

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRIST (11)

EVERY upset comes in our life because of men. We upset each other, but Christ never said or did anything which could upset us. He had no pride, no desire of self elevation, and He sought to do only His Father's will. No one can shake our faith in Christ if we truly believe in Him. Jesus asked the question in John 6 "Will ye also go away?" The disciples replied "Lord to whom shall we go, for Thou hast the words of eternal life." Only Christ can satisfy the spiritual needs of the individual. At the end of his gospel, John recounts an incident concerning Jesus, himself and Peter. Three times Jesus questions Peter: "Lovest thou me?" Peter's irritation at this questioning by Jesus is apparent from his remark "What about John, have you nothing to say to him?" The reply of Jesus must have shaken Peter: "If I desire him to remain until I come, what concern is that of yours? Follow me yourself." That story is for our benefit as well as Peter's, so that we might follow Christ alone, might look only to Him, might think only on Him and the things He did, rather than looking at each other and becoming discouraged in the process. So often we, like Peter, fall into the category of having misgivings about other people's condition, to the exclusion of all our own faults. It's because, like Peter, we don't think enough about Christ's death and what it accomplished; about our relationship *here and now* because of our obedience; about the time when we shall leave the earth and inherit the promises. Many times, we're too busy envying other people their possessions; we're pulling other people's statements apart so that we can criticise instead of build up; we look after our own interests instead of learning the lessons of humility and service asked of us.

In the final analysis here upon earth, we shall only be left with thoughts. The apostle Paul couldn't have anything else in some of the strict confinements he had. There was no opportunity to preach, no one upon whom to practise Christianity. He only had the conviction, the faith, the knowledge, and the assurance concerning His Saviour, and it was only thoughts on these things which sustained him and gave him that contentment of which he writes. If we are confined to the house in later years, thoughts are all that we shall have and we are sure then to think about Christ. But let's not leave it until then to think about Him, and what work we could have found to do for Him. If we seek Him out in thought, we shall find work in abundance; we shall strengthen our faith through a greater knowledge and appreciation of the wonderful blessings we have *here and now*; and we shall be more content in our situation, whether in good or bad health, if our thoughts are on the glorious inheritance promised to the faithful.

### "Think On These Things"

Hebrews 11 lists men and women of faith, tells of all the terrible trials and deaths that took place. But, the writer says, although they won God's approval, none of them

received the fulfilment of His promises because God had provided for us something better, so that apart from us, they were not to be perfected. Without the age of the Christian church their blessedness was incomplete. Being surrounded by these witnesses, we are asked to shake off the sins that trip us up, and run patiently, looking to Jesus. We are told, if we get faint hearted, to compare our own trials with those of Jesus. When we compare things done, we are exercising our minds; we are giving thought to what Christ did, we are giving thought to our position, before, and *now*; and we are encouraged because of these thoughts to live better lives in His service. Faith is strengthened by thoughts, which prompt decisions made, and actions displayed by an individual. All Christians can, and should engage in this mental exercise. All Christians must agree that they are at their best spiritually when Christ is in their thoughts. If this is true, then we can say that, the more we do it, the better Christians we shall become. The help is there in any situation we can think of, so let's use it more and more.

I look to Thee in every need,  
 And cannot look in vain.  
 I feel Thy strong and tender love,  
 And all is well again.  
 The thought of Thee is mightier far,  
 Than sin, and pain, and sorrow are.

M. MANNION

(Concluded)

## THE TROUBLED YEARS

*The shadows lengthen; dark fingers probing into sunlit ways;  
 And time, once loitering in the benign warmth,  
 Ushers in the chilling wind of discontent;  
 The troubled years are here.*

SOME time ago through the pages of the "S.S." I asked the question, "Whither Now?" In the mind's eye I was looking ahead and seeing the community of Christians in this country confronted with the seemingly intractable problems being posed by factions within the community, culminating in the internecine struggles which would leave the community confused and bereft of hope. I was rebuked by some for having brought my fears before my fellow Christians, but the intervening time has served to convince me the more that it was and still is right not only to face the problems that exist but to try to find answers for them. We must never be afraid to analyse. Generalisations have led us along the slippery slopes of subjectivity, when complete objectivity ought to have been the accepted norm. We must say precisely what we mean so that our brethren and others who hear us will understand. The trumpet must "not give an uncertain sound," or we may find that the trumpeters will be blamed and not the instruments. I want to re-examine some of the problems that afflict us, and to suggest possible answers.

