

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE ZEAL OF THE LORD'S HOUSE

Nothing succeeds like success and, of course, the converse is also true: nothing fails like failure. At last week's Mutual Benefit Meeting of the Slamannan District the subject under discussion considered *methods* of preaching the gospel and *the effectiveness* of the various methods. The point that was stressed several times, however, was that the real necessity was a new enthusiasm. After a long spell of seeing no fruits for our labours we are inclined to enter a spiral of depression and decline, almost to the point of giving up. Somehow we must break the spiral and become single-minded again in seeking the lost. We must shake off sloth and despond, and be fired again with interest and zeal. Not easy; but we must try. At this very moment in time, for instance, how *single-minded* are we in our gospel efforts? How far have we got to go; before "The zeal of the Lord's House has eaten us up". *What place* does evangelism have in our lives?

When I was a small boy the Salvation Army used to come to our street on a Sunday morning and bang on their drum and rattle their tambourines. Their goings-on provoked a rare comment on religion from my father, who was seldom in a place of worship, and his comment was "Religion is all right, if it is kept in its place." My mother shared this view and reckoned that religion taken *too seriously* would eventually result in a visit to the mad-house. Indeed there were in the village at that time a few who were reckoned to have 'gone crazy with religion' and a few who tagged on to 'Gospel Halls', and the Salvation Army, who were almost certifiable. I remember the late brother Crosthwaite saying that many of his relatives predicted his coming insanity if he persisted (as a young man) in studying the Bible as intently as was his practice. As we know he died in his eighties and was anything but addled when he died. I suppose the accusation is as old as the hills because Festus, when Paul was defending himself before Agrippa, interrupted Paul's wonderful discourse and said, with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts 26:24). In Glasgow a few years ago the Queen opened the newly built Gallery (costing some £20 Million) to house the vast collection of priceless art treasures gathered in the lifetime of Sir William Burrell. This Glasgow millionaire lived a spartan life that he might dedicate all his time and money to his obsession of collecting art treasures from all over the globe. At the end he gave his collection to a reluctant Glasgow Town Council who could not find a building large enough to display it - thus having to build this specially large museum. No-one suggested that this man should have his head examined, or that he must be mad - everyone understood that this was his life's endeavour; it was his meat and drink; his monomania. He was not insane - he was just fully monopolised by his sole interest in life. His *zeal* could well be copied by disciples of Jesus. His *single-mindedness of purpose* could, with profit, be copied by all of us. "Religion is all right, if it is kept in its place" - but *where is its place?* Exactly *what place* should Christ have in our

lives? Second place? or no place at all? What place does Christ have in *my* life; or in *your* life? Have we a ZEAL for God?

ZEAL

Probably nothing is more lacking in the churches today than zeal. The word 'zeal' means unflagging and uncompromising enthusiasm; ardour reaching boiling-point; burning energy and enterprise. Consequently it should consume us (eat us up) i.e. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up". This is a quotation from Psalm 69:9 which came to the minds of the disciples when they saw Jesus make a scourge of small cords and drive everyone out of the temple. Jesus had seen, with great disgust, the temple packed with jostling market traders, cattle, oxen, sheep, doves and changers of money. As He overthrew the tables and poured out the money of the changers, He cried, "Take these things hence: make not My Father's house an house of merchandise, and his disciples remembered that it was written. The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up." Does the zeal of the Lord's house have any affect upon us? Are we consumed with zeal for Christ's kingdom? From the above quotations we can see that zeal, includes by definition, "*an anxiety for God's honour*"; the kind of concern and anxiety exhibited by Jehu (11 Kings 10:16) and Phinehas (Numbers 25:11-13).

JEHU, a king of Israel, showed "a great anxiety for God's honour" and at his coronation was commissioned to smite the house of Ahab his master, avenging all the blood of all the slain prophets, and also to avenge all the many servants of God slain by Jezebel. Jehu set about his task with a consuming passion and physically stamped upon the eventual dead carcase of Jezebel. He also slew the seventy sons of Ahab and pursued his other tasks (including the destruction of the priests and worshippers of Baal) with great vigour: making Jehonadab ride with him in his chariot and saying, "Come with me and SEE MY ZEAL for the Lord." (2 Kings:9&10). Although Jehu had his religious imperfections, his zeal for God received God's commendation, and God said, "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the House of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." (2 Kings 10:30).

PHINEHAS is another example of one whose zeal for God (or whose "anxiety for God's honour") galvanised him into such precipitate action that he not only received God's approval but was invited into a special covenant with God. It was at the time of Israel's history when Balaam's doctrine was being implemented: i.e. when Israel was being seduced into idolatry, and other serious forms of sin, with the adjacent nations. "...And the people began to commit whoredoms with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods, and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself to Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." (Num.25:1-3) The following verses tell us that at this vexing time, in full view of Moses and a tear-stained congregation, at the door of the tabernacle, a prominent Israelite took his Midianite girlfriend into a tent nearby. Phineas was so incensed with this audacious act that he took a javelin in his hand, entered the tent, and thrust the spear through the stomachs of both of them; presumably as they lay together. "And God spoke unto Moses, saying, Phinehas hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, while HE WAS ZEALOUS for My sake among them, that I consume not the children of Israel in My jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him My covenant of peace. And he shall have it and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because HE WAS ZEALOUS for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Clearly Phinehas had been so stunned and angry at this barefaced insult to God and Moses by the Israelite and the Midianite girl, that, in a frenzy of zeal, he thought "enough is enough" and took this extreme action: and action, however, which "atoned for Israel" and

forestalled an oncoming plague. And so, it would seem that the *essence* of zeal is that we should *care enough* for God to be stirred into action. Doubtless many in the crowd on that occasion were mortified by the audacity of the Israelite, but Phinehas was the one who *did something about it*.

