dennistoun, Glasgow in 1964, where he continued until overtaken by ill-health, which he bore with courage and strong faith.

Mrs Lizzie Bell on 15th May, in her 80th year. Saved as a teenager and received into Bridgend Gospel Hall, Kilwinning. After her marriage to Jamie Bell she was received into Plann Assemby in Crosshouse and continued there for over 50 years, except for a short time in Dreghorn. A beloved sister and faithful at all the gatherings. Her husband Jamie will need our prayers.

Mrs E Cardy aged 84. Saved when she was 19 and for very many years in the Frances St assemby in Newtownards. Deeply interested in the work amongst the young, good at getting friends and neighbours in to hear the gospel. Her husband was an elder in the assembly, as was her son who passed away seven years ago. The funeral from the gospel hall was well attended. JG Hutchinson conducted the services assisted by D McFeeters.

Alex Fisher on 13th May, aged 84. Brought up in a christian home, Alex was saved at the age of 12 and baptised in his teens. He spent most of his life in the Whitburn assembly, returning to Armadale some 15 years ago. Alex was always interested in children and involved himself in Sunday School work from an early age. He was Superintendent of the Whitburn Sunday School for a number of years, but was equally at home in the ministry of the Word and the preaching of the gospel.

Mr Robert Gibson (Aughavey assembly, Co Tyrone). Beloved husband of Helen and father of four sons and one daughter. He went to be with the Lord on the 16th May after a prolonged illness. Saved in 1932 he bore a quiet consistent testimony throughout the years.

Mrs Eileen M Jordan (Newcastle) on 26th May aged 90. Saved as a girl of seventeen through the words of John 3:36 when DL Craig had meetings in Bryansford. Widowed over fifty years ago, she brought up her young family single handed, and for many years had the Rathmourne Guest House. A godly woman with a keen interest in spiritual matters, she was very active in the sisters' missionary class. She radiated inner peace and joy by her beaming smile. She is survived by two sons and one daughter.



Mr Robert Richmond called home on 16th May. Saved when 19 years of age and later baptised he enjoyed the fellowship of the Lord's people in Kilwinning, Ayr, Troon and for the last 26 years in Bute Hall, Prestwick. In early days he preached to many companies in Ayrshire and bore a bright testimony in his place of business. Robert was faithful in his attendance at the assembly gatherings and always willing to help in outreach work. Our brother was well supported in his service by his wife Jean for whom prayer is requested.

Mrs Catherine Ritchie (Cathy) on 13th May. Saved and received into fellowship in Musselburgh over 40 years ago. Her husband pre-deceased her by 31 years. A faithful attender at all the assembly gatherings until her last weeks, although she was in poor health for many years. A very large number attended her burial and she will be greatly missed, by her loved ones and in the local assembly.

Mrs Skelly aged 66 after a long illness borne with christian fortitude. Saved 35 years ago and in the assembly at Cregagh Street, Belfast. A woman with an excellent christian testimony, esteemed and loved in the assembly and highly respected by all who knew her. Her large funeral from the gospel hall was an indication of how highly she was esteemed. Prayer valued for her husband and large family connection, some not yet saved. A Aiken and JG Hutchinson conducted the services.

Mr William John Simpson Smith on 27th May 1998 aged 83 years. Saved in his teens, he was received into the Portessie assembly and for around 50 years he maintained a faithful testimony. He was a consistent, reliable brother who was ever ready to serve his Lord. He was a pillar in the assembly, earnestly contending for the faith, and his ministry and fellowship will be greatly missed. Called home after a period of declining health and latterly suffering much, he was released from his experiences here, which he used to describe as "preparing for glory".

Mr Samuel Spence on 27th April aged 86. Our brother was saved in 1942 at meetings conducted by a Mr Stone. He was soon baptised and associated at first with the local Baptist church and then came into fellowship at Growell. A quiet and godly brother much respected. He was lovingly cared for by his dear wife Evelyn during some eleven years of illness. S Thompson and J Graham shared in the large funeral services where many heard the gospel. He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

Miss M Wilson aged 94. Saved in 1918 when W Rodgers and G Alexander had tent meetings near her home. In very many ways she was a real servant of the church, interested and helpful in all its activities. She was a woman who adorned the doctrine of God. Prayer valued for her relatives, some not yet saved. JG Hutchinson and A Aiken spoke at the very large funeral.

PERSONALIA

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Change of Correspondent: All correspondence for Drummond Road Hall, Boscombe should now be addressed to, Mr C Jackson, 'Ingleby', 11 Penrose Rd, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9JF. Tel: (01202) 872308.

Change of Correspondent for the assembly at Derriaghy Gospel Hall, Lisburn. The new correspondent is: Mr Tom F Armstrong, 15 Moneybroom Road, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 2QP. Tel: (01846) 648374.

Ritchie Deans may now be contacted at 25 Fyne Crescent, Larkhall, ML9 2UW. Tel: (01698) 886261.

Wanted: Information about Mr & Mrs Wm Templeton, especially details of their years of service as missionaries in Trinidad (1935-1955). Contact John Young: (01563) 821444.

As from 3rd August Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Lane from Chennai, India will be in the UK for six weeks.

Glasgow: Eastpark Gospel Hall, Avenuepark Street, Maryhill. A warm welcome is extended to Christian students starting university or college in October. Letters of commendation would be appreciated. Further information can be obtained from David Newell: (0141) 9461711.

Wanted for Bible teaching in Zambia. Used copies of the Scofield Bible, any condition, any number. Post to KE Barker, Ridgewood, Sudbury Rd, Little Whelnetham, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 OUL.

Holidaying in the North of Scotland? Come over and help us. The little assembly in Dingwall would greatly appreciate the help and fellowship of any saints holidaying in the north. Lord's Day: Remembrance and Worship 10.30am.; Gospel Meeting 6.30pm.; Tuesday, Prayer and Bible Study at 7.30pm. Letters of commendation would be appreciated. Contact: (01349) 863272.

Change of address for the assembly in Esbjerg, Denmark. It is now Spangsbjerg Mollevej 16C, 6715 Esbjerg N. Further information from David Saunders, (+45)75140912, Fax (+45)75140913, E-mail: david.saunders@get2net.dk

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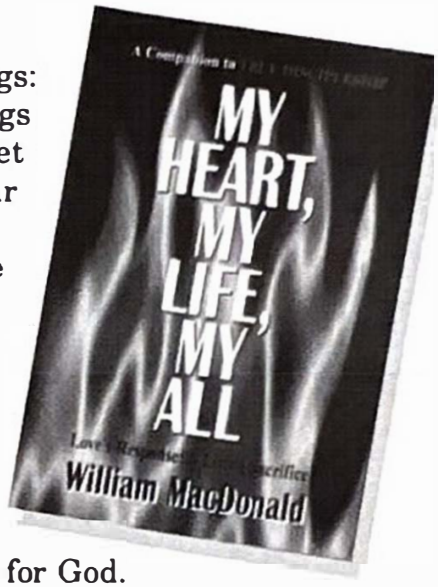
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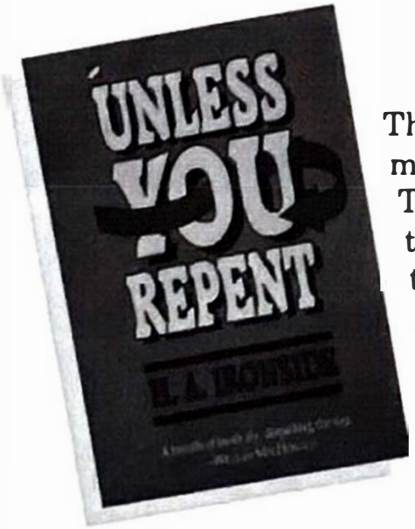
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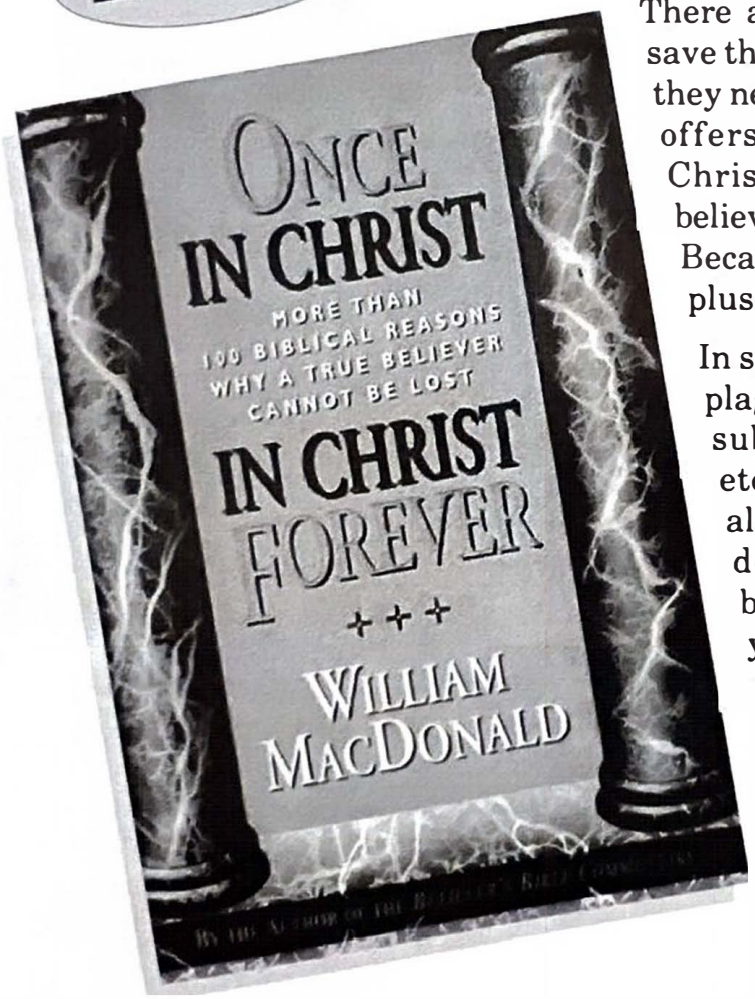
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Believer's Magazine

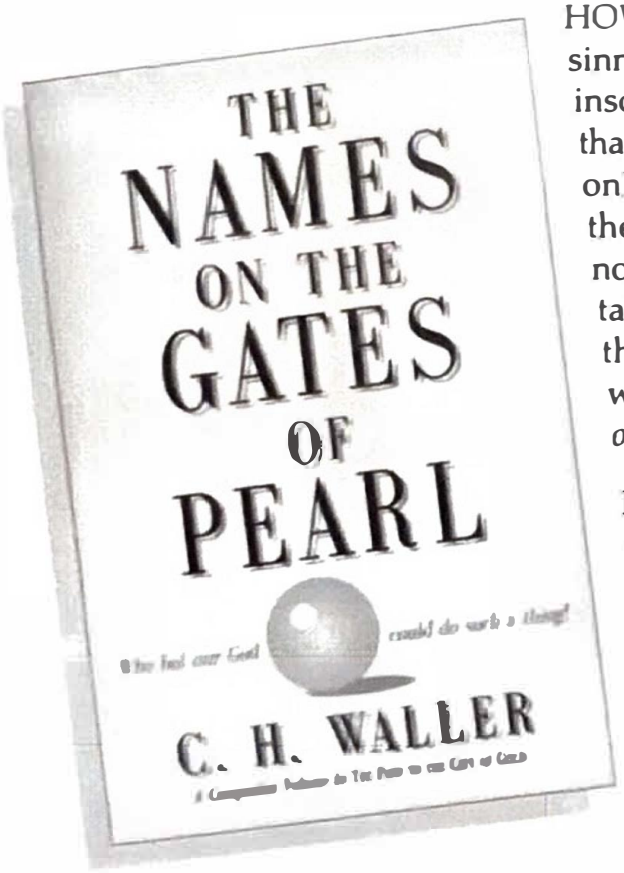


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Believer's

Magazine

SEPTEMBER 1998

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Editorial

"Who is the greatest?" (Matt 18:7)

It was an intriguing scene as all the disciples gazed upon a child in their midst. The Lord Jesus had called this little one to Him to illustrate His answer. Matthew tells us that the question "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" had come from them, but both Mark and Luke reveal that He had really elicited it from them. He had perceived "the thought of their heart" (Luke 9:47), He even knew where they were when they had discussed the matter! (Mark 9:33-34). They had walked together in the open way and had talked about priority of place in the coming kingdom, but it was in the privacy of the house that He taught them the vital importance of true humility.

Perhaps they were thinking of that kingdom because so recently three of them had been privileged to see it previewed on the mountain of transfiguration. Yet there they had not learned a lesson taught by the Father Himself. Peter would have built tabernacles of equal status for Christ, and Moses and Elijah but the voice from out of the cloud had answered, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (17:5). A true conception of the absolute pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ will keep us free from exalting self in any way.

This is the crux of the lesson taught in the house. A little child stood before them, there was no appearance of power or position in it. They were to do what the child did not even need to do; to humble themselves "as this little child". To take the lowly place if done "as" the child would be both natural and genuine. Such a lesson if learned well by each of us would take away many of the problems which affect us in assembly life.

But there was more to learn. Perhaps it was as He commenced the next sentence that He took the child into His arms (Mark 9:36) to say, "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matt 18:5). Here we learn that humility in others is dear to Him, He appreciates it! The lesson is clear, when we receive and appreciate, as He did, those who are lowly. He takes it as though we are receiving Him. Our present day world will tread down the lowly, assertiveness is the popular theme of the day but "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

But in that room there was also a warning. The words "offence" and "offences" should be looked at carefully. The reference is to that which causes another to stumble and the warning is to those who would knowingly cause one of God's little ones to fall. Here is an important matter for all to remember (see Rom 14:13).

But who will be greatest in the kingdom? The answer is in v.4. And who has humbled himself to such a degree? It is the "beloved Son" of chapter 17:5 who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and.....humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:7-8). He will be the greatest.

JRB

The First Conqueror

by the late WW Fereday

Chedorlaomer was his name. In contrast with Abraham he occupies a very insignificant place in the Word of God. Thirteen chapters are devoted to Abraham, and divine grace made him worthy of this distinction; but Chedorlaomer is named only in Gen 14, and even in that one chapter he is by no means the central figure. The great theme of the Scriptures is the counsels of God concerning Christ, in which His saints have part through grace. The world's doings are only noticed in Scripture in so far as they directly affect God's saints. Had Chedorlaomer not taken Lot the nephew of Abraham amongst his many prisoners, we should probably have heard nothing of him.

Viewed in the light of eternity such a man as Chedorlaomer was a mere fly in the ointment; but being the first of a long line of petty self-important creatures who have striven for power and influence in the earth, Chedorlaomer cannot be altogether passed by. If earth was nothing to Abraham, it was everything to this king. If a tent and an altar sufficed for the friend of God they certainly did not suffice for Chedorlaomer. He would have cities and armies, with satellite kings humbly following his lead. But where is this ambitious man today? Where are all the men who have followed in his steps? In their day they "made the earth to tremble, they did shake kingdoms, they made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof" (Isa 14:16,17); but where are they now? We shudder to ask the question. The work of every conqueror has been undone by his rivals and successors, and men do not call them blessed (Ps 72:17). Why historians should apply the epithet "great" to adventurers who were only skilful in slaughtering their fellow-men and devastating their lands is hard to understand.

To the man who sought nothing in the world, and who valued communion with God above everything else, God said: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen 12:2). Abraham's name is still respected throughout the earth; Chedorlaomer's name most certainly is not. The people of the twentieth century are not interested in him in the smallest degree. Do not miss the lesson, he who lives for God has greatness and value beyond all human understanding, and his work will abide for ever. "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jer 45:5).

Chedorlaomer differed from Nimrod in this respect, no military adventures are attributed to the latter. He was rather a builder of cities than a conqueror of the territories of others. But Chedorlaomer apparently aimed at world-empire. During twelve years, eight other kingdoms besides his own groaned under his tyranny. Nothing paternal or motherly is suggested in the Spirit's description of him. When Jehovah made provision for a king in Israel He bade him write out a copy of the Scriptures for himself, that he might meditate therein, and be obedient to them, "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren" (Deut 17:14-20). When David gave instructions to Israel concerning the building of the temple, he said, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people" (1 Chron 28:2). To such sentiments as these the hearts of the Chedorlaomer's of all ages have been utter strangers. The whole sorry breed have been a curse to all who have come under their influence and control.

Why two subordinate kings are named before the tyrant himself in Gen 14:1 is hard to say; but it may be that the Holy Spirit would connect the new evil of oppression and conquest with the impious

movement at the city and tower of Babel.

Chedorlaomer was the outstanding man of his time. He was successful against all opposition. Five of his subject kings–Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela–after enduring twelve years of his tyranny, decided to break away from him and take their destinies into their own hands. It was the doctrine of the rights of weak nations, so popular today. Reference to the map will show that all these places were far removed from Chedorlaomer's capital city. The tyrant did not hasten to attack his rebellious vassals. He took a whole year to make careful preparation for the campaign. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer with the three satellite kings who continued to obey him. But he did not wait until he reached southern Palestine before he began to destroy. Six other peoples are mentioned as being smitten by him en-route. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun! Did not Hitler smite the unoffending peoples of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg in his desire to reach and destroy France and Britain?

Chedorlaomer was no mean general. Three of the peoples he attacked–the Rephaim, the Zuzim, and the Emim–were giants. This we are expressly told in Deut 2. They were "great and many and tall". One of their kind, with whom Israel had to do - Og, king of Bashan - required an iron bedstead nine cubits long and four cubits broad. This means about sixteen feet long and seven feet broad! (Deut 3:11). Yet all these giant nations fell before the invader, as also the Amalekites and the Amorites. Chedorlaomer was "the overflowing scourge" of his day (Isa 28:15), and he was the foreshadow of the last king of the north (the Assyrian) who will invade Palestine when the Antichrist is reigning there. He also will destroy in his travels, "many countries shall be overthrown" (Dan 11:41). The first battle recorded in Scripture is thus suggestive of the final clash of the nations at Armageddon. Name of dread to all who hear it!

Gen 14, with its sordid story of strife and plunder, would probably never have been written had not Lot been involved in the circumstances. Weak and unfaithful though he was, he was a piece of God's fine gold (Lam 4:1). The gold had been dimmed by his residence in Sodom, and it became irretrievably besmirched in the cave of Zoar, but Lot was precious to God nevertheless. God never casts off His own, but watches over them with tenderest interest and care, even in their wanderings.

Lot represents unfaithful Israel at the time of the end, who will bring down upon themselves the mighty powers of earth. The people will be in the direst straits when their long-rejected Messiah appears in glory and majesty and plants His feet upon the mount of Olives. The lofty ones of the nations–the Western Beast, the Antichrist, the Assyrian and the Russian will then meet their doom.

Let us not overlook the contrast between Abraham and Lot. Lot courted the world and was completely overcome by it. Abraham stood in separation from the world and proved himself superior to its power when the hour of trial came. In true separation strength is found to act for God.

Gen 14 opens with a small-minded, godless, would-be conqueror of the world, the chapter closes with the delightful Melchizedek, priest of the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Living for the Pleasure of the Lord
Psalm 116

by EL Lovering, Ilfracombe

This is a continuation of the Passover Hallel (Pss 113-118), a hymn of deliverance from Egypt's bondage. Psalms 113-114 were sung in the Jewish home before the meal and Psalms 115-118 after the meal. At the Last Supper we read that, "when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives" (Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26) in the company with the Saviour who was Himself the Pascal Lamb. The psalm is not only true of Israel historically and nationally but describes an intensely personal experience of one who had found deliverance even from death. His first response was

Adoration of the Heart (vv.1-8)

"I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplication".

Love is not always logical. When we think of the Lord's love for us we are at a loss to explain it, but there is every reason why we should love the Lord when we remember that we had nothing to commend us. The law required that men "love the Lord with all thy heart, soul and mind" but it was powerless to produce it. It is suggested that an alternative reading may be, "I love, because the Lord hath heard my voice". This would remind us of 1 John 14:19 (RV), "We love, because He first loved us" for "love is of God, and everyone that loveth is begotten of God". The Lord has heard his voice, his supplications, and has inclined His ear to him even when in his weakness his voice could not be heard. There are times when words fail and "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Rom 8:26). He will call upon the Lord all the days of his life. Calling upon the name of the Lord expresses adoration of all kinds and this he will do in days of prosperity as well as adversity. There will be continuity in his prayer-life mingled with praise.

When encircled and imprisoned by sorrow and trouble he finds deliverance in calling upon the name of the Lord. When things were at their worst he invoked all the attributes of Jehovah's name.We are reminded of the words in Mal 3:16; when the king had failed, the priest was corrupted and the prophet was silent, then "they who feared the Lord spake one to another" and took an inventory of His name. He acknowledges that in his deliverance the Lord was gracious and compassionate, but it was grounded in His righteousness. How fully this was demonstrated at the cross when "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other" (Ps 85:10). The Lord is always attentive to the need of the helpless and simple-hearted. The Lord Jesus thanked the Father that "things hidden from the wise and learned were revealed to little children, for this was your good-pleasure" (Matt 11:25).

Having stated the principle, the psalmist now proves this in his personal experience and enjoys the privileges of restoration and communion, "Return unto thy rests, O my soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee". Salvation, joy and gladness are now his present possession. The psalmist's response was:

Dedication of the Life (vv.9-13)

"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living". A man's walk is his way of life and this man will do so as "before the Lord" and not in the sight of men to be judged by them. Paul prayed that the Colossian believers should "live a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10). The Lord Jesus exhorted his disciples, "beware of practising your piety before men in order to be seen by them" whether it was toward men, in giving to the needy, or towards God, in prayer, or as regards themselves, let them not put on a hypocritical fast (Matt 6). True faith in Christ will be evident in the life. It was because he had believed, that the psalmist could speak with conviction and certainty. "He who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6). Paul testified, "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (2 Tim 1:12). In the present climate of a compromising religious society it is essential that "the trumpet sounds a clear call, else who will get ready for battle?" (1 Cor 14:8). The psalmist confesses that in a time of extreme pressure he had spoken "in haste" and called "all men liars". Anything spoken in high-temper is usually highly coloured and judgment exaggerated. Conscious again of the Lord's benefit towards him his heart is full of gratitude and he will "take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord". He has said, "What shall I give?" and his answer is, "I will take". The cup symbolises an experience of life. David said, "my cup runneth over and the Saviour in Gethsemane asked, "Let this cup pass from me". His life was wholly dedicated to the Father's will and so he could say, "not my will but thine be done". Having expressed the adoration of his heart and the dedication of his life, the psalmist now determines to fulfil his vows to the Lord in the

Consecration of the Will (vv.14-19)

"I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of the people". He is not ashamed to confess his God publicly and he will do it now, for there is no time like the present to witness to the Lord's goodness. "For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God, and with his mouth he tells others of his faith confirming his salvation" (Rom 10:10 paraphrase). The psalmist recognises the Lord's goodness in sparing his life and knows that even if death had come, this too would be precious in God's sight. As a servant, and born of a servant, he is doubly the Lord's and presents himself to his master as an offering. We are reminded of Paul's exhortation to the believers in Rome to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). Again the psalmist calls upon the name of the Lord "in the courts of the Lord's house, in your midst, O, Jerusalem" for that is where his heart is. He is not afraid of repeating his gratitude and devotion to the Lord, for, "a good thing is worth repeating twice and a bad thing is not worth saying once!"

Christ Manifested (1)

by P Harding, Manchester

Revelation 19:11-21

There are three imperatives in relation to our glorious Lord:

(i) John 3:14 – He must be lifted up – *Redemption,*

(ii) Acts 3:21 – Whom the heaven must receive – *Reception or Exaltation* and

(iii) 1 Corinthians 15:25 – He must reign – *Revelation.*

On four occasions we read of the heavens being opened in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ: (a) Matt 3:16 – He is the object of heaven's delight, (b) John 1:51 – He is the object of heaven's ministry, (c) Acts 7:56 – He is the object and source of the saint's comfort and strength, and (d) Rev 19:11 – He is the source of earth's deliverance.

The Description of Christ

"white horse" (v11). The white charger or warrior horse. The warrior horse speaks of war, the white colour speaks of righteousness and justice – *shimmering holiness* – the intrinsic holiness and perfect righteousness of Christ as He comes forth in judgment – "in righteousness he doth judge and make war". "In thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness" (Ps 45:4). "And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa 32:17). Here we have the rising of the Sun of righteousness (Mal 4:2). Believers today ought to love righteousness and hate lawlessness.

"His eyes as a flame of fire" (v 12). Nothing shall escape His piercing eyes – all will be open to His gaze – *searching discernment*. The eyes of omniscient perception that search the depth of men's sin, that penetrate the darkness of men's wickedness and illuminate the rebellious hearts of men. "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom 12:19). It is vital that we appreciate that every part of our lives is open to His gaze.

"on his head were many crowns (diadems" v 12). He comes with all the sovereignties of earth as His rightful possession – *supreme sovereignty* – unlimited rule. "He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (v 15):

(i) Rule – to tend as a shepherd. Here we have the character of His rule – free from harshness and hardness – the *sufficiency* of His reign.

(ii) Rod – really sceptre. Here we have the claims of His rule – the regal right, the *sovereignty* of His reign.

(iii) Iron – firmness. Here we have the competancy of His rule – the royal might. The *stability* of His reign.

It is the privilege and dignity of believers today to manifest the rule of Christ in their lives day by day.

"clothed with a vesture dipped in blood" (v 13). Some suggest that this has two things in mind – memorials of past victories (Josh 10:14,42; 23:3; 2 Chron 20:29), and evidence of judgment about to take place. It certainly is anticipative of judgment to be carried out – *solemn judgment*. As thus clothed He is:-

(i) The Treader of the winepress of the wrath of God – Rev 14:17-20.

(ii) The One who comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah – Isa 63:1.

This is the fulfilment of Isa 24:1-8 and Joel 3:9-16 the winepress being full.

"out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword" (v15). Sharp like a sickle to carry out *swift retribution*. "Out of his mouth" shows the ease with which He accomplishes His purpose – He speaks, and it is done, He commands, and it is accomplished. This is the fulfilment of:

(i) Ps 2:5 "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath".
(ii) Isa 11:4 "he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
(iii) Ezek 38:19 "in the fire of my wrath have I spoken".
(iv) Joel 2:11 "the Lord shall utter his voice before his army".
(v) Joel 3:16 "the Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem".
(vi) 2 Thess 2:8 "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth".

The different names He bears

"Faithful and True" (v.11). He is the embodiment of all faithfulnesss and truth – reliability and reality – *the immutable one*. 'Faithful' – see 2 Tim 2:13; Rev 1:5 – reliable. 'True' – see John 1:9; 6:23; 5:1 – genuine – real. Faithful and true to all His promises of blessing and to all His threats of judgment – Num 23:19. Here we have His perfect dealings with men. Absolutely faithful and true He comes forth to deal with all His enemies who are deceitful and false.

"he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (v12). His absolute and essential deity – "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt 11:27). He comes in all those unrevealed and unknowable wonders of His Person which are indicative of His incomprehensible Godhead – *the incomprehensible one*. He comes with omnipotence in His hands – "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him" (Isa 40:10). Here we have His personal dignities manifested.

"The Word of God" (v13). God's utterance of Himself. The true and only expression of the eternal God – *the illuminating one*. In John 1:1 He is called "the Word" and as such we have God's utterance of Himself in His greatness. He who is the mighty Creator, is the full and perfect *revelation* of God as unfolded in John. In 1 John 1:1 He is called "the Word of life" – the essence and expression of life eternal – and as such we have God's utterance of Himself in His grace for not only does the title emphasise that life is eternally inherent in Him it also indicates that He imparts life. Since the epistle deals with the features of those who are in the family and who thus possess eternal life *regeneration* is indicated. Here in Rev 19:13 we have God's utterance of Himself in His government – God manifesting Himself in judgment upon all who have rebelled against Him. He therefore comes in retribution making claim to the world His hands had made. Here we have His plain declaration as to His claim to the earth.



Annual Statement

LORD'S WORK TRUST

Year Ended 31 March 1998

	1998 £		1998 £
Gifts received for Lord's Work:			
Individuals	247520	Allocated	2000922
Assemblies	468814		
Covenants, Gift Aid and Tax	1197350		
Legacies	37695		
For Expenses	49543		
	2000922		2000922

We certify that the above is a true extract from the full Accounts.
Cassells & Co.
Chartered Accountants

Wishaw
31 July 1998

LORD'S WORK TRUST

42 Beansburn, Kilmarnock KA3 1RH
Tel: (01563) 521098 • Fax: (01563) 571215 • Charity No. SC008740

Gifts received during July 1998

Lord's Work and Workers		For Expenses
Assemblies	30404	993
Individuals	21267	816
Covenants/Gift Aid	76560	905
Legacies	2800	0
Refund of Tax	13816	418
	144847	3132

Includes: Anon - nil.

Books

The Master Theme of the Bible by J Sidlow Baxter, published Kregel Publications; price £7.25. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

The Master Theme of the Bible is sub-titled "A Comprehensive Study of the Lamb of God" and for that reason immediately the child of God expresses interest. As one might expect, the author travels from Genesis to Revelation as he traces his theme.

Here and there Baxter takes liberties to engage the reader with his worthy theme. For example, commenting on the two goats required on the day of atonement, he comments that " the lamb had to be represented by two goats". In his chapter notes he comments but not convincingly on why two lambs were not used.

He is equally assertive in writing of what he calls "the Luciferian revolt" which left the desolate earth in need of refashioning; again he offers no justification for his view. However dealing with the great tribulation of Rev 7:9-17 he allows for the great tribulation lasting seven years, or three and a half or, "the whole of the christian dispensation". He describes his attitude to such distinctions, "To my mind it seems wiser at present to be tentative rather than headstrong on that point".

The reviewer is disappointed that a few such comments distract from a book which in its 204 pages exalts the Lord. Despite these shortcomings *The Master Theme of the Bible* will be appreciated by many.

TW

Rabboni by Phillip Keller; published Kregel Publications; price £9.30. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

Phillip Keller is well known to many Christians as the author of *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. For that reason alone many will be attracted to this 320 page paperback *Rabboni* sub-titled "Which is to say, Master". Like his earlier volumes *Rabboni* is written in simple flowing language and is a compelling read.

Rabboni is a harmony of the Gospels written much as a journalist would relate events for a readership interested in the simplest detail. As with all such attempts to convey the atmosphere of the great events surrounding the Lord's first advent, at times Keller oversteps the fine line that divides the acceptable and the unacceptable. Not all will be pleased to find the Holy Spirit called "the Hound of heaven"; not just the more theological in outlook would question the statement that our Lord had "a soft spot... for the underdog Samaritan". Perhaps less objections would be raised to the suggestion that the evening after the crucifixion the two Marys were tossing and turning on "their lumpy pallets".

However despite such excesses of language *Rabboni* does offer an interesting overview of the Lord's movements and ministry. *Rabboni* also leaves no shadow of doubt but that the author loves the Lord and is captivated by the very work and deed of the Man whose worth is revealed in four precious volumes in our NT. For that reason the many who will read *Rabboni* because of earlier encounters with the author will find insights into his love for Christ.

TW

Question Box

Question

Is there guidance from the Word of God regarding the eternal position of children who die before they have reached the age of responsibility. In a BM article in June 1996 by the late William Hoste, it is stated "because babes dying before the age of responsibility receive in some way not revealed a nature fitted for a heavenly sphere..." Is this assumption which Mr Hoste appeared to hold a scriptural one?

Answer

If there were definitive scriptures to guide in the matter, we can be assured that a teacher of Mr Hoste's ability and experience would have used them and would not have used the language of assumption at all. We have no clear statement on this matter and must therefore be careful in handling it. Above all we can be content that God will act justly as befits His character. In light of this it is most important that Christian parents teach their children the Holy Scriptures to lead them to salvation from their early infancy (2 Tim 3:14-15), and that the saints continue earnestly in gospel activity amongst both young and old.

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matt 18 could have some relevance to this subject. The Lord Jesus had set a little child in the midst (v.2) and through it had taught to the disciples the great lesson of humility. In v.10 He said "despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven". The word *angel* is often translated *spirit*, and if viewed in this way the Lord Jesus would not have been speaking about *guardian angels* as some teach but rather that the actual spirits of little ones are before the face of God. The present writer first heard our late brother A Leckie teach this. He also pointed out that the statement which follows should be carefully taken into consideration: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost". The omission of the words "to seek" (found in Luke 19:10) being significant. W Kelly states on this verse "A beautiful word, especially as it is so broadly stated by our Lord as to take in literally a little child as well as the little ones that believe in Him. I believe this chapter was meant to give encouragement touching little ones. The plea on which our Lord goes is, not that they were innocent (which is the way in which they are so often spoken of among men), but that the Son of Man came to save that which was lost. It supposes the taint of sin, but that the Son of Man came to meet it: so that we are entitled to have confidence in the Lord, not for our own souls only, but for the little ones too" (*Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew, p.361).* Mr Kelly goes on to teach that careful consideration of the next parable in vv.12-14 will reveal the same emphasis. We can be certain that God will do right in such matters and will remain consistent to all His own attributes.

J R Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
5) ESTHER THE QUEEN (Esther 2:22)

Introduction

Hadassah, otherwise known as Esther, was an orphan being brought up by her cousin Mordecai, among the exiled Jewish community in Persia. The family had originally been brought from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and like Daniel, Mordecai had eventually ended up in the king's service. Esther was a "fair and beautiful" girl, but was otherwise unknown, nevertheless it was she who ended up as the most important woman in the empire. She is thus another example for our study of people whom God used in a most unexpected way, compared with their younger days.

Ahasuerus' anger and its effects

In the third year of his reign, the Persian king Ahasuerus (better known in history by his Greek name Xerxes) organised a feast for all the nobles and princes of the provinces of his empire, and an exhibition of all his treasures – "the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty". This extravaganza went on for six months and culminated in a week-long feast for the men, and at the same time queen Vashti held a feast for the women. On the last day of the king's feast, when all the men were "merry with wine", the king commanded his wife to come to his feast "to show of her beauties", but she refused to be shown off in front of the drunken men. The result was a national crisis, and the king called in all his advisors to decide what to do. They told him that Vashti had set a dangerous precedent in refusing his request – they thought all wives would thereafter despise their husbands if they thought she had got away with such defiance! Vashti was set aside and another queen was sought. A national contest was organised, and Esther was eventually chosen out of many other young women, the king being impressed with her beauty and her personality, as were all who met her (Esth 2:15). He "set the royal crown upon her head" (v.17), and gave her a special feast. However, he was unaware of her Jewish origins, because Mordecai had instructed her to keep this secret, as he had done all her life.

Soon after this, Esther was able to demonstrate her loyalty to her new husband. Two of Ahasuerus' chamberlains were planning an assassination attempt, but Mordecai heard, and through Esther, warned him – the plot was foiled, and the plotters hanged.

Haman's plot

Haman, one of the princes, was promoted to be over his fellow princes. In this new position he demanded that all the king's servants should bow down to him, but Mordecai refused to show him any special reverance. Despite his colleagues' daily warnings, Mordecai persisted, and word of this eventually reached Haman, who then "sought to

destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai" (3:6). His plot to exterminate all the Jews in the empire was put into the mind of Ashasuerus as a suggestion that they were disloyal to him because "their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them" (3:8). The king listened to his newly appointed chief minister, and agreed to his plans and provided the necessary finance and manpower to carry out the task. A royal decree was proclaimed in all the provinces and everything was planned, but "the city Shushan was perplexed" (3:15). Obviously the king was blissfully unaware of what was really at stake, living in such splendid isolation, but the ordinary people of Shushan, who knew the Jews, and what kind of people they were, were "in consternation" (3:15 JND). Mordecai was very upset indeed, and went about in sackcloth and ashes as a sign of his distress, and even went into the palace like that, even though it was not really allowed. Obviously this had all come about because he stood for personal convictions, just like Daniel and his friends under similar circumstances (Dan 3:12). Soon all the Jews in the empire joined him in mourning their fate.

