

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THINGS WHICH ACCOMPANY SALVATION

In last month's article I emphasised the fact that N.T. baptism came quite specifically from God (or, as Jesus said, "from heaven") and that it was not, therefore, something that any man could lightly dismiss or ignore (although he very often does). And in the article previous to that one, I showed that every instance of conversion in the Acts of the Apostles, involved not only belief, but repentance and baptism (notwithstanding that most tract-writers seldom see fit to mention baptism). In case any readers should think that I have given undue attention to baptism, or attributed to it a superiority above all the other things which contribute to man's salvation, I propose in this article, to refer to some of **these other factors: i.e. factors** which equally must be taken into account when we contemplate the gospel. But surely it must be very doubtful that we can ever over-emphasise the importance of **any** of the ingredients of salvation, whether it be faith, repentance, baptism or, indeed, any other necessity. Readers may well realise that we sometimes appear to overstate the case for baptism for the simple reason that the religious world at large make no case for it at all. Thus, if others were to make more of it, we would be very happy to make less of it. Obviously when we encounter those religious tracts which are in transit throughout the world, and which proclaim to readers that they need "only believe", we **surely have no option** but to declare this doctrine entirely unscriptural and draw attention to baptism, and the other things which accompany salvation. There is, of course, nothing wrong with printing tracts which stress the need for faith: but this is quite a different proposition from asserting that we are saved by "Faith Only". Such teaching is nowhere to be found in the N.T. and I invite any reader whomsoever (if they espouse this doctrine) to show us the justification for it in God's word. Since my original article I have received another four tracts from a tract-writer who prints his "Faith Only" message, and I have given him a written invitation to show where this dogma is to be found in the N.T. We shall see if the invitation is acted upon.

### FAITH ALONE AND LUTHER

If the "Faith Only" teaching is not in the N.T. from where did it come? It seems that the reformer, Martin Luther, gets the credit or the blame for originating the idea. Around 1530 AD Luther interpolated into his own translation of the N.T. the words **sola fide** (Latin for "Faith Only") into Rom. 3:28. This action has clearly had great ramifications in the religious world and has given us the term "Solifidianism" which is what the doctrine is officially called. It was not a slip of the pen but was very consciously done. Indeed Luther felt so strongly about it, that when he added the word "Only" to Rom. 3:28 viz. "**Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith (ONLY) without the deeds of the law**", he insisted that the word "Only" was necessary for clarity. He was greatly criticised at the time for his action, and said in an angry

letter. "It is **my** Testament and **my** translation and if I have made any mistake (although I never falsified intentionally) I will not let the papists judge me .... As to Romans 3:28, if the word "only" is not found in the Latin or the Greek texts, yet the passage has that meaning and must be rendered so in order to make it clear and strong in German." (Unquote). And so Luther acknowledged that "Only" is not in the Greek text but he thought that it ought to have been, and that it would have made for clarity and strength in the German language.

Luther had, of course, become increasingly disenchanted with the R.C. Church and in its excesses. In 1510, for instance, he visited Rome for the first time and was really shocked by the spectacle of worldliness. He later said "Rome is a harlot. I would not take 1,000 gulden not to have seen it, for I never would have believed the true state of affairs from what other people told me, had I not seen it myself. So great and bold is Roman impiety that neither God nor man, neither sin nor shame, is feared. All good men who have seen Rome bear witness to this, all bad ones come back worse than before". (Unquote). As a good catholic, Luther had previously submitted wholeheartedly to the priestly system of meritorious works. He gave himself to penances; self-mortification; fastings; night-watches; sacraments; invocations of saints and other features of monasticism, but eventually came to the conclusion that all such "works" were uncalled for, and that a man could please God simply by faith; or by faith itself; or only by faith: or by faith only. Thus his faith "only" attitude. This basic cry or theme, "Faith alone", became the cornerstone of the Reformation and the bedrock of the ensuing Protestantism. The three fundamentals of the Reformation were (1) The supremacy of the Scriptures over 'tradition'; (2) The supremacy of Faith over "works"; i.e. Faith alone: and (3) The supremacy of Christian people over an exclusive Priesthood. Most of Protestant churches, and Presbyterianism in general, embraced the "Faith alone" doctrine as well as Luther's belief in foreordination (that God has already chosen who will have faith and who will not have it) and, 450 years later, this is still largely the case. Perhaps it was only to be expected that Luther, fettered so long in the "works" of the R.C. Church, should swing so violently to the other extreme, and denounce works almost entirely, and reject almost outright the epistle of James. Alexander Campbell excused Luther somewhat on the grounds that Luther's error was understandable: in a man struggling his way out of the smoke of obscurity and spiritual darkness.

#### A CHAIN OF EVENTS

Consider the following scenario. Imagine, if you will, an old man, in his wheelchair, enjoying the evening air on his porch overlooking the tranquil lake. Fairly well out on the lake a young man is fishing from a small rowing boat. A sudden splash alerts the old man to the fact that the boat has overturned and the young man is struggling for life, in the water. The old man can't do much but shouts to his son who is inside the house. The son rushes out and, sizing up the situation at a glance, runs to the beach. He finds a boat there, but no oars. He dashes to a neighbour and manages to borrow two oars. Frantically he rows out to the drowning man who, by this time, seems to be about to sink for the last time. Despairing of reaching the man in time, and noticing a coil of rope in the bottom of the boat, the son throws the rope out towards the victim. More by luck than good guidance the young man manages to clutch at the rope and to hold on to it. After a struggle the young man is eventually dragged into the boat and brought to the shore, but he seems to be dead. Someone, from the little crowd now assembled on the shore, steps forward and gives the young man artificial respiration, and, after some very worrying minutes, manages to bring him round. Later, the young man endeavoured to thank his rescuers and began with the old man, without whom the rescue would never have been mounted. He had also to thank the son, of course, and the man who gave him the artificial respiration. The son accepted the thanks with pleasure but pointed out that he would have been useless

but for the boat, and but for the neighbour's oars, and what about the rope? Without the rope he would never have reached the young man in time.

