

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

VOL. 44. No. 5

MAY, 1976

BY ACCIDENT OR DESIGN ?

IT has been a well established fact for years now that more people in the Glasgow area die from bronchitis than anywhere else in the British Isles, or in the world for that matter. This is thought to be mainly due to the kind of foggy climate in these parts. A report recently expressed renewed alarm at the fact that Scotland has, by far, more alcoholics than anywhere else in the British Isles, or the world. Dentists have known for years now that the state of the teeth of the people of Scotland is shocking and probably Scotland again achieves the doubtful distinction of coming top of the poll in world rankings – for tooth decay. By and large the populace care little about the condition of their teeth and take few steps to look after them. It is not uncommon to see youngsters and those in their early twenties with full sets of dentures. Rather than go to the dentist teeth are allowed to decay sometimes beyond recall and certainly teeth are subjected to more sweetmeats in Scotland than anywhere else in the world. Just to add to our already considerable achievements, a report was issued a few days ago which said that in the central belt of Scotland (around Glasgow and Edinburgh) three times more people per head of population died from heart attacks and heart disease than anywhere else in Britain, or the world for that matter. This staggering statistic is quite official and authentic and there are three times the number of deaths here per head of population from heart disease, and its associated compliants, than anywhere else in Britain. Heart specialists are surprised by the magnitude of the percentage just as much as the public are, and explain it by saying that the Scots smoke too much, drink too much and eat too much in the way of sweet things (such as cakes and biscuits). No one would deny such a charge. We look after our cars better than we look after our bodies. Men here subject their bodies to all kinds of ill-use and neglect. It never ceases to amaze me just how much ill-treatment the human body will stand. We do not appreciate health until we lose it. We then do all in our power to recapture it, usually without success. Truly the Psalmist declared that we have been “fearfully and wonderfully made”. Of all the creatures made by God man stands supreme. From a purely physical point of view Man is a most beautiful machine of fantastic complexity, of such complexity that not only can the human mind not conceive of its construction but medical science, at its best, can not even understand some of the more elementary functions of this wonderful creation of God. Any engineer must surely be consumed with envy of the brain and hand which produced the maintenance-free hinges and joints of the human frame which never need to be greased or oiled (albeit they bend and flex countless millions of times in the human life-span. Yet man deems the human body a thing of little consequence if the way in which he treats it is anything to judge by.

Men in their own way are quite brilliant (that is because God gave man quite a useful brain) but when we compare the clever inventions of man with the inventiveness of God they pale into complete insignificance. When one considers the design of the human eye, for instance, and compares its focusing power with that of the best camera money can buy one begins to get some vague appreciation of the skill and mind of the Designer of the eye. That is to say nothing about the completely baffling process by which the image reaching the human eye is translated into a picture in the mind. Medical Science has produced an elaborate kidney machine which takes up a lot of space and hardware and which, even then, does at best a rather imperfect job of purifying the blood. Yet think of how God was able to produce a kidney, so completely efficient and effective, and to fit it so unobtrusively into the human torso. If it takes a fairly large room to house the machinery, which replaces a kidney think of the machinery which would be needed to even try to produce the thought processes of the human brain. I am told that the Albert Hall in London could not hold all the computerised equipment which would be required. Even then, the human brain can never possibly be matched by machinery. One could go on, if one was knowledgeable enough to do justice, to the organs of the human body – all of which are marvels in their own right, completely beyond compare from any standpoint. The ear: the liver: the lungs: the heart (a pump of unbelievable strength and efficiency which functions night and day, maintenance-free, for an entire lifetime): the blood: the stomach: the bones: intestines: arteries: ad infinitum. The 'miracle' of the procreation of the species: the eternal mysteries of birth and death.

It is said that Miss World is but a collection of chemicals the sum total of which is worth about £1 and no doubt this is one way of looking at Miss World. However we can be sure that the bulk of the world's male population look upon her with slightly more interest than they would a pile of dust and crystals. Man is indeed a self-contained and highly efficient chemical factory and we are astounded to consider how well the human digestive system copes with all the unlikely rubbish we stuff down our throats. It surely is incredible that the stomach can within a few, few hours, reduce stew, potatoes, cabbage, fruit, ice-cream and custard etc. to their basic chemical components and convert them into energy and life-giving fluids injected into the bloodstream of the body. Yet surely man, like Miss World, is more than a chemical factory, wonderful though that may be. Surely man was made in the image of God and was the crowning glory of God's creative power. How sad God must be when he sees His creature lying in the gutter, in a drunken stupor.