Deliverance

When Esther sent to Mordecai to find out the details of the king's edict, he sent to her the plea that she should "go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people" (4:8). This was a very dangerous thing to ask, because anyone going into the king's inner court without being asked could be killed. Even in view of this, Mordecai sent the message "think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, [any] more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed" (4:13-14). In other words, if she remained silent she would die anyway, so she should at least try. However, Mordecai was able to raise her thoughts above her personal safety, when he sent the momentous words, "who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (v.14). She did go into the king's presence, and eventually she managed to win his favour, and her people were delivered from the worst effects of the edict and Haman was executed. The Jews established an annual feast called Purim, which is still held to commemorate the event.

Conclusion

"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10), in other words we are here "for such a time as this" as Mordecai told Esther. What good work could we do today?

The Holy Scriptures (4)

by M Davis, Leeds

Their Translation

Translation is necessary to overcome all the linguistic barriers in the world created by the Lord Himself since the confusion of the one original language during man's attempt to build the city and tower of Babal according to Genesis 11. Translation of the Hebrew Bible first became necessary after the Jews were carried away into the Babylonian exile, during which time the next generation learned to speak Aramaic, the common language of the Near East at that period, rather than Hebrew. Hence a paraphrase of the OT into Aramaic was made during the post-exilic period and called the Targum, which means "translation".

Later, in the second century B.C., when Greek had replaced Aramaic as the common language following the conquests of Alexander the Great, various translations of the OT into Greek were made, notably the Septuagint, so-called because seventy men were supposed to have been involved in its production in Alexandria in Egypt. The Septuagint was used widely by the early Christian Church, and some of the allusions to the OT found in our NT follow the Septuagint translation of it more closely than the Hebrew text. Evidently, the Holy Spirit was pleased to use it sometimes whilst writing the inspired NT, adapting some of its thoughts to suit a particular spiritual purpose. Now that scripture is complete, we need to be more careful in our use of all translations, including the Septuagint. Where the Hebrew text is obscure, it is sometimes helpful to compare the ancient translations to see if they were following a different Hebrew text, one which makes more sense in context. But this is a dubious practice at best, because the Septuagint and Targum translations may not have been translating accurately the text which they had before them, but paraphrasing instead.

Mention could be made of other ancient versions of the Bible translated in the early centuries A.D., such as the Syriac Peshitta translation used by the Eastern Church and the Latin Vulgate of the Medieval Roman Catholics. But it will be more helpful to readers of this article if we concentrate on the translation of the Bible into English and give some advice on the use of a few of the more recent versions.

Let us, therefore, trace the history of the translation of the Bible into English. Apart from Anglo-Saxon glosses on the Latin Vulgate during the Dark Ages, the earliest attempt to translate the Bible into English from the Latin version was made by John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. The first translator from the original Greek and Hebrew text was William Tyndale in the early sixteenth century in the face of much persecution from the Catholic authorities. His first English NT was printed in 1525, but he was martyred on the Continent before he could complete the OT. The first complete English translation of the Scriptures was published in 1535 by his colleague, Miles Coverdale, and is therefore known as the Coverdale Bible, although most of it is the work of Tyndale. During the remainder of the sixteenth century a few further

translations were made, notably the Protestant Geneva Bible of 1560. Our Authorised Version did not appear until 1611, and was intended to be a revision of all the previous translations for King James I. This version has been called "the noblest monument of English prose", and has never since then been entirely displaced by any other translation. It still owes most to Tyndale's scholarship, and the majority of the best tools of study still depend upon the wording of the AV's text.

However, although it is true to say that the AV has been the most blessed English translation, we need to remember that it is only a translation, not the original autograph text, nor a full replacement for the latter either, and can be improved upon in some of its renderings in the light of later believing scholarship and the manuscripts discovered during the past two centuries. It is helpful in study, therefore, to compare the AV text with some later versions made by competent and believing scholars. For some of the early assembly writers made their own revisions and marginal notes, notably FW Grant in *The Numerical Bible*, JN Darby in his *New Translation*, Thomas Newberry in his *Englishman's Bible*, and William Kelly in his expositions of Scripture. It is profitable to compare their work with that of the RV of 1881, which followed some of the newly-discovered texts and tried with varying literary success to produce a version more literal than the AV.

Since 1881 there has been a spate of versions into English of varying value. English readers with no knowledge of the original text need guidance in the face of such a flood of different translations, which can cause confusion of thought in understanding the Scriptures.

First, therefore, it is advisable to use the AV for public reading to avoid confusing the hearers, but to be ready to compare it with other literal versions, such as the RV or Darby or marginal notes in the Newberry Bible, for detailed study and exposition.

Secondly, compare some other recent versions known to be translated by true believers, such as the New King James Version, the New International Version, or the Revised Standard Version, for clarity of expression and a fuller meaning of the original.

Thirdly, avoid liberal and heretical versions made by unbelievers, such as the New World Translation.

Fourthly, use carefully simplified versions, such as the Good News Bible, and paraphrases like the Living Bible, JB Philipps' New Testament, and the Amplified Bible. Paraphrase involves much interpretation and is like a concise commentary.

Fifthly, use study tools made by believing scholars, such as WE Vine's expository Dictionaries, GV Wigram's Concordances to both Testaments, Strong's Exhaustive and Young's Analytical Concordances, Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, and the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. For such works of believing scholarship will prove invaluable in assessing the value of many English translations of the Bible in circulation today and guard readers from both confusion of thought and plain error in understanding the meaning of the original text of the Scriptures.

Regions Beyond

Ethiopia Revisited

by R Revie

It was our privilege to revisit Ethiopia during the first three months of this year and it was most encouraging to see the way the Lord is working there and to witness the prayerful devotion of the local believers. We know that many have been praying for the work and we would like to give you some pointers for prayer.

Children's work Just over three years ago the assemblies became concerned about the children in their districts who do not attend a place of worship. They did have children attend the adult services but they were keen to commence something specifically for children. At that time they did not have much space for this kind of work but this has now changed and the brethren commenced Sunday Schools in the three assemblies in and around Addis Ababa. There is a good group of teachers who are keen to help the children study the scriptures and one of the evangelists has a real gift in working with children. While we were there the brethren had arranged a special day for the children. About 400 young people packed into a hall about 15 miles from Addis and the teachers had organised a programme of singing and dialogues and the children thoroughly enjoyed their day. At the end of the day the teachers discussed the possibility of having a camp site where they could take the children for a longer period and be able to teach them from the scriptures.

Rural conference Along with some believers from Addis I was present at a conference about 100 miles west of Addis in a fairly remote area of the country. Around 700 believers attended the conference from about twelve assemblies. The majority have been saved from witchcraft and Satan worship and have been believers for only a few years so there is a real need for teaching especially among the elders. The brethren felt that the most effective way would be to bring the elders to a central venue and give them consecutive teaching from the scriptures so that they in turn could take the teaching back to their respective assemblies.

Rural evangelism When we went to Ethiopia in 1993 there were six local evangelists serving with the assemblies but this number has greatly increased and I was privileged to spend a weekend with them teaching on the subject of worship. Many of these evangelists are serving the Lord in remote areas and they have a real vision to take God's word to villages that have never heard the gospel.

Ginchi site After long negotiations with the government the Ginchi assembly was granted a site with approved planning permission to build a gospel hall and a kindergarten. When the plans were looked at it was felt that these could be suitable as multi-purpose buildings. They could be used for part of the year as a kindergarten while at other times they would be suitable as a camp for the children and as dormitories to accommodate the rural evangelists and

elders as they study the scriptures.

Batie On this visit we were able to be at Batie twice. In a strongly Islamic town with seven mosques it was lovely to see the new hall and to hear of three young men who have been saved, baptized and added to the assembly. Two came from the Ethiopian Orthodox church while the other one was converted from Islam. During our second visit we had the joy of seeing four more being baptized and to meet a man who had been recently converted. This man who lives about four hours from Batie had been to Koranic school to learn to read Arabic in order to study the Koran. While visiting a fellow Moslem he noticed a New Testament in arabic and wondered if he could borrow it. Some time later while trying to find the American news on the radio he heard the gospel in arabic from Beirut. Some time later he heard the gospel from the Seychelles in his own language and he was anxious to hear more about this message. He went to a local Orthodox church but sadly they were unable to help him. However fairly recently he became unwell and attended his local health clinic. It so happened that the medical attendant was a brother from the Batie assembly and as he went about his work he was singing a hymn. He was asked by this Moslem if he knew anything about the New Testament and the brother explained the gospel to him and invited him to the assembly at Batie. Paulos the local evangelist had the joy of leading this man to the Lord. Pray that he might be protected from harm and be used by God to reach the people in his own area with the gospel.

Needs We wholeheartedly agree with our colleague John McQuoid when he stated in a recent article that in some assemblies he found believers worshipping not in a spirit of thoughtful reverence but in an atmosphere of emotionalism which was being deliberately generated by the brother leading the meeting. It would appear that thoughtfulness was being set aside in favour of a form of worship which may have made the believers feel excited and happy but which was lacking in depth and quality.

The words of the Psalmist are now being fulfilled for "Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to God"

Prayer We value your prayers for our Ethiopian brethren and sisters and also for myself as I seek to share God's word with them as we visit the country. It has been an honour to work alongside the local brethren and to see their dedication to the furtherance of the gospel and to be aware of God's Spirit moving through Ethiopia. The words of the Psalmist are now being fulfilled for "Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to God".

The Parable of the Sower

by TJ Blackman, Brazil

This parable is found in Matt 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8. It is one of the seven parables of Matt 13 where the common theme is the difference between the sons of God and the sons of the evil one, both as to their character and destiny. In Mark 4 it is the first of four parables related to the preaching of the word, stressing respectively the preparation of the hearer, the responsibility of the preacher, the sovereignty of God and the activity of the enemy. In Luke 8 there are just two parables, that of the sower and that of the lampstand, calling attention respectively to the life and light communicated through the word of God.

In this parable, which is the first in each context, the Lord shows the importance of the preparation of the heart to receive God's word. It is this that makes the fundamental difference between the sons of God and the sons of the evil one mentioned above. To begin with, then, let us ask two questions:

Who is the Sower? In the interpretation of the parable of the tares, the Lord Jesus declares, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man" (Matt 13:37). But how can He sow the seed now, seeing that He is at the Father's right hand in heaven? He sows by means of His disciples.

The apostle Paul said, when speaking of the work of evangelizing the Gentiles which he and Barnabas were just beginning, "For so hath the Lord commanded us" (Acts 13:47), and then went on to quote Isa 49:6, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth". In the context of Isaiah's prophecy these words are addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, but Paul applies them to himself and Barnabas. As members of the body of Christ, directed by the Head, they were the instruments Christ was using to accomplish His purpose of grace. Then Christ is still the Sower, accomplishing this work by means of members of His "mystic" body, the church.

Therefore the true sowers can neither be robots nor persons who are destitute of the life of Christ. They must be living members of His body, not sowing in a cold, mechanical way, but feeling something of the love and compassion of the divine Sower, as Ps 125:5 puts it: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy".

What is the seed? In Mark 4:14 He simply speaks of "the word", emphasizing especially the *work* of sowing. In Luke 8:11 it is called "the word of God", emphasizing the divine *origin* of the message. In Matthew 13:19 it is called "the word of the kingdom", emphasizing its *authority* – it is a royal message, faithful and worthy of all acceptation.

Where is the seed to be sown? In this parable, it is not just placed in the hand, nor does it just sound in the ear, but it is introduced into the heart. In each case, represented by four types of ground, the word reaches the heart, even in that which was sown "by the

way side" (see Matt 13:19). It is the state of the heart and the influences which dominate it, which determine the result of the sowing of the word. Hence the necessity for preparation. The good ground would be that which has been prepared by ploughing, and without doubt that is where the sower would scatter most of his precious seed, as it says in Jeremiah, "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer 4:3).

In each example the Lord Jesus indicates what it is that dominates in the heart, either hindering or promoting the production of fruit. There are some interesting differences between the three versions of this parable in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and, with the Lord's help, we will gather these details together and try to understand all that He would teach us.

The seed sown by the wayside

In this example the seed does not even begin to sprout, but is snatched away by the fowls of the air. The Lord explains that this is the work of the devil, and thus it is the malign influence of Satan which this part of the parable emphasises.

(1) In Matt 13:19 we encounter the words "and understandeth it not". In vv.13-15 the Lord shows that the lack of understanding results from sin and the hardening of the heart: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand..." and then, at the end of the chapter, He asks the disciples, "Have ye understood all these things?" (v.51). The hardened heart of the natural man is Satan's "aerodrome"; the word cannot enter into it, for "the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Ps 119:130), and the evil one does everything he can to make sure that it does not remain there. To the natural man the word of God is foolishness (1 Cor 2:14) and its messenger seems: "as one that mocked" as did Lot in the eyes of his sons-in-law in Sodom (Gen 19:14). "There is none that understandeth" (Rom 3:11), and "the god of this world" wants the sinner to remain in this state, blinding "the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:4).

(2) *"Satan cometh immediately"* (Mark 4:15). Notice how in each Gospel the enemy has a different name:

In Matt 13:19 (see also 38) he is called "the wicked one". This name indicates his nature, that is, his malignity. Cain was "of that wicked one" and slew his brother (1John 5:19 Newberry). The "young men" of 1 John 2:13,14, however, overcame the wicked one because the word of God abode in them. The enemy as the wicked one, seeks to destroy, snatching the word of life from the heart of those who hear the gospel. But, "He that is begotton of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1John 5:18).

In Mark 4:15 he is called "Satan". This name means "adversary" and represents his *enmity*. He it was who caught away all that Judas Iscariot had

ever heard from the mouth of the Lord, and who, in the end, entered into him (John 13:27): he it was who filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3): and it is he who tempts the believer to commit immorality (1 Cor 7:5). The unbeliever is under Satan's power (Acts 26:18), and he even transforms himself into an angel of light in order to keep them enslaved and deluded. By means of persecution, he seeks to hinder the evangelist from announcing the liberating message of the gospel (1 Thess 2:18), using also to this end "all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess 2:9,10).

In Luke 8:12 he is called "the devil", which signifies "false accuser". This name represents his *falsity*. As the devil he is the father of lies (John 8:44); he "sinneth from the beginning"; all who sin belong to him (1 John 3:8); he had the power of death (Heb 2:14), and deceives the nations (Rev 20:8).

(3) *"Lest they should believe and be saved"* (Luke 8:12). The enemy well knows that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17), and it is for this reason that he wastes no time in snatching away the word from the heart which is still under his power. However, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"(1 John 4:4), and, therefore, praying in the **Holy Ghost** (Jude 20) and preaching with the Holy Ghost (1 Peter 1:12), the gospel will be communicated not only in words, "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (1 Thess 1:5).

What a great blessing it is when the word of God enters into a heart which the divine Sower had already ploughed up by conviction of sin and repentance

What a great blessing it is when the word of God enters into a heart which the divine Sower had already ploughed up by conviction of sin and repentance – a broken and a contrite heart (Ps 51:17). In the Christian's heart also, a spirit of repentance should never be absent. Sadly, our hearts still all too often become hardened by the "traffic" of Satan's kingdom (which can take many different forms), and thus we become weak, defeated and barren.

May we be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:1) and may His word dwell in us richly in all wisdom (Col 3:16); and so we will overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14), and shall be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil 1:11).

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (6)

by John Gillespie

Sixth Stage

Boyhood Minority : Devotion and Subjection (Luke 2:41-52)

("the boy", v.43 cf. RV and JND)

Up to Jerusalem His people went
To keep the yearly feast with due accord,
Pilgrims with family walking by the Word.
Yet, Jesus trod with more avowed intent.

Breaking with custom He remained behind
When homeward turned the feet of travelling folk,
And breaking, too, the tie of nature's yoke
Refused the tempting call of kith and kind.

His searching parents thought Him to be lost,
But, Jesus now was in the temple found
With ear bored through and to the door-post bound,
Finding thus early what He sought for most.

Among the teachers there He sat inclined
Hearing and asking as "the boy" would do.
Then, come to understanding wise and true
Began to answer questions, full in mind.

The parents found Him. With much sore amaze
His mother asked, "Why did you treat us so?
With aching hearts we've sought you, to and fro,
I and thy Father. Strange to us thy ways!"

Quiet with reproof He to His mother said,
"He is alone My Father, He who ever is.
Did ye not know My purpose, only this:
To do His work, path of His will to tread".

She understood not who He really was.
Fading her memory of His life begun
At Bethlehem when hailed as God's own Son.
Imperative to Him His Father's cause.

Thou wert Thy Father's Son, whom no one knows,
And lovedst Thy master here, not breaking free,
Serving His will with prime priority.
Constant in Thee the love that upward rose.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (5)

by John Gillespie

Fifth Stage

Growth : Wisdom and Grace (Luke 2:40)

The Son of God became a child,
Prospered and grew "a tender plant",
Rooted where all was barren, wild:
"The desert blossomed jubilant".

Full from the garden of His life,
Hid to yon private northern view,
Without a thorn, or pruning-knife,
The bud burst forth in season due.

See measured, threefold growth instilled,
Perfect in body, part and whole,
Strong in His spirit, wisdom filled,
Treasured by God with grace of soul.

Made like to us, divine surprise,
Elisha's miracle of grace:
Mouth to our mouth, eyes to our eyes,
And hands to hands, face answering face.

What love in lowliness see here,
Lips, eyes, and hands, likeness in deed!
He stooped to us and stretching near
"Man-child" became to match our need.

Took to Himself that body frame
Prepared by God, and with us thence
"Partook of blood and flesh the same"!
Yet, sinless, shared experience.

So like unto His brethren made,
Though God the Son, as Man He grew,
From infant form in manger laid,
Such as "the First Man" never knew.

So soon The Spirit rests on Him,
Filling a vessel undefiled
With wisdom, rising to the brim,
God's favour, too, rests on the child.

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

SEPTEMBER 5

Carryduff: Annual Conference at 7.30pm.

SEPTEMBER 11-15

Larne: Craigyhill Gospel Hall, Annual Conference and Bible Readings.

SEPTEMBER 19

Portavogie: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm.

OCTOBER 1

Shanaghan: Gospel Hall at 12 noon. Annual Conference.

OCTOBER 3

Ahorey: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Hill, J Flanigan. Mr Hill continues Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.

Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm.

Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Allen.

Lungs: Gospel Hall at 2.00pm. Annual Conference.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

SEPTEMBER 5

Annbank: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, 1 School Brae at 3.15pm. JR Baker, R Cameron, F Reid.

Interlink: Missionary weekend. Friday 4th at 7.00pm. in Fernielea Gospel Hall, Aberdeen and at 7.30pm. in Gospel Hall, Portessie. Saturday at 3.30pm. and 6.30pm. Victoria Hall, Aberdeen, also Sunday at 8.00pm. in Hebron Evangelical Church, Aberdeen.

Kinross: Annual Conference in Kinross Primary School at 3.00pm. T Wait, G Forbes, D Gillies. (Note change of venue).

Kirkmuirhill: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, 62 Vere Road at 3.30pm. T Aitken, M Radcliffe, W Stevely.

Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. J Dickson.

SEPTEMBER 12

Bellshill: Annual Conference in the Gospel Hall, Johnstone St at 3.00pm. B Cargill, A Prentice, A Sinclair.

Interlink Missionary Meetings: Friday 11th in Gospel Hall, Kirkcaldy at 7.30pm. and Bethany Evangelical Church at 7.30pm. Saturday 12th in Hamilton College at 2.00pm., 3.30pm. and 6.45pm.

Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. J Campbell, J Burnett.

Larbert: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. G Gilmour, J Stubbs, T Wilson.

Peterhead: Annual Conference in York St Hall at 3.00pm. J Allen, M Browne, J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues in ministry Monday-Friday.

SEPTEMBER 19

Ayr: Gospel Hall, Prestwick Road at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (Rev 2:1-7). J Sinclair.

Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, 20 Church Street, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. B Cargill, R Millar, T Wilson.

Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall. Prayer at 3.00pm. Open Air at 3.30pm. Bible Reading at 6.00pm. (John ch.17). J Paterson.

Perth: Gospel Hall, Annual Christian Conference in Perth High School at 3.00pm. P Coulson, A Sinclair, C Hutchinson – Mr Hutchinson will continue in ministry in the Gospel Hall from Sunday to Thursday.

SEPTEMBER 26

Crosshouse: Gospel Hall, Annandale Gardens at 3.00pm. K Rudge, R Hill, M Radcliffe. Mr Rudge continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

Dumfries: Bethany Hall, Buccleuch St. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. R Gamble, I Steele.

Kirkconnel: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Marshall, T Wilson.

Port Seton: Viewforth Gospel Hall. Annual Conference at 3.30pm. A Gamble, T Rice, A Hutt.

Prestwick: Bute Hall at 7.00pm. J Dunlop, L Rollo.

St Monans: Annual Conference in the Town

Hall at 3.00pm. C Hutchison, J Grant, R Revie.

OCTOBER 2

Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. (Eph 5:1-14). J Brown.

Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Terrace. Commendation of Mr Stephen Grant to full time service to be held in Freeland Church, Main Street, Bridge of Weir at 7.30pm. Speakers, I Jackson, W Stevely.

OCTOBER 3

Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. G Bull, J Cadzow.

Culloden: Gospel Hall, Keppoch Road. Annual Conference in Millburn Academy, Diriebught Road, Inverness at 3.00pm. A Pollard, M Ferrier, C Roberts.

Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. J Dickson, D Spence, S MacKenzie.

Gourock: Bethany Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. J Grant, S MacDonald, A Sinclair. Mr Grant continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.

Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Dickson, J Stubbs.

Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place. Annual Conference at 3.15pm. D Gillies, J Hay, A McLean. Mr McLean will give a report on a visit to Russia on Friday 2nd at 7.45pm.

Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. J Paterson (Linwood), A Summers.

OCTOBER 9-11

Plains: Conference Weekend. Friday 9th at 7.00pm. Bible Reading in Elim Gospel Hall. B Currie, (Eph 1:1-14). Saturday 10th. Conference in Public Hall at 3.00pm. B Currie, J Grant, J Stubbs. Sunday 11th, Ministry at 3.00pm.-5.00pm. B Currie, J Grant, J Stubbs. Gospel Meeting at 6.30pm.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

SEPTEMBER 5

Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill Street at 7.30pm. A Maunder.

Ludlow: Cleeview Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Scammell.

Prescot: Prescot Gospel Hall, Evans Street. Annual Conference at 3.30pm. and 6.15pm. S Baker and A Gamble.

Trent Vale: Swan Lane Gospel Hall, Claytonwood Road at 7.00pm. S McKenzie.

Waltham Abbey: Eastbrook Hall, Broomstickhall Road. Conference at 4.00pm. W Gardiner.

Warrington: Hope Hall, Hawthorne St at 7.00pm. D Newell.

SEPTEMBER 12

Appledore: N Devon, The Bethel, The Quay, Prophetic Meetings at 3.45pm. and 6.15pm. D West.

London: Hornsey N.8. Annual Conference in Alexandra Hall, 62 Alexandra Road at 7.00pm. A Cundick.

New Bradwell: Milton Keynes, Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Scarsbrook.

Redditch: Annual Conference in Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall, Batchley Estate at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. K Rudge, M Horlock. Mr Rudge continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.45pm.

South Shields: Hebron Hall. Annual Conference in Maxwell Hall, West Stevenson at 2.45pm. and 6.00pm. R Miller, J Riddle. Mr Riddle continues on Monday at 7.30pm.

Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road. Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. R Dawes, A Carew.

Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. and 6.15pm. R Hill.

SEPTEMBER 19

Beighton: Gospel Hall, Eckington Rd at 7.30pm. S Davie. (Report on Albania).

Birmingham: Gospel Hall, Quarry Lane, Northfield at 6.30pm. Home Workers Report Meeting. S Mountstevens.

Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.



Eastbourne: Marine Hall at 3.45pm. and 6.00pm. M Radcliffe. Also Monday and Tuesday at 7.30pm.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall at 6.00pm. and 7.45pm. R Revie. Mr Revie continues in ministry Mon-Wed.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Davies.
South Shields: North East England Missionary Conference from 18-21st. Further details contact J Wallace: 01429 264603.
Trent Vale: Swan Lane Gospel Hall, Claytonwood Rd. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. A Naismith, A Young.
Warrington: Gospel Hall, Forster St. 100th Anniversary. Special Ministry Meeting at 7.00pm. W Stalker.
Weston-Super-Mare: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Davies.

SEPTEMBER 26
Bexleyheath: Bethany Hall, North St at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Rd. Missionary/Homeworkers Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. M Coombes (Arabic Work), D Tinkler.
Golborne: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Anthon.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Clarke.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St. Annual Conference at 6.00pm. A Pollard, J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues Mon-Wed at 7.30pm.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 7.30pm. R Collings.
Worksop: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Kaye.

OCTOBER 3
Blackburn: Gospel Hall, Mill Hill at 7.30pm. D Gilliland. Mr Gilliland continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Butt Lane: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Banbury St at 7.00pm. J Bennett.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill St at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. F Reid, D West. Mr Reid continues Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall, Conference at 4.00pm. and 6.00pm. F Beevers.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Romans 12:1-21). W Stevely. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Gospel Hall, Portland St at 7.15pm. E Hughes.
Merseyside: Missionary Conference weekend. Newsham Park Chapel, Denman Drive, Liverpool. Friday 2nd at 7.30pm. Saturday 3rd at 2.00pm.
New Bradwell: Milton Keynes, Gospel Hall. Bible Reading at 4.30pm. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Ministry at 7.30pm. J Riddle.
Oldham: Werneth Gospel Hall. Conference at 3.15pm and 6.15pm. E Parmenter, J Rogers.
Shoeburyness: Conference at Shoebury Hall, Wakering Avenue at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. C Lacey.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall, Bishops Oak Ride. Conference at 3.30pm.-5.00pm. Ministry, R Crozier, M Browne. Report, M Browne at 6.00pm. M Browne continues in Ministry Mon-Wed at 7.30pm.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. B Price.

OCTOBER 10
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Warrington: Hope Hall, Hawthorne St. Friday 9th at 7.30pm. Bible Reading (Gal 6). Saturday at 7.00pm. J Riddle.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Clough: Over many years the assembly in this village has maintained a good gospel witness and, once again, special meetings commence in their hall (d.v.) on August 23rd. Speakers expected J G Hutchinson and A Aiken.

Kells: This assembly held annual open air meetings at end of July helped by A Aiken who visited with tracts the area during the day and made contacts with the people, telling them of the meeting in the evening. Response was encouraging. The assembly is looking forward to a week of ministry in September by M Radcliffe, and to gospel meetings in October by R Surgenor and D Gilliland.
Ballybollan: Annual Believers' meeting in July 13th – helpful ministry given by E McCullough, S McBride, D Kane, B Currie, J McDowell (Australia).
Ballinaloob: N Mellish with the assembly for ministry for one week.
Portrush: D Gilliland getting encouraging numbers to ministry meetings.

Co. ARMAGH
Armagh: Gospel tent meetings commenced early August. Preachers are A McShane and D Gilliland.
Lurgan: A McShane and M Radcliffe concluded gospel meetings with three professing salvation.
Bleary: Annual conference – speakers were A McShane, B Hull, R McKeown, N McKeown and T Flannigan. Reckoned to be a fair conference with numbers down due to political unrest.
Portadown: Tent meetings commenced here end of July by E McCullough and A Davidson.

Co. DOWN
Newcastle: Northfield – The 13th Annual Northfield fortnight was held from 12th-26th July in large 1,000 seater tent. Bible teaching was given for nine mornings, majoring on the christian home, and in the evening meetings the gospel was preached. The preacher was Mr J Reece (Ontario, Canada). Large numbers each evening filled the tent to capacity from a wide area and various backgrounds, where they heard the glorious gospel declared in simple terms with the power of God manifested in quite a number professing faith in Christ. Mr John Spiers (Scotland) chaired the meetings and led a team of young people in open air meetings on the promenade. They also visited the town and surrounding villages with gospel literature inviting people to the tent. Meetings for children were held in two of the large caravan parks led by Colin Sheldon. Many children from non christian backgrounds heard the gospel and blessing in salvation experienced. A teenage work also was led by S Gibson. During the tent meetings a number expressed their desire for baptism, and on the Sunday afternoon (26th) in the open sea, nineteen obeyed the Lord, five of whom were members of an R.C. family, and a number of the others had been saved for some years. This was a great public witness in the town.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL
Gartan: G Stewart and S Patterson were encouraged with their five weeks of meetings which resulted in some blessing.
Killykergan: J Lennox and B Currie have just commenced gospel meetings in a tent (26th July) in this country district near to the town of Garvagh.
Macosquin: W Fenton expected for gospel meetings in October in this village near Coleraine.

Co. TYRONE
Cookstown: S Jennings and N Coulter concluded a gospel series with some blessing in salvation.
Donemana: At end of June R Pickering finished five weeks of gospel tent meetings. The assembly was encouraged to see some locals attend. The gospel was faithfully preached with power each evening.
Dunmullan: Annual Believers' Meeting (13th July). Tent filled to hear practical ministry from A McShane, J G Hutchinson, A Aiken, N Turkington and T McNeill.



Kilmore: Annual Believers's Meeting (29th July). Good number present. Speakers W J Nesbitt, E McCullough, D Ussher, D Kane, A Davidson and B Glendinning.
Kingsmills: Annual Believers' Meeting (13th July). Good company gathered to hear helpful ministry from S Jennings, JR Baker, S Ferguson, T Bentley and D Ussher.
Martry: Annual Believers' Meeting (13th July). Including Bible Reading. Taking part, W J Nesbitt, B Glendinning, N McKeown, B Hull and T Matthews.
Sion Mills: Annual Believers' Meeting in June. Helpful ministry given by JG Hutchinson, T Sloan, M Radcliffe, N Lowden and T Gracey.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

WEST MIDLANDS

Broadwas on Teme : There was good support this year for the Annual Conference. T Ledger and K Rudge gave refreshing and helpful ministry. Saints were encouraged by the number of believers who travelled a considerable distance to attend the conference.
Stourbridge, Wollaston: I Rees spoke at the Annual Ministry Meetings. Profitable, thought provoking and challenging ministry.
Glastonbury: Believers at Bove Town, Gospel Hall, Glastonbury were encouraged at their Sunday School Family Service and Prizegiving held on Sunday afternoon, July 19th. The hall was comfortably full with children and their parents and 20 children from the Sunday School received prizes for attendance and memorising the Scriptures. A challenging and appropriate gospel message was given by Mr Chris Stephens. This was well received particularly by one man who was a former work-mate. The supporting attitude of parents towards the Sunday School and the attendance of their children is very encouraging. Join us in praying that God will continue to bless this work.

SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS

Hartwell: Northants. S Mountstevens and D Richards had 11 days of encouraging meetings, the 8th year of visiting being the most rewarding with about 30 children each evening showing much interest. Behaviour was excellent and text memorisation good. Starting with 3 children in 1982 numbers have risen steadily as the villagers have become accustomed to these visits. There is no assembly testimony in the village, and there was no response to adult meetings convened each evening. However, parents came into the tent with their children and 7 attended prize giving. The help from just a few of the Lord's people was greatly appreciated. Our brethren hope to return to this site in the will of the Lord. Brother Mountstevens writes "a boy of 11 years of age has made a profession of faith at Parson St, Bristol, for which we rejoice having had good meetings there recently".

SCOTLAND REPORTS

Carluke: From 31 May until 18 June Mr Archie Carew from London conducted a gospel campaign. It was given a good start with a well attended Rally on Saturday 30 May, when a number of locations in the town were visited with open-air meetings. During the following three weeks, eleven assemblies in the area gave their support on an organised basis. Each night a number of local people came under the sound of the gospel, some for the first time, having been invited by local believers. Others came who had been attending gospel meetings regularly for a while, among them a gentleman of ninety-two years. Prior to the campaign he said that he did not understand how anyone, could say that they were saved. He thought all would need to wait until "the Judgment". However during the first week of the meetings he trusted Christ for salvation. A lady who also had been attending meetings for some time, a backslider, saved, baptised and in fellowship



many years ago. was challenged by the preacher's reference each night to those who may be saved and not baptised, or were backsliders. She decided to return to the Lord and to ask to be received into fellowship with the Lord's people. Many others were challenged by the faithful preaching of God's Word and by the working of the Holy Spirit, but as yet have not responded. One of the notable features of the campaign was the number of men who attended regularly, some of whom are still attending and showing great interest. Please continue to pray with us that God will add yet more of "such as should be saved".

Lanarkshire: Summer open air work was undertaken by Roy Marshall during the month of June in fellowship with the assemblies in Forth (for two weeks), Greengairs and Uddingston (one week each). Saturday Gospel Rallies, followed in the evening by ministry of the Word, were also held in Carluke (see above), Greengairs, Kirkmuirhill and Chapelhall, in which Tom Wilson and John Rae also gave help.

Ayrshire: John Grant was responsible for the early summer outreach at Patna where there is a small assembly, and the meetings were well supported. Some local people did attend but inconsistently, and the children's meetings were slow to build up. Our prayer is that some results not yet known will be revealed if not now then in eternity.

Easterhouse, Glasgow: During the month of June, Jack Hay and Stephen Grant shared in a continuing effort in the Easthall district of this large housing estate. Support from nearby assemblies, especially Dennistoun and Muirhead, was much appreciated. The children's meetings went well with attendances of 50 to 70 each time, and on the last evening about a dozen parents attended. It was also a cause for thanksgiving that a good number of unsaved people came every evening to the adult meetings and listened to the gospel. This is the fourth year of the June effort in this area and it was felt that progress had been made in gaining the confidence of the people, especially parents, although no professions of salvation were made during the meetings. God willing, the regular work among the children will recommence in September, and Stephen Grant and John Grant plan to have the next effort with adults in January. Do pray for blessing in this needy area.

St Andrews: For the week of 18-25 July, about twenty young people from various assemblies worked along with Dan Gillies in fellowship with the small assembly in this busy town to spread the gospel out of doors and indoors, among children and adults, from morning to night. A local boy of twelve professed to trust the Saviour after a children's meeting, and a man of about thirty came to the last meeting, also heard the testimonies of some of the young believers at the final barbeque, and then came to the regular open air meeting on the Saturday morning where he asked for help and was led to the Lord. Pray that the Lord will encourage and strengthen the assembly in St Andrews and its outreach to townsfolk, visitors, and the many students at its ancient university, some of whom over the past session, influenced by fellow students, have been saved and some have been baptised.

South Uist: In the early part of the summer, Dan Gillies fulfilled an exercise to visit this predominantly (estimated 97%) Roman Catholic island and within a week along with Mrs Gillies distributed "Seed Sowers" packages to about 450 crofts, making up around 85% of the population there. The reception was encouraging with some enquiries for more information now being received. A young woman who had been saved just before had her faith strengthened as a result of receiving the package left in her home. Pray that more of the Seed sown, here and elsewhere, may bring forth fruit for the glory of our Saviour.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mrs Eveline Aiken, widow of the late Andrew Aiken originally from Ahoghill, N.I. who served the Lord for some years in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island passed away in hospital in Ballymena on 16th May, after some years of ill health patiently borne. Our sister was a talented and helpful person. She was Australian by birth and was saved there in early life.