In short, the young man was not saved by **any one person** or **any one thing**, but by a chain of events and a series of actions, and it would be as foolish to say that the young man was saved by the rope **only**, as it is to say that sinners are saved by faith **only**. Surely it was a whole chain of circumstances which brought about the saving of the drowning man, and if any of the links in the chain had been missing the rescue would never have been successful. This fictitious anecdote is sometimes used as a rough, analogy of God sending His Son into the world to rescue man from sin and death, and imperfect as the analogy is, it does demonstrate, perhaps, that our salvation rests upon a *plurality of factors*, and not on any one particular thing.

#### STEPS IN A PROCESS

Having been alienated from God by his sins and shortcomings, man has to be reconciled again, back to God. Indeed the meaning of the word "religion" (**re: ligio**) is "a binding back" to God. We might say that we are bound back to God by a chain: the chain of salvation. Some see salvation as something acquired at once, when we obey the gospel, but, personally, I see it as a **process**. Paul, referring to the passing of time, said, "**Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.**" (Rom. 13:11). And Jesus said, "**He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.**" (Matt.10:22). Until the end of what? we might ask. Clearly the end of a person's life-span is being referred to, and our salvation depends upon us remaining faithful until that time. Plainly, if there are links in the chain of salvation, each link must come in its proper order, and has its proper place. We would not, for instance, expect someone to repent prior to them having faith; or to believe the gospel before they had heard it. Jesus said, "**He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved**". (Mark 16:16). Thus, according to Jesus, baptism should follow belief and both belief and baptism should come **prior** to salvation. Peter said, "**Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...**" (Acts 2:38) and so he places repentance prior to baptism. Thus on this brief information alone, we can see a sequence of hearing, believing, repenting and being baptised: **all prior** to the promise of salvation. It must also be noted that having taken these aforementioned steps, and having entered the Kingdom of God, we have not **concluded** the process of salvation but merely set foot on the bottom rung of the ladder, or commenced the journey. Again, the Christian life has been likened unto a race that is set before us, in which we must strive for the prize. Changing the figure, Jesus said that no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, was fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. It's a process.

The following are some (not all) of the many links in the chain of our salvation :  
WE ARE SAVED BY :-

- ( 1 ) BY GOD'S GRACE: "**By grace are ye saved.**" (Eph. 2:8).
- ( 2 ) BY THE GOSPEL: "**... the gospel is God's power unto salvation**" (Rom. 1:16)
- ( 3 ) BY FAITH: "**Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.**" (Acts 16:3)
- ( 4 ) BY REPENTANCE: "**For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation. .**"  
(2 Cor. 7:10)
- ( 5 ) BY IMMERSION: "**whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.**"  
(1 Peter 3:21)
- ( 6 ) BY CHRIST'S BLOOD: "**Redemption through His blood.**" (Eph 1:7)
- ( 7 ) BY HIS NAME: "**Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"  
(Rom. 10:13)
- ( 8 ) BY CONFESSION: "**And with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.**"  
(Rom. 10:10)
- ( 9 ) BY HOPE: "**For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope.**"  
(Rom. 8:24)

- (10) **BY CHRIST'S LIFE:** "being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."  
(Rom. 5:10)
- (11) **BY OBEDIENCE:** "Save yourselves from this evil generation." (Acts 2:40)
- (12) **BY PERSEVERANCE:** "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."  
(Matt. 10:22)

Each item in the above group is linked, in scripture, with salvation (the actual word "saved" is used in each case) and as can be clearly seen the Holy Spirit never ever employed the word "ONLY" in regard to *any of them*. Salvation does not come by grace (only); or by the blood of Christ (only); or by immersion (only); or by hope (only); or by perseverance (only). Why then should it be thought that we are saved by faith (only)? Luther was right when he said that "only" was not in the Greek text. If the Holy Spirit never employed the word "only" neither should we.

#### FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

If we are ever fortunate enough to manage to get into conversation with those who write tracts and teach the "Faith only" doctrine (and it's not easy to get these conversations, for some reason) we will probably be told that they have no time for baptism because baptism is a "work," and Paul prohibited "works." The passage offered in support of this will be Eph. 2:8 where Paul says, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast." Clearly Paul is linking "works" with boasting and is simply saying that redemption is a gift and not a reward for our good "works." The N.T. has a great deal to say about "works" and we must be able and careful to differentiate between the various kinds. We read of "the works of the law" (of Moses): we read of "evil works;" we read of "good works;" we read of "dead works;" we read of "the works of God;" we read of "the works of the devil;" we read of "wonderful works;" The "works" Paul had in mind in Eph. 2:8 referred, of course, to any good deeds the Gentiles might have imagined they had done, *which merited* God's salvation and that God was therefore, in this way, indebted to them, and *owed them a favour* on account of their "goodness." Paul dispels any such idea and says that we are saved by God's GRACE (unmerited favour) and that any righteousnesses we may think we have, are as filthy rags. All have sinned and deserve death, but God gives us life: not because we merit it, but out of love and grace. James certainly had no 'hang-up' about "works." He said, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being ALONE" (2:17). This is, strangely enough, the only verse in the entire N.T. which refers to faith "alone" and it mentions it only to condemn it. "Faith Alone," says James is dead (like "a body without the spirit) and faith must be accompanied by works. This time "works" does not refer to our own estimation of righteousness but to the "good works" that Jesus had in mind when He said ". . . that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:16).

