

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## A NICE THING TO DO ?

IT is many a long day since we heard clergymen publicly declare their emphatic belief that the 'baptism' of infants has the authority of God and is taught in the scriptures. It happened a few weeks ago at the annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland held in Edinburgh. The Assembly lasts for a week or more and authoritative decisions are taken for Church of Scotland members on widely ranging subjects – from doctrine to social services. Highlights of each day's transactions are shown on television in the late evening and although I am not a member of the Church of Scotland I try to see these programmes out of academic interest. One evening the subject under discussion was that of the 're-baptism' of a few of their members by the Baptist Church. Apparently, in a few isolated cases, a member of the Church of Scotland ('baptised' as a baby) will, on becoming more knowledgeable of the teaching of the scriptures on baptism request to be immersed (usually by the Baptist Church). In the past, when this has occurred, the Church of Scotland have informed the member involved that, in the circumstances, it might be best for that person to transfer his membership to the Baptist Church i.e. if not satisfied with Church of Scotland Baptism they were free to go elsewhere and indeed were encouraged to do so. At this year's Assembly some clergymen, alarmed at the loss, however small, of members to another Church, suggested that the Church of Scotland should take a more lenient line in such cases and allow 're-baptised' members to remain. After much discussion, however, the proposal was over-ruled and it was decided that the former policy would continue and that any member who wanted to go to the Baptist Church for baptism need not return but should stay with the Baptist Church. Some of the statements by some of the clergymen who took part in the discussion were interesting and it was avowed that the scriptures clearly taught the baptism practiced by the Church of Scotland i.e. the 'baptism' of babies. When this statement was made there were 'amens' and grunts of general approval from the vast assembly of clergymen. One speaker went as far as to say that the term 're-baptism' was a misnomer in that the immersion in another church could not be a baptism in the bible sense when, in fact, that person had already had proper baptism as a baby in the Church of Scotland i.e. there could not be a re-baptism if the first baptism was the real one, and the true one. It was wrong therefore, according to this speaker, to allow 're-baptised' persons to remain and thus perpetually infer that the Church of Scotland baptism was spiritually and scripturally inadequate. And so the Church of Scotland reiterated their unshakable belief that the baptism of infants has God's authority and thus have entrenched themselves in their present position. However I have reason to believe that some individual clergymen have, to put it mildly, grave reservations about the scriptural validity of the practice and I have heard of clergymen in other churches, which practice the baptism of infants, of altogether resigning their charge. Indeed the Church of Scotland have, in the past, been so ill-at-ease with the subject of baptism that they appointed a Special Com-

mission on Baptism. This Commission deliberated the question from 1953 until 1962 – thereafter publishing a considerable document on the matter but recommending a continuance of the baptism of infants. All in all, this resurgence of interest and confirmation of baby baptism by the Church of Scotland suggests that we ought to look again at the subject and its implications. Surely no religious practice ever carried less scriptural authority. Let us remind ourselves therefore of some of the more obvious objections to it.

The bible certainly does not appear to mention it and although it is performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit it is sanctioned by neither. Certainly Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me” but He didn’t command them to be baptised and indeed His remark had nothing whatsoever to do with baptism. They who would enter the Kingdom must become as little children but not literally. Those who say it replaced circumcision would need scriptural sanction for such a statement and in any case circumcision was for males only. Babies are sinless and as such are already fit for the kingdom of Heaven which is precisely the reverse of the thinking behind baby baptism. The baptism of infants is partly a horrible consequence of the doctrine of ‘original sin’ which, it itself, is not founded in scripture. We read of ‘households’ being baptised in the New Testament but that is a far cry from the assumption that every household has babies in its composition. I reckon that the majority of the houses in the street where I live have no infants in the household and it surely is quite wrong and illogical to assume that all households contain babies and that therefore the ‘households’ mentioned in the New Testament had babies. Indeed the scriptures teach that only the following categories of persons are fit candidates for New Testament baptism:—

- 1 Taught Persons – “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).
- 2 Believing Persons – “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. (Mark 16:16).
- 3 Penitent Persons – “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).
- 4 Confessing Persons – The eunuch before being baptised confessed, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). Indeed all that hindered the eunuch from being baptised was the requirement that he must believe with all his heart (Acts 8:37).

