

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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DISCIPLESHIP

As the ministry of Jesus began to gain momentum, larger and larger crowds began to follow Him; so much so that He had, occasionally, to escape from them by boarding a small ship, or by snatching a few hours privacy up in the mountains. On several occasions He had to miraculously feed these multitudes, for they apparently lost all sense of time and place, and this sometimes involved catering for as many as five thousand men (not counting thousands of women and children). Understandably, when word got around amongst the towns and villages that there was a prophet of God in the neighbourhood who could successfully and instantaneously cure all forms of disease and illness, completely free of charge, the crowds searching for this man would steadily grow. Christ's purposes, in His miracles and good works were, of course, entirely philanthropic, but they were much more than that. He was proving His claimed credentials as the long-awaited Messiah: was seeking to establish the Kingdom of God and was preparing men and women for entry into that Kingdom. Human nature being what it is, many in the crowds thought more in terms of the **material** benefits from following Jesus; i.e. the 'loaves and fishes' and the curing of blindness, palsy, leprosy, etc., than they seem to think of any **spiritual** blessings or advantages. Indeed, in John 6:24 we read of Christ's necessity to reprove this general attitude: viz. "When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed. They said unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The Lord's counsel to the multitudes given then, is just as pertinent to the multitudes now. We are all engrossed in the meat that perishes: neglecting the "**meat that endureth unto everlasting life**".

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

Luke, also, comments on Christ's reaction to the behaviour of the multitude. It seems that there was a careless, or even a kind of 'carnival' or circus atmosphere amongst the crowds; often found when very large numbers of people gather together.

It's certainly true that people behave in crowds as they would never behave as individuals. It may well be that some regarded it as very good fortune, and even good fun, to be amongst the throng 'dogging' the footsteps of this elusive man who could cast out demons, walk on water, heal the sick and even raise the dead. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and for a second time Jesus had to reprove the general demeanour of those pressing upon Him. His sombre words on 'discipleship' must have had a profoundly sobering effect upon His hearers and brought to a sharp halt any traces of whimsicality. To those in the crowds aspiring to discipleship, Jesus had a rather blunt message; i.e. that He could not promise them a rosy path but a life fraught with danger, persecution, and a disposition for self-sacrifice. Luke says, (14:25) **"And there were great multitudes with Him, and He turned and said unto them, If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and comes after Me cannot be My disciple."** Jesus was not, of course, suggesting that His disciples should "hate" anyone, but that they should "love less" those related to them, and ever give pre-eminence to Christ in all aspects of life. At that time Christ's hearers must have been puzzled by His mention of bearing 'a cross' but they would later live to learn. Jesus went on to say, **"For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and COUNTETH THE COST, whether he have sufficient to finish it, lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him. Or what king going to war against another king sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand men to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand men. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be My disciple"**.

And so Jesus advised the multitude, (and indeed advises men in every age), to COUNT THE COST and give careful thought to any proposal of becoming one of Christ's disciples. Quite often, men and women embark upon the Christian life for the wrong reasons, or with false impressions, and after a few years give up and return to the world (as per the parable of the sower). Quite often their original decision was founded upon some unsettled mood at the time, or even upon a surge of religious fervour induced by the highly-charged atmosphere of some large religious gathering. It seems to be that some present-day evangelists seek to capitalise upon human emotion in their meetings, (similar perhaps to Dr. Billy Graham's famous rallies). Such meetings with thousands in attendance, seem orchestrated to play upon the emotions; with a special style of preaching, with 'backing groups' and background music from large choirs. Many, caught up in a state of religious excitement "step out" and make a life's commitment to Christ which may, in the cold light of the following day, appear to have been a slightly rash decision. This is certainly not always the case, of course, and emotion obviously plays a part in conversion, but there should be much more to it than heart; the head should also have a say. Jesus certainly did not exploit anyone's emotions or 'sock it to them' with high-powered preaching; rather the reverse: He advised His hearers to think long and hard before taking such a serious step. COUNT THE COST; don't start something that you won't finish for the latter end is worse than the beginning.

DISCIPLESHIP

In this modern, sophisticated and scientific age where the bulk of mankind enjoy the very maximum of creature comforts the word 'disciple' must seem an almost antiquated word relevant only to an age that has long since gone. Small wonder, then

that modern man has only a hazy idea of what the word means and knows even less of its full implications. The words of Jesus (in Luke 14:33) are therefore likely to draw us up short, **"So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"**. Surely such a statement must make us all think. It would seem that Jesus understood that being one of His disciples would (and should) entail sacrifice, self denial and a fairly ascetic and frugal life-style. Thus being a disciple of Christ involves a renunciation of all our possessions, if necessary, our own family if necessary and even our own life if necessary. The words "if necessary" do not, of course, appear in the scripture and have been inserted by me without any authority for doing so. Clearly it is necessary to remind ourselves from time to time about what Jesus said concerning the kind of disciples He expected, for it is so easy, in our day-to-day living, to forget.