In these days when so much is known (and unknown) about the intricacies of the human body, and scientists are unstinting in their praise of its sublime design, is it not surprising that men would not be constrained to see in man the handiwork of God. One can not have a design without a Designer. One can hardly conceive of a machine, such as that of the magnitude of the human frame, to have accidentally come into being (although I realise that some people, in fact, so believe). Is it not amazing that man can daily look upon all the creation of God, with all the evidence of the careful and conscious design of the Creator, without it never seeming to dawn upon him that there must, therefore, be a great Designer, or 'Great Architect' behind it all. All other creatures in the world seem to have been made for man's benefit. One can't watch fish being gutted without thinking how conveniently made they are: or peel an orange or banana without thinking the same thing. Most butchers must have realised how conveniently designed is the animal kingdom with reference a butcher's interest in them and how easily the varied cuts of meat can be appropriated. Although all eating the same grass differing creatures produce milk; meat; leather; wool, with numberless by-products -- and all for man's benefit. There are those who argue that all things have adapted themselves into their present state but one can hardly envisage unintelligent things like bananas adapting themselves, even over a period of numberless millions of years, into the 'handy-pak' fruit we know today, or the sheep deciding to give wool if the cow would agree to give hide. Man's most vital commodity – water – being inanimate certainly could not have adapted itself, and yet how wonderfully a designed liquid it is. We take it for granted, of course, but it has wonderful properties not least of which is its ability to dissolve a very large number of substances (and in the blood holds in solution at least 64 sub-

stances). It is not easily decomposed and boils and freezes at temperatures ideally suited to the temperature range of our planet. If we fill a vessel with almost any liquid and freeze it it will freeze at the bottom first. Water is an exception freezes at the surface first and thus prevents all water-creatures in the lakes and ponds from being killed in winter.

'Nature' (the term men use to avoid ascribing the creation, to God) abounds with countless items and evidences of the boundless creative powers of God and one does not have to be a scientist sometimes to see them and appreciate them. Of that men would open their eyes and see the handiwork of God in their own bodies and in the world around them, and acclaim God as their maker and their king. The Psalmist said (53:1) "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God".

EDITOR

THE CROSS OUR GLORY

ALMOST all men have something wherein to glory, every bird has its own note of song; it is a poor heart that never rejoices, and a dull packhorse that is altogether without bells. Men usually rejoice in something or other, and many men so rejoice in that which they choose that they become boastful and full of vain-glory. It then becomes very sad to see those people ruined by their glory, and, yet it is so, and many instances are the truth of this shame, Many men glory in an emptiness, some glory in their physical strength, some in their gold, which is but thick clay, or in their gifts, which are but talents in which they are entrusted. These gifts are thought by men to belong to themselves and therefore they rob God of the glory of them.

Let us listen to the voice of wisdom which crieth out, "He that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord and the Lord only". Let us not be so foolish as to glory for a bubble, for many have thrown away His soul for a little honour, or for a little success in trifles. The apostle Paul had a rich choice of things of which he could have gloried had he chosen, he could have remained amongst his own people, he could have been one of their most honoured Rabbis. "But what things were gain to me I counted them a loss for Christ, yea I counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." "God forbid", said the apostle, "that I should glory in my birth, my education my proficiency in Scripture or my regard to orthodox ritual. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". Paul could very well have glorified in His suffering for Christ had he chosen to do so. What is that doctrine of the cross, of which it is written that it is "to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved the power of God, and the wisdom of God"? In one single sentence, it is the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us. That doctrine is that of a full atonement made, and the unmost ransom paid in full. This is also a necessary part of the doctrine that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but is justified from all sin.

Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life. But the apostle himself gloried in the doctrine of the cross. For the death of the Son of God on the cross is the whole crux of christianity. Here we see the difficulty; the stumbling block; the rock of offence; The Jews could not endure a crucified Messiah, for they looked for power and pomp. Paul himself did not blench before the sharp and practical reply of the conquerors of the world. Neither did he fear the great Nero, for he was never ashamed to openly assert that he had for his cross his philosophy; the cross for his tradition; the cross for his Gospel; and the cross for his glory, and for nothing else. But why did Paul glory in the cross? HE did not so glory because he was in need of a theme. He would have chosen to glory on account his knowledge as a man of Jewish Law, for he was trained at the feet of that great authority, Gamaliel. He had counted the cost, he had surveyed the whole range of his own ability, he was the master of the art of thinking none could excell him as a logical thinker. He could have called to God himself as witness that he knew of no ambition save that of bringing glory to the cross of CHRIST.

It is the old cross still,
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
Its, triumphs let us tell,
Hallelujah. hallelujah

The grace of God here shone.
Through Christ the blessed Son,
Who did for sin atone,
Hallelujah for the cross.

Here I am reminded of a judge in the U.S.A. who was called upon to try the case of a man whom he knew as a very young boy. The case was one in which a heavy fine would fit the crime, and the judge did not diminish the fine. Many people in that court thought the fine was far too severe whilst others thought it was correct, yet all were very surprised when the judge came down from the bench and from his own pocket paid the fine to the full.

So did God in person of His Son, God not only prescribed the punishment but He himself endured it. As christians then, we should never feel weary of thinking of the cross. Sin just had to be punished else the foundations of society would have had to be removed. Society could not stand if laws were left without penal sanction. Some men in the days of Paul ran after honour and power; some toiled after learning, whilst others strived after riches. But to this apostle all these were but trifles since he had seen Christ crucified (Through the eye of Faith) Let us pray that many will enlist under the banner of the cross. Once rolled in the dust and stained in blood, it now leads onwards the armies of the Lord to victory.

W, S, BRADLEY, Bawtry.

THE BEAUTY OF JESUS

IT seems a contradiction of terms when we read in Isaiah 53:2. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him". And yet we are also told in Isaiah 33:17, "These eyes shall see the king in his beauty"; both prophecies refer to the Lord. We also sing such well known hymns as "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me". and others of like sentiment.

What is this beauty then that is referred to in Isaiah 53? This is a reference to the outward appearance. No beauty of form or visage, in fact Isaiah 52:14 tells us that "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men", which was fulfilled at the Lord's trial and crucifixion. God, in His divine, wisdom, would not have His Son endowed with any attraction that would appeal to our carnal senses. No beauty of face or figure. He was dressed in no rich apparel; he carried on His person no precious jewels. HE wasn't bedecked with rings as the Eastern custom, nor was His dress adorned with precious stones. He was poor, for our sakes. He wore the garb of the artisan. His dress would be of the simplest. We read nothing of any outstanding features of his garb or adornment that would mark Him out as different from His fellows and that men would admire.

And yet He was different. His beauty lay not in the outward appearance, not in beauty of face or figure, but in Himself. He was full of "Grace and Truth". When HE opened His mouth the beauty of His character was expressed in His gracious words. No deceit, we are told, was ever found in His mouth. There was no guile in His character. No man ever spoke like this Man. No man ever spoke such wondrous words of life. His beauty shines forth in every word He uttered.

When He looked at the multitudes He looked with compassion. His look had a piercing quality that saw through the outward appearance into the heart. He saw the sorrow, the sadness, the unfilled longings of the soul with eyes that were filled with the beauty of His love.

No one looking at Jesus from a distance would see any beauty in Him. Only those who got near enough to see His face, to hear His voice, to see the look in His eyes, would realize the beauty that lay within Him. Today the world sees no beauty in Him. He is the despised Nazarene, the rejected One. But His followers see "The King in His beauty"; they have drawn near and seen His spiritual beauty. A beauty that is divine and fades not with time. Only 3 of His disciples were allowed to see the glory that shone in His face at His transfiguration. Today all who will may see Him in all his revealed glory without a veil, by faith. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily".

J. J. SMITH, Durham.

IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

"Blessed assurance — Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long."