Abraham had a reputation for being a *man of faith*, but why was he seen to be a man of faith? It was by his "works." Indeed Abraham was "justified by works," because his faith was such that it prompted him into doing things: things that were well pleasing to God. Those who want to dismiss baptism as a "work" will obviously have to decide whether it is an evil work or a good work; and surely could hardly class it is an evil work if it came from God and was commanded by our Lord. Thus it must be a good work and Paul says that we should "be fruitful in every good work" (Col. 1:10).

#### SAVE YOURSELVES

God has done as much as he can to save us. Although Christ was sent into the world to save sinners, yet we must all take steps to *save ourselves*. Indeed, when Peter was preaching the gospel at Pentecost, we read that "with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying **SAVE YOURSELVES from this untoward generation**"

(Acts 2:40). Clearly, in addition to God's part in man's redemption man himself, has an important part to play. Some things God has done: some things man must do. In a broad sense nothing with God is impossible, yet it is impossible for God to accept man in the absence of faith, i.e. **"Without faith it is impossible to please God."** (Heb. 11:6). Luther believed that God gave some men faith but withheld it from others. If this is so why preach the gospel: if God has already decided our eternal fate? The apostle Peter certainly did not share Luther's view for he said, **"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."** (Acts 10:34). **"Faith comes through hearing: and hearing the word of God"** (Rom. 10:17). A "saving faith" is the kind which, like Abraham's prompts us to obey the gospel in repentance and baptism. These are things only we, ourselves, can do. Only man, himself, can decide to put his hand to the plough. Surely this is what Peter had in mind when shouted to the crowd **"Save yourselves"** from this reprobate generation. How did the crowd interpret his call? The very next verse says, **"Then they that gladly received his (Peter's) word were baptised: and the same day there were added to them about 3,000 souls."** And so, out of that vast audience 3,000 persons decided to "save themselves" and to take the next appropriate step in obeying the gospel i.e. baptism. They had never heard of Luther and didn't seem to regard baptism as "work."

Thus God has done all that He can for us. We are now expected to play our part. Man's salvation now rests entirely in his own hands. **"God is not willing that any should perish but that all may come to repentance,"** and so if we are eternally lost we have only ourselves to blame. Paul's exhortation to the Philippian Christians was that they should **". . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"** and he obviously thought it something that WE must work at. Peter adds his voice to Paul's, and confirms that there are *things that WE must do*. He says, **"Wherefore the rather brethren, GIVE DILIGENCE to make your calling and election sure, for if YE DO THESE THINGS, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."** (2 Peter 1:10).

As mankind "drowns in destruction and perdition" God has thrown out the lifeline. We must grasp it, and if that's a "work" it's a good one.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

### "AND THE LIFE"

**"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."** (John 14:6).

### WE QUOTE - F.B. MEYER

#### Following Christ

**"He that followeth Me . . ."** We must put Christ first. He must hold the position of Leader and Guide, Primate and King. Our one question must ever be, which way is He taking? and we may generally ascertain this as we endeavour to answer one of the following questions: (1) What is the law of Christ? (2) What is the will of Christ? (3) What would Christ do under these circumstances? If we are not sure, we must wait till we are; but knowing, we must follow at all costs. Oh to keep just behind Him — not running on in front, or lagging behind! They say that lambs are taught to follow at the heels of a shepherd, by his dropping for them savoury morsels, and such as they like; and we may well follow hard after Him whom we love, and who loves us, upheld by his right hand, because of the inestimable benefits which will accrue.

### Follow Jesus, Christian!

We cannot follow Jesus except we leave all — our own judgement and wisdom, our schemes and preferences, our predictions and fancies; but if we dare to forsake them, and step right away from the boat, we shall win an abundant compensation. Was Paul a loser, who suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ?

Follow Jesus, Christian! keep Him always well before thee in every path of duty; in every sphere of service; in every attack, like Jonathan's, on the stronghold of the foe. Tread no track where his footprints do not appear. But when thou descriest them, plant in them thy feet, defying aught to separate thee from Him.

### Shall not walk in darkness

**'Shall not walk in darkness.'** — Not in the darkness of ignorance and error; not in the darkness of perplexity and confusion. If any man dares to follow Christ so far as he knows, deliberately sacrificing his own will and way to His, it is simply marvellous how the mists will roll up, the night clouds disperse, and the perplexities which had beset the soul, give way as brushwood before the tread of the sportsman. Endeavour to please Christ absolutely; and you will know almost immediately what He wants to be done, and how. You may not be able to see more than a step in advance; but dare to take that step, and you will see the next and the next. **"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."**

### But shall have the light of life

**'But shall have the light of life.'** — Light is essential to life. Without light flowers would be colourless, even if they grew animate and inanimate creation would fail; and the world would hasten back to primeval chaos, out of which light came. And equally necessary is it for the inner life to be sustained and nourished by communion with, and obedience to, the Lord Jesus. Apart from Him it is doomed to wither. In Him, through Him, and by Him, alone, can it thrive. There is no doubt about this. Begin even now to believe in and follow Him, though it may involve death and the grave; yet, as surely as the soul follows Him, acting up to all its present convictions of duty, it will emerge into a clearness of vision and a vigour of life, which shall vindicate its choice for ever. Let Jesus be your pillar of cloud and fire."

### We Quote — F.B. Meyer

**"When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice. John 10:4**

**THE FOLLOWING OF THE SHEEP.** — **"The sheep follow Him."** The utter dependence of the sheep on the Eastern shepherd is a beautiful emblem of our attitude towards our Lord. In those vast pasture-lands, rolling over mountain slopes, and dipping into darksome glens, brooded over by a silence that can almost be felt, there arises a very close intimacy between the shepherd and his flock. He forgets the distance between them, and becomes their friend. He is as intimately acquainted with their history, faces, and dispositions, as with those of his own children. He has a name for each, which is sufficient to bring it to his side. And common peril or privation, shared together, but cements the friendship closer. Nor is the affection only on his side. Stupid as they appear to us, they develop under such conditions an amazing power of attachment, which they manifest in touching trust. They follow the shepherd anywhere ...