### "Local Autonomy"

It is said in many quarters that the local assembly is completely autonomous. We have attached meanings to this statement which have led to gross misrepresentations and which, I feel sure, are responsible for many of our difficulties. We do not find mentioned anywhere in the Word such terms as "local assembly" and "assembly autonomy." But supposing we accept them we then have to ask ourselves what they mean and what have they been taken to mean?

The term "local assembly" has a perfectly straightforward definition: it is a community of Christians who assemble together at various times and for various purposes in any given locality. Ideally and scripturally the community would be organised under elected leaders known as Elders and Deacons, whose functions are to teach and uphold

the truth of God's Word. The term "assembly autonomy" would be defined in its broadest sense as the right of the community to decide its own affairs. So far, so good. What disturbs me personally, however, is that the local community is looked upon by some as an entity in itself. Disturbing, I say, because this idea seems to have within it the germ of Kant's philosophy on autonomy which, insofar as I understand it, holds that "the human will carries its own guiding principle within itself." When I was converted to Christ I thought then and I have believed ever since that the guiding principle for a community of Christians is the Divine will and not the human will. When we have leaders who exercise their human wills, even when these conflict with the Divine will, to tell us what is good for us, then we can look for trouble, and trouble, brethren, is what we have had in good measure.

It has been said by some, for instance, that the use of one container for the feast is right according to the Word, but that the use of multi—or individual containers is not wrong; and the application of this statement has led us into much heartache and discontent. But need this have happened, brethren? The answer here is so plain that it hardly needs stating; why don't we set ourselves to do *that which is right*? Why must we innovate when the terminology and precedent of scripture are so clear? We shall not begin to move forward until (a) each community of Christians is organised, as the Word teaches, under a properly constituted leadership, *i.e.* elders and deacons; and (b) we disabuse our minds of this "we must go it alone" and "we have a right to do what we want to do" attitude. We have no rights as such: the only standing that we have is in Christ our Lord, and this coupled with the privilege, not the right, of doing God's will and not our own.

#### Unity in the Gospel

Again, the argument is put forward that even though we may disagree on some fundamental points we ought to unite and to support the preaching of the gospel. I hold it to be absolutely true that every dedicated Christian should promote the gospel whenever and wherever he or she can. But when we come to consider why support at some meetings is divided, we have to examine the reasons. This issue is serious, but it can be simply put and it is put by some like this; how can we support meetings at which others are speaking when these others have been responsible for initiating practices which have been seen to be detrimental to the community as a whole? It is vital for Christians to be united together in common purpose, especially in these dark days, and anything which hinders this unity demands our closest scrutiny. Personally, I find it difficult to accept the idea that one can hold forth the blessed hope of complete unity with the Lord (which is inherent in the gospel) when the acceptance of this same gospel will bring an individual into a state wherein he is ostensibly united with us in Christ but in which we have raised serious divisions by our own actions. This individual is likely to ask (and quite rightly) why, if unity in Christ is so perfect and complete, do His children find it so difficult to realise. He may look askance at us who have spoken the good news to him when he realises that we ourselves have a responsibility for the unhappiness of some of his new-found brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is a terrible responsibility that we take to ourselves, particularly if we speak and lead the thoughts of others. This is why I personally find it difficult to attend some meetings at which certain brothers speak. Any of us who have been guilty of disturbing God's children by word or deed will not find it pleasant to stand before Him at the Great Day.

Brethren, we need to "agree quickly while we are in the way." If we think we have been wrong in the past then let us say so publicly and bring fruits which are "meet for repentance." We may be leaders, preachers, evangelists: but the plain truth is that we may also be wrong in those things which we have initiated and promoted, even though we may affirm that we have done all things in the name of the Lord and for His sake.