PERFECT ASSURANCE — "SHALL FOLLOW ME" Psalm 23:6

I am once more making my way to the "green pastures", and also on to the "still waters", so if you are to join me I shall be delighted. As we sit in quiet contemplation, shall we together send up a peon of praise, to our loving heavenly Father, for our very own Psalm, and for all the blessing and help we have received so far. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever" 1 Timothy 1:17. The Good Shepherd reminds us in John 10:27 that He goes on BEFORE the flock. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me". "Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile", consider, meditate on some of the themes we have so far reflected upon, keeping in mind, that He is leading, providing, and guiding for all the needs of all those who are His, in all circumstances of life.

BEFORE.....BEFORE.....BEFORE.....BEFORE.....BEFORE...

Perfect Salvation	"The Lord is my Shepherd"
Perfect Security	"I shall not want"
Perfect Rest	"He maketh me to lie down in Green Pastures"
Perfect Refreshment	"He leadeth me beside the still waters"
Perfect Restoration	"He restoreth my soul"
Perfect Guidance	"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His names's sake"
Perfect Protection	"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"
Perfect Companion	"For thou art with me"
Perfect Comfort	"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"
Perfect Provision	"Thou preparest a table before me"
Perfect Safety	"In the presence of mine enemies"
Perfect Attention	"Thou anointest my head with oil"
Perfect Trust	"Surely"

Surely the child of God can be satisfied with the knowledge that the Lord Jesus is walking on BEFORE, he could be, but praise the Lord, he can have more, because He is also BEHIND.
"Surely goodness and mercy SHALL FOLLOW ME".

BEHIND.....BEHIND.....BEHIND.....BEHIND.....BEHIND.....

We have followed our Lord to the "still waters" and have been refreshed, He has led us in the paths of righteousness, which brings perfect happiness. Now the figure changes, we have behind us something that will help us "all the days of our life". "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me". Open your eyes and see "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" Now close your eyes, and go down memory lane, and consider the many blessings you have personally received from a Father who loves and cares. Draw up a balance sheet, on one side put down what you have done for God, and on the other side put down what God has done for you. Of this I am sure — you will die in debt.

"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done".

"Surely goodness and mercy SHALL FOLLOW ME".

Shall we allow the word of God to bring sunshine in our souls, as we think of the goodness and mercy of a loving heavenly Father, as we turn our attention to a few verses in Psalm 103, Verses 8, 11, 12, 17. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy". "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him". "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us". "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children".

Glean from the pages of this precious volume, and you will find that mercy, following is:— "Great Mercy". "Plenteous Mercy". "From everlasting to everlasting". "Rich in Mercy". "New every morning". "Tender Mercies". Surely having the knowledge that the Lord is BEFORE and BEHIND, would be enough to satisfy any saint of God, but He gives us still more, HE IS ABOVE.

ABOVE.....ABOVE.....ABOVE.....ABOVE.....ABOVE.....

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there" Psalm 139:7,8. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" Hebrews 1:3. "Who is he that condemneth? Is it Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" Romans 8:34. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" Hebrews 7:25. Do I read aright? the Lord Jesus, making intercession for me, one who is "sold under sin" Romans 7:14, one who is one of the number who have "gone astray" Isaiah 53:6, one who has time and again been "Found wanting" Daniel 5:27, one who is able to say that I am "not worthy" Matthew 8:8, Ah, but praise the Lord, the Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost:—

"Wide, wide as the ocean, high as the heaven above;
Deep, deep as the deepest sea, is my Saviour's love;
I though so unworthy, still am a child of His care,
For His love teaches me that His love reaches me everywhere".

His children are invited to the mercy seat:—

"if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" John 15:7. Let us remember that many of God's promises are conditional, if we fulfill His commandments and abide in Him, His words says:— "He ever liveth to make intercession for us". Surely having the knowledge that the LORD is BEFORE, BEHIND, AND ABOVE, that would be satisfactory to those who are 'His workmanship', Ephesians 2:10, but no, we can still have more, we can have Him, "UNDERNEATH".

UNDERNEATH.....UNDERNEATH.....UNDERNEATH.....UNDERNEATH.....UNDER.....

