

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## IN TRUTH THE WORD OF GOD

Still somewhat bemused by the Bishop of Edinburgh's disparaging comments on the Bible (subject of last month's article) I propose this month to say a few words about the innerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. The Bishop ("The Most Reverend" Richard Holloway, of the Episcopal Church of Scotland) said, in a written (newspaper) article, that the Bible tells us things (about creation) "**that can't be true**"; gives **bad advice** as well as good; "**contains as much dross as gold; contains as much out-of-date nonsense as enduring wisdom; and that we must find the courage to reject the bits of the Bible that are not of God...**" There is nothing new in these criticisms, of course, and it is par-for-the-course these days for clergymen to belittle the book they are paid to uphold. The Bible, however, is an impregnable rock, and has survived the many assaults and storms that have assailed it, or (to change the figure), is an anvil that has worn out the countless hammers of atheism, secularism, Higher Criticism, etc. Nobody needs to defend the Bible: it can well defend itself. As the little boy remarked when he saw the armed security guard posted at the door of the lion's cage, "Why don't they let it out: it would soon protect itself"; and this is just as true of the Bible. True Bible students repudiate all these derogatory remarks from the Bishop on the grounds that **every word of scripture** was dictated by the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit can not be guilty of stating facts "that can not be true"; nor of producing dross and much out-of-date nonsense. When we cast reproach upon the Bible we cast it at the Holy Spirit and that is a very serious and dangerous thing to do. By contrast, we find that although Jesus referred continuously to "the scriptures" (the O.T.) He **never ever** uttered one syllable of criticism of the scriptures; but rather endorsed every word of it as being true, wholesome and accurate. Never did Jesus even make a veiled hint that the scriptures might contain untruths, or give bad counsel or deal in nonsense: rather the reverse. On one occasion Jesus said to the Sadducees, "**Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God**". (Matt. 22:29). Like the Bishop, the Sadducees thought that some things in the Bible "could not be true" (in their case they could not believe in the resurrection) and so they plied Jesus with the teaser about the seven brothers who had the same wife. His reply showed that they erred on two counts (1) They failed to know that the O.T. acknowledged the resurrection, and (2) They failed to take into account "the power of God". According to Jesus, their ignorance of the scriptures caused them to err. According to the Bishop, the scriptures could cause us to err. Surely we, too, limit **the power of God** if we regard God incapable of conveying His word infallibly to mankind, and thereafter preserving it.

### THE O.T. SCRIPTURES

The Bible is composed of an Old Testament and a New: let us look, first of all, at the Old. The apostle Peter tells us that "in old time" (in O.T. times) prophecy came not by the will of man **"but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"** (2 Peter 1:21). The words penned did not originate with the human writers but were dictated by the Spirit of God. Space does not allow many illustrations of this but one example would be Jer. 36:2. **"Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day."** Another might be Ezek. 1:3 **"The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him."** Other examples of verbal inspiration of the O.T. might be 2 Sam. 23:2 **"The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue"**. Isaiah says (1:2) **"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken"**. Jer. 1:7 **"Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak ... Behold I have put My words in thy mouth"**. Ezek 2:7 **"Thou shalt speak My words unto them"**. Luke 1:7 **"He (the Lord God) spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began."** Acts 1:16 **"The Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke concerning Judas."** These few random examples could be greatly multiplied and could include the writings of Daniel, Amos, Ezra, Nehemiah, and indeed all other prophets. As Peter says, their words came not by the will of man, but **God moved them** (breathed upon them) to write what they wrote, by His Spirit. The tablets of stone containing the Law, chiselled by Moses, were, we are told **"written with the finger of God."** (Ex. 31:18). In the following chapter we read, **"And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon tables."** (Ex. 32:16). Moses' writings were actually God's writings and Moses wrote, as we know, the first five books of the O.T. Jesus regarded the words of Moses as **"the words of God"**. In His controversy with the Pharisees over their attempts to nullify the Mosaic Law by their own traditions, Jesus accused them of **"laying aside the commandment of God"** that they might hold the traditions of men. In giving an example of what He meant, Jesus described how they tried to avoid the force of the fifth commandment and, in consequence, **"making the word of God of none effect"**. Thus Jesus equates the writings of Moses as the word of God. It is of interest to note that when Aaron and Miriam (Num. 12) despised Moses for marrying an Ethiopian woman, they were taken aside by God and severely rebuked for daring to speak ill of God's faithful servant Moses. God informed them that He thought so highly of Moses that He did not speak to him, (as He did to other prophets) in visions and in dreams, but **"directly, mouth to mouth, and face to face."**

My purpose in emphasising the fact that the O.T. scriptures consist of God's **own and actual words**, (and that the human penmen were merely the instruments of God in producing His word) is to show that, this being so, there is no possibility of the O.T. containing the dross, bad counsel and nonsense charged by the Bible's critics. **"Thus saith the Lord"** occurs some 2,000 times in the O.T.