Mr John Crockett on 14th July aged 74, of Albert Hall, Renfrew. Converted in his early teens in Aberdeen, he soon became actively involved in the Lords work there. In 1950 he was baptised and received into fellowship in Renfrew. He was a Sunday school teacher and a worker in the children's meetings and for a number of years he was Bible class leader. An acceptable preacher and teacher, he assisted in many assemblies in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. He was an elder in Renfrew where he was held in high esteem as was evident by the large number who attended his funeral service in Renfrew. Remember his widow and family in prayer.

Mrs Maria Keenan on 18th May aged 84 years. Our sister was saved early in life in Annbank and on moving to Prestwick was associated with the Bute Hall Assembly. After the loss of her husband Willie seven years ago she moved to residential care in Kilmarnock. Ill health and increasing frailty were borne with faith and courage.

Mr John Lightbody on 7th May, aged 86 years. Our brother was saved and brought into fellowship in Uddingston assembly in 1929. Until his final illness which extended over 14 years he served the Lord faithfully, both locally and in a much wider sphere. As many can testify, his "praise was in all the churches". During the last 12 years he was lovingly cared for by the staff at Ebenezer House, Wishaw.

Mrs Marion (Min) Lindsay called home to be with Christ on 12th June aged 87 years. Saved as a young girl and in happy fellowship in Olive Hall then High Parks Gospel hall, Hamilton for 70 years. A widow for 35 years and a regular attender at the assembly gatherings. Her presence and prayerful interest will be missed by the assembly and her family. Prayer for the family would be appreciated at this time.

Mr George Petrie on 29th March, in his 102nd year. Saved aged fifteen and soon received into Ratho assembly. On the family moving to Broxburn, he was in fellowship there for many years. Committed to Wormwood Scrubs during the Great War as a conscientious objector. Associated with the Bruntsfield assembly for seventeen years before moving back to Broxburn and the assembly. He had a good knowledge of the scriptures, which he retained until a few months prior to his homecall. Brother of the late James Petrie, evangelist.

Mrs Isabella N Proudfoot suddenly on 3rd June, aged 69 years. Saved at age 10 and received into fellowship in Elim Hall, Plains at 14, where she continued in happy fellowship for 55 years. A widow for 28 years (the late Robert Proudfoot) she was consistent and faithful in her attendance at all assembly gatherings, given to hospitality and a succourer and support of many. Isa had an exceptional testimony in the village, being a source of help to many unsaved. She will be missed in the assembly and at home. Remember her daughters and son-in-law.

Mrs Jean Stevenson on 15th May aged 77. Saved when 12, baptised at 14 and received into fellowship in Victoria Hall, Ayr. She



helped in the Sunday School for a number of years. In 1947 she moved to Sorn with her husband John and was in fellowship in Catrine and Auchinleck till 1960 when they moved to Tarbolton and here they remained for 17 years. On retirement they returned to James St in Ayr for six years and spent the last 10 years in Woodpark. She was a faithful attender at all the assembly gatherings.

Mr Joseph Usher on 16 March 1998. Saved aged 12 at meetings in Matchett St, Belfast conducted by the late Mr Dick. In fellowship for 16 years at Matchett St then Carrickfergus for three years, latterly at Whitehouse where he was in fellowship for 42 years. A willing worker who was on the oversight, with a keen interest in Sunday school work. Many will remember his welcoming smile. The large funeral service at Whitehouse Gospel Hall for an esteemed brother was conducted by David Brown, Brian Currie, Matthew McKillen, and Gordon Wallace.

Mrs A Wasson, on 7th March. Our sister and her husband were saved in March 1966 when J Thomson and J Hawthorne preached the gospel in the Kells area, and since that time our sister has been in assembly fellowship. She was loved and respected by all the believers and took a great interest in all the meetings, especially the work amongst the boys and girls. Greatly missed by the family circle and the assembly in Kells.

PERSONALIA

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. *Contact:* Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Antrim Gospel Hall. As from 1st September 1998 all correspondence should be addressed to Mr W Hamilton, 5 Tullynamullan Road, Antrim, Co Antrim, N Ireland. Tel: 01266 891457.

Back copies of the Believers Magazine urgently needed, 1950-1975, Romans Ch 8 by Andrew Borland, M.A. Fax or write to: Dr Narayan Nair, Fiji Bible College of Evangelism, PO BOX 315, Lautoka, Fiji Islands, Fax (679) 665 470.

Change of Address: All correspondence for Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place, Kilmarnock, to H Hunter, 15A Townend, Kilmaurs, East Ayrshire, KA3 2RE.

Commendation: The assembly at Bridge of Weir has great pleasure in commending Mr Stephen Grant to full time service for the Lord. He will labour in Scotland or wherever else the Lord may lead. Our brother goes out into the work to which the Lord has called him with the support and prayers of the assembly that he will be used for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners and in the building up of the saints.

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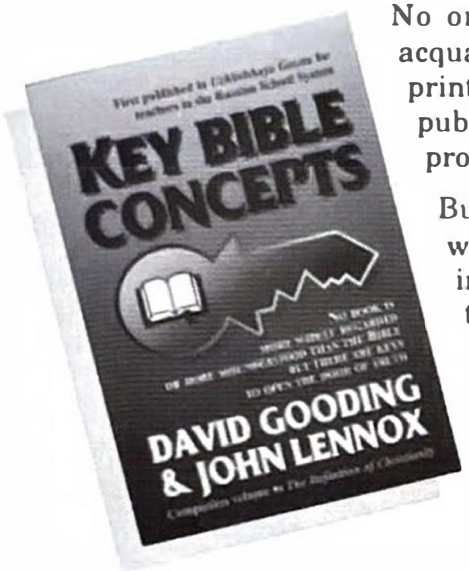
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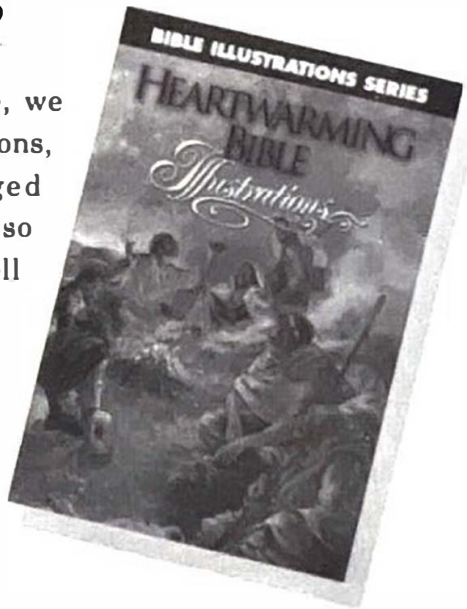
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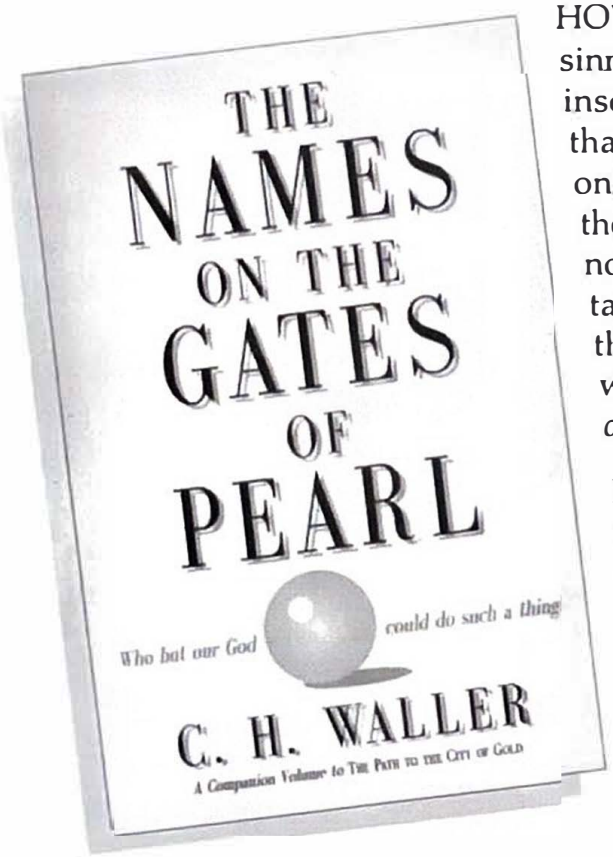
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Believer's
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NEW BOOK

THE NAMES ON THE GATES OF PEARL

C. H. WALLER



HOW did God do it? How is it possible for sinners like Jacob's sons to have their names inscribed in Heaven? It goes without saying that we aren't God's type. Yet He intends not only that His people be with Christ but that they also be like Christ. How can a person not love such a God, the God who not only takes prodigals into the Father's house, but then inscribes their names on the gates by which they came home to Him? *The Names on the Gates of Pearl* are Jacob's sons!

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Believer's

Magazine

OCTOBER 1998

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Editorial

"Lord, what shall this man do?" is a question we find all too often on our lips, especially when we hear the Lord say to us, "Follow me" (John 21:21,19). We seem much more comfortable with inquiring into the responsibility of others than answering to what the Lord is requiring of us. Is it that we are fearful that our burden will be so much heavier than our brother's? Or are we somehow of the view that apart from our intervention our Lord might overlook our brother?

Sadly there are times when we intrude with our "Lord, what shall this man do?" with unworthy thoughts about our brother dominating our thought processes. We speak because we are convinced that there is a mote in our brother's eye when really the beam in our own eye is blurring our vision (Matt 7:3). Having concluded that our brother errs, at our word we expect the Lord to restrict his sphere of service or chasten him. Our defective sight ensures that we do not see in one who is after all "another man's servant" the hallmark of the work of God in his soul: "God is able to make him stand" (Rom 14:4).

In respect of public service too some ask, "Lord, what shall this man do?" Oftentimes the enquirer has a worthy motive. He sees in a young man God-given ability and is genuinely exercised to ascertain the Lord's mind on the matter. Could it be that the Lord is saying, "Separate me" another Saul or Barnabas? Let honest spiritual inquiry continue (Acts 13:2). But let the earnest seeker be aware that the Lord calls and the Lord says "to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it" (Matt 8:9). Neither a missionary society nor a committee of brethren may curtail the Master's right over His servant.

It was none other than John, the John who leaned on Christ's bosom, who saw one casting out demons in Christ's name. John openly told his Lord, "...he followeth not us and we forbad him, for he followeth not us" (Mark 9:38-39). That exorcist was unlikely to "lightly speak evil of" the Lord and was not to be forbidden of the disciples. And we too are slow to learn that lesson: ours is to follow the Lord and leave the Lord to deal even with those who wilfully ignore or ignorantly misinterpret what He expects of them. Clearly we cannot go on with disobedience but we can leave with the Lord the correction of any who do not walk with us. We should not interfere with them nor even ask, "Lord, what shall this man do?"

In the privacy of our own prayer exercises, there is however a question that we need to ask. It is not, "Lord, what shall this man do?" Rather we should ask with Saul of Tarsus, blinded, bewildered and broken, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). On that question hinges our response to that Pauline exhortation, "Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt...save thyself..." (1 Tim 4:16). And as Paul taught Timothy, others will benefit too.

TW

'Gave Himself'

by EAR Shotter, Northampton

As we look through the Epistles we shall find the title of this article occurs five times, plus once as He 'hath given Himself'. So often, when phrases such as this occur we tend to leave them isolated to the passage in which they take place without trying to link them with each other. It is the purpose of this article to look at such a linkage and to see how it meets our need at all times.

Whilst the backcloth to each of these references is the strong *agapao* love (i.e. the love that loves for love's sake alone), it is definitely linked with the first, fourth, and the last of the passages we shall look at, whereas the other passages have to do with separation from the world in one aspect or another.

Given Himself Eph 5:2

The longings in the Godhead in eternity were to have an object for that intense longing. Whilst each enveloped the other in that divine love, it would appear that their desire was to extend it beyond themselves, and chose man with whom they could share it. In the counsels of eternity we find these purposes were being devised, so that our verse would bring before us a whole burnt-offering and a sacrifice given to God of a sweet smelling savour. In those tabernacle offerings the burnt offering was absolutely clean within and without; all of it was burnt on the altar of sacrifice; and none but God had part of it, but it was an offering of sweet savour – a savour of rest – to Him. We hear the cry, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isa 6:8). Do we not hear the answer as from the Saviour's lips: "Here am I: send me". Or again, from His very lips "No man taketh it (My life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father" (John 10:18). In those aeons of eternity it seems He was almost pleading with the Father to be that odour of sweet smell to Him in His love for us.

By taking this passage first it teaches us to put God first in all things. Surely a timely lesson for us to learn.

Gave Himself 1 Tim 2:6

In this passage we have the will of God brought before us, motivated, no doubt by the love of which we have thought above.

After man's aspiration to be as the triune God (following the temptation of the serpent, who as Satan also had that aspiration) and his fall through disobedience and rebellion against Him, the will of God was that all men should be saved, and come to the full knowledge of the truth. In order that this might take place, the very one who loved us in Ephesians 5 now becomes the Mediator–the go-between–who, as God, can put His hand on God knowing all that He desires; and, as having become Man, can put His hand on us, knowing all

our needs and weaknesses. None other could take such a place, for none other is God. He therefore gave Himself a ransom for all that the debt to God might be fully paid.

Whilst not all men are saved, because they have chosen to exercise their own free will otherwise, there is not one human being who has come into this world for whom this ransom is not an amply full provision. The Lord Jesus Christ has become the substitute for each person's sin who has trusted Him, and if each person trusted, each person would have the substitute. In this giving of Himself then it was a giving for sin.

Gave Himself Gal 1:4

In this passage again, whilst as previously the underlying motive is that intense divine love, we have another desire expressed – He gave Himself for our sins. Whilst in the sight of God the ransom paid, and the redemption procured, places us as if we have never sinned, i.e. justified, yet in our daily lives we have not received perfection, and, though we are not to practise sin as a habit, there will be times of "missing the mark", so making us unclean before Him. For this reason the Lord Jesus has given Himself for our sins, and to deliver us out of this present evil age (world system) where the temptations to sin will be ever before us. This also is the will of God our Father for us.

Let us come to John 17 and hear Him in prayer: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are...I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil...Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word...thou...hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me". Do we not see here that wonderful *agapao* love – love for love's sake alone.

Gave Himself Gal 2:20

This passage tells us that He gave Himself for our life. It must be evident that, whilst Christ gave Himself for our sin and our sins, sinless perfection is not yet our possession. The 'old man' in us motivated by the principles of the flesh, and inherited from Adam must be put to death. Col 3:5-25 complements our chapter in Ephesians and tells us to mortify (to deaden, to subdue) our members which are upon the earth; and Rom 8:12-14 says we are to mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body. In the passage in Galatians, Paul tells us he is crucified with Christ, therefore the 'old man' in him is put to death, yet he lives. However, the life which he now lives is the life the Son of God is living in him. The Lord knows that we humans, even though cleansed by the precious blood, cannot live a Christ-like life without Him living it in us. How careful we should be when we exhort one another to live the Christian life to see that we place the emphasis correctly.

Christ Manifested (2)

by P Harding, Manchester

Christ Manifested
Revelation 19:11-21 continued
The different names he bears (cont)
"King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (v.16).
His authority, majesty and dignity now being asserted and displayed – the Supreme Sovereign of the universe – THE IRRESISTIBLE ONE. As the Supreme Sovereign He comes to hold to account all who rebel against him and who filled the earth with violence and corruption. Here we have His Powerful Display – He comes with the Name of His authority upon His thigh (the place where the sword is generally carried – Ps 45:3) and woe to those powers that think they can withstand Him – "the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them" (Ps 21:9). Israel's long-promised Deliverer, the Sceptre from the tribe of Judah – the Lion of the tribe of Judah – comes in all His glory, power and majesty for the deliverance of His earthy people.
The Destruction of His Enemies
vv.17-18 – the supper of the great God where the flesh of kings, captains and mighty men becomes food for the fowls. The outcome of the coming forth of the Lord to take dealings with those who oppose Him is in no doubt for even before the battle the fowls are bidden to come. It tells of the greatest of men – kings, captains, mighty men – strong and confident, along with their followers scattered on the field and left for the fowls. It anticipates the utter helplessness of those who would dare to stand against Christ thinking that they could be victorious. Here is the fulfilment of:
(i) Isa 18:6 *"They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth".*
(ii) Isa 56:9 *"All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest".*
(iii) Ezek 39:17 *"Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice..."*
(iv) Zeph 1:7 *"the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests".*
(v) Matt 24:28 *"For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.".*
vv.19-21 – the great judgment falls upon the leader and his companion first for these give confidence to the vast company that follows them. The beast is powerless, despite his boasted claims, to defend himself and is taken along with the false prophet and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. Then the remnant were slain with sword of the Lord and given to the fowls. Vast though their number may be they perish in a moment at the utterance of the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Those who will not have Christ to rule over them must perish. Men may boast in their unbelief and indulge in their passions during this day of grace but, if they continue, they will perish. This passage is the fulfilment of:
(i) Ps 2:9 *"Thou shalt break them with*

a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel".

(ii) Dan 2:35 *"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together...".*

(iii) Dan 7:11 *"the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame".*

(iv) Hab 3:12 *"Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger".*

(v) Zech 14:12 *"Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet...".*

Our glorious Lord as the Great Warrior King will come:

(i) To execute judgment on all – 2 Thess 1 and Jude 15.

(ii) To be glorified in His saints – Col 3:3-4 and 2 Thess 1.

(iii) To sit upon the throne of His glory – Matt 25:31.

This passage in Rev 19 can be linked with Ps 24. Here in Rev 19 the Lord comes forth as the mighty warrior king to deal with His enemies and to deliver Israel. In Ps 24 the Lord, having destroyed those opposed to Him, makes His claim to the throne. We suggest that the four names he bears as He comes forth in Rev 19 are linked with the fourfold claim to the throne in Ps 24. We would like to look at Psalm 24 in this way:

Psalm 24

His Creatorial Claim (vv.1-2). He comes as the mighty Creator, bearing the Name "The Word of God" to make His claim to the throne of the earth. In v.1 the claim is made – "the earth (the material earth) is the Lord's, and the fulness (every part of it) thereof; the world (the globe as a dwelling place), and they that dwell therein (the inhabitants). In v.2 we have the reason for the claim – "he founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods" – a reference to Gen 1 – John 1:3 tells us that without Him was not anything (one thing) made that was made. Col 1:16 tells us that in (Greek *en*) Him, through (Greek *dia*) Him and for (Greek *eis*) Him all things were created. He is not only the source and the channel of all things but He is also the object of all things. In Col 1:17 we learn that He is before all things and that in (Greek *en*) Him all things consist (are held together). In Heb 1:3 we learn that He upholds all things by the word of His power and He will continue to do so until at last it serves the pleasure and glory of God. Thus He comes forth as *"The Word of God"*, the mighty Creator to make *his creatorial claim* to the throne.

Creation vast His glory doth unfold,
For by 'The Word' all things were made we're told;
Thus His great power and Godhead are displayed,
The earth is His, He its foundation laid.

In Him the vast creation finds its source,
And in His power the 'all things' run their course;
All His by right, His glory is its aim,
The throne of earth HIS CREATORIAL CLAIM.

The Parable of the Sower (2)

by TJ Blackman, Brazil

The Seed Sown on Stony Ground

In this parable the Lord is showing His disciples the different influences which determine how the heart receives the word of God. In the seed sown "by the wayside", He has shown us the heart dominated by *Satan*. Now, in this second example, we shall see, with the Lord's help, how *the flesh* also hinders the word of the Lord, keeping it from having free course and being glorified (2 Thess 3:1).

As in our first study, we are going to compare the three Gospels which include this parable (Matt 13:20,21; Mark 4:16,17; Luke 8:13), noting the details added by each one.

"Anon (immediately) with joy receiveth it" (Matt 13:20). In this example we see how, at first, the flesh can appear to cooperate with the word, manifesting a rapid and promising growth, but at last causing disappointment.

The Scriptures present several examples demonstrating how the natural man can apparently receive the word of God, even with great joy, but afterwards withdraws himself even further from God than he was before.

At the beginning of Saul's reign, when he had been constituted king by the word of God, we read of much joy: "And there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" (1 Sam 11:15). But it was not long before he began to rebel against the word of God, to the extent that, in his last days, he consulted a medium rather than wait upon the Lord. It is written with respect to this first king of Israel: "Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Chron 10:13).

Many times the people of Israel in general manifested this attitude. God complains in Isa 58:2, that the people "take pleasure" in knowing His ways but only want to do their own will. In Ezekiel's days, the people came to the prophet and the word was to them like "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice". God warned His servant, however: "with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness...they hear thy words, but they do them not (Ezek 33:31,32).

King Herod is another example. He liked to hear John the Baptist, and even "did many things" when he heard him (Mark 6:20). But, just a little pressure from Herodias and her daughter was enough to persuade him to have John, the Lord's messenger, beheaded.

One more example is Simon the sorcerer. Acts 8:13 tells us, "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptised, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done". However, he soon showed that his faith was merely temporary and wished to buy with his money the capacity to transmit the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter told him, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (v.21).

Therefore, rapid growth and much joy

are not necessarily signs of eternal life, because in many such cases the result is as follows:

By and by (straightway) he is offended (Matt 13:21); "these...fall away" (Luke 8:13). There are two principal causes why these people are offended or fall away: (a) because of the *truth* of the word; and (b) because of the *reproach* of the word.

(a) The truth of God's word humbles man, showing him that he is a sinner and dependent on the mercy and sovereign grace of God. Such revelations offend the natural man, and a "conversion" which was nothing more than intellectual, emotional, or merely because the message was found attractive or impressive, will soon come to nothing. It is as God says to Ephraim, "your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hos 6:4).

(b) The reproach of God's word is what is stressed here. Just as the world neither received nor recognised the eternal Word (John 1:10,11), so also it does not receive His word. For this reason the person who has no more than this carnal "faith" soon feels ashamed to be identified with the despised word of the Lord, and is soon offended. With respect to such people the Lord said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory" (Luke 9:26). However, the one who has a "root" is not ashamed of the testimony of His Lord, but is ready to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (2 Tim 1:8).

In Luke 8:13 we read that these "in time of temptation fall away". The word translated "fall away" is also found in Heb 3:12: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in *departing from* the living God". This verse shows the character of the heart which "by and by is offended". It is not an "honest and good heart", but rather, "evil and unbelieving", making it quite clear that the person in question was never regenerated.

"When affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake" (Mark 4:17); "In time of temptation" (Luke 8:13). God does not deceive those who receive the gospel. The Lord warned His disciples: "in the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33), in fact, tribulations without and temptations within. The truth is that afflictions really increase after conversion, because the devil, the world and the flesh have now become the believer's enemies. God says, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isa 48:10). It was for this reason that the apostles confirmed "the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). It is evident here that afflictions serve the purpose of exposing those who are not genuine, who just make an empty profession of faith.

"These have no root" (Luke 8:13). Job says in Job 19:28, "the root of the matter is found in me". We gather "matter" could be translated "word", literally, "the root of the word". It is because of the lack of

this "root of the word" that the stony-ground hearers only believe "for a while". Prov 12:3 says, "The root of the righteous shall not be moved", and v.12 of the same chapter adds, "the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit". The true Christian is "like a tree planted (stability) that bringeth forth his fruit in his season (fruitfulness)" (Ps.1:3). The flesh, how-ever, although it may manifest much joy and enthusiasm as it receives the word, can never produce this firmness and fruitfulness of faith, because it is "like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps.1:4).

The growth of the seed which fell on stony ground was all above the surface, all visible, with nothing below the ground. The vital part of the true Christian's spiritual growth is the hidden part: communion with God in the secret place.

"Dureth for a while" (Matt.13:21): "which for a while believe" (Luke 8:13). This is what we see so often in these days of superficiality. Instead of accompanying the preaching of the word with prayer, supplicating God for "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4), the preaching is often accompanied, or even substituted, with various forms of religious entertainment, which can never produce conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8), nor "repentance unto salvation" (2 Cor 7:10). Only the Holy Spirit is able to produce these things, breaking the hard heart of the sinner and preparing it for the reception of the word of God.

Mere professors believe just "for a while"; in the case of a true believer, however, we are assured that "he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ". Therefore, may it ever be our desire to see the exhortation which Paul addressed to the Colossians fulfilled in ourselves: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col 2:6,7).

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Books

A History of Israel by Walter C Kaiser Jr; published Broadman & Holman; price £24.99. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

A History of Israel offers a history of Israel "from the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars". It attempts to present "current approaches to the study of the history of Israel" and to identify "common fallacies...in modern secular" treatments of the periods covered in this book. The flyleaf of *A History of Israel* announces of this volume, "History triumphs over hearsay in this comprehensive chronicle of God's chosen people". Certainly that is the author's viewpoint: he accepts and sets out to defend the historicity of the OT records of the period.

As with all such studies the reviewer is always pleased when an author begins with the acceptance of the inspiration of Scripture and so of the historicity of the historical sections of the OT. But he always would admit to a measure of disquiet lest a young believer assume that the very publication of such a study is an admission that the OT needs defending. The value of the OT is not based on our ability to find secular evidence for the exodus from Egypt or the existence of Saul or on proofs that there is but one author Isaiah who penned the prophecy of that name. However in noting the corroboration of the Scripture we find not so much a basis for belief in the historicity of Scripture as in the futility of the wisdom of this world.

A History of Israel is an interesting and in places an enlightening book. Not surprisingly its treatment of the vast period of two thousand years dealt with is not even. At times the author does little more than re-tell the record of Scripture but the reader is rewarded elsewhere with interesting shafts of light. And always the narrative style Kaiser adopts is lively and fitting to the subject he treats.

TW

Defending Your Faith by Dan Story; published Kregel Publications; price £8.75. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

A number of books have now been published recently which offer answers to the range of questions skeptics pose particularly to younger Christians. Often embarrassed by the apparent validity of what are often no more than carefully-honed but not usually carefully-researched questions the young Christians may not be altogether at ease in defending his faith.

Not always do books of the genre which *Defending Your Faith* represents, make the important point that the Christian's faith stands not on his ability to address objections to his faith but in the Saviour who died for him. So often the simplest confession of faith is of greater import than elaborate arguments often built on a premise the contender will not admit. And the young Christian should know that despite the very wisdom of God having framed the word of God, the Christian's ability to present the Word is limited by his understanding; therefore inevitably a question will be posed to which unashamedly the Christian should simply answer that he does not know.

However among the books on christian apologetics Story's *Defending Your Faith* is as lucid as any. Many will find assurance in noting that our Lord was cross-examined often by His adversaries; so too were the apostles. We then can expect no different treatment.

TW

Question Box

Question

Does the law of the Lord (Mosaic, primarily found in Exod 20) apply to Gentiles in the present age? What part should the law have in gospel preaching?

Answer

Both Old and New testaments reveal that the law was given particularly to the nation of Israel. The actual heading of the ten commandments in Exodus 20 is "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (v.2). Soon after the inception of the law, and before it was in writing, the nation accepted it from God with the words, "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exod 24:7). The response of Moses to these words was to sprinkle the people with blood and say, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words". In the NT the Gentiles are spoken of as those "which have not the law" (Rom 2:14). It is therefore clear that the law was a covenant between the Lord and the nation of Israel.

In considering these matters we should also note the inspired words in the epistle to the Romans, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (3:19). "Them who are under the law" clearly refers to Israel, but "every mouth" and "all the world" looks beyond the one nation and embraces all mankind. Thus the divine standard was given to Israel, but all stand condemned by it.

Regarding the second part of the question, the gospel is defined, and its preaching described for us, in the NT. A terse but clear statement of its presentation by Paul in Corinth is given in 1 Cor 15:3-4, and various sections in the Acts of the Apostles give differing samples of the content of the message of early apostolic preachers including Paul's preaching of the gospel in many places. In addition the epistle to the Romans gives a detailed doctrinal exposition of the gospel and other NT letters add to this.

When all this preaching and teaching is analysed it will be seen that the major thrust in preaching the gospel revolves around the presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the work which He accomplished through His death, burial and resurrection. Some of the passages alluded to earlier will show, that on occasion mention is made of the law in speaking of the gospel to show how far short man has fallen from the divine standard. The apostle Paul also refers to it to show that although it reveals such a standard, it is completely inadequate to enable mankind to attain the standard (see Rom 8:3). Beyond this we have no further direction for its use in gospel preaching, as far as the present writer is aware.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons From Long Ago
6) JOHN THE BAPTIST (Matt 3:1)
Introduction

Many might think that John the Baptist was the most *unlikely* person to be able to preach effectively to huge crowds of ordinary people. He was born as the only child into a very religious family, he had old parents, and he lived his later life before preaching, in obscurity and isolation in the Judean wilderness. However, there was no one so effective as John the Baptist at reaching people for God, until the Lord Jesus came onto the scene.

John's Early Life

John was born as the answer to ancient divine promise and previous human prayer. Hundreds of years before, a promise had been made of him as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness". But at the same time, Elisabeth and Zacharias had been praying that they should have a child. However, when humanly speaking the possibility had passed, they must have stopped praying. Indeed, when Zacharias was told that they would have a son, he could not believe it, and was struck dumb! The full, extraordinary story is told in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. The outcome was the birth of John; the giving of his name (which according to Strong means "Jehovah is a gracious giver") by divine direction, and the dedication of his life to be a Nazarite (literally "a dedicated or devoted one") from birth. The vow of a Nazarite would have meant that John had to be different from other Jews, specifically in that he was not allowed to drink alcohol or cut his hair (Num 6:1-21; cf. Samson, Judges 13). John not only grew physically, but was also "stregthened in spirit" (Luke 1:80 JND), as a child.

Wilderness Days

John spent much of his early life in the desert, away from human influence, but available for divine leading. In fact the word of God came to John in the wilderness, and among the things that he learnt was his scriptural calling as "the voice crying in the wilderness", which gave him his message from Isa (40:3), then his calling to baptise (John 1:33). Then he was shown how he could identify the One coming after him of whom he spoke: "he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33).

He started to preach in the wilderness at various river crossings of the Jordon where crowds of people came on their way to and from Jerusalem. His preaching was direct and to the point–immediate repentance and thereafter the bringing forth of "fruits meet [suitable] for repentance", because the King and His kingdom were coming soon. John anticipated peoples' excuses, and told them not to say that "we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:8). John only came to speak to Jews, but his message



was to all Jews, irrespective of their background. John's baptism was of, or unto, repentance and for, or unto, remission of sins, and those who were baptised did so confessing their sins. Many unexpected people listened to his preaching, as the Lord Jesus said, "publicans and the harlots believed him", but as He also said, a lot of important people did not (Matt 21:32).

Impressions of John

John the Baptist's appearance and diet were the results of his life in the desert. His outer garment was of camel's hair, held by a leather belt and his diet was locusts and wild honey. These things were usual for people who lived in the desert, and they were usual for him. However, it was something unusual, and no doubt attracted the attention of the people who saw him. Our life might seem unusual to people in the world, but it is the result of pleasing God, and actually is for the good of those same people. As the Lord Jesus asked them about John, "what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses" (Matt 11:8).

John paid the price for service in another way. His straightforward message about Herod's immoral relationship with brother Philip's wife, Herodias (Matt 14:31), led to him being arrested and imprisoned. He was there for some time, during which time his followers were able to visit him. They brought news about the Lord Jesus Christ, but not the kind of news that John had expected. His idea was the establishing of the kingdom that he promised, and he had indeed identified his own cousin as the Messiah, the One who would set up the kingdom. In order to reassure him, the Lord Jesus sends him a special message that was taken by two of John's disciples who had just seen him performing many miracles, the subjects being the blind, lame, deaf, and even the dead, and heard Him preaching the gospel to the poor, the kind of people who had no doubt responded to John's preaching. John was to be reassured that He was the One who was coming and there was no need to look for another.

Whether they believed him or not, John left such a deep impression on the people that when the Lord Jesus came to prominence and he had died, many people thought that He was John the Baptist "risen from the dead" (Matt 14:2) and His mighty works were considered to be the result of resurrection. Even king Herod thought this to be the case and was "much perplexed" (Mark 6:14 RV, 16; Luke 9:7).

Conclusion

John was most unlikely as an influential person from a human point of view. His background, appearance, and the direct delivery of his message might be considered by many as unsuitable for such work. However, God was with him, and of him the Lord Jesus said "among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11).

The Holy Scriptures (5)

by M Davis, Leeds

Their Interpretation

The subject of the interpretation of scripture follows on naturally from our previous consideration of its translation, since all translation involves a degree of interpretation. No two languages have the same methods of construction or exactly-matching shades of meaning in their vocabularies.

The basic question to ask in the study of the Scriptures is "How literally should we interpret them?" And the answer which all true believers would give is "as literally as possible, having allowed for all ordinary figures of human speech". In the previous article on *Inspiration* we found that there was a human element in the composition of scripture; divinely-prepared and controlled men were used by the Holy Spirit to write in prose or poetry containing figurative and even symbolical language at times. In parts of the prophetical books such as Daniel and Revelation symbolism is used widely and some of the symbols are explained, whilst others are not.

But it is still true to say that scripture is always literally and historically true in its primary meaning, including all the predicted events of prophecy. It is plain unbelief to deny this. Believers are quite prepared to accept the accounts of creation in six days, all the miracles, the details of predictive prophecy, the deity and true Incarnation of Christ, His resurrection, ascension, and future second coming as all literally true as history or prophecy. Christ's second coming will be as literal as His first coming, and is not just to be interpreted in a vague spiritualised way.

In this latter respect it can be seen that the so-called *premillennial* view of prophecy is based on a much sounder principle of interpretation than the *amillennial* view, which is held by many true believers. For the premillennial view believes in a literal thousand-year future rule of Christ over the whole earth from Jerusalem after His literal return for His Church at the Rapture, and the events of the so-called Great Tribulation as predicted in the Book of Revelation. The amillennial view, by contrast, believes that the Church is at present fulfilling the promises made to Israel in only a spiritualised way, on the ground that by their rejection of Christ at His first coming Israel forfeited their promised blessings. Amillennialists deny a future literal thousand-year rule of Christ and hold that the present age of the grace and Church of God is the only millennium that is going to be. But Romans 11 makes it quite clear that there is a future for the earthly people of God, Israel, and that the unconditional promises made to Abraham and David in OT times have never been annulled or transferred to the Church, but will be fulfilled as literally as the promises of Christ's first coming to earth. Vast tracts of the OT prophets become almost meaningless unless we accept them as having a future literal fulfilment in the restored

nation of Israel. The amillennial view encourages active participation by the Church in the political and social affairs of the present age, whereas the premillennial view discourages this and promotes a clear separation by true members of the Church from present political affairs and a vigorous involvement in the preaching of the gospel of God's grace to rescue people of all nations from the coming judgment of God. Amillennialism in respect of prophecy is really the thin end of the wedge to full unbelieving liberalism and modernism in all doctrine, and should therefore be rejected by true believers as unsound.

A further cardinal principle in the interpretation of scripture is that its reference is always Christocentric. Our authority for asserting this is found in the record of our Lord's conversation with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:27, where Luke states that "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself". For a full and helpful exposition of this subject readers are referred to an older book by AM Hodgkin entitled *Christ in all the Scriptures,* which is one of the first Bible study books that the present writer was advised to obtain as a young Christian. Unless we can see Christ and God's plan of salvation for man through Him in every part of the Scriptures, we shall not be helped spiritually. This principle at once throws light and gives meaning to many parts of the OT especially which appear at first to be rather barren and tedious to read. I refer to the detailed instructions for the building of the Tabernacle and later the Temple and the Levitical sacrifices. Once we understand that these relate to Christ who tabernacled amongst us during His earthly life and to His "one sacrifice for sins for ever" on the cross of Calvary, then we can appreciate their real significance and meaning for us today in their many and varied aspects. Also, we shall be able to appreciate the significance of some of the Psalms of David where the thoughts and feelings expressed seem at times to go beyond the psalmist's own experience and refer to One greater than he was. The apostle Peter in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost clearly establishes this as a principle of interpretation when he refers to part of Psalm 16 and preaches from it about the resurrection of Christ, having stated that David had died and was still in his grave, but was in that Psalm speaking as a prophet about the One he foreshadowed, namely, "great David's greater Son", Christ Himself.

