

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THE CONVERSATION AT SYCHAR

A report in yesterday's local paper gave the result of a recent Ecumenical Survey. This Survey, commissioned jointly by the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church and the Bible Society of Scotland, dealt with such issues as Church Services, abortion, co-habitation, Bible reading, Religious Education, etc. Six hundred church-goers, and non-church-goers, were interviewed, and on the question of the dramatic drop in church attendances the main complaint appears to have been "boring and old-fashioned services". This seems to have prompted the Rt. Rev. Joseph Devine, Bishop of Motherwell, to say that "The Church must change its image, and show that services are relevant and uplifting". The worship of God is certainly in decline.

This report comes at a time when, over the Christmas period, we have, on our television screens, been looking in on a great diversity of churches and other places of worship, seeing how they variously observe Christmas, and seeing in general, large numbers of men, women and children singing carols with much enthusiasm and great gusto. I am informed, however, that these same churches, although bursting at the seams at Christmas, are fairly desolate places for the rest of the year. Obviously there are many who seem to feel quite pious at Christmas and get the urge to "Worship the King" on one night of the year, but feel that this is as far as they are prepared to go. Quite often even 'drunks' might want to join in the carol singing at Watchnight Services, and many have to be ejected from these services for making a nuisance of themselves. The "once-or-twice-a-year" worshippers are not confined to Christmas Eve, of course, and often amongst those considered "regular church-goers," some confine their appearance in church to "The Communion Sunday" which may be twice or thrice a year. It is not difficult when walking down any village street on a Sunday morning, to know whether or not it is "Communion Sunday". Obviously many reckon that God will be quite happy with the one visit, but as a special favour, may grant God a second visit.

Then there are those whom we occasionally hear saying that, although they don't go to church, they worship God by listening to the religious service on the radio, or T.V. All kinds of things are described as "acts of worship". Some claim that listening to classical music, or visiting the sick is a devotional act: or that a nice stroll in the country on a Sunday morning "communing with nature" is an act of worship, presumably on the basis that "being in a garden is nearest to God". Clearly the general public, and many 'church-goers', have only a hazy notion of what is meant by 'worship' and what God looks for from His creatures.

### Not defined in Scriptures

And so it seems that we all have our own personal conceptions of how God ought to be worshipped. Even in the religious world, amongst theologians and the clergy, there seems considerable confusion, as witness several hundred different denominational bodies, all following their own particular and distinctive procedures in worship, much preferring their own to that of any others. These differences range from quiet simplicity and puritanical austerity, to great pomp and circumstance with much ritual and dressing-up.

Far be it for me to imagine that anything I say on the subject will dispel any of the confusion, but there are some pointers in the N.T. from which we might derive some benefit: (especially from John 4:1-26). As Vine points out, there is no definition of "worship" in the scriptures and we can but draw conclusions from the way in which the word is used. The most frequently used Greek verb is 'Proskuneo' which means "to make obeisance to" or "to do reverence to". 'Proskuneo' is made up from *Pros.* (meaning, towards) and *Kuneo.* (to kiss). Worship is any act of homage or reverence, and this can be directed towards God; or to an angel; to a man; or to some thing (such as an idol). The use of the word in the N.T., and in the O.T., envisages someone upon their knees acknowledging their inferiority before a superior being. For example; "Abraham bowed and worshipped the Lord" (Gen. 24:26); "The congregation bowed down and worshipped the Lord" (1 Chr. 29:20); "And they came and held Him (Jesus) by the feet and worshipped Him" (Matt. 28:9); "And bowing their knees, worshipped Him (Jesus)" (Mark 15:19). Dozens of similar examples could be quoted, even where Satan tempted Jesus "to fall down and worship me", but we also read of how Jacob, when dying, "worshipped God leaning upon the top of his staff." (Heb. 11:21). I am sure that if we were to encounter the presence of Jesus today, we would all bow the knee and prostrate ourselves before Him. Now, however, His presence, like God's, is spiritual, and we must prostrate ourselves before God spiritually, mentally, figuratively. Vine says "The worship of God is not defined in scripture. A consideration of the Greek verb shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving, or by deed done in such acknowledgement."

### The Conversation at Sychar

Vine says we can learn much from the Greek verbs, but I believe we can also learn much from the very enlightening conversation Jesus had with the woman from Samaria, as recorded in John 4:1-26. Jesus was travelling from Judea to Galilee and, quite naturally, had to pass through Samaria. There was no love lost between Jews and Samaritans: indeed a perfect hatred existed between them, and religious controversy was ever present, especially as to the true identity of the Holy Place (whether the Temple in Jerusalem, or the temple built by the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim). It was a hot day, at noon, and Christ's disciples had gone into the city of Sychar to buy food. Jesus, tired and thirsty was sitting beside Jacob's well, at the outskirts of the city. Soon a woman comes to draw water and Jesus asks her for a drink. She recoils in amazement at being spoken to by a Jew, and asks, "Why do you being a Jew ask any thing of me, a Samaritan, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," Jesus enters a conversation with the woman and begins to amaze her with the things He says, particularly when He is able to tell her that she has had five 'husbands' and that the man she presently lives with is not her husband. Perceiving that He is a prophet she engages Him in a little theological discussion, and says "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but ye, (the Jews) say that in Jerusalem is the place where man ought to worship". The woman doubtless expected Jesus to trot out the usual well-hackneyed arguments in support of the Holy City, but He confounded her once

again with His unexpected and incredible reply, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh and now is, when ye shall neither worship in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship, for slvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth". It seems these remarks were much too radical for the woman and she said, "I know that Messias cometh and He is called Christ, when He is come He will teach us all other things. Jesus saith unto her, 'I that speaketh unto thee am He.'"