### CHRIST'S APPROVAL

As mentioned previously, it is surely passing strange, that if there were flaws, misinformation and errors in the O.T. scriptures, Jesus never ever referred to them, or warned us against them. After all Jesus was not averse to denouncing error, and correcting false conceptions amongst His people. If there had been errors in the O.T. scriptures Jesus must have known about them, and being **"the faithful and true witness"** that He was, He would certainly have mentioned them. If Moses' description of the creation of the world was unreliable, and if his reference to the fact that the world was created in six days, and that Eve was made from a rib of Adam's, was completely

false, then Jesus would surely have repudiated the words of Moses. Instead, Jesus (in His discourse on the question of divorce) said, **“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female”** obviously referring to, and approving of, the account of Creation given by Moses in Genesis. In saying, **“Have ye not read”** (about what Moses said concerning the making of male and female) Jesus was recommending such reading and giving it His complete endorsement: i.e. Jesus believed Eve was made from a rib. Indeed Jesus approved of many other things at which the critics baulk. It is generally accepted amongst the critics that no intelligent person could believe that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, but Jesus endorsed the O.T. record concerning Jonah and said, **“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.”** (Matt. 12:40). Bible critics would also say that no intelligent person could believe that a woman could be turned into a pillar of salt, and yet Jesus said, **“Remember Lot’s wife”**. If space permitted we could quote dozens of similar references: made by Jesus, and His apostles giving total credence to every event and character recorded in the O.T. and their complete acceptance continually to the scriptures and always did so in terms which showed His absolute confidence in their veracity. He never voiced the slightest note of doubt or caution as to their accuracy. Surely this is most important.

### THE N.T. SCRIPTURES

The N.T., as an integral part of the scriptures and complementary to the O.T., is also a product of the inspirational work of the Holy Spirit.

The writer to the Hebrews says, (1:1) **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son.”** This coincides with what we stated so far, i.e. that GOD did speak to mankind in times past through His prophets, but has in these recent days spoken unto us by His Son, Jesus Christ. Even the most simple, unlettered, person can understand what Jesus says, and there must be few indeed in the world who could accuse Jesus of giving bad advice, or indulging in untruths or out-of-date nonsense. However, Jesus had apostles and delegated part of His total authority to them, instructing them to **“Go therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ...”** (Matt. 28:19). These instructions were carried out and the things taught by Christ and the apostles were eventually committed permanently to print: now forming the contents of the N.T. Naturally, Jesus did and said much more than is recorded, but John says **“... these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”**

And so, according to Paul, it is GOD, who spake in times past through the prophets, who speaks to us today through His Son. Jesus, Himself, acknowledged this and confessed, **“I have many things to say and to judge of you but He that sent Me is true: and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him”**, and, **“... I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father hath taught me, I speak those things”**. (John 8:26). Thus, even Jesus followed the long tradition of prophets and spoke only the words given to Him by God. In sending out the apostles Jesus confirmed the authority He vested in them, as God’s spokesmen, and declared, **“He that heareth you heareth Me: and he that despiseth you despiseth Me: and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.”** (Luke 10:16). To hear the apostles was equal to hearing Christ.

The question for us here, however, is whether these same apostles, and other writers of the N.T. scriptures, were (like the writers of the O.T.) inspired by the Holy Spirit in their writings, and thus qualified to claim inerrancy and infallibility in their work. In short, is the N.T. infallible?

### THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the time came for Jesus to return to heaven He assured His apostles that He would not leave them bereft of comfort and guidance, but would send the Holy Spirit unto them. **“But the Advocate, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you ALL THINGS, and bring ALL THINGS to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”** (John 14:26) and also (in Chap. 16:13) Jesus said, **“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into ALL TRUTH for He will not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come.”** Acts 2 describes how the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost and how they were able to preach the glad tidings in languages they had never learned. The apostles had not only to preach to make disciples, but had to teach those disciples the things God required of them in the churches, beginning with the sincere milk of the word and progressing to the strong meat. These preachings and teachings were eventually set in concrete; not only the four gospels but also all the apostolic and other epistles. Thus was Christ’s promise fulfilled and the apostles equipped with ALL TRUTH and reminded of ALL THINGS spoken by their Master. Anything that their natural memory could not retain over the ensuing years would be provided by the Spirit of God. Even when in a tight situation with the authorities, Jesus assured the apostles that they need not **“be anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given ye in that hour that speak ye, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit.”** If words mean anything at all, the apostles, in all their teachings and writings, were under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit; and that amounts to infallibility. They were not just given spiritual ideas by the Spirit but actual words. They employed not their own words but the Spirit’s. Paul could say, **“But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in WORDS which man’s wisdom teacheth BUT WHICH THE SPIRIT TEACHETH.”** (1 Cor. 2:9). And Paul could also say to the Thessalonians (2:13) **“For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is IN TRUTH the WORD OF GOD.”**

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion I have tried to reach is that the Bible (O.T. & N.T.) is indeed the product of the Holy Spirit and therefore does not contain flaws, much less the possibility of bad advice, misinformation or out-of-date nonsense. Paul said, **“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”.** (2 Tim. 3:16)(RSV.). Surely this says it all. If all sacred scripture is inspired of God, and it is, then that scripture will be without fault or flaw. Coming as it does, from God, and trustworthy, it is also of great profit for the purposes mentioned: i.e. for our spiritual education (teaching and correction) and for our Godly growth. Nor can it ever be “out-of-date”. It is equally pertinent for every age and generation, in every corner of the world. Jesus said **“My words shall never pass away”** and these same words will judge us all on the last day. Jude says the faith was **“once and for all delivered”** to the world and it certainly is not going to be up-dated. God is the Author of His own Word, and **“God is not the author of confusion”** (1 Cor. 14:23): neither is God the author of error or nonsense. The Psalmist, unlike the Bishop, ‘seemed’ to have nothing but praise for the scriptures. He said, **“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be**

desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them is great reward." How true, and no mention of dross.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### TO THEE

"To Thee I bring my care,  
The care I cannot flee;  
Thou wilt not only share,  
But bear it all for me.  
O loving Saviour now to Thee  
I bring the load that wearies me."