In short, without faith and without a deep appreciation of Christ the Bible is a barren and meaningless set of books. But, given a simple faith in God and a true experimental knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, it is the key to the meaning of life both now and hereafter.

Regions Beyond

Yugoslavia

by Michael Browne

Since the break-up of Yugoslavia and the bitter war that followed, the majority of assemblies in the former Federation have been isolated in what is now Serbia. The two autonomous regions of Vojvodina in the north, and Kosovo in the south, have lost their autonomous status and have been reluctantly merged with the Serbian Republic to form, together with the Montenegro Republic, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There are 11 assemblies now in Vojvodina, 5 of which are ethnic Serbian, and the rest Slovakian.

Firm Spiritual Convictions Assembly work in Vojvodina commenced in 1900. The first assembly was established in the large village of Backi Petrovac, in the Novi Sad district NW of Beograd (Belgrade). Among the first believers were the grandparents of present day self-supporting worker among Yogoslav assemblies, Samuel (Samko) Ribar. The Ribars, together with others, formed an assembly in the Slovakian village of Backi Petrovac which from the beginning grew out of firm spiritual convictions, and followed the pattern of assembly truth they discovered in the Acts and Epistles. In those early years they were helped by brother Butcher from (what is now) the Czech Republic and later, in the years between the wars, by James Lees from Scotland.

Liberal Changes As in other assembly areas around the world, there are strong pressures felt here also for liberal changes. These changes are undermining scriptural teachings and practices held by local assemblies from the very beginning of assembly testimony in Yugoslavia. These pressures come from those described by Paul as, "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). This is the end result of aggressive liberal teachers, supposedly from assemblies and mainly from UK and USA, influencing impressionable young brethren from E. European and Third World countries through international conferences held in different lands. The young brethren who attend these conferences, with all expenses paid, are encouraged to return to their home assemblies with the goal of implementing the things they have learned. It is quite certain they never received their liberal ideas from the scriptural ministry received in their own land.

In Yugoslavia among assemblies in Vojvodina, unbiblical practices have been pressed which have sadly resulted in division. The distinctive position of the assembly as gathered out to the Name of Jesus Christ alone, has been challenged by interdenominational tendencies brought in by the new teachers. Centralisation and loose practices have divided the saints who for generations had formed a united testimony. As one brother observed, "It was better for us during the days of Communist rule, when we had none of these outside influences to disturb us."

Voting & Centralisation As is usual with such liberal innovators sisters are assured there is no need to cover their heads in the public gatherings of the church. This is the first step towards full "freedom" for the public participation of women in prayer and worship, one step always makes way for the next. In an assembly where oversight has always been decided by the observed work, gift, and qualification for shepherd rule seen in scripture, new "elders" have just been selected for office by the democratic political process of voting in the assembly! Following on from this there was pressure for a centralised "Committee" to be formed among the



various assemblies to form what was described as a "spiritual eldership" with delegate members chosen from the constituent congregations. This has been partially successful and the division further widened among the Vojvodina assemblies by almost half joining in a central Committee or Oversight. Believers who want to follow the "old paths" of biblical obedience as they were taught by godly men used of God to found assemblies in a former generation, are branded "traditionalists" and their teaching ridiculed. Brother Ribar recounts that assembly brethren who have been visiting Yugoslavia with the Word of God for over 40 years, are now refused permission to speak, and their teaching described as "dangerous" if they speak on assembly doctrines!

Interdenominational Institution Another factor contributing to the present circumstances of the assemblies in Vojvodina, is the introduction of an interdenominational institution "Krestanske Evangelizacne Stredisko" or Christian Evangelical Centre (KES). Leaders of the liberal movement are also executive members of KES, and bring the influence of this foreign-funded institution into the assembly. Assemblies, as such, in Yugoslavia have no official links with KES which was commenced as an inter-denominational ministry, and is supported by funding outside the country.

The KES Bible School relies upon teachers of its own persuasion brought from overseas, and is influencing young people from the Yugoslav assemblies. It was put to us by a local elder that young men barely out of their teens and only recently saved, join-up for a 2 year course. They have never worked in their lives, are fresh from school or college, have no spiritual foundation or experience of assembly life – yet after a 2 year course at KES are "commended" to God's work as "missionaries". The thinking of young people was reflected in a conversation this writer had with a 17 year old from a local assembly visited. He said he saw his future in terms of studying for another year or so to better his English, then do a 2 year study course at KES, after which he would, "do what God wants me to do." In the context of our conversation this meant he expected to go into full-time Christian service. As the local elder said, "They are sent out and supported by foreign funds and hardly know basic doctrines or what to preach. How can they establish local assemblies when they have no practical experience of an assembly?"

Gospel Fruit In spite of these major difficulties, assembly work continues by those brethren still following scriptural principles. The ministry magazine "Vecny Zivot" (Eternal Life) is produced quarterly (2200 copies) in Slovak and Serbian. The Emmaus courses in Serbian go out from Petrovac, and a translation of Dr Farid Abou-Rahme's book "And God Said" is being prepared for printing. Tract printing and translation is an ongoing ministry, and the special series of gospel meetings held among assemblies each year from December to March were blessed with some gospel fruit this year, and there are regular baptisms.

The great need today is for much prayer on behalf of the assembly testimony in Vojvodina. Pray that the saints may know practically what Paul meant when he wrote, "that ye may stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 1:27).

Psalm 139 (1)

by Clifford Jones, Cardiff

David wrote of the God he knew to be omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. He speaks to God directly using many personal pronouns – thou, thee, me, my, mine and I. David reveals his closeness to God in his awareness of the constant and eternal presence of God. His transcendent majesty, immutability, infinite power, wisdom, love and grace overwhelm David and the psalm conveys the feelings of awe and wonder that David experiences when he meditates on God. The reverence due to His Name permeates this psalm and causes David, the man who killed a lion, a bear and Goliath, to bow in worship and complete and glad submission. We who have been saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ would do well to meditate on these things.

God Omniscient vv.1-6

These verses reveal God as omniscient and David's reaction to this truth. David begins with the words "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me". LORD indicates the name revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3:13-15) and is the name Jehovah. It is the personal name of the God of Israel and the covenant name of Almighty God who can make and keep covenants with Israel and those of us saved by grace. The essence of the meaning of this sublime name could be expressed as *I AM THAT I AM* and it speaks of the unchanging One. It is used in connection with God's purposes in redemption (Exod 3:14,16; 6:3) and makes us think of God as the independent, self-existing, self-sufficient, self-revealing One who has made and maintains relationships with His people. He is love (1 John 4:8,16) and all His plans, purposes and promises are founded in love, grace, mercy, truth, holiness and righteousness and with Him all things are possible (Matt 19:26).

God is omniscient, that is, He is all-knowing. He knows all things at all times, with a perfect knowledge of the past, present and future of all that is, of all created beings and of each individual. Each one of us can say "Thou God seest me" (Gen 16:13).

Books and articles are written and courses are provided in an attempt to discuss and explain the psychological aspects of human beings so that people might understand themselves, feel confident, be assertive, experience self-esteem and feel successful. Some of the people who write and provide courses say that "religion is a crutch needed by the inadequate". Sadly, they do not realise that sin lies at the root of all the problems with which they are attempting to deal and that a person will never experience peace and satisfaction unless that person knows the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and is walking a path of obedience to Him in a life that is becoming increasingly less self-centred and increasingly more God-centred. Only then will the cleansing power of the blood of Christ ease the troubled conscience, and peace with God and the peace of God be experienced by the individual.

We cannot know ourselves because of the limitations of our minds, they are finite and spoiled by sin for "all have sinned" (Rom 3:23). But God knows all things. He knows each one of us perfectly and completely.

Vv.1-6 tell us that God knows all our physical movements, even those that seem trivial. He knows our hopes, intentions, aims, aspirations and our real motives even though we may not truly know them ourselves. The God in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28) knows what we think and will think and He knows every word we have spoken and every word we will speak even before we give utterance to our thoughts. Thoughts produce words and actions and can cause habits to develop and so characters are formed. What we allow to fill our minds will determine the sort of people we are. Therefore, we must be careful regarding what we read and dwell upon, what we see and the company we keep, because all of these will influence our minds. We need to feed on the living Word through meditating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the written Word. This will, by the grace of God, cause believers to gradually become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, and His ways will gradually become our ways.

Thoughts are expressed by the tongue which can create such havoc. Let us remember "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2). We read in Prov 23:7 that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" and in Matt 12:34 that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh".

We only see the surface. God knows all and cannot be deceived by hypocrisy or outward appearance (1 Sam 16:7). He knows the heart, therefore "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov 4:23). In Prov 25:3 we read "the heart of kings is unsearchable", that is, cannot be searched by men.

God's perfect, absolute, infinite knowledge overwhelms David and will overwhelm every believer who meditates on these things. Our knowledge and understanding is always limited because we are finite but God is infinite and the finite cannot comprehend or imagine the infinite. David says "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (v.6). Such knowledge combined with such love, grace, mercy and power calls forth spontaneous praise, adoration, love and worship and a desire to be careful to please Him more for "the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed" (1 Sam 2:3).

These truths revealed to David, by the Holy Spirit are for our blessing, comfort and guidance (Rom 15:4) and we would do well to remember that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13). One day each one of us will stand before the judgment seat of the Lord Jesus Christ and give an account of himself to God (Rom 14:10,12; 2 Cor 5:10). God is supreme, knows all things, is infinitely powerful and He rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan 4:17,25,32).

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (6)

by John Gillespie

Sixth Stage

Boyhood Minority : Devotion and Subjection (Luke 2:41-52)

("the boy", v.43 cf. RV and JND)

Up to Jerusalem His people went
To keep the yearly feast with due accord,
Pilgrims with family walking by the Word.
Yet, Jesus trod with more avowed intent.

Breaking with custom He remained behind
When homeward turned the feet of travelling folk,
And breaking, too, the tie of nature's yoke
Refused the tempting call of kith and kind.

His searching parents thought Him to be lost,
But, Jesus now was in the temple found
With ear bored through and to the door-post bound,
Finding thus early what He sought for most.

Among the teachers there He sat inclined
Hearing and asking as "the boy" would do.
Then, come to understanding wise and true
Began to answer questions, full in mind.

The parents found Him. With much sore amaze
His mother asked, "Why did you treat us so?
With aching hearts we've sought you, to and fro,
I and Thy father. Strange to us Thy ways!"

Quiet with reproof He to His mother said,
"He is alone My Father, He who ever is.
Did ye not know My purpose, only this:
To do His work, path of His will to tread".

She understood not who He really was.
Fading her memory of His life begun
At Bethlehem when hailed as God's own Son.
Imperative to Him His Father's cause.

Thou wert Thy Father's Son, whom no one knows,
And lovedst Thy master here, not breaking free,
Serving His will with prime priority.
Constant in Thee the love that upward rose.



And this Thy first recorded word to man
Asunder pierced the ignorance of his heart.
Oh Holy Learner! now to us impart
That pierced ear with which Thy life began.

Though still He felt the pledge of love to God,
And knew the time to work His will had come,
Yet did He feel renewed constraints of home
Taking to Nazareth's now familiar road.

First of The Father's business lay off some
Long miles with parents in subjection meet.
They need not fret! Now were His faithful feet
Set to the kindred claims of Heaven and home.

He dwelt at Nazareth these voiceless years
Plying dear Joseph's trade of carpentry
And hallowed labour. From obscurity
He thus His lowly life to us endears.

Far from the temple-city life was spent
In solitude of ways as yet untold,
The secrets of these times God shall unfold
As food for all who serve without relent!

Like hidden manna in the pot of gold
Treasured by God, that pure and lovely past
Of well-remembered years shall Time outlast,
And serve as food the Overcomer bold.

Stooping to infancy and measured growth,
What harmony of body, soul, and mind
Graced Him with moral beauty unconfined.
God's favour grew with Him in holy troth.

What eloquence of silence from the lips
Of Thy blest life! What patient, private years
Of waiting till the heavenly Dove appears
Settling on Thee, all others to eclipse!

The Lord's Work & Workers

In view of postal service pressures over the Christmas period, would contributors please note that all intimations of forthcoming meetings for the January magazine must be with the publishers by Friday 20th November.

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

OCTOBER 1
Shanaghan: Gospel Hall at 12 noon. Annual Conference.

OCTOBER 3
Ahorey: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. Annual Conference.
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. H Wilson (Brazil). Conversion, Call and Report.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. Ministry.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Allen.
Lungs: Gospel Hall at 2.00pm. Annual Conference.

OCTOBER 5-8
Ahorey: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. R Hill.
Dundonald: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Hay.

OCTOBER 7
Ballinamallard: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 2.00pm. J Flanigan continues in ministry 12th-15th at 8.00pm.

OCTOBER 10
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. T Bentley.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. Ministry.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Johnston.

OCTOBER 12-16
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. I Jackson.

OCTOBER 17
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. R Surgenor (USA).
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. Ministry.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. W Ferguson.

OCTOBER 18- 23
Tassagh: Houghan Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. R Surgenor (USA). Report of the Lord's Work on 19th at 8.00pm.

OCTOBER 24
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. WJ Nesbitt.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. Ministry.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. S Jennings.

OCTOBER 31
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. S Maze and A Wilson.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. Ministry.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. D Gilliland.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

OCTOBER 2
Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. (Eph 5:1-14). J Brown.
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall, Maxwell Terrace. Commendation of Mr Stephen Grant to full time service to be held in Freeland Church, Main Street, Bridge of Weir at 7.30pm. Speakers, I Jackson, W Stevely.

OCTOBER 3
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. G Bull, J Cadzow.
Culloden: Gospel Hall, Keppoch Road. Annual Conference in Millburn Academy, Diriebught Road, Inverness at 3.00pm. A Pollard, M Ferrier, C Roberts.

Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. J Dickson, D Spence, S McKenzie.
Gorgie: Gospel Hall, 4 Smithfield Street. Bible Reading at 7.00pm. (Heb 1:1-14)
Gourock: Bethany Hall, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. J Grant, S MacDonald, A Sinclair. Mr Grant continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Dickson, J Stubbs.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. W Banks.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place. Annual Conference at 3.15pm. D Gillies, J Hay, A McLean. Mr McLean will give a report on a visit to Russia on Friday 2nd at 7.45pm.
Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton St at 7.00pm. G Meikle, D Smith.
Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. J Paterson (Linwood), A Summers.
New Stevenston: Ministry Meeting at 6.30pm. S Matthews, J Paterson.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. B Cargill.
Shieldhill: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. I Affleck, S Arbuthnot.

OCTOBER 9-11
Plains: Conference Weekend. Friday 9th at 7.00pm. Bible Reading in Elim Gospel Hall. B Currie, (Eph 1:1-14). Saturday 10th. Conference in Public Hall at 3.00pm. B Currie, J Grant, J Stubbs. Sunday 11th, Ministry at 3.00pm.-5.00pm. B Currie, J Grant, J Stubbs. Gospel Meeting at 6.30pm.

OCTOBER 10
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Pollard.
Bannockburn: Gospel Hall, East Murrayfield at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (1 Cor 13).
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. D Cameron, T Wilson.
Innerleven: Gospel Hall, Methil. Report Meeting at 6.30pm. J Baxter, D Locke.
Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. J Burnett, R Revie.
Lesmahagow: Annual Conference in Hope Hall, Main Street at 3.30pm. D Clarkson, A Naismith.
Stevenston: Bethany Hall, A.G.O. weekend. Fri 9th at 7.00pm. R Pickering, J Burns. Sat 10th at 7.00pm. J Hay, R Pickering.

OCTOBER 16-18
Carberry Bible Study Weekend: M Horlock, P Brandon. Subject: The Consecrated Life. For further information contact: J Gamble 01698 424614; T Watt 01383 820925; C Hutchison 0115 9397551.

OCTOBER 17
Ayr: Gospel Hall, Prestwick Road at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (Rev 2:8-11). B Currie.
Bonnybridge: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.00pm. A Foster, G Meikle, J Sinclair.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. S Grant, B Aitken.
Linthouse: Bethesda Hall at 7.00pm. J Baxter, G Forbes. (Reports).
Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. E Nelson, D Meikle.
St Monans: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Geddes (Report on work in Aruba).
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Paterson Snr, R Millar.

OCTOBER 24
Chapelhall: Workers Conference in the Gospel Hall at 6.00pm. A McLean, I Robertson, S McKenzie.
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall. Friday 23rd, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. W Stevely (Philemon). Saturday at 6.45pm. B Martin, W Stevely.
Kirkconnel: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. K Stapley, I Stewart.

Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road at 7.30pm. R Gamble.
Prestwick: Bute Hall. Missionary Weekend.
Shotts: Gospel Hall, Dykehead at 6.30pm. J Grant, S Grant.

OCTOBER 31
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley St at 7.00pm. A Meikle, E Nelson.
Musselburgh: Gospel Hall, Homeworkers Conference in Fisherrow Coast Mission at 3.30pm. H Keirs, R Marshall, A Pollard.
Wishaw: Ebenezer Gospel Hall at 3.30pm. J Cadzow, E Jaminson, R McLuckie.

NOVEMBER 7
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall. Conference at 3.15pm in Freeland Church, Main St. T Ledger, A Sinclair, J Grant. Mr Ledger continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall, Church St at 6.30pm. I Steele, K Stapley.
Gorgie: Gospel Hall, 4 Smithfield Street. Bible Reading at 7.00pm. (Heb 2:1-18).
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. J Burnett.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall at 6.45pm. A Gooding, J Stubbs.
Knightswood: Gospel Hall, 361 Fulton St at 7.00pm. D Locke, S Meikle.
Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. E Nelson, W Park.
New Stevenston: Ministry Meeting at 6.30pm. M Hunter, J Baxter.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. S Lewis.
Shieldhill: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. W Banks, B Cargill.

NOVEMBER 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. (Eph 5:15-33). JR Baker.

NOVEMBER 14
Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. John Baker.
Bannockburn: Annual Conference in Community Centre (near the cross) at 3.00pm. Ministering brethren expected.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. S Grant, C Peake.
Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. D Meikle, J Sinclair.
Maryhill: Glasgow, Eastpark Gospel Hall, Avenuepark St. Conference at 3.00pm. S Foster, J McMaster, T Wilson.
Wishaw: Ebenezer Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Harrison, A Naismith.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

OCTOBER 3
Blackburn: Gospel Hall, Mill Hill at 7.30pm. D Gilliland. Mr Gilliland continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Butt Lane: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Banbury St at 7.00pm. J Bennett.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill St at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. F Reid, D West. Mr Reid continues Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall, Conference at 4.00pm. and 6.00pm. F Beevers.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Romans 12:1-21). W Stevely. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Gospel Hall, Portland St at 7.15pm. E Hughes.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. A Wiseman.
Merseyside: Missionary Conference weekend. Newsham Park Chapel, Denman Drive, Liverpool. Friday 2nd at 7.30pm. Saturday 3rd at 2.00pm.
New Bradwell: Milton Keynes, Gospel Hall. Bible Reading at 4.30pm. (1 Cor 12:12-31). Ministry at 7.30pm. J Riddle.
Oldham: Werneth Gospel Hall. Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. E Parmenter, J Rogers.

Shoeburyness: Conference at Shoebury Hall, Wakering Avenue at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. C Lacey.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall at 7.00pm. R McClenaghan. (Report on Romania).
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall, Bishops Oak Ride. Conference at 3.30pm. Ministry, R Crozier, M Browne. Report at 6.00pm. M Browne. Mr Browne continues in Ministry Mon-Wed at 7.30pm.
West Mersea: Gospel Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. F Epps.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. B Price.

OCTOBER 10
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street. Annual Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. D West, J Dickson.
Guildford: Manor Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Lee.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Warrington: Hope Hall, Hawthorne St. Friday 9th at 7.30pm. Bible Reading (Gal 6). Saturday at 7.00pm. J Riddle.

OCTOBER 17
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. J Grant, K Rudge.
Boscombe: Drummond Hall at 7.00pm. I Steeds.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Rd at 7.00pm. A Griffiths.
Golborne: Annual Conference in Gospel Hall at 3.15pm. P Harding, I Robertson. Mr Harding continues in Ministry, Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Luton: Onslow Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. D West.
Liverpool and District Christian Rallies: Crete Hall at 7.30pm. J Pickbourne.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. E Hughes.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. B Gardiner.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane. Annual Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. A Gamble, R Hill. Mr Gamble continues Mon-Tues at 8.00pm.

OCTOBER 24
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. J Kirkham.
Coventry: Gospel Hall, Upper Hill St at 7.30pm. R Hill.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Atkinson.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. N Patel.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. S Downs.
Liverpool and District Christian Rallies: David St. Bible Study at 5.00pm. and Ministry at 7.30pm. P Harding.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge Road at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. Ministry Conference. A Maunder, C Hutchison.
Weston-Super-Mare: Bethany Gospel Hall, Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. D Williams, D Bees. Mr Williams continues Mon-Tues at 7.45pm.

OCTOBER 31
Barnsley: Mottram Hall at 7.30pm. J Wallace.
Bexleyheath: Bethany Hall, North St at 7.00pm. C Stewart.
Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane. Conference at 3.15pm. and 6.15pm. R Gamble. J Scarsbrook. Mr Gamble will continue Mon and Tues at 7.30pm.
Mansfield: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. M Radcliffe.
Liverpool and District Christian

Rallies: Larkhill at 7.30pm. E Hughes.

NOVEMBER 7

Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey.

Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. J McPhail.

Crewe: Bethany Gospel Hall, Lime Tree Ave. at 7.00pm. J Coltman.

Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tynside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Romans 13:1-14). E Parmenter. Ministry at 6.45pm.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Gospel Hall, Portland St at 7.15pm. W Gardiner.

Luton: Sel[illegible] Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. A Cundick.

Mersey[illegible]side: Huyton at 7.30pm. J Hall, Manchester.

New [illegible]radwell: Milton Keynes at 7.30pm. J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues in ministry Monday and Wednesday at 7.30pm.

Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall at 7.00pm. A Griffiths.

Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Tinkler.

West Mersea: Gospel Hall at 4.00pm. and 6.15pm. J Glenville.

Warrington: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. J Hall, Harrogate.

NOVEMBER 14

Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. J Wallace. Mr Wallace continues in ministry Mon and Tues at 7.30pm.

Merseyside: Newsham at 7.30pm. M Cargill.

Red Row: Morpeth, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. D Sampson.

Wembley: Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. K Totton.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM

Ballybolan: J Thompson and N Fleck ended eleven weeks of well attended and fruitful gospel meetings here on 12th July, followed by one week of ministry meetings 17th-21st August.

Broomhedge Area: R Eadie and S Maze are having tent meetings, with some interest, on site adjoining main Lisburn to Moira Road.

Burnside: H Wilson (Brazil) and T Meekin (Burnside) have commenced in the gospel in the gospel hall. A difficult area between Antrim and Templepatrick.

Clough: JG Hutchinson and A Aiken had an encouraging start to gospel meetings which commenced in this village on 23rd August.

Doonan: (near Carnlough). L Mullen and W Brown having gospel meetings in a portable hall. Their aim is to get the gospel to the local people.

Co. ARMAGH

Armagh area: Gospel Tent meetings continue at Drumgaw, Armagh conducted by A McShane and D Gilliland. Attendance has been good, with many unsaved in nightly, including some locals unconnected with the assembly. Prayer valued.

Portadown: Gospel tent meetings continue into the fifth week (end Aug,) with a number of unsaved attending. E McCullough and A Davidson are the preachers.

Armagh: Mr J Finnegan (Zambia) gave a very interesting report of over fifty years in Africa.

Clones: Conference: A nice number gathered and was considered fair. Speakers were WJ Nesbitt, S Ferguson, N

Turkington, G Stewart and J McDowell.

Co. DOWN

Annalong: N Burden and R Shannon have had a series in the gospel.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL

Aughrim: H Andrews expected for gospel meetings in the gospel hall on 25th October.

Ballylintagh: W Fenton expected for gospel meetings in October in portable hall in townland of Macosquin.

Killykergan: J Lennox and B Currie are in the fifth week of tent meetings at end of August. Whilst numbers of unsaved attend each night, no settled or definite interest is evidenced.

Co. TYRONE

Ballygawley: (Greenhill). Tent meetings commenced in early August by S McBride and T Wright. Some local interest.

Fintona: Annual Conference 12th August – Speakers were B Hull, Mr Black, WJ Nesbitt, E Stewart. Large number heard good ministry.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

Ballingry, Fife: The assembly has again this August reached out to the town of Crosshill by means of a gospel tent pitched in the garden of one of the believers. The preaching has been shared by the local brethren, and David Kane of Northern Ireland came to give some help. The meetings were well attended by local folk, some in for the first time, and supported by believers from nearby.

Summer Camps: In addition to young people's camps held in several parts of Scotland, and one from Ladybank in Fife going to the south of England, Faskally House, Pitlochry, has again been the venue for several camps. These enable many children and teenagers to hear God's Word and enjoy a holiday within a christian atmosphere for a whole week, something becoming more and more rare for so many of them. During July, the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Camp, and the Tayside and Scottish Postal Sunday School Camps between them brought around 300 people, (children, teenagers, their leaders and helpers) to Faskally. Some boys and girls professed faith in the Saviour, and several of the older ones were challenged about their commitment to Christ, some having since been baptised. In August, a group of about 80 young believers from several Eastern European countries stayed at Faskally for a fortnight, organised by the Philadelphia Trust. Daily scripture teaching was based on the Signs in John's Gospel, and some special topics dealt with such as the Evolution/Creation question. In spite of some wet weather, they all enjoyed the facilities available and the opportunity to see a very beautiful part of Scotland. Also in August, there was a camp from Sunderland and Tyneside for a week and again the Lord blessed in a variety of ways. Please pray that seed sown will yet bear fruit in the lives of these young people, and that as Faskally House continues to be used throughout the year for week ends and mid-week breaks by believers young and old, God will be glorified through the upbuilding of His people and the salvation of many others.

Children's Holiday clubs: These opportunities of gathering boys and girls daily for a week of their summer holidays

and teaching them the Scriptures, along with supporting activities, have been taken by assemblies in several parts of the country, such as Bridge of Weir, Inverurie, Lochee (Dundee), St Monans, and Holburn (Aberdeen), to mention just a few. In some cases this has extended contacts for the regular Sunday School or week night children's meetings, many of which now need our prayerful and practical support as they have resumed after a summer break. The difficulties of working with children these days are increasing, calling for great care and vigilance on the part of all involved, but this vital part of our work for the Lord cannot be neglected. He said, "Forbid them not to come unto Me!"

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

WEST MIDLANDS

Crowle: The assembly here had a further three weeks gospel campaign this year with our brother Joe Baxter who preached an excellent, powerful message each evening. The door to door work by our brother was very good with much more interest. There were unsaved in every evening and more from the village itself which was good, the last week an 80 year old lady was saved from the village, for which we praise the Lord. It was a great encouragement to the saints, please continue to pray for us.

The Lancashire Gospel Tent was in Bromborough on the Wirral for four weeks in July. Joe Baxter had previously spent a week visiting homes in the area, and he saw a lot of interest on the doors. It was a joy to the assembly to hear from him of a lady who professed for the first time to having been saved after a gospel meeting in the Hall some weeks earlier. The evangelists at the tent were Ian Jackson for the adults and John Skingley for the children. Although the weather was very poor, a good number came into the meetings. The numbers in the children's meetings rose to about fifty during the first two weeks, during which time John Skingley was able to take school assemblies on most days. The numbers dropped back a little during the last two weeks which coincided with the school holidays. Over the four weeks more than one hundred and twenty different children came into the tent. The numbers at the adults meetings were quite good, with outsiders in most evenings, and good support from local assemblies as far away as Manchester and Southport. Support for three special teenage meetings was very good from assemblies in Liverpool and Warrington. This was the third time the tent had come to Bromborough in the last six years, and the effort put in by the believers in the locality was thought to be worthwhile.

Isle of Man: J Thompson along with 12 other brethren from N Ireland joined Gary Woods from 3rd-10th August. 27,500 gospel tracts were distributed on the streets and into thousands of homes. Open air meetings were conducted daily in Douglas, Ramsey, Peel and Laxey. Tracts were also distributed at the Agricultural Show. Eternity will reveal the result.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Mr George Armstrong on 3rd June, aged 93. Saved in 1931 at meetings conducted by Hawthorne Baillie and J Murphy. Our brother was in fellowship, firstly in Waringstown, then Edenderry and since 1982 in Annalong. Fervent in assembly truth, he had a keen interest in the spread of the gospel. Cared for in widowhood by his daughter Mildred Bingham of Ballykeel. His prayers will be greatly missed by the family. Mr A McShane and Mr A Davidson shared the funeral service.

Mr Albert Boyd on 9th July aged 76 years. Saved in 1942, our brother came into fellowship in Lischrin Assembly. His love for the assembly and the gospel was evident to all who knew him. His long illness provided opportunities to speak to others about their spiritual needs, including doctors and nurses. Physical weakness prevented him from attending assembly meetings, more so recently. His interest in spiritual things was maintained until his homecall. Sadly missed by the assembly and especially his close family circle.

Mr James Crow on 21st July aged 74. Saved seven years ago at meetings in portable hall. He was baptised and received into Ballnashee assembly for those short years. He was a valued member, faithful and rejoicing in salvation and will be greatly missed. Prayer valued for his wife Audrey and three sons. The funeral services were conducted by B Hull and B Glendinning.

David Keirs on 29th May aged 71. Saved in 1952, baptised in 1953 and received into fellowship in Larkhall in April 1957. Our dear brother continued in happy fellowship for a period of 37 years with a few years in the interim at Low Waters and Forgewood. Early years were marked by a zeal in the gospel, both in open air work and tract distribution. His last years were occupied with caring for his dear wife who is housebound.

Mrs Masie Laurie suddenly on 14th June. Saved in her early teens, she was baptised and received into fellowship in Shields Road Gospel Hall in 1933 where she continued until her homecall. Married in 1969 and widowed in 1984, our sister continued steadfastly with the saints in her attendance at the gatherings and in her devotion to the Lord whom she loved. She endeared herself to all the saints and strangers too and shall be missed for, "her seat will be empty."

Mrs Margaret Marshall on 20th July in her 84th year. She was saved for over 50 years and after conversion came into the Cookstown assembly. Most of her christian life was spent in happy fellowship with the Kingsmills assembly. Appreciated by all for her consistency of life and testimony, both in the assembly and in the world. Latterly prevented by her illness from attending the assembly gatherings. Mourned and missed by the assembly and especially by her only daughter and the family circle. Prayer requested for these.

Mrs M McCutcheon on 22nd July peacefully at her home, aged 64. Saved in Australia in 1958 she came back to Ireland, and was in the assembly at

Dunmullan, Co Tyrone. She was loved and respected by all. As a teacher in the local school she was loved by the pupils and their parents and her christian testimony was bright. The large funeral was conducted by JG Hutchinson and A Aiken. Prayer valued for her family of two sons and a married daughter.

Mrs G Porter on 7th July in hospital, aged 80. Saved 59 years ago at meetings in Dundonald conducted by Mr John Hutchinson. For a number of years she was in the assembly there. A bright happy christian, with a good testimony in the district. Her husband passed away 15 years ago. She had the joy of seeing her three girls saved and happy in divine matters. Her well attended funeral was conducted by I MacNaughton (her son-in-law) and JG Hutchinson.

Mr Matthew Robertson on 30th May aged 78. He was led to Christ by his eldest brother almost 60 years ago and later came into fellowship in Chapelhall. Along with his late wife Rita they remained there in happy fellowship with their home open for hospitality. For many years he taught in the Sunday School and faithfully attended the assembly gatherings until ill-health prevented him. For him now it is truly far better. He had the joy of knowing that his family are all in assembly fellowship.

Mrs Catherine Thompson on 9th June aged 87. Saved in 1931 she was for a little time in the Frances Street assembly Newtownards. When the assembly was formed in Comber, she moved there. Throughout the years she was a real help in the assembly, all that she did, known only by the Lord. She had the joy of seeing all her family saved and in assembly fellowship. A loyal supporter of her husband as he served in the assembly. The gospel hall was packed for her funeral. JG Hutchinson and A Aiken conducted the services.

Miss Barbara Thomson on 16th July after a short illness. Eldest daughter of the late Mr and Mrs H Thomson of Sanquhar, she was a dear sister. Saved in early life and in Dumfries assembly since 1945. A true servant of the church.

Hugh Wilson on 14th June aged 53. Saved as a boy of 16 at Faith Mission meetings. Hugh was called home very suddenly when returning home with his wife Iris after remembering the Lord whom he loved and served. He was a happy, helpful christian who loved to sing and play the piano. Will be greatly missed in the assembly at Broomhedge. The funeral services were large with many friends and colleagues from the R.U.C. attending. The gospel was preached and reverent attention given by all gathered. Prayer especially requested for his wife Iris.

Mrs Sandra Woodside Called home on 7th July, aged 51 years, after an illness which was borne with exemplary faith and fortitude. Saved as a girl of nine, she was baptised and received into the fellowship of Larne Gospel Hall, Curran Road, as a young woman, and for many years has been faithful in her attendance at the meetings. During her trying terminal illness she wrote her testimony in the form of a poignant tract, entitled, *Do You Want To Know?* This has been widely distributed and her husband and son Darren, who both miss her deeply, pray that as the result of the passing of their loved one, many others will be led to faith in the Saviour who meant so much to her.

PERSONALIA

Change of Correspondent for Hebron Hall, Coatbridge. All correspondence should now be sent to Mr R Cameron, 22 Carrick Drive, Drumpellier, Coatbridge, ML5 1JZ. Tel: 01236 428936.

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. Contact: Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Change of Address for Mr D Raggett, now 12 Woodhill Grove, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 0AE. Tel: 0161 798 8626.

The assembly at Calderbank is now closed and the saints gather at the Gospel Hall, Chapelhall.

Wanted to purchase – Portable Hall for Gospel Work in Scotland. Please contact PO BOX NO 26.

Change of Correspondent for the Mayfield Gospel Hall. All correspondence should now be sent to Mr E Nelson, 1A Park Hill, Gorebridge, Midlothian, EH23 4BP. Tel: 01875 820802.

Change of address for the correspondent of Gospel Hall, Pallion Road, Sunderland. Mr David Reed, 26 The Precinct, Sunderland, SR2 9DN. Tel: 0191 5228240.

Hall Caretaker Required for Shields Road Gospel Hall, Motherwell. Large cottage attached to the hall building is available. Conditions and further information can be obtained on request. Contact: Mr Jack Murray, 43 Neilsland Drive, Motherwell, ML1 3EB. Telephone: 01698 267949.

HOLIDAY HOMES

The publishers cannot be held responsible for any difficulties which may be experienced by those responding to these adverts.

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Morecambe: Silverwell is open all year for you. Some ensuites, known for good food. Offers to church groups, discounts for over 60's in Sept-Oct. Low winter rates from Nov. Details: Graeme Last, 20 West End Rd., Morecambe, Lancs. LA4 4DL. Tel: (01524) 410532.

Portleven, Cornwall: Carn Del Christian Guest House. Right on seafront in area of outstanding natural beauty. All rooms have magnificent sea views. Most en-suite. Warm fellowship. Tel: (01326) 562431.