From the quotation from Luke 14:26 it appears that to become a disciple, one must **'come to Jesus'** rather like the way in which an apprentice enrolls himself under the guidance, teaching and discipline of the master-craftsman. Indeed in classical Greek, I understand that the word 'mathetes' meant the pupil of a philosopher or teacher. A **'disciple'** therefore is one who willingly and gratefully places himself, or herself, under the training and teaching of a master and hopes to be disciplined by that master (for the one word is derived from the other). Such disciplines existed, and still exist, in all forms, and include all the arts and sciences. By virtue of the definition, many of the world's prominent men have had disciples. **John the Baptist** had disciples and we read in the New Testament of a verbal conflict between them and Jesus. **'Then came to Jesus the disciples of John the Baptist saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft but Thy disciples fast not" (Luke 5:33)**. Similarly we read in John 9:28 of the **disciples of Moses** and how they reviled the blind man whom Jesus had healed, viz. **"Then they reviled him and said, Thou art His disciple but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is"**. Even the **Pharisees** had disciples and sent them, with the Herodians, to tempt Jesus (Matt. 22:16). Thus the disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has sought Him out and has expressed the wish to be His pupil and follower. It is possible to be a student in a detached way, studying a subject that gives little pleasure (like a chemist studying diseases), but discipleship involves more than being merely a student of a master; it means a follower of a **particular master**. A follower who is prepared to be disciplined by the master; In the realms of music, painting, architecture, sculpture, some disciples have outshone and become greater than their masters. The Prentice Pillar at Roslin Chapel is a small example of this but the jealousy displayed by the master in this case must surely be uncharacteristic of masters who are eclipsed by their pupils. Surely most masters must take pride in the progress of their pupils and be very pleased to see evidences of the master's influence in the student's work. Disciples of Jesus will be hard pressed to emulate their Master let alone try to excel Him. Jesus said, **"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his Lord"** (Matt. 10:24).

HOW TO BECOME A DISCIPLE

And to be a disciple, we must **become** one. And how do we become one? We must resolve to "learn of Him" and to obey Jesus in all things. Before ascending to heaven Jesus sent His apostles into all the world to **"preach the gospel to every creature for he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."** Thus we must hear the gospel and

believe that Jesus is the Son of God; repent of our past life-style and sin; be immersed for the remission of our sins and continue in the doctrine of Christ. Thus we rise from the watery grave **"to walk in newness of life"** (Rom. 6) and continue to walk in the footsteps of the Master. **"He that endureth to the end, shall be saved"** said Jesus.

None of us are strangers to the concept of "counting the cost"; indeed we do it in almost every aspect of life. Business-men do it; housewives do it; even school children do it. Prudent people continually assess the potential consequences of their actions; whether serious or trivial. Obviously in major transactions, such as matrimony or house buying, we give the matter the consideration it deserves, but even in mundane things like running a car, planning a holiday or even just keeping a pet we certainly assess the cost. In some of the decisions we make, the heart rules the head, and vice-versa. How long should it take us to count the cost of becoming a disciple of Christ? Clearly it will vary from person to person depending upon our age, experience of life and present commitments, but in Acts of the Apostles we read of some being baptised "the same hour of the night", whereas we know of some baptised after ten or twenty years attendance at gospel meetings.

Jesus came to save a doomed world. He also died to save us all. He is **"not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance"**. Therefore, in challenging the multitudes to "count the cost" before embarking upon discipleship, Jesus was not trying to discourage them from becoming disciples but merely warning them to take it very seriously. Jesus certainly wants ALL men and women to be disciples: **requires** all men and women to be His disciples and will be satisfied with nothing less. Disciples (called "Christians" first at Antioch) are rescued from the clutches of Satan and are **"translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son"**. (Col.1:13). It is not, therefore, solely a question of "Can I afford to be a disciple" but rather, "Can I afford not to be a disciple". Do we opt for heaven or hell? Jesus knew that if we counted the cost, we could consider the **alternatives**: and a Christless grave is unthinkable. It has been truly said that if we live as if Christ had never died, we shall die as if Christ had never lived.

CONCLUSION

Jesus mentioned the builder. All that we can build to take into the next world is character. We can also build up "a good deposit" of good works in the heavenly bank. No man can build a character that will survive the great Judgement and so we must depend upon Christ's grace and mercy and seek to follow Him here below. Jesus also talked about a King going to war and petitioning for peace. We, too, should sue now for peace and enlist in the army of Jesus. As mentioned previously, there are, sadly, many who have put their hand to the plough of discipleship and have looked back. Of them, Peter says, **"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."** (2 Peter 2:20).

Paul, on the other hand, like most of the twelve disciples, suffered much as a disciple but remained sure and steadfast until the end. We can read (in 2 Cor. 11) a brief description of how his discipleship was regularly punctuated with perils in every possible direction; with weary journeyings; and shipwreck; with floggings and beatings with rods, and once he was stoned to apparent death. Yet he endured it all quite cheerfully and could say near the end, **"For I am now ready to be offered and the**

time of my departure is now at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Hence-forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 2:4). And so Paul, not only counted the cost at the beginning of his ministry, but is recounting it here at the end, and in spite of all his privations and sufferings found it very much worth while: a cost well worth paying. The reward, a "Crown of Righteousness" (life eternal in heaven), is given not to Paul only but to all others who will follow his example. But as the hymnwriter says, "only he who bears the cross may hope to wear the glorious crown."