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" Deuteronomy 33:27. Dealing with the second part of that text, Campbell Morgan said:—"That is the only time in the Bible where that Hebrew word is translated "Underneath". The same word may be found translated in other ways, but this is the only place where the translators have employed this English word, a simple one that a child can understand. The Hebrew word means absolutely, at the bottom. That does seem to rob it of poetry, but that is what it means. What is that? The lowest level, underneath. We go down and down. How far can we go? Plunge, sink, sink, down, and at last what? The everlasting arms. How far down can your imagination or your experience carry you? You cannot get lower than that, "underneath". The very indefiniteness of it, the very fact the song does not say under what, makes it all the more wonderful. AS low as your thinking can carry you, as low as your experience can take you, what will you find there? The everlasting arms". Surely the thought of the Lord being BEFORE-BEHIND-ABOVE-UNDERNEATH - would be enough for one who was of "an elect race", but no, we can have HIM AROUND.

AROUND.....AROUND.....AROUND.....AROUND.....AROUND.....

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them". Psalm 34:7. What a lovely picture we have here, the angel of the Lord under orders, to set up a camp, and shadow and watch those who fear the Lord. Active service for God's messenger, to guard against all who would do us harm, and through the gracious ministry rendered, we can rest in the knowledge of this month's theme of perfect assurance. One with God is a majority, so we can face the prospect of the battlefield, having the word of the Lord to comfort and sustain us, as we fight the good fight of faith, knowing that final victory will be ours, for did He not say, "and delivereth them". Do you want anything more my brother, my sister? The Lord is BEFORE - BEHIND - ABOVE - UNDERNEATH - AROUND, surely those are enough, but no, the word of God gives us another bonus, we can have Him INSIDE.

INSIDE.....INSIDE.....INSIDE.....INSIDE.....INSIDE.....

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" Galatians 2:20. Can you grasp this glorious and precious thought, the "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace". "The altogether lovely one". The fairest among ten thousand". "The rose of Sharon". "The lily of the valleys". The bright and morning star". "The lion of the tribe of Judah". "The lamb of God". HE can live inside YOU; "CHRIST LIVETH IN ME". HE...CAN...LIVE...IN...ME!

"Behold. I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" Revelation 3:20.

Let us open the door of our heart, and allow Him to enter, so that we may have the wonderful experience of the indwelling of the Lord Jesus; shall we say:—

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee.

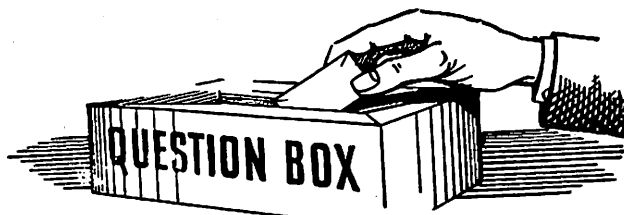
PERFECT ASSURANCE-BEFORE-BEHIND-ABOVE-UNDERNEATH-AROUND-INSIDE

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life".

This month's exercise:— Learn by heart one or more of the following passages:—

Psalm 23:1; Part of verse verse 6 of Psalm 23; Hebrews 7:25; Deut. 33:27; Psalm 34:7; Galatians 2:20.

May the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.....



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

FELLOWSHIP

IF you recall, we said that the subject of Fellowship was so important that we needed to look at it separately: this is what we shall now do, and we shall concentrate on those aspects of the subject which seem to cause most concern.

What is Fellowship?

The Greek word used in the N.T. is KOINONIA and it has the meaning of 'joint participation' 'communion', joint sharing. Some have used the definite article with the word fellowship and so have said that 'the fellowship' means the Breaking of Bread service; others have said that the collection of the saints is 'the fellowship'. Certainly, both of these ideas have the element of joint sharing and participation, but I am persuaded that fellowship, even though containing these elements, is more fundamental than these, and indeed, is complementary to them.

John records, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). I believe that the realisation of our relationship with God through Christ is fundamental to our understanding of the nature of fellowship between fellow christians. Perhaps we have been hypercritical of the relationships that we have with each other without realising that such relationship should be extensions of the primary relationship that we have with God through Christ.