#### Love Towards One Another

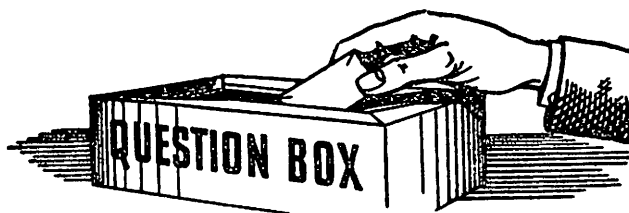
For reasons stated above, serious doubts have arisen concerning the exhibition of love one towards the other. But this word love, when used in its scriptural context, demands something more than cursory examination. The Lord put it like this: "If ye

love me, ye will keep my commandments." So love here is related to the keeping of commandments given. Now before someone jumps in with distinctions between the letter and the spirit of a commandment let me hasten to say that the Lord taught as a prime duty the keeping of the commands of His Father. Dare any of us say that the Lord lacked love towards His Father? When the Lord scathingly denounced the scribes and Pharisees, He was beside Himself and were His loving virtues overcome by temper and hatred? Or when Paul warned Timothy against Alexander the coppersmith, was it the mind of a petty man overcome with revenge? No, brethren, none of these lacked love, as I am persuaded that not many of God's children today lack love. They had their priorities right: we ought to have our priorities right today. They interpreted love as complete fidelity to those principles which they had been taught and shown from the source of all true love. When God was offended, they were offended, and it was because of the offences against the gracious will of God that they were forced to speak plainly and strongly against those by whom the offences had come. But all-pervading love was always paramount in them. I do not find in the Word that we are taught to forgive everyone and everything, but I do find that we are taught "to contend earnestly for the faith." The tragedy is that if we seem to do this it is interpreted as lack of love, for it brings us into some sort of conflict with those who are promoting something which is patently not right. Since when did Christians stop defending the truth? Is there a more desirable exercise or function than defending the truth against error? The day we do this we may as well close our doors and perform scriptural gymnastics, as do those of different religious faiths around us.

No, brethren, I have as much love for my brethren as I ever had and I feel sure in saying this that I echo the sentiments of all brethren. But that doesn't mean that any of us are not offended by some things done from time to time. It is very important that, before we do or say anything, we must carefully and prayerfully sift, analyse, consult and discuss with others, so that in the saying or doing we may not harm any of God's children.

The troubled years? Yes, they have been and will remain so as long as we are not careful about the Will of God in His Word. But how fruitful they could be if we resisted those things that sow division in the Body, and go forward together towards the glorious hope of our high calling in Christ Jesus the Lord.

A. MARSDEN




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Conducted by  
James Gardiner

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**"Does God hear the prayers of those who have not been baptized into Christ?"**

At the outset perhaps the remark should be made that it would be very presumptuous of man to say exactly what God hears or does not hear. God can choose to hear whom He will, and can elect to hear those who are not baptized just as easily as He can turn a deaf ear to the prayers of some who are baptized. This is God's prerogative. By the same token God can *save* those who are not baptized if He so chooses. God *makes* the rules and therefore can *waive* the rules. This is God's department and has nothing to do with us. *Our* position is that God has given *us* His laws and rules and we must acknowledge those rules and obey them. We have no prerogative in the matter, but our duty as creatures of the Creator is to hear what He has said to us in the scriptures and to do it. The New Testament plainly teaches that we must hear and obey the gospel to be saved, and that the gospel is God's only power unto salvation.

### What The Old Testament Teaches

As far as God hearing the prayers of those who have not obeyed the gospel is concerned, we must likewise search the scriptures and see if the teaching there leads us to suppose that God does hear such prayers.

For my own part I think we should give thought to the reason why the person has not been baptized, *i.e.* is it because of complete ignorance of the necessity of such a step (I'm thinking perhaps of some native in an African village who has not yet heard the true gospel of Christ) or is it because of pure disinterest and unbelief? If the former, then perhaps the case of Cornelius is worth considering.

In John 9:31 the blind man said, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth." How did the blind man know that God heareth not sinners? Was it a surmise held by self-righteous Jews or was it something he had learned from some of the statements in the Old Testament? We do not know, and we must remember that this was not an inspired outburst but merely the blind man's point of view. However, the following selection of statements from the O.T. would seem to justify his claim:—

Prov. 15:29. "The Lord is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayers of the righteous."

Prov. 15:8. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord but the prayer of the upright is His delight."

Prov. 28:9. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be an abomination."

The Psalmist said (34:16) "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil"; and (66:18) "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me."

These scriptures don't lead us to suppose that God hears very many of us, let alone the unbaptized.

When someone is sick in the house we send for the doctor. Many people, mostly the unbaptized, use God in this way and when trouble comes they make earnest entreaties to God, but when the troubles are past they don't give God even a fleeting thought.