This was doubtless why the disciples (quite dull at other times) were sharp enough to think of Psalm 69:9 when they saw Jesus leap into action in the making of a whip and the cleansing of the temple. Presumably Jesus was so disgusted and indignant at the commercial babble in the temple that He too, thought "Enough is enough" and "We will have no more of this". "The zeal of thine House hath eaten me up". When we see the state of the world, and the constant dishonouring of God, I suppose we too should think "Enough is enough" and resolve to try and do something about it.

TRUE ZEAL AND MISGUIDED ZEAL

The apostle Paul expressed great pleasure in the zeal which manifested itself in some of the Corinthian Christians and urged that, in their *zeal for spiritual gifts*, they should, "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church". Zeal must have a true motive (i.e. to the upbuilding of the church. 1 Cor. 14:2). He also taught two things to the Galatian Christians about zeal (1) "It is good to be zealously affected always in a *good thing*" and (2) "Not only when I am present with you". (Gal 4:17). Some show a surprising zeal in the presence of some special visitor to the congregation, and lapse into inactivity again when a visitor goes away. Note that Paul recommends zeal in the pursuit of only a *good thing*. He, more than any other, knew what it was like to have a misguided form of zeal, and all his remaining life he counted himself as 'chief of sinners' because he persecuted the church of God. Paul had a great zeal for God, but at one time it was gravely misguided. (Gal. 1:13, 14). James and John were also guilty of misguided zeal when they asked Jesus if they should bring fire down from heaven to consume the Samaritan villagers; on account of the indifference shown by the Samaritans to the preaching. Jesus rebuked such zeal "for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them". Similarly, the apostle Peter exhibited great zeal when he drew a sword and smote off the ear of the High Priest's servant but, again, Christ rebuked this form of violent enthusiasm. In Rom. 10:2 Paul declared "Brethren, my heart's desire for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." The Jews had a zeal for God, but an imperfect knowledge. These cases illustrate that zeal can be *misguided* through imperfect understanding; it can be *misdirected* zeal: and can be an unwise form of zeal. Indeed nothing can be worse than zeal without knowledge except, perhaps, to have knowledge without zeal. We are so often warned against "zeal without knowledge" - is it not time to warn against knowledge without zeal?

THE LAODICEAN CHURCH

When John, in the Revelation, wrote to the seven churches of Asia he could summon no words of commendation for the church at Laodicea - only words of condemnation. What was their condemnation? They were *lukewarm*; neither cold nor hot. They were not absolutely cold, mark you; but neither were they hot. All zeal in the church had evaporated. What had Jesus to say to such a church "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth". Are there any congregations like this today? Many of us are, perhaps, just 'keeping house' for the Lord. Many of us have just enough energy to make the wheels go round - 'ticking over' so to speak, but not likely to go anywhere. Give a congregation, of fifty members, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year to prosecute the Lord's business, surrounded by a large population from which recruits for the Kingdom of God can be found, and what could the Lord rightfully expect? It has been said that some congregations are like the old Mississippi River Steamboats which had small boilers but large whistles and each time the whistle was blown the boat had to stop

until it could get up steam again. What were Jesus' instructions to the Laodicean church? "Be zealous therefore, and repent." Jesus demanded repentance in the form of ZEAR. Real zeal. *Where* do we get zeal, we might wonder? *How* do we get zeal, we might ponder? If zeal is the opposite to lethargy, (and it is), then clearly zeal will come to us only when we have shaken ourselves from slumber. There is obviously no possible substitute for zeal. If it is not there, nothing else will do.

CONCLUSION

Often we *talk* about *when* we shall evangelise, *where* we shall evangelise, *how* we might evangelise but sometimes that is as far as it goes. Some churches try all manner of gimmicks to get the church's work done, (even bringing in business consultants to try and run the church like a Limited Company) but at the end of the day nothing can be a substitute for true zeal in the heart of *each member*; nothing can replace 'fire in the belly' of every child of God. Imagine a locomotive sidetracked for years in a shunting yard, and the speculation of some on how to get it going. Someone suggests removing all the grime from it, and giving it a new coat of paint. Another adds the suggestion that all the brasswork should be polished up. Another suggests that someone go round it with an oilcan. Another suggests that if all the weeds were removed from the track the train might go. Another suggests that the answer is to get a handsome young driver, with smart suit, and stick him in the cabin (pulpit?) and then the train would get places. A passing railway-porter stops when he sees the small crowd fussing around the train. On being asked for his opinion, the old railwayman replied, "Why don't you light a fire in the boiler, and get up steam?" And that, I suppose, is precisely what is needed in the churches today. WE can talk until the cows come home about modern ills in the world, about changes in socio-economic patterns, about competition from T.V. etc. etc. but what is needed is for *every* church member to stir from lethargy, and replace sleep with burning energy and enterprise for God. Churches lacking zeal and failing to evangelise their neighbourhood will almost assuredly go into extinction. WE must have an urgent concern for the thousands of souls going to a Christless grave every day in the year.