Portstewart: Luxury bungalow available with outstanding sea views from all front rooms – 4-5 bedrooms, sleeps 8-10. Only 2 minutes drive from beach. Brochure from S & T Moore, 11-15 Bridge St, Coleraine. Tel: (day) 01265 53300, (evening) 01849 479626.

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Tarbolton: Scoutts Farm, bed and breakfast in Country House, all home baking, also mobile home to let. Convenient to Ayr and close to local assembly. Mrs J Harrison. Tel: (01292) 541218.

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Secretary to the Trustees,
Bethany Care Trust, 37 Felton Lane,
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9th - 11th October 1998 (d.v.)

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Subject: Ephesians 1:1-14
Chaired by B Currie, N Ireland

Saturday 10th
Conference in Public Hall
3.00pm.-7.00pm.
B CURRIE (N. Ireland)
J GRANT (Bridge of Weir)
J STUBBS (Mayfield)

Lord's Day 11th
in Elim Gospel Hall
Ministry Meeting 3.00pm.-5.00pm.
B CURRIE, J GRANT, J STUBBS
Tea in hall after meeting
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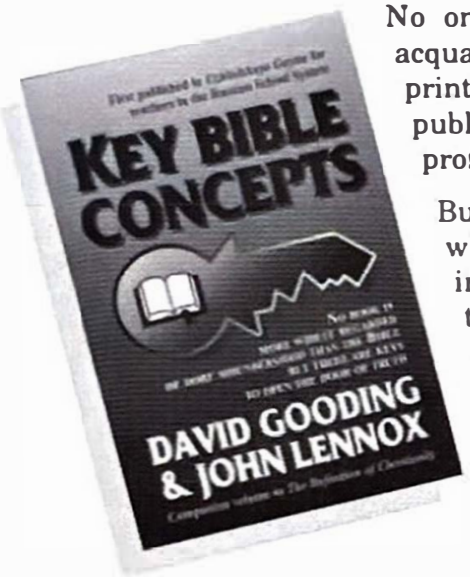
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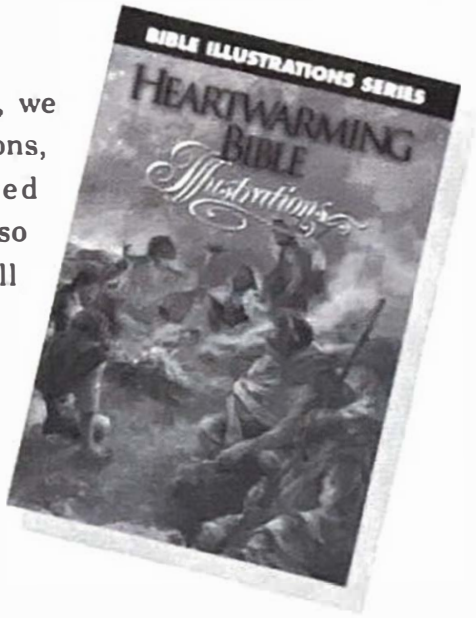
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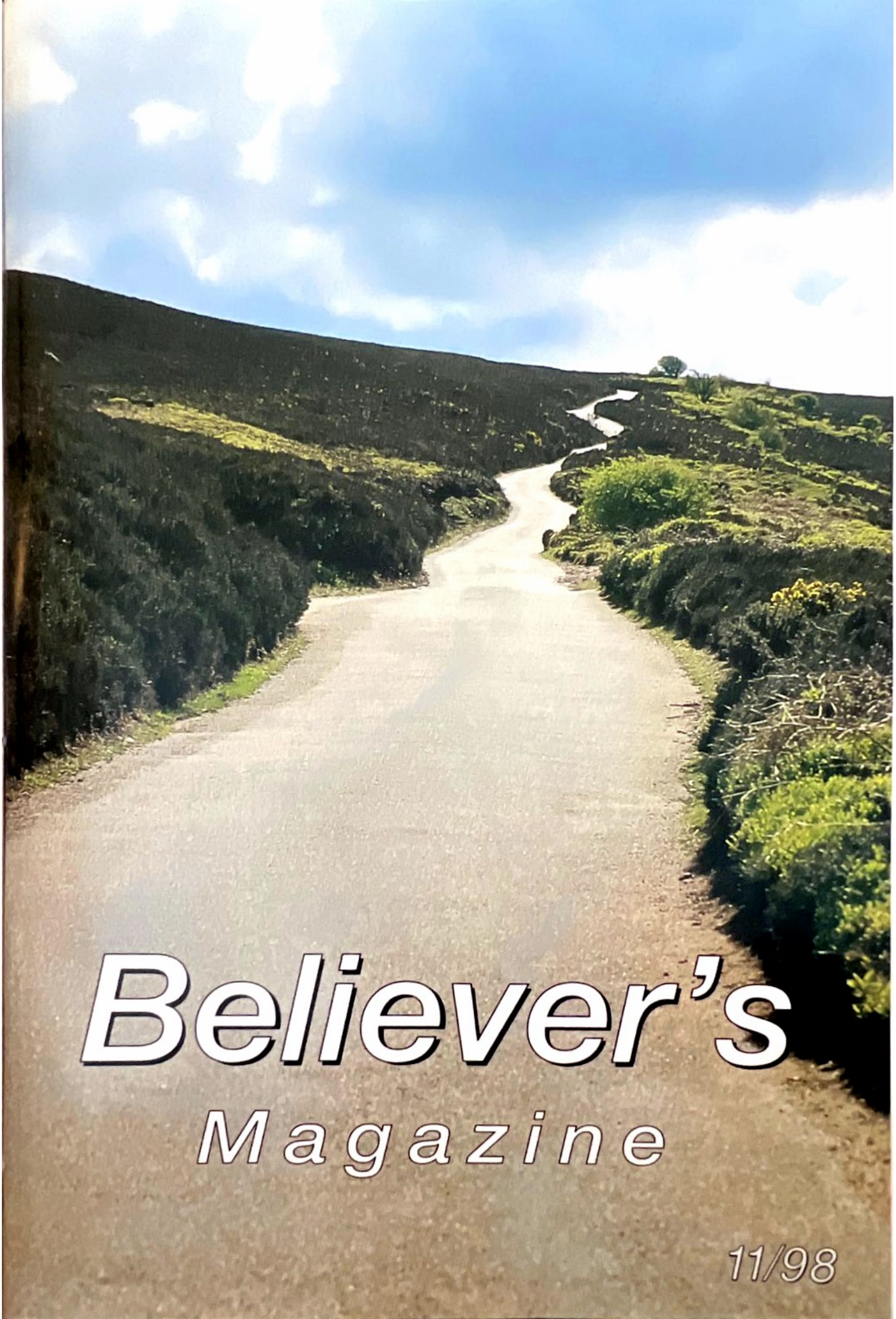
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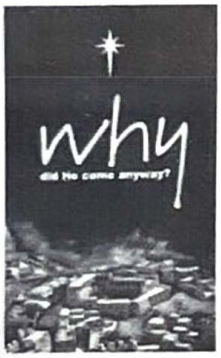
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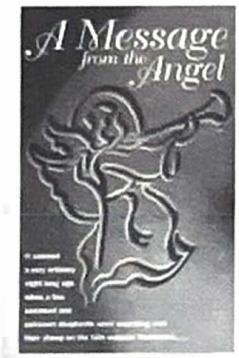
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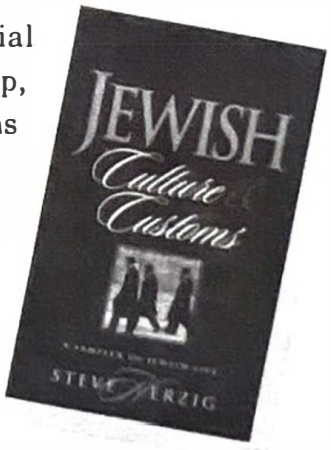
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Believer's Magazine

NOVEMBER 1998

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Editorial

I beseech Euodias and I beseech Syntyche.

Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all who came in unto him. One day the door opened and, framed in the doorway, stood Epaphroditus of Philippi. It would be difficult to describe the welcome he received, or the reminiscing that followed. Reflecting upon it later, Paul wrote, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you...from the first day until now". How precious those memories would be: the meeting with the womenfolk at the river side; the emancipation of the soothsaying damsel; the inner prison with its many stripes and songs in the night; the deliverance of the jailer from a double death.

There was, too, the gift that Epaphroditus brought. Whether it was a princely sum or paltry according to the estimation of men is of no concern; Paul caught the fragrance of it to God – the turtledove and the bullock were alike a sweet-smelling savour.

We may be sure that Paul enquired diligently for each of the saints, specially those who had laboured with him in the gospel. The mention of Euodias and Syntyche embarrassed Epaphroditus and he became strangely hesitant. Under the gentle probing of Paul, there emerged the fact of a lapse in the assembly at Philippi. There are such things as malicious gossip, and going up and down as a talebearer, and sowing discord among brethren. God abominates them. May we too shun them. Epaphroditus was guilty of none of those.

Perhaps you think that disharmony among the saints is a small matter. The Preacher spoke of flies of death. He was alluding to their diminutive size and said that, for all their smallness, they cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour. Certainly it slopped the wine from the apostle's erstwhile brimming cup of joy. How much more so from the cup of Him who purchased the assembly with His own blood? It is a sad commentary on christian testimony that what the devil failed to do by persecution, he has achieved by internal dissent. The antidote is for each to constantly esteem the other superior to himself. It leads to a willingness to surrender what otherwise we would cling to tenaciously. This is the mind which was in Christ Jesus. He, with sublime *disanxiety* (if there be such a word), emptied Himself. It was an infinite sacrifice.

During the sixteen years of ministry in our present capacity we have sought to emulate the aim of the apostle expressed in the closing verses of Colossians 1, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus". We have focused largely upon personal holiness and christian grace, areas which are so easily pushed into the background by the growing need to "contend earnestly for the faith". Our final appeal is, "I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche". Perhaps you can think of many pairs of names which quite appropriately could be substituted for those in the text. The more important inquiry for each of us is surely, Could mine?

KWS

The Parable of the Sower (3)

by TJ Blackman, Brazil

The seed sown among thorns

We have noticed, in the previous articles of this series, some of the malign influences which keep the word of God from having "free course" (2 Thess 3:1) in the human heart.

The first part of the parable, the seed sown by the wayside, emphasizes the influence of the *devil*, who "catcheth away that which was sown in his heart". The second part, the stony ground, highlights the influence of the *flesh*, which, even when it seems to receive the word with gladness, cannot stand the temptations and persecutions which arise because of the word.

Now, in this third study, we must consider how the *world* also opposes the operation of God's word in the heart. As before, we will gather together what each Gospel brings before us in recording this parable.

(1) Observe how the Lord describes these worldly influences that make the word unfruitful in the heart of the hearer.

"The cares of this world" (Mark 4:19). It was because of this that Martha lost a precious opportunity to hear the teaching of the Lord Jesus, while He was here on earth. She was "careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41). Of course it is sometimes necessary to attend to the things of this world, but "To everything there is a season" (Ecc 3:1), and this parable shows what happens when the world and its cares are given priority and dominate the heart.

"The deceitfulness of riches" (Matt and Mark). The Scriptures are full of examples of the terrible damage caused by the seduction and fascination which the world exercises by means of material wealth, or the hope of gaining it. This was the cause of Achan losing his portion in the promised land, not to mention his own, and his family's lives (Josh 7); this is the reason why Gehazi lost the privilege of being Elisha's servant and became a leper for the rest of his days (2 Kings 5:20-27); this was the reason why the rich young ruler turned his back on the Lord Jesus, the fountain of living waters (Matt 19:16-22); for this cause Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives (Acts 5); and Demas walked no more with the apostle Paul (2 Tim 4:10).

"The lusts of (or, desires for) other things" (Mark 4:19). Money is not the only thing the world offers. It also has positions, titles and privileges; it has sciences and philosophies for the studious, art and literature for the imaginative, engineering and inventions for the skilful. Some doubtless will argue that a position in the world can be used for the glory of God–well that is just how the world deceives and renders the Christian useless to God. The Lord's word to Baruch is sound advice for us today; "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jer 45:5).

"Pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14). The world also has its sensual

attractions, from which the Christian must abstain (1 Thess 4:3), and flee (1 Cor 5:18; 2 Tim 2:22).

(2) Now we are to consider the effect all these things have on the good seed sown in the heart. They "choke the word", hindering growth and smothering the life. Here is the reason for the spiritual barreness which is encountered more and more amongst professing Christians today. These worldly influences are introduced into our hearts and homes by the means of communication – radio, television, etc., with the result that Christians are becoming more and more "conformed to this world" and less and less "transformed by the renewing of their minds" (Rom 12:2). Notice how, in Luke 8:14, it is not just the word which is choked, but "they which have heard".

(3) What is the final result of all this? "It" (the seed) "he" (the hearer) *"becometh unfruitful"* (compare Matt and Mark), or as in Luke, "they...bring no fruit to perfection". It may be that the person represented by this part of the parable is a true believer, but no one can know them" (Matt 7:20). God desires that we produce fruit. He "purges" us that we might produce "more fruit", and He is glorified when we produce "much fruit" (see John 15:2,8).

Finally, let us apply these things in two ways:

To the work of the gospel. The Lord said to the prophet Jeremiah: "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer 4:3–the next verse shows that, as here, the field in question is the heart). In modern evangelism, however, all too often the "thorns" are sown together with the good seed, when worldly methods are used. How different was the evangelism of the apostles: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified...in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:2-5).

To the life of the Christian. The worldly Christian, if he be a true child of God, is the most miserable of all men! He cannot have a full enjoyment of the world because his conscience will not let him, neither will the Holy Spirit who indwells him. He cannot enjoy fellowship with God because his worldliness has grieved the Holy Spirit and his own conscience accuses him.

God's word is essential to spiritual life and growth (1 Pet 2:2). Treasured up in the heart it keeps me from sin (Ps 119:11); it is "a lamp unto my feet" – it shows me how to walk in each circumstance of life; it is "a light unto my path" – it gives me direction, orientation and purpose as I tread the narrow way, which, although full of difficulties and trials, is truly "the path of the just, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov 4:18). So may the Lord deliver us from the choking and stifling influences of this present evil world, and grant us, through the sacred Scriptures, to be "throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:17).

Christ Manifested (3)

by P Harding, Manchester

Psalm 24 (cont)

His moral claim vv.3-6

He comes in all His moral beauty bearing the name "Faithful and True" to make His claim to the throne of earth. In v.3 we have two questions: (1) "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? – Zion – the place of the throne. Who shall ascend to the throne – who can take up the reigns of government? (2) "Who shall stand in his holy place?" – the temple – who is able to take up priestly ministry? Both questions have in mind the King Priest – Who is able to fill these offices?

Verse 4 gives us the answer – it gives the outline of a character that only one Man in the vast universe answers to – only Christ possesses in Himself the moral fitness to fulfil the King Priest ministries.

Clean hands – perfect in activity – perfect in righteousness – pure in all His actions. As He reigns all that He does will be marked by righteousness.

Pure heart – perfect in affection – perfect in all His motives. In His perfect reign all that He does will be out of love and with a pure motive.

Hath not lifted up His soul unto vanity – perfect in aspiration. There will be nothing false or thoughtless in His rule but all that He does will be for the benefit of men and in keeping with His perfect wisdom.

Nor sworn deceitfully – perfect in affirmation. As He reigns all the communications to men will be marked by truth.

As we think of His moral beauty we recall that no blame or blemish blighted His beautiful life, no spot or stain scarred His sinless life and no flaw or failure was found in His faithful life. No one can with Him compare.

Verse 5 – blessing mentioned here could be a reference to standing in His holy place and righteousness could be a reference to ascending to the hill of the Lord. "God of his salvation" – this could be a reference to the salvation that He brings. However, salvation has the idea of prosperity (Strong) so it could be "the God of His prosperity".

Verse 6 – the generation that will benefit from His reign – those "that seek thy face, O Jacob (O God of Jacob)" – those who depend upon His grace – those of Israel who turn to God at the end of Daniel's seventieth week.

Thus He comes forth in all the perfection and beauty of His character to make His *moral claim* to the throne.

In every way His love was sowed,
In every word His grace o'erflowed;
In every work His power bestowed,
And in His life perfection glowed.

In every act His preciousness,
In every deed His loveliness;
In every step devotedness,
All join to show His sinlessness.

His moral beauty thus made plain,
To fill the throne is now His aim;
Faithful and True He comes to reign,
And thus He makes His moral claim.

His victor's claim vv.7-8

He comes in all His might bearing the name King of kings and Lord of lords to make His claim to the throne of earth.



He comes as the supreme sovereign to hold to account all who filled the earth with lawlessness, who persecuted the people of God and who rebelled against Him. The hostile powers of the nations having been destroyed and the victory at Armageddon gained, He comes as the mighty Victor, the warrior king to Jerusalem. The gates are bolted and the doors barred but as the great warrior King approaches He makes His claim, which, although challenged, is substantiated.

Verse 7 – the claim is made – "Lift up your heads, O ye gates...and the King of glory shall come in".

Verse 8 – the challenge is made – "Who is this King of glory?" The answer comes back – "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle".

He has ridden along the battle front and destroyed His enemies and brought deliverance to the nation. All who sought to destroy Israel and Jerusalem have been defeated and as the victor He makes His claim upon the throne. Thus He comes forth as the great warrior King to make His victor's claim upon the throne.

Ride triumphant mighty Saviour,
And lift up Thy glorious sword;
All Thy foes now fall before Thee,
And they trembled at Thy word;
In Thine arm there's mighty power,
Thou the Victor, King of glory,
Thou God's well beloved Son.

Everlasting doors now open,
Let the King of glory in;
Mighty is the Lord in battle,
And all pure is He within;
See His triumph, see His glory,
Hear the people spread His fame;
His by right the throne of David,
Now He makes His Victor's claim.

His Godhead claim vv.9-10

He comes bearing the name that no man knew, but He Himself, in all His absolute and essential deity to make His claim to the throne of earth. Some suggest that vv.7-8 refer to entrance into the city and these verses refer to entrance into the temple (Mal 3:1). Should that be the case He now comes to the temple to make His claim for that is the place of His throne (Ezek 43:7).

Verse 9 – the claim is made again – "Lift up your heads, O ye gates...and the King of glory shall come in".

Verse 10 – again the challenge is made – "Who is this King of glory?" The answer comes back – "The Lord of hosts (Jehovah Tsebaoth), he is the King of glory.

'The Lord of hosts' is a Jehovah title that occurs over 280 times in the OT – its first occurrence is in 1 Sam 3:1. It denotes the God of Israel as the Lord of all the hosts. This universal title indicates that He is well able to put down all resistance to His will. When Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filling the temple he used this title – "for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa 6:1,5).

Thus He comes with omnipotence in His hand to make *His Godhead claim* to the throne.

Walking in Ephesians (2)

by J Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

The Challenge of our Calling (Ch.4)
As he moves from the doctrinal to the practical Paul says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord" (v.1). His appeal is upon the basis of the doctrine that he has revealed and expounded to them and from the standpoint of one who practises in his life what he enjoins upon others. He may speak with the authority of a chosen vessel of the Lord but he speaks from experience, knowing the personal cost of what he is asking. He does not claim to be a prisoner of Rome, for it was for the cause of the Lord that he was now imprisoned.

The tone of Paul's appeal is remarkable. Thinking for a few moments of the wonder of the divine purpose in election, the wonder of redeeming grace in salvation, and the vastness of the love of Christ we might have expected something stronger. He says, " I beseech you". "The word signifies a will of the writer that is at the same time warm, personal and urgent" (*Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, Rienecker & Rogers, p.530). This is a loving exhortation although the apostolic authority is implied by the words we find later (v.17).

The content of His appeal is twofold. In a positive sense, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (v.1). Conversely, "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (v.17).

Paul clearly states that a believer's life is to be wholly different from that of the unregenerate. The unbeliever's mind is occupied with worthless objects and transient things. It has sought to shut out God and to harden the heart and conscience from the promptings of the Holy Spirit (v.18). The resultant moral insensibility has led man to unbridled lust and rebellion and its outcomes, uncleanness and greed (v.19).

By divine grace and through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit the believer's life stands in stark contrast. The characteristics of this life are lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance (v.2) and diligence (v.3). Lowliness or humility is that appreciation of the power and ability of God which puts humanity into its true perspective. Meekness or submissiveness is an acceptance of the sovereignty of God in His dealings with us. Forbearance is an affection for others that bears with those aspects of personality that often annoy. Diligence is the overriding and constant occupation of our hearts, that we might maintain that unity which the Holy Spirit has brought about when He brought each one of us into the assembly of the Lord's people. Whereas the unbeliever has his eye turned inwards, consumed by the pursuit of his own pleasures, the Christian has his eye turned upwards and outwards, seeking the will of God and the good of others.

If we were in any doubt, this teaching of the apostle makes it clear that the doctrine which has occupied chapters one to three is not a matter of intellectual study but of paramount importance for the daily lives and testimonies of every saint.

'Gave Himself' (2)

by EAR Shotter, Northampton

Gave Himself Titus 2:14
Here we have another way in which Christ gave Himself for us, He did it that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people (being beyond usual, i.e., special as one's own), zealous of good works. This clearly indicates the Christian's *walk* as the outward effect of the life of Christ in us. He went about doing good, and surely we cannot but think of Him as zealous in the things of God. Here also then He is our Example.

Gave Himself Eph 5:25-27
What a wonderful finale this is to these passages! "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". What can be said to this, beloved–*sanctified!* Set apart for Him, cleansed for Him, and presented to Him–His Bride–with no blemish whatsoever from the effects of sin, time, or Adam. Perfectly suited to Him the perfect one. Oh, what love to the unlovely is this. Love for love's sake alone - *agapao* love! Let us remember then to place ourselves at His disposal as a bride to her bridegroom and see that we are continually cleansed with the washing of water by the word of God so that we are conformed to His image!

Looking at verse 30 of our chapter we read, "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones". The "we" here seems to suggest the individual as well as the collective sense, i.e., each of us as well as the Church. Does it not make our hearts burn within us as we contemplate such a present condition brought about by His intense love for love's sake alone? But there is more, for John tells us "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Paul also says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body [body of humiliation–humiliated by sin and wicked works], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body [the body of His glory], according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil 3:20). Again, Paul states, "For whom he [God the Father] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified them he also glorified" (Rom 8:29).

Not only now do we see the intense magnetic force of the love of Christ for His Bride who in a day soon to come will be possessed of a body like to His body of glory, but we also see now that intense magnetic force of love in the Father for a family in His presence, also glorified. He also desires His Son to be

magnified because of all the fulness which dwells in Him. The Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us that Christ may be glorified thereby. So then, what a future awaits the child of God, "not for the years of time alone, But for eternity", reposing in that love which is God Himself– Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Beloved, what deep, intense, magnetic force hast the divine triunity shown to us in that love–deep love–for love's sake alone, and for nothing in us to attract it. How we should seek to return that love, though it may be in a 'weak and faint' response to Him who has given His all in love to us. And where better than in the family circle, both physical and spiritual should this love be evident, as our chapter indicates. It should also overflow from there to the world around us.

Finally, we turn our thoughts to 'Himself'. Perhaps these may take us to the land of Israel when He walked its lanes and streets, showing compassion, sympathy, and love to all who stood in need of these, irrespective of their status among men. We may think of the miracles He wrought and the words He spoke as He came to declare the Father. Yet when we come to think of Himself as our meditation has led us to do, is there not yet something deeper in that 'Himself'? His holiness, His harmlessness, His purity, His sinlessness, His obedience and all those characteristics which marked Him out as being the Man after God's own heart, in addition to the kindnessess, and compassions, and that deep love which continually flowed from him and still does toward the sons of men. Does not meditation on "gave himself" take on new dimensions when we let our minds dwell on Him who gave himself for every vicissitude and circumstance in our lives? This will we do. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"!

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Books

William Tyndale by MA Rudge; published by and available from the author price £4.00.

Michael Rudge's 80-page biography of the great William Tyndale is worthy of reading by all who rejoice that there are English translations of the Bible. As the author points out perhaps as much as nine-tenths of the AV is from Tyndale's earlier work.

Sadly so little is known of scholars like Tyndale, Coverdale, Latimer and Fryth who made such a lasting contribution to the common good of English-speaking Christians over some five hundred years. Certainly as we speak of those who suffered unto blood we rarely list men like Tyndale.

Michael Rudge's outline of Tyndale's life and times is intensely interesting and well researched. There are regretfully one or two deficiencies in reproduction. The maps included are almost indecipherable; given the reader's interest in areas where Tyndale was active it would have been worthwhile to have had maps drawn to an appropriate scale rather than merely reproduce extant but overly detailed maps. Hopefully a second edition will address these points.

The reviewer commends this valuable insight into the labours of a godly scholar to a wide readership. *William Tyndale* will enhance our appreciation of the contribution such men have made even to twentieth century Christians.

TW

1. The Chronology of Scriptures; 2. The Chronology of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; 3. The Commitment of the Apostle Paul.

by Denis R Manley published by the author on behalf of Operation Brotherly Love; prices respectively £3.00; £2.00; £1.50.

Perhaps because it demands so much time to cross-reference Scripture with Scripture so few have any depth of understanding of the chronologies contained in Scripture and so little appreciation of their value. A number of saints will have access to some publications which endeavour to cast light on the chronologies of Scripture. These brief works of D R Manley do offer a starting point to those who would seek to explore the time-lines of the inspired records.

In *The Chronology of the Scriptures* the author offers a view of God's dispensational dealings based on Ps 90:4 and so concludes that a period of 7000 years is encompassed in the seven dispensations he identifies from the creation to the end of the public reign of Christ – a view which will not go unchallenged.

Less controversially the panoramic view offered of the patriarchs' long lives will assist the diligent reader to grasp how readily oral tradition could be passed from generation to generation. Equally helpfully is the tabulation of the kings cross-referenced to the prophets who ministered in their reigns.

The "Church era" is considered and using the seven letters of Rev 2,3 a pictorial representation of how they may relate to the period of "Church testimony" is included. The Tribulation period is similarly treated.

The Chronology of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and *The Commitment of the Apostle Paul* set out the chronologies of our Lord's public ministry and of the subsequent labours of the apostles. Neither field is without difficulty; however the author's work does lay a foundation on which the reader can build.

TW

Question Box

Question
Can we presently apply the principle "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:16)? I am concerned with the practice of promoting and selling literature at assembly gatherings.

Answer
In the case quoted, it is clear that the Lord Jesus was acting with zeal for the house of God. We know from the OT that those who lived a long distance from Jerusalem were given guidance regarding the bringing of animals for sacrifice. It was in order for them to "turn it into money" (Deut 14:24-26), thus they were allowed to sell the animals before leaving home, and then take the money to Jerusalem and there buy again, to enable them to bring their offering or sacrifice to Jehovah. It is also clear, that what was a divinely allowed answer to their particular problem had developed into the mere practice of men making merchandise out of the people of God. Such activity had brought defilement into the place where God had placed His name. Anything that savours of such, should be studiously avoided in any assembly.

The present day practice referred to in the question can be of help and profit to the people of God in certain circumstances. Some saints in the UK, and in many other lands, live in areas which are remote geographically. They do not have access to Christian bookstores, nor do some of them have those who are able to guide them in the acquisition of wholesome spiritual literature. In these cases, a collection of helpful material made available at a conference can be of great assistance to such saints. An indiscriminative display of literature which has been placed there for base gain is a different matter.

JR Baker

Question
Why must there be a change of law, when there is a change of priesthood (Heb 7:12)?

Answer
The reasoning in this chapter reveals that our Lord Jesus Christ has a priesthood which is superior, unique and after a different order than that of Aaron. According to human birth he was not a member of the authorised tribe of Levi (7:14-15). Already the writer has stated that the priesthood of Christ is "after the order of Melchisedec" (5:6; 6:20). It is shown that although the Aaronic priesthood in the tribe of Levi was divinely constituted, yet it had, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec (Heb 7:9-10). Abraham in turn had been blessed by Melchisedec, and because of the principle that "the less is blessed of the better" (Heb 7:7), both Melchisedec and his priesthood, are greater than Abraham and the Aaronic priesthood which came from him.

The writer goes on to teach that the Levitical priesthood was linked to the dispensation of law, and in the verse under question speaks of the requirement, that with the change in priesthood there must also be a change of law. Christ's priesthood is not conducted within an earthly tabernacle or temple, and being so different it cannot be regulated within the compass of OT law. The two other uses in the epistle of the word *change* can be profitably studied in Heb 11:5 and 12:27. Today we live by a different principle in a dispensation which is altogether free from the ceremonies of law.

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons from Long Ago
7) MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN (Matt 10:3)

Introduction

In our study of unlikely people who end up serving God, Matthew the publican must come high on our list. As a tax collector for the occupying Roman authorities, he belonged to *the* most despised class of people among the Jews, but remarkably it was he who ended up writing the Gospel record dedicated to the Jews!

Taxes for most parts of the Roman Empire were usually paid in advance to the government by Roman business men, who then employed locals like Matthew to collect as much as they could. It was not until later under the emperor Nero that the tax regulations for goods in transit were posted publicly at every customs house, so cheating by local tax collectors was easy. (In the AV the word "publican" is a transliteration of the Latin word *publicanus* used by the Romans for this kind of local tax collector.)

In the NT the numerous publicans (Luke 5:29) were ostracised and linked with sinners (nine times), with harlots and also with heathens (Gentiles), on account of their collaboration and dealings with the Romans, and so ordinary Jews would not even eat with them and the stricter among them were shocked when others would. Although no-one liked them, the publicans were, nevertheless, very loyal to one another (Matt 5:46-47). However, as we are going to see, Matthew the publican got a new care for his fellow publicans when he followed the Lord Jesus, and he wanted them all to get to know Him.

The Lord Jesus and publicans

The Lord Jesus was known to publicans as sympathetic and friendly (Matt 9:10), and He was prepared to sit down, and eat and drink with them (Matt 9:11), because they were prepared to hear Him (Luke 15:1). In fact, many of them believed in and followed Him, just as many had previously believed in John the Baptist (Matt 21:31; Luke 3:12). He could tell his critics that because of their faith "the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt 21:32).

Matthew's background

Matthew's name or similar ones (like Mattanah, Mattaniah, Mattathah, Mattathias, from the Hebrew word *mattan* meaning gift) were quite common in Bible times and mean "gift of Jehovah". However, when he decided to become a tax collector he must have become very unpopular with his fellow Jews, and originally no doubt he saw money as his chief aim in life. He stands in great contrast to another disciple, Simon, (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:18) a former member of the Zealot party, who as a revolutionary, had been trying to set up the rule of God by revolting against the Romans. Both Matthew and Simon became followers of the Lord Jesus, but now their former



collaboration with or hatred of the Romans was a thing of the past.

Matthew's calling

Perhaps Matthew had been a follower of John the Baptist (Luke 3:12-13) or simply a believer in the Lord Jesus, for unlike the situation with Zacchaeus, the chief publican, the Lord Jesus did not talk about salvation coming to his house nor the Son of man coming "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 9:9-10), as had happened when Zacchaeus received Him. However, he called Matthew from his place of work, just like he had Peter and James, cf. John 1:43. Matthew's calling is mentioned more than anyone else's (Matt 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27) – was it such a surprise? Matthew must have known what was expected of him when he followed the Lord Jesus, but he had not hesitation in accepting such a great honour.

Capernaum was then a very busy place, with lots of taxable goods passing through the ports around the bustling lake and along the main road that went through the town from Damascus to the Mediterranean. So presumably Matthew, when he was called, was not the only tax collector at the Capernaum customs house ("the receipt of custom"), others could carry on his work when he abruptly left to follow the Lord Jesus.

Having been called by the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing that Matthew Levi did was to invite his many former colleagues to meet the Lord Jesus at a great feast at his house (Luke 5:29) and many came – "a great company" – much to the annoyance of the scribes and Pharisees, but Jesus told them, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (v.32).

Conclusion

What did Matthew become as a follower of the Lord Jesus? He, who was formally hated by the Jews, was eventually to be the very man to write the Gospel for those same Jews, telling them about the Lord Jesus as their king whose kingdom was near to them. Matthew was chosen for this task, instead of other disciples who might have been considered more patriotic than him, in terms of having done good for the nation. He eventually lived up to his name – "gift of Jehovah" – in writing this Gospel in which he constantly quoted from the OT. Until John wrote much later, Matthew was in fact the only disciple to write a Gospel. So here is a man who is not quoted as saying anything at all in the Gospels, who eventually writes his own Gospel, and unlike many (Luke 1:1), it was he who was inspired by God to do so. Today, God is still gifting people to write, even those who are not particularly known for public utterances.

The grace of God can take the most unlikely men and women and make them useful to Himself and to others around them. The process can of course take a long time, as confidence is built up with respect to those involved.

Psalm 139 (2)

by Clifford Jones, Cardiff

God Omnipresent vv.7-12

These verses speak of God's omnipresence. The fact that He is always present everywhere is now the subject of David's thoughts.

A person who, for whatever reason, wants to hide from or avoid God will find that this is impossible. Our God is always everywhere. In Jeremiah 23:23,24 we read, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord".

God cannot be avoided while we live nor after we die. There is great comfort for the believer in these verses. God, whose power and wisdom are without limit, who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom 8:32) is always watching over us for our eternal good. He is omnipresent and wherever we might be and whatever the circumstances through which we are passing He is always with us and caring for us. He has said "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5) and He will work all things together for our good (Rom 8:28).

We behave foolishly if we attempt to run from God in disobedience and attempt to avoid His presence and His control over our lives. Jonah disobeyed God and tried to flee from His presence. But we read in the book of Jonah that God sent a great wind, prepared a great fish, a gourd, a worm and a vehement east wind. He used all of these to ensure Jonah's obedience. Jonah could not escape from the presence and power of God and ultimately Jonah obeyed God and the people of Nineveh were blessed.

Crimes are often committed in the night because the darkness helps to hide a criminal from other people. We are dependent on light if we are to see. But God, who created light (Gen 1:3), who is light (1 John 1:5), and dwells in light (1 Tim 6:16), is independent of His creation for He is infinitely greater than His creation. Darkness or light make no difference to an all-seeing, everywhere present, all-knowing God. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world there was light in the night-time (Luke 2:9), at His crucifixion there was darkness in the day-time (Luke 23:44). Both light and darkness are under His control.

There is no place in earth or heaven, among the living or the dead where God is not present (Amos 9:2). A sinner can only escape the wrath of God by coming to Him, by being saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8,9). To believers the omnipresence of God is a wonderful thing. He is always present and His hand is upon us to lead us, guide and protect us. He is the Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of His pasture (John 10:11,14; Ps 23). All that we learn of Him in this Psalm and elsewhere in His word

stimulates feelings of thankfulness and praise. How sad that so many will not come to Him (John 5:40).

God Omnipotent

There is no limit to God's power. God is omnipotent, that is, His power is infinite, and this truth is brought before us in verses 13-18. Creation reveals something of the wonder of His power (Ps 19:1). We are part of His amazing creation and each one of us can say, "He created me". God knew this even before the world was created (Eph 1:4). We have been in His mind eternally and perpetually. He was in control of our conception and our development in the womb (Job 31:15). In His sovereignty, wisdom and love God ordained every aspect of our being, that is our physical, mental and emotional characteristics (Jer 1:5). All that we have comes from God and therefore those who might be regarded, physically or mentally, as the finest of human beings have nothing to boast of for "...it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves..." (Ps 100:3).

We are indeed "...fearfully and wonderfully made" (v.14). Life comes from God and is not to be taken by man either by abortion before birth or by murder after birth. (Exod 20:13). Our bodies and minds are wonderful evidences, which are always with us, of God's omnipotence. But even more wonderful than our conception and development both in the womb and after birth, was our new birth when we were born again (John 3:3,5) "...not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23).