One hears of midnight vigils in prayer at pit disasters, and similar national tragedies, and while this is very understandable it certainly comes into the category of coming to God only when in a tight spot. Some even make great promises and vows to God in such times of trial but when the trial passes so do the thoughts of serving God. Does God hear such prayers? — those scriptures just quoted don't lead us to suppose that He does, or even should. Isaiah gives us the reason for God's apparent dullness of hearing (Isa. 59:1-2) and it is worth remembering that he was speaking to God's chosen people: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that *He will not hear.*"

### What The New Testament Teaches

The New Testament continues the theme of the Old, and we find that God's answer to prayer is conditional, and prayers must conform to certain standards before the petitioner can hope to catch God's ear. They must be made in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:6, 7); in harmony with God's will (1 John 5:14); made in Jesus's name (John 14:13, 14); by those who "abide in Christ" (John 15:7); and with a proper motive (Jas. 4:3). It is interesting to note that the apostle Peter brings the Old Testament position over also into the New when he says (in 1 Peter 3:12) "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto *their* prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." The apostle John says (1 John 3:22) "And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, *because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.*" Most of these scriptures apply to members of the church and when we consider the conditions which God requires of His *saints* before He hearkens to their petitions then perhaps we may rightly conclude that God will not countenance the prayers of those who have yet to become His saints and are

yet outside the Commonwealth of Christ. The New Testament certainly leaves us in no doubt that a prerequisite to a prayerful relationship with God is to obey His word and become a disciple of Christ through the gospel. It is however often pointed out that there are many pious men and women who, strangely enough, have not yet heard the true and pure gospel and who may indeed be searching after the truth and are presently serving God as they best know how.

Cornelius certainly seems to have been a man who partly comes into this category. He was worshipping God as best he knew how and was doing it so successfully that his prayers and almsgiving gave God pleasure indeed. Like everyone else he still had to have the gospel preached to him and still had to be baptized for the remission of his sins: nevertheless God heard His prayers previously. Certainly there will be some like Cornelius in the world today, and who can say that God will not likewise hear them? Cornelius was not so good that he was exempted from obeying the gospel and so whether or not there be any like Cornelius today is not our concern, for we must preach the gospel to every creature (whether or not God may be listening to their prayers). As I said at the beginning, what God chooses to hear or not to hear is no concern of ours, and is consequently of academic interest only. I would say however that the case of Cornelius is no justification for us to invite the unbaptized to join us in prayers as we commonly do at gospel meetings.

### It Depends Upon The Prayer

Does God, then, hear the prayers of those who have not been baptized?

It seems we would be justified in believing that He would hear men like Cornelius albeit some say that his was a special case. Prayer however is *never a substitute* for the gospel, and the good news must be preached and all must be subject to it if they would continue in God's favour. Paul, when he was Saul, prayed much after the incident on the way to Damascus but he was told to get up, to arise, and be baptized and wash away his sins. His prayers were no substitute for *obedience* to the commands of Christ.

On the other hand those who take no steps to find out what God would have them do, or having found out are not disposed to do it, have little hope of God hearkening to their prayers. Solomon said "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be an abomination" (Proverbs 28:9) and this is as true of Christ's law as it was of that of Moses.

Space has prevented us from discussing whether those not obedient to the gospel can come to God through the merits of Christ, not having acknowledged Christ as their saviour or God as their Father. "And *because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Jesus said "No man cometh unto the Father but by (or through) me" (John 14:6).

Surely only those who have become *children* of God can call Him "Father" or "Our Father," and only those of sinful mankind who have been washed, cleansed and sanctified by the blood of the Lamb can approach the pure God of heaven who cannot look on sin.

(1 John 3:22): "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

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(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland).

### IS THIS YOUR PRAYER ?

I pray that faith may give you light  
And be your constant guide;  
That faith may overcome all doubt,  
And move the clouds aside.

I pray that all your cherished hopes,  
May be fulfilled for you,  
For nothing is impossible . . .  
With faith so deep and true !!

# A MISSIONARY EFFORT

N.W. 21st St. Church of Christ,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

18th February, 1969

Dear Brother(s) in Christ,

The church on N.W. 21st Street in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U.S., has been sponsoring a mission programme in Malawi, Africa, with the help of sister churches in the United States for several years. We have asked the James Grant family of the Wallacestone congregation in Scotland to go to Malawi where Bro. Grant will work as a missionary among the African churches. This letter is an appeal to you for help with Bro. Grant's travelling expenses.