Walking in the Light

Christians are those people who are walking in the Light and who have fellowship with others who are walking in the same light. Jesus said of himself, "I am the light of the world", and it is John in his gospel record who tells us why in the final analysis many will be condemned by God, "For light has come into the world and men have loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Jesus is the light, and when we accept him as Saviour then we come to the light. We are not afraid of the illuminating power of the goodness of God because we know that we have willingly forsaken darkness and have preferred the benign glow of the true light from heaven. Our fellowship with God can be complete, but only in Christ Jesus His Son. Commenting on this in his first letter to Corinth Paul said, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Christ Jesus our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

Now taking this a stage further we can see that the primary fellowship which each christian has is with God and Christ. This primary fellowship which each individual christian has with Christ is extended into a fellowship with other individual christians who are also 'in Christ'. God's love has called us through Christ. We love Jesus because he died for our sins and brought us into the glorious fellowship of himself and the Father. The plain fact of the matter is that we have to learn to love each other once having entered this fellowship. This is the burden of much of the N.T. teaching. The principal point which I want to impress upon your minds is that whatever fellowship we enjoy in the brotherhood is the necessary outcome of our fellowship with the Father and the Son. This is why, for instance, the Word teaches us that before we can contribute anything in any way we must first give ourselves to the Lord. This is also why John records, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

COMMON GROUND

The christian has been made a partaker of the divine nature, and if we continue to walk in the light I believe that fellowship with God and Christ will be full and complete. It is we who break the fellowship by drawing ourselves away from Christ. The Word of God is the common ground, and I believe that fellowship with the Father and the Son is impaired when that Word is ignored or mal-treated.

The question is often asked, "Why do you have no fellowship with members of other religious groups?" The answer is, of course, that they have precluded a real fellowship by denying, in fundamental terms, the revealed will of God. What do I mean by the phrase 'in fundamental terms?' Well, let us enumerate some of the things which separate:

- Titular heads of religious groups
- Infant sprinkling in place of immersion
- Denial of the sovereignty of the Lord
- Denial of the Sonship of Jesus
- Systems of church government other than that revealed in the N.T.
- A separate priesthood and ministry
- Periodic remembrance of the Lord instead of every first day of the week
- Hierarchal systems which have outgrown what God intended
- Women usurping authority over men
- Dubious fund-raising schemes

These are only some of the major errors of doctrine which serve to disallow true and complete fellowship between ourselves and other religious groups. The list is almost endless. I assert that such errors are fundamentally opposed to the christian doctrine and as such cannot receive the blessings of God and Christ. They deny the very fellowship with the Father and the Son that some say they have. In such circumstances it is difficult to understand how we can have true fellowship when the common ground has been destroyed. The tragedy, so far as I am concerned, is that many fine and sincere people are caught up in such systems as I have stated, and my advice to them would be to do as the Bereans of old did; search the scriptures to see if the things you have believed are so.

What about the Church of Christ?

Someone will then say to me, "Are all the practices in the Churches of Christ absolutely uniform?" My answer to that would be, 'No, they are not'. But having said that, I would also say that I am not aware of any practice which would fundamentally deny the Father and the Son and exclude the participants from fellowship with them. If this is true, then it would be quite wrong of any other child of God to deny fellowship. The plain fact of the matter is this: if I deny fellowship to any of my brethren then theoretically I am saying that they are no longer children of God. I have sat in judgement on them and I have passed sentence that they are no longer fit to have communion with me. In fact, I am saying that with the absolute knowledge of right and wrong which I have, it becomes unnecessary to have a God at all.

I am deeply conscious of the fact that what I am saying may offend some of my brethren, but this is a cross I shall no doubt have to bear. All I ask is that we should examine the logic of the argument and dispense with the illogical.

It is illogical to assume that simply because money comes from America to support work here, that such money must be evil in source and use.

It is illogical to assume that all full-time workers who come from America to Britain have come here to subvert the British brethren.

It is illogical to say that if I use one container at the Lord's supper that I can have fellowship with brethren who use two, three or four, but that I can have no fellowship with those who use more.

It is illogical to agree only with those who may happen to agree with me at given moment in time, I have believed some of these things in the past but I have learned that fellowship with the Father, the Son, and with my brethren is to be prized more than that.

The Glittering Prize

Let us turn our attention to the Lord Jesus and his Church. The Lord purchased the Church with his own precious blood. HE intended that it should be a glorious church, without spot and blemish. When I think of my Saviour hanging there on the tree for my sins I know that in the new life he came to bring he had the conception of a glorious fellowship that I should enter into.