If any attention is to be paid to the New Testament at all, and surely in a consideration of New Testament baptism students will be willing to accept the New Testament scriptures, then the above passages, per se, rule out the possibility of infants being rightfully baptised. These passages place teaching (or preaching), belief, repentance and confession as prerequisites to baptism. Those who baptise babies reverse that order by saying, “let’s baptise them now and they can (perhaps) be taught, believe, repent and confess when they grow up”. It is, of course, by virtue of the very nature of baptism, quite futile to ‘baptise’ a baby; the very necessary preceding ingredients of personal belief and repentance not being present. One might as well baptise a monkey or a spaniel. It is said that Henry Ward Beecher agreed that there was no scriptural authority for infant baptism but he did it because it seemed a nice thing to do. If this is true then Mr. Beecher was at least honest about it but how he ever imagined that it was a nice thing to do escapes me. To mislead someone into believing that he or she has received New Testament baptism when, in fact, they have not must surely be a most serious deception (whether intentional or not). The churches of Christ are often accused by the denominational bodies of emphasising baptism unduly and believing in ‘water’ salvation. If the sprinkling of water on a baby ushers it into the church (as per the teaching of some of the denominations) notwithstanding the complete ignorance of the baby (i.e. it has not heard the gospel and can’t believe it, nor is it in a position to repent from sins had it any to repent from, nor can it confess belief in anything) then that is ‘water’ salvation indeed. Anyone, therefore, who subscribes to that point of view, a view quite unsupported by any scripture but condemned by much, should think twice, or thrice, before accusing anyone of believing in ‘water’ salvation.

After watching the broadcast from the Assembly on T.V. I wrote to the Church of Scotland headquarters and asked for some information regarding precisely where the New Testament taught or authorised the baptism of infants, I received a very kind reply a few days ago enclosing

a small 19-page booklet entitled "The Doctrine of Baptism" which claimed to be "An Interpretation of The Biblical And Reformed Doctrine of Baptism" which, notwithstanding its promising title proved to be extremely disappointing to any one who was seeking guidance on the matter of New Testament Baptism. During the entire booklet, which is the outcome of the work of the Special Commission on Baptism which considered the subject from 1953 to 1962, the scriptures are rarely referred to, Acts 2:39 is mentioned and is quoted, it seems, to infer that when Peter said, "the promise is unto you, and to your children..." he was authorising the baptism of infants. My space has more than gone and a great deal more could be said on the matter, this re-affirmation by the Church of Scotland on the scriptural validity of infant sprinkling shows, however, that we too should re-examine the subject and be in a position, when required, to present to others the truth of the matter.

EDITOR

## "TAKE HEED AND LIVE"

"Commit thy ways unto the Lord; trust also in Him" Psalm 37:5. This exhortation from the Psalmist of old is as important today as when it was first penned. As Christians and God's people we are often instructed or commanded to attend to something. In the past, men of old were instructed by their law – the law of God – and they too received commands. Joshua, a fine man of old, was given a divine command, yes a command from our same God. He followed it through, and behold, success was the ultimate result. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

In Joshua 1:6-9 we have words of wisdom and encouragement but verse 8 indeed commands our attention in this day and age. We have been given these writings of old so that we may learn and benefit from them. Let us then look at verse 8.

A. **This book shall not depart out of thy mouth.**

It shall in other words, or should be, always in our mouth. We should speak often of it and on it. Perhaps not so much the old laws as used by the nation of Israel but the new law of Christ as used by the new nation of chosen people, the saints of God, the church. How often do we speak a word in season? It is good to quote scripture, yes that's true, but we should not just quote we should speak of it, explain it. Many can quote but few seem to exhort. "This word shall not depart out of thy mouth": endeavour to have it always in our mouths. In the past men of old revered the word, the law. Some words, we are told were too sacred to utter. They wrote them only. The Bible, the word is God's law. Paul the great Apostle went preaching the word. The disciples went out two by two note preaching, speaking, and if you like gossiping, the word.

Psalm 19:14 reads: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight". Psalm 119:160 "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgements endureth for ever". Let us then keep the truth, the word in our open mouths. We must be thinking and speaking about Christ.