Take up thy cross and follow on,
Nor think till death to lay it down,
For only he who bears the cross,
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

EDITOR

THE BIBLE (Part 8)

An important question is : How can we be sure that all words and phrases of the books are the same that were first recorded by the pen of inspiration? This question is answered under the heading: *The Bible - Its History and Integrity*. In the absence of the original manuscripts, our main sources are: 1) Ancient Manuscripts. 2) Ancient Versions. 3) Quotations.

The most important ancient manuscripts are: a) *Codex Vaticanus*. b) *Codex Alexandrinus*. c) *Codex Sinaiticus*.

Codex Vaticanus dates from the mid-fourth century A.D. and has been in the Vatican Library in Rome since before 1475. It consists of over seven hundred leaves of the finest vellum. It is not perfect, having lost Genesis 1-46; Psalms 105-137; and all after Hebrews 9:14 of the New Testament.

Codex Alexandrinus is so named because it was supposed to have been written in Alexandria in Egypt. This manuscript is in the British Museum in London. It was presented to Charles I by Cyril Lucar (1572-1638 A.D.), Patriarch of Constantinople. Only ten leaves are missing from the Old Testament, but the New Testament is much more defective, having lost twenty-five leaves from the beginning of Matthew, two from John, and three from Corinthians. It dates from c.450 A.D.

Codex Sinaiticus is so named because it was discovered in St. Catherine's Monastery in Mt. Sinai by the great German scholar Dr. Constantine Tischendorf (1815-1874). It, like the *Codex Alexandrinus*, is kept in the British Museum. It dates from c.350 A.D. A few N.T. verses are missing in this manuscript.

Many years ago, as a young man in the faith, I visited London frequently to study at the British Museum. My research centred on these ancient manuscripts of the Bible. The time and the expense were all worth-while. Later I visited the Vatican, but, unfortunately, did not find the *Codex Vaticanus* on display.

SCROLLS AND VERSIONS

These three great manuscripts of the Bible are written in the Greek language. Of course, the Old Testament Scriptures were originally written in the Hebrew language. Until recently, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts available to scholars were dated in the

ninth century A.D. Those who had been involved in the studying and editing of the text of the Hebrew Bible had become known as Masoretes and the text itself as the 'Masoretic' text. However the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 was epoch-making in the field of Textual Criticism. These scrolls belonged to a community (probably of Essenes) and dates from the last few centuries B.C. and the earlier part of the first century A.D. "The community library, of which some five hundred documents have been identified (the great majority in a sadly fragmentary condition), comprised biblical and non-biblical writings. About one hundred scrolls are books of the O.T. in Hebrew, among these all the O.T. books are represented (some of them several times over), with the exception of Esther" (New Bible Dictionary). I think it is important here to quote from Prof. Bruce's outstanding work - *The Books and the Parchments*: "Before the discovery of the Qumran manuscripts Sir Frederic Kenyon asked what he called a 'great, indeed all-important question' with regard to the traditional text of the Hebrew Bible. It was this: 'Does the Hebrew text, which we call Masoretic, and which we have shown to descend from a text drawn up about A.D. 100, faithfully represent the Hebrew text as originally written by the authors of the Old Testament books?' The Qumran discoveries have enabled us to answer this question in the affirmative with much greater assurance than was possible before 1947."

The *Ancient Versions* of the Bible are the translations of the Bible into the languages of the early Christendom - some produced long before the oldest of our Greek manuscripts were written. For example, there are Armenian, Syriac, Egyptian, Georgian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, Gothic, Slavonic and Latin versions. Two of the best known are the Syriac Bible and the Latin Bible. The form in which the Latin Bible has exercised the widest influence is Jerome's Vulgate. This was completed by Jerome of Bethlehem in about 400 A.D. For a thousand years it was the standard Bible in the Catholic Church.

QUOTATIONS AND OTHER WRITINGS

It is said that if we lost all the Bibles in the world and all the modern commentaries then we could rewrite the sixty-six books from the *quotations* of the early Christian writers. "In spite of disadvantages of the quotations being often fragmentary, and sometimes made loosely from memory, they are yet of great value in determining the text of ancient Bibles, some of them going back to the days of the original New Testament writings" (J. Paterson Smyth).

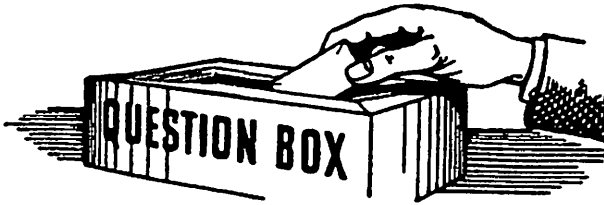
We can refer to such works as the *Epistle* of Barnabas, the *Epistles* of Clement of Rome, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, the *Epistles* of Ignatius, the *Epistles* of Polycarp, the *Orations* of Athanasius. There are also the writings, for example, of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Novatian, Tertullian (the father of Latin theology), Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius and Eusebius of Caesarea (the father of church history). Alexander Campbell said in his debate with Robert Owen: "I have lying upon the table here before me, a volume of the writings of the primitive disciples of Christ, the first teachers of Christianity, the contemporaries and successors of the apostles . . . all these directly quote the historical or epistolary books of the New Testament and refer to these writings as of general notoriety . . . There is not a writer on religion, which has come down to us from the second century, who has not quoted these writings, less or more, as we do at the present day.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was complete, or substantially complete, by A.D.100. The original documents are, of course, no longer with us. Does this create a problem for