What happiness joint participation with Christ brings! Do we dwell sufficiently on the great privilege that is ours in Christ? We can live with him. We can hasten the day of his glorious return. We can hammer nails into the coffin of Satan. We can have the blessing of a unique and expanding fellowship. Why do we not grasp this glittering prize and demonstrate to the world what a truly united Church can hold forth in true love and fellowship. My fervent prayer is that we shall resolve to do this.

(All questions please to brother Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JUNE 1976

6—Hosea 1 to 2:1	Romans 9:19-33
13—Isaiah 65:1-12	Romans 10
20—1 Kings 19:1-18	Romans 11:1-12
27—Isaiah 59	Romans 11:13-36

GOD'S SUPPOSED INJUSTICE

THE question has often been raised — “Why should the Jews have been chosen by God; what about all the other nations?” We can only reply that He chose to work out His purpose in that way. Left to himself man works out his own damnation without fear or trembling—though it is untrue that the heathen are happy without God as some would have us think. The related question of God’s choice of certain persons, and it must be admitted that the question is reasonable, remains a difficulty. Why did God choose Jacob rather than Esau? HE did so before either had done good or evil. Was this unfair? Brother M. E. Lard seems to have put the matter in a reasonable light. God did not doom Esau to punishment or evil-doing. He left him to his own way. By giving special blessings to some He does not work against the salvation of others. Rather He makes choice of one to bring blessing to all. His plagues upon Egypt had the effect of hardening Pharaoh’s heart only on account of Pharaoh’s obstinate disobedience. They were

surely designed to move him to obedience. and their ultimate result was to free a people of slaves to become a people for God’s use in the salvation of innumerable human souls. Sin merits punishment. This is universally admitted by sensible people. All have sinned. But God has chosen to show immeasurable great mercy through the gospel to all such as accept it. Far from injustice this is GRACE.

Paul’s Thorn in the Heart

“Great sorrow and unceasing pain” trouble the loving heart of the apostle as he considers his own people. His original thought had been that God would use him for the salvation of his own people but God made it clear that it was quite otherwise — “They will not receive of thee testimony concerning Me” (Acts 22:18). What a wonderful witness he thought he could be with his record of total conversion. God chose him for a greater work and a more fruitful one. His humble acceptance of the Lord’s will must have brought deep satisfaction when he looked back on what the Lord has done through his ministry to the Gentiles. We can certainly sympathise with Paul in his great sorrow for his own people when we remember the fearful fate they were bringing upon themselves when the letter to the Roman Christians was written. He then must have realised the hopelessness of winning the nation for Christ seeing he had faced opposition wherever he had entered the synagogues and with deep earnestness and consummate skill and tact proved from their own writings their fulfilment in a crucified and resurrected Saviour.

Their obstinacy like Pharaoh's in face of "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3, made it impossible to win any but a very small minority. Their loyalty to the law and their reverence for it and all its ritual still being practised, closed their minds against "salvation by faith in Jesus", and they continued to trust in their own standing before God. They continued to think and say - "We know that God spoke unto Moses but as to this man..." (John 9:29). Their faith was obedience to the legal observances - and none of them kept them completely. They still prided themselves on being righteous. If we in this day indeed "observe the ordinance" we can well be in danger of failing to possess the spirit of Christ without which the ordinances becomes a hollow mockery. The rejection of the Saviour was followed by deterioration in moral and religious life, and the nation fell into the hands of warring factions. Obstinate resistance to Rome ended in complete destruction of Temple, City and finally Nation. Yet the scattered people have not lost their identity, and in these days have a political entity. They are not entitled to it but the kindness of gentile nations has permitted it. God's gracious purposes may well be fulfilled through the tangled skein of world history. Their scattering and their persecutions have fulfilled His word.