B. **"Thou shalt meditate therein day and night".**

Meditate on it, yes, meditate but note how; "day and night". Joshua indeed, ensured his success in this same manner. We are exhorted to meditate on the word, we are to study it, not just once a week but each day. 2 Tim reads 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth". Today in the world we have many workmen who are – or should be – ashamed. The state of many industries show this, but what about the Christian, is he a tired worker, a tired studier. Better we should be a tried worker, a tried studier. Let us study, let us meditate, let us instruct others to do the same. God expects it, nay, He commands it.

C. **Observe to do according to all that is written**

Here we are exhorted to submit to it. No one truly likes to submit, but to the law: the word, we are commanded to. We are to submit to the word, just think what our Lord submitted

Himself to for our sakes. Let us then submit for His sake. The problem today with the world and its many problems is simply that the world will not submit to the Word of God. Joshua, and many like him, started in humble beginnings but grew in stature and wisdom by humbling himself and submitting himself to the voice of God. James 4:7 tells us: "Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he shall flee from you". Submit yourselves therefore to God: His word; His commands; His exhortations. Then we shall prosper in all things. We must be firm in the faith, steadfast in principal, not easily moved. We must be courageous in spirit in as much that we are glorifying God, not man, not ourselves but God.

#### Conclusion

We are commanded to speak the word	-	constantly,
Meditate on the word	-	often
observe to obey	-	always.

Brethren in doing so we can expect to prosper in all things both spiritual and material. Be strong and of good courage and then, only then, may we see Christ in all His glory.

ANDREW P. SHARP, Newtongrange.

## ASK

"Speak to Him then, for He heareth,  
And the Spirit with Spirit shall meet,  
For nearer is He than hearing,  
And nearer than hands or feet".

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

#### ASK WHAT DO I ASK?

#### ASK WHAT DO I ASK?

May I draw your attention to one of my favourite Bible characters, for our meditation this month on the subject of Prayer.

#### NEHEMIAH ..... A MAN OF GOD ..... NEHEMIAH ..... A MAN OF PRAYER.

So we turn to the book of Nehemiah for our profit, reproof, correction, and instruction, so that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Nehemiah was a child of the Captivity, born and brought up in the furnace of affliction. Evidently some of the Jews had escaped captivity, and had returned to Jerusalem, and there had been some rebuilding. Shall we allow Nehemiah, in his own words to inform us of the situation. "And it came to pass in the month Chis-leu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu-shan the palace, That Ha-na-ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire" Nehemiah 1:1-3. God's chosen people:- "in great affliction and reproach:

the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down,  
and the gates thereof are burned with fire".

"And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept". Jerusalem... "the city, the place of my father's sepulchres lieth waste". If you desire to know what God's children thought about Jerusalem, turn to Psalm 137. God's children are in captivity in Babylon, shall we again turn to the word of God, so that we may fully realize how they felt about the city so well-beloved. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" Psalm 137:1-6.

Can you now understand why this man of God, became a man of prayer, purpose, and passion. Jerusalem ... the wall broken down ... the gates burned with fire ... day and night this matter was with him. "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept". How thrilled we should be, as we read these spirit filled messages, written for our learning by these men of God, note the human touch, as Nehemiah breaks down and weeps for his brethren and the state of the beloved city. Would it be true to say, speaking generally, we do not weep anymore? Millions we are told are dying as a result of starvation, in the world, and we can read or hear a'out it, without at times, the flicker of an eyelid. Further millions have died through the horrors of war, and man's inhumanity to man still continues, and the news does not seem to have much effect on our emotions. Our newspapers tell us of shootings bombings, murders, rape, and other atrocities, and still we find it very hard to shed a tear. Men are sent to prison for their faith in Christ, and are suffering intensely, and again speaking generally, we fail to remember them before the throne of grace, and again the tears fail to flow. And what shall we say of the Lord's church, as we see it torn and tattered, bruised and bleeding, through internal strife and division, caused by men who have dared to sweep away the clear teaching of the word of God, for their own private opinions. Men have altered the mode and method of worship with impunity, and we do not shed any tears over the sad situation. The world and the church, need men of God, who with Nehemiah will say:—

### "I SAT DOWN AND WEPT".

George Whitefield is said to have preached over a thousand times from the text, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7), and to all kinds of audiences from the very roughest to that of the highest and noblest in the land. The effect of his preaching was so remarkable that great audiences are described as being "drenched in tears". "How can I help weeping", he said to them, "When you have not wept for yourselves"; and they began to weep.