Obviously in a very small congregation, with a preponderance of elderly members, it might be thought less than appropriate to talk in terms of "getting up steam" but we must try. If everybody tried, we might just do it. After all, Jesus was *an individual* (as was Jehu and Phinehas) and He was consumed (or "eaten up") with a zeal and concern for "The Lord's House" (or state of the church); and if *every individual* member was fired up with a similar enthusiasm, what a difference it could make. There is no substitute for zeal. Nothing less will do. We have been saved to serve.

Jesus had the answer to those who think that there is plenty of time, "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." (John 4:35).

EDITOR

GLEANINGS

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

TRIUMPHANT FAITH

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

(Habakkuk 3:17-18)

We Quote - J H Jowett
THE NEGLECTED CUP

"That I may know him... and the fellowship of His sufferings."

(Philippians 3:10).

"The quality of our fellowship with the Lord is best revealed, not by our capacity for joy, but by our capacity for suffering. We often test our communion with the Lord by the measure of our equanimity. If our life is calm and passive, and the wrinkles are absent from our brow, and we can sing, "Peace, perfect peace!" then we assume that our intimacy with the Lord must be very deep and true... We do not reveal our high spiritual kinship by our ability to remain unruffled, but by our capacity to be stirred. It is when life is upheaved to its depths that we know the Lord, it is when deep calleth unto deep that we have the conditions of vital communion. And so it is not by our pleasures but by our pangs that we may discover our likeness to the Lord."

"ARE YE ABLE"

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?" That is the cup we forget, and yet it is in the cup of suffering that we attain the finest and rarest spiritual communion. And how far from this is the common reasoning! We say one to another, 'Have you found peace?' - and if an affirmative answer be returned, we give glory to God; and well we may, for to have drunk the cup of spiritual peace is a sure witness that we are found at the table of the Lord. But how far has our fellowship advanced? How rarely we ask one another, 'Have you become a partaker of the sufferings of Christ? Have you lifted that cup to your lips? And if so, when and how and where did you taste the bitter draught?' I am afraid that if we were subjected to these most searching questions the majority of us would have to confess that we had kept our eyes upon the other parts of the table, and that we had confined ourselves to the sparkling and welcome draughts of spiritual delight. But it is a shallow intimacy which confines itself to the pleasures of the table; the deeper discipleship lays hold of the darker cup, and enters into 'the fellowship of His sufferings.'

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS"

"The prevailing sin hurt Him, it crucified His spirit long before it crucified His flesh. Here is Jerusalem, wicked, wayward and indifferent, wasting its hallowed treasure in decorated debauchery. And the Master gazes upon its unholy pleasures and shames, and He weeps! Have we entered into the fellowship of that suffering? Have we tasted that cup?"

ALTHOUGH - YET

"THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY HIS FAITH"

Selected by Leonard Morgan

"MODERN MISSIONS" *Tested by Scripture*

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11-12).

All man knows, or can know, of the Gospel and scheme of redemption comes from Christ and His Apostles. God having revealed Himself in Christ, and Christ having sent His ambassadors into all the world, inspired and fully equipped, to make known the eternal purposes of His grace, we are thenceforward, throughout the day of grace, bound by an absolute necessity to receive the truth through this apostolic channel, and to preach it, without the slightest addition or subtraction.

I cannot but believe that workers in "modern missions" are in downright earnest in their

desire to awaken sinners and lead them to Jesus. It is most gratifying to listen to the enforcement of the love of God to sinners; the love of Christ as exhibited on the Cross of Calvary; the completeness of the salvation He offers to the guilty; the universal character of the Gospel invitations, and that now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation. These and kindred declarations are glorious truths.

Let me now emunerate just a few examples, out of many, of the errors promulgated, repeated, and reiterated with the pertinacity and vehemence quite appalling when their nature is considered:

"If only you sinners would look at Jesus you would be saved by a look at the Crucified One";

"If you sinners would just believe in Jesus you are safe for eternity";

"Sinners, you have nothing to do. Christ has done everything for you, you have only to believe that and you are saved";

"What is the use of a dead man trying to come to Jesus? He (Jesus) must make you alive by His Holy Spirit before you can come."

All these statements are, in the true light of the New Testament, untrue. Not one of these statements, nor anything like them, is to be found in the Scriptures; they are foreign to the teaching of Christ's first preachers, who were guided by that Holy Spirit whose power alone, through the word of truth, can convince and convert. And here let me say a word for those brethren with whom I am identified in the Church of Christ. People slander our faith by publishing that we slight the Spirit's work in the conversion of sinners. So far are we from being open to this charge, that with one consent, we hold that from the day of Pentecost, when the Kingdom of God was set up among men, to the present day, not one soul has confessed that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit.

WE MUST DO SOMETHING

Allow me now to ask your attention to the teaching of Christ, in contradistinction to that we have cited.