F.R.H.

### AN HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

(Isaiah 35:8)

### THE GOSPEL IN PERSON GOD LOVES ME

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16.

### A LOVE - "God so loved."

"My friends, for a whole week I have been trying to tell you how much God loves you, but I cannot do it with this poor stammering tongue. If I could borrow Jacob's ladder and climb up into heaven, and ask Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Almighty, if he could tell me how much love the Father has for the world, all he could say would be, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.'"

The Preacher Boy — Henry Moorhouse.

"Wonderful love, Wonderful love, Brought my Saviour from above.

Down to die on Mount Calvary's tree, All to save a poor sinner like me,

Oh, it was wonderful love, Oh, it was wonderful love."

### A GIFT - "God so Loved - that He Gave"

"God loves me. Christ died for me. God loves you. Christ died for you."

Peter Mackenzie said:- "When God loves, He loves a world."

"When He gives, He gives His Son."

### A GIFT - "His Only Begotten Son"

That mighty man of God, the Apostle Paul, said in 2 Corinthians 9:15, (A.V.)  
"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

In the Englishman's Greek New Testament, we have the words — "Now thanks (be) to God for His indescribable free gift."

If the great Apostle of the Gentiles, could not describe, the "indescribable," how can I expect to understand fully the blazing light of God's message from the place called Calvary, and bring before you this stupendous message of God's everlasting love.  
This slave of Christ, had been to Calvary:—

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Galatians 2:20.

**ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ON MOUNT MORIAH — Genesis 22**

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, ‘Abraham:’ and he said, ‘Behold, here I am.’

And he said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I my son. And he said, behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

Gen. 22: 1-12.

**WE QUOTE - AVIS B. CHRISTIANSEN**

“Beyond my greatest asking, beyond my deepest need,  
My Lord’s abundance standeth my hung’ring soul to feed.  
Lift me above things earthly, and help me daily prove  
The riches of Thy glory, the wonders of Thy love.”

**WE QUOTE — CAMPBELL MORGAN**

“If we can climb the heights, and plumb the depths, and encompass the vastness of the things which constitute the preciousness of Christ, then pause and consider and remember this, that all those things are made over to the believer in Christ; they are at his, or her disposal; they are at the disposal of the Church; they belong to the people of God.”

“For you therefore which believe is the preciousness.”

Leonard Morgan.

**ADHERING TO A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**

When Socrates, the Greek, who lived about 400 B.C., was charged with corrupting the youth of his day, and condemned to death, his friends were amazed at his attitude toward the sentence. He refused means of escape by bribery, common then as now, and steadfastly maintained that as he was a law-abiding citizen he would abide the decision made by a lawful court. He was really not guilty of any serious offence except that of making people think by his questioning method of teaching, what we today term the Socratic method. However, making people think can be a serious offence to

a conservative establishment such as that which wanted him out of their way. They had not really wanted his death, and had hoped that he would take advantage of an opportunity to "skip town" as we would say in our modern slang. But this he would not do, and his friends could not understand his lack of fear of death as the hour of his execution by drinking the poison hemlock drew near. They wept and mourned when they thought of losing such a very dear friend as he had been to them. His philosophy of life was expressed like this: I THINK THAT A MAN'S DUTY IS ONE OF TWO THINGS, EITHER TO BE TAUGHT OR TO FIND OUT WHERE THE TRUTH IS, OR IF HE CANNOT, AT LEAST TO TAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE HUMAN DOCTRINE AND THE HARDEST TO DISPROVE, AND TO RIDE ON THIS LIKE A RAFT OVER THE WATERS OF LIFE AND TAKE THE RISK; UNLESS HE COULD HAVE A MORE SEAWORTHY VESSEL TO CARRY HIM MORE SAFELY AND WITH LESS DANGER, SOME DIVINE DOCTRINE TO BRING HIM THROUGH.

From this statement one can see that Socrates did not take any of life without questioning. By his questioning and dialogue with his friends he would establish the foundation on which his life's actions should be built. His searching questions sorted out the wheat from the chaff, or to put it another way he kept testing the materials of his thinking and throwing away that which would not stand the very closest of examinations.

#### THE OUTWARD MAN

THE WHOLE REASON FOR INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT OF THIS ARTICLE WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF A MAN WHO LIVED 400 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST IS THAT HIS REASONING IS BASICALLY SOUND. His questioning brought out the final thought that the inner man, the mind, the soul if you will, is more important than the body. Our thinking, he says, is corrupted by the appetites of the body, thus preventing our seeing clearly and without bias when we must provide for the claims of the body. Therefore, his reasoning was with his friends: I can rejoice now that I shall be released from this body, and the inner man shall have achieved immortality. Why should I be in tears with you, my friends? Why should I strive to hang on to that which has constantly kept me from achieving the highest possible gain? My body must return to dust, that is an inescapable fact. But my reasoning has brought me to the conclusion that death of the body is not the end of me, but rather the beginning of that which is better.