#### Points to ponder

(1) The first lesson we learn from this most illuminating statement of Christ's, is that **the place of worship is now quite immaterial**: "neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem". As Paul said to the Athenians, "**The most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands**". (Acts 17:24). As God dwells not in temples He can be worshipped anywhere; in homes; in halls; in barns; on ships; on aeroplanes, and even in the open-air. Worship comes from the heart and does not require an elaborate edifice, with stained-glass windows or a steeple, but can come from a tin shed, wooden hut or even a prison cell.

(2) **The second point to note is that whereas the place of worship is not paramount, the manner is. Men must worship God "in spirit and in truth"**. Jesus says, "God is spirit" and must be worshipped accordingly: i.e. sincerely and spiritually. Barnes says, "The word **spirit**, here, stands opposed to rites and ceremonies, to sacrifices, and to the pomp of external worship. It refers to the **mind, the soul, and the heart**. They shall worship God with a sincere mind, with the simple offering of gratitude and prayer, with a **desire** to glorify Him and without external show and splendour. Spiritual worship is when the heart is offered to God and when we do not depend upon external forms of acceptance".

(3) The worship, we notice, must not only be "IN THE SPIRIT" but also, "IN TRUTH". "Truth" is a constant and quite unique. Pilate asked "**What is truth**" (without waiting for the answer). John quotes Jesus as saying, while praying, "**Sanctify them through the truth: Thy word is truth**" (17:17). Paul talks of "**The truth of the gospel**". Paul also says (Phil. 1:18) That whether "**in pretence or in truth**" the gospel is preached, and He gave thanks that the Thessalonians "received the word not as the word of men, but as it is, **in truth**, the word of God which works effectually in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13).

John himself said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children **walk in truth**" (3rd John:4). He also talks of the elect lady whom he "**loved in the truth**" and exhorts all, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and in **truth**". It seems, therefore, that to worship "**in spirit and in truth**" means to worship truly (sincerely), and **in keeping with God's truth**. We must love in truth, walk in truth, and worship in truth.

#### Ignorant Worship

It seems quite possible, however, to worship ignorantly, When Paul visited Athens he soon noticed that the city was entirely given over to idolatry; with altars erected to all manner of gods. In case any god had been omitted, the Athenians had included an altar to "The unknown God". When Paul addressed the crowds from Mars Hill he said, "**Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription, "To the Unknown God". Whom ye, therefore, ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you**". (Acts 17:23). In short, he complimented them on their desire and capacity to worship, but showed that it was misdirected. There was a desire in the Athenians (as there is in most men) to worship, but their homage was being wasted. This can happen just

as easily today, and we see millions of worshippers all aiming their devotion in opposite directions.

In similar vein, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, **“Ye know not what ye worship”**. The Samaritans imagined they worshipped the same God as did the Israelites, but Jesus charged them with ignorant worship. (The Samaritans accepted only a small part of the O.T. (The Pentateuch) and were at odds with the true Jews who had received the “true” religion). Even when the Samaritans had first entered the land **“they knew not the manner of the God of the land”** (2 Kings 17:27) and these many hundreds of years later, still did not seem to savour the things that be of God. Paul also talked of those **“who had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge”**, and so we must worship God sincerely but also **INTELLIGENTLY AND KNOWLEDGEABLY**, knowing the **who**, the **what** and the **why** of our devotions.

#### Vain Worship

It also seems possible to worship God in vain. In the conversation at Sychar Jesus talked of **“The true worshippers”**, inferring, presumably, that there were other kinds. And it was Jesus, himself, who, as He pondered the pious activities of the Sadducees and Pharisees, described the possibility of men worshipping God in vain. Although very ‘devout’ these men had allowed their own religious traditions to take precedence over God’s word and thus to render it null and void. Consequently the worship of such men, in these circumstances, was also rendered null and void. Jesus said, (Matt. 15:9) **“Howbeit IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”**. “Doctrine” is not something to which some worshippers give a high priority: but make it subservient to “sincerity”. This quotation from Isaiah by Jesus certainly had sincerity in mind (Honouring with lips but hearts far from God) but Jesus had also **DOCTRINE** in mind, for He went on to say, **“For, Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the traditions of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandments of God that ye may keep your own traditions”**. The traditions and commandments of men were being taught and practised in preference to God’s word: and this rendered any worship from those responsible, quite worthless.

Surely this throws another great shaft of light upon our subject, and clearly illustrates **God’s attitude** to worship, and to worshippers (a matter which seems to receive little consideration). In such circumstances we can see that quite often much prayer and praise rises no higher than the ceiling. Clearly the “true worshipper” must go exclusively to the N.T. for his religion, and must utterly reject every religious precept and practice that can not be found there. If we look around at the religious world, and its worship, we can readily identify a myriad of man-made doctrines and procedures not to be found in the N.T. and certainly not sanctioned or authorised by God. To obey is better than sacrifice.

