

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

Vol. 58 No. 6

JUNE 1990

## VAIN TRADITION

Yesterday morning, on the radio, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland was being interviewed on the question of homosexuality. During the conversation he said, referring to some meeting of the Church at which the matter was to be reviewed, that homosexuality would be examined in terms of "Holy Scripture and the Traditions of the Church". It was amazing to hear that the Church of Scotland, in its relatively short history, had evolved any ecclesiastical tradition on any subject at all, let alone on the matter of homosexuality. Later in the day I 'phoned the headquarters of the Church in George Street, Edinburgh, to ask how I could learn more about these traditions, but did not get far. However the clergyman's remark has prompted me to write upon 'Church Traditions' and homosexuality but obviously limited space necessitates that the latter be dealt with in next month's issue. Some may find it extremely surprising that any church, which claims to be protestant, should seek to emulate the Roman Catholic Church in giving any credence to church 'tradition'. Certainly it is well known that the Roman Catholic Church has built up great masses of religious folk-lore and 'Church Tradition' and make no bones about the fact that such tradition is as important as Holy Scripture, if not more so. Surely any ordinary Bible student must wonder why any matter (as in the case of homosexuality, mentioned above) should not be examined in terms of Holy Scripture, and it alone, and wonder at what possible relevance church tradition could have. What relevance do religious traditions have: and what authority, if any, do they carry? Indeed, what did Jesus, and His chosen apostles, think and say about such tradition?

### Traditions

Any dictionary will tell us that traditions can evolve in any and all avenues of life and are, in simple terms, the handing down of customs, forms, ceremonies, opinions and doctrines, from ancestors to posterity; from past to present, by oral communication. They are to be found everywhere: in schools, colleges, universities, professional associations, clubs; even in families and certainly in Halls of Justice and Parliament Buildings (House of Commons and House of Lords have a great many). They are found, as previously mentioned, in religious establishments as well. Most traditions are harmless enough and some even quaint, charming, and picturesque. Religious tradition however, when placed alongside scripture is an unwarranted intrusion; is mischievous and a presumptuous rival to God's inspired words, There are inspired and uninspired traditions; i.e. those inspired of God (and now contained in the canon of scripture) and those cobbled up by men.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, in their Bible Commentary, define "traditions" (as used by Paul) as "truths" delivered and transmitted orally, or in writing. They go on

to say, "Rome has argued for her accumulation of inspired traditions, virtually overriding God's Word, whilst put forward as of co-ordinate authority with it. She forgets Christ's and Paul's pronouncements which stigmatise man's uninspired traditions. Not even the apostles' sayings were all inspired (e.g. Peter's dissimulation, Gal. 2:11-14) but only when they claimed to be so, as in their words afterwards embodied in their canonical writings. Oral inspiration was necessary in their case, until the canon of the written Word should be complete: they proved their inspiration by miracles wrought in support of the new revelation, which revelation, moreover, accorded with the existing O.T. revelation, an additional test needed beside miracles (see Deut.13:1-6; Acts 17:11). When the canon was complete, the infallibility of the living men was transferred to the written Word, **now the sole unerring guide** interpreted by the Holy Spirit. Little else has come down to us by the most ancient and universal tradition, save this, **the all-sufficiency of Scripture** for salvation. Therefore, by tradition we are constrained to cast off all tradition not contained in, and provable by, Scripture." If space had permitted it would have been profitable to have quoted more of what these men had to say on the subject but clearly they reject all tradition not enshrined in God's written Word.

#### Traditions Of The Elders

But, most important of all, what did Jesus have to say about traditions.? (see Matt. 15:1-9: Mark 7:1-13).

I suppose we are indebted to the Scribes and Pharisees for soliciting Christ's comments on the issue. They complained to Jesus that His disciples **transgressed** the "Traditions Of The Elders" by not washing their hands before eating. It is, of course, a good thing to wash hands before eating, and I am sure Christ's disciples did so, but the Scribes were referring to the set ceremonial washings prescribed by the Tradition Of The Elders. The Jews washed often, hands and bodies, almost as often as they mingled with other people (especially the Romans and other heathen), in case they had been 'defiled' by such close contact. These traditions were customs, practices, religious observances and rites handed down from generation to generation by Jewish 'Elders'. It was believed that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, he not only received laws from God which were permanently chiselled out on stone, but also received laws and precepts which he was to pass on **by word of mouth** for following generations. These laws and ordinances were allegedly passed verbally from one generation to another, down the years, until finally being recorded in the Talmud. These, then, were the Traditions Of The Elders to which Scribes referred. The traditions were very numerous and, though sometimes of a trifling nature, were held sacred and considered every bit as important as the written law of Moses (if not more so). Mark's account of the incident says, **"For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace except they wash they eat not. And many things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables."** These ceremonial washings were held so rigidly that it is said that Rabbi Akiba, imprisoned by the Romans, with scarcely enough water to sustain life, preferred to use all his supply on his ritual washings and died of thirst.