### Submission

Let Jesus Christ stand between you and everything — between you and circumstances; between you and dreaded trials; between you and temptation; between you and your attainments in the blessed life; between you and your projects of Christian usefulness. Follow Him, i.e., let Him go first. If He does not go forward, wait for Him. Every step taken apart from Him, or in front of Him, will have to be retraced with bitter tears.

The attitude of the sheep is **submission**. From the first, its attitude is one of utter obedience to the will of another. It has no will of its own; or if it have, it is instantly repressed. So there must be the entire and utter surrender of our will of Christ. This is the hardest lesson we have to learn; but everything of blessedness depends on our coming to a point at which we say, 'From this moment and for evermore, in the smallest details, in the routine of daily life as well as in its great crises, I choose the will of God.' Never again to do what we wish because we wish it; never again to consult our own preferences or choice; never again to have a way or will of our own; but to follow absolutely and always the path marked out by another: this is the secret of blessedness ...

#### Dependence

The attitude of the sheep is **dependence**. It would be impossible to submit if we could not also **commit**. But it becomes easy to do the former when we can do the latter. To have an absolute confidence in Him, to lean on Him, to look to Him for direction and help, as each moment needs; to trust Him on the rocky mountain path equally as on the green sward; to believe in Him against appearances and our own hearts; to abstain, as David did, from taking advantage even of a means of deliverance, which may seem ready to hand, but which would be inconsistent with his revealed will; to wait only on the Lord till He shall pluck the feet out of the net, and give the heart's desires – this too is the secret of blessedness."

#### Joy Unspeakable

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter 1:8

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The object of the article under this heading in the December issue is to be commended, and much of the subject content requires careful analysis.

When Manasseh seduced the people of Judah, and Jeroboam made Israel sin, the *entire nation* in each case became guilty before God, and suffered the consequences. From this it follows that a majority, or even a unanimous decision is no certain guide in Church procedures, or in matters of right or wrong. These ancient kingdoms are types of the Church.

In support of the idea that church leaders SET RULES, and carried the whole congregation with them by allowing full access to the decision making process, and its implementation and ratification, the writer cites three cases:

- (1) The appointment of Matthias (to replace Judas as an apostle) (Acts 1:15-26);
  - (2) The appointment of servers of tables (Acts 6:2).
  - (3) The dissension over the question of circumcision and salvation (Acts 15:1-29).
- (1) The procedure following the quotation from the Psalms showing the **NECESSITY** for this appointment, was the nomination of two men from those "**who had companied with the disciples all the time the Lord went in and out among them from the time of His baptism by John, to the ascension.**" This was followed by prayer that the LORD would make HIS choice from these two men from the drawing of lots, in which it was impossible for anyone to foresee what the outcome would be. The necessity for this appointment is given by inspired prophecy, the group from which nominations were to be made is strictly specified, and the final choice is of the Lord. No explanation is here given as to **HOW** the apostles knew the drawing of lots would reveal the Lord's will, but it is evident that they did.

*It must be observed:-*

- (a) that this is a one-off occurrence which could never be repeated, and has no parallel in the appointment of church officers, instructions for which are given

elsewhere in the apostles' epistles. The qualifications of all such are divinely given, and not of human origin.

- (b) though the apostles were not yet INDWELT by the Holy Spirit, yet He dwelt with them, and they were somehow guided by Him (Jn. 14:17, 16:13). All these decisions were therefore of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) To settle the dispute about daily ministration, the apostles called the disciples together, pointed out the folly of their neglecting the propagation of the word to serve tables, and instructed them to select seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom the apostles would then formally appoint to attend to this business, which appointment was made by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. Though we have some guidance here for the selection and appointment of church officers, it must not be imagined that these arrangements were of human origin. The Lord has not left things which affect the welfare of His people to be decided by human wisdom. The church is under LAW in all such matters, and must act accordingly. When the church proceeds according to His will she will prosper, AND ONLY THEN.
- (3) This case reveals that the decisions of the apostles were not of human origin. While the decisions of the apostles were the result of irrefutable logic based on the facts of the matter, the Holy Spirit was there working with them, and guiding them to that solution.

On this occasion Peter states that God gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, and purified their hearts by faith (Acts 25:7-9). That law of Moses had been an unbearable burden to the Jews, but they also were now saved by faith. vs.10-11. The Gentiles were commanded to abstain from certain things which could be an abomination to God in any dispensation, v. 20. The apostles wrote letters to the Gentiles to this effect, v. 23, and in these letters the very significant statement appears, "**FOR IT SEEMED GOOD UNTO THE HOLY SPIRIT, and to us to lay no great burden (upon the Gentiles) than these necessary things.**"

### THE LAW OF CHRIST

How did the apostles KNOW the mind of the Spirit, but for the fact that they possessed the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in abundance? The Holy Spirit SPOKE THROUGH the prophets of the primitive church. The addresses and epistles were given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This event reveals that the Holy Spirit was always in close communication with the apostles, and they were guided by His will.

There are no such miraculous gifts of the Spirit in the church today, because the necessity for them has ceased, (1 Cor. 11:8-12), and the LAW of Christ has now been revealed in all its fullness. The church must always proceed according to that Law as is so aptly emphasised in the writer's final sentence, ". . . how much MORE do we need to be on guard against innovations to the New Testament pattern, which is to be OUR SOLE GUIDE." Church leaders must be appointed according to that LAW, and must also act accordingly.