#### Conclusion

The confused Samaritan woman said, **“I know that Messiah cometh, when He is come He will teach us all things”**. If we are confused about worship we cannot repeat that woman’s hope, for **Messiah has come**: He has “taught us all things” and that teaching is exclusively within the covers of the N.T. It’s true that in order to preach the gospel, Christ’s disciples must **“Go”** (i.e. “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”) but in order to **worship**; Christ’s disciples **“Come together”** (i.e. to Break Bread, sing and pray). **“This do”** said Jesus, and promised that **“where the twos and threes are gathered together in His name”** there would He be in the midst. The Bishop of Motherwell says that **“the Church must change its image and show that the services are relevant and uplifting”**, and, of course, a lot depends upon the ‘church’ he has in mind. Since the **“image”** of the Lord’s church is enshrined in God’s word, it would seem, in view of what Jesus said about vain worship, a dangerous suggestion to alter that divine image. As to worship services being relevant or uplifting:

surely this largely depends upon the frame of mind of the worshipper, and, in any case, gimmicks are no substitute for true reverence and veneration.

Israel, as we know, oftimes moved away from God and bowed down to their various idols, such as the golden calf, Baal, the sun, etc. We too can quite easily set up our own idols and engage in our own forms of idolatry. An "idol" has been well defined as anything (anything at all) we allow to come between us and God (whether this relates to our duty to God or our worship of Him). Men, and women, in the pursuit of fame and fortune have often made shipwreck of their faith, by allowing some person, friend, hobby, habit, weakness, profession, pastime, apprehension, predilection, etc., etc., to prevent them from following their Saviour, and being in their place to worship God. Nothing must be allowed to come between us and God.

As Vine reminds us, given the absence of any exact definition of "worship" in the N.T. the term means **any formal acknowledgement of God**, of His nature and attributes; of His power and ways, whether this takes the form of our prayers, or praises, or whether it be deeds that we do in His honour. Space has gone, but perhaps we can squeeze in a couple of verses of David's famous Psalm (1 Chron. 16) on this subject, ". . . Give unto the Lord ye kindreds of the earth; give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Fear before Him all the earth . . ."

As Jesus says, we must worship God "in spirit and in truth" for "God seeketh such to worship Him". This is what God wants.

EDITOR:

## GLEANINGS

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

### CALLED OUT

**"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter 2:9 (R.V.)**

**G. H. HOLMES (BULWELL)**

"The soul that lives by prayer meditates much on the divine and concentrates itself upon God, makes its impression upon the life and character, and growth in grace is clearly seen . . . ."

Pray much: in pleasure, toil or rest

Call on that unseen force,

And let your heart kneel in your breast

Communing with the Source.

### "NOT BEING OF THE WORLD"

Growth in grace, then, is only possible when the soul lives in an atmosphere adapted to its growth. This being so, how careful ought we to be in avoiding surroundings that would hinder the growth of the soul and retard our progress as we press toward the mark of our upward calling. The Saviour had this thought before Him when He prayed for His disciples: "Though they were in the world they might not be of the world". Here is the secret of true Christian life — "Not being of the world". Worldliness, taking possession of the mind, acts upon the soul as impure air acts upon the body. Just as breathing such impurity into the system would mean natural death, so worldliness means spiritual death. To be spiritually minded is life and peace, but to be carnally minded is death.

**“WITHOUT GREAT DANGER TO THE SOUL”**

In the pursuit of the pleasures offered by the world, how many have been drawn from the paths of virtue? Worldly society and worldly amusements will not in anyway tend to spiritual advancement, and so should be avoided. It may be asked, are Christians to forego every pleasure that the world offers? Cannot the things of the world be enjoyed to a degree, and yet growth in grace be assured? To this I would say that no pleasure which brings us into worldly society which envelopes with evil influences can be entered into without great danger to the soul. Whatever is suggestive of evil or has evil tendencies should be shunned by all Christians.

**“ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL”**

Abstain from all appearance of evil. This position by no means deprives the follower of Jesus of pleasure. Christians of all people are the happiest, and the more truly we follow Christ, the happier we are. The fellowship of the saints, and the fellowship of heaven, together with the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, makes the Christ-loving soul all aglow with real happiness.

**WE GROW INTO HIS LIKENESS**

The growing happiness of the soul as it lives in constant fellowship with God cannot fail to impress and make beautiful the whole life. By vital contact with Jesus, by living in Him and He in us, we grow into His likeness. When He, the Spiritual Sun, arises in our horizon He sheds a flood of Holy light and joy into the life. Indeed, what the sun is to the natural world, Jesus is to the spiritual, and just as the sun gives colour to all nature, so Christ gives colour and beauty to those in whose heart he dwells.

**“EXERCISE THYSELF INTO GODLINESS”**

Another important law essential to growth is exercise. Physical exercise is necessary to develop the body, to strengthen the sinews and muscles, and expand the physical frame. Without exercise there would be no real development. If a child were confined to a room and cramped it would not develop a strong and healthy body. The separate members of our bodies if not used would deteriorate in power; and so with our intellectual powers and senses, if not exercised they would diminish in force.

Speaking of exercise, the Apostle Paul says: **“Exercise thyself into Godliness, for bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come”**. I take it Paul is not decrying or belittling the importance of bodily exercise, but admits it to be of profit for a little, and then, in contrast to this, very beautifully shows the great value of the exercise of our spiritual powers. The profit of such exercise is far-reaching.