### ASK ..... WHAT DO I ASK? ..... FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF MY SINS.

May I lovingly suggest that you turn to the book of Nehemiah and read over and over again chapter one, and particularly take note of the prayer of this man of God. There are only seven verses dealing with the prayer, but they are very profound, and give us some wonderful teaching. Read them silently, read them aloud, until the soul of this man is laid bare before you, that you may profit by your meditation. Nehemiah had done some heart searching, remember his words, after he had wept over the news he had received, he went on to say..." and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" Chapter 1 verse 4. He took time off to examine the situation. God's chosen and well-beloved people, "in much affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire". Why? Why? Why? So the searchlight of God was used to good effect, he allowed it to probe his own life, and the life of his brethren, and soon came to realize that the root trouble was their own sinfulness. So he hid the only sensible thing, he went to the one who could do something about it. "And prayed before the God of heaven". A period of self-examination would help God's children today, we also may see that our spiritual lives are stifled because of our sinfulness. We can receive another lesson by noting his approach to the throne of grace. He spoke to God in the spirit of humility, not coming as the Pharisee did in the temple, when he prayed "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican". The burden of Nehemiah's prayer was a confession of sin, for himself and the children of Israel, and pleads with the words of "I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven" verse 5, "Remember, I beseech thee", verse 8. "O Lord, I beseech thee", verse 11. We dare not approach our heavenly Father, with an arrogant spirit, we need this lesson of humility, for we are exhorted by the apostle James to "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" James 4:10.

### Nehemiah's Prayer

"I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have

sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandest thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man" Nehemiah 1:5-11.

What a prayer! One feels that any words of mine would be superfluous, it is all there, adoration, humility, confession of sin, penitance, the appeal, the way back. On a previous occasion the Lord said to Solomon:—"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" 2 Chronicles 7:14. God's children today can take encouragement from the words of the Apostle John, writing in his first Epistle he says: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:7-9.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed,  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try;  
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach  
The Majesty on high.

May the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

LEONARD MORGAN.

## PRIVATE LIVES AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

THE laws God placed over man were made for man's own good. God knows man's nature for He made him, and He seeks to shield him from both physical and spiritual dangers. Throughout history He has tried to protect His creation and at the same time leave them as much freedom as possible. In the garden of Eden, for example, there was only one prohibition; only one tree the fruit of which they could not eat. We have no indication that they were required to eat of any particular tree, and on the other hand they could eat of as many different ones as they wished as long as they did not take the one forbidden fruit.

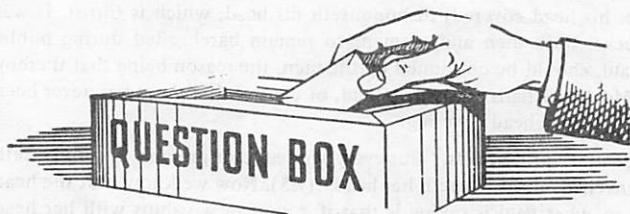
The same set of conditions prevails today. As long as we regulate our lives according to the few general principles of honesty and decency that God has laid down, we may do whatever we wish. We are taught, for example, to work to provide for ourselves and our families (2 Thes. 3:10), but we are given complete freedom about what kind of work to do as long as it is honest and decent. There is basically only one rule governing our interactions with our fellowmen - The golden rule- "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them". In our conversations with friends, we have complete freedom of speech, again, as long as we follow the general rule that we be "pure in speech". In our private lives we are free to do anything that is not condemned by one of the few general rules of conduct in the Bible.

In sharp contrast to the wide freedom we have in our private lives, God has strictly regulated the public worship of the church. In all ages God has required some type of public acts of reverence, and they have always been at places, times, and in the manner of His choosing. Recall

the instructions He gave Moses for erecting the tabernacle (a type of church), "And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. After the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof shall ye make it". (Exodus 25:9). The pattern for the tabernacle was given in such detail that even the number of arms on the candle holders were specified, as well as where the furniture was to be placed in the rooms. Paul recalled those instructions for the church today when he said, "see saith he that thou make all things according to the pattern". (Heb. 8:5). He praised the church at Corinth for remembering his instructions and keeping the ordinances exactly as he had delivered them. (1 Cor. 11:2). The rule in public worship is that unless an act is specifically authorized by the pattern (scriptures) we can not do it.