Restoration after Rejection

Paul remains certain that God has not deserted His ancient people, but that in some way and in due time there will be a general turning back of the Jewish people to God's favour. We see this first of course in the fact that although only a small minority of the nation accepted Christ, that body formed the nucleus of the church in its early days. We may say they became the root or foundation of the church. They had received the initial training by instruction in the Old Testament scriptures. They already understood the One God. In every way they had the advantage over their Gentile brethren, and they suffered ostracism by the Jews, breaking family ties for Jesus' sake in a special way. Are they not represented in Rev.7? However the point we have in mind is that Jews had the first opportunity to accept the gospel, and many of them like Paul himself did so. The nation as a whole did reject their Messiah. The time is coming in which there will be a reversal of Jewish feeling towards Jesus. We do

know that numbers of Jews are becoming Christians as the world "becomes a smaller place". Their involvement in world crises, and the wider dissemination of the Scriptures by the modern news media, all tend to make clearer the truth that Jesus from all points of view must have been their Messiah. We do not anticipate this to have political results but rather closer ties among believers in the one God. It may well be that the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (11:25). They are having widened opportunities, and, the warnings are much in place (11:20).

God's Inscrutable Wisdom

Writing to Gentiles as he is, Paul has to regard unsaved Jews as enemies of God becoming the means in His hands of untold blessing to the Gentiles as indeed so it has proved, but the door is not closed on Jews. Sin puts all men. Jew and Gentile alike, under sentence of death, but in the gospel HE presents His mercy in the person of Jesus, offering forgiveness through His blood. Man cannot hope to understand the ways of God. In a different Old Testament passage to that quoted by Paul, we have "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways...for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts". (Isaiah 55:8&9) It is fitting that we stand in awe and worship.

R.B.SCOTT

WRECKERS

I watched them tearing a building down.
A gang of men in a busy town;
With a ho-heave-ho and lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman: "Are these men skilled?
And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed!"
Just common labour is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do".

I thought to myself as I went my way;
Am I a builder who works with care,
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Measuring life by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan?
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker, who walks the town,
Content with the labor of tearing down?

COMING EVENTS

Gospel Mission.

Earlestown Lincs. 12 - 16th June 1976.

Speaker : Ted Cline, Phoenix, Arizona.

Each Evening 7.30 p.m.

ALL WELCOME H. B. FRANK

AN APPEAL

Willoughley Hall,
Nottingham University,
Nottingham NG7 2 RD.
9th February 1976

Dear Brethren,

Greetings in the name of our Lord. It is a great pleasure to write to share with you this heart warming news. Ever since my arrival in this country it has been my wish to impart to a congregation I started at home the right way of administering the Lord's Supper. This desire was imperative in that I realised the defect in using individual cups.

In almost all my letters to the brethren, I have reasoned with them the importance of this issue. Today, thanks be to God, who can work miracles, I have received a letter from the church which indicated that they have seen the need, through the pages of the Bible, to use one cup. This is a quotation from the letter I received: "We have searched the scriptures and have decided to use ONE CUP to administer the Lord's Supper. We are looking for a neat plastic cup as we are too poor to afford a silver cup".

The appeal in the letter is for assistance to purchase a suitable cup. I hope you will remember the appeal from the church for financial assistance for their building where they will meet to fellowship. I am afraid I could

not encourage the Church at that time for the assistance they decided upon because of the 'Cup Problem' Now I can say with certainty, without fear or contradiction, that I am confirming and renewing appeal for their help.

Any assistance should go to Sister Kate A. Awuku, Church of Christ, c/o The Postal Agent, Adawso-Akwapim, Ghana. I used Sister Kate's name as she is a responsible person to whom everything could be entrusted. She is a retired School Mistress (Head) who spent most of her life in this country and the first elderly member to decide to suffer loss of earthly honour for the glory of the Lord.

Please do extend this appeal to other congregations in Scotland for me and if possible take their appeal to the Scripture Standard for me.

I rejoice greatly since this will affect a second congregation which relies heavily on the Adawso Church for the work of the Lord in the form exchange of speakers.

Praise be to the Name of the Lord answering my prayers;

Yours in the service of our Lord.

DAVID ARKU-MENSAH.

AGAIN THE STORY IS TOLD

Pilate, Pilate, wash your hands,
Cry, "What is truth?" again.
None asks or cares, these wiser days,
Nor fears so small a stain.

Jesus, Jesus, nailed on high,
Christ whom the nations praise,
Which is the cross that tore thee most—
Golgotha's or today's? Selected.

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER: PAUL JONES 3 St. Laurence Crescent, Slamannan, Falkirk, FK1 3HY, Tel. Slamannan (032 485) 200 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd., Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. 07737 (Langley Mill) 2266