**BECOMING MEET FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

It is a means of increasing spiritual vigour and energy here, and as we grow in spirituality we are becoming meet for the presence of God, for the exercise of our ransomed powers in the great beyond, the eternity with God.

**INCREASES OUR POWER FOR SERVICE**

The continual use of our spiritual powers in Christian service increases our power for service. The greater the activity the greater the capacity. Is not this principle taught and emphasised by Jesus in the parable of the talents? The working of the talents means an increase of talents. And again, to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath. Every faculty has been given in the church by divine wisdom for the exercise of our gifts. There is a sphere in which every one may work, proving a blessing to others and bringing honour to God.

**A LIFE OF DOING GOOD**

The Christian life was never intended to be that of a recluse shut up from the world, but should be rather like that of the Master — a life of doing good, of exercising ourselves unto Godliness.

### AN OUTCOME OF OTHER CONDITIONS

Now, while exercise in Christian life is an important means and condition of growth, yet after all is this condition not an outcome of other conditions, of much prayer, of reading and meditation upon the Word of God? A child in possession of all its natural powers and faculties placed under suitable conditions, being properly nourished and living in a pure atmosphere, cannot help but be full of life and activity. While the frolic and play tends to develop the body, yet the activity is an outcome of other conditions of growth.

### JUST SO IN THE DIVINE LIFE

It is just so in the divine life. The soul that is fed upon the bread of life, and lives in prayer and meditation with God, cannot be confined and cramped — it must assert itself".

Bible Advocate, June, 1903.  
Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## THE HIGHWAY TO LIFE EVERLASTING

Life is a journey. Isaiah said that God's highway would be so plain that even a fool could travel it without error. But Jesus warned that few would find the road to life in comparison to the many that travel the road to destruction. Which highway are you travelling today?

The journey of life begins with a physical birth. We all love the sweet innocence of little children; how we all gather around new mothers and marvel that another soul has come into being! Jesus pointed to the attitude and innocence of children as examples of citizens in the kingdom of heaven: "**suffer little children and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven**". "**Except ye become converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven**".

As children grow up they are subjected to the influences of a sinful world; they come into contact with the wiles of Satan and sin separates them from God. We call this change from innocence "reaching the age of accountability". When this occurs the person becomes subject to the gospel call to obedience through faith in Jesus Christ that their sins may be blotted out.

Exactly how old a child must be to reach the age of accountability we cannot say; it varies with rate of maturity and knowledge of the child. If he is old enough to believe, to be conscious of his sins, old enough to repent, to confess his faith and to be immersed in water for the remission of sins, he is old enough to obey the gospel and be added to the Church, the Body of Christ.

At the tender age of 12 Jesus asked his parents "**wist ye not that I must be about my father's business? . . . and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man**". Thus Jesus left an ideal example for the growth and development of young people.

In the old testament God commanded children to obey their parents; In the new testament, the apostle Paul wrote "**Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth**".

One enters through the straight gate and begins his journey on the narrow road that leads to life by obeying the gospel. Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born again to see God; that he must be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.

The Bible is a perfect guide for those who travel the road of life: "**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word**". "**Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In**

all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct thy paths”.

In walking the narrow road one must always be aware of Satan; his great aim is to make Christians think that they have heavy loads to bear, but he is lying. Jesus said “my yoke is easy and my burden is light”. . . “Casting all your cares on Him for He careth for you”.

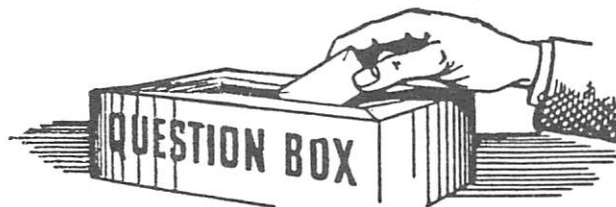
That the road is narrow does not mean that it is crowded; we walk it freely with light and joyful steps. To the contrary the broad road is heavily crowded with much pushing and jostling; people walk it heavily burdened with sins and sorrows.

Death inevitably ends the road that we travel here below: “It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgement”. But there is a vast difference in the consequences of whether we die in the Lord, or in our sins: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them”. On the other hand, Jesus told those on the broad road “I go my way, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins: Whither I go, ye cannot come”.

Life is indeed a journey from birth to the grave; a miraculous gift from the Almighty creator of the Universe who holds the keys of our destiny in his hands. He has revealed our origin and our final destiny in the Bible. He gives us the choice of two roads to travel: the narrow way to life everlasting or the broad way to destruction.

Each moment of our lives we are on one or other of these two roads. It is crucial for us to realise the awful consequences of ending our journey on the wrong road that we may keep our feet from straying from following the Lord. Jesus ever invites us to renounce evil, to repent of our sins and come to him for the rest promised from the foundation of the world.—

A. F. Arnold.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“While we cannot invite non-Christians to partake of the Lord’s Supper, is it our job to ban those who think they are Christians and want to remember their Lord? A ban on such may offend them, and give us no opportunity to teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly.”**

This question embodies the principle of ‘neither invite nor debar’, a principle which has been espoused by some concerning the Lord’s Table. There are, however, certain pertinent questions **within** the question which need to be answered, namely,

- (a) why can we not invite non-Christians,
- (b) whose responsibility is it in the Church to make such decisions,
- (c) is the Lord of the Christian the same Lord as those who **think** themselves to be Christians, and
- (d) does the end justify the means, i.e., do we take the opportunity of teaching the truth by practising error, if error it is. So let’s put our ‘heavy boot’s on once again and see if we can negotiate **this** thorny path without making our feet bleed.