Perhaps you wonder why we are appealing to you for help. The congregations here which believe as we do are closer in faith and practice to most of the British churches than to the other churches of Christ in America. This is especially true in such matters as opposing individual cups, one-man ministry, going to war and other things. In comparison with the other churches of Christ here, our membership is small. We are asking for help in this work simply because we need it.

We asked Bro. Grant to go to Africa (rather than one of ourselves) for several reasons. One is economic. Bro. Grant lives about half the distance from Africa that we do. More importantly, there are compelling historical reasons. Malawi was explored and developed by Scottish people. (Blantyre, Malawi, was named after Blantyre, Scotland). An English family and a Scottish sister, Mary Bannister, helped to plant the gospel in Malawi over half a century ago. Sister Bannister was from the Slamannan district. The Wallacestone church, as well as others in Britain, has for some time helped the Malawi Christians with bibles, tracts, clothes and in other ways. Because of the interest we share with them in the gospel in this area, it seemed very reasonable for us to send Bro. Grant. The church here is in substantial agreement with Bro. Grant doctrinally. We do not believe he is violating his principles in accepting support from us, and we feel free to ask your help.

If you are able to help in this work send a contribution to brethren John Baird and Tom Read, c/o Seaview Cottage, Wallacestone, Falkirk, Stirlingshire; they will place it in a special fund to help to pay Bro. Grant's fare to Malawi. The church at Wallacestone fully endorses and gives its blessing to this venture and appeal. The Grant family will leave for Africa, God willing, as soon as all prudent arrangements can be made, perhaps by summer. We have asked them to stay in Africa for approximately three years.

May God bless you all in His service.

Sincerely in Him, JAMES ORTEN

(for 21st Street Church of Christ)

[EDITOR'S COMMENT: We have been asked to bring the above letter to the notice of the British churches through the "S.S." and to add a word of endorsement. We are happy to do both. Several brethren in England and Scotland clearly remember Bro. Orten's visit in 1966, when he met and had fellowship in the gospel with several congregations and individuals. We learned to love and esteem him for his grasp and understanding of the views of his brethren here concerning New Testament Christianity. In his turn Bro. Orten encouraged us in helping us to realise that there are still in the United States many brethren who strive closely to adhere to this noble cause.

Since that visit close contacts have been maintained between us, both in letters and in publications.

So far as our personal knowledge goes, we warmly commend also our Bro. Grant as one eminently fitted by his deep spirituality, his zeal, his knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, and his level-headedness and commonsense for this noble and responsible task. And we wholeheartedly subscribe to the appeal for the necessary money to finance this undertaking. Let us give generously. Here is an opportunity to increase the very little we have done to send the gospel into all the world.]

# SCRIPTURE READINGS

APRIL 1969

6—Psalm 32	Romans 4
13—Genesis 3:1-21	Romans 5
20—Genesis 2:1-17	Romans 6
27—Deuteronomy 5:22-33	Romans 7

## THE GOSPEL TO THE ROMANS

We have already stated our belief that the gospel first came to Rome through some of those who were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). While thus the first members of the church there were undoubtedly Jews, some Gentiles had joined them by the time Paul wrote from Corinth in about 57 A.D. (we assume time and place). The battle for the Gentiles and thus unity in the church so far as race was concerned had been won through the decision of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts 11:18 and 15:23) and the advocacy of the apostle Paul. We apply the title "gospel" to our comments on account of certain passages in our April readings in the letter—and we trust, our study of them.

### Great Texts in the Epistle

"Jesus, Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (4:25); "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1); "For while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (5:6); "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:8); "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20); "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (6:23).

All these are being and have always been used very widely for simple and striking public display. In one way or another they epitomise the gospel message. They set forth the atoning work of our Saviour as forcefully as anything in the whole New Testament. This is an illustration of the way in which fact and doctrine are inextricably interwoven harmoniously in the texture of the scriptures. We regard this letter as doctrinal up to

chapter 12, and thereafter more specifically instruction for Christian behaviour; yet in our present chapters the question of behaviour stands out prominently. We have first the thought of Abraham as a righteous man who pleased God (Gen. 18:19). Yet his righteousness was not the means of his justification before God. It was his continued faith in the promises, in spite of humanly impossible obstacles, that made him righteous in the sight of God (Gen. 15:6). His obedience proved the genuineness of his faith. So our own peace with God, due to our faith bringing us "into this grace (favour with God)" (5:2) leads on to patience, experience, probation and hope. God's love working in us changes our behaviour (5:3-5).