Matt. xi. 28: *"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

John vii. 37: *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."*

Matt. xxiii. 37: *"O Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?"*

John vi. 45: *"It is written in the Prophets: and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."*

I have quoted these passages, out of many, simply to show that though men are described as 'dead in trespasses and in sins,' they are yet treated as living beings naturally, having ears to hear, minds to learn and understand, legs to walk, and power at least to come to Jesus and receive blessing. God deals with man, as He Himself has created him, taking into view the science of the human mind, and the moral free agency of the human will; and not as though man were a machine to be driven like a steam engine or dragged like a wheelbarrow. Hence man is always addressed by God as an intelligent creature, free, and accountable for his actions - free, and responsible for his choice. The language of the Scripture is in accordance with this view of man's nature, when he is addressed in that sweet word of invitation, *Come!* And when he refuses, the language of the Saviour is again appropriate, **"YOU WILL NOT COME unto me that you might have life."** **"I WOULD, BUT YOU WOULD NOT."** Thus the responsibility is thrown on man. Where moral freedom is, there responsibility is, and the consequences must inevitably rest on man if he misapply or abuse such noble faculties.

Again, *"Sinner, you have nothing to do in order to be saved, Christ has done everything*

for you." We reply to this, that the narrative does not bear out the assertion. We read that Jesus "finished the work the Father gave *Him* to do." But, certainly, He has not finished those things God requires us to do as sinners who, through the truth, are led to believe in Jesus.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

When convicted sinners asked the Apostles of Jesus what they should do to be saved, they did not perplex them by replying, "Nothing sinner, nothing you can do!" They replied in the language of inspiration, "Repent and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out," "Repent and be baptised everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins" etc., or "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," as in the case of the Philippian jailer who, upon hearing and believing, was baptised.

We never read of an Apostle teaching men that as soon as they believe all is completed. We never read of an Apostle telling inquirers to pray for the Holy Spirit to convert them. Nor do we read of Apostles praying God to open the windows of heaven and shower down His Holy Spirit upon sinners to bring them to Jesus. Nor do we read of an anxious room or penitent bench attached to those places where the Apostles preached.

The Gospel is God's power unto salvation to all those who believe it, and the Gospel message is accompanied with the conditions of pardon, "Go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." The Gospel message is the Spirit's instrumentality in bringing men to the Father; fail to preach the Gospel, and the Spirit does not convert; fail to preach the Gospel, and you fail to use the only channel of communication known to man between the Holy Spirit and man's spirit fail to declare to enquiring sinners the conditions the Holy Spirit has attached to the Gospel for man's obedience, and you absolutely rob the poor sinner of the only means of knowing how, and when, the Holy Spirit testifies with his spirit that he is a child of God. Jesus has sent out the Gospel; He has laid down the conditions to be complied with; and, upon compliance, those who believe the message can point their finger to the word, while their spirit leans on the testimony. But if you withhold these conditions, and tell a man he is saved if only he believe, then he has no testimony of the Spirit on which he can lean. He who leans on the Spirit's testimony can say, "*I have believed the Gospel, I have repented, I have been baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus said if I believe and then obey I shall be saved; and saved I assuredly am, if the Saviour's word be true.*"

We have no interest but in the truth. We have no objects to gain but the glory of God, the absolute authority of His Word, the salvation of sinners, and the ultimate union of God's children.

In view, then, of all that has been said, I venture to suggest that many "*modern mission*" statements are of man, and dangerous to our eternal interests.

The Lord grant us all grace to receive the simple truth in the love of it, and a willing mind to obey it. Ponder well the ground on which we hope for salvation. Let judgement occupy the throne, and not a passing fancy or an excitement created by novelties. Let truth, simple truth, untrammelled by tradition and uncorrupted by any human admixture, be the object of our constant, earnest search; and let the authority of God's exalted Lord and Christ alone be binding upon our consciences and affections.

G. Collin

BE DEFINITE!

A great deal has been written and preached concerning the lost and how to win them to Christ. I believe that most members of the Church really want to see people saved. I think

we also generally agree that we are not winning as many souls for the Lord as we would like. What is the trouble? There are many factors: people are "self-centred", everybody is "pleasure mad", and a great segment of society is interested only in "material things". It must be admitted that all this is so, but is this the whole story of why we are not winning souls? I am afraid that it isn't.

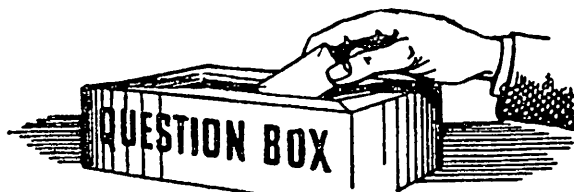
Could it be, that in our quest for souls we have become so interested in the salvation of people in general that we make no definite effort toward saving a single individual?

We sing, pray and talk about "saving the lost" and we make great plans to send forth a message to the condemned, but in the meantime we are so absorbed with the task of saving souls "in general" that we do not have time to be concerned about even "one person". It is easy to generate enthusiasm about a "great plan" for saving the lost, as though the world will be saved in mass; but it chills our spirits when we are confronted with the responsibility of "personal evangelism". Salvation is an individual matter, and comes about when individuals are instructed in divine truth and "one by one" turn to the Lord. We need to realise that *the individual* should be our chief concern.

Brother, sister, why not be definite about bringing some lost soul into contact with the Truth? Determine now to make a definite effort, to convert a definite person. We talk to people about everything else, why not about the Truth? If you feel that you just can't express yourself to others, then do what you can to bring them to hear the preaching of the gospel so that we may be taught by others. Don't be too "general" in your outlook. What is everybody's business is nobody's business." If the world is saved, it will be chiefly, "person by person", or "one by one". And remember, if you are too busy to save a soul you are TOO BUSY"

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise".
Proverbs 11:30.