#### The Criterion

It is the responsibility of the leaders, ideally, the Oversight of a local assembly to maintain the ‘purity’ of the Lord’s Table, whatever **they** may deem that to be. Consequently, it is also **their** responsibility to decide the criteria for **acceptable** particip-



ants to be around the Table, partaking of the emblems and sharing in the fellowship and remembrance. In Church of Christ terms, the **unacceptable** ones are designated non-Christians. It would seem, therefore, that there must be clear guidelines as to the identification of the ones called 'Christians', and from such guidelines we would be able to identify those whom we call 'non-Christians'; remember, the questioner says quite categorically that 'we cannot invite non-Christians to the Lord's Supper'. That is quite a definite statement within a question.

'Christian' is a biblical name, but in the early days of the Church the ones called Christians were called 'disciples' prior to being given the name of Christian; Acts 11:26b reads, "**And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch**". So if we can find out how one became a disciple then we should be able to say who a Christian is.

A disciple must be a follower of **someone**, and since the disciples came to be called Christians, then we can rightly conclude that they were disciples of Christ. We should not however, confuse such disciples with the Twelve whom the Lord chose; they had a specific role to play relative to the scheme of redemption.

Acts, chapter two, tells us how people became disciples (or Christians) in the early days. On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter preached a Gospel message in Jerusalem. In it he told the people that they had to believe, repent, be baptised in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and then they would be recipients of the Holy Spirit. The promise was to Jews and Gentiles and any of their progeny who would in future respond in obedience to the Gospel. The scripture in Acts 2 then goes on, "**And they (the ones who had responded as Peter had directed them) continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, in the Breaking of Bread, and in prayers**". So according to Acts 2, those who 'broke bread' together were the ones who had believed, repented confessed Christ as Saviour, and had been baptised (immersed in water) for the remission of their sins. **They** comprised the early Church. **They** were the Church of Christ, because in Matt. 16:18 did not Jesus say that He would build **His** Church, therefore if it is **His** Church then quite logically it is 'the Church of Christ'.

The difficult question we now have to ask ourselves is, "Where is the Church of Christ"? Is it one specific identifiable Church with a world-wide communion, each individual community of Christians observing precisely the same doctrine, and practising the same things, or is the Church spread across and among many so-called Christian communions, e.g., R.C., Anglican, Methodist, etc.? I suppose what I am really asking is this: "Should the Church we are looking for be an **exact** replica, in faith and practice, of the N.T. Church of the 1st Century A.D.? To be quite clinical and blunt we have to ask ourselves if anyone has the **right** to be around the Lord's Table if that person is not a functional part of the Lord's Body (the Church), and not a child of God's Family in the way the N.T. directs. If that is **not** the case, then we have to consider if there is room and opportunity within the economy of God for professing Christians, within their separate communions and communities, to practise different ways for both entry into the Church, and in the Church's life and worship. I suppose the 'bottom line' of the question is this: Is a person debarred from the Lord's Table because at some point in time he/she was 'sprinkled' as a baby in order to comply with baptism, and therefore cannot be described as an 'immersed believer'? Taking that thought a stage further, does that fact make them non-Christian and therefore place them on a par with those who have no pretensions at all regarding Christianity, or are they in an intermediate state of being 'near Christians'. You may think the last remark to be ludicrous and facetious, but I assure you I am perfectly serious. I am firmly convinced that we have to 'grasp the nettle' and say what we mean. If a person, say, from the Anglican Communion, who sincerely believes in God and Christ, comes to one of our Breaking of Bread Services and wants to take communion with us, and if we refuse

such a request, then in my book we should tell them that we class them as non-Christian, because our refusal, in fact, says precisely that: they are not fit; they are not acceptable. I have made many forthright statements during my lifetime, but I do not believe that I am qualified to make **that** one. God is qualified, and He will judge. In the meantime, Overseers in the Church will have to make value judgments as to whom **they** consider to be worthy, always bearing in mind that they may allow something which God could not allow, or that they may refuse something which God **would** allow.

Difficult? Yes, but that is just one of the serious trials of being an Overseer in the Church.

#### Past Experience

Over the years I have seen examples of how the problem has been handled. One method has been to ask the person his/her name, and the President has announced, "We welcome (name) who has come to witness the Breaking of Bread". Sometimes the person has lived locally, but needless to say, he/she has not returned to 'witness' again, nor has the invitation to attend Gospel Meetings been accepted. I suppose **they** may have taken the view that they were Christians anyway.

Another method has been to abdicate responsibility and leave it to the servers. Sometimes, if the emblems are moving along a row from hand to hand it is difficult for the Server to have any real control over the situation. The result of that is that individual members take control and pass the emblems **across** the person whom **they** consider should not be partaking. This method does nothing to recommend itself, and seems not to have any redeeming features.