Many people, some with the best of intentions, have failed to observe the differences just noted and have assumed that believers have the same freedom of conduct in the public worship as is true in our private lives. Such an assumption is a serious mistake in the eyes of God, for changes in the pattern renders one's worship useless. "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Since God is the object of worship, since he is the divine One and we are the servants, it is only reasonable that He should dictate the manner in which He shall be worshipped.

JAMES ORTEN, Brentwood, Tenn.




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Conducted by  
Alf Matsden

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### "Should christian women wear a head covering during the worship of the Church?"

**THIS** question is no doubt asked because of the conflicting practices which are to be seen in different assemblies of christians regarding the covering of the head by women during worship services. Some assemblies favour all sisters to wear a covering, while others consider head covering unnecessary; some even allow individuals to make up their own minds on the subject. A subsidiary question to the one asked above would be, "Does the Lord approve of one practice more than another, or does His Word give clear teaching on the subject?"

It is in Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth, Chapter 11 verses 1-16, that we find the principal teaching on this subject and it is to that part of the Word that we shall now turn our attention.

#### Tradition

Before he begins to teach anything on the subject, Paul appeals to the christians at Corinth to "hold fast the traditions" (1 Cor. 11:2). The word 'tradition' as used here is an old word and denotes something handed on from one to another. Now things which are handed on to other people can be either bad and contrary to the will of God (Matt. 15:2f; and Mark 7:8), or wholly good and acceptable to God (as here). So what the apostle is here asking the Corinthian christians to do is to embrace the teaching which he is about to give (because he is an imitator of Christ, v1), and to understand that this teaching will be good for them and in accordance with God's will; in other words he is saying that this is the orderly presentation of new truth based on, and in harmony with, those old truths which they had been taught and by which they were supposed to control their lives.

The Deuteronomists knew all about this emphasis on tradition long ago because they taught that God's laws should be taught by parents to their children who in their turn could pass them on to their children and so on. In this way they would ensure the continuity of God's

tradition throughout their time and their children's time as well. This is surely a salutary lesson for us today, and one that we would do well to copy.

#### Authority

I consider verse 3, together with verse 2, to be crucial to the understanding of the discourse on head covering which follows. It is not coincidental that Paul mentions ordinances, traditions, and authority before he gives his important teaching. Let us look at the authoritative hierarchy as Paul reveals it, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (v.3). It seems to me that there is a note of censure in what he says. To paraphrase it he would seem to be saying, "Now look here, I want you to know and understand this...etc". Perhaps the Corinthian christians had not appreciated this; perhaps we have not appreciated it. You christian women, know this; Christ is subject to God, and you are subject to man. If you keep this clearly before you, then you will not misunderstand the subsequent teaching. And you christian men: is it asking too much that you should fulfil the God-given requirement that you should be the head of the woman, or has the modern view of the emancipation of women torn a hole in your defences?

#### The Corinthian Scene

Paul deals first with the men, "Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered, dishonoureth his head" (v.4). 'Having his head covered' means literally, having a veil hanging down from the head. So what Paul is saying is that a man who prays and prophesies with a veil on his head (i.e. his head covered) dishonoureth his head, which is Christ. It was the custom among the Greeks, both men and women, to remain bareheaded during public prayer. This custom, says Paul, should be continued by the men, the reason being that thereby Christ would be honoured. Most christians will understand, of course, that there has never been any controversy about men wearing a head covering.

Regarding the women, the scripture reads, "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered (unveiled) dishonoureth her head" (v.5). Now we know that the head of the woman is the man, so what Paul is saying is that if a woman worships with her head unveiled she is dishonouring the man. He ends that verse by saying, "For that is even all one as if she were shaven".

What was the significance in the shaven female head? There were evidently two classes of women who wore shaven heads in Corinth, the slave-women, and the adulteresses. Therefore, says Paul, if the women will not cover their heads in public praying and prophesying, let them be shorn. And if the shorn head is a sign of dishonourable conduct, which it undoubtedly was, then it is also a sign of dishonourable conduct for women to refuse to cover their heads, because by so doing they are bringing dishonour upon their heads, which are the men. Clearly Paul uses language as strong as this because of the effect on a woman's reputation in Corinth if she was marked out by her conduct as a lewd woman. The teaching is clear and unambiguous.