### The Part of Baptism

Furthermore the exercise of God's grace towards us imposes an obligation which we accept when faith leads to obedience in baptism. The significance Paul here gives to baptism is of vital importance. Unless our immersion in the water truly indicates subservience and surrender to the divine will, brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (John 3:5), we have not died and been buried to the old life of sin, and risen to the new. Here we see the meaning of this death and burial as severance from the appeal and power of sin (6:11). We must not (the negative side) allow sin to establish any power over us (6:12). We must (the positive side) put ourselves in God's hand as good tools or weapons for His purposes. We have absolutely changed our employer from Satan to God—and what a most wonderful "employer" we have! His wage is not pay but a priceless and unlimited gift (6:23).

### United With Christ

Another analogy is equally fitting, and we approach it with reverence. We were married to Satan and could not escape judgement, because the only way of escape is sinlessness—not to sin at all because, through the law and our conscience we knew of our condemnation. The result of our union with sin is disease, physical, moral and spiritual. The union and the condemnation are ended by our death in baptism. Marriage to Christ (7:4) means the closest and most thrilling spiritual union and communion with Him, resulting



in the conception and birth of every noble and righteous thought, word and action—a life like His, due to the life imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. We may, indeed, thereafter stumble and fall, but One to Whom we are so closely bound restores and renews us as we recognise and confide our weakness to Him.

#### Daily Application

As we grow in likeness to Him our old nature recedes and gradually but surely drops away, and “each victory helps us some other to win.” Though deeply conscious of his weakness (read in particular 7:14-25) Paul could say truly “Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). Let us each one examine himself (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5) with the thought “Do I belong?” arising from 1:7—“called to be Christ’s men and women” (J.B.P.). There is an easily adopted feeling that something less than this will do. We may well be dubbed “puritanical” and “prudes” if we stand firmly for strict adherence to scriptural

instruction on points of “fashion” and “keeping up with the times” (Romans 12:2). Neglect of this might well mean “conforming to the world.” It generally does, and the very thought should frighten every committed Christian. “Friendship with the world is enmity against God” (James 4:4). Beware, for instance, sisters, because the moral decadence of our permissive society goes hand in hand with women’s fashions. Men, including Christian men, are men not angels, and the “flesh lusteth against the spirit” (Gal. 5:17). Every woman who fails to be modest is guilty of disobedience to God (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Peter 3:2-4; 1 Cor. 11:1-16). Some very unpopular instructions are given in scripture. Nevertheless we shall be judged by them on the last day. Alas, some do not even know they are there—dare we suppose that ignorance will be a valid excuse? Jesus’s words (John 12:48) cannot be limited to what He said only (Luke 10:10).

R. B. SCOTT

#### A SERIES FOR OUR WOMENFOLK

## LESSONS FROM LIFE

By HAROLD BAINES

### No. 1: SALT

“Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13)

IN presenting this series to our women readers we are bearing in mind two things: One, you seldom have articles in the “Standard” specially for you; and Two, taking elements in common household use and from them drawing, as our heading suggests, Lessons from Life. This is the method our Lord used with good effect, so we intend to copy Him and take the very elements He used from which to draw our lessons.

We begin with that common household condiment, salt, an element Jesus said to His followers they were. It follows that the natural elements found in salt have their spiritual counterpart in us. Let us see what they were.

First *salt is a mineral, i.e. of the earth*. So are we. As such it needs refining; so do we. In the refining process foreign matter, impurities, sand, grit, etc., are removed by a process of washing and evaporation which involves the separation of the pure grains of salt from the impurities that make it unfit for use. When these are removed the salt becomes the essential mineral it is for the preservation of life; without it, especially in hot countries, life would not be possible, for the body would dehydrate.

Our next point is that *salt is soon recognised*: there is no mistaking the taste of salt. Salt has a taste all its own, tangy and keen. Are we soon recognised? We call to mind two people who worked together on the same bench in a workshop for some time. One day they found themselves in the same pew at the local church attending some special services. “I didn’t know,” said one, “that you attended a place of worship.” “Neither did I about you,” said the other. Strange, wasn’t it, that two so-called Christians worked side by side for about ten years and never recognised each other as fellow-Christians?