A tricky problem presents itself when an unknown person comes into the Meeting **after** the Meeting has started. When I have seen that happen it has either been left to the person as to whether he/she partakes, or the Server decides by passing the would-be participant without offering the emblems. The trouble is, of course, that the assembly is so unused to being disturbed for months on end that no special provision is made for coping with such a situation. We do seem to have become a little too exclusive and insular, but by saying that, I am not indicating that we should be more 'open' and 'liberal' in those aspects of doctrine and worship which need to be safeguarded.

#### What Should We Do ?

Any answer I can give will in no way be definitive; I can only speak with personal experience of involvement in this problem. Twice in the final year before we left Albert Street I had to deal with the problem involving two women on separate occasions who walked into the assembly and wanted to take part in the Breaking of Bread. Both were Anglicans and seemed quite sincere. On each occasion I sat down with them before the Meeting started and told them the Church's teaching concerning the Lord's Table. I explained why we jealously guarded the Table, and pointed out the dangers of unworthy participation. I then left it to them. One partook of the emblems, one didn't. The one who didn't came to me after the Meeting and thanked me for my frankness and **concern for her**. I have never seen her since because she lived in North Wales. Some in the Church may disagree and I respect their point of view, but I believe I handled a delicate situation with some tact and with no disrespect to my Lord or His Church. **He** will either confirm or deny that sometime in the future.

I must point out that these are my **personal** views and do not necessarily reflect the views of the assembly to which I belong, nor the Editor of this magazine. I do, however, contend for tact and understanding when dealing with situations which may be problematical to us but which visitors see as no problem at all.

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

## THE SEVEN BEATITUDES OF REVELATION

Most folks are somewhat familiar with the beatitudes of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Each begins with the word "blessed" and the purpose is to emphasise the inner spiritual character of the true followers of the Son of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"; "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God". Jesus ends the beatitudes upon the subject of persecution. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you". The hope of eternal life is strongly emphasised throughout.

Most folk are not so familiar with the series of seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. These are like a golden thread woven into the fabric of the text beginning with chapter 1 and ending with chapter 22. Consider them:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (1:3).

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they rest from their labours; and their works do follow them". (14:13).

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (16:15).

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (19:9).

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with him for a thousand years". (20:6).

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (22:14).

Why are there only seven beatitudes? Seven is a perfect number in Biblical interpretation. God created the world in seven days. Man's allotted time upon earth is seventy years. The seven beatitudes of Revelation describe the maturity of Christian character in the face of adversity and hardship which reaches its ultimate fulfillment in heaven. We have a goal to strive for but one which will not be completely attained in this life. The apostle Paul said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". Our Lord and Saviour said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

J. H. Wilson.

## THE DENOMINATIONS

### 10.—THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army arose out of revival meetings conducted by William Booth, a Minister of the Methodist New Connexion Church, and his wife Catherine, in 1865. The aim was to preach the Gospel to those untouched by the ordinary Churches. A feature of the campaign consisted of open-air meetings and marches. Converts were at first advised to join themselves to Churches, but many found themselves unwelcomed in communities where there was much snobbery. So the Christian Mission came into being. Gradually as the movement rapidly spread, more efficient organisation was developed to secure more effective 'warfare' against evil. In 1878 the movement became known as 'The Salvation Army', with a definite military organisation including Uniforms, brass bands, flags, banners, etc. William Booth became General Booth and remained so until his death in 1912, when he was succeeded by his son, Bramwell,

who held office until 1929. He was succeeded by General Higgins, who in 1934 was succeeded by Evangeline C. Booth, the founder's fourth daughter. In 1939 George L. Carpenter became General. The Army is more highly organised than any other body except the Roman Church, but it has never indulged in political machinations, and so is not under suspicion from Protestant quarters.

#### *Faith and Practice*

The Foundation Deed sets forth the principal doctrines as belief in the Divine inspiration of Holy Scripture, the fall of man, the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit conditioned by man's repentance and faith, the possibility of sanctification — deliverance from the power of sin (a characteristically Methodist doctrine), the eternal happiness of the righteous and the endless punishment of the wicked. The Sacraments are discarded as in the case of the Quakers. Another similarity with the Quakers is that men and women have completely equal rights. Every office is open to women as well as to men. Perhaps another similarity is seen in the Army's passion for social service, though the area of this service is somewhat different in the two bodies. In the Army it is directed much more to 'seeking and saving the lost'. Its social institutions number something like 1,700 throughout the world. But here the similarity between Quakers and the Army ceases. The Army is much more evangelical and evangelistic and it touches, in the main, a quite different class of people.

#### *Great Accomplishments*

The Salvation Army spread rapidly throughout the world. In 1962 there were 16,623 corps, with 26,123 officers. More than 100 periodicals are published in various languages. All members have to be total abstainers and the officers must be non-smokers. The Army goes everywhere, much of its work being done in public houses and amongst the poorest and most neglected and roughest sections of the community. Its work amongst this class was advertised widely amongst the general public by two works which appeared early in this century. General Booth's *In Darkest England* and Harold Begbie's *Broken Earthenware*. No one can read these two books without realising the very real regenerating influence which has gone out from the Army. Even Bernard Shaw, in his *Major Barbara*, has treated the Army with some respect. But perhaps the finest Characterisation is to be found in Vachell Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters Heaven*. William Booth was certainly one of the greatest organising geniuses that this country has produced, Those 'high brows' who are inclined to sniff at the Army because of the fact that it touches a class of people who are culturally low, might do well to study these documents and, further, to remember that amongst its officers are many people of high culture.