So then, when the Scribes came to Jesus and asked, **"Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders (for they wash not their hands before they eat bread)"** what was Christ's reaction? The Scribes could hardly have been prepared for Christ's prompt, powerful and scathing outburst in reply, **"And why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions."** Most of the traditions did of course, literally transgress God's commandments but even those that didn't, by their very existence, were an insult to God's word. Thus Jesus detested religious traditions and clearly His disciples did not observe any of them. Mark is more expansive on Christ's reply and quotes

Him as saying, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

These well-washed, whiter-than-white, Jewish leaders would be horrified to hear that the well-known prophecy from Isaiah was written with them in mind, and that worship based upon human traditions was not only vain, empty and useless, but entirely ignored by God. All these cherished ablutions and observances enshrined in the beloved Talmud were not only pointless but, much worse than that, they were a stench in God's nostrils. If a commandment of God was 'inconvenient' the Jews merely invented a tradition that would circumvent the problem, nullifying God's word in the process. To illustrate and support His accusation, Jesus threw them a random example. "For God commanded saying, Honour thy father and mother: and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death," (Jesus was quoting from Ex. 20:12), "But ye say, Whosoever shall say unto his father and mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me: And Honour not his father and mother, he shall be free. Thus ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Like many families today, the Jews found that it was expensive and not always 'convenient' to care for an aged parent, or both. God had required that a man **must** look after his father or mother, but the traditions of the elders said that if man declared his goods to be gifted to God (or 'Corban' as per Mark 7:11) then he was absolved from that responsibility – he was 'free' albeit he did **not** afterwards devote his goods to God's use. This was a flagrant, if thinly disguised, device for making God's commandment of none effect. On the matter, also mentioned, of cursing father or mother, the Mishna says, "He that curses his father or mother is **not** guilty of death unless he curses them with the express mention of the name of Jehovah." Again this illustrates how simple a matter it was for the Jews to produce a tradition that would make void the intention of God's commandment.

We can, therefore, readily see from Christ's withering reply to the Scribes that He totally abhorred uninspired religious tradition. He condemned it out of hand on the grounds that it was not only uninspired but, being extraneous to God's written Word, was unauthorised and unlawful. Its ostensible purpose was to amplify God's word, but in reality, it was designed to circumvent and nullify God's word. Men 'laid aside' the commandments of God that they "might hold to the tradition of men", and "full well did men reject the commandment of God that they might keep their own traditions". The rejection of God is involved and any man who "teaches for doctrine" any human tradition, worships God in vain. One might be excused for thinking that, following Christ's censure, there would have been an end to human tradition and religious men would have shunned its very appearance, but not a bit of it. Indeed since Jesus made that comprehensive denunciation of religious tradition the Roman Catholic Church has been producing much more of it than even the Jews ever did; and is it possible that even Protestants are now talking in terms of the 'traditions of their Church'?

#### Paul And The Apostles.

Some readers, while understanding Christ's castigation of human tradition may, at the same time, be puzzled by Paul's words to the churches in Thessalonica, where he says (2 Thess. 2:15), "Therefore brethren stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word, or our epistle." and (3:6,7) "Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother which walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received

from us.”

Obviously, these “traditions” referred to by Paul were **inspired** of the Holy Spirit and only remained ‘traditional’ **until** they entered the canon of scripture. Naturally, before the N.T. was written, **all** the teaching of the apostles was by ‘tradition’, i.e. by word of mouth, and remained so until embodied in God’s written Word. E.M. Zerr (in his Bible Commentary) quotes Thayer’s definition of ‘tradition’ as from *paradosis*, meaning “a giving over” or “passing on” from one to another (or one generation to another) and adds, “hence the traditions Paul mentions here are from God through Paul and thus have Christ’s authority albeit word of mouth (oral preaching)”. And so, what Paul rightly describes as “traditions” when he spoke, later became permanently fixed in the written N.T. Paul also draws a distinction between the inspired traditions of the apostles and the uninspired ones which Jesus condemned, when he warns the Colossian brethren to, **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, AFTER THE TRADITION OF MEN, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”** The apostle Peter, likewise, reminds his contemporaries that they had not been redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from their vain conduct **“RECEIVED BY TRADITION FROM THEIR FATHERS”**, but by the precious blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18)

The crafty ingenuity behind the purpose of the Traditions Of The Elders is not dead; neither is the evasive spirit which fostered them. God’s word is still nullified and circumscribed as much today as ever it was, and religious men can still manage to set aside the intention of God by a ‘Church’ interpretation of scripture, whether from the R.C. Church or Protestant denominations, or whether (dare I suggest it) from some segment of Churches Of Christ. An obvious example would be N.T. Baptism, or the Lord’s Table. How many religious groups, for instance, comply with God’s word on either of these two subjects.? Is it because God’s word is ambiguous and obscure, or is it because of church tradition and more ‘convenient’ interpretations on these matters? Obviously the latter and we must seek never to be involved.

In the quote from Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, earlier, we were reminded of the **all-sufficiency of Scripture**, and this is in complete accord with Paul’s assertion to Timothy that **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”** (2 Tim. 3:16) Traditions, like Creeds, say too much if they say more than the Bible: and say too little if they say less than the Bible: but are superfluous if they say the same as the Bible: for we already have the Bible.

There is absolutely no place for religious traditons. They have no authority or relevance: and, in any case, Jesus abhorred them.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### THE SIN OF FORGETFULNESS

“The sin of forgetfulness is insidious, wide-spread, and inestimably hurtful. That is to say, it is intensely human. Albeit, it is not a disease itself, it is only a symptom. It generally, if not always, shows that the heart is affected. When there is failure in keeping an appointment, either with God or with man, the neglect will, with a ready and intuitive justice, be charged against lack of sympathy rather than lapse of memory. Interest and retentiveness are left to be because and effect, and where the treasure is there (it is realised) will the memory be also. Why did not God forget the human race? Why, because, in the language of Jesus, He “so loved” it, although the reason for His doing that may to a great extent be inscrutable, exciting our wonder, as it did

David's."

### THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION

Looking back upon those things that "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come," we note that so long as the chosen people remembered the redemptive work of Jehovah in bringing them with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm out of their wearisome, intolerable bondage, so long as they heard ringing in their ears the oft-repeated "Thus saith the Lord," they were singularly prosperous and happy. But as years elapsed the erstwhile pious Israelites' memory – lulled by the quiet pursuits of a peaceful life, or again, thronged by the feverish fervour and bustle of war-like enterprise – let slip the Mosaic warning: "Take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons."

#### SOME OF THEM MAY HAVE SMILED

One wonders how the favoured people had received the admonition and command. Some of them may have smiled incredulously, while others may have perhaps been offended at the "unjust suspicion." Yet soon, very soon, the things that they had seen became a tradition void of helpful inspiration – the veiled prophecy was fulfilled, the clouds of calamity swept, with blighting force, over the homes of the people."

(B.A. January 15th 1895) James M. Christie.

#### FORGETTING, GO ASTRAY

"Light of the world! whose kind and gentle care

Is joy and rest;

Whose counsels and commands so gracious are

Wisest and best;

Shine on my path, good Lord, and guard the way,

Lest my poor heart, forgetting, go astray."...

"We turn to ancient Israel. Moses knew something of the human heart, and how earnestly he pleads, and how solemnly he warns them. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life."

#### BUT THEY DID

"One would hardly suppose they could forget their deliverance from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, their wanderings in the wilderness, and the other abundant and remarkable evidences of God's favour towards them. But they did. Their murmuring, mistrust, rebellion and idolatry, clearly shew their heedlessness. They forgot the covenant, the testimony, the warning, the promise, the commandment, and the lessons of their own bitter experience. Their whole history is characterised by such forgetfulness and going astray."

#### WE MUST TAKE HEED

"Something of a like nature is found in the world today. How much we need the exhortation, 'To give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, It applies to our work as churches, and to our responsibilities as individuals. If we desire not to go astray we must take heed, watch and pray. To all of us comes the warning, 'Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain ... Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard and hold fast. 'Keep that which is committed to thy trust.' Hold fast the faithful word: Stand fast in the Lord. 'Stand fast in the one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel'."

(B.A. May 1st 1903)

W. Marshall.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

*(The following short article is offered in response to the Editor's invitation for comment upon Brother Grimditch's recent article on Divorce & Remarriage.)*

## FOR THIS CAUSE – (Matthew 19.5)

### SELF EVIDENT MORALS

Some moral principles are self-evident and require no legislation to be seen to be correct. Unselfish love, honesty and trustworthiness are obviously right. Coveting what belongs to another, lying and deceit are clearly wrong. The honest mind confronted with these principles, does not require an authoritative statement from a higher power to satisfy it that these things are so.

### LEGISLATION

Other issues might be the subject of authoritative legislation and their validity depend on the rank of the authority.

On which side of the road we should drive is decided arbitrarily by the government of the country we happen to be in. In America it is the right side. In Britain it is the left. We are required to obey the laws of the country we are in. If however a civil law conflicts with that of one whose rank is higher, then the requirement of the higher authority takes precedence.

Acts 5:29

**Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.**

### DIVINE LEGISLATION

Sometimes God, the supreme authority of all, has re-started self-evident moral rules, for example **"Thou shalt not kill"**. The right to take life is obviously the prerogative of the giver of life.

Sometimes God has bound on man rules that would seem arbitrary. for example **"Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"**, **"This do in remembrance of me"**.

Such rules might be bound up in covenants with particular people, for example **"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy"** is directed at the children of Israel to remind them that they were servants in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD God brought them out thence with a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm, therefore the LORD their God commanded them to keep the Sabbath day (Deut. 5.15).

On the other hand it goes without saying that the underlying principles of moral laws are not confined to the covenant under which the enactments were made. Consider for example **"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."** Even though this legislation was made as part of God's covenant with Israel, the underlying moral principle, that coveting is sinful, is universal.

(Incidentally, we know who our neighbour is Luke 10:29 **"But he, willing to justify himself said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?"**).

Because of the universality of moral and Divinely established principles, Paul was able to say to Timothy:—

II Timothy 3:16-17

**ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and IS PROFITABLE for DOCTRINE, for REPROOF, for CORRECTION, for INSTRUCTION in RIGHTEOUSNESS: That the man of God may be perfect, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED unto all good works."**

### DIVINE PRINCIPLES

Sometimes the very fact that God did a particular thing in a particular way shows without question that God requires it to be that way, and anyone who dares interfere with the arrangement is guilty of sinning against the Creator. For example, in Genesis 2:18-24, God makes one woman from one man to be his **"help meet for him"** thus

establishing for all time the principle of one man/one woman for life.

It was this principle that Jesus appealed to when he made his pronouncement on marriage and divorce.

Matthew – Chapter 19:3-6

3. **“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?**

4. **And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,**

5. **And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?**

6. **Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”**

It had nothing to do with any restricted covenant relationship God and a selected company of people, whether Patriarchal, Jewish or Christian.

Jesus made it clear that the whole principle of one man/one woman for life is based on this historical fact: **“he which made them at the beginning made them male and female and said FOR THIS CAUSE shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his woman (Gk. gunaiki from gune, woman): and they twain shall be one flesh, Wherefore they are no more twain, but ONE FLESH. What therefore God hath joined together, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER.”**

This principle was bound on ALL mankind right at the beginning. This accounts for Jesus statement with regard to deviation from this principle: **“but from the beginning it was not so.”** Matt. 19:8.