So up to this point, Paul is making it perfectly clear that in public worship (a) the man's head should be uncovered, and (b) the woman's head should be covered.

#### The Hierarchy

Paul now clinches the argument by reference to the Creation. He emphasises that the man was created first, and that he (the man) was in the image and glory of God. We must understand, of course, that Paul is referring to moral likeness and not bodily resemblance. Man was the summit of God's creation and endowed with authority as well. But the woman is 'of the man', i.e. formed from the man, and because of this fact a certain superiority is given to the male. However, Paul infers that the woman was the crown and climax of the creation of God, and can in her own right add glory to the man. What a beautiful sight it is when we see christian men reflecting the glory of God, and that glory being enhanced rather than marred by the actions and words of their christian women. I tend to be a little impatient with women who constantly moan about their so-called 'inferior role'. God created woman for a very necessary and important role; to be a help suitable for the man. Not as a chattel; not as a clothes and dish-washing machine; nor as a sex symbol, but as a vital part of His scheme for the human race on earth. And if anyone has seen a good christian man, ably assisted by his christian wife; a



home well-organised along good christian principals by that woman; and children who are a credit to her industry and ingenuity, then one has seen what God intended when He created woman. On the other hand, one has seen women who, as they put it, have taken their 'rightful' place with men, and in the process have become separated from their husbands and strangers to their own children. I thank God because He is wiser than the emancipationists. However, I digress. Or do I?

### Obligation

Paul now makes it clear that the woman is obligated to cover her head. As he puts it, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels" (v.10). This means that the veil worn by the woman is the sign of the authority of the man over the woman. But perhaps we should look at this in another way. Sometimes when people have authority over us we do things because of the authority and not because we want to. Therefore it would seem to me that if a woman covered her head it would be indicative that she was willing to show her subjection both to the man and also to God. I have a sneaking feeling sometimes that women do not conform because they want to be a wee bit rebellious to the men; but let us be careful that we do not find ourselves in rebellion before God, because it is He who arranged things as they should be.

Furthermore, what about the demonstration to the angels? Over in Isaiah 6 we read of the seraphins around the throne of God. Each one had six wings; two were used for utility, and four for humility. How would the angels, who were so humble before God, react to the display of women who were not willing to show their subjection by covering their heads, but were willing to show what was a sign of shame by coming before God with heads uncovered? Surely we can understand what Paul means when he says "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord"? The woman is for the man. Man could not exist without the glory of motherhood. Let each fulfil his or her role before God in a way best pleasing to Him.

We could not close this study without some comment on verse 15. Some have thought that a woman's hair is the covering and that no other covering is necessary. The words 'for a covering' are ANTI PERIBOLAIUO and mean literally 'in the sense of' or like a veil, but not in place of a veil.

### Conclusion

Well, there we have it. In public worship Paul is teaching that the women should have their heads covered. This is the way that God would approve of. Let each one of us seek to do His will.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1977

7 - Isaiah 53	Matthew 27:27-44
14 - Psalm 22:1-21	Matthew 27:45-66
21 - Psalm 22:22-31	Matthew 28
28 - Psalm 1	James 1

### DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED

Obviously Pilate failed in his plain duty - to discharge the innocent person immediately. There can be no question that he wanted to do so. His suggestion to scourge Jesus and

release Him was a compromise - a sop to the angry fanatical accusers who could produce no evidence to justify punishment. However the ugly suggestion of treason against Caesar - by Pilate not by Jesus really - was calculated to force Pilate's hand, and so it did, so the false verdict was allowed and Jesus was scourged as a preliminary to the act of crucifixion. This heart-sickening torture in some cases produced death, so dreadful was it. What a comment on the civilisation of those days, and the sadistic habits of mind so common then! The soldiers called together their comrades in arms to enjoy tormenting and mocking the already exhausted victim. He was going to death anyway so let us have fun with Him! We do not like to dwell on the details but

we ought to know — “what He endured no can tell, to save our souls from death and hell”. The actual physical pain cannot be exaggerated but what also of the spiritual stress, which must have been involved in bearing the burden of sin. This is something the mind boggles at — it is as impossible to measure as the extent of the universe. One hymn-writer has put it “I scarce can take it in”. The first few verses of our August readings give us a picture of the profoundest humiliation that a man could endure — and This Man of God“ manifest in the flesh”.