We on this side of the cross have a far surer base on which to build than had Socrates 400 years before Christ came fulfilling the prophecies of the ages: LIFE AND IMMORTALITY HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL (2 Tim. 1:10) and because this is so Paul urged Timothy (and us) **"to hold fast the form of sound words . . . in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus"** (2 Tim. 1:13).

Mankind in general is more concerned about the care of the body than it is about the nurture of the **"inner man."** In the midst of this kind of thinking the apostle Paul could say in all honesty and truth concerning himself that **"though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"** (2 Cor. 4:16). But this was true for Paul because of his line of thinking which governed his activities: **"WHILE WE LOOK NOT AT THE THINGS THAT ARE SEEN, BUT AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN, FOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN ARE TEMPORAL; BUT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL"**(2 Cor. 4:18).

There is every reason to agree with the scripture of Phil. 3:21 which speaks of *our vile body* (better translated as *the body of humiliation*) for it surely does humiliate us no matter how well we may care for it. Spend a fortune on it if you will, but it

cannot continue its beauty forever. Eventually it must return to the dust from whence it came.

YET IN SPITE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS, MANKIND PLUNGES HEEDLESSLY ON IN THE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO FURTHER THE CARE AND COMFORT OF THE BODY. WHETHER WE THINK OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT, OR WHETHER WE THINK OF MODERN ADVERTISING, OR WHETHER WE BECOME ENAMOURED OF THE LATEST DESIGN IN MODERN TRANSPORTATION, it is all concerned with the comfort and care of THE BODY. The little phrases we use in talking about these things tell what we really think about it all: "the rat race," "back on the treadmill," "back to the salt-mines!" What a package of truth is given in Ecclesiastes 8:8, "**There is no man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.**"

#### STILL WATERS

Mankind has changed little over the centuries. Therefore, we should go back to some truth spoken by a prophet 700 years before Christ came. Does it still have relevance in our day? Isaiah 8:5-8 tells us: "**The Lord spoke also unto me (Isaiah) again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah; and he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.**"

The period following the reign of Solomon was the beginning of the end. The people of God were divided into a northern and southern kingdom, Israel and Judah. Depending on political alliances to stave off the enemy in the East, Israel was in grave danger. Judah was not exempt from punishment for the armies of Assyria like a flood would nearly drown them, but Israel was to fall. History of the time tells what happened, a sad tale indeed, and all because they would not drink of the *waters of Shiloah that go softly*. This was a stream of pure water in Jerusalem which ran constantly the year round, but the prophet uses it as a figure of speech in which the waters that go softly represents the grace of God always available (see also Isa. 55:1). As God's flock they could not drink from an agitated water. Sheep perish if not provided with "still waters" (Psalm 23). And this being so Israel and Judah were suffering because they were not concerned about the most important thing of all — spiritual salvation!

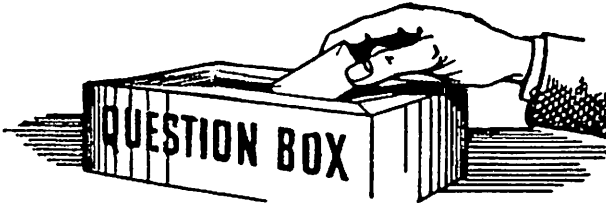
We need to ask ourselves as professing Christians: "Where are our priorities? How consistent are we as Christians? Do we really accept the statement that "**our citizenship is in heaven?**" If we do not drink of the "**waters of Shiloah that go softly**" we too will perish as surely as did the careless ones of so long ago. Surely with a better and more seaworthy vessel, a "**DIVINE DOCTRINE,**" we should be able to reach our true destination with equanimity. Have we any really good reason for doubts and fears?

Earl B. Severson, Burnaby, B.C., Canada.

If anything is right, let us do it first; then others will be willing to follow our example. We must do, then teach others to do. This is the rule that our Master followed. "The former treatise I have made. O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach."

W. Claytus Anderson.






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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“What would be your reaction if a person expressed a desire to be immersed in response to the Gospel, but stated that afterwards he wanted to attend a church of his own choice?”**

This is a difficult question, and one which cannot be answered lightly because I am well aware that there are firmly entrenched views on both sides of the question. One prominent brother in the States, who is both well-respected and loved in the Lord, has held that anyone who has been immersed into Christ is his brother or sister irrespective of where they may attend for worship. Many Christians feel if a person attends a Gospel meeting, and responds positively to the invitation, that no one has the right to refuse baptism. Who am I, to challenge the judgement of so many? I have, however, been asked to give **my** reaction to the question, and I shall attempt to do so as factually as I can, and argue the case as closely as I can.

The first point which crosses my mind is, “What would constitute a **positive response** to the Gospel invitation”? Is it simply a desire to be immersed because we believe that immersion is the correct and scriptural way to be baptised, or does it signify a more enduring love for Christ which would prompt us to obey Him in **all** respects? Before we can answer these supplementary questions, we need to examine the scriptural evidence regarding **salvation**, because surely that is what we are talking about.