We are always and continually in the mind of God, whether we are awake or asleep, whether we are seeking to know Him better and do His will or away from Him in a state of backsliding. We are always under the care and protection of God who loves us and gave His only begotten Son, the altogether lovely One (Song 5:16), in whom He was well pleased (Matt 3:17; 17:5) to suffer and die for us (Acts 2:22,23).

God, in His omnipotence and sovereignty, has done, and continues to do, wonderful things in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers live in anticipation of yet another wonder, that is the personal return of the risen and glorified Lord for all those who have been saved, whether dead or alive (1 Thess 4:15-17). How wonderful are the works, plans and purposes of God and how precious to us are His innumerable eternal thoughts (Ps 40:5). Almighty God, the "...high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy..." (Isa 57:15) eternally and constantly cares for each believer as if that believer is the only one who has ever existed. Paul expressed this love of God for the individual believer when he said "the Son of God, who loved me , and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Regions Beyond

Sowing For Eternity

by Clark Logan

Anyone seeking to cultivate land in Botswana has a struggle ahead. It is not just the seasons of drought but also the colonies of white ants, swarms of locusts and flocks of redbilled quelca which can leave farmers shaking their heads in dismay. This natural struggle has an even more serious spiritual counterpart.

Over the last few years of assembly work in Botswana there has not been as much reaping as in former years. We have all had our share of disappointments to face and problems to deal with, including moral and doctrinal ones. Nevertheless, the Lord graciously continues to bless, souls have been saved and many believers show evidence of ongoing spiritual growth. We thank God for His goodness.

Sowing

It has been well said that with natural seeds you are sowing only for a season but with the Word of God you are sowing for eternity. Frequent and varied are the times and circumstances in which we are found sowing the good seed of the gospel in Botswana.

In the five assemblies there are regular gospel meetings but we also seek to preach in homes, schools, prisons, hospitals, tents, and marketplaces. We publish and distribute tracts and booklets and record messages for the national radio station. Sunday School work has been profitable over the years in opening up whole homes to the gospel. Some local brethren and sisters are presently employed in remote areas but use their off-duty time to reach out to others. Please pray for Donald in the far north, Mabe and Koketso in the central Kalahari and Mavis in the south.

Watering

In Botswana one can never be sure of good rains. One is only sure that for many months of the year there will be no rain at all. How unlike the spiritual realm in which every day without fail many faithful friends throughout the world pray earnestly for this land. We owe much to your labours in this vital ministry of interceding for the unsaved, the believers and our families too. Even as we offer our thanks we would urge you to pray on for the showers of blessing.

There are a number of recent developments that encourage us here and for which we can thank the Lord. The believers in Maun have just completed thatching their temporary building and in Selebi-Phikwe there are now opportunities to take the gospel into the prison. The Francistown assembly has recently baptised and received a number of young brethren into fellowship and in Serowe a new printing machine will be of great help in the literature work. Six years ago the Gaborone assembly applied for land to extend their work in the Gaborone West area. In the last few weeks the Lord has begun to open up the way.

Weeding

In Botswana, as the seeds germinate and shoots appear, women and children are busy keeping the weeds at bay (it is not always clear what the men are



doing at this time!). Some weeks later the women can be found in the fields clapping their hands and crying "Phoi! Phoi!". They do this to drive away the thousands of quelea birds which can quickly ruin any prospect of gathering in a good harvest.

The weeds of nominal Christianity, materialism and the errors of every major cult are proliferating here. We are often confronted with the strange ideas some people have about salvation. They use the right words but we discover that they mean something quite different. Recently we spent several hours with a young man who wondered how many times he could be saved. There is much confusion, the devil is busy and false profession is common around us.

Reaping

We have rejoiced in the harvest of souls in the past and we look expectantly to the Lord to continue saving souls here. It is good to hear of one here and another there trusting Christ. It is unusual for adult men to come regularly to listen and most of our reaping so far has been amongst the ladies and younger men and women.

The benefits of a good harvest can still be lost after reaping. Not all who have professed have gone on well but we have proved the value of visiting new believers in their own homes to read and discuss the Scriptures together. Our desire is to see them grounded in the Word and intelligently taking their place in a local assembly. As well as teaching them we hope that they might catch even a little glimpse of Christ in us. Such a glimpse would be better than a thousand words.

Fellow-labourers

God has been raising up young men who have a real love for the things of God and for the unsaved. Grounded in the truth of God they participate fully with us in the work and have the same convictions as to assembly principles. We trust that they will continue to put the Lord first in their lives.

The five assemblies in Botswana have a real need for stable leadership. Up to the present it is the missionary brethren who have had to remain in one place whilst local brethren and sisters are frequently transferred around the country in their employment. We try not to neglect smaller villages but it would seem more likely that new assemblies will be planted in the larger centres of population. Even then, brethren would need to live and work in these places on a long-term basis. Towns and villages like Kanye, Lobatse, Molepolole and Mahalapye call out for such brethren.

Firstfruits

When we share in a time of reaping we acknowledge that it is God alone who has saved and given the increase. He deserves the firstfruits of our praise and of all that we have. Although the true extent of the harvest cannot now be fully known, in that coming day He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. We will share that satisfaction and be filled with joy and yes, even glad surprise, as we bring in the sheaves.

The Holy Scriptures (6)

by M Davis, Leeds

Their Application

The interpretation of Scripture, however correct, without proper application to our daily lives here and now in this wicked world, which rejected Christ of whom it speaks, is academic and unprofitable to our souls. But 2 Tim 3:16 asserts that all scripture is profitable for every spiritual purpose, namely, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. This must apply to both Old and New Testaments now. So the words of scripture are always spiritual in their application and intended effect.

How, then, should we apply scripture to ourselves? Directly or indirectly? The answer is twofold. First, there is much scripture that we can apply to ourselves directly, either as members of the sinful human race, or as members of the NT Church. We do not need in any way to spiritualize the epistles of Paul and others. But, secondly, other Scriptures which relate primarily to Israel or Gentile nations in both Testaments we need to apply to ourselves indirectly in spiritual principle only, bearing in mind the clear differences that exist between the present age of grace and the Church of Christ, the past ages of promise and law to Israel, and the future ages of judgment and glory for all nations. There certainly are spiritual lessons for ourselves as members of God's heavenly people, the Church, today from His dealings with His earthly people, Israel; for 1 Cor 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come". Their separate histories are parallel, although not the same, in God's saving purposes for the world and the so-called 'law of double reference' states that what was or will be true of Israel literally has a secondary application in spiritual principle only to the Church today.

For instance, Israel in OT days engaged in earthly warfare to conquer the Promised Land, but the NT states that the present-day warfare of the Church is not earthly, but spiritual and against spiritual enemies, "the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph 6:12). We can learn spiritual lessons from Israel's experiences in the OT, but should not apply them directly to our earthly lives today, but rather indirectly, remembering that we are God's heavenly people with a spiritual inheritance who should love our enemies now and seek to witness to them of God's love to them, not literally fight against them. Failure to realise this has led many to make practical mistakes in life.

So we find that we may profit from all scripture, OT as well as NT. For, although not all scripture is about us, it is all for us. Thus, according to 2 Tim 3:17, we shall become fully-equipped as believers today for every spiritual purpose in our present Christian pathway to glory in heaven with Christ.

Seven Stages in the Growth of Jesus our Lord, from Conception to Manhood (7)

by John Gillespie

Seventh Stage

Manhood Fulness : Consecrated Service (Luke 3:23)

"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age"

Then from the peaceful, private of His life
At Nazareth came Jesus unto John
On Jordan's bank to be baptised. Small strife
Could not defer His full obedience prone.

"What now becomes us suffer it to be
All righteousness to keep: no less will do!"
John humbly listened, and with wonder he
Immersed the Son of God in manner true.

Now into Jordan's depths baptiséd He
In symbol of dark water-spouts to come:
That other baptism which through death would free
His soul from all constraint once ever done.

And as the Ark went into Jordan's bed
From off the river's bank and rising brim,
So Jesus substituting for the dead
Would know the billows rolling over Him.

Elijah, too, ta'en from Elisha's head
At Jordan. There was the falling mantle's tryst!
Now John, The Water-man, thus far was led,
Then was eclipsed. God's Spirit fell on Christ.

And as the Anointing oil is found above
The pure, sweet Incense in the Scripture's lore
The Holy Spirit lighted as a Dove
On Jesus while He prayed. From Heaven's door

There came a Voice divine. The Father spoke:
"Thou art My well-loved Son. Now rests on Thee
My pleasure". Nothing could ever revoke
This concourse of the Holy Trinity.

Father, and Holy Spirit, and the Son
Met at this glorious, public meeting rare.
Surrendered manhood of the Spotless One
By Jordan brought delight that all must share.

Heaven's cumulative joy from thirty years
Of sinless, silent life could not prevent
All that to other hearts the Christ endears
From welcoming the Voice that Heaven rent.

The Sonly Boy upheld His Father's claim
When that a mother's heart misunderstood,
Feeling the natural way. His higher aim:
The Father's business to yon Cross of blood.

So now the Father from a riven sky,
And Holy Spirit from above descending
With instant Voice and Folded Wing reply
To Sonship's Glory, Three-in-One now blending.

Mark well how due the time this Perfect Man
Has come to serve. Round thirty years of age
His work in deed and doctrine now began,
And all the world before Him as a stage.

Dear Egypt's Joseph rose to manly power
On thirty years. David in Hebron knew
At age the same his crowning day. What dower
To manhood Levites: The Call for work to do!

Thus He who was in the beginning then,
Beginningless, knew power but to command,
Now comes to love the loveless sons of men,
And, grown full stature, serve them heart in hand.

Jesus of Nazareth, God's Anointed Man,
Visions of Chebar, God with human face
At Jordan now from whence His work began:
Circuit of healing-power and saving grace.

Oh Manhood Grace, Oh Fairest of the fair!
Man amongst men, nearest of men most near.
Thou hast been heard, and seen, and handled where
On earth Thy work began at thirtieth year.

Oh, Son of Man: Dearest of all most dear!

The Lord's Work & Workers

In view of postal service pressures over the Christmas period, would contributors please note that all intimations of forthcoming meetings for the January magazine must be with the publishers by Friday 20th November.

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

NOVEMBER 7
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Lennox.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Hay.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. T Gracey.

NOVEMBER 14
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Allen.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. T Meekin.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Wishart.

NOVEMBER 21
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. S Ferguson, F Sweeney.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. D Gilliland.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. G Hall.

NOVEMBER 23-27
Ahorey: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Flanigan.

NOVEMBER 28
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. B Currie, W Fenton.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. N Mellish.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Flanigan.

DECEMBER 5
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Stubbs.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. R McIlwaine.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Hay.

DECEMBER 12
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. D Gilliland.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

NOVEMBER 7
Bridge of Weir: Annual Conference in Freeland Church at 3.15pm. T Ledger, A Sinclair, J Grant. Mr Ledger continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall at 6.30pm. I Steele, K Stapley.
Gorgie: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. Bible Reading. (Hebrews ch 2:1-18).
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall. Friday 6th, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. (Phil ch 3). Saturday 7th, Annual Conference at 3.30pm. J Chalmers, N Mellish, M Radcliffe.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. J Burnett.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall at 6.45pm. A Gooding, J Stubbs.
Knightswood: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Locke, S Meikle.
Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. E Nelson, W Park.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. M Hunter, J Baxter.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. S Lewis.
Shieldhill: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. W Banks, B Cargill.

NOVEMBER 13
Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. J Baker. (Eph ch 5:15-33).

NOVEMBER 14

Aberdeen: Holburn Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. John Baker.

Armadale: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J McDonald, R Crozier.

Bannockburn: Annual Conference in Community Centre (near the cross) at 3.00pm. Ministering brethren expected.

Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. S Grant, C Peake.

Carluke: Gospel Hall, Missionary Weekend. Friday 13th at 7.00pm. Saturday at 3.30pm. and 6.00pm. Sunday at 3.30pm. and 6.30pm. J Burnett, R Brind, P Headley, A Pollard.

Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Pollard.

Innerleven: Gospel Hall, Methil at 6.30pm. B Cargill.

Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. D Meikle, J Sinclair.

Maryhill: Glasgow, Eastpark Gospel Hall, Avenuepark St. Conference at 3.00pm. S Foster, J McMaster, T Wilson.

Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Hopewell, G Murray.

Prestwick: Bethany Hall, Glenburn. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Burnett, W Stevely. Reports from I Campbell, I Robertson.

Stevenston: Bethany Hall at 7.00pm. J Rodgers, H Hunter.

Wishaw: Ebenezer Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Harrison, A Naismith.

NOVEMBER 21

Ayr: Prestwick Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. Bible Reading. T Wilson. (Rev 2:12-17).

Bo'ness: Hebron Hall, School Brae at 6.30pm. W Park, I Robertson (Report).

Gourock: Bethany Hall, Drumshantie Road at 7.00pm. I Gibson.

Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. R Thomson, W Banks.

Linthouse: Bethesda Hall. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. J Riddle, S Downs, J Grant. Mr Riddle continues Mon-Wed at 8.00pm.

Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. G Forbes, S Grant.

Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.00pm. Home Workers Conference. D Gillies, R Marshall, A Pollard.

Plains: Elim Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Burnett, C Roberts.

Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A Summers, I Stewart.

NOVEMBER 28

Ballingry: Gospel Hall. Bible Reading at 6.30pm. Joshua chs 3-4.

Galston: 100th Annual Conference in Evangelistic Hall at 3.00pm. D West, J Baker, M Radcliffe.

Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street at 7.00pm. J Baxter, R McKeown.

Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. J Dickson, R Revie.

Kirkconnel: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. H Cooper, R Thomson.

Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Sinclair.

Musselburgh: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Grant, S Grant.

Prestwick: Bute Hall at 7.00pm. T Rice, W Hannay.

Shotts: Dykehead Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. M Chalmers, J Baxter.

Uphall: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Meikle.

DECEMBER 5

Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. J Burnett, T Bentley. Mr Bentley will

continue Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, W Park.
Gorgie: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (Hebrews ch 3:1 to 4:13).
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. E Hughes, J Rodgers.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. I England.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. D Locke, (Report), I Wallace.
Knightswood: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Pollard, A Summers.
Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. T Jones, R Marshall.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. A Sinclair, B Stapley.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. B Stevely.
Shieldhill: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Flanigan (Ministry and Report). Mr Flanigan continues in Ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

DECEMBER 11
Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. R Thomson. (Eph 6:1-12).

DECEMBER 12
Armadale: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, K Binnie.
Bannockburn: Gospel Hall, East Murrayfield at 7.00pm. Bible Reading. 1st Corinthians 15.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. J Burnett, R Cameron.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Pollard.
Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. S McDonald, R Marshall.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. N Hamilton, W Hannay.
Stevenston: Bethany Hall at 7.00pm. S Arbuthnot, R Revie (Report).

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

NOVEMBER 7
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue, off Rigby Road at 7.30pm. R Maffey.
Brierfield: Hebron Hall, Walter Street at 7.00pm. J McPhail.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Speedwell Chapel at 7.00pm. R Brown.
Crewe: Bethany Gospel Hall, Lime Tree Avenue at 7.00pm. J Coltman.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall, Oakfield Road at 7.15pm. E Griffiths.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Romans 13:1-14). E Parmenter. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Gospel Hall, Portland St at 7.15pm. W Gardiner.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall, Waller Avenue at 6.30pm. A Cundick.
Merseyside: Huyton at 7.30pm. J Hall.
New Bradwell: Milton Keynes at 7.30pm. J Flanigan. Mr Flanigan continues in ministry Monday and Wednesday at 7.30pm. Tuesday at Gold St. Hall, Hanslope.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall at 7.00pm. A Griffiths.
Warrington: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. J Hall, Harrogate.
West Mersea: Gospel Hall at 4.00pm and 6.15pm. J Glenville.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Tinkler.

NOVEMBER 14
Appledore: N Devon, Bethel, The Quay

at 7.15pm. J Mitchell.
Blackburn: Gospel Hall, New Wellington Street at 7.30pm. P Harding.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Unity Chapel at 7.00pm. P Davies.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel at 7.00pm. R Collings.
Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. J Wallace. Mr Wallace continues in ministry Monday and Tuesday at 7.30pm.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Hay. Mr Hay remains for gospel meetings Sun 15th-Thurs 26th November. Sundays at 6.30pm., Monday-Saturday at 8.00pm.
Merseyside: Newsham at 7.30pm. M Cargill.
Northampton: Osborne Road Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Pickering. Mr Pickering continues Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Red Row: Morpeth, Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. D Sampson.
Uxendon: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. K Totton.
Wembley: Gospel Hall, Elmstead Avenue at 7.00pm. K Totton.

NOVEMBER 21
Beighton: Gospel Hall, Eckington Road at 7.30pm. I Walker.
Brierfield: Hebron Hall at 7.00pm. J Hall.
Boscombe: Drummond Hall at 7.00pm. H Cooper.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Totterdown Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. F Beevers.
Crawley: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Spence.
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. R Revie.
Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. P Litchfield.
Eastbourne: Marine Hall at 7.00pm. J Baker. Also Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Harrogate: Woodfield Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. B Osborne.
Harrow: Belmont Hall at 7.15pm. N Osborne.
London: Bermondsey Gospel Hall, St James's Road at 7.00pm. R Curtis.
Luton: Onslow Road at 6.30pm. P Brandon.
Merseyside: Liverpool and District Christian Rallies, Crete Hall at 7.30pm. R Parnaby.
Mitcham Junction: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Scarsbrook.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. G Payne.
Trent Vale: Swan Lane Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. R Watson (camp report meeting).
Winshill: Gospel Hall, Hawfield Lane at 7.15pm. N Mellish.

NOVEMBER 28
Basingstoke: Essex Road Gospel Hall. Missionary Conference in Crawley Village Hall at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. R Wood, H Reid, I Campbell.
Bexleyheath: Bethany Hall, North Street at 7.00pm. P Richardson.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Chelsea Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Rabey.
Chesterfield: Littlemoor Gospel Chapel at 7.30pm. D Holmes.

Coventry: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Bees.
Golborne: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. R Maffey.
Hanworth: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Keele.
Haywards Heath: Franklynn Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Scarsbrook.
Helions Bumpstead: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. T Ledger.
Merseyside: Liverpool and District Christian Rallies, David Street. Bible Study at 5.00pm. Ministry at 7.30pm. E Parmenter.
Northampton: Gospel Hall, Spencer Bridge at 7.30pm. R Hill.
Withington: Gospel Hall, Mauldeth Road at 7.30pm. A Young.

DECEMBER 5
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue at 7.30pm. S Downs.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Speedwell Chapel at 7.00pm. D Roberts.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall at 7.15pm. B Osborne.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm (Romans 14:1-19). J Sinclair. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. R Davies.
Merseyside: Liverpool and District Christian Rallies, Larkhill at 7.30pm. H Barnes.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Victoria Road at 7.15pm. P Scarsbrook.
New Bradwell: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. D Spence.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road at 7.00pm. J Bennett.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall at 7.00pm. G Davies.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall, Bishops Oak Ride at 7.00pm. I Jackson.
Warrington: Hope Hall, Hawthorne Street at 7.00pm. R Dawes.
Westcliff-On-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. D West.
West Mersea: at 4.00pm and 6.15pm. E Parmenter.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Stewart.

DECEMBER 12
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Hollyfield.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.
Derby: Meeting Room, Curzon Street at 7.15pm. N Mellish.
Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. I Rees.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Stewart.
Northampton: Osborne Road Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. H Barnes.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Hutchison.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. H Hatt.
Uxendon: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Roberts.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Ballymoney: R McKeown and C Law commenced in the gospel first Lord's Day in October.
Buckna: The assembly here expect J Allen and R McIlwaine (Nova Scotia) to

commence gospel meetings at end of October.

Burnside: Meetings by H Wilson (Brazil) and T Meekin have continued for six weeks. One lady has professed. Quite a number of young people–believers' children attending.

Clough: Gospel meetings by JG Hutchinson and A Aiken in sixth week at end of September, very well attended, with fair number of locals. One young woman has professed.

Kells: R Surgenor (USA) and D Gilliland expected for gospel meetings end of October.

Co. ARMAGH

Bleary: Gospel meetings have commenced with T McNeill and G Patterson (Canada). Brother F Tornaquindici (USA) had a number of ministry meetings in Co Armagh during September.

Co. DOWN

Ballymacashon: J G Hutchinson and A Aiken expected here for gospel meetings at end of October.

Crossgar: B Glendinning and R Fairley are preaching the gospel in portable hall, and have been encouraged with some local interest. A difficult village for gospel work.

Carryduff: Annual believers' meeting on 5th September. Good company enjoyed ministry and fellowship. Speakers R Pickering and R Revie (Scotland).

Portavogie: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Annual conference on 19th September. Good numbers, including young believers at both sessions. Ministry was of a helpful nature from JG Hutchinson, J Kelso, H Andrews and J Wishart.

Co. LONDONDERRY & Co. DONEGAL

Aughrim: H Andrews expected for gospel meetings in the gospel hall on 25th October.

Ballylintagh: W Fenton expected for gospel meetings in October in portable hall in townland of Macosquin.

Bridgetown: G Stewart and T McClay are in their third week of meetings in the townland of Copany (end Sept). The meetings are being held in an outreach hall, about five miles from Bridgetown, and are proving to be most encouraging.

Co. TYRONE

Ballygawley: S McBride and T Wright concluded a series of gospel tent meetings in mid September. Response from local people disappointing.

Tullylagan: W Fenton and M McKillen are continuing in the gospel at end of September.

Cookstown: J Allen conducted a series of Bible Readings from 21st-15th Sept. Subject: Epistle of James. Full hall each evening with good participation.

Killycurragh: Annual conference 23rd September. Large company held helpful ministry given by A McShane, W J Nesbitt, W Aiken (Ontario), R Pickering, J Wishart, J Allen.

Co CORK (S Ireland)

Skibereen: S Patterson and T Wallace had two weeks of gospel meetings. There was both feeling and interest as the gospel was preached nightly, with encouraging numbers attending. The christians were encouraged and now watch for answers to prayer.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

Lossiemouth: The Bible Exhibition



from Ayrshire was hosted in Lossiemouth Town Hall during the first week of September, and it was very well received. Many from the town really enjoyed it. Jimmy Brown, Robert Gibson, and Mr and Mrs Roy Kilpatrick worked tirelessly together with local saints and Ainslie Patterson to ensure that many would see and hear both the story and the message of the Bible.

Over six hundred children from eight schools attended and their response and that of their teachers was very encouraging. Several letters of appreciation have been received. The opportunity has also been granted to follow up the exhibition with visits to the schools. In addition well over two hundred adults came, both local people and visitors, and good contacts were made and re-established. Some believers were encouraged when work colleagues attended and were obviously impressed by what they saw and read.

There is a special request for prayer for one visitor, a Roman Catholic priest from another town, who told one of the brethren that some time ago he had come to realise that salvation is a gift and not of works. This dear man was also impressed by what he saw – do remember him with others that God may work in their hearts to the salvation of their souls.

Tayport, Fife: Our prayer support will be valued for gospel campaign to be held in the Gospel Hall during the month of November, with Stephen Grant responsible for this effort in fellowship with the small assembly there. Some teenagers have attended similar meetings in the past, and although a bit restless have heard the Word preached –may come and hear again, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God".

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

The Christian Workers Relief Fund exists to help assembly-commended, UK-based workers in times of need. The Fund is now in its 37th year, supported by gifts from assemblies and trusts, as well as from individuals through gifts, covenants and legacies. Financial help is sent in times of sickness or emergency, and regularly to those who have retired or are chronically ill, or where there are special family needs. During the last year, 27 workers who are currently active in the Lord's work have been helped in times of illness or following accidents. Also 48 retired elderly workers, wives and widows have received needed help, including hampers that are sent each year at Christmas time, and these are very much appreciated.

During the year assembly giving rose to nearly £6,000, but individual, trust and covenant gifts decreased by some £10,000. To meet the needs that had come to the attention of the Fund, a deficit of over £21,000 resulted and monies had to be taken from reserves.

However, as long as the Lord provides, the Fund will continue to meet the emergency needs of His servants and the continued needs of their dependants.

Would those wishing to have fellowship with the fund please communicate with Mr John McEwan, Silver Birch Barn, Leamington Hall Farm, Fosse Way, Chesterton, Leamington Spa, CV33 9JP.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words

Mrs M Bingham on 16th August in hospital aged 93. Saved when she was 16 and after baptism was one of the foundation members of the Ballykeel assembly. A gracious, spiritual, happy woman who was a real asset to the assembly. Very highly esteemed in the community and loved by a multitude of christians. Her prayers and godly influence will be greatly missed. Her home was a sanctuary for many of the Lord's people. Prayer valued for her family, all in Christ, and for the assembly.

Robert Houston passed into the presence of his Lord from hospital on 14th August after several months of weakness following surgery. He was saved as a young man of 35 in 1949 at meetings conducted by Mr John Wells near his home. Soon afterwards he was received into the assembly at Ballybollan. Latterly he was in fellowship in Crosskeys. A brother who appreciated salvation and often spoke of his conversion. Many neighbours and friends listened attentively to the words spoken at his funeral services.

Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) Hughes on 11th July aged 86. Saved at an early age, she later came into fellowship at Renfrew where she served the Lord for fifty years. Her latter years in Bethesda, Linthouse are remembered with affection. A widow of forty years, she combined personal frugality with generosity and was deeply appreciative of any kindnesses shown. She loved her Lord and was valiant for His truth, even witnessing to those who tried to promote their wares over the telephone. Her bright presence will be greatly missed.

Mr Steele Kane passed suddenly into the Lord's presence on 29th June aged 76. Saved after much anxiety in 1997. Baptised and received into fellowship at Ballycastle some months later. He had only been in fellowship for 15 weeks, his greatest regret being that he had not been saved many year's earlier when he heard the gospel preached. The funeral services were conducted by T McNeill, giving opportunity for many unsaved relatives to hear the gospel. Prayer valued for his widow in fellowship, son and daughter and their families, all of whom are not saved.

Mrs Jean Kay passed into the Lord's presence on 3rd June, having borne her illness with patience. Saved in her teens, our sister was in fellowship for 11 years in Hebron Hall, Airdrie, then moved to be in fellowship for 58 years in Gospel Hall, Garrowhill and latterly in fellowship in Plains assembly. Our sister will be remembered for her faithful attendance, her generous hospitality, her encouraging spirit and bright personality. Remember in prayer her husband David, daughters Alma and Sheena, their husbands and families.

Ian Kinloch aged 67 on 20th August after a short illness. Saved in 1945 aged 14, Ian was soon baptised and received into assembly fellowship. He quickly developed a love for the word of God and also took a real interest in missionary



work. In later years his great desire was to help younger believers develop in the study of the scriptures. There was a real awareness of the Lord's presence at the large funeral service conducted by a young brother who had been greatly helped by Ian.

Muriel Lancashire on 1st July aged 82. Muriel was born in Liverpool and trusted the Lord as her Saviour in her early teens In 1949 she moved to New Zealand with her husband Bill and children, returning in 1959. She enjoyed fellowship with the assemblies at David Street, Heswall, Johnstown and Bicester. She was a faithful wife and a loving mother to her five children all of whom she knows are on the way to heaven where she now is and 'from whence we also look for the Saviour'.

Miss Christine Mair on 24th August aged 80. All her life part of the assembly in St Monans, her godliness, sincerity, diligence, and kindness were a blessing to all her brothers and sisters locally and to many elsewhere. She lived for the assembly and loved to hear the Word of God preached. A primary school teacher, she always had a heart for young people and this included the spiritual welfare of many for whom she prayed regularly. She also had a deep interest in many aspects of missionary work. She will be greatly missed especially in St Monans.

Mrs M McFarland on 21st July aged 92. Our sister left Ulster and landed in Australia in October 1926 and was saved the following month in tent meetings in Chatword, NSW. Soon after she was received into assembly fellowship in Sydney and was eventually in Turramurre, which became the Wahroonga Assembly (now Argyle Street). With members of her family, she returned to N Ireland in 1990 and for the last 51/2 years was a resident of Faith House. Prayer requested for her surviving family. T Bentley and B Currie conducted the services.

Nessie McGregor on July 25 aged 72. Saved as a young woman at a tent campaign in East Whitburn, our sister was baptised and came into fellowship in the Armadale assembly. Due to debilitating illness she had been precluded from attending the gatherings of the saints for some years, and her homecall was a happy relief from this illness which she bore with fortitude. Prayer is requested for her family circle, none of whom are saved.

Hilda Catherine McGuigan wife of the late Oliver McGuigan called home to be with the Lord on 4th August after a prolonged illness. Saved in 1933, she became associated with the assemblies in Portadown, Ahorey and latterly at Aughavey, Co Tyrone. She was very interested in the work of the Lord both in the homelands and overseas and was given much to hospitality. She is survived by a daughter and two sons.

Miss Jean McKay passed into the Lord's presence on 4th June. Our sister was saved in the Bible Class at Fraserburgh in 1939 and was baptised at Tillicoultry and received into fellowship at Stirling in 1943. She returned to Fraserburgh in 1949 and apart from two years when she worked in New Zealand, she was in happy fellowship in the Fraserburgh assembly. Just prior to her homecall she moved to Lossiemouth. A faithful, consistent sister

whose presence will be missed by the assembly and close relatives, especially her sister.

Mrs McMullan in her 97th year. Saved when she was 22, she was a foundation member of the assembly in Ballintoy and continued stedfastly ever since. In 1954 she moved to Portrush and until 1998 when her health was not so good, she moved to her daughter's in Ballymena. A faithful sister who loved the Lord, His ways and work. To almost the end she was making garments for the mission field. She was loved by all especially the young who learned much of the things of God from her. Prayer valued for her large circle of relations.

Mrs Jean McNeil on 10th August aged 67, after a long illness borne with dignity. Saved in 1950, she was soon afterwards baptised and received into fellowship. She loyally supported her husband Tom in his gospel work and was a devoted member of the assembly, interested in all its activities. Given to hospitality, loved and respected by all she will be greatly missed. The very large company which attended her funeral services bore testimony to this. Prayer valued for her husband Tom, who feels his loss dearly.

Sandy Paterson: Called home on 24th May aged 88 years. A true Christian Highland gentleman. He was one of the original members of the Culloden assembly, a true shepherd who was active in the assembly gatherings. His sweet contributions on Lord's day mornings are greatly missed. He was a founder member of the Kilravoch Bible Readings. The large company at his funeral, all the arrangements for which he made himself, showed the esteem in which he was held. Please remember his wife and family, also the assembly in prayer.

Douglas Sharp called home on 26th June after three years of suffering from a severe stroke. Saved at the age of 14 when George Gourt had meetings in the Hanslope area. He was baptised and received into assembly fellowship and for many years our brother was in active fellowship at New Bradwell. A quiet and godly brother who was always cheerful and much respected. Prayer valued for his two daughters and grandchildren, some not yet saved. Many unsaved heard the clear gospel message at the funeral service.

Mrs Nan Skelly aged 98 was called home on Wednesday 12th August. Mrs Skelly came to Irvine from Ayr with her parents and the rest of the family as a girl of ten. Saved as a young girl, and apart from some years spent in London was most of her christian life associated with the assembly in Irvine. She was a widow for 34 years and spent her later years in a Sheltered Housing Complex in Irvine from where the Lord called her home.

Mr Thomas Twaddle on 23rd June aged 83 years. Saved in his teens our brother was baptised and received into assembly fellowship, and for the past 46 years he met with the saints in assembly hall, New Stevenston. He bore a quiet consistent testimony and was faithful in his attendance at all the gatherings, though often in ill health. He will be greatly missed by his wife, Mary and son Jim as well as the saints in the assembly.



PERSONALIA

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. Contact: Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Correspondence for Pensford Gospel Hall, Bristol should be addressed to John Axford, 4 Naishes Avenue, Peasdown St John, Bath, BA2 8TE. Tel. 01761 432786.

Change of telephone number for George Meikle. It is now 01506 823272.

Commendation: Mr James Armstrong has been commended to the work of the Lord by the assembly at James Street, Newtownards, In the will of the Lord he will be leaving for Brazil with his wife Joy and their two young children in mid October. Initially they will be staying with Mr and Mrs Tom Matthews in Novo Hamburgo.

Correspondence for Wolseley Road Gospel Hall, Plymouth should now be addressed to Roy A Wood, 38 Dovedale Road, Beacon Park, Plymouth, PL2 2RS. Tel. 01752 558204.

Change of address for Mr and Mrs N Mellish. It is now: Rahelagh House, 4 Albert Street, Chesterton, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs, ST6 7JF. Tel/Fax. 01782 562190. E. mail: nmellish@netcom uk.co.uk.

Hall Caretaker Required for Shields Road Gospel Hall, Motherwell. Large cottage attached to the hall building is available. Conditions and further information can be obtained on request. Contact: Mr Jack Murray, 43 Neilsland Drive, Motherwell, ML1 3EB. Telephone: 01698 267949.

As from the 14th October Mr Bill Halliday will be returning to Zambia where his address will be PO Box 10061, Chingola, Zambia.

HOLIDAY HOMES

The publishers cannot be held responsible for any difficulties which may be experienced by those responding to these adverts.

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Eastbourne, Sussex

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Mr J Baker • Mr J Riddle

Subject for Bible Readings:
1 & 2 Thessalonians

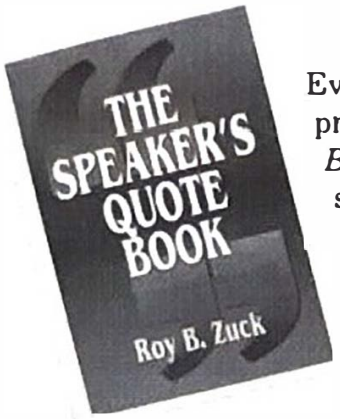
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THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE OFFERINGS

Henry W. Soltau



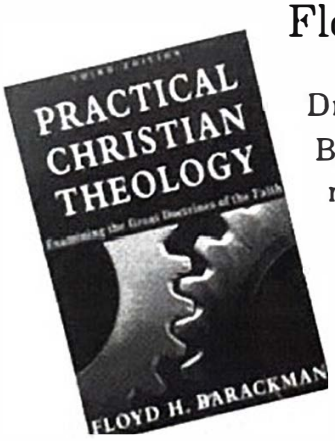
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PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Examining the Great Doctrines of the Faith

Floyd H. Barackman



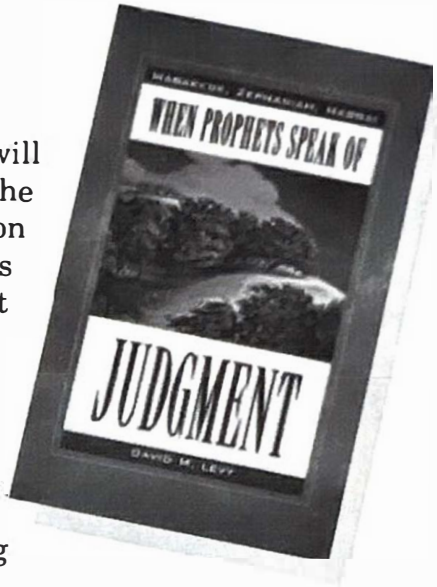
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David M. Levy



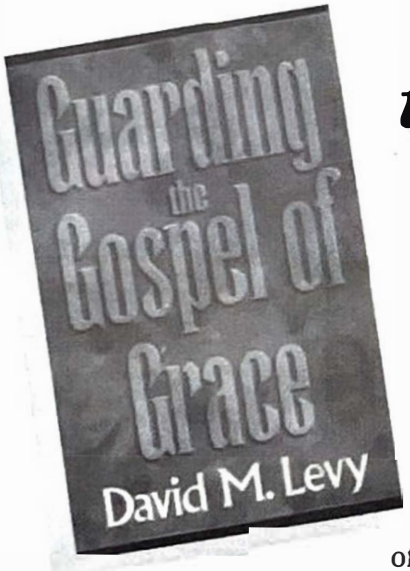
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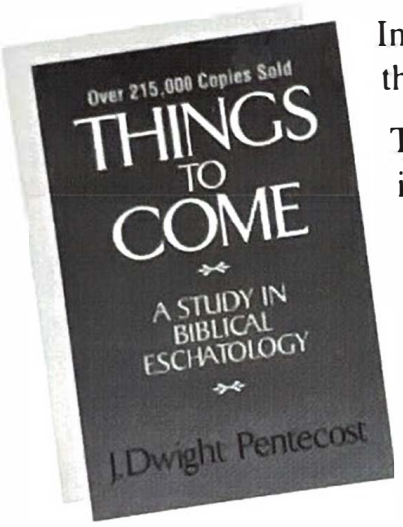


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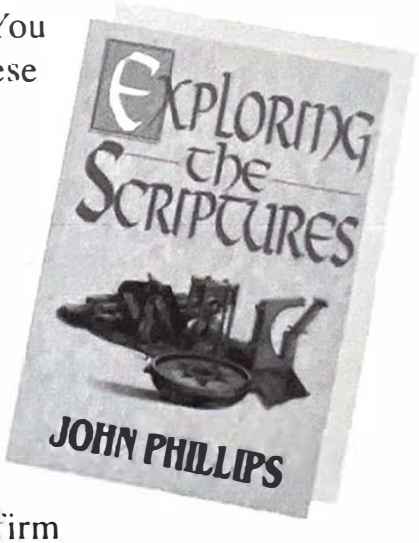
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Believer's Magazine

DECEMBER 1998

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Editorial

When times are hard and the most spiritual heart feels discouraged, it is good to remember we have been brought to "the God...of encouragement" (Rom 15:5 JND). This same passage refers to the particular source of encouragement which God so often uses and which is always available:- the scriptures. How often in moments of weakness and need we have found "a word from the Lord" in its pages.