#### THE EXCEPTION CLAUSE

**What about the exception clause?**

In Matthew 19:9 **“fornication”** (Gk. porneia) is given as an exception to marrying another being the sin of committing adultery (Gk. moichos).

The exception clause is recorded by Matthew only. (Matt. 5:32 and 19:9). These passages must not be interpreted to teach something different from the parallel passage in Mark 10:2-12 where, without any exception being permitted, it says: **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery (vv11 - 12).**

Why then an exception clause in Matthew but not in Mark and Luke (i.e. in Luke 16:18)? Did the Greeks whom Luke addressed and the Romans, whom Mark addressed, not need to know of the exception clause? Were only the Jews, whom Matthew addressed, permitted this liberty? The answer lies in the peculiar way in which the Jews contracted marriage.

#### JEWISH BETROTHAL

Has it never struck us as odd that Joseph was considering divorcing Mary before the marriage?

Matthew 1:18-20

**“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was ESPOUSED to Joseph, BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded TO PUT her AWAY privily. (“to put away” Gk. apoluo divorce).**

**But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, FEAR NOT TO TAKE UNTO THEE Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”**

Jewish custom differed significantly from that of the Gentiles with regard to mar-

riage. Before a Jewish marriage took place, an espousal contract was entered into. Then a period of several months betrothal preceded the marriage ceremony. During this period the couple were not allowed to come together as man and wife. Even so this espousal contract could only be broken by a writing of divorcement. That is how Joseph, finding his betrothed was having a baby, came to her thinking of divorce, even though they were not yet married.

From Matthew's account of Jesus' words on divorce, it is evident that; a man having undertaken in an espousal contract to take a woman as a wife, the only legitimate ground he could have for breaking that contract would be FORNICATION, i.e. pre-marital sex.

In Matthew 19-9 the NIV wantonly translated "fornication" (Gk. porneia) by ("marital unfaithfulness"). It is true that porneia can also include adultery but in this passage two different Greek words are used; porneia for fornication and moichos for adultery. This signifies that two different types of action are being referred to. In passages where both words appear, "fornication" (Gk. porneia) is not used as an alternative word for "adultery" (Gk. moichos). It is used for a sin distinctively different from adultery, that of pre-marital sex. See for example Matthew 5:32 and Mark 7:21. The exception clause is not relevant to the gentile situation. It can not be used as justification for the divorce and re-marriage of one who has been joined by God's design and purpose, to another. Such a person would be committing adultery.

#### FORGIVENESS

Adultery has to be regretted, and repented of to be forgiven. Repentance is a change of mind which produces a change of action. In this case from committing adultery to ceasing to commit adultery. God is gracious and he will forgive the contrite heart and cleanse us from all unrighteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord (1 John 1:7-2:2).

Allan Ashurst,  
60 Kenwood Road,  
Stretford,  
Manchester M32 8PT.

## BREAKING THE BREAD

This article is particularly concerned with whether Jesus ATE the loaf and DRANK the wine in the inaugural feast in the upper room, and whether there is any special significance in His BREAKING of the loaf.

a) We are specifically told that Jesus BROKE the loaf (Matt. 26:26. Mk. 14:22, Lu. 22:19.) Once He had BROKEN the loaf, it could no longer be called WHOLE. It was a BROKEN loaf which He gave to His disciples to eat.

b) *There is no statement which says Jesus ATE the loaf.* If He had done so, the Holy Spirit would have left us in no doubt about it. In common meals the expression "BREAKING BREAD" signifies "a breaking in order to eat", but there is no indication that this must apply to Jesus in this case.

c) Of the BROKEN loaf Jesus said, "THIS is My BODY which is given FOR YOU." (Lu. 22:19). The BODY was NOT given for HIM, but for THEM. It was appropriate for THEM to eat of the symbol of His body. It could not be appropriate for Him to partake of the symbol of His own flesh and blood, and there is no indication that He did. In the silence of the Scriptures, we can only believe He did not.

d) (Lu. 22:14-23). If Jesus ate the loaf, it follows that He must also have drunk the fruit of the vine. There are TWO cups mentioned by Luke; a cup in v.17, and another cup in v.20. In Matt. 26:26-27, Mk. 14:22-23, and 1 Cor. 11:23-25, we are told that



the cup of the inaugural feast was taken AFTER the bread. So the cup of Lu. 22:17 was a cup of the Passover feast, and the cup of v.20 was the cup of Christian communion, as is also evident from the words, "Likewise also the cup AFTER SUPPER." (i.e. AFTER the Passover supper was finished.) Of the cup in v.17 Jesus said, Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, I WILL NOT DRINK OF THE FRUIT OF THE VINE . . . UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME." So we understand that FROM THAT TIME ONWARDS Jesus would NOT drink the fruit of the vine with His disciples upon the earth again. It follows that if He did not drink of the cup v.17, He did not drink of the cup v.20 hence also, He could not have EATEN THE LOAF in the inaugural feast. He did not BREAK the LOAF in order to EAT.

e) The BREAKING OF THE LOAF by Jesus must therefore have another significance. Since the LOAF is the symbol of His BODY, the BREAKING OF THAT LOAF must have another counterpart in the SACRIFICE of that BODY. If it can be shown that there is any SENSE in which it can be said that His BODY was BROKEN in His death, the BREAKING OF THE LOAF by Jesus would be a fitting symbol of that BROKEN BODY. (It must be noted that in terms of type and anti-type, the BREAD need not be BROKEN in precisely the same MANNER that the BODY was broken. In the nature of things, that is an utter impossibility in any sense.)

Speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul writes in Cor. 11.24, "And when He had given thanks, He BRAKE it (the loaf) and said, 'Take, eat, THIS is My BODY which is BROKEN for you: THIS DO in remembrance of Me'."

This passage plainly tells us that Jesus (a) BROKE the loaf, (b) commanded them to DO after His example in doing so, and (c) that His BODY was BROKEN. If it can be shown that there is any SENSE in which the BODY of Jesus was BROKEN, His words are confirmed, and the BREAKING OF THE LOAF becomes a fitting symbol of that BROKEN BODY.

With special reference to 1 Cor. 11:24 THAYER cites CLAOO – "TO BREAK" – Used in the New Testament for the BREAKING OF BREAD. Metaphorically, TO SOMA – "Shattered, as it were, BY VIOLENT DEATH."

In addition to this, we have the nail and spear wounds. We speak in general of an injury "BREAKING THE SKIN". Christ's wounds RENT ASUNDER the FLESH of the BODY. With such wounds, it cannot be said that His BODY was UNBROKEN. The Lord BROKE the LOAF as a fitting symbol of the BODY which was METAPHORICALLY and LITERALLY BROKEN on the cross. We are commanded to follow the Lord's example in order to commemorate His death in His appointed way.

*Alexander Campbell on the Lord's Table.*

From "The Christian System", Breaking the Loaf:-

*Proposition 5:* "The one loaf must be BROKEN BEFORE the saints FEED UPON it, which has obtained for the institution the name of "BREAKING THE LOAF".

Para. 4: "We have said that the LOAF must be BROKEN BEFORE the saints partake of it. Jesus took a loaf from the paschal table and BROKE it BEFORE HE gave it to His disciples. They received A BROKEN LOAF, emblematic of His BODY once WHOLE, but by His own consent BROKEN . . . FOR HIS DISCIPLES. In eating it we then remember that the Lord's BODY was by His own consent BROKEN or WOUNDED for us. Therefore he that gives thanks (the presiding brother) for the loaf SHOULD BREAK IT, not (acting) as the representative of the Lord, but (acting) after His example; and after the disciples have partaken of this loaf handing it one to another, or while (they are) partaking of it, the disciple WHO BROKE IT (the presiding brother) partakes with them of the BROKEN LOAF. And thus they all

have communion with the Lord and with one another in eating the **BROKEN LOAF**. And thus they as priests feast upon His sacrifice.

THE PROOF OF THIS is found in the institution given in Matt. 26, Mk. 14, Lu. 22, and 1 Cor. 11, in EACH OF WHICH His **BREAKING THE LOAF** after giving thanks, and **BEFORE** His disciples **PARTOOK OF IT**, . . . *IS DISTINCTLY STATED.*"

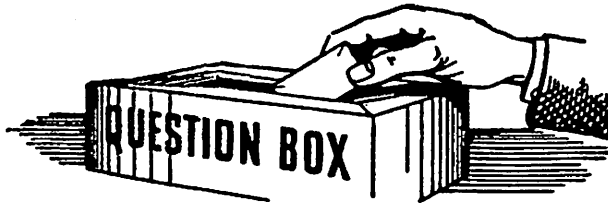
(1 Cor. 11:24), "And when He had given thanks, He **BROKE IT** (the loaf) and said, 'Take, eat; **THIS** is My **BODY** which is **BROKEN** for you; **THIS DO** in remembrance of Me'."

Any intelligent person can read that statement and conclude:-

- a) That the Lord's **BODY** was **BROKEN**,
- b) That the **LOAF** was **BROKEN** as a symbol of the **BROKEN BODY**,
- c) That Jesus did not break the **LOAF** in order to **PARTAKE OF IT HIMSELF**.

We must accept what is plainly revealed in the word of God.

John M. Wood,  
19 Venturefair Ave.,  
Dunfermline,  
Scotland. KY12 0PF  
Tel: 0383 729223




---

Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

---

**"What does one do if, as a member of a congregation, they feel that an Elder exists in name only?"**

I shall answer this question on the basis of my understanding of it, i.e., that the congregation referred to has Elders (appointed by the congregation) and that one or more of those Elders is/are not doing the work which it is supposed an Elder should do. Perhaps it would help our questioner, and others, if we tried to define what that work should be.

#### **The Work of an Elder.**

I believe that we should call Bible things by Bible names. Leadership is a **function** of Eldership, but 'Leader' is not wholly descriptive of the office; one would have to use the title 'Elder' or 'Presbyter' to describe it correctly. Functionally, the names which spring to mind from the Scriptures are 'Overseer', 'Shepherd', 'Bishop', 'Pastor', and as I have intimated, 'Leader'. So whatever work is involved in Eldership must include the **functional** aspects of the office. I think I should also point out that an Eldership is not essential to the **being** of an assembly, but it is certainly essential to the **well-being** of an assembly. One other point; Paul did not instruct Titus to ordain 'Leaders' in every city, but Elders. (Titus 1:5). I believe that to be important.