### SALVATION IN CHRIST

Shortly before He returned to His Father, Jesus gave instructions to His Disciples, **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”** Mk. 16:15,16. To the cursory reader this might suggest that once a person has been baptised, then his salvation is assured for all time. We must, however, understand that **‘to believe’** does not signify just mere credence, but strictly means ‘a reliance upon’. Now if I rely upon someone, I don’t turn my back on that person. Similarly, the Gospel is an on-going experience, because the Gospel is the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus, and therefore I cannot relate my belief in the Gospel just to some point in time when I was said to have ‘obeyed’ it; if Christ is the Gospel, then I must **go on** believing it and Him for the rest of my life. As Peter says, I must go on adding to my faith in order to make my calling (by the Gospel) and my election (by the grace of God **through** the Gospel) sure. (See 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

With regard to the foregoing, the Christian neophyte must answer two further questions. Can I add to my conversion faith by staying away from the fellowship of the Church, and work out my own salvation from thereon; or, shall I return to the Church which **did not teach me the truth of the Gospel** in the first place, for the simple reason that all my ‘friends’ are there? (This, of course, is the substance of the original question).

### THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Gospel makes it plain that we are baptised into Christ Jesus. **“Know ye not,”** says Paul in Rom. 6, **“that so many of us were baptised into Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness**

of life". In his second letter to Corinth Paul says, **"Therefore if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** 2 Cor. 5:17. Concerning Christ, Paul says in his Ephesian letter, **"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him which filleth all in all"**. Eph. 1:22,23. So when we are baptised into Christ, we are baptised into His Body, and that Body is the Church. Christ is the Head of the Body, so He is Head of the Church. That seems to be fairly straight forward, and is in line with Matt. 16:16-18 where it is recorded that Jesus said that He would build **His Church**, and that it would be based on the confession of Peter that He, Jesus, was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The foregoing leads us on to a further question. "Where, then, do we find the Church of Christ today? Is it such a loose organism that its members are scattered throughout denominational Christendom, or is it a unique fellowship whose faith and practice attempt to mirror the early days of Christianity, taking as its only standard the divine will of God as revealed by His Christ and Apostles, and passed on to mankind in the Holy Word of God, the Bible?"

#### THE POST-PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE

Acts chapter 2 records that after Peter had preached the Gospel on that first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus, that three thousand people responded to the call of the Gospel and were immersed in water into Christ. The record then goes on, **"And they (the immersed) continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . And all that believed were together, and had all things common . . ."** Acts 2:42-47.

There are detractors who say that some of those early Christians very quickly fell away from the high ideal set before them, e.g. Ananias and Sapphira, but the fact that **some** defect does not make the **ideal** unreal or unattainable; it simply means that some people are defective in their **appreciation** of what the ideal stands for. Isn't this true of every age, and isn't this why the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17) is so splintered and shattered? It is high time that we today faced the ideal squarely and, like Paul **"forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"** Phil. 3:13,14.

This is not only an **individual** effort, but must be a **united** effort by a **united** Church, for the sake of the One who **"loved the Church and gave Himself for it"**. I fail to see how this united effort can take place if some members of the Lord's Body keep their allegiance with disunited denominationalism. It seems to me that such 'converts' are attempting to maintain some semblance of 'spiritual affinity' with Christ while denying the way in which **true** spiritual affinity come through practice, i.e., by communion of saints, and participatory fellowship **with** the saints in the Church. If that is not the case, then the focal point of that sort of 'conversion' is nothing more than the obedience to a command to be immersed in water, as distinct from the 'sprinkling' which the neophyte might have undergone when a baby. Is that enough? Not for me, it isn't.

What I am challenging is the idea that some people have regarding conversion to Christ. Conversion in its truest sense means not only a turning **from**, but also a turning **to**. Take the case of a person who attends a particular denominational Church, comes into a Gospel meeting, and hears baptism by immersion preached. Such a person may reason, "Oh, well, I've been converted but I've now learned that the 'sprinkling' I had when a baby is not good enough and I now need to be immersed. I'd better get it done, and then everything will be alright, and I can return to my Church with an easy mind". This, to me, seems to be a complete reliance on overt acts which ostensibly represent faith, I would have serious doubts whether such an

attitude represents real commitment to Christ.

### PROBLEMS WITH BONDING

Speaking practically, I can pass a rope around a small group of people, or books, or other things, and **bind** them together. Bricks could be laid upon each other, but without being **bonded** together with cement, they would make a very unstable edifice. Metaphorically speaking, Christians are said to be **bound together** in Christ and with Him. It is this fact more than any other which should give us a clue as to what true bonding in Christ should be. It would be pointless, for instance, to leave out bricks from a house which I was building, and put them into a different house in the next street. It would be equally pointless to leave a vital organ out of my physical body and then expect the body to function efficiently. In his Ephesian letter Paul speaks about 'the supply of every joint of the Body', so that the **co-operative** effort of **every** joint makes the Body upbuild itself in love. (See Eph. 4:15,16). In his Colossian letter he develops the idea of Christ being the Head of the Body. He shows how believers are **knit together**, and how the joints in the Body are **bonded** together. He gives a beautiful picture of how efficiently the Body of Christ can work; just as how the human body can work when all parts are operating efficiently. Can anyone doubt the meaning of this teaching with regard to our question?