Christian Messenger



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"In 1 Cor.13, Paul says, "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love". Why is love greater than faith?

The sister who asked this question further added, "Surely, a true faith in Christ would produce the love which may, in some cases, not be truly felt at the time of baptism". I trust, as we study this question, that we shall be able to say something to prove that in our Christian lives, and perhaps prior to our Christian beliefs, love is paramount.

In the first place, we must not confuse the Biblical concept of love with the type of eroticism which we now find in novels, plays, and television programmes. Furthermore, as our brother James pointed out in his Editorial in the May issue, high churchmen are now confusing the issue by condoning - and in some cases participating in - a type of "love" which the Apostle Paul, particularly, condemns as unseemly. Yet most of these churchmen would contend quite vehemently that they have faith in God and His Christ. So even though Paul place love last of the three attributes, he nevertheless says it is the "greatest". Let's see

if we can find out why he says that.

THE GOSPEL

One of the great dangers is that if the Gospel message is given as a textually based set of instructions to which people must be obedient, then maybe they will obey for the wrong reasons. Almost invariably, when we conclude our Gospel messages, we state the terms of the Great Commission which Jesus gave to His Apostles, "Go ye into all the world... he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned". If, as I say, the message has been comprised of scriptural texts as to why I should be baptised - and many are - then it is quite likely that the invitation will come over as a command which must be obeyed. Well, the command has to be obeyed, of course, otherwise Jesus would not have stated it, but we have to ask ourselves, "Is the response because the command has to be obeyed, or is it because the candidate, out of a heart of love for the Saviour, wants to obey any command which He may give"? I suppose another way of putting it, from the questioner's point of view, is "Will the obedience of faith in Christ produce the love which is necessary, or is the love of Christ which produces the initial faith in Him"? Personally, I am convinced there is a difference.

EMOTION

To have faith in someone - as a business-man might have faith in a financial analyst - may produce a feeling of satisfaction toward the person when he delivers the "goods", but not necessarily a feeling of love. The rationality of scriptural argument may be very convincing, but unless the conviction has the added dimension of the emotion of love, it is very possible that the response may not be as genuine as it should be. It is my understanding of scripture which leads me to believe that a person should not come to Christ merely for the satisfaction of acquiring something which he couldn't acquire for himself. He must look for a faith which will produce the result that he wants, but rather he must look with a heart-felt love to the One who produces the result, and who will engender within him such a faith as will move mountains. You see, we must look beyond the command and see the loveliness of the Person who gives the command; it is faith in the One who stands behind the command, and not solely faith in the command itself. If that had always been so in many "conversions" I have seen in my Christian life, then I will stick my neck out and say that many who have fallen away would not have done so. What is it, then, which moves us emotionally to have true faith in the Christ?

"LOVE NEVER FAILS"

"Come on, Alf Marsden", you may say to me, "Haven't you read about the numbers of married people who are being divorced these days? Their love has failed". I would reply by saying, "It all depends upon what sort of love their love was initially". The truth of love, to my mind, is exemplified by its *quality* and *durability*. When a man and woman marry, they not only affirm their love for each other; they also pledge it, "As long as ye both shall live". Many pledge before a God in whom they do not believe. One wonders how long the clergy who conduct such marriages can condone this travesty of so-called marital "love". This is some sort of carnal love asking for the blessing of a God who abhors carnality. We dare not compare this with the sort of love which the Christian should have towards his Lord.

It is true, of course, that a love which a Christian can have for God can fade and fail, but if that happens, then it is a failing of love on the part of the person and not on the part of God. God's love can never fail. Why is this so? The elementary answer which every child of God should know is that God "is" love. That which "is" can never be taken away, even when punishment and retribution are necessary. Does a parent love less because the child has to be punished? "But", you say, "How can One who is all love sit back and allow such atrocities to take place as we see in the world today"? Man's inhumanity to his fellow-men

has always been, and always will be, present throughout the world. We must, however, understand that human retribution is not like Divine retribution. Have no fear; God will exact retribution at the end. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord". In the meantime, men will continue to inflict pain, injury, and death on their fellow-men. That is not a measure of the lack of action on the part of a God of love, but it is a measure of the extreme action of Satan in the hearts and minds of sinful men who perpetrate such things. We must not blame God: we must fight sin. Out of His great love God has always done just that, and I'll tell you how.

GREATER LOVE

God is the eternal Spirit. We know, however, that spirit, of itself, does not have physical substance. We also know from the Bible that salvation demanded a physical death, and the shedding of sacrificial blood. How was the Eternal Spirit to accomplish this? Only by coming to earth in the flesh, and offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin. He did this in the Person of Jesus, His Christ; as Paul says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself". 2 Cor.5:19. The Bible also teaches, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". John 15:13. As the ignoble spat in His holy face, remember, "God was in Christ". As they pushed down the crown of thorns upon His brow, remember, "God was in Christ". As the "created" had succumbed to the wiles of Satan, remember, "The Creator in the Person of His Christ suffered all the pain, humiliation, and indignity that the ones He was saving could heap upon Him". How undeserving was upward and perfidious man. How gracious and loving is the creator.

