

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## “PREACHING BAPTISM”

ONE thing is obvious in our preaching of the gospel, whether in “meetings”, “missions”, “crusades” or “campaigns”. It is the difficulty of getting people to be baptised. Among visitors from various religious denominations we can get those who regard themselves as being one with us, and who attend the meetings to “help” us in sending out the gospel, or to show the “unity” of the various churches. They express wholehearted agreement with what we preach - up to the point of baptism. There we meet the difficulty - how to persuade them to take this step.

There are several reasons for this fact. One is the various substitutes for baptism : many claim that they have been baptised by having had water sprinkled upon them in infancy, and having been “confirmed” in that sprinkling when they were able to make their own decisions. Very few respond to being shown that what the scriptures mean (and what we mean) by baptism is immersion in water. There are those who insist that salvation is by faith *only* ; that baptism is a *work*, that we are not saved by works, and that therefore baptism has no part in salvation - it is entirely “by grace” that we are saved. Thirdly we have those who “don’t know enough” yet to be immersed : in vain we show such that what one needs to “know” about immersion is that one is a sinner and needs a Saviour - Jesus Christ. Finally there are those who cannot gainsay the truths they have heard in the preaching, but who intend to wait for “some more convenient time”.

All these reasons can be summed up in the question, “Can’t I be saved without baptism?” Perhaps the best way to answer this question is that used by William McDougall, an evangelist of the late nineteenth century. He would reply by writing on a blackboard two answers: (1) “He that believeth and is not baptised *may* be saved. Signed: William McDougall”. (2) “he that believeth and is baptised *shall* be saved. Signed: the Lord Jesus Christ.” Bro. McDougall then asked his own question: “Whose word are you going to take?” Thus he put the question in its right setting: it is a matter of “by whose authority?” - Christ’s or man’s?

### Preaching Christ.

It is probable that some of us will question the very title of this article - “Preaching Baptism” Surely we must preach Christ, not any specific doctrine.

not any particular belief or practice, but A PERSON. Indeed we must. But how are we to preach about that Person without showing His authority as it is demonstrated in the scriptures - in doctrine or teaching? It is clear that in Acts 8 when Philip the evangelist "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian he showed him how to become a follower of Jesus, so that the Ethiopian asked to be baptised - "See, here is water; what is to prevent my being baptised?" Not, notice, "can't I be saved without being baptised?" but "What is to *prevent* my being baptised?" O! for more such inquirers today! Well does Alexander Brown in his *Conversion to God* head his chapter on the conversion of the Ethiopian, "A Model Enquirer". Philip "preached unto him Jesus" and in doing so he preached baptism.

And, after all, "preaching baptism" is a perfectly scriptural term. In Mark 1: 4 and Luke 3: 3 we read that John the Baptist was in the wilderness of Judea, "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". In preaching that baptism he was pointing the people to the coming Messiah, Jesus. He was "preaching Christ".

### Do we preach baptism too much?

It is a common charge against churches of Christ that we are concerned with getting people "into the water"; that we make "water Christians"; that we lug in baptism on every possible (and impossible) occasion. Many of our preachers have been rebuked for "spoiling" good messages (or even "ruining" our witness) by "unnecessarily" bringing in baptism at the end.

That last phrase, "at the end", suggests significant lines of thought. Must baptism be referred to only "at the end" of our messages? In other words, DO WE PREACH BAPTISM ENOUGH? Looking back into our own experiences, we can all recall addresses in which baptism has hardly been mentioned, even then in an apologetic or indirect way, so as "not to be controversial, or to offend". Indeed, it is tempting when unbaptised are present in our meetings, to keep off the subject, that we may not discourage them or "drive them away." Many of us persuade ourselves that we have to approach the subject indirectly or in a roundabout way, when surely the fact that we are preaching to some unbaptised means that our first responsibility is to *them* and not to those baptised. On such occasions should we not preach as if this is our last opportunity to show the way of salvation, and that we must leave the unbaptised in no doubt as to what they must do to be saved? Philip did just that with the Ethiopian: "the eunuch saw him no more", but "he went on his way rejoicing."

Preachers of the gospel should be able to claim, with Paul, that "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God." In the light of such passages of scripture it is our firm conviction that we should preach baptism more, and in a more direct way, than we have done. When we preach "faith, repentance, confession" we are stating truths that all our hearers believe in. We can almost start with that which is lacking - with baptism - for many hearers of the gospel are at the stage where they should be immersed. It means that we need to devote more complete messages to the subject of baptism, demonstrating its prominence in the New Testament, and that many of God's promises and blessings, and the very life of the church are connected with baptism.

It is hoped in a future article to show this prominence and importance of baptism.

# CHRIST'S BODY, THE CHURCH: III

R. K. Francis

## III: THE FORM AND SYMMETRY OF THIS BODY

NOTHING could more forcibly "declare the glory of God." than the form and symmetry of such a body. It is not a thing of spontaneous earthly growth or birth, though in part formed of earth's materials. Like the primitive man it is a new original creation from the plastic hand of God. Should we search all nature, we could not find a better type of union and sympathy than a human body: one head, one heart, one soul, innumerable members joined to one another, and the head, by "bands and ligaments" of "cunning workmanship" that none on earth can imitate. To this the Church of Christ has been compared by one who knew its constitution, character and spirit, when as yet no "schism" marred its beauty. To identify "this body" in this age of many churches is no easy task. A hundred counterfeits or imitations are laying claim, and saying "Lo! here it is." In respect to creation we find God "made man of the dust of the earth." forming him in His own "image." When *organized*, God breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Possessed of intellect and heart, and taught of God, he loved, admired, and adored the Author of his being. Thus "God made man upright." So in regard to the Christian body-the Church of Christ-it is recorded as the Divine intention, that now unto the "principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." And in the beginning that one Divine body was competent to all the work for which God in His manifold wisdom designed it. Gloriously did it accomplish His benevolent purposes.