My reaction, then, is quite simple and straight forward. If I were an Elder of an assembly of Christians, and someone wanted to be immersed but was quite adamant that he/she was **not** going to have fellowship in the Church with brothers and sisters of like mind and like faith, then I would have serious doubts as to whether the baptism ought to go ahead at all. Why should I be party to sending them back, ostensibly cleansed, to an organisation which did not preach and practise the things which were taught in God's Word? My reasons for thinking as I do are entirely scriptural. They have nothing to do with my opinion.

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

## WHAT A FELLOWSHIP

One of the greatest blessings of the Christian life is that of Christian fellowship. In Acts 2, after Peter had preached to thousands on the Day of Pentecost, the first things we read about is the fellowship of those new Christians.

We read that they devoted themselves to the fellowship, were all together and had everything in common, sacrificed to give anyone in need, and met together every-day and practised hospitality with one another in their homes.

From these passages we are reminded not only of the importance of being devoted to the fellowship surrounding our worship services, devotionals, classes and special congregational events, but the emphasis placed on daily fellowship among the believers. Christian fellowship is a valuable part of any Christian's life. Without it, it would be impossible to fulfil the command Jesus gives to "Love each other". God never intended for Christians to just come to services, or just study our Bibles or just pray. When we become Christians we are "baptised into the body of Christ" and no longer independent of God and His people. Each of us has become "part of the body of Christ". We now have the responsibility to Christ and each other to become devoted and totally committed to the fellowship of believers. Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of any substitute for deep and meaningful relationships among brothers and sisters in Christ.

We are taught to :

- "Encourage One Another Daily".

It is impossible to encourage one another on a daily basis without fellowship.

Daily fellowship should be encouraging, uplifting and joyful. It will also help keep us from becoming "hardened by by sin's deceitfulness" because through constant Christian relationships Satan will have a difficult time getting a foothold in our lives.

■ **"Spur One Another On Toward Love and Good Deeds".**

Our fellowship should consist of motivating, stimulating and urging each other to continue to love each other, love the lost and to serve one another. Daily fellowship will give us the incentive to live victorious lives for Christ.

■ **"Follow My Example As I Follow The Example Of Christ".**

One of the most practical ways we can learn to live the Christian life is by imitating those whose lifestyle is like that of Christ's. It is difficult to follow someone's example in Christ with little fellowship. Through fellowship each day we can influence each other to do **WHATEVER IS TRUE, NOBLE, RIGHT, PURE, LOVELY, ADMIRABLE, EXCELLENT and PRAISEWORTHY.**

■ **"As You Help Us By Your Prayers".**

Through fellowship we will become sensitive to the needs of each other. As we share these short comings, obstacles and sins with one another we can then take them to God in prayer on each others behalf. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective".

We can't go out and restore the New Testament Church without restoring New Testament fellowship. When more Christians begin to devote themselves to serving, giving, helping and praying for one another, then the results will be congregations in which the Lord is adding to their number daily those who are being saved.

J. Patterson.

## THE DENOMINATIONS

### Churches with Peculiar Doctrines

## 5. — SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

Modern forms of Adventism may be said to begin with William Miller, who was born in Massachusetts in 1781, and in 1833 began to preach that the second advent was near. He proclaimed 1844 as the year and then 1845. When his prophecies failed he renounced his errors. Mrs. Ellen G. White, born in 1827, had heard him preach and herself became a 'prophetess'. She had visions and was told by an angel that the Sabbath (Saturday) must be kept. Hence Seventh Day Adventism, which was organised at a General Conference in U.S.A. in 1863, and has since spread throughout the world. It is characterised by three things, adventism, Sabbath-keeping, and the belief in soul-sleeping (the dead are unconscious until the resurrection, after which the wicked will be destroyed). In its modern form it is also associated with health foods, farming, and health institutes. The main tenet, however, is the keeping of the Seventh Day.

### *Organisation.*

There are 157 Churches in this country, with 9,252 members. Missionary work is world-wide. At the head is the General Conference. The world is divided into 11 Divisions of which Northern Europe is one, with a Superintendent over each. Each Division is divided into Unions, Great Britain and Ireland being one. Over each Union is a President. Each Union is subdivided into (a) Conferences, (b) Missions. England has two Conferences. Scotland and Ireland are Missions. Finances come by tithing, which is obligatory. All tithes go to world headquarters. They amount to something like two-and-a-half million pounds per year. But tithing doesn't end giving. There is a weekly missionary collection and free-will offerings for the support of local work. There is no doubt that in giving, this body sets an example to all Churches. The centre

of the work in this country is at Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts., where there is a health Institute, a farm, and modern factory for producing health foods. Practitioners are medically qualified, but drugs are discountenanced and Nature cures largely employed. The training centre is at Newbold Missionary College, near Rugby, where the course, which is six years, includes engineering, carpentry, farming, journalism, business methods, as well as arts subjects and theology. Magazines are *Present Truth* (fortnightly) and *Good Health* (monthly).