In the first place, Elders must unify the Church. In order to do this they must themselves be united. Remember Paul's warning to the Elders at Ephesus, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples unto them" (Acts 20:30). There must be no **chief** Elder; we all know what **that** has led to. It is very difficult to prevent this, of course, because of our social outlook. We are much influenced by wealth, intellectual ability, personality, and social and business

standing; consequently, one Elder who might fall into one of the above categories could influence the others, so in theory there could be a plurality of Elders ostensibly making democratic decisions, but in practice there could be autocratic decisions made by one Elder, the others following his lead in spite of their better judgment. This is one thing that Christian assemblies must guard against.

Secondly, the Elders must be able to plan and organise the community in such a way so that all of the vital work of the Church is carried out. An Elder, contrary to what some Christians may think, does not have to do **all** the work **himself**. Take routine visiting, for example; there may be some members who are extremely good at this; if there are, then they should be used. By delegating such tasks the Elders will involve individual Christians in the life and work of the community and at the same time leave themselves available to deal with more urgent and serious spiritual matters, which **only** they should deal with. If it can be planned and organised, Christians other than Elders should be put in charge of the Bible School, they should start the hymns, and they should act as secretary and treasurer, etc.; after all, it is no use complaining about lack of involvement from the members, if the Oversight take it upon themselves to fill all the church tasks.

Thirdly, Elders should be skilled in Human Relations and Motivation; if they are not, then they should be taught **before** they are **appointed**. Any situation in which members are at odds with each other should be dealt with immediately. A local community of Christians forms a group, and group pressures will always exist. It is easier to deal with **things** than with **people**, and whether we like it or not, the Elder must at least know the rudiments of psychology. All people are different, and the principles governing the resolution of a problem affecting one person may be totally inadequate for the resolution of a similar problem affecting another person; this is when the going gets tough for an Elder, and when special inter-personal skills are needed, especially the skills of Human Relations, Communication, Motivation, and Counselling. We may think we know people because of long association with them, but ask any married couple whether they **really** know **everything** about their partner.

The preceding three points may be summed up in my fourth point; the Elders are responsible for the development of the Church. A truism which hardly needs stating is that we shall not live for ever (in the flesh, I mean). Furthermore, Christians **do** get ill and become ineffective, Elders included. The realisation of these facts should prompt us to develop certain suitable members of the community for important tasks so that continuity will not be impaired. Apart from the Oversight, individual members should also realise the seriousness of this and be ready to present themselves for training and development. Too often we hear Christians say, "Oh, I'll wait until I'm needed and then I'll do something about it". By then it is too late; the continuity has been broken, and all that the community can expect is for ill-prepared people to take over tasks which they are not capable of completing effectively. This has happened regularly in the past and it's about time we had learned the lesson. The Elders should be looking out for suitable people, talking with them, motivating them, and all the while planning for the time when they and others who fill responsible offices in the Christian community will no longer be there.

Well, I've put before our questioner some of the work which I believe an Elder should be engaged in. If there are Elders who exist 'in name only' then it is very probable that they are not doing the work I have suggested; if so, they will be largely ineffective, no matter what else they may be doing.

#### What Should One Do?

In 1 Tim. 5:17 we have the statement by Paul, "**Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine**". The Apostle then goes on to suggest that the Elder can be rewarded by material help

from the 'flock' he oversees (v18). He then instructs Timothy, "Against an Elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (v19). The instruction by Peter to Elders is, "**Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock**" (1 Pet. 5:2,3).

These two great Apostles magnify the office of Elder in the Church, and also spell out the pastoral and spiritual care of God's heritage which devolves upon the Elder. Therefore, it must be a very serious matter from God's point of view if Elders fail to meet the requirements of pastoral and spiritual care.

Who seeks out and appoints the Elders of a Christian community? The answer to that question is, of course, the members over whom the Elders will rule when appointed. The community is guided by the instructions regarding qualifications given by Paul to Timothy and Titus. Are Elders, then, appointed for life? The answer would seem to be 'yes' and 'no'. If an Elder dies in office while still capable of exercising his Eldership effectively, then 'yes'. If on the other hand an Elder becomes too ill or too old to do the work effectively, then his own commonsense should tell him that it is time to relinquish the office, and to ask the community to seek out someone else; if what I have said earlier has been done then there should be no difficulty there. What should happen if it becomes patently obvious that an Elder is no longer doing the work? Two things, I think; in the first place, his fellow-Elders should be sufficiently mature to suggest the appropriate course of action to him; in the second place, the community who appointed him should ask him to relinquish the office.

There is an additional important point which our questioner should be aware of. It may very well be that a community of Christians has become so used to a comfortable church-going existence that they are satisfied with an ineffective Eldership which does not push them into any extra effort. People get the type of leadership which they deserve, and if I found myself in such a situation, and there was another community of Christians within striking distance, then I would leave and join them (that is, of course, if they seemed to be a dynamic group of Christians). So those are my thoughts on some of the things which can be done. In the ultimate, when we have endured a situation as long as we can, we may have to make the ultimate decision.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 1	Lam. 3:22-40	2 Cor. 13:
July 8	Psa. 51	1 Tim. 1:
July 15	Prov. 31:10-31	1 Tim. 2:
July 22	Psa. 1:	1 Tim. 3:
July 29	Ecc. 12	1 Tim. 4:

### TIMOTHY

Timothy is an important figure in the N.T. Scriptures. He was a native of Lystra in the Lycaonian region of Galatia. He was the son of a mixed marriage, his mother being a Jewess and his father a Greek. Eunice, his mother,

brought him up in her faith with obvious support of her own mother Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). Bruce has written: "He first appears in Luke's narrative when Paul (accompanied by Silas) pays his second visit to Lystra, returning to his Gentile missionfield after the council of Jerusalem. By this time Timothy could be called a 'disciple . . . the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer' (Acts 16:1); it appears, then, that mother and son had come to faith in Christ during Paul's previous visit to Lystra (in company with Barnabas), two or three years previously (Acts 14:6-20). That Timothy was a convert of Paul's is further implied

by his description as Paul's 'true-born child in the faith' (1 Timothy 1:2)."