The evidence of love is plain for all to see. John says, "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him". 1 John 4:16. If we want to get to the heart of the Gospel, we go with John, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us". He demonstrated that love by sending His Christ into the world to save us. It is love that draws us; it is faith through love which holds us; it is the hope engendered by a loving faith which sustains us.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love". Faith is great, but it is loving faithfulness of God which is greater. I believe that is why Paul, looking at the tragedy of sinful man, and knowing the blessedness of salvation, could say, "but the greatest of these is love".

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

CALLING ON HIS NAME

Most of so-called Christendom is taught that since Romans 10:13, says, "Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved," then *alien sinners* need to pray for salvation.

Probably a large number of those who claim to be "New Testament Christians" know there is *something* wrong with that doctrine, and may be able to quote John 9:31, "For we know that God does not listen to sinners," or Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." But to many, this is too much like simply arraying one scripture against another, so you just take your choice of which one to believe, and overlook or reject the one that does not fit your preconceived notions. Of course, an honest Bible believer will take *all* the Bible says on any subject, and if one thing seems to conflict with another, will try to see wherein he can find harmony.

There needs to be an examination in more detail of what is involved in the expression, "calling on the name of the Lord," and also its meaning when used in a particular

grammatical construction. Most of us surely know that words and phrases do not have absolute meanings apart from contexts and grammatical constructions.

It may be interesting and instructive to point out that even in our common English usage, "call on" means more than simply making a request for something. When a doctor calls on a patient, he does not merely drive by and say, "Hello in there! I wish you well!" He goes in and is involved with service. When I grew up, young men were said to "call on" young ladies. (I am not sure what they are said to do - or what they do - now.) But I was aware that to "call on" meant something different from merely to ask for some favour. But of course no Bible expression should be defined simply by an appeal to our common usage, though that may clarify or illustrate. Bible expressions should *always* be defined in terms of Bible usage. What do we find as we examine the sacred oracles?

WHAT IT MEANS

When we find the expression in Romans 10:13, we immediately find in the following verses that "calling on" must have some prerequisites. One should not "call on" God in the scriptural sense without hearing and believing.

Let us examine briefly some other passages. In Zephaniah 3:9, we find "that all may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him." It appears that both in the Septuagint and in English, "to serve" (*tou douleuvein*) is in apposition to "call upon" (*tou epikaleisthai*). That is, "to call on" involves "serving him," not merely requesting something from him, or praying to him. You may note that this usage is very comparable to the illustration of the doctor calling on his patient - serving him - not merely asking him for payment of a bill.

Note again in Acts 9:14, Paul was reported to have asked for the authority to bind all who "call upon the name of the Lord." Paul was not persecuting those who simply *prayed*, but those who were *serving* the Lord.

In Acts 25:11, Paul uses the words, "I appeal unto Caesar." The words "appeal unto" are from *epikaloumai*, the same word translated "call upon." Paul did not simply say, "Caesar, save me!" He put his case into "Caesar's hands, submitting to Caesar's judgment and will. That, in a nutshell, is what "calling on the Lord" involves.

But let us probe a little deeper. In Acts 22:16, Saul was told to "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Although this may be translated in some versions as if it were four imperatives: (1) Arise, (2) be baptized, (3) wash away thy sins, and (4) call on His name, they are not all imperatives in the original. "Arise" is a second aorist participle, which should be translated, "having arisen." "Be baptized" (*baptisai*) is a first aorist middle imperative as is "wash away" (*apolousai*). "Calling on" is not an imperative, but a present, passive participle (*epikaleasamenos*). Although I am neither a Greek nor English scholar, having forgotten much of what I thought I once knew, and do not even know a scholarly reference to uphold my conclusions, the best usage I remember is that the present participle, in both Greek and English, is generally used to modify the main verb, or show how the action is to be performed. In this case, it is a passive participle, and indicates how the two passive acts of submission to God which are mentioned are to be done.

(You may want to note here a sort of side issue which may be very enlightening. Some of our religious friends take the position that since we are saved by faith, baptism must be ruled out of our salvation since it is an act (work) which we perform. You may note that both verbs are *passive*. They do not relate to acts which we perform, but which are performed on or for us. Baptism is no more *our* work than washing away sins is our work. They both refer to things done for us.)

In the case before us, "calling on his name" is a present passive participle, and relates to how the submission to Christ was to be done. In other words, there could be no "calling

on the name of the Lord" in the Bible sense without submitting to Christ - in this case by arising and being baptized and having sins washed away.

CONCLUSION

Although my study has not been exhaustive, I have been unable to find any exception to these general principles in the Bible. In the 33 times the word is used in the New Testament, not one of them seems to have any clear reference to "praying to," but rather to such ideas as serving, submitting to, or by being surnamed, etc. It appears to be a general rule, also, that the active participle, when used with an imperative, always describes the manner in which the command was to be carried out. There may be some exceptions, but I am not aware of them.

It may also be interesting to note that this conclusion also fits very well with a logical or mathematical comparison. We learned in high school maths (or maybe earlier) that "things that are equal to be the same things are equal to each other." Let us note how it works in this and other connections.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 1:16).

"He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13)

Therefore, he that believeth and is baptized, and he that calleth on the name of the Lord are the same. It not, why not?

Again, notice the following:

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5).

Therefore, being converted and being born of water and the Spirit involve the same things.