### Crucified

What is the gospel but “Christ and Him crucified”. Led out by the soldiers but too enfeebled to bear the weight of the cross, Jesus is taken outside the city to the hill, called the place of a skull, and there nailed to the wood. Normally the victims of this fearful death call down curses with shrieks of agony upon their torturers but Jesus prays aloud “Father forgive them”. This strange behaviour undoubtedly contributed to the impression on the centurion who was driven to say “Certainly this was a righteous man”, and to the change in behaviour of the dying robber “Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom”. These testimonies confirm that Jesus suffered in silence except for the “seven words”. Before the darkness came the soldiers fixed up the accusation declaring His claim to kingship to justify death from Roman view, and sat to watch as military duty while those who should have been moved at least to pity passed by justifying themselves for His death by what they thought was His inability to resist, or be saved by miracle. Little did they realise that a greater power was shortly to be revealed to them and all by the preaching of the gospel of His glorious resurrection, proving victory over death itself. How true it was that in fact He could not save himself because He was the sacrifice He and His Father made for them and for us. Surely when the darkness, the earthquake came at the time of the full brightness of the sun, they must have had misgivings, and some were undoubtedly awakened to fear (Luke 23:48) for their own safety. Many in the crowds had known Jesus to be a universal benefactor, and would anticipate punishment for the crime of killing Him. Matthew alone records the earthquake but all three synoptists record the rending of the Temple Veil. Jesus had thought for others in

these last hours of life, granting forgiveness to the robber, and commending His mother to John's care. His cry at the end of the darkness takes us to the vivid picture of His suffering given a thousand years before in the 22nd Psalm, and He passes as it were out of the darkness into the light of final triumph as He receives the one kindness of drink for thirst, commends His spirit to God and cries “IT IS FINISHED!”. One preacher is said to have always read these passages of scripture before entering the pulpit, and a daily reminder of this kind would do all His people good.

### GAIN AFTER LOSS

Jesus had frequently told His disciples, especially those closest to Him after three days He would rise. He spoke also of the sign that would be given of Jonah, three days in the fish's belly. It seems obvious that all His closest folk had failed altogether to believe this. We should not be surprised at this because it would seem so utterly impossible and they were absorbed with being with Him, enjoying His most wonderful company though at times over-awed (Mark 10:32; Luke 14:25; John 12:16). The company of women who followed Him watched where He was laid in order that they might come and pay their last respects to His dead body, and the disciples at first thought the women's story was imagination. What we want to understand is the most terrible sense of loss all these must have experienced when they viewed the culminating tragedy of His holy and blessed life in which they had so much shared and upon which all hopes of happiness had been fixed. Just so much more wonderful was the new experience of having Him among them alive. The tremendous thrill filled out and made the rest of all their lives, and has been brought to us by their testimony. By faith He becomes as real to us as to them. “A cloud received Him out of their sight” but “I am with you always” and “He cometh with the clouds” (Acts 1:9; Matt. 28:20; Rev. 1:7).

### The Letter from James

We have completed our reading and we trust are continuing to benefit by the work of the tax-gatherer in providing us with a portion of the Word of Life. We now read the written work of one of the Lord's brethren so we will suppose though authorship of the letter is uncertain. Here are very practical instructions which every christian needs con-

tinuously if his life is to be pleasing to his Saviour. He so rightly tells us "In many things we all stumble" (3:2). Primarily his letter is for Jewish Christians but we must all behave as strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet. 2:11) in relation to worldly matters. His first note is one of encouragement in overcoming the trials and difficulties of life. We are not to meet them as misfortune but as opportunity to develop patience. The complaining Christian is unnatural, not in line with character. He has taken on a new attitude to life, no longer living it for his own selfish enjoyment or to accumulate possessions, but to use powers or possessions for doing good to others. For such a life he needs to be complete — an echo of the sermon of the mount, Matt. 5:48. What a task we have, brethren and sisters! But do not let this discourage us because as we are conscious, of lacking much in heavenly character. We are assured that God is ready to help. However we must ask, and expect to receive because we know God loves us and has both power and will to give. The first chapter is concerned with attitudes. We have the attitude of the poor, the attitude of the rich, the attitude of the man under trial — not to blame God for his trials but to resist sinful inclinations. Our attitude in expressing ourselves — not to allow temper to control our actions, and on the other hand not to be talkers but doers. It may be living in Jerusalem he sees what Jesus saw — the teachers who did not carry out their own teachings (Matt. 23:3).