believers? Not at all. There are in existence over five thousand Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part. How does this compare with other historical works? Caesar's *Gallic War*, which dates to between 58 and 50 B.C., has only nine or ten good manuscripts, the oldest of which dates nine hundred years after Caesar's day. The *Histories* of Tacitus (c.A.D.100) run to fourteen books of which only four and a half survive. The *Annals* of Tacitus runs to sixteen books of which ten survive in full and two in part. The two manuscripts for the extant portions date to the ninth century and the eleventh. The *History* of Thucydides (c.460-400 B.C.) is found in eight manuscripts, the earliest dating to c.A.D.900. I know of no classical scholars who would question the authenticity of all these manuscripts, even although some date well over one thousand years later than the originals. A comparison between these and the New Testament manuscripts is quite a revelation. Sir Frederic Kenyon has written: "The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.



Conducted by
Frank Worgan

The Head-Covering (2) 1 Cor. 11:1-16

Question 5. "What difference does it make to God, whether Christian women in worship have their heads covered, or not?"

In the first 16 verses of the chapter Paul answers this question by presenting a series of reasons, which, briefly, are as follows:

1. He reminds the Corinthians of the order of Creation. vv. 3-10.
(A grasp of the principles revealed in this section of the chapter is essential to a proper understanding of the subject. Fail to appreciate what is being taught - and 'the head-covering issue' will always remain an 'issue').
2. He declares that a Sense of Propriety calls for the head-covering. v.13.
3. He points out that nature itself teaches it. vv.14-15.
4. He reminds them that this is the Recognized Practice in all the congregations. v.16.

The Order of Creation

When Paul states that 'Man is the image and glory of God' (v.7) he means that Man glorifies and honours God when he submits himself to God and obeys His will. When he says that 'Woman is the glory of Man,' he means that Woman becomes Man's glory when she recognizes and accepts the role, which God has appointed for her (see **Gen. 3:16-17**).

The word 'glory' in v. 15 is used in a different sense from verse 7.

We give glory to God by being what God planned for us to be; and, to be obedient to His plan for us is the highest glory that we can attain.

For many centuries the status of women in Eastern society, both Jewish and Gentile, was generally one of inferiority. Although among the Jews under Mosaic Law, a woman had certain rights, her position in society, even in the days of the Lord Jesus, remained an unenviable one when compared with the standing of womanhood in Christian lands today. Only when and where the teachings of Christ became accepted, did women begin to be treated with respect, and only then were they raised to a position of equality with men (Gal. 3:28).

The Corinthian Situation

It was in the first congregations of Christians that this new attitude towards the status of women was first preached and practised. But, apparently, this newly-experienced sense of freedom and equality had led certain women in the church in Corinth to decide to express their 'liberation' by discarding the head-covering which was the recognised sign of female respectability.

Only a few years after this letter was written, the Roman world was prepared to believe the most scandalous stories about the way Christians behaved when they met for worship, and if they were seen to be disregarding the common decencies of society and the social practices which were recognised as normal and proper, the non-Christians would consider that those rumours were true.

Paul says, therefore, that, even on a social level, breaches of convention are to be discouraged and Christians should avoid giving offence by flouting reasonable custom. In this chapter he makes the point that it is proper for Christian women to act with dignity, by scrupulously observing social custom in the matter of the head-covering.

Furthermore, he reminds the 'liberated' women in the church in Corinth that if they abandoned the use of the head-covering, they not only abandon that which indicates that they are women who accept God's order in the Church, but they are, in fact, behaving just like those lawless, immoral women of pagan Corinthian society, who declare that they do not care what society thinks about them.

When, in v.5, he writes about a woman having her head 'shaven,' he is referring expressly to the behaviour of the prostitutes of pagan Corinth - of whom there were many - who regarded themselves as 'free spirits,' beholden to no-one. They not only abandoned the use of the head-covering; they also shaved their heads completely, as a sign of their disregard for society's opinion, but Paul points out that liberty in Christ does not cancel God's rule of subordination or change the divinely appointed order,

In v.6, he drives home this argument by stating that, if Christian women abandoned the wearing of a head-covering because they supposed that in this way they were declaring their freedom, they might as well follow the example of these unruly women of the street and also shave their heads completely, to flaunt their disregard for convention. But, he says, if the women in the church in Corinth agree that it is a shameful thing for a woman to have her head shaved, she ought to wear a head-covering. (Again, note: the reference is to a 'head-covering,' not a 'veil,' which is a misleading rendering).

It is interesting to note that Schonfield, the Jewish translator, actually says that a married Jewish woman could be divorced by her husband for going out bareheaded.

We should remember that, in this chapter, the apostle is discussing what has evidently been happening during worship in the Corinthian church (verses 18,20,33), and he declares that a woman who prays with her physical head uncovered dishonours Man, who God's Word declares to be her spiritual, or primary Head; whilst if a man prays with *his* physical head covered, he dishonours Christ, who is his Head.

Consider this. If today, it does not matter whether or not a woman has her head uncovered in worship, would we be happy if a man were to pray or preach with his head *covered*? And if, as the scriptures state, when a woman fails to wear a head-covering she dishonours Man, who is her head - (i.e. her 'origin'), would not Christ, Who is the head of Man, also be dishonoured, if a Man prayed with his (physical) head *covered*?