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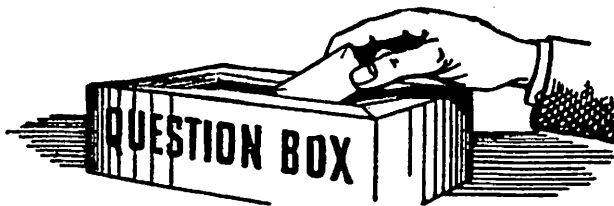
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### EXACTLY RIGHT

A preacher wrote to a wealthy and influential businessman soliciting a donation to a worthy cause. He received a curt refusal which ended by saying, "As far as I can see, this 'Christian business' is just one continuous give, give, give."

After a brief interval the preacher wrote back and said, "I wish to thank you for your letter and for the best definition of the Christian life I have ever heard."






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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**“Is it right for Christians from one community to take up membership with Christians in another community. If so, on what basis should such moves be made?”**

This is an interesting question. I don't believe that I have ever heard it discussed previously, so I shall do my best with it.

The immediate thought would be, that on the face of it there should be no valid reason why Christians should not meet wherever they want to (you will realise, of course, that I am speaking about what we call 'local churches of Christ,' because this is what the questioner has in mind). That is the theory, but to my mind it does not take into account the *practicalities* of the question. I myself have never been an itinerant Christian in the sense of the question, but I have known quite a few others who have. The church at Albert Street, Wigan experienced such 'comings' and 'goings' quite regularly but I had never any great enthusiasm for it. My reasons for this were practical rather than theoretical, and I want to set out those reasons in answer to this question.

#### LACK OF ACTIVITY

This is one reason frequently adduced by Christians who leave one assembly for another. I have known some who, ostensibly, have moved for this reason, but I believe their assumptions to have been false.

Maybe the *real* reason has been that they see themselves cast in a more authoritative role in the group to which they are going; such a thing is not unknown. Such a reason is not a valid one in my book. The whole ethos of the Christian message is that change must come *from within* a person, and I am convinced that the whole ethos of the community spirit is that change, if needed, must also come from within. It maybe thought that the 'grass is greener' on the other side of the fence, but possibly the lack of aridity in appearance may not always indicate that the soil is more 'fertile.'

Dear Christian, if you believe that your assembly is not, for example, promoting the Gospel as well as it should, then *you start from where you are* and do whatever work you can; perhaps your example will motivate others. One thing you musn't do, however; you must not look for *easier* pastures. If your assembly is in the dire straits you believe it to be, then surely you must understand that *your* drive and energy are *needed* there,

#### PERSONAL ANTAGONISM

I have seen Christians leave one assembly and take up membership at another for no better reason than that they don't 'get on' with fellow-Christians. Such a reason, to my mind, is appalling. How can we hope to influence others to the Gospel when we ourselves are seen to renounce the very basis of the Gospel, i.e., peace. It may very well be that the causes for such friction lie deep in family histories, but that does not make it any more acceptable; possibly it makes it worse. I have even seen success in secular life used as a means to engender strife. I once heard a Christian say of a brother in Christ, "Who does he think he is? Does he want to take over the church, too?" Such thoughts are ignoble in social life; to the Christian they should be anathema.

It may very well be that a brother or sister may feel they have been 'sinned' against; if so, there is a scriptural way for resolving this in the Church; it is found in Matt. 18:15-17. It is quite explicit and does not need comment from me, except to

say that every Christian should know and understand it.

When I was an elder at Albert Street, Wigan, there was particular method I employed and which I found to be quite useful. At the end of the Breaking of Bread Service I would stand aside a little and watch. What was I looking for? Brethren who seemed to ignore other brethren; no smile or handshake; the look on the face which might indicate some degree of hostility. If this sort of thing happened on a number of occasions to the same people then I knew that it was time to take some action. I once saw a play on television; it was a courtroom scene, and showed a man and his wife wringing their hands over their son who was in the dock, convicted of some serious crime. The parents were looking at each other in bewilderment and saying, "How did this happen?" Well it had been happening for a long time but it had gone unnoticed. Generally, we see what we want to see, and hear what we want to hear, and attempt to put out of our minds the sometimes unpleasant things which intrude. The end result can be very unpleasant, and the repercussions long-lasting.

Sometimes we are so intent in promoting what we call 'the plan of salvation' that we tend to minimise what the plan is about. It is about the inter-personal out-working of love among the brotherhood. The Gospel starts in love; it is lived in love; and it will end in love. It is the living in love which embodies Gospel principles. Jesus said, **"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** John 13:34,35. Brethren, do not let personal antagonisms make you leave brethren you should love; you will send out a message which will be interpreted by others, perhaps to your detriment: certainly to the detriment of the Church.

### CONTINUITY

Many highly successful family businesses have been built and maintained by continuity; of family, of principles, of a certain type of personnel, of honesty and integrity, etc. The Church is, perhaps, the greatest 'family business' of all time, if you will permit the expression. It should come as no surprise, then, that continuity in the Church is of paramount importance: of the Godhead, of the doctrine, of the conduct of those who bear the name of Christ, of the promotion of Christ and His Church until He comes again, etc.

The foregoing is particularly true of the 'local assembly.' How can anyone plan for the development of an assembly in order to ensure continuity of witness if Christians leave and go somewhere else at the slightest provocation? How can we cement relationships in Christ if those relationships are consistently undermined? We pride ourselves in 'speaking where the Bible speaks, and remaining silent where it is silent,' and yet the responses of our egoistical human natures nullify the very words to which we attach such importance. From the very first chapter of Genesis we are exhorted to view the Church and the world through the window of spiritual maturity with its concurrent love, and to realise that our faith reaches in continuity even to Heaven itself. This is the way that God has ordained it. This is why God is love, and that the immutability of His counsel insists that our relationship with Him and with each other must be maintained in love, as He has maintained everything since Creation.