Timothy was obviously a gifted young man and Paul saw in him a very valuable assistant in all his missionary and pastoral work. Timothy's willingness to labour with the great apostle must have cheered Paul greatly.

The question of Timothy's uncircumcised state immediately arose. To all intents and purposes he was a Jew, but in Jewish eyes he remained an apostate because of the uncircumcision. To enable Timothy, therefore, to enter the Jewish synagogue, Paul circumcised him. This action obviously avoided a great many problems in the missionary work. But let it be emphasised, that it was not done out of religious obligation or as a necessity for salvation (Galatians 5:6; 6:15).

Timothy is worthy of a special study.

#### THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

Paul wrote: "... according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1:11-13). It is wonderful to think that God took such a wicked man as Saul of Tarsus and completely changed him to the point that he could entrust him with the preaching of the good news concerning Jesus. If Saul could be won for Jesus then anyone can be won for the Master.

Paul went on to write: "**This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief**" (1:15). That is it in a nutshell! The verse sums up the whole story. Albert Barnes has commented: "He 'came into the world'. He therefore had a previous existence. He came, He had therefore an object in coming. It marks His gospel more worthy of acceptation that He had an intention, a plan, a wish, in this coming into the world. He 'came' when He was

under no necessity of coming: He came to save not to destroy; to reveal mercy, not to denounce judgement; to save sinners—the poor, the lost, the wandering, not to condemn them; He came to restore them to the favour of God, to raise them up from their degradation and to bring them to heaven."

Jesus, as we know, very often on this earth met with hostility, hatred and humiliation. Frequently, therefore, as a Christian, I feel rather ashamed of the feeble efforts I have shown in response to his life-giving labours for me and all mankind, I am reminded here of some words penned by Alexander Campbell to his wife; "... When I think of Him who forsook the palace of the universe and the glory of His Father's court and condescended to be born of a woman and live in an unfriendly world, and to be treated a thousand times worse than I have ever been, to save us from our sins. I think but little of all I have ever done or can do to republish His salvation and to call sinners to reformation and to build up the cause of life, of ancient Christianity."

#### WOMEN

Paul has something specific to say about women in the church (2:9-14). It must never be forgotten that woman was created for man and not man for woman. Indeed, man was created to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever; and woman was created to be a help suitable to such a being as man, and to participate in common in glorifying God and in enjoying Him forever.

Eve is mentioned. Her name means Life. One writer has pointed out: "She is not only the mere life of humanity, in its literal import, but the life and the spirit of true and genuine civilisation."

Chapter 2 verse 15 has perplexed many commentators. Dr. MacKnight paraphrased it thus: "... the female sex shall be saved (equally with the male) through child bearing — through bringing forth the Saviour, if they live in faith and love and holiness with that sobriety which I have been recommending."

### ELDERS AND DEACONS

The terms "elder", "bishop," "overseer" and "pastor" describe the same office or function. In the Greek they are **presbuteros** (hence our English word Presbyterian), **episkopos** (hence Episcopalian), **episkopos** again, and **poimen**. **Elder** speaks of age and experience, **bishop** or **overseer** refers to one who guides and directs and **pastor** describes one who leads and feeds the flock of God. In each New Testament congregation there was a plurality of elders. There was not one elder or bishop in charge of a plurality of churches.

Much could be written and has been written on the subject of the eldership? David King once said: "Though elders are not essential to the being of a church they are most certainly indispensable to its well being." And on considering the elders qualifications he remarked: "Thus we have spread before us an outline of character, which every brother ought to strive to realize. Let this holy striving go on, as it should, and the church will not long pine for want of good and efficient elders, bishops, overseers. Neglect this striving and they can never be had. Colleges cannot make them; they cannot be imported ready for use; in the churches they must grow, or they never can be had. Extraordinary material is not needed in order to their formation; ordinary men with fair devotion to the Lord and His truth, looking for, and giving themselves to usefulness in the church of God, are all we need in order that the Lord may raise up among us shepherds after His own heart — good shepherds, who shall receive from the chief shepherd the reward of life eternal, when He appears."

**Deacons** had a different role or function from the elders. The term deacon in the Greek is **diakonos** and means a servant. In 30:10 Paul wrote: "... use the officer of a deacon (Greek diakoneo)." That same Greek word is found in Acts 6:2 " ... It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve (Diakoneo) tables." The early

verses of Acts 6 are important to our study of deacons because they reveal the introduction of this office or function to the early church. What were their duties? King again has written: "They were to wait upon the secular affairs of the church. Nothing of preaching or teaching appertained to their office. They were not to be excluded from ministering in word and doctrine, nor did their office disqualify them for the eldership; but in teaching, preaching or ruling, they would not act by virtue of their standing as deacons. We also see that they were especially elected for their work, and duly ordained to the same."