Another thing about salt is that it does its work silently, with a minimum of fuss (not like certain kinds of health salts that fizz and boil for a moment and must be taken immediately or they go "flat" and lose their effectiveness). Salt put in a dish of potatoes promptly disappears; but should the housewife in the rush of cooking chores ask herself "Have I put in the salt?" she has only to taste and see. Like the schoolboy who, on being asked to give a definition of salt, said, "It's that which makes potatoes taste bad when it isn't there"!

Again *salt prevents corruption*—prevents but doesn't cure: once corruption sets into foodstuffs there is little that can be done: "Prevention is better than cure." In the days before refrigerators, salt was used extensively by our mothers to preserve the meat in hot weather from going bad, and even to-day is used by certain food industries for the very same purpose. That appetising breakfast dish of fried bacon would not be possible without the preserving element of salt.

Our next point: *salt creates a thirst*. In our youth we remember enjoying salty kippers for supper: real tasty they were, but oh the thirst they created! We felt like drinking gallons. We wonder how many Christians develop a spiritual thirst. In an earlier part of Matt. 5 (verse 6) our Lord taught that "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled." One feels there are few of us who have really and truly hungered and thirsted as those in a famine. It is an awful agonising experience. The thought here is of one craving longingly for food and drink, having an appetite for it because of spiritual activities, just as the body has an appetite for natural food after physical labour. Let us see that our lives are sufficiently "salty," that we too have a spiritual appetite for the "Water of Life."

Our next point may surprise our women readers. It will certainly interest them: did you know that *salt is good for beauty*? Now you ladies, you spend much time and money on your appearance, going to great lengths to catch and delight the masculine eye; but did you know that the best ingredient for a "schoolgirl complexion" is the salt dish on your kitchen table? We quote no less an authority than "Show Business" (and no one knows more about artificial beauty than the world of the theatre). A group of acrobats who were noted for the healthy appearance of their skin were asked for the secret. No, it was no special cosmetic or expensive oils: they just rubbed themselves down night and morning with a towel soaked in a strong solution of salt and water and their skins were a delightful natural healthy colour. Dare I suggest, as a mere man, ladies, that you throw away your powder puffs, face creams, etc. Save yourselves money and turn to common salt, and find that "schoolgirl complexion" of the popular advertisements of not so long ago.

Finally, *salt can lose its taste*, and after that is no more use. Do any of our readers know of a use for tasteless salt? It can't even melt ice. No, our Lord's condemnation is only too true that it is fit for nothing but to be cast under the feet of men.

What a solemn warning. Do we realise how easy it would be to lose our Christian flavour, our spiritual saltiness, and become of no use in the Master's Kingdom? Salt loses its flavour by being exposed to elements outside, such as dampness. The Christian can lose his or her flavour when too much of the world intrudes into our life and destroys our thirst after righteousness. So dear sister, when next you use your salt pot in the daily round of household duties, just pause for a moment and think of the words of our Lord,

"Ye are the salt of the earth."

Next month we hope to talk about Milk.

*Thought from the kitchen:*

Christianity is like instant coffee,  
It should leave no "grounds for complaint."

## A NEW AND WORLD-CHANGING ACT OF GOD

"The writers of the Gospels report the announcement of Jesus that the Kingdom of God has come, and are filled with the joyful certainty that the promises of the Old Testament have come to fruition. The apostles are described in the Book of Acts as telling the Jews that Jesus is their promised Messiah and the Gentiles that the risen Christ has come to turn them from darkness to light. Paul's letters are inspired variations on the theme that "if any man is in Christ he is a new creature." John's writings are dominated by the master-thought that "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" and the Book of Revelation sets the Christian message in the dazzling imagery of "a new heaven and a new earth."

(From "The Christian Faith,"  
by David H. C. Read)

(Sent by A. L. Frith)



## REVISED DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES

With reference to the announcement in the February issue of the "Scripture Standard" regarding the new directory of churches, Bro. Hunter and myself regret any misunderstanding that may have occurred. Bro. Hunter was not aware that this notice was going to appear in the "Scripture Standard." The circular letters to the church secretaries were printed in January, prior to this notice, and there was no intention of making a revised "Scripture Standard" list.

The reasons for the revision were three-fold:

(1) Several British members and also visitors from overseas have been asking for an up-to-date list of churches to enable them to meet with their brethren while they are travelling around the British Isles.