There are, of course, times when employment takes families into another area; this is particularly true today. The Oversight of any assembly should know when reasons are valid. And let me say this. I have always believed that before any Christian moves out of an assembly he should have discussed the problem with his Oversight. Furthermore, if Christians turn up at an assembly without warning, then the receiving assembly should contact the assembly from which they have come immediately in order to establish reasons. It may be very nice to gain numerical strength but it may not be in the best interests of the Church as a whole.

So the message is clear. No itinerant Christians; work in the assembly where you are; eschew all antagonism, and foster love; and ensure that so far as you are concerned, you will do all you can to ensure the continuity of the Church in its several localities. If we do this, then we shall be furthering the prosperity of the Church.

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

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

In the article "Church Government" by Brian J. Boland ("S.S." December, 1994) our brother invites discussion of this subject, and this prompts me to write.

Acts 1:15-26 deals, of course, with the "selection" by lot, of Matthias as a replacement for the vacancy left by Judas. There are two ways in which we can view this passage, i.e. (A) as a record of an action unauthorised by the Lord, or (B) that the action was undertaken, approved and accepted by the Lord.

If (A) is accepted as the correct view then the use of it as an example for the Church today, and the inclusion of it in the other examples given is invalid.

**We have, in support of (A) view:-**

- ( i ) In his opening remarks our brother says: "The first decision of the Church following the ascension of Jesus, etc. etc. was made by the whole Church." It seems to me that this decision was made *prior* to there being any "Church," for my understanding is that the Church (or kingdom) came into being after Peter's speech in Acts ch. 2:38 when 3000 souls were baptised into it, and then many more were added to it by the Lord (vs. 47). By this it could not have been the "whole Church" nor any part of it.
- ( ii ) Furthermore in support of (A): We should note that when Jesus parted from them into heaven He told them to wait or "**remain in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.**" (Luke 24:49). At that same time we are informed by Acts 1:8 that it would be only *after* the Holy Spirit had come upon them that they would be witnesses for Jesus. Prior to Acts ch. 2:1-4 these were uninspired men whom Jesus Himself had rebuked for their lack of faith in His resurrection (Mark 16:14). From Jesus' last words to them we could understand that they were to take no action until they had received this power, and that they should wait patiently in Jerusalem for just such an event.

Now just because it is recorded that Peter recalled and quoted Ps. 69:25 does not mean that his actions and undertakings were authorised or approved of by the Lord. Peter is noted for his impetuous behaviour and we have one example where he desires to question his Lord and to run things: i.e. John 21:21. Jesus' plain answer to him is, on this occasion: (regarding the things that Jesus himself would take care of): "**what is that to you?**" vs.22.

- (iii) In further support of (A) we see that each and everyone of the original twelve apostles were chosen **DIRECTLY** by Jesus Himself – never by proxy. In addition we see that Saul of Tarsus was chosen by the Lord Himself, and Paul under the guidance of the Holy Spirit refers to himself as an apostle – (1st Cor. 9:1-2, 2nd Cor. 12:12). There are only 12 apostles referred to in Rev. 21:14.

It might be argued in support of (B) that Luke (who at the time he wrote the book of Acts was in fact inspired and had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost) says: Acts 1:26 "**the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles**" But this does not say the Lord approved of this, nor does it say that he was endorsed as an apostle by the Lord. This account could merely be revealing how the people viewed Matthias. We never

again hear a single reference to this man in all of the New Testament. In summary of this (A): it would seem that the strongest point would be that Jesus Himself, personally and directly, chose the apostles. Now in support of the second view (B), we might say that there are passages which indirectly hint at other men, besides Paul and the eleven, as being "apostles" i.e. 1st Thess. 2:6. Here Paul refers to "WE" – "**as the apostles of Christ**": the antecedent of "we" could be construed as including Silvanus and Timothy – ch. 1:1.

### CONCLUSION

The significance of finding one way or the other has a direct bearing on the use of this as an example for the conduct of the Church today. Yet even if it is allowed to stand as a valid proposition, nevertheless the men who, after this first questionable example, were involved in subsequent decisions were in fact by then inspired, whereas today we have no inspired men. Nor, of course, do we require any, for the conduct of the Church today must follow the instructions and guidance of the inspired writings. Yet we must be wary of examples that may seem right but were conducted by uninspired men. It follows if uninspired men of that day could set the conduct of Church through prayer and casting lots, then the same thing could be applied today. Until further evidence from scripture is produced I am persuaded to reject such a proposition. On the other hand we can see the result of taking this approach as we look around us and see the established hierarchism's that dictate the rules and regulations set in force in denominational churches, through systems of prayer and voting by the majority.

We must remember that Christ's "Kingdom" is a true monarchy ruled by its only Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a democracy and it certainly is not the kind of modern "kingdom" we see in various countries throughout the world today.

In Christian Love, George Sillman,  
Box 327, Chilliwack, B.C., Canada.

### KINDNESS

Kind hearts are the gardens,  
Kind thoughts are the roots,  
Kind words are the flowers,  
Kind deeds are the fruits.  
Take care of your garden,  
And keep out the weeds;  
Fill it with sunshine,  
Kind words and kind deeds.

– Longfellow

Kindness is one of the most vital characteristics to the life that exemplifies Christ. Let's consider why.

Kindness was one of the forces moving God to sacrifice his Son for us. "**But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man, appeared not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us**" (Titus 3:4,5a).