It is surely significant that, throughout the ages, for a man to remove his hat -(or cap, or whatever he might be wearing on his head) - has been the sign of respect in the presence of one whom he wishes to honour. Even today, in civilised society at any rate, men still raise their hats to ladies and remove their hats as they enter a house or church building.

Paul says that when a man prays or preaches (*'prophets' means 'to speak forth'*) - he must be bareheaded, because Christ, his Head is present.

Where women are concerned, the opposite is true. He says that, if a woman prays or speaks in public with her head *uncovered*, she shows disrespect for the one whom God has declared to be her head - the man - because, by her action she declares that she does not recognise the presence of a visible head.

(Please note that Paul deals with the question of women speaking in a worship-service where men are present, in ch. 14. He is here dealing, first, with the fundamental issue of submission).

Question 6. "But does the wearing of a head-covering really have any significance in these modern times?"

In reply, let me ask this question, "Why, at a formal wedding, does the bride - even *'in these modern times'* - wear a veil? Is that merely a part of the wedding-dress? Is it nothing more than a piece of finery? Is it a meaningless tradition signifying nothing at all?

The practice recalls the fact that, from very early Christian times, the bride's head was covered in affirmation of her willingness to be submissive to her husband.

'To love, honour and obey' has long been the form of the vow taken by the bride, even if, in these modern days, a non-Christian society has changed it.

The Lord's Supper, also no longer significant?

But consider also, that if the head-covering is rejected on the grounds that it *'belongs to a long-past and different age and culture'*, why do we not adopt the same position with regards to the Lord's Supper? Are unleavened bread and unfermented grape-juice items that can be readily found in our homes? Do we see them on the table of our friends and relatives? Would not today's non-Christians say that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is just as much an *'out-date irrevelancy'*, as the wearing of a head-covering?

We should also bear in mind that there is probably not a single nation on earth which does not treasure and cling to, customs, rituals and ceremonies which date from its historic past. But nations do not abandon their 'traditions' on the grounds that they *'belong to a different time and culture.'*

Question 7. "What does Paul mean when he writes about 'a sign of authority'?"

The New Testament contains a good many words that relate to various aspects of 'power' or 'authority'. In this case, the word is *'exousia'*, a word used 104 times, and it also has various shades of meaning. It may sometimes mean authority that is *demonstrated*, and it may mean authority that is *recognised or acknowledged*.

When Paul says that a woman should have *'exousia'* on her head *'because of the*

angels', he is not suggesting that woman has any sort of authority, or power over the angels.

He means that a woman's use of the head-covering in worship is a sign of her acknowledgement and recognition of authority - a sign that she accepts her role in God's scheme of things, and is willing to comply with His will. In so doing, she provides an example of obedience and submission to the angels, who are looking on.

Jude v.6 records that there was a time when angels sinned. They *'did not keep their own position, but left their proper habitation'*. 2nd Peter 2:4 also refers to this astonishing example of disobedience among the angels, and the consequences were catastrophic, as these passages show.

There can be no doubt that angels are aware of what occurs here on earth, because the Lord Himself tells us that there is joy among the angels in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:10), and there are many instances of angelic ministry recorded in the book of Acts, if one cares to look for them.

Eph. 3:10, teaches us that, it is through the Church, that the manifold wisdom of God is being made known to principles and powers in the heavenly places; and this certainly included the angels. Thus, the Christian woman's acceptance of her divinely appointed role is, to the angels, **an abiding example of obedience**, because it demonstrates submission to the will of God.

Question 8. "What do vv.14 and 25 mean? How does 'Nature' teach?"

The word for 'nature' is the word *'phusis'*, and it means *'the inborn sense of what is proper'* or *'that which is natural'*. In N.T. times this appeal to 'nature' was quite commonly used. Paul uses it in Rom. 1:26 and 2:14 as well as elsewhere.

The argument here is that there are certain fundamental physical differences between Male and Female, and certain things are instinctive.

Whilst long hair is a glory to a woman it is not natural to man. (Forget those paintings of a Jesus who had long, blonde hair!).

God himself created the distinction between male and female, and we honour Him by maintaining that distinction and by rejecting any of society's practices or customs, which break it down. Paul's argument is that Nature has endowed Woman with such an abundance of hair, because God intends her to be different and does not wish her to copy the man.

In these days, an immoral society seeks to break down the distinction between male and female, so we have 'Unisex' - the 'one sex' society.

We see masculine, short-haired women, who hanker to look like men and who dress in men's clothes, and we have effeminate men, who have taken to wearing women's clothing and using eye shadow and lipstick!

A long time ago, Epictetus, a philosopher in ancient Greece, pointed out that *"there are distinct marks of masculinity and femininity which should not be confounded or abandoned; the gentle voice of woman and the beard of man"*.

(I have never yet heard of a woman needing to regularly shave her chin or trim her beard!) Such women are so abnormal that they used to be displayed as curiosities in circus side-shows. Paul declares that we should give glory to God, by being what He meant us to be and by maintaining our natural and distinctive differences.

This is his argument relating to 'long hair', vv.14-15.

Woman's Hair - A 'Covering'?