#### *Methods and Passion*

No doubt much of the early success of the Army was due to its unconventional methods, the novelty of which has worn off. But much was also due to the passionate love of the majority of its workers for the down and out, in which there was a sincere imitation of our Lord. The Army might sing doggerel and use bad grammar and employ slang, but in it all there was this burning love, the absence of snobbery, and this passion for souls — souls of any kind. And these ought to be marks of any Church which strives to follow in the way of Christ.

W. Robinson.

Abide in Me. The measure of our practical obedience to this word of our Lord will be the measure of our strength: His strength clothing us. We have fully adequate resources for Christian living, for holiness, for effective power in this day and generation. Shame on us if we are not making that evident.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mar. 7	Gen. 19:12-29	Matt 9:35-10:15
Mar. 14	Mic. 7:1-13	Matt 10:16-11:1
Mar. 21	Mal. 3:	Matt. 11:2-19
Mar. 28	Ezek. 28:1-19	Matt. 11:20-30

### THE TWELVE

The twelve apostles chosen by Jesus were: Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Thomas, Matthew, James 'the younger', Lebbaeus (Judas), Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. The apostles stand unique in the kingdom of God. Alexander Campbell wrote of them: "How freely, how cheerfully, how laboriously they performed the ministry they had received! They look for no applause, for no stipend, for no fixed salary, no lucrative office, no honourable title among men. They have continually in their eye the example of their Chief 'looking off from the ancients to Jesus the Captain and Finisher of the Faith, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame and sat down on the right hand of God'. Amidst their enemies and false friends, how calm, how meek, how prudent, how resolute, how persevering! They exhibit virtues, in comparison of which, the virtue of all other religionists appear either as splendid sins, or as meagre empty names".

The apostles were the original prophets, elders, deacons and evangelists in the Church. As things developed, they appointed others to these offices because it grew impossible for them to do everything — much like Moses in his day. The importance of the apostles can be seen in the following passages: "And Jesus said unto them. Verily I say unto you. That you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and

fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). "And in the Church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration and those speaking in different kinds of tongues" (N.I.V. 1 Cor. 12:28). "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone . . ." (Ephesians 2:19-20). "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14).

### Persecution Foretold

Some people warm to truth, while others react violently to it. Jesus once said: "Every one that is of the truth hears my voice" (John 18:37). Jesus suffered for speaking the truth (of course, he was the Truth personified), as did His apostles and many of the early disciples. They experienced what the prophets of old had experienced for thousands of years (Matt. 23:37).

Jesus warned: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles . . . And the brother shall deliver up brother to death and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved . . . And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (10;16-28). Albert Barnes has commented: "Temporal death is a slight thing compared with

eternal death. He directs them, therefore, not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death, but to fear God, who can destroy both soul and body for ever”.

Thousands of disciples in the early days of Christianity died for their faith. H. B. Workman has written: “Some, suffering the punishment of Parricides, were shut up in a sack with snakes and thrown into the sea; others were tied to huge stones and cast into a river. . . during the persecution of Diocletion, Christians were tied to catapults and so wrenched limb from limb. Some like Ignatius were thrown to the beasts; others tied to their horns. Women were stripped enclosed in nets, and exposed to the attacks of ferocious bulls. Many were ‘made to lie on sharp shells’ and tortured with scrapers, claws and pincers before being delivered to the mercy of the flames. Not a few were broken on the wheel, or torn to pieces by wild horses . . .” Much more could be quoted, but sufficient is given to depict the horrors of it all. How can we, brethren, ever be careless about our faith when we are a part of such heroism?

#### A Fault-finding Generation

The people found fault with John the Baptist and with Jesus. Jesus remarked: **“For John came neither eating or drinking and they say, He has a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children”** (11:18-19). How impossible it was to please them! As one writer has commented: “They were what the Scots call contrary. No matter what was suggested, they did not want to do it; and no matter what was offered, they found a fault in it”.

Every generation has been a fault finding one. Our present one is no exception. The Church today comes in for a lot of adverse comment — not all of it from without! I like the verse that reads:

Am I an active member, the kind  
who would be missed?  
Or am I quite contented that my  
name is on the list?  
Do I attend the meetings and  
mingle with the flock?  
Or would I rather stay at home  
and criticise and knock?  
Am I alert to do my part to help  
the work along?  
Or am I satisfied to know that  
I at least belong?

#### Cities Condemned

We read: **“Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not . . .”** (11:20). Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum are the cities mentioned by the Master. All of them were sited in Galilee and were relatively close to one another. Capernaum is the most famous, and indeed it was this city that Jesus used as his base for a time (Matt. 9:1 cf. Mark 2:1).

Why were Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum worse than Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah? After all, Tyre and Sidon were condemned again and again for their wickedness (Isaiah 23; Jeremiah 25:22; 47:4, Ezekiel 26:3-7; 28:12-22) and Sodom and Gomorrah were by-words for iniquity? Edwin W. Rice has commented: “Those wicked heathen cities, Tyre and Sidon, would have repented at the sight of the miracles seen in the Galilean cities, therefore, they will have a lighter punishment at the judgment. The greater the light resisted the greater the sin, and the heavier the penalty . . . The Sodomites will be less severely condemned at the day of judgment than the people of Capernaum. Prof. Plumtre aptly says, ‘Men are judged not only according to what they have done, but according to their opportunities’”.