Repent - and be baptized - for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38).

Repent - and be converted - sins blotted out (Acts 3:19).

Therefore, to be baptized and to be converted involve the same things.

So, both logic and scriptural usage compel us to conclude that "calling on the name of the Lord" is not just prayer, but submission to and service for God.

T. BROWN

SCRIPTURE READINGS

August 6	Leviticus 23:33-44	John 7:1-24
August 13	Isaiah 1:10-31	John 7:25-36
August 20	Micah 5	John 7:37-53
August 27	Leviticus 20:1-10	John 8:1-30

JESUS TEACHES AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The Feast of Tabernacles or Shelters was the third of the annual harvest festivals. It lasted seven days, the first and last days being holy convocations. Fruit was gathered in and people dwelt in booths

made of branches and boughs of trees (Leviticus 23:39-43; Numbers 29:12-38). As one writer put it: "It was a time of great joy but also of daily pomp and circumstance with priestly ritual in the temple courtyard".

Jesus taught the people during the feast. They were amazed at His learning and could not understand how someone from such a humble background had all this knowledge and ability. "My teaching is not my own. It comes from Him who sent me" (7:16, N.I.V.). These Jews should have readily recognised that this man Jesus was from God and spoke the truth. But they did not. Truly, there is none so blind as he who will not see; none so deaf

as he who will not hear.

I often wonder what people's image of the coming Messiah was at that time. Did they expect Him to come with great pomp and circumstance? Did they look for His charging on a great white horse and forcibly liberating His people from the conquering Romans? Did they see Him as a king like David ruling from Jerusalem with much splendour and magnificence? Whatever the image was, it certainly did not measure up to the true image as provided by Jesus Himself. Yet it is heartening to read: **"Still, many in the crowd put their faith in Him. They said, 'When the Christ comes, will He do more miraculous signs than this man?'"** (7:31, N.I.V.).

On the final day of the feast Jesus made a pronouncement that had a tremendous impact. Knowledge of the background is so important. W. Carl Ketcherside has written; "Each day thousands of Jews in attendance brought branches of trees which they waved toward the altar during the singing of the Hallel by the well-trained Levitical choir. During the ceremony a priest poured water from the pool of Siloam which had been carried to the site in a golden pitcher. The water was solemnly poured out by the side of the altar. On the last day of the festival this ceremony was made even more impressive. The priests brought twice as much water from the famous pool. Just as the first words of Psalm 118 were chanted - 'O give thanks unto the Lord' - they appeared at the Water Gate and marched toward the altar... Then the water was ceremoniously poured out while waves of religious emotion swept over the vast audience which filled the court of the people." It was at this time Jesus daringly stood up and cried out: **"It any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"** (7:37-38). John immediately gives the explanation: **"But this spake He of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him**

should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Holy Spirit, of course, has now come and dwells in each of us. We can all fulfil Jesus' words by becoming fountains of blessing in His sight. We can help transform arid hearts. We can turn dry deserts into luxuriant gardens. So we must not be satisfied with merely taking in, but we must be giving forth.

UNBELIEF OF JEWISH LEADERS

The Jewish leaders were not going to accept Jesus as the Messiah no matter what He said and did, and no matter what was reported of Him. They opposed anyone who did not condemn Him. Nicodemus, for example, had a hard time when he asked: **"Does our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he does?"** (7:51). Earlier the temple guards got into trouble because they had failed to bring Jesus in for questioning. In response they said: **"Never man spake like this man"** (7:46). Immediately these men were accused of being deceived (7:47).

One problem for the leaders was in the fact that Jesus came from Galilee (7:41,52). It was a district very much looked down upon. They, of course, knew that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem of Judea (7:42), as Micah had prophesied (5:2). If only they had enquired of Jesus' birthplace! Would it have made any difference to them! I think not.

A WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

In the New International Version of the Bible John 7:53-8:11 is headed thus: "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11". Such a heading involves us in the area known as Textual Criticism. Personally, I have read a number of books by brilliant scholars in this field including works by Prof. Bruce M. Metzger, late of Princeton Theological Seminary; Prof. J.N. Bidsall of Birmingham University; the late Prof. F.F. Bruce of Manchester

University and the late Sir Frederic G. Kenyon of the British Museum, London. The reliability of the Biblical text is a subject of outstanding importance to all believers in Christ and it is right that passages questioned are brought to our attention. I quote the late Frederic W. Farrar of Canterbury: "The very fact that the narrative found so little favour in the early centuries of Church history - the fact that whole Churches regarded the narrative as dangerous in its tendency - the fact that eminent Fathers of the Church either ignore it or speak of it in a semi-apologetic tone - in these facts we see the most decisive proof that its real moral and meaning are too lofty to admit of its having been originally invented, or interpolated without adequate authority into the sacred canon".

We read: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her... And they who heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last..." (8:7,9). I am certain it is the case that, as we get older, we become more aware of sin in our lives. It was Solomon who wrote: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them..." (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

THE VALIDITY OF JESUS' TESTIMONY

The enemies of Jesus questioned the validity of His testimony. They said to Him: "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid" (8:13, N.I.V.). Jesus replied: "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I am going... In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me" (8:14,17).

In that day, anyone who claimed that God was His Father, made himself equal with God. This was blasphemy to many

(John 5:18). But, of course, Jesus spoke the truth. He was God in the flesh. Quite a number came to recognise this truth (8:30).