Of course, we have heard it argued that, since, in this passage, Paul says that a woman's long hair is given to her as a 'covering', that is all she needs!

But Paul does not say this because he is not so foolish as to contradict the arguments he has already made!

1. If a woman's hair is an adequate head covering, meeting God's requirements, when would it be accurate to describe her as being 'not covered'? v.6. Are bald-headed women the ones described as 'not covered'?

2. If, we claim that, when a woman has hair she is 'covered', does she only become 'uncovered' when she loses her hair?

3. And if a woman's hair itself is an adequate covering, does Man's hair also constitute a covering? But he should not be 'covered'!

If a man's hair is also a covering - and if it is a shame for a man to pray or preach with head 'covered' - must he, then, shave his head completely and be bald-headed before he may preach?

Paul tells us that, if Man allows his hair to grow long it is degrading - (or a dishonour to him). But God has given to woman hair which naturally grows long and which is a natural adornment and a distinctive sign of her femininity. When she wears it in a womanly fashion, it is a glory to her. It is a visible sign that she is fulfilling the role for which God intended her, and this should indicate to her the propriety of wearing a head covering, and the head covering should be seen as a logical and reasonable extension of her natural covering.

The recognized practice of the churches generally, v.16

It seems that, in this matter of the head covering, the Corinthian church was the only church causing concern, because there is no mention of this problem being experienced in any of the other congregations. On the contrary. Paul's final word on the matter, in v.16, is, *If anyone is disposed to be contentious (about this matter) we recognise no other practice, nor do the churches of God.*"

The word translated '*custom*', v.16 in the KJV, and '*practice*' in the RSV and other versions, refers to '*common usage*'.

He says that it is the usual practice of all the churches, for women to have their heads covered in worship. No other practice is recognized.

It is significant that the Corinthian church was a church in which, during New Testament times, all of the spiritual gifts were in evidence, **ch.1.7.**

Yet Paul reveals that even spiritually gifted women - i.e., those women who had received spiritual gifts, such as the gift of prophecy or the gift of tongues - were not exempt from God's order requiring them to wear a head-covering when the Church came together for worship, and he even reminds them of another law which was apparently being flouted at Corinth. They were not remaining silent in the assembly.

They seem to have imagined that, because they had been endowed with spiritual gifts, they were exempt from the law which said that women must keep silent in the church, '*for it is not permitted for them to speak*'.

This is dealt with in 1 Cor. 14:34, where the rule is very clearly stated. There are no exceptions - and no exemptions. Even women who possessed miraculous, spiritual gifts must observe the God given order of things. They must have their heads covered, and they must observe the rule of silence in the assembly - like all other women.

The conclusive word vv.14:37

"If anyone thinks he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognise this, he is not recognised."

*(All questions to Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way,
Houston, Johnstone, PA6 7NZ)*

NOTHING DOUBTING

As frail human creatures we are sure, at times, to have the occasional attack of doubt. The basic cause of such doubt stems, of course, from that fallen angel: Satan. It is one of the agencies of the Devil, to create doubt in the mind, and draw away the disciple from his confident belief.

Doubt can affect us two ways: it can either stunt our spiritual growth or it can spur us on eventually to a greater depth of faith. It seldom leaves us the same as we were before. What is doubt? It is usually only of a temporary nature and arises from thoughts which cause us to waver, to be uncertain about an opinion or belief. Eventually we become withdrawn, pensive, even suspicious and lack conviction, confidence and trust. Even the greatest prophet of all, John the Baptist, had his wavering moments and, on one occasion, sent his disciples to Jesus to ask if He really was the One who was to come, or was he to look further afield for another.

Even a very small child can be coaxed to jump off a wall into the loving arms of a parent. The jump, to the child, is dangerous but the trust in the parent is strong and the child focuses its attention on the outstretched arms. Quite often our faith in God's outstretched arm is blurred by our attention spending too long upon the dangers and the doubts. In simple words, beloved, we often tend to let our eyes stray from God, Jesus and the Church and fall victim to our doubts. An added doubt is sometimes the result of **doubting ourselves**, doubting our own judgement, our own abilities and our own strength. This may cause us to fear and fear can have a serious affect on us: so do take care, brethren. When confidence in self breaks down we tend to 'set up camp' not wanting to venture for the Lord or take any risks. No advance in life takes place. We need to remember verse 4 of the 23rd Psalm, "**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.**"

WHY SHOULD WE DOUBT?

Christ's own disciples, as close as they were to Jesus daily, had often to be warned about doubt. When Peter tried to walk on the water and began to sink Jesus caught him by the hand and said, "**O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt**"? This is always a good question. Why should we doubt? sometimes doubts are born of waning belief. We need to know but also to **believe** the truth. Sometimes doubts are born of disobedience, and so we must be obedient, as never before: time is running out; God still cares; if in doubt call upon God. Again, doubt sometimes comes to us when we are at a low ebb in morale and even in poor health (as was probably the case with John the Baptist). We are perhaps physically and / or mentally run down and we begin to waver in our faithfulness. We might even separate ourselves from our God and from prayer. We might even contemplate separating ourselves from our brethren and from the Church. He that thinks he standeth must beware lest he fall. Let us take care lest we fall, the best way to keep doubt at bay is to be strong in the faith (putting on the whole armour of God. Eph. 6) and by keeping busy in the Lord's work (always abounding in the work of the Lord).