So we can say that these cities were guilty of the sins of indifference and failing to live up to their privileges and responsibilities based upon the opportunities given to them. Dear reader, one wonders where your city, town, village

or community fits into all this in the light of the availability of God's word and the opportunities to hear the gospel.

Ian S. Davidson,  
Motherwell.

### Tradition: Good or Evil?

Sometimes in explaining a position I hold on certain portions of the Scriptures, I have heard others exclaim, "Oh, you hold the old traditional view". I am sure these brethren don't mean to imply that being "old" and "traditional" is a fatal error, but I can't help but feel a bit uneasy when I hear this charge levelled.

I'm sure what they mean to emphasise by this is that we must not be so wedded to the conclusions reached by our predecessors, the McGarveys and Campbells, that we cease to think for ourselves. I can't agree more. I honestly try to do my own thinking and reach conclusions I feel the Bible warrants, but I don't divorce myself from the aid these great minds can afford to give me either.

Surely we all understand that just because a thought is "new" and "unconventional" doesn't make it right anymore than being "old" and "traditional" makes it wrong. Or vice versa. However, I do know that the real acid test is the test of Scripture. Any doctrine that is not as "old" as the New Testament and as "traditional" as the apostles' doctrine is not Biblical and must be rejected.

The Bible warns us to avoid the "tradition of men" — (Col. 2:8). On the other hand, it commands us to hold fast to apostolic tradition — (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15). In fact, it teaches us to withdraw from those who don't walk in these traditions — (2 Thess. 3:6). Thus, there are traditions which must be refused (traditions of men) and some which must be accepted (apostolic traditions).

Brethren, let's not reject a position just because we weren't the first to think of it. Being "old" and "traditional" doesn't condemn a position as wrong.

L. R. Ritchie.

## OBITUARY

**Hindley:** The Church here has suffered another sad loss in the passing of Bro. Edward Morgan, on 10/12/92, aged 84 years.

Bro. Ted has served the Old Paths Movement for most of his adult life; spent with the congregation at Hindley, although he worked with the brethren at Ince for a short while. Ted was not noted as a great preacher, teacher, evangelist or pastor but was the Church's "think tank" and his life's effort could be summed up as mediator, motivator and encourager. He had a great ability to inspire his brethren to do things, when he himself admitted his own inability. He saw the potential in all his brethren and encouraged them in the work.

Brother Ted's favourite Bible character was Nehemiah, a man who had a vision of Revival for the Jewish nation. Ted's vision was for the 'revival of the church' and worked to that end. He worked long and hard with the young men in the Bible Class and was well respected by all. He had a wonderful dry sense of humour, and was gentle, of great patience and not given to temper.

During the last 10-14 years Ted went through the refiner's fire of suffering, yet his faith and trust in the Saviour shone through.

The Church at Hindley asks for your prayers for his loving wife Nellie, his brother Leonard, his sister Molly and all his earthly and spiritual family, that the Lord will strengthen us all in this time of sorrow. The funeral took place on 16th December, when many brethren were present to witness to his faithful life. The text this writer chose to represent his life was Heb. 6:19 "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast". Brother Ted was a true gentleman and Christian and we savour his memory.

John Morgan.

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Do not sacrifice first principles on the altar of expediency. — Lewis Silkin.

## COMING EVENTS

**Tranent Social** to be held (DV) on Saturday, 13th March, 1993 in Lochside Centre, Tranent at 4.00 p.m.

Please make a note of the date  
Speakers to be announced later  
(This is Tranent Church's  
100 years anniversary.)

**Kirkcaldy:** Annual Social is scheduled for 17th April, 1993, God willing  
Speaker: M. Gaunt

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Slamannan District:** The Annual New Year's Day Social took place on that day, at 12 noon in the meeting-house of the church at Motherwell, when a goodly gathering enjoyed a great time of fellowship. Due to illness and infirmity others were prevented from attending and were mentioned in our prayers. Chairman for the day was Bro. J. R. Gardiner, Haddington, and the speakers were Mark Plain and John Colgan from Tranent, and Bill Cook from Dunfermline. Bill Cook replaced, at

very short notice, Bro. Jimmy Grant from Wallacestone, who was to have been a speaker but had 'flu. We had visitors from Canada and south of the border. During the proceedings Sister May Wilson and Bro. Harry McGinn favoured us with solos. John Wilson was to have joined with May in singing a duet, but, as a fireman, was called to a fire and could not attend. Ian S. Davidson also took part, and by playing some 'tapes' of the Motherwell Male Voice Choir evoked in the older members some wonderful memories of days gone by. Add to this marvellous baking and hospitality of the sisters at Motherwell, and a very enjoyable time was had by all.

Harry McGinn (Sec.).

## THANKS

George and Grace Sneddon wish to thank brethren and friends for the cards and good wishes received on the occasion of their recent Golden Wedding. A special thanks to the brethren of Slamannan Church for the lovely Tea they provided, and the gifts they gave us, to make it a memorable evening.

God bless you all.

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Thank you — John Kneller.

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