### LAYING ON OF HANDS

In 4:14 we read: "Neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (elders)." In 2 Timothy 1:6 Paul wrote: "Wherefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands." The "with" in the former verse means "together with" in the original Greek. So from these two verses we understand that Paul laid his hands on Timothy for one purpose and the elders for another. Through Paul, there was bestowed upon him a spiritual gift (a gift which was the subject of prophecy or the prediction of someone) and through the elders, he was appointed or ordained as an evangelist.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Kirkcaldy:** The church here at Hayfield wish to thank all those who travelled to be with us at our Annual Social on 21st April. A fine time of fellowship was enjoyed by all, and our grateful thanks goes to all those who helped make the day such a success. We really enjoyed having the Heinemeir family with us and thank Mike for his services over the weekend.

May God bless him and his family as they work for the Lord.

Ruth Moyes (Sec.).

**Slamannan District:** The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting took place at Brightons on Saturday, 12th May, when the subject discussed was "What should be our Strategy for the Evangelisation of the World and the Methods now available". The speakers were Mark Plain and James Sinclair (Sen.): the Chairman was John Kneller, all from Tranent. Following the speakers was the usual hour discussion and comments from the audience. A lively discussion was engaged in and much food for thought engendered. The next Meeting (D.V.) will be held on 8th September, 1990 at Motherwell, when the subject will be "Did Jesus eat the bread or merely break the bread at the institution of the Lord's Supper". The speakers will be Harry McGinn, Dalmellington, and James R. Gardiner, Haddington. The Chairman will be Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline.

A collection was taken at the Meeting and kindly donated by the church at Wallacestone to the Ghana Appeal: it amounted to £50.92.

Harry McGinn (Sec.).

## COMING EVENTS

**Saturday Meetings:** The church at Dennyloanhead intend (D.V.) to hold Saturday evening Gospel Meetings on:-  
26th May, at 6.30 p.m.  
23rd June, at 6.30 p.m.

John Dodsley will be the Speaker in May and Stephen Woodcock in June.

All Welcome.

## GHANA REPORT

It is now one year since the Ghana Appeal began and I wish to thank everyone for their very generous effort. To those who have contributed may I say, on behalf of the Brethren in Ghana, you have not only given them hope, encouragement and buildings to meet in

to comply with the registration requirements, you have contributed to their spiritual needs, their physical needs and exhibited one of the qualities that New Testament Christians were distinguished for, you have helped the poor by sharing and giving.

At the time of preparing this short report for the Scripture Standard (12/5/90) £12,839.64 had been collected of which £408.94 was still in the Bank awaiting transfer. In the past month £230.89 was sent to David Arku Mensah to the Accra church to be allocated in the following way:-

General Fund	£10.96
Medical Fund	£65.00
Cement Fund	£68.09
Seeds Fund	£35.00
Schooling	£20.00
Eye Care	£25.84

In the past year, with the exception of one donation which was given with the instruction that it could be used for any aspect in the work including postage, which it was partly used for at a time when posting parcels of Bibles and clothes was high, we managed to send 100% of every other donation to Ghana. We have received 102 donations over the past twelve months.

Every donation was acknowledged and a receipt was issued. It may be of interest to some that in the past year the Registration Appeal collected more money than any other, however it did only receive a few donations in number, but these were very generous donations. The Cement Appeal attracted the largest number of donations and probably the most unpopular appeal was the roofing appeal. To date there is not enough in the fund to pay for the timber in half a roof which is giving me cause for alarm since the churches are presently building up their walls. One thing this appeal has taught me, though, is never underestimate the response from Brethren. I had my doubts 12 months ago if I would raise £1000 for Ghana so I am confident, having simply men-

tioned the area of concern that there will be response, for the encouragement I have received from the brotherhood has been tremendous. After the initial response I have ceased to think of this work as an Appeal because the love and concern is already there and I am merely collecting and sending to Ghana. I never intended this Appeal to extend this long but given the circumstances, I see no good reason for terminating this work in Africa, while there are brethren willing to help in this work which has just begun.

Graeme Pearson.

#### MALAWI APPEAL

Two years ago the Minister of Education in Zambia, brother Geoffrey Banda, an exceptional individual, very talented and useful in the Lord's church, moved to Malawi.

He has already set up a nursery school which is doing well. Parents are requesting an extension of his work to teach English and Maths on an experimental basis.

If there is anyone who has old English or Maths textbooks which are not being used could you please pass them on to me and I will post them out to Malawi. "Out of date" books will be fine. If any schoolteachers know of any school which may be replacing such

books (particularly Standard I and Standard II) I would be prepared to pay the postage on bulk parcels and if necessary make a donation to the school fund.

Graeme Pearson.

#### GHANA APPEAL, May, 1990 MEDICAL AID

It has been many months since I appealed for Medical Aid for Ghana. In the past month or so it has been brought to my attention that there are a number of brethren who could do with medical aid but the money already sent has been used up. If anyone would care to help replenish these small funds which were set up please contact me. There are brethren with illnesses that we cannot realistically cure, but we can relieve some of the suffering and misery for them. We can let them know that they are not forgotten and that we do care.

Donations should be made out to:-  
Graeme Pearson,  
13 Fairways,  
Dunfermline.  
Fife. KY12 0DU.

P.S. Thank you for seeds received on 14 April, 1990 posted in Lothian district, no address given. These were sent to David Arku Mansah and Abraham Mante.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

#### PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH .....	£ 6.00
CANADA & U.S.A. ....	\$10.00
AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates	

#### DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY  
Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,  
Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by  
Lothian Printers. 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785