We must take note that God never withdraws His love from us: it is we who withdraw ourselves from God (sometimes knowingly, sometimes not). Someone has said:-

"Whoso draws nigh to God one step
though doubting Him;
God will advance a mile,
in blazing light to him."

ANDREW SHARPE, Newtongrange.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct 6	Genesis 41:17-36	Acts 11
Oct 13	Lamentations 3:52-66	Acts 12
Oct 20	Numbers 8:1-22	Acts 13:1-15
Oct 27	Isaiah 55	Acts 13:16-41

PETER DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS

Peter was criticised by the circumcised believers for mixing with the uncircumcised. (It is difficult to appreciate fully the huge gulf between Jew and Gentile in those days.) In response, Peter simply recounted to them in detail all that had happened. And all that happened was the work of God. In truth, Jesus of Nazareth was now bringing together Jew and Gentile into one body (Ephesians 2:14-22). The gospel was not only for the Jew, but also for the Gentile (Romans 1:16). In other words, the gospel was for all men and women everywhere. In the end, the objections of the critics were overcome (11:18).

THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH

Syrian Antioch was the most famous of Sixteen Antiochs established by Seleucus 1 Nicator in honour of his father. The city stood on the Orontes river some five hundred kilometres north of Jerusalem. Josephus records that the Seleucids encouraged Jews to emigrate here and they came in large numbers. Pompey conquered Antioch in 64 B.C. and he made it a free city. It became the capital of the Roman province of Syria and was the third largest city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria. By the time of the apostles, the city housed a large Greek population. To them, the gospel was preached with great results (20,21).

We now read of Barnabas, who became a very important figure in the early Church. He was sent to Antioch as a representative of the mother church in Jerusalem. This great man lived up to the meaning of his name - "son of encouragement." We read: "For he was

a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith . . ." (24). However, the great man needed help with the work and he, therefore sought out Saul of Tarsus, whom he felt would be the ideal colleague. They both laboured with the church in Antioch for a year and became renowned teachers.

We read: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (26b). Was "Christian" originally a nickname or a Divine-given name? Much has been written on the subject. It is interesting to note that the name is found only three times in the whole of the New Testament Scriptures - Acts 11:26; 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16. W.E. Vine has pointed out that "from the second century onward the term was accepted by believers as a title of honour." I like the fact that a title of scorn later became a title of honour.

In Antioch, Agabus prophesied of a great famine "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar" (28b), who was Emperor from 41-54 A.D. A relief fund was set up and Barnabas and Saul were appointed to deliver it to Jerusalem (29,30).

Their standing with the members of the Antioch church was obviously high at this time. Paul later described this Jerusalem visit in Galatians 2.

HEROD AGRIPPA 1 AND THE CHURCH

Herod Agrippa 1 was a grandson of Herod the Great and the Hasmonean princess Mariamne. He was born in 11B.C. and brought up in Rome. The Emperor Gaius bestowed upon him the former tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias in southern Syria. Later his kingdom was extended to Galilee and Peraea. Claudius further increased his realm by the addition of Judea. He revelled in the title "King."

Herod was a wicked man and became an instrument of evil for Satan. He had the apostle James executed (the first of the apostles to meet a martyr's death). His brother John was the one

who was to outlive all the other apostles. He was a very old man by the time he received "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" on the island of Patmos. Following James' death, Herod then moved against Peter (12:3). But, of course, God miraculously delivered him from prison and from the hands of the king (11). Herod was furious that Peter had escaped and had the prison keepers executed as a result (19). Peter's release was really an answer to prayer (5). I like the fact that he immediately went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where a prayer meeting was still going on (12). The early Church was a praying church.

Herod, in the end, was killed by an angel of God in the city of Caesarea (23). Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives a parallel account of the circumstances surrounding the king's death. It makes fascinating reading. Both Luke and Josephus agree that the king was hailed as a god and not a mere mortal. So Herod was guilty of accepting blasphemous adulation for which he paid with his life. His end was very unpleasant indeed. Truly, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

BARNABAS AND SAUL GO TO CYPRUS

We now read of Paul's first missionary journey. He undertook three in all. Saul and Barnabas were commissioned by the church in Antioch to undertake the missionary work. In fact, the leaders of the congregation "fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and sent them away" (13:3). I wonder if they ever fully appreciated the importance of this development in the history of the Christian religion.

First, the missionaries went to Cyprus, the native island of Barnabas himself. Today, Cyprus is a divided island. The Turkish Cypriots live in the north and the Greek Cypriots dwell in the south. The situation is tragic with little sign of a resolution. Two thousand years ago, Cyprus was under Roman

administration. At least it was not a divided island. Barnabas and Saul began their work in Salamis, a city on the west coast of the island and a commercial centre. We read: ". . . they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister" (5). *Synagogues* is proof of a large Jewish community there. It became a regular feature of the evangelistic strategy of Barnabas and Saul to use Jewish synagogues wherever they could.

Papos, on the west of the island, was their next port of call. It was the seat of the provincial government. Here they met the proconsul of the time - Sergius Paulus. (Luke, the writer of the book of Acts never gets his facts wrong. In the A.V. "deputy" is a translation of the Greek title *anthupatos*, which is the word for a proconsul, the governor of a senatorial province.) They also encountered "a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus" (6). Satan was never far away in attempting to hinder their preaching of the gospel.