Since its inception, the Believer's Magazine has sought to present the truths of scripture in such a way that the Word of God would have power in the lives of its readers. This was the desire of the original editor who in his first editorial stated "We do not intend to fill our columns with controversy, nor shall we suppress any truth, doctrinal, practical, or ecclesiastical that will be for the profit of our readers". Three able brethren continued the work over differing periods of time until the formation of an editorial panel of four in 1975. Three from that panel have since gone to their reward and those who have followed in this ministry have tried to keep closely to these principles. In this last edition under the present editors, I speak for each in saying it has been an honour and privilege to have had a part in this important work, our brother Wilson for twenty four years and the other two for sixteen. Along with our late esteemed brother Stallan, we have worked in happy fellowship together and with the support of the directors of J Ritchie until the present time. And now at this time of change, suggested by the present editors, we would commend the new arrangements to your prayers. The directors have chosen our brother Grant, who will be looking to the Lord as he takes up this fresh responsibility in his service for the Lord. We pray he will be richly blessed in it and that the ministry of the Believer's Magazine will go on from strength to strength.

The present day is marked by darkness and moral corruption in the world at large. There are indications that the stage is being set for the manifestation of the Man of Sin (2 Thess 2:3,8), but before that the coming of the Lord to the air to take us home must take place. In the meantime let us remember that "we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Thess 5:5-10).

Such a prospect should have a salutary and spiritual effect upon all who know the Lord, yet sadly conditions amongst the saints indicate the need for a return to fresh and continued communion with Him. As another year draws to a close let us with vigour seek Him afresh and live in renewed fellowship with Him until we see Him face to face.

JRB

The Parable of the Sower (4)

by TJ Blackman, Brazil

The seed sown on good ground

Now we have come to the only kind of ground which really produces fruit and shows signs of life and blessing from God. We have noted, in the other three, the influences which hinder spiritual life and growth – the *devil*, the *flesh* and the *world* respectively. Now, in this part, we have the ideal conditions in which the good seed of God's word is able to bring forth fruit and prosper. In this case alone the influence is not malign but rather it is the blessed and beneficent influence of the Holy Spirit as He establishes God's kingdom in the heart.

We must observe here that this represents a heart in which a great transformation has taken place. By nature the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9); "an evil heart of unbelief" (Heb 3:12); and the source of all evil (Matt 15:19). Here, however, the heart is described as "honest and good", but how did it become so? "Who can say; I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov 20:9), "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4). We must conclude, then, that such a change must be God's workmanship, springing from His amazing grace, which alone can transform children of the devil into children of God.

Each Gospel emphasizes a different gospel aspect of the operation of the Spirit of God in the heart:

(1) In Matthew the Lord affirms that this person "heareth the word, and *understandeth* it" (Matt 13:23). In contrast with the seed sown by the wayside (v.19), where we read of one who hears the word of the kingdom and "understandeth it not".

The comprehension of the things of God is not natural to mankind. Even the apostles, those who walked with the Lord Jesus Christ and heard His teaching, were unable to understand until He "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). On one occasion he said to the Jews, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43). How important was the question which Philip the evangelist addressed to the Ethiopian eunuch: "understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30).

The truth is that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). It is for this reason that "they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (Paul's epistles) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:16), and it becomes us to give thanks to God if we can say in truth, "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding" (1 John 5:20).

(2) In Mark He speaks of those who "hear the word, and *receive* it" (Mark 4:20). The word translated "receive" signifies "accept with approval", and it not the word used in v.15 of those on

the stony ground who "received" the word with gladness". Now, although the word convicts and condemns them, it is "gladly received" or "welcomed" (Acts 2:41). How much more when the word brings the glad tidings of salvation: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, (a related word to the one in Acts 2) that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

This is a characteristic of the true Christian: he accepts God's word even when it hurts. He "trembles" at the word (Isa 66:2; Ezra 9:4; 10:3; Ps 119:120), and for this reason is approved of God, who declares: "...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa 66:2). So will be fulfilled the words of James: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, (wickedness) and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

(3) In Luke the Lord uses the word "*keep*" (Luke 8:13), which, with respect to God's word, suggests meditation (Ps 1:2), sanctification (Ps 119:11), appreciation (Ps 119:123), and, above all, obedience (Ps 119:80; John 11:15).

We read in Luke 11:27,28 of the occasion when "a certain woman of the company" said what many religious people would say even today: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee..." The Lord answered, however, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it". To Job this was more important than his necessary food (Job 23:12), and the Psalmist agrees: "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them" (Ps 119:29).

The Lord shows how such obedience is the evidence of love, and brings us into true fellowship with Himself: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (John 14:21), and "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love..." (John 15:10).

(4) Also in Luke, the Lord affirms that these "bring forth fruit with *patience*" (Luke 8:15). Here we have a stark contrast with the second part of the parable, where the person who only "endures for a time" cannot stand the trials. We must never underestimate the importance of patience and perseverance. We find many examples recorded in Scripture of the damage caused when patience is lacking. In Exod 33, the people lost their patience when Moses delayed to come down from mount Sinai, and soon they fell into idolatry. In 1 Sam 13:8, king Saul did not have the patience to await the arrival of Samuel and did that which only the priests ought to do, offering the burnt offering. Because of this Saul also lost his kingdom (v.14). How many quarrels, falls and errors might have been avoided, if we had had patience!

It is quite surprising to see how many times the word, here translated "patience", occurs in the NT. According to the context, it signifies either

"patience" (passive) or "perseverance" (active).

In Luke 21:19 it is necessary for our spiritual preservation: "in your patience possess ye your souls". In Rom 2:7 "eternal life" is assured to those "who by patience continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality". In Rom 5:3,4 Paul states that we not only rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but "in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience..." And besides all this, it is one reason why God gave us the Scriptures. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom 15:4); it is, in fact, as attribute of God, as the next verse shows: "Now the God of patience and consolation..." (Rom 15:5).

Patience is essential in the ministry of the gospel: "in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience..." (2 Cor 5:4); and several times it is the burden of Paul's prayers to God (Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:3), as of the exhortations he addresses to the believers (1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2).

James shows that this virtue is the basis of the whole development of the Christian life: "...the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3,4), and eulogizes the patience of Job (James 5:11). Peter gives patience the central place among the seven virtues which should be added to faith: "add to your faith virtue...knowledge...temperance... patience...godliness...brotherly kindness...charity" (2 Pet 1:5-7). In his introduction to the Revelation, John calls himself "your...companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9). Then the Lord Jesus Christ Himself says to the churches of Asia: "I know...thy patience...(thou) hast patience" (Rev 2:2,3), "I know...thy patience" (2:19), "thou hast kept the word of my patience" (3:10). Finally, in the time of the great tribulation, it is "the patience of the saints" which will be highlighted in those awful days (13:10 and 14:12).

(5) Lastly, in Matthew and Mark, the Lord shows that there may be differences in the *quantity* of the fruit produced by each seed. In Matthew He says that it "bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty, while in Mark the order is reversed, "some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred". In Matthew the greater is in first place, while in Mark the least is first; why the difference? We would suggest that it is simply to show that the quantity is not really so important. What matters is the *quality* of the fruit. May the good fruits of that eternal life, given in such abundance to the saved sinner, be seen more and more in each one, to the glory of His excellent Name.

A Little Light Recovered

by T Wilson, Springburn

Had *A Treatise on the Lord's Supper* by John Glas been published in 1998, no doubt the *Believer's Magazine* would have reviewed it. However 1743 was the date of its publication by a London-based publishing house, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington. The author was a Scot born in Fife in 1695, a Church of Scotland minister from he was ordained to preach in 1719 until "he was deposed" in 1728.

Glas lived in the days when the National League and the Solemn League had captured public imagination, especially among Church adherents. But Glas abhorred the joining of "religion" and "secular power" and vehemently opposed the notion of a national church, so much so that 47 charged were raised against him by his peers. At great personal cost Glas stood true to his convictions and lost a very lucrative charge. He acknowledged that the Lord supported His servants and apparently thereafter lived by faith.

Obeying the truth

From 1725 Glas began to separate from fellowship with unbelievers, citing 2 Cor 6:14,17, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...be ye separate". His teaching began to emphasise that "in stead of the minister of a parish governing with his lay elders, as is the case in the National Church of Scotland, there ought to be in every christian assembly a plurality of elders, who are also called in Scripture bishops or overseers", comments the 1743 Preface. Only through those elders was the local church governed; the local church and its elders were not responsible to any superior body, synod or general Assembly. But what of the qualifications of those elders? The Preface continues, "A prejudice had long existed, and still exists, in the world, for the necessity of a university education to fit a man for the ministry of the Word. That men who had received no education, who had been bred to the plough or the loom, should pretend to preach was thought ridiculous". Christ was owned as Head in the midst of His people and "the ascendancy of any single man" disowned. However after a time outside the respectable circles of the National Church some found such practices uncomfortable. In particular the rich found "brotherly admonition" by poor but godly elders unacceptable and "under specious pretexts withdrew from the connection".

Those in assembly fellowship would not find it surprising that searching the Scriptures led Glas to the conclusion that remembering the Lord twice a year was not in harmony with Scripture, so they began to break bread monthly and soon on the first day of every week. It was this exercise to remember the Lord weekly that led to "requiring the exercise of necessary discipline for the removal of offences that the Church might meet together with mutual affection and sincerity".

In this 254-page treatise Glas emphasises that "Every Church member ought to examine himself, especially of his brotherly love to his fellow-communicants, and so eat of the

bread and drink of that cup". He held that only in assembly could there be the answer to our Lord's command to remember Him; those who partake of the bread "must be visibly united...without schism". The breaking of bread "is not delivered to any company of them occasionally met together and having no stated visible connection as a body". Evidently casual association that friendship or convenience occasions would not have satisfied those 18th century brethren in any seeking to break bread. Nor would they have been prepared to "set up a table" on some campsite while holidaying in a locality.

It would appear that a measure of growth was a feature of those who meet with John Glas. By 1768 that there were "nearly 30 (churches), with 44 elders and 880 members". Those saints appear to have met on lines not wholly dissimilar from our understanding of the NT pattern. That they did so 100 years before a curate named John Nelson Darby published a booklet entitled *On the Nature and Unity of the Church* should not be overlooked.

The way of the Lord more perfectly

Given that *A Treatise on the Lord's Supper* was published so long before Darby, Kelly and others began to study diligently the sacred page of Scripture and expound with clarity truth that none seem to have taught over some centuries, it is not surprising that truth that such men of God recovered for the saints was not understood fully by John Glas. Had the present writer been reviewing today *A Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, he would have drawn attention to much that he could not commend.

With no clear light on the rapture of the Church, Glas examined the 1,260 days of the prophetic Scripture (Rev 11:3) and counted "each day for a year". He considered that it must be the church that is to be hidden during that period "as Elijah hid in the wilderness". He looked back too and identified a period of great apostasy from the "primitive profession of faith" and described it as "the Church of Christ (being) confounded by Antichrist". Perhaps it is only as we see in good men like Glas these doctrinal deficiencies that we appreciate the rich heritage that has been bequeathed to us by those early brethren who served God a century after Glas. From our childhood many of us have been taught by godly men of that period of great tribulation that will be the climax of suffering for Israel after the saints of the present have been raptured by their Lord; we understand too that in that period *the* Antichrist will be active in the persecution of the godly.

Above it is observed that Glas had a firm grasp of certain aspects of church truth. And having observed that the NT, unlike the OT, separates civil and religious matters, one would have expected that other NT truths would have been understood by Glas. However, he, in common with many today in Presbyterian circles, failed to distinguish between the Church and Israel. Therefore in Rom 11 he is

prepared to identify the Church and the olive tree, to which Paul refers. More strange is a passing comment on Israel: "...the church of the OT which perhaps is called the *body of Moses* (Jude 9 with Zech 3:1-2)". As the NT describes the Church as the body of Christ, Glas assumed that the OT saints might collectively be the body of Moses. How important to the understanding of Scripture is the distinction between the Church and Israel as taught in the Pauline epistles.

As one would expect, John Glas was most reverent in his references to our Lord Jesus. But he does use of our Lord that phrase "our elder brother", a phrase entirely without scriptural warrant but sadly still in use in some circles. Again we should thank God that the very vocabulary we have been taught to employ as we speak of our Lord is in the light of Scripture "acceptable words", so often terms used by the apostles and enshrined in the sacred text of holy writ. Evidently Glas failed to note that whereas He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb 2:11), the words which the Holy Spirit teaches offer no precedent to use the words "our elder brother" of that One who is God over all and blessed for ever.

Conclusion

The exercise of soul that is represented in John Glas is a reminder that throughout the centuries God has worked in His own to enlighten and then lead out of the systems where human ordinances assume a place above the teaching of Scripture. Although his dissenting from the established church finds little recognition in many of the histories of those sometimes (and wrongly) called "the Brethren", nevertheless it is humbling to think that at great cost he entered into the good of truth which so many today would readily give up.

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Walking in Ephesians (3)

by J Bennett, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

The Character of the Christian (Ch.5)

If in chapter four we see something of the fruit of the Spirit, here in chapter five, we see the imitation of Christ, for this is the standard of comparison that occupies the apostle. If we are to walk in love, it is "as Christ also hath loved us" (v.2). If we are called upon to "walk as children of light", it is because we are now "light in the Lord" (v.8). Equally, the apostle's call that we "walk circumspectly" (v.15) is that we might manifest that we have been enlightened and transformed by Christ.

It is instructive that the apostle's first plea deals with our relationship Godward before he admonishes us about our walk manward. As we have seen in previous articles the reference to the walk of the believer is a reference to the whole realm of a person's activity. The emphasis in this verse is a life of self-sacrifice. In Romans 12 Paul could write, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (12:1). Here the perfect example of such a living sacrifice is brought before us in the person of Christ. To what standard should we aspire? That we might be "acceptable unto God" (Rom 12:1) or "for a sweet smelling savour" (v.2). There is a reference here to those Old Testament offerings which were wholly for God and His pleasure.

If in v.2 we are called upon to walk in love, in v.8 the apostle enjoins us to walk in light. As with the teachings of the previous chapter we see again that sharp contrast drawn between the life of the unbeliever and that of the believer: "ye were once darkness, but now..." (JND). Now our union with Christ and our knowledge of Him means that light should radiate from our lives. There can be no neutrality or compromise with "the unfruitful works of darkness" (v.11). If we are to produce anything for God it will be only as a result of walking in the light. To prove "what is acceptable unto the Lord" (v.10) we shall need to examine and test things in the light of the Lord's will and word.

Finally, the apostle would have us to walk in line: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (v.15). The emphasis here is upon the care that we need to exercise in the conduct of our lives. Every step needs to be a measured step, keeping an eye upon the principles by which our lives should be relegated. We are not called upon to rush about blindly. Rather, says the apostle, we are to redeem the time (v.16). This means watching for the seasonable time, the time of true opportunity, when a work for the Lord may be done. In days that are evil and adverse to pleasing God it can be so easy to be drawn into folly. This is not an excuse for lethargy, it is a loving appeal to us to know the word of God and the will of God and to let both govern everything that we do and say for Him.

Books

A Treasury of Inspirational Readings by FE Stallan; published by John Ritchie Ltd; price £15.95. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

A Treasury of Inspirational Readings must be among the most attractive books John Ritchie has published to date. It is issued as a 191-page hardback. Over 100 colour photographs are included, most of them most pleasant pastoral scenes. Altogether the designers have produced a most acceptable "coffee-table" book of daily readings.

But the value of *A Treasury of Inspirational Readings* is really in its spiritual content. Its appearance is enhanced by the use of full-colour illustration but within its covers we have daily meditations which remind the reviewer of Fred Stallan at his best. The meditations are drawn from the letters the author wrote to the Lord's servants over a period of eleven years; they were pertinent to the recipients' circumstances but are also to the much wider readership to whom they are now commended. The cover quotes from a missionary who regularly received Fred's letters: "I found the letters...an unusual blend of uncomplicated thought and richness of language without being ornate".

A helpful index of verses expounded is included in the volume. It will assist the readers to find familiar verses like Rom 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"; Rom 8:28, "...all things work together for good to them that love God"; Mark 7:31, "Come ye yourselves apart". But less commonly quoted are verses such as 2 Sam 3:17-18, "Now then do it"; Ps 4:4, "Stand in awe and sin not"; Josh 21:45, "...all came to pass". And the verses are treated in context and draw forth enlightening comments from the author: e.g. "Temptations of the present times may not be dressed in the same garb as the ones of yesteryear, but the issue is the same for the believer".

A Treasury of Inspirational Readings will be welcomed by a considerable number of readers who value a collection of daily readings. The *Precious Seed Day by Day* has proved that point over recent years. This publication will be a worthy addition to both Ritchie's catalogue and many a saint's bookshelf.

TW

Meditations in Luke by August Van Ryn; published by Walterick Publications; price £6.45. Available from John Ritchie Ltd.

This 278-page paperback is written in simple language and presents its teaching in a way that should not exclude any from benefiting. Perhaps it is his years of evangelism that ensure that his applications are apt and his readiness to point to Christ never in doubt.

Meditations in Luke is not structured as a commentary but provides, as the title suggests, meditations from which the author August Van Ryn has drawn sustenance and guidance. He has grouped his meditations in nine characteristically simple groupings: "Expository Thoughts", "The Very Heart of Luke's Gospel", "Stories about Rich Men", "The Things Concerning Himself" etc. Since each grouping treats 4-16 sub-sections of the Gospel, the detail attaching to each is slight. However sufficient detail is given to stimulate the reader; indeed the lack of detail may prove beneficial to younger readers of Luke's Gospel.

Probably August Van Ryn intended that Meditations in Luke would address a range of needs he discerned in his public ministry. In this he has not entirely failed. The reviewer would suggest that the mature saint seeking in-depth exposition may not find his need met in these Meditations. However he is sure that young and old will find something to turn them to Christ.

TW

Question Box

Question

Some are teaching that the rapture will take place by, or before, the year 2,000. Their reasoning is that one day is equal to one thousand years (2 Pet 3:8), therefore as God worked in six days of creation and rested on the seventh, so 6,000 years (6 days) will have elapsed since creation and the millennial rest (the 7th day), will then be ready to commence. Further, that as after four days the Lord Jesus visited Lazarus to give him life, so 4,000 years (4 days) from creation He came to give us life. They also argue that as the Lord Jesus went to the marriage at Cana on the third day for the marriage of a Jew, so after these 2,000 years (2 days) He has blessed us and on the third day He will visit the Jews again in Tribulation (Hos 6:2). Is this a correct approach to these prophetic matters?

Answer

It is unwise to speculate in matters which God, in His Word, has left unclear. It is also dangerous to predict on the basis of incidents of history which were not even given in a prophetic context. Some feel free to use such incidents for illustrative purposes but to make them the basis upon which we interpret prophetic doctrine is a different matter. The words of Peter in his second epistle are simply saying what Moses had previously said (Ps 90:4). The emphasis in both passages is on the fact that God is the God of eternity and not of time. Neither passage is providing a prophetic formula for us to follow.

The apostle Paul included himself within the plural pronoun employed in his words, "then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15) and similarly throughout the present day of grace there have been saints who have expected the Lord Jesus to return at any moment. We have no scriptural information regarding "times or seasons for the saints of the present day". The church is not the subject of such, indeed the term "times and seasons" always has to do with the nation of Israel and God's dealings with them. The suggestion made in part of the question virtually suggests the the Church and Israel are part of one prophetic programme. They are in fact quite distinct in the purpose of God.

Similar points apply to the later parts of the question. It should also be noted that the visit to Lazarus mentioned in the question involved physical resurrection from the dead. It is hardly a picture of the present day of grace. It should also be noted that the days of the immediately preceding context in John ch.1 should be taken into account when deciding how to view the day of the marriage spoken of in ch.2:1. If viewed as the third day following the one in 1:43 this would make it the seventh day! These considerations reveal the flimsy case for such speculation in all the parts of this question. It has not been given to us to become prophets in our day. Let us just be those who "wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess 1:10).

JR Baker

Young Believers

by Howard Barnes, Bromborough

Living Lessons From Long Ago
8) PAUL THE PRISONER
(Acts 23:18)

Introduction

Paul, or Saul as he was first called, was born into an affluent, orthodox Jewish family in Tarsus, an important city on the southern coast of Cilicia, now a part of modern Turkey. His father was, unusually, a Roman citizen, and was prosperous enough to send Saul to Jerusalem for his further education, to sit "at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). There he was considered to have great potential, being, as he puts it, "above many mine equals in mine own nation". However, he ended his days in a Roman prison, with few friends around him, suffering "trouble as an evildoer" (2 Tim 2:9). He was the most unlikely person to have ended up in that situation, given his early life and promise, and subsequent behaviour, but God had other plans for him!

Early Days

Saul came into the picture when Stephen was being martyred. Stephen had been taken out of the city to be stoned to death, and "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7:58), and "Saul was consenting unto [Stephen's] death" (8:1). At that time he was already well known (26:4), and had already become a Pharisee. He soon changed from being an observer to an active leader in the persecution of Christians, for later he "ravaged the [Jerusalem] assembly, entering into the houses one after another, and dragging off both men and women delivered them up to prison" (8:3 JND). Some of them were killed, Saul adding his own voice against them (26:10), "being exceeding mad against them" (v.11). His rage against believers did not confine itself to Jerusalem, but still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest", asking for and obtaining letters of authority to take to the Damascus synagogues, in order to arrest and bring back any he found "of this way". However, it was on the way there that the Lord Jesus appeared to him and commissioned him to go to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18).

As soon as he was able, Saul got on with his new work, first at Damascus and then at Jerusalem, and eventually as Paul (Acts 13:9), preaching to Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (26:20).

In Journeyings Often

The best summary of Paul's work thereafter is his own–"in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times

received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor 11:23-28).

He was eventually arrested and imprisoned, first at Jerusalem (Acts 21:33) and then at Caesarea (23:33), and seeing no possibility of an early trial, he made use of his Roman citizenship and appealed to Caesar (25:11), and was taken to Rome (27:1). There he utilised his confinement under house arrest to preach the gospel (Acts 28:30, Phil 1:12-14), and was busy welcoming visitors and sending letters as necessary. Some time later, as he had hoped (Phil 2:24), he was released, but was subsequently rearrested, imprisoned, tried (2 Tim 4:16) and executed.

Conclusion

If we had seen Saul travelling along the road to Damascus, the last thing we would have predicted for him was to have become a dedicated christian preacher. Furthermore, if we knew his strict Jewish background and beliefs, we would never have believed that he would dedicate his life to work among Gentiles. At various points in his later life Paul made statements about his progress, for instance, evangelically–"from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum [our Albania], I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom 15:19); then financially, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil 3:8) and then, finally, spiritually, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7). If they had heard this, how many of his unconverted fellow-countrymen had said to him that he should be ashamed of himself, given the great possibilities he had ahead of him in his youth? No doubt we would have said, as he did on a number of occasions, "I am not ashamed" (Rom 1:16; 2 Cor 7:14; 2 Tim 1:12).

The two most important lessons for us to learn from our study of Paul the persecutor turned preacher, who ended up as prisoner, are, first that we ought not to write anybody off as being impossible for God to save. Second, we ought not to judge a person's potential for service for God by their background. Paul changed from a persecutor who was mad to a preacher who "laboured more abundantly than they all", but knew that it was "not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor 15:10).

Psalm 139 (3)

by Clifford Jones, Cardiff

Reactions to God's greatness

The final section of the Psalm (vv.19-24) shows David's hatred of sin. He has been contemplating the greatness of God and now we read of his reactions which develop out of this contemplation. David loathes sin in others and in himself. He hates the enemies of God. There was a time when all believers were enemies of God (Rom 5:10) and "...dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1), but now, those of us who have been saved are called to "...walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). We enjoy liberty and freedom to worship and serve as led by the Holy Spirit. If we are to be led and used by the Spirit we must be clean vessels fit for the Master's use. We are not our own, for we have been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19,20). One prerequisite to becoming gradually more and more conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29) and living a life of service in accordance with His will is that we should be separated from the world and to God (2 Cor 6:17). This separation must not be simply positional, in the sense of having the appearance of not being involved in certain activities, or going to certain places, but it must be a separated condition. That is separation in reality, with no spiritual pride but a heart filled with love for God and a desire to serve Him.

The separated believer, led by the Holy Spirit, will possess spiritual discernment enabling him to choose between good and evil. Such a believer will experience an increasing love for God, His written word and fellow believers. There will also be an increasing sensitivity to sin, and David is displaying such sensitivity in the verses we are considering. God's name is so often taken in vain and this causes the believer to wince inwardly and to feel a hatred of the sin but intense pity for those who commit such blasphemies.

The Lord loved sinners. He was the friend of sinners and won them to Himself but He was, at the same time, holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (Heb 7:26). The separated life involves avoiding permanent relationships with unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14) and demands a prayerful choice of companion, employment, places frequented, situations and use of time and energy, for "...the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4).

Living in the constant expectation of the return of the Lord concentrates the believer's mind and stimulates the desire for a separated life. Separation leads to blessing (Ps 1:1) and the gradual replacement of evil in the life with holiness, that is "...perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor 7:1).

Being led by God in paths of obedience leads to a prayer like the prayer of David in verses 23 and 24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way

in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (vv.23-24). The believer, like David, will want God to reveal to him any sinful ways of which he is not aware so that the sin may be eradicated and the believer progress further in the way that God would have him to go, as one who has been redeemed by precious blood (1 Pet 1:19). Once the believer is aware of sin in the life, then if that sin is confessed God is faithful and just to forgive that sin and cleanse from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). God requires a believer to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and to love his neighbour as himself (Matt 22:37,39; Mark 12:30,31). This is the ultimate in spiritual growth and maturity. Such a believer will "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15,16).

In verse 24 David asks God to reveal to him any wicked way that is in him because he knows that such a way will lead to pain and grief, and he prays to be led in the way everlasting. This is the way that leads to God, ultimately to an eternity in heaven where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore (Ps 16:11). The righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is imputed to believers (2 Cor 5:21) and "...the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps 1:6).

Meditation on God will ultimately cause a believer to be overwhelmed by the truths revealed by the Spirit

Great blessing comes from meditating on the truths revealed in the Word of God (Ps 1:2). When one meditates, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the eternal, unchanging God, on His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, and His eternal majesty and glory, and considers the meaning and implications of the truths that "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16) and that He is "...full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), then words become inadequate to express the feelings of wonder, reverence, awe, praise, worship, love and adoration that rise in the heart. Such meditation leads to a desire for greater sanctification, and to longings to become more like him and to serve Him better, with complete obedience, in the time that remains. Meditation on God will ultimately cause a believer to be overwhelmed by the truths revealed by the Spirit and to say "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep" (Ps 92:5).

Regions Beyond

ARMENIA– a field white unto harvest by Jeremy Sampson

In 1989 a tragic earthquake struck killing thousands of people, thus making Armenia the focus of international attention. Before then, if you are in anyway like me, you would have barely heard of Armenia let alone be able to locate it on a map.

Armenia is a landlocked country with powerful, and sometimes hostile neighbours. Turkey is to the West, Iran to the South, Azerbaijan to the East and Georgia to the North. Armenian history is one of a continuing struggle of a resilient and gifted people to preserve their identity in the face of conquest, destruction and even genocide. Nevertheless, Armenia, as far back as Biblical times, has been a centre of art, literature and culture, much of which has been permeated by a deep spiritual yearning. In fact, Armenia in 301 A.D. was the first country to adopt Christianity as its state religion. With the rise of Islam in the seventh century Armenia's Christian identity brought it into repeated conflict with the Moslem countries round about it. This reached an unparalleled brutal height in 1915 when the Turks massacred over 1,500,000 Armenians in the space of two years, causing many survivors to flee America, Europe and other parts of the Middle East. Shortly after the First World War Armenia was forcibly absorbed into the expanding Soviet Empire, only to re-emerge as an independent country in 1989 as a result of the collapse of Communism.

In the last nine years of religious freedom God has been working mightily. Many Armenians have been turning from spiritually bankrupt nominal Christianity to real faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. In 1993, I first became aware of the Christian work being undertaken in Armenia when I took up a position as an English teacher at the Logos School in Limassol, Cyprus. Whilst being in fellowship in the Gospel Hall, Limassol I heard regular reports from Levon Yergatian and his son-in-law Toros Pilibosian of the work of God in Armenia. It was difficult not to be moved and enthused by the reports as many of those in assembly fellowship were Armenians who took a keen prayerful and practical interest in the ongoing work. Having recently returned from a holiday in Cyprus and having been in contact with Levon I am pleased to report the work goes from strength to strength.

Since 1993 three assemblies have been established in Yerevan, Giumri and Horom, with pioneer work in a number of other towns and villages. This achievement is all the more remarkable when one considers there is no full-time overseas assembly missionary in Armenia. Thus, this further demonstrates the blessing of God, the spiritual hunger amongst these people for the truth of the Word of God and the hard work and diligence undertaken by the Armenian saints.

During the month of August a camp staffed by Armenians from England, Cyprus and Armenia itself was held in



Vanadzor. At this camp over three hundred children heard the gospel, and as a result, one hundred professed faith in Christ. In the same period twenty-one Armenian believers obeyed the Lord in the waters of baptism. A container full of food and clothing has been sent from Cyprus. Another container from Holland has carried 10,000 Bibles to join the 20,000 previously transported. Other Christian publications, including 10,000 copies of the Armenian translation of 'Pilgrim's Progress' are also in print.

It is amazing what the Lord is doing in Armenia. 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few' (Matt 9:37). Many countries may feel that this aptly describes their spiritual situation but few more acutely than Armenia.

VISIT TO MOSCOW AND KROPOTKIN by Alex McLean

At the Moscow airport I was met by my good friend, Sergei Sidorenko, and Alexei who works full time at Butyrka prison for Spiritual Freedom. At 10am we were ready to go to Butyrka Prison. There are almost thirty Russian people working for Spiritual Freedom. They are dealing with 300 Bible courses each week and are having great results. After receiving permission from the Governor we visited "Death Row"! We had long conversations with Nikolai and Boris who are both very bright Christians and have been since 1993 when the gospel was introduced in the prison by Phil Wagner.

Next day while Sergei preached to the Russian occupied cells, I spoke to the English speaking Nigerians. At the first cell the little opening on the door, which is 9 inches by 12 inches, was opened by a dear American brother called Dale Tweedie. Mr Tweedie told me that only two hours ago this man, Christopher, had been sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment. In the next cell a young man, Samuel, was serving eight years. What do you say to someone who only two hours ago was told that he would spend the best years of his life doing hard labour? I was amazed at their attitude! Christopher praised the Lord and thanked God for taking him off the street and into prison where he heard the gospel and trusted Christ and was now on his way to heaven. If he had still been on the streets of Moscow he would soon have died and gone to hell. Both men said exactly the same although they were in different cells. Oh the marvellous grace of God!

On the Train to Kropotkin

Sergei and I left Moscow on the thirty hour journey to his home town. On the train we occupied the compartment with two Russian men, Anatoli and Alexander. We introduced ourselves to each other and then the conversation began! What is a man from Scotland doing in Russia? The gospel was preached from that moment and lasted the whole journey. Just before we came to Rostov on Don, Alexander trusted

Christ as Saviour. He said that when he came on to the train he was very depressed but now he would leave the train a very relieved man. Alexander was an ex jet pilot and very intelligent. When we returned from the Black Sea area there was a letter waiting for us from Alexander. He thanked us for the experience on the train and asked if, on our return to Moscow, we would stop at Rostov and speak to his sister and family about the way of salvation. Of course we could not do that but Sergei, at a later date, will drive by car and meet him and then visit the family.

Kropotkin

I experienced a great welcome at Sergei's house, this being my second time here. The weather was wonderful but too hot for someone from the north of Scotland, almost 100F in the shade! We visited all the villages round Kropotkin with Bibles and booklets and were gladly received.

On June 15th we packed the car with Bibles and books and started our journey to the Black Sea area. On the way we passed at least ten market places, with many people, and distributed as we went. At one point we passed through a Muslim area and were surprised to see the response and how gladly they received the bibles and children's books. We crossed the Caucuses mountains and descended to the Black Sea. On one occasion we distributed Bibles as the people went into the hotel dining room. It was touching to see them coming back out holding the Bible as if they were coming out of a meeting. We had no opposition apart from one or two who were strong Russian Orthodox but it was just a simple refusal.

Another Saved

On our return we had the great privilege of leading yet another Russian to Christ. Two men came to Sergei's house. One had already professed and, after an hour, the other, Andrei, came to the Saviour. He said he had been three times at Sergei's home looking for him burdened about his soul. As they say continually in Russia, "Slava Bogo" Glory to God! There are now more than 230 in fellowship in the meeting in Kropotkin and all very desirous of the Word. Poverty prevails but where there is a need materially there is abundance in spirituality. Please continue to pray for a people who are experiencing spiritual freedom for the first time.

The Economy

Pensioners get less than $50 per month but sometimes do not get paid for seven months. One old lady in the market place, when she knew I was from Scotland, spoke to me loudly with great emphasis, she is receiving five times less now than in Communist times. Sergei's brother Alexander, since his factory has been closed in the Ukraine, has worked in a restaurant as a security man, his wage $20 per month. He also is saved and rejoicing in the Lord.

My experience in Russia is all the result of Sergei Sidorenko receiving a Bible in Peterhead from brother James Strachan in 1992.