(2) Two people travelled over 40 miles one Lord's Day to find a congregation mentioned on the current list but found that the church was no longer meeting there.

(3) In my personal work of trying to spread the gospel, I am sending a copy of "Twenty Questions" to nearly every writer of a religious article that appears in all the papers or periodicals that come my way, and whose address is given, and, as far as possible including name and address of nearest church or preacher for contact. In order to do this work effectively an up-to-date list is essential and a comprehensive list would therefore have greater outreach. The new list should be ready for printing in April and church secretaries who have not already done so are urged to send me particulars of services, etc., as soon as possible. The new list will be entitled "Directory of Churches of Christ in the British Isles."

Bro. Hunter has kindly given me every possible assistance in this project and without his help I should not be able to complete the task.

C. KINGSWOOD,  
"Cartref," 45 Williams Way,  
Radlett, Herts.

[The above letter arises from our note in "S.S." of March, p. 31. We gladly give space to Sis. Kingswood's reply. We simply repeat our closing words in our statement: ". . . the 'S.S.' is having nothing to do with this matter. This is not interfering with the desire of any brother, sister or church to be identified with this revised list of churches.—Ed.]

## OBITUARY

Blackburn (New Wellington Street).—On 14th March, 1969, our aged sister, Hannah Cunliffe, departed this life. She came to know Jesus as her Saviour just over three years ago, and has remained faithful. Because of bodily weakness towards the end of her life she was unable to enjoy the fellowship of the saints around the Lord's Table, but with simple faith she remained steadfast. The brethren here mourn, but "not as those without hope." We commend the family to a loving Father and especially do we offer our sympathy to our Sister Violet Cunliffe in her sorrow.

Bro. H. Davenport conducted the funeral service.

**SPRING CONFERENCE**

The brethren at Ulverston have invited the Conference, which is to be held Saturday, April 5th, 1969.

Afternoon business session to commence at 2 p.m., followed by Devotional Meeting approximately 3.30 to 4.30 p.m. when Bro. John Dodsley and Bro. G. Ellis of Kirkby-in-Ashfield will speak. Tea will follow.

Will committee members please note that the committee meeting will be held at a convenient time between tea and the evening meeting.

The evening meeting will commence at 6 p.m., Bro. Black of Dalmellington presiding, and the speakers being Bro. Alf Marsden of Wigan and Bro. Ernest Makin of Ince.

Will brethren note that the meetings will be held in the Quebec Mission Hall.

Accommodation for those brethren wishing to stay over can be arranged by writing to Bro. John Thistlethwaite, 3 Lancaster Street, Dalton in Furness, Lancs., or alternatively by writing direct to one of the following hotels:

The Sun Hotel, Ulverston. B. & B. 32/6.

The Lonsdale House, Ulverston.  
B. & B. 40/-.

The Newby Bridge Hotel, near  
Ulverston. B. & B. 44/-.

We hope that all brethren who are interested in Evangelism will make an effort to attend the meetings, remembering

that the Conference is for all Old Path churches and supporters; in other words YOUR Conference.

Tom Woodhouse (Secretary)

**The Scarlet Woman (Rev. 17 : 17)**

Babylon means confusion—from the tower of Babel to Rome has been confusion in religion.

Marks of her identification:—

1. She is a spiritual adulteress (Rev. 17 : 2).
2. Kings of the earth accept her false claims (Rev. 17 : 2).
3. The inhabitants of earth come under the influence of her false teaching (Rev. 17 : 3).
4. Her predominant colours are purple and scarlet (the colours of the Papacy Rev. 17:4).
5. Her great wealth—girded with gold, etc. (Rev. 17 : 4).
6. She is abomination to God (Rev. 17 : 5).
7. She is the "mother of harlots" — other false religious systems. (Rev. 17 : 5).
8. She persecutes God's people (Rev. 17 : 5)..
9. She sits on a seven-hilled city and is a city (Rev. 9 : 18).

No other system than the Roman Catholic Church fits the picture in every detail.

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**CONFERENCE SECRETARY:** **TOM WOODHOUSE, "Jesmond," 8 Shoulder-of-Mutton Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. NG17 7DX.**

**NYASALAND MISSION:** Contributions to **W. STEELE, 88 Mountcastle Drive South, Edinburgh, 15. Tel. 031-669-1290.**

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