#### *Belief and Practice.*

Members are admitted by Baptism (immersion) on a profession of faith, and the Lord's Supper is celebrated quarterly, being preceded by the ceremony of feet-washing in which the sexes are segregated. Ministers, Elders and Deacons are ordained by 'the laying of hands'. After training in College a Minister serves first as a Licentiate. Women may serve as Bible-workers after a course of study. Alcohol and smoking are strictly forbidden. Adventist doctrine is accepted by all, including the keeping of the Seventh Day as the true sabbath. This is supported by curious exegesis, the main prop of which is that Christians kept the Sabbath until the time of Constantine, who changed it to Sunday. This will not bear the light of historical examination. The New Testament alone makes it clear that Christians met on the First Day, which they called the Lord's Day. What Constantine did was to make this day a general holiday, which, of course, it had not been before. Many Adventists hold that those who do not keep the Sabbath have upon them 'the mark of the Beast'. Adventists co-operate with no one and recognise no spheres of delimitation on the Mission field, often making their converts from those of other bodies and causing great confusion.

#### *Seventh Day Baptists*

Another Adventist body is the The Seventh Day Baptists, who have only two small congregations in England, but a number in America, where they were established in 1681. They are followers of the Traskites in the seventeenth century. They hold General Baptists tenets and add to these the keeping of the Sabbath. Unlike Seventh Day Adventists, they co-operate with other Christian bodies and form part of the Faith and Order Movement. In U.S.A. they form part of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ.

W. Robinson.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct. 3	Isaiah 34	Matt. 24:23-35
Oct. 10	Genesis 7	Matt. 24:36-51
Oct. 17	Daniel 1	Matt. 25: 1-30
Oct. 24	Daniel 12	Matt. 25:31-46
Oct. 31	Exodus 12:1-20	Matt. 26: 1-25

### THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

I enjoy visiting bookshops. I was in one the other week and came upon a volume by a Jewish historian whose name was the background of the Jewish revolt which began in A.D. 66 and resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. All this was of interest to

me because I have been following a series of articles recently on "The Fall of Jerusalem" in an Australian magazine called *Buried History*. (I met the editor, Piers Crocker, in Israel.) The series was excellent and has stimulated me to do a special study for myself on this important subject. I forecast it will take years to complete.

At one time, I was of the view that Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 spoke alternatively of the destruction of Jerusalem and of His second coming. (For example, the commentator E. M. Zerr has suggested this interpretation.) Then I taught that the Master's remarks on the destruction of Jerusalem ended at verse 35 and the subsequent verses

dealt exclusively with the second coming. Now I am not so sure. For example, we read: **“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left”** (24:40-41). I was certain at one time that these words had reference to the second coming of Christ and the taking of the righteous before the wicked. However, verses 38 and 39 should be carefully considered in our analysis of the passage. They read: **“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark and knew not until the flood came and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”** Question: What does “took them all away” mean in verse 39? Second question: What does “taken” mean in verse 40 and 41? Albert Barnes has written: “The word ‘taken’ may mean either to be taken away from the danger — that is, rescued, as Lot was (Luke 17:28-29), or to be taken away by death. Probably the latter is the meaning”.

The remaining verses of this great chapter produced comment by the outstanding Biblical commentator James MacKnight: “But as the miseries which men were to undergo at the destruction of Jerusalem, the reasons of that destruction, the passions which its approach would raise in their minds, together with the suddenness at and unexpectedness of it, nearly resemble what shall happen at the destruction of the world and the general judgment, it was natural for our Lord on this occasion to put the disciples in mind of that judgment, and to exhort them to the faithful discharge of their duty, from the consideration of the unexpectedness of his coming to call every particular person to an account at death”.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

In this chapter we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the Parable of the Talents and Declarations on the Last

Judgment.

Wedding traditions vary all over the world. Jesus used the customs in His day to get across spiritual lessons. One thing that has always surprised me about the Parable of the Five Wise Virgins and the Five Foolish Virgins is that the virgins in illustrations are always depicted as females. This is a mistake, I believe. The term “virgin” in that day was used as much of a male as of a female. The ten referred to here would almost certainly be of the former sex.

The message Jesus was wanting to get across is summed up in verse 13: **“Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes”**. To leave things too late, especially in relation to one’s salvation, will prove a great tragedy. As one writer put it: “There is no knell so laden with regret as the sound of the words **too late**”.

Robert Milligan has pointed out that the scope of the Parable of the Talents is: “Christ will hold all men personally responsible for whatever talents he has committed to their charge”. How often have we seen the waste of talents in churches! Everyone has at least one talent, which is to be used for the good of all. To bury that God-given talent is to be condemned in the end by Jesus. Brothers and sisters in Christ, may we all work to identify whatever talent or talents we possess and use it or them in the service of God and in the service of our fellow men.

It is interesting to note that Jesus in speaking of the final judgment clearly teaches the lesson that God will judge us in accordance with our reaction to human need. Barclay has written: “His judgment does not depend on the knowledge we have amassed, or the fame that we have acquired, or the fortune that we have gained, but on the help that we have given”. Jesus said: **“And the King shall answer and say unto them, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me”** (25:40). He also

went on to say that all such help withheld is withheld from Himself (v. 45). We clearly see the importance here of God's family and what they really mean to the Father and the Son.