The Emotions of Christ

by C Logan, Botswana

The Lord Jesus experienced a full range of human emotions, sin apart. He had neither a cool nor detached approach to life and He knew nothing of "a stiff upper lip". The plight of individuals touched him deeply and He responded with an intensity none of us has ever known. His prior knowledge of human circumstances never blunted His response and His frequent addressing of need never caused Him to become casual or unfeeling.

We are so different. Many of us have been brought up in a culture which discourages the display of emotions. Not only do we recoil from the frothy emotionalism of some religious groups but also we struggle with any hint of emotion at all and are embarrassed should someone "wear his heart on his sleeve". We can also hold back from becoming too deeply involved with the needs and suffering of others. There is an element of self-protection in this. Empathy with human need is draining and sometimes we feel that we have reached our limits of sharing in another's grief or pain. As we shall see, the Saviour never shielded Himself from identifying fully with others.

So what was it that evoked His pleasure and His pain? Why did He sometimes commend and at other times condemn? A number of explicit references in the Gospels to the emotions of Christ open up for us a window into His soul.

His pleasure

The Lord *"rejoiced"* to find men and women exercising faith in God. In a short prayer He thanked His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, that He had revealed truth to those who are willing to receive it in childlike dependence and humble faith (Luke 10:21). By contrast, those who looked to their own worldly wisdom and knowledge could never become the recipients of divine truth.

The faith of a centurion also pleased the Lord. He *"marvelled"* at the soldier's nobility in caring for his servant, his humility in declaring his own un-worthiness and his trust in coming to the Saviour for help. His faith contrasted with an unbelieving nation (Matt 8:5-13). The centurion and the nation would receive their appropriate rewards.

His pain

The Lord was deeply disturbed by unbelief and hypocrisy. Mark tells us He was *"angry"* and felt *"grief"* at the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts (Mark 3:5) and He *"sighed deeply"* when they called for a sign (Mark 8:12). He knew, of course, that they were insincere. They were wanting only to tempt Him and then accuse Him so that finally they might destroy Him. One of three occasions the Saviour *"wept"* was when he lamented the unbelief of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their stubborn refusal to heed His tender pleadings (Luke 19:41).

Apart from the attitudes and actions of the Lord's enemies, He also *was "much displeased"* with His own disciples when they rebuked those who brought their children to Him (Mark

10:14). How He loved the little ones! He drew them close to Himself, took them up in His arms and blessed them. Insensitivity and impatience were foreign to Him.

His Compassion

Whenever the Lord met human need He was *"moved with compassion"*. He saw vast companies with no bread (Matt 14:14; 15:32) and lost souls with no shepherd (Mark 6:34). He had compassion for a leper with no hope because of his disease (Mark 1:41) and a widow with no hope because of the death of her boy (Luke 7:13). At the grave of Lazarus, His beloved friend, He *"groaned"* and *"wept"* (John 11:33). He *"loved"* a young ruler who had seemed to zealous to inherit eternal life (Mark 10:21). Into these dire circumstances He brought food, care and healing, life, light and love. Only the ruler departed unblessed but certainly not unloved. Other things were claiming his heart.

The exercise of divine power was not inconsequential to the Saviour. When the woman touched the hem of His garment He knew that virtue had gone out of Him. He was not exhausted by this miracle nor was His power depleted but He was aware, however, that the blessing had flowed. And still it flows today.

His Cup

Calvary overshadowed the Saviour's life. As a boy He was aware of His identity and responsibility: "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). In later life He could declare that He was *"straitened"* until His baptism be accomplished (Luke 12:50). This baptism was not that of the river Jordan but that of the cross and the word used by Luke has the force of pain and distress.

As His appointed time drew near His soul was *"troubled"* (John 12:27). We see Him prostrate and lonely in the garden of Gethsemane and we are permitted to be wondering spectators of His *"agony"* and His *"strong crying and tears"* (Luke 22:44; Heb 5:7). He was *"exceeding sorrowful"*, *"sore amazed"* and *"very heavy"* (Mark 14:33-34; Matt 26:37) as He contemplated becoming the Sin-bearer. The suffering and shame, the hatred and pain, were only a prelude to the mighty onslaught of God's wrath upon sin. The darkness was riven by the terrible cry, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" There was no answer and none to help when He became the Orphan of the universe.

This One is our Saviour and Friend. Today He is the gentle Shepherd who cares and the great High Priest who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. We may bring Him pleasure or pain but despite our many failings and weakness He abides faithful.

A christian tourist was visiting the Far East. He was led inside the vast image of a heathen deity where he stood looking around. Finally he gazed upwards and remarked, "It is truly magnificent but I see no heart here". No heart, no feelings, no love, no emotion. We can rejoice that the One we own as Lord remains supreme, "the sympathising Jesus."

The Lord's Work & Workers

N. IRELAND FORTHCOMING

DECEMBER 5
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Stubbs.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. R McIlwaine.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Hay.

DECEMBER 12
Armagh: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. D Gilliland.
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Grant.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. T Bentley.

DECEMBER 19
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 8.00pm. J Flanigan.
Cloughfern: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. H Andrews.

DECEMBER 25
Cregagh St: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. Annual Conference. R McKeown, D Gililland, J Flanigan.

DECEMBER 28 & 29
Belfast: Annual meetings to be held in Balmoral Conference Centre. Bible Reading at 2.30pm. Ministry at 6.00pm.

DECEMBER 31
Ballymena: Gospel Hall at 11.00pm. J Baker, D West.
Laganvale: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Flanigan, G Hall.
Maranatha: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. Testimony meeting.

SCOTLAND FORTHCOMING

DECEMBER 5
Bridge of Weir: Hope Hall at 7.00pm. J Burnett, T Bentley. Mr Bentley will continue Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.
Coatbridge: Hebron Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, W Park.
Gorgie: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (Hebrews ch 3:1-4:13).
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. E Hughes, J Rodgers.
Kennoway: Arnot Gospel Hall, Cupar Road at 7.30pm. I England.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. D Locke, (Report), I Wallace.
Knightswood: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Pollard, A Summers.
Livingston: Gospel Hall, Deans at 6.30pm. T Jones, R Marshall.
New Stevenston: Assembly Hall at 6.30pm. A Sinclair, B Stapley.
Perth: Gospel Hall, 157 South St at 7.00pm. W Stevely.
Shieldhill: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Flanigan (Ministry and Report). Mr Flanigan continues in Ministry Mon-Thurs at 7.30pm.

DECEMBER 11
Ashgill: Bethany Hall, Bible Reading at 7.30pm. R Thomson. (Eph 6:1-12).

DECEMBER 12
Armadale: Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Chalmers, K Binnie.
Bannockburn: Gospel Hall, East Murrayfield at 7.00pm. Bible Reading: 1st Corinthians 15.
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. J Burnett, R Cameron.
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Pollard.
Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. S McDonald, R Marshall.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. N Hamilton, W Hannay.
Stevenston: Bethany Hall at 7.00pm. S Arbuthnot, R Revie (Report).

DECEMBER 19
Ayr: Prestwick Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm.

Bible Reading (Rev 2:18-29), W Banks.
Denny: Westboreland Road at 7.00pm.
Gourock: Bethany Hall, Drumshantie Road at 7.00pm. J Dunlop.
Linthouse: Bethesda Hall at 7.00pm. T Jennings (Ministry and Report on Eastern Europe work).
Mayfield: Gospel Hall, Stone Avenue at 6.30pm. M Radcliffe. Mr Radcliffe continues in Ministry Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm.
Motherwell: Shields Road Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. S Arbuthnot, A McLean.
St Monans: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. J Buchanan.
Whitburn: West End Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. A Foster, J Grant.

DECEMBER 31
Ballingry: Gospel Hall. Ministry at 3.30pm. Bible Reading at 6.30pm. Joshua ch 5.

DECEMBER 31 - JANUARY 1
Hamilton: High Parks Gospel Hall. Thursday 31st at 6.45pm. Ministry. A Sinclair, R Cargill. Friday 1st. Annual Conference in Hamilton College, Bothwell Road at 11.30am. R Cargill, P Coulson, A Sinclair.

DECEMBER 31 - JANUARY 4
Glasgow: Gospel Hall, Harley Street, Thursday 31st at 7.00pm, Bible Reading (1 Cor 3) J McDonald. Friday 1st in Harper Memorial, Craigiehall Street at 11.00am. Conference, J McDonald, T Meekin, B Osborne, J Paterson. Lord's Day Harley Street at 2.30pm. Ministry. Monday 4th in Harley Street at 6.30pm. Report meeting, R Surgenor (USA) and others.

JANUARY 1
Aberdeen: Annual Conference, Victoria Hall, Torry at 2.00pm. J Buchanan, R Gamble, M Baker. (Also 2nd January).
Ayr: Woodpark Evangelical Church. Annual Conference in the Baptist Church at 1.30pm. W Stevely, J Dunlop, W Naismith.
Kilmarnock: Annual Conference, Central Evangelical Church, John Finnie Street at 1.30pm. N Hood, A Naismith.
Kirkcaldy: Gospel Hall, Hayfield Road. Annual Conference at 2.30pm. S Arbuthnot, M Horlock, R Stephen.
New Stevenston: Annual Conference in Holytown Community Centre at 11.30am. J Grant, T Bentley, S Foster. Mr Bentley continues in Ministry Mon-Thurs at 8.00pm.

JANUARY 2
Aberdeen: Annual Conference, Victoria Hall, Torry at 2.00pm. J Buchanan, R Gamble, M Baker.
Abingdon: Stewartville St, Partick. Annual Christian Conference at 3.15pm. S Arbuthnot, A Gamble, W Hannay.
Auchinleck: Gospel Hall, Park Road. Conference at 12.15pm. G Meikle, R Millar, B Stapely.
Denny: Annual Conference in New Masonic Hall, Broad Street, Kirkslap at 12 noon. Ministering brethren expected.
Larkhall: Hareleeshill Gospel Hall. New Year Conference in Larkhall Baptist Church, Machan Road at 11.30am. J Grant, E Parmenter, E Hughes. Mr Parmenter continues in ministry Mon-Wed at 7.45pm. in the Gospel Hall.
Prestwick: Bute Hall, New Year Conference in Bute Hall at 1.30pm. W Naismith, J Cadzow, A Foster.
Whitburn: Annual Conference in Brucefield Church, East Main Street at 11.30am. T Meekin, P Coulson, J Harrison.

JANUARY 8
Ashgill: Bible Reading at 7.30pm. J Grant (Eph 6:13-24).

JANUARY 9
Armadale: Gospel Hall. Conference in Armadale Academy at 3.00pm. M Radcliffe,



I Robertson, J Chalmers.
Bannockburn: Gospel Hall, East Murrayfield at 7.00pm. Bible Reading (1st Cor 15).
Bishopton: Gospel Hall at 6.45pm. G Meikle, J Paterson (jnr).
Cumbernauld: Mossknowe Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. A Pollard.
Dumfries: Bethany Hall, Buccleuch St. Annual Conference at 2.00pm. A Foster, J Rodgers.
Hamilton: Low Waters Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. J Hay, B Martin.
Kilmarnock: Elim Hall, Cuthbert Place at 6.45pm. W Park, D Meikle.
Larkhall: Albion Hall at 6.30pm. J Grant, R Millar.
Newmilns: Townhead Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. G Ruston and J Zachariassen.
Wishaw: Ebenezer Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. S Grant, I Steele.

ENGLAND & WALES FORTHCOMING

DECEMBER 5
Birmingham: Charlton Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Linton.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue at 7.30pm. S Downs.
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Speedwell Chapel at 7.00pm. D Roberts.
Cwmbran: Gospel Hall at 7.15pm. B Osborne.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm (Romans 14:1-19). J Sinclair. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. R Davies.
Merseyside: Liverpool and District Christian Rallies, Larkhill at 7.30pm. H Barnes.
Netherfield: Gospel Hall, Victoria Road at 7.15pm. P Scarsbrook.
New Bradwell: Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. D Spence.
Stoke: Gospel Hall, Fletcher Road at 7.00pm. J Bennett.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Hall at 7.00pm. G Davies.
Tonbridge: Gospel Hall, Bishops Oak Ride at 7.00pm. I Jackson.
Warrington: Hope Hall, Hawthorne Street at 7.00pm. R Dawes.
Westcliff-on-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. D West.
West Mersea: at 4.00pm and 6.15pm. E Parmenter.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Stewart.

DECEMBER 12
Appledore: The Bethel, The Quay at 7.15pm. M Coombes (Report).
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. J Hollyfield.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel at 7.00pm. A Wiseman.
Derby: Meeting Room, Curzon Street at 7.15pm. N Mellish.
Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. I Rees.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall at 7.00pm. C Lacey.
Leicester: York Street Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Stewart.
Northampton: Osborne Road Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. H Barnes.
Redditch: Foxlydiate Crescent Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Hutchison.
Tooting: Gospel Hall, 146 Longley Road, London at 7.00pm. H Hatt.
Uxendon: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. C Roberts.

DECEMBER 19
Cheltenham: Bethany Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. C Lacey.
Crawley: Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. A Maunder.

Dereham: Toftwood Gospel Hall, Shipdham Road at 7.00pm. E Honeyball.
Harrogate: Woodfield Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. P Richardson.
Harrow: Belmont Hall at 7.15pm. I Rees.
London: Bermondsey Gospel Hall, St James's Road at 7.00pm. J Riddle.
Mitcham Junction: at 7.00pm. D West.
Portsmouth: Copnor Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. I Jackson.
Solihull: Gospel Hall, 62 Lode Lane at 7.30pm. J Mitchell.

JANUARY 1
Ash-Vale: Evangelical Church, Frimley Road. Annual Conference at 3.30pm and 6.00pm. P Brandon.
Swindon: Penhill Gospel Hall, Penhill Drive. Annual Conference at 3.00pm and 6.00pm. C Lacey, T Proffitt.

JANUARY 2
Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Gospel Hall at 7.15pm. J Hall.
Luton: Selbourne Gospel Hall at 6.30pm. K Cline.
Sydenham: Mayow Road Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. P Kaye.
Westcliff-On-Sea: Gospel Hall, Carlton Avenue at 7.30pm. I Jackson.
Wimborne: Emmanuel Gospel Hall at 7.00pm. D Stevely.

JANUARY 9
Blackburn: Gospel Hall, New Wellington Street, Mill Hill. Annual Conference at 3.00pm. and 6.00pm. J Baker, I Jackson. Mr Baker continues in ministry Monday 11th January at 8.00pm.
Blackpool: Gospel Hall, Salthouse Avenue at 7.30pm. J Coltman
Bristol: United Ministry Meetings in Unity Chapel at 7.00pm. D Bradford.
Cheshunt: Mill Lane Chapel at 7.00pm. R Dawes.
Derby: Meeting Room, Curzon Street at 7.15pm. I Campbell.
Ely: Gospel Hall, Ship Lane at 7.00pm. G Woods. Mr Woods continues on Monday at 7.30pm.
Guildford: Manor Road Hall, Manor Road at 7.00pm. B Chapman.
Huyton: New Year Conference in Bethany Hall at 3.00pm. and 6.15pm. S Baker, J Gibson.
Jarrow: Gospel Hall, Cambrian St, Tyneside Monthly Bible Study Conference. Bible Reading at 3.45pm. (Romans 14:20-15:13). T Wilson. Ministry at 6.45pm.
Northampton: Osborne Road Gospel Hall at 7.30pm. D Hands.
Uxendon: Gospel Hall, Elmstead Av at 7.00pm. T Proffitt.

N. IRELAND REPORTS

Co. ANTRIM
Ballymoney: Good numbers are attending meetings in the gospel hall by R McKeown and C Law. Several have professed faith in the Lord Jesus.
Buckna: J Allen and R McIlwaine (PEI) commenced gospel meetings on October 25th. Numbers are encouraging and include a fine company of unsaved young people with assembly connections.
Kells: D Gilliland and R Surgenor (USA), whose ancestors lived in the Kells area, are getting a real good interest and most encouraging numbers to gospel meetings in the gospel hall. Brother Surgenor's family connections are opening doors and giving him many good contacts as he visits around inviting folk to the meetings. Hall filled nightly.
Ballymena: Ian Jackson had one week of well attended ministry meetings in Cambridge Avenue in October. Ministry helpful and most challenging.



Co. ARMAGH

Killylea: Gospel meetings commencing in portable hall 1st November by T McNeill and M Campbell.

Tassagh: Roughan Gospel Hall had one week of ministry by R Surgenor (USA). Full hall nightly with good practical ministry. This small assembly was encouraged.

Ardmore: Conference was considered good with full hall. Speakers J Hutchinson, J Allen, J Dickson and J Wishart.

Lurgan: Conference–Large number present throughout and generally thought to be one of the best for years. Brethren responsible for Bible Readings were T Bentley, A McShane, D West and D Gilliland.

Portadown: A Davidson had a week and a half of ministry on "The Feasts of Jehovah" with nice numbers nightly.

Co MONAGHAN

Monaghan: J Thompson and J Kells commencing gospel meetings 1st November.

Co. DOWN

Ballymacashon: J G Hutchinson and A Aiken have had an encouraging start to the gospel effort in this country area where the assembly is small.

Crossgar: B Glendinning and R Fairley concluded a seven week series in portable hall. Fair numbers attended but disappointing in that local response was not consistent.

Drumnahare: J Martin and J Rogers commenced gospel meetings in hall used for S. School work and outreach on 25th October. Attendance so far very encouraging.

Shanaghan: Annual meeting 1st October. Speakers, R McKeown, N Stewart, N Turkington, B Allen (Australia), W J Nesbitt. Ministry considered good and practical. The following evening the annual S. School prize giving was held with many parents present. The gospel was preached by J Lennox.

Ballyhay: J Lennox and B Currie commenced gospel meetings on 25th October.

Bangor: (Ebenezer). J Flanigan had two weeks ministry on the book of Revelation.

Bangor: (Central Hall). J Riddle had one week of profitable ministry.

Dundonald: J Hay had one week of well attended ministry meetings, very practical.

Ballymagarrick: J Burnett was with the assembly for one week. Hall filled each evening. The ministry was practical and challenging.

CO LONDONDERRY

Aughrim: H Andrews is in the first week of gospel meetings in the gospel hall (end October).

Ballinlintagh: M McKillen and W Fenton are in their second week of meetings in a portable hall in the village of Macosquin (end October). The village is three miles from Coleraine and numbers attending are most encouraging. So far a young married woman has been saved, with a number of others showing a measure of interest in their soul's salvation.

BELFAST & DISTRICT

Shankill: D Kane and T Meekin (Burnside) continue in the gospel. Local interest disappointing but unsaved present nearly every night. Saints greatly encouraged by support from other assemblies.

SCOTLAND REPORTS

Lanarkshire: Throughout the summer months, the three Larkhall assemblies co-operated to distribute a gospel text (John 3:16) to every home in this town of over 18,000 people. The assemblies are grateful to those brethren who provide these beautiful scripture texts. Many were framed by the townsfolk and a number of cards were returned requesting information. Pray that the entrance of the Word will give light to needy souls. A similar activity was conducted



by the believers at the village of Overtown in North Lanarkshire, who gratefully acknowledge the help of Jack Ritchie from Law in this task.

At Bellshill, consideration had been given to closing the Sunday School owing to lack of interest, but perseverance and prayer have seen a reversal of the common trend and there are now 30 scholars on the roll, some of whom are young men in their sixth year at high school. The assembly at Greengairs has for some time been inviting adults to Sunday School with their families. This is proving useful in attracting a few parents who would not otherwise attend gospel meetings.

In August, the assembly at Muirhead convened a series of gospel meetings in Moorpark Gospel Hall when the evangelist was John Grant. The local assembly was much encouraged in these meetings, and by his personal zeal in preaching and in daily visitation to the districts and homes in Muirhead, Chryston, Mt. Ellen, Gartcosh and Moodiesburn. Some 5000 gospel tracts and other literature were distributed and many good contacts were made. Over the three-week period, 34 unsaved people attended the meetings and the Lord graciously blessed the preaching in the saving of a young man and a young woman. We rejoice with them that do rejoice.

Throughout Lanarkshire, there is increasing public opposition to open-air meetings, and we may soon be facing no go areas in our towns and villages. This should be a spur to greater activity in the gospel.

In October, the monthly prayer meetings of the Lanarkshire Gospel Work recommenced, held in Bellshill on the second Friday of each month, October-May, when a number of exercised brethren representing several assemblies meet together for a time of focused prayer on behalf of the work of the gospel in Lanarkshire.

Ayrshire: Roland Pickering from Northern Ireland was responsible for a series of gospel meetings in Beith where there has been no assembly for a number of years. Although a small country town, it has a Mormon temple and a satanist group is also known to meet there. The town was tracted and invitations distributed over the 2 weeks prior to the meetings, and special preparatory prayer meetings were held in the neighbouring assembly at Kilbirnie. On Sunday evenings the meetings were held in the Community Centre while on week nights the former Gospel Hall was used. (The Gospel Hall has been taken over by a small evangelical group who kindly loaned it for the duration of the meetings). There was very good support, organised from the assemblies nearby, for the prayer and open air meetings held before the evening gospel preaching. Mr Pickering visited well throughout the town and faithfully preached the gospel each night. A few local people attended and some women came regularly. We continue to pray that God will yet save souls in this needy town. Robert Revie and Ian Robertson conducted meetings in the small town of Logan and had a good response from the children with excellent children's meetings. Only a few attended the adult meetings but among them it was felt there were souls seeking Christ. Some recently saved men from Auchinleck who were former alcoholics, brought along to the meetings others with this same affliction. Good ear to the preaching was given and some had conversations about salvation. Subsequent to the meetings one of these men professed faith in the Lord Jesus. Pray that he may be truly delivered from his sins and the power of alcohol.

The assembly at Woodpark, Ayr had an intensive build up to their gospel effort in September. Much visitation was done and personal invitations given. The Bible Exhibition was taken into Belmont Academy for two days and the RC school for a day, and then in the assembly hall itself. There was

an excellent response in the schools and impressions were made. This was preparing for the visit of Ian Jackson, who preached the gospel with power for two weeks and a number of unsaved people attended. Two men in particular, one an alcoholic, showed interest. A girl in her mid teens took an Ultimate Questions booklet the second Wednesday night and professed to be saved the next night in her own home after reading it.

During October Robert Revie and Ian Robertson moved on to Kilmaurs near Kilmarnock with the portable hall. They have been in this village before and have seen souls saved in the past and are able to build on previous contacts. There are also several assembly Christians living in Kilmaurs, and the local minister has a number of saved people in his congregation who have also previously attended meetings.

Dumfries and Galloway: This year marks the 20th anniversary of the commencement of open air work in the town of Dumfries. This is supported by the assembly at Bethany Hall and is mainly carried on by John Wilson, joined in recent times by Stephan Brandt who originates from Germany. On Wednesdays and Saturdays they meet for prayer and then proceed up the High Street with Scripture banners and gospel tracts. On average they are distributing to unsaved people 800 tracts per month. In their newsletter they point out that it is estimated that only around 5% of people in the UK these days regularly attend any place of worship and that the remaining 95% have little or no care for their souls. In a day when open air work is not so evident as it once was we thank God for this consistent testimony over the last 20 years.

George Meikle and Roy Marshall spent most of July in the village of Gargunnock, near Stirling, visiting the homes and holding meetings in the Community Hall. The response was very poor, but it was encouraging to see an Irish family attending almost every meeting. Prayer would be valued that they might come to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our brethren went on to the nearby village of Thornhill during September, and, in spite of the poor response here also, were encouraged by a phone call from a young woman who phoned to say that she had trusted the Saviour after being visited and reading some booklets. Subsequent visitation has indicated that she is enjoying peace and joy in Christ. Please pray that her profession is genuine and that she may be helped in her personal problems.

There was further encouragement in witnessing the baptism of a young couple who were saved a year ago at Inverkeithing, and who have consistently attended the small assembly there. Some of the parents were also present, and we look to the Lord to save them as well. This couple have been received into the assembly at Inverkeithing.

We hope to have some meetings in Kirkliston, near Edinburgh, during November and December, but are waiting for permission from the village committee. We value prayer for this work also.

ENGLAND & WALES REPORTS

Appledore: The Bethel, The Quay, North Devon. The monthly series of ministry on Women of the Old Testament was well attended and helpful teaching was given on Ruth, Rahab and Esther, whilst the Easter conference also included stimulating ministry on Deborah by Mr C Lacey.

Two Holiday Bible Clubs have been held this year, one in February, the other in August. The regular attendance of 15-20 children was an encouragement, and some new faces there in August have promised

to come to the weekly One Way Club when it recommences in September.

Outreach has been carried on again this summer with the Lord's Day evening Gospel meeting which is relayed out onto the Quay. Whilst numbers are not as they once were, a fair number of people, local and on holiday have been reached by this means. The assistance of brethren on holiday has been much appreciated, when in the Lord's goodness good sized companies gathered. The assembly however is small, with just 3 present on most Lord's days, so please pray for us.

Skelmanthorpe, Yorkshire: The assembly held a 2 week gospel effort conducted by J Baxter. A good number of unsaved attended, especially senior citizens, with one lady of 88 years of age professing salvation and others showing concern. Some backsliders were also contacted who show a desire to get back to the things of the Lord. Our brother was faithful in door-to-door visitation, many contacts being generated by this aspect of the work, some of whom attended the meetings.

Killamarsh, Derbyshire: P Kaye conducted 2 weeks of children's meetings in fellowship with the assembly here. Between 30 and 50 children attended each evening with good attention being paid. Some parents also attended, with one mother being present at almost every meeting. Opportunity was also taken to visit 2 local schools to take assembly. The results are left with the Lord of the harvest.

Bermondsey, London. The 15 day gospel campaign at Bermondsey Gospel Hall in September proved to be very challenging. Well over 110 different folks attended, of which some 30 were outsiders. Although no clear professions were made publically, many unsaved were clearly seeking and some near to tears during powerful preaching from Nitish Patel. The power of God and the effort of the young saints throughout the campaign were tremendous. 14,000 leaflets were delivered. Hundreds of doors were knocked with some very fruitful conversations. Please pray that the good seed sown will bring forth abundant fruit to His praise and glory.

Ilminster. The assembly have formed a School Link Team which visits schools in the local area by invitation. We were invited by one school to give a 35 minute talk on the "Gospel Hall". This has been followed with invitations to take the school assembly.

1999 will see another school opening where we have been asked to take their school assembly on a regular basis. For five years we have been approached by a local school to give a talk on baptism to the top stream pupils. This year 80-90 children filled the gospel hall with their teachers to listen to the talk. The baptistry was opened, but not filled, and during the talk a demonstration was given. Opportunity is given for the children to ask questions.

We have booked a slot with the 'Royal Mail Door to Door' for a split delivery of 12000 leaflets in January and February 1999. We have written our own leaflet entitled 'An Invitation' explaining Who we are. Where we are. What is the problem. What is the remedy. The leaflet includes an offer of free Christian literature and New Testaments. This will go into 6000 homes the third week of January, to be followed with a purpose written gospel tract to go into the same 6000 houses in February.

With the expansion of the work we are planning to start work on refurbishing the hall. This will involve some building work to lift the gospel hall out of the 40's into the late 90's. We are thankful to God for opening up new avenues of gospel activity and look to Him in earnest prayer to bless these efforts for His glory.

With Christ

In view of the number of obituary notices the publishers are expected to insert we would ask those who submit them to endeavour to restrict them to 80-90 words.

Miss Jessie Caskie Allan on 18th August aged 95. For most of her life Jessie was in fellowship in Lochwinnoch but came to Kilbirnie assembly in 1982. She was an active Christian who not only lived for Christ but wanted others to know Him also. Her special interest over many years was in children's work. She was marked by hospitality and loved to serve and encourage others in the spread of the gospel. A large turn out at her funeral reflected the respect the community had for her.

Mrs Margaret Andrew on 28th July aged 85. Saved as a girl and received into fellowship in the Gospel Hall, Springburn, Glasgow. On marriage she moved to Bethany Hall, Stevenston and in 1960 to Bridgend Gospel Hall, Kilwinning where she was in happy fellowship for many years. For the last few years she and her husband have been cared for in Machermore Home and Auchlochan House. Remember her husband Jim and family in prayer.

Mrs Eleanor (Nellie) Duncan called home on 4th August aged 84. Saved early in life and with her husband Jimmy was associated with the assembly in Lochore, Fife for most of her life but spent the recent years in fellowship in Ballingry. She was a good woman who loved to gather with the saints, of a bright disposition and even in failing health remained very cheerful. The esteem with which our sister was held in the locality was evidenced by the large turn out at her burial with many neighbours present. Remember her three daughters and two sons and their families in prayer.

Mrs Mary Elizabeth (May) Hamilton on 14th September aged 91 years. She was saved at meetings conducted by the late Messr's Curran and Bunting on the 29th January 1923. Received into the fellowship at Fintona where she was consistent and faithful in attendance until prevented by physical disabilities. A lady of a meek and quiet spirit; loved by the saints, and respected by all who knew her. The large funeral bore witness to this. Mourned by five sons, three daughters and one sister and family relations some of whom are not yet saved. Prayer requested for these.

Miss Mary McColl called home on 7th September aged 91. Saved and baptised in 1922 she was in fellowship in Greenview, Pollokshaws, Glasgow and was a Sunday School teacher for many years. The last 16 months of her life were spent happily at Ebenezer Residential Home in Wishaw. She is now at home with the Lord whom she loved, but is sadly missed by friends and family.

Mr Gilbert Milligan on 7th September 1998 aged 87. Saved early in life, baptised and received into fellowship in Ebenezer Hall, Dreghorn, where he spent his entire life in happy fellowship with the saints. He was a loving and caring christian and while he was not a public speaker, his manner of life and conversation spoke to many. The large attendance at the service both in the hall and at the grave bore witness to the esteem in which he was held in the village. Remember his wife and family circle in prayer.

Mr Robert Steele called home to be with Christ on 10th June aged 89, having been in fellowship in Kilbirnie since February 1942. Robert was a quiet friendly brother who was marked by consistency. He served the Lord in a variety of ways, for many years being involved in children's work and having the responsibility of keeping the assembly roll. Owing to illness Robert had been more or less house-bound for some time. Remember in prayer his wife Ellen, daughter Sharon and son-in-law Stuart.

PERSONALIA

For audio requirements in your assembly e.g. P.A. systems, induction loop for hard of hearing, radio mics. Contact: Alex Borthwick (01555) 772648.

Change of address: Mr and Mrs Andrew de Ville should now be addressed at: 7 Gorse Drive, Barrhead, G78 1JH. Tel: 0141 8804765.

Change of address for Mr and Mrs James Hutchinson. It is now: 11a Tudor Abbey, Old Movilla Road, Newtownards, BT23 8YS, Co Down. Tel: 01247 821613.

Change of correspondent: Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Oldpark Road, Belfast. Please note that in future all correspondence for this assembly should be addressed to Mr Denis Williamson, 25 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, CT13 3LA.

Commendation of Ken and Sandy McDowall. Ken and Sandy McDowall of Comrie have been recently commended to full-time service by the saints in Limassol Gospel Hall, Cyprus and Perth Gospel Hall for the Lord's work in Cyprus.

Student Accommodation available: Detached house in Stormont, Belfast, Near Government Buildings and Ulster Hospital. From 1st January 1999. Ring Philip 01232 659462.

The book ***William Tyndale*** is available from the author M.A. Rudge, 15 Tamar Road, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4JR.

Sam Hanlon leaves for Honduras 3rd December for $3^1/_2$ months, prayer valued.

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Annual Conference

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in

Model School, Baronscourt Road,
Newtownstewart

12.30 prayer meeting

1.00pm. - 2.45pm. Bible Reading
conducted by Mr. A McShane
Subject: John ch.16

2.45pm. - 3.30pm. Refreshments
3.30pm. - 5.30pm. Ministry

AHOGHILL GOSPEL HALL

New Year Conference Period

28th Dec 1998 - 3rd Jan 1999 (d.v.)

28th - 30th December
8.00pm. Ministry: JR Baker, D West

Thursday 31st December
7.30pm. Conversational Bible Reading
Subject: *Headship,* conducted by JR Baker

Friday 1st January 1999
Annual Conference 1.00pm.-5.30pm.
(interval 3.00pm.-3.45pm)
JR Baker, D West, J Hay, R McKeown

Lord's Day 3rd JANUARY 1999
4.00pm. Ministry: J Hay

Belfast Christmas Conference 1998

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MONDAY 28th DECEMBER

2.30pm. - 5.00pm.
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Mr. Jim Baker (Hamilton)
Ephesians chapter 3
The Mystery of the Body of Christ

Refreshments 5.00pm.
Ministry of the Word 6.00pm. - 8.00pm.

TUESDAY 29th DECEMBER

2.30pm. - 5.00pm.
Bible Reading conducted by
Mr. Robin McKeown (Ballymoney)
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The Ministry of Christ for the Body

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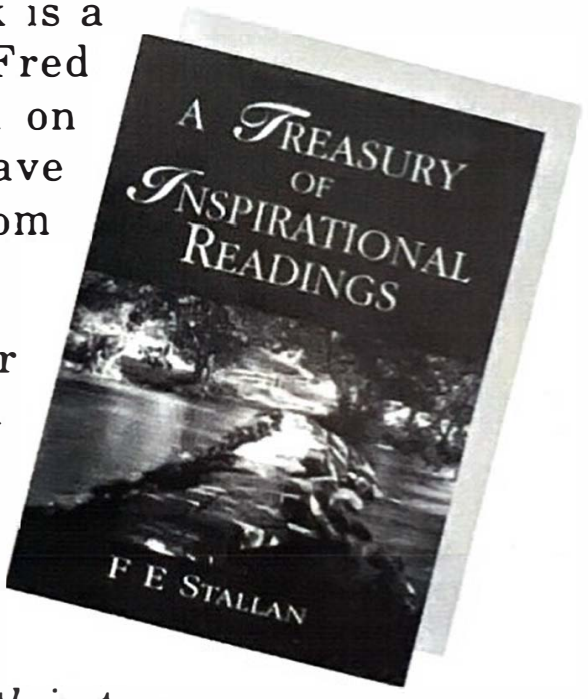
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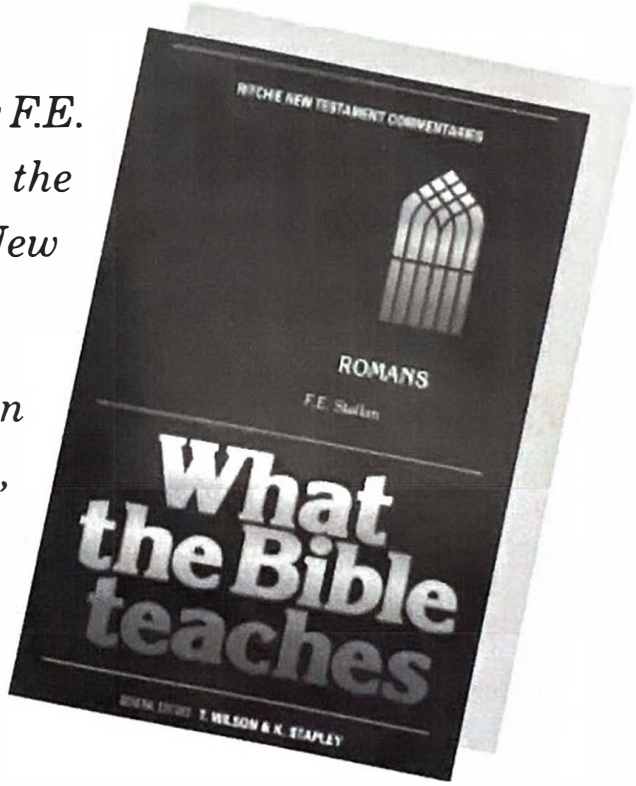
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