R.B. SCOTT.

### CHOKING WEEDS

I KNEW a boy whose education was stifled because his father gave him two automobiles and a motorboat.

I knew a man who could never accomplish anything seriously worthwhile because he was always tinkering with trifles. I knew another man whose house was so full of rare and costly bric-a-brac that he was a slave to the care of his collections.

Unless we know the difference between flowers and weeds, we are not fit to take care of a garden.

It is not enough to have truth planted in our minds. We must learn and labour to keep the ground clear of thorns and briars, follies and perversities, which have a wicked propensity to choke the word of life.

### MY NEIGHBOUR'S BIBLE!

I am my neighbour's Bible  
 He reads me when we meet;  
 Today he reads me in my home—  
 Tomorrow on the street.  
 He may be relative or friend  
 Or slight acquaintance be;  
 He may not even know my name,  
 Yet he is reading me.

And pray, who is this neighbour  
 Who reads me day by day,  
 To learn is I am living right  
 And walking as I pray?  
 O, he is with me always  
 To criticize or blame:  
 So worldly-wise in his own eyes,  
 And "sinner" is his name.

Dear Christian friends and brothers,  
 If we could only know  
 How faithfully the world records  
 Just what we say and do,  
 O, we would write our record plain  
 And come in time to see  
 Our worldly neighbour won for Christ  
 While reading you and me.  
 Selected.

### *His Abiding Presence*

"HE hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Several times in the Scriptures the Lord has said this. He has often repeated it to make our assurance doubly sure. Let us never harbour doubt of it. In itself the promise is specially emphatic. In the Greek it has five negatives, each one definitely shutting out the possibility of the Lord's ever leaving one of His people so that he can justly feel forsaken of his God. This priceless Scripture does not promise us exemption from trouble, but it does secure us against desertion. We may be called to traverse strange ways, but we shall always have our Lord's company, assistance, and provision. We need not covet money, for we shall always have our God and God is better than gold; His favour is better than fortune.

We ought surely to be content with such things as we have, for he who has God has more than all the world besides. What can we have beyond the Infinite? What more can we desire than Almighty Goodness?—Selected.

## THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Stern and proud that Roman Soldier  
 Scion of a noble race  
 Filling well his lofty office  
 Yet a man of humble grace.

When his servant-boy lay dying  
 Filled was he with deep concern  
 Went to seek the Jewish Healer  
 Not from any help he'd turn.

"Master, wilt thou heal my servant?"  
 Lest he die ere day is gone  
 And at once the Master answered  
 To thy house at once I'll come.

Whereupon that Roman soldier  
 Recognised the Greater Man  
 Answered "nay Lord" I'm not worthy  
 Let thy word the distance span.

For I have the word of Power  
 To say, Go, or Come, or Do  
 And I see that God hath given  
 Such authority indeed to You.

Jesus looked at him and marvelled  
 Spake with wonder in His voice  
 Not in all the land of Israel  
 Hath such faith my heart rejoiced.

As thou hast, my friend, believed  
 Be it unto you This Day  
 And the soldier found his servant  
 Fully healed in every way.

A Sister in England.

## CALMNESS

WE often forget this, most of us; but it is true. Noise, anger, explosive tones, superlatives, exaggerations of passion, add nothing to the force of what we say, but rather rob our words of the power that belongs to them. But the utterance that shows a spirit subdued by truth and mastered by wisdom is the utterance that sweeps away opposition, that persuades and overcomes. Go into a heated political convention, and you will find that it is not the men who get angry and storm and swear who carry the day. But the men who never lose their tempers and never raise their voices; who keep talking quietly and placidly as if they were discussing the weather. This is a truth that all of us who seek to influence our fellow beings, in the family, in the church, in the school, in society, in anything, anywhere must lay to heart. We are prone to forget it, but we make a great mistake when we do forget it. The soft tongue breaketh the bone. The tamed tongue subdues the adversary.

Whatever makes men good Christians makes them good citizens.

Sometimes the fires of adversity warm a cold heart.

Jesus Christ is not valued at all until he is valued above all!!

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