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

Pisidian Antioch was in Asia Minor. It was a Roman colony, with the title Colonia Caesarea. Paul (note the change from Saul) always saw the importance of bringing the gospel to Roman colonies because they were planted at strategic points throughout the empire. His address in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia (16-41) was an outstanding one. The content reflects the Jewish audience. He rehearses the history of Israel to the ascension of David and then moves from David to Christ. The risen Christ is declared, and justification through Him. He concludes with a warning. Great was the disaster that came upon those who ignored the warnings of God's prophets, especially in the days prior to Nebuchadnezzar; but a greater disaster will befall those who reject the gospel.

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. According to the prophet Jeremiah, how many years would Jerusalem lie desolate?
2. How long did it rain during the great Flood?
3. How many district governors were there over Israel in the day of Solomon?
4. Give another name for Hananiah?
5. Achan stole silver and gold, and what else?
6. Who were Eli's two sons?
7. Who was the servant girl who answered the door for Peter after his escape from prison?
8. In the book of Revelation, who fought against the dragon and his angels?
9. After his conversion, which apostle did Paul first meet in Jerusalem?
10. How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved Him?

NEW EDITOR

The new editor of the "Scripture Standard," Brother Robert Marsden, takes up his editorial pen commencing with the October issue, and I am sure I speak on behalf of every reader when I wish him every success, and thank him for accepting this considerable responsibility. I also hope the brethren will rally to his assistance, and support him wherever possible. Obviously the magazine depends upon readership support.

I took over, as editor on a "temporary" basis in January, 1974, and have great cause to be grateful to all those who have helped me since that time. Indeed, if space was available, I could fill this entire paper with the names of such brethren (many of whom have now passed on). I shall not, however, attempt to list any names, (lest I should inadvertently omit some deserving name), But I shall content myself by saying a very sincere "Thank

You" to ALL those who have been true friends, helpers and supporters of the "Scripture Standard" over the years; not forgetting our friendly and helpful printer.

Robert's address is:

4 The Copse, Orrell Road,
Orrell, WIGAN. WN5 8HL.
Tel.: 01942 212370.

Accordingly all material, articles, news, etc., for the "Scripture Standard" should now be sent to the new editor (prior to the 15th of any month for appearance in the following issue). Once again I thank, very sincerely, all those who have helped, encouraged, assisted and tolerated me over the past twenty eight years. Thank you.

JAMES R. GARDINER.

COMING EVENTS

PETERHEAD

Special Weekend

We shall have the services of
Bro. Dwight Eppler, USA
on SATURDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER,
7.00 p.m.

and

SUNDAY, 22nd SEPTEMBER,
10.00 a.m. & 11.00 a.m. & 6.00 p.m.

KENTISH TOWN

Anniversary Meeting

Hope Chapel, Kentish Town
SATURDAY, 5th OCTOBER,
3.00 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.

also

SUNDAY, 6th OCTOBER,
11.00 a.m. & 6.00 p.m.

Speaker: Ian Davidson,
from Motherwell

MANCHESTER

Saturday Evening Meetings

Green Hut, King's Road, Stretford
SATURDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER,
Ian Davidson, Motherwell
SATURDAY, 2nd NOVEMBER,
Allan Ashurst, Stretford
Both Meetings at 7.00 p.m.

**HITCHINGBROOKE,
Huntingdon
22nd ANNUAL LECTURESHIP**

Theme:

The Whole Counsel of God
SATURDAY, 12th OCTOBER,
From 10.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m.
Buffet Lunch & Refreshments
Tel: 01487 710552

GHANA APPEAL

We thank our donors for assisting the healing, both physical and spiritual, of our brethren in Ghana. We continue to receive letters of thanks from brethren who have received help, much of it life saving.

Some physical ailments can be cured relatively quickly while others need continuing attention. Our sister with heart trouble is now receiving the regular attention she needs and we've just heard of another sister suffering from epilepsy and one with a skin disease, as well as a brother with a hernia.

The baby girl born with the internal defect has responded well to surgery but will need more treatment. We can well understand the anxiety of parents in such cases.

As well as illness there are two other difficulties, such as the brother who is

homeless since his house was burned through no fault of his own. This is an area where only traditional building material can be used.

Our Ghanaian brethren are enthusiastic about extending the Lord's Church and your contributions have helped them establish congregations further from their homes. A very recent example is a church which, within two weeks of being started by a brother has eleven members.

Those wishing to help please make cheques payable to: Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund and send to the treasurer:

Mrs. Janet Macdonald,
12 Charles Drive, Larbert,
Falkirk, Stirlingshire. FK5 3HB.
Tel: 01324 562480.

- 10. 3 (John 21:17)
- 9. Peter (Galatians 1:18,19).
- 8. Michael and his angels (12:7)
- 7. Rhoda (Acts 12:13).
- 6. Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam. 1:3).
- 5. A robe (Joshua 7:21).
- 4. Shadrach (Daniel 1:7).
- 3. 12 (1 Kings 4:7)
- 2. 40 nights (Genesis 7:4).
- 1. 70 (Daniel 9:2).

ANSWERS

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