Any true student of the Bible today will soon realise from his reading of the gospel records the uniqueness of the character of Jesus of Nazareth. I believe with Alexander Campbell that "no one could have drawn a character, such as that of Jesus Christ, from all the stores of human learning, from all the resources of the human imagination... No greater truth was ever uttered than these words: 'He that has seen me has seen the Father also'". Brothers and sisters in Christ, our task in the world is to get people to see Jesus as we see Him - the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. When we came to Jesus we thought at the time that our life depended upon it. Now we know that it did! We must, therefore, all strive to share Him with others.

IAN S DAVIDSON, MOTHERWELL

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. What two animals did Daniel see in his second vision?
 2. Who was the father of Merab and Michal?
 3. Who was a famous female judge of Israel?
 4. Where did Paul go immediately following his conversion in Damascus?
 5. To whom did Luke dedicate his book the Acts of the Apostles?
 6. Who was the chief craftsman in the construction of the tabernacle?
 7. Where did Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image?
 8. What does Edom mean?
 9. After Rome where did Paul plan to go?
 10. How many demons had been cast out of Mary Magdalene?
-

THE OLD PATHS

I have received the following press clipping from that old stalwart in the faith:

Bro. T.H. Blackmore of Worle, which he received from his sister in south Wales. As brother Blackmore says, we have been advocating "a return to the Old Paths" for a great many years, and it is very encouraging to see the denominational bodies now doing the same (although it remains to be seen as to how far they will be likely to go).

Return to the old paths

SIR - A group of ministers from all over Wales are launching a Return to the Old Paths Campaign at Cephys Baptist Church, Heolgerig, Merthyr Tydfil, on Friday May 26, at 7.15pm.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage Christian churches to use the King James Authorised Version of the Bible, and encourage Christians to read it and to pray for revival.

For a great many years now the market has been flooded with new translations all of which are sub-standard to the Authorised Version. Indeed many could be described as perversions.

The greatest revival since the Day of Pentecost, was brought about by the Reformation of the 16th century. The Authorised Version comes to us as a direct result of it, and the line of its Bibles - Wycliffe (1380-1400), Tyndale including the Matthew Bible (1525-35), Geneva Bible, Testament (1557-1560), King James (1611), are the premier translations in English from the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament, and the Greek Receptus New Testament.

We believe the only answer to the nation's problems is to return to the old paths that lead to God.

The Rev MELVYN JERVIS
Mount Pleasant House,
Pen-yr-heol, Rhymney Bridge,
Gwent.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District: The Quarterly Mutual Benefit meeting took place on 3rd June, 1995, in the meeting place of the church at Haddington with a good attendance. The subject discussed was "What would be the most effective method *nowadays*, of preaching the gospel?".

The speakers were Ian Davidson, Motherwell, and James R. Gardiner, Haddington. In the chair was Mark Plain, Tranent. As usual, in the hour's discussion which followed much food for thought (and action) was produced and an interesting time was spent.

The next such meeting will, God willing, be held at Motherwell on 2nd September, 1995, at 4 p.m. when the subject will be "Who are our brethren in Christ?" and the speakers will be:-

Bill Cook, Dunfermline.

Jimmy Grant, Wallacestone.

The chairman will be Joe Malcolm, Dennyloanhead.

Harry McGinn
(Secretary)

COMING EVENTS

ANNUAL SOCIAL

Newtongrange

Saturday, 7th October, 1995

4.00 p.m.

Speakers: Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline.
Mark Plain, Tranent.

We look forward to a rich time of fellowship with the various congregations.

Joe Currie
Sec./Treasurer.

ANNUAL SOCIAL**Kirkcaldy**

20th April, 1996

Ladies Day:

18th May, 1996

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA
FUND**

I wish to thank all the congregations and individual Christians who contributed to the Papua New Guinea appeal. I have been so encouraged by the generous response. To date I have received donations totalling £4,456.95 including bank interest. I have already written to each contributor, and will follow this up with a "Newsletter" in September.

Ruth B. Coles.

GHANA APPEAL

I wish to thank everyone who so generously responded to last month's appeal to help in the postage of the Bibles to Ghana. £539.50p was received in less than a month which greatly exceeds the money required. The money left over will be sent for medical aid before this article is read. The money received to date is £53,640.34p.

The church continues to grow in Ghana and there is real enthusiasm to spread the word of God. Our recent distribution of funds went to Ashanti region. We hope to remember our brethren now in the coastal churches, Koforidua and Volta Region in the near future.

Any one wishing to assist in this work please contact Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU. Tel. 01383 728624 Cheques should be made out to "Graeme Pearson Ghana Appeal".

*The Bible does not need to be re-written,
but re-read*

READ - and you will know**KNOW** - and you will love**LOVE** - and you will serve**SERVE** - and you will be **HAPPY**

1. A ram and a goat (8:3-5)
2. Saul (1 Samuel 14:49)
3. Deborah (Judges 4:4)
4. Arabia (Galatians 1:17)
5. Theophilus (1:1)
6. Bezalel (Exodus 31:2)
7. Plain of Dura (Daniel 3:1)
8. Red (Genesis 25:30)
9. Spain (Romans 15:23-24)
10. Seven (Luke 8:2)

ANSWERS

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