The apostle wrote, "**Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ**" (1 Cor. 11:1). Among the shining qualities of that man of God to be imitated is **kindness**. Paul betrayed his kindly disposition in the first letter to the saints at Thessalonica. The apostle wrote, "**But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children**" (1 Thess. 2:7). In his tender affection for those brethren Paul and his companions held nothing back in their efforts to draw the saints even closer to Jesus Christ, but were ". . . well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls . . ." (1 Thess. 2:8).

Kindness was such an outstanding feature of Paul's ministry that it is cited as evidence of his apostleship. The Bible says, "**But in everything commending ourselves as ministers of God, in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness . . .**" (2 Cor. 6:4,6a).

Love for both God and the brethren is fundamental to a properly lived Christian life, and in 1 Corinthians 13:4 one of the great characteristics of love is revealed: "**Love . . . is kind.**" Love doesn't dwell in the heart of the continually harsh, caustic, critical saint, because kindness has no place in such a heart.

Christians are commanded to cultivate kindness. "**Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you**" (Eph. 4:32). Kindness is even identified by Peter as evidence of Christian maturity. In 2 Peter 1:5,7, the apostle presents those inspired stairsteps to Christlikeness. Near the peak of that pyramid of saintly graces, topped only by love, is "**brotherly kindness.**"

The New Testament presents kindness as a quality for which there is no substitute. If one were to make soundness, Bible study, use of talents, liberality and every other quality mentioned in the New Testament a part of one's life, and neglect kindness, the fabric of his faith would be marred with a gaping hole. What is the conclusion of the matter? "**Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of . . . kindness**" (Col. 3:12a).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mar 5	Genesis 37:12-36	Acts 23:12-35
Mar 12	Job 2:1-10	Acts 24
Mar 19	Genesis 39:	Acts 25
Mar 26	Genesis 40:	Acts 26

### CLAUDIUS LYSIAS

Claudius Lysias was military tribune in command of the Antonia garrison in Jerusalem. He was the man who took Paul into custody. The book of Acts reveals that he acquired his Roman citizenship by purchase (Acts 2:28). "His nomen Claudius suggests that he had bought it in the principate of Claudius, when Roman citizenship became increasingly available for cash down. His cognomen Lysias implies that he was of Greek birth. His letter to Felix about Paul (23:26-30) subtly rearranges the facts so as to place his own behaviour in the most favourable light" (New Bible Dictionary).

### MARCUS ANTONIUS FELIX

Felix succeeded Ventidius Cumanus as procurator of Judea in A.D. 52. He was a freedman, who had once been a slave in the house-hold of Antonia, daughter of Mark Anthony and Octavia. He married three times and all his wives

W. Langfield

were of Royal birth. One was a granddaughter of Anthony and Cleopatra; and his third wife, whom he had married by the time his path crossed Paul's was Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder sister of Agrippa II and Bernice.

Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, reveals that before being appointed to succeed Vestidius Cumanus as procurator Felix had occupied an administrative post under Cumanus in Samaria (part of the province of Judea). During this period he seems to have won the confidence of Jonathan the son of Annas, an influential high-priest, who pressed for Felix's appointment as procurator of Judea when he was in Rome on a deputation to voice Jewish grievances against Cumanus.

In the early days of his procuratorship, he ruthlessly dealt with Jewish terrorists, which raised his credit in Roman. When his brother Pallas fell from favour in the imperial household in A.D. 55, shortly after Nero's accession, Felix remained in office in Judea for four more years.

### PORCIUS FESTUS

Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as procurator of Judea. He was the man

who inherited the responsibility of coming to a decision about the apostle Paul. Nothing is known of his life before his appointment. Festus undoubtedly was prepared to sacrifice Paul for his own political ends: thus the suggestion of a retrial in Jerusalem. Paul, of course, did not think this was a reasonable suggestion at all. "If Festus began by making one concession to the Sanhedrin, he might as well go on to make more, and each concession would expose Paul to further peril . . . There was one course open to Paul as a Roman citizen to avoid this particular peril, even if it was a course which might be attended by perils of its own" (F.F Bruce). That course was, of course, an appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11).

### KING HEROD AGRIPPA II

He was the great grand-son of Herod I and son of Herod Agrippa I. He was born in A.D. 27 and died in c.A.D. 93. He was raised and educated at the imperial court in Rome. In 48 A.D. he received authority over temple affairs in Jerusalem. Two years later he became king of Chalcis. In 53 A.D. he exchanged this land for Philip the Tetrarch's former holdings. Nero, the new emperor, in 54 A.D. added territory near the sea of Galilee to Agrippa's realm. He changed the name of his capital from Caesarea Philippi to Neronias as a complement to Nero. From A.D. 48 to 66 he had the prerogative of appointing the Jewish high priests. He did his best to prevent the outbreak of the Jewish war against Rome in A.D. 66, but his efforts failed. He remained loyal to Rome during the conflict for which he was rewarded. He often described himself as "Great King, Pious Friend of Caesar and Friend of Rome."

### BERNICE

Bernice was the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I Josephus informs us that her first husband was named Marcus. Later she married her uncle Herod, king of Chacis. When he died, she was suspected of evil relations with her brother Agrippa, (see above).

"Leaving Agrippa, she married Polemon, or Ptolemy, king of Cilicia, who for her sake embraced Judaism by the right of circumcision. She soon left Ptolemy, however, for a future period of intimacy with her brother. Subsequently, she became the mistress of Vespasian, but when Titus became emperor, he cast her aside" (Herbert Lockyer). Undoubtedly, she was one of the most corrupt and shameless women of her time in Roman history.