We read: "**And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal**" (25:46). Eternal life is eternal union with God and everlasting punishment or eternal death is eternal separation from God. Dear reader, what is the destiny of your soul?

### JUDAS ISCARIOT

The name of Judas Iscariot forever lives in the annals of infamy. He was a traitor of the deepest dye. He sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver (26:15). It is almost incredible to read that someone so close to Jesus, (in fact, a chosen disciple), could have done what he did. And yet I believe with Alexander Campbell that his testimony is of great importance in considering the Divine origin of Christianity. Campbell once said: "Perhaps I should place at the head of the list of infidel, Pagan and Jewish witnesses, the testimony of one Judas Iscariot, a traitor to Jesus Christ. The testimony of a traitor is sometimes more worthy of credit than the testimony of a friend. This Judas is a better testimony than a combined testimony of the eleven friends . . . He had been, during the whole ministry of Jesus, most intimately acquainted with His speeches and His actions. If anything insincere, political, or contrary to the ostensible object of the mission of Jesus, had ever transpired in secret, or if there had been any conspiracy among His followers, to delude or impose upon the nation, Judas must have known it. This must be conceded by all who have ever read the gospel histories".

Judas allowed himself to be used as an instrument for Satan. Satan saw his opportunity and never hesitated. The evil one must have thought he had achieved the victory in having Jesus tried, crucified and slain. In the end

Judas knew he had betrayed innocent blood (Matthew 27:4) and in consequence went out and hanged himself (27:5). In the book of Acts we read these words of Peter: "**For he (Judas) was numbered with us and had obtained part of the ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out**" (1:17,18). How do these words square with the hanging? Surely we can say that Matthew does not deny that Judas, after hanging himself, fell and burst asunder; and Peter does not say that Judas did not hang himself previous to his fall. In other words, Matthew gives one aspect of the affair and Peter another. There is no contradiction between them.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

## OBITUARY

**Haddington:** The Church here greatly regrets to report the passing of sister Mary Gordon, in her 91st year. Our sister has been a faithful disciple for 74 years or so, and was attending our services regularly until the time of her passing. She had been blessed with good health nearly all her days and died peacefully: for which we give thanks. She was ever bright and cheerful and shall be greatly missed by us all. She died on 30th July, 1993 and was cremated at Mortonhall Crematorium on 4th August. The funeral service was carried out by Bro. Joe Nisbet, who had promised her many years previously, to officiate at her funeral.

**Easthouses:** It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our Brother Morris Finlay from this veil of tears to be with his Heavenly Father. We in Easthouses are deeply shocked at the suddenness of his death.

Brother Morris became a Christian in the late 1940's during a mission being held by the Church at Newtongrange and his early service to God was with that congregation, although many of the churches in the Slammanan

district benefited from his unstinting devotion to serve his Master.

For the last twenty years he was a faithful member with the small congregation which meets here in Easthouses unflinching preaching the Good News of the Gospel of the Saviour he diligently sought to serve. Not only did he take an active part in all the services of the church here but he also made sure that our building was kept in condition doing the necessary repairs when needed.

Morris will be missed greatly by all of us here, but he has fought the fight and won the prize he longed for: his crown of righteousness and life eternal in heaven. We commend into the love and care of God his wife, and our sister in the Lord, Jeanette, and also his family.

The funeral took place on Saturday 24th July. A short service was held at our meeting place here in Easthouses. Brother Robert Hughes from the church in Kirkcaldy conducted the service held at Seafield Crematorium.

David Fergus, Secy.

**Tranent:** It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Sister Agnes Scott on 19th July, 1993, after a short illness.

Sister Agnes will be missed by all of us and our thoughts are with her husband, Brother David Scott and the family at this time. Bro. James Sinclair (Snr.) officiated at the funeral service at the house and John Kneller at the cemetery.

J. Colgan (Sec.)

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Longshoot, Wigan:** It is with joy that we report the baptism of Mark Webster. Mark

who is the son of Chris and Isabel (and grandson of Jack and Dorothy Parker) was immersed following the breaking of bread on Sunday, 18th July, 1993.

We praise God for Mark's decision to follow his Master and pray that, as he grows in grace and the knowledge of God's word, he will prove to be a useful worker for the Lord.

D. Melling.

## THANKS

Sister Jeanette Finlay, Newtongrange, would like to thank all those who telephoned and sent letters, cards and flowers during her recent bereavement, and those who attended the funeral of her husband Morris. All these things were greatly appreciated and were the source of real help and support.

## COMING EVENTS

### Newtongrange Social

The Church at Newtongrange intends, God willing, to hold its Annual Social On Saturday 9th October, 1993 at 4 p.m. in the meeting place

Speakers: Bro. Bill Cook, Dunfermline  
Bro. John Wilson, Slamannan

Chairman: John Wilson

We look forward to a rich time of fellowship with the various congregations, and our Lord.  
Joe Currie (Sec/Treas)

**Kentish Town:** Anniversary Meeting, Kentish Town, London, 122nd Anniversary. Saturday October 2nd 1993 3.00 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. Tea 4.45 p.m. Speaker: Bro. Geoff Daniell - A warm welcome to all.

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