### DRUSILLA

Drusilla, the wife of Felix, is also mentioned in this portion of scripture. She was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great and the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I whose other two daughters were Mariamne and Bernice (see above). These three girls were nieces of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist. At fourteen, Drusilla had been married to king Aziz of Emesa, but Felix had seduced her into leaving him. The eventual marriage to Felix was sinful in that, as a Jewess, she married a heathen, who did not confess the faith of her fathers. Josephus records for us that Drusilla, along with her son Agrippa, perished during the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. She was a wicked and shameless woman who had the opportunity to repent at the preaching of the apostle Paul. What are her feelings now?

### PAUL

Paul was a remarkable man. The importance of his conversion can be seen in the space allotted to it in the book of Acts. He was the man chosen by God to take the gospel, especially to the Gentile world. His impact in the early days of Christianity is immeasurable. He still inspires countless followers of Christ Jesus. Frederic W. Farrar wrote of him: "His faith had never wavered amid life's severest trials, nor his hope grown dim amid its bitter disappointments; and when he passed from the dungeon and the martyrdom to his crown of righteousness, he left the life which he had sown to be quickened by the power of God in the soil of the world's history,

where it shall continue to bear fruit until the end of time, amid the ever-deepening gratitude of generations yet unborn."

W.J. Dawson commented: "It was his genius, his intensely idealistic and yet practical spirit, his magnificent moral enthusiasm and self-sacrifice that were to do more than any other agencies to secure the dominion and justify the ideals of Christianity. Many forces had already attacked those unscaleable fortresses of imperial Paganism and failed: this man was to succeed. The birth of a single strenuous purpose in his heart was destined to transform the entire character of Europe."

As we come to the conclusion of Luke's record known as "The Acts of the Apostles" we find that Paul has appealed to Caesar (as was his right as a Roman citizen) with the eventful journey to Rome soon to take place. He had always been eager to visit the great metropolis, but, of course, in entirely different circumstances. However, man's extremity is often God's opportunity. Paul would become an outstanding witness for his Master in Rome. There too he would pen some of his best-known epistles prior to his execution as a Christian martyr. But his death was not the end. It was only the beginning of a new adventure.

Ian S. Davidson,  
Motherwell.

## GROWING UP IN CHRIST

Over and over Jesus stressed the importance of becoming like little children. Jesus said the greatest in His kingdom is the one who is as a little child. Even though we are to become as children in the sense of innocence and humility, we also are to grow up in Christ. Paul said that in malice be babes, but in mind be full of age. Far too many Christians never grow up in Christ. When things won't go their way, just as children, they pout, or run away from their home congregation!

Closely connected with growing up in Jesus is knowledge of Jesus. The more

we know, the more we grow. And the more we grow the more mature we become. Mature Christians produce strong churches. Paul develops this concept in Eph. 4:13-16. Strong churches are united churches. There can't be a bunch of spiritual babies and unity at the same time. In speaking of unity, Paul deals with maturity.

Paul said that we are to grow into ". . . mature manhood . . ." (NEB). Paul goes on to say that if we are growing up in Christ, we will no longer be children, ". . . tossed to an fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . ." Children because of their ignorance, and instability, can't distinguish right from wrong, false from true. And the immature Christians are much the same way. With every new "issue" or opinion which comes along they are tossed back and forth like little boats on a stormy sea! Knowledge of Jesus is the anchor which defies the wind. Issues come and go but if we're anchored in Jesus, they'll not destroy our faith.

Are you growing up in Christ? It's a paradox: the more you grow in Christ, the more your attitude becomes as a little child, the more you love, the more you forgive and forget, and the more you trust.

D. Boswell.

## COMING EVENTS

### TRANENT SOCIAL

18th March, 1995

Speakers:

Jimmy Grant & John Dodsley

### GHANA APPEAL

There has been very little information on the progress of the work in Ghana in the past month. In the few letters we have received we hear that the Lord's Church continues to grow.

We are still waiting feedback on the Twi Bibles sent out two months ago by surface mail, perhaps by next month we may have the first reports back on how

these have been received. We thank those who have individually given glasses and offered tracts for our brethren. We also thank those who have helped in the past month in sending parcels directly to Ghana, this was very much appreciated.

Those wishing to help in this work, please contact: Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. 01383 728624.

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### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Who brought King Solomon 120 talents of gold and spices?
2. How many days did Israel mourn for Moses?
3. Name the first son of Moses?
4. How many men did Cornelius send to Joppa to accompany Peter to Caesarea?
5. Who described as "mighty in the scriptures?"
6. How many springs were there at Elim?
7. In which city was David anointed king of Judah?
8. Who hid 100 prophets in caves in the days of the evil Jezebel?
9. With whom did the Pharisees join in their efforts to destroy Jesus?
10. From what tribe in Israel did Samson come?

### APPEAL FROM MALAWI

(The following appeal was received last week. Readers may wish to assist where possible. I have no knowledge of the situation at Lilongwe and merely print the letter as I received it.)

"Dear Sirs",

I have the desire to let the word of God and Christ grow. I may be on centre of that, but if I don't have enough materials for the job in question - I am useless.

And do I stay quiet. No. My speech to you is to print for us the Church here the books of the good news to salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have people who have devoted life to God, who speak better, but with little materials to use. Assist please. I have not much than this.

May God bless you all,  
MacMillan Ziba, (Church Secy.),  
Chitedze Church of Christ,  
P.O. Box 150, Lilongwe, Malawi.

1. Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:10).
2. 30 (Deut. 34:8).
3. Gershom (Exod. 2:22).
4. 3 (Acts 11:11).
5. Apollus (Acts 18:24).
6. 12 (Exod. 15:27).
7. Hebron (2 Sam. 2:4).
8. Obadiah (1 Kings 18:4).
9. Herodians (Mark 3:6).
10. Dan. (Judges 13:2).

### ANSWERS

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