### Unity of the body

But Christian concord, and the purity and unity of the Church are an impossibility with denominationalism. There is the same power of growth in the united Church of Christ as in the forest tree. New accessions take place every year, and these improve the older timber of the Church, diminish the hollowness and increase reality. The Church of the Living God, the pillar and support of the truth, unaided by kings or governments, princes or nationalities, yea, with hell and the world in combination against it, carried the all-conquering Gospel to every creature under heaven, overturned the direst and darkest of empires, despotisms and priestcrafts; and brought in from every clime multitudes of trophies to the Messiah.

It was by the light and power of the Divine Sun of Righteousness this new body was organized: that Sun arose ushering in the day of a "new creation." that was to make of "twain one new man." Jesus, during His personal ministry, *called out* those whom He chose to be His disciples; and having blessed them, left them, and ascended to the Father. Inert, lifeless, powerless, this body stood, religiously it moved not, spoke not, neither did it grow. It had the mandate of its Maker: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the members of this new body being "of one accord in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thus God breathed into that body the breath of spiritual life. On that day God brought into existence a new body, separate and distinct from others. It lived and moved and had its being, not as a branch of some other previously existing; its words and actions were peculiar-spiritual; and of such a character

that they bore conviction to thousands of hearts that its spirit was divine. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit the body of Christ could have no life, nor power, to exercise its functions, nor could it be recognised as distinctly and formally established in the world. Hence the command, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued with power," and then proceed to preach the Gospel beginning at Jerusalem. This was in accordance with the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, that out of Zion should go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. So that we have distinctively fixed both the place and time at which the Christian institution should commence. Time and place constitute the two eyes of history.

On Pentecost at Jerusalem the Gospel was first preached. It was there and then dew descended upon Zion, even life for evermore. It was there the King sent down His message from the throne by His Witness and Advocate—the Holy Spirit.

#### Members and life of the body

In the healthy physical body there is natural and continuous growth from childhood to prime: so in the Church of Christ. By the use of the means duly provided, the Church in its individual members must "grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed, and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Eph. 4; 15, 16. The energizing power and uniting bond of the body is the *one Spirit*. By the power of the word of Truth each member of the body has been begotten to a life divine, and by His gracious indwelling power, the development of that life is secured, growth in grace maintained, and sanctification realized.

The organization of this body was of Divine wisdom, and the head rules the body through the indwelling Spirit; and insubordinate members are cast out as useless limbs. The immediateness with which the members of the human body obey the nervous impulse thereof, truly illustrates obedience to Christ. As the power, wisdom, and goodness of God are seen in the organization and symmetry of the human form, so are they manifest in the constitution of the Church. And as in the human body the fit joining together of the various members is in order to joint service, and this joint service is in order to the increase of the body; so in the Church, the body of Christ, the fitting together of the whole is in order to the due service of every member, and that service in order to the increase of the body. This is the Divine arrangement for growth and development. Nor can this increase be attained by the work of merely a few members of the body: "the edifying of itself in love" is the upbuilding of the whole by the effectual contribution of every part. This Divine law of development cannot be broken with impunity in the reign of grace, any more than in the kingdom of nature; priestly and ministerial pretensions notwithstanding.

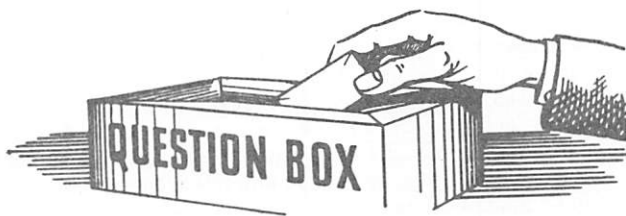
In I. Cor., 12, we have an argument drawn from the human body and applied to the Church of God. Verse 27 shows its application. The argument commences in v. 12, and in v. 14, we read, "For the body is not one member but many," and then Paul proceeds to show the necessity for every member to the body, and of every member filling his place in the body. Then applying his reasoning to the Church, the Apostle says in v. 28, how God hath set in the Church the various members and ministries. All humanly established ministries, therefore, are out of place. This body is not formed to be governed by instinct nor by impulse. There can be no warring of the parts for the supremacy. The thumbs and toes cannot philosophize on the bodily action, for all ideas in selfgovernment depend on the head.

#### Denominations not the one body

Now it is evident that the above Scripture (I. Cor., 12) cannot be applied to the present condition of the religious world; we must, therefore, come to one of two

conclusions—either that the existence of various bodies with different members and ministries and conflicting policies, is wrong, and therefore sinful; or, that it is right, and that the Lord and His Apostles were wrong. Which can it be? Whatever power or opinion guides the study of those who are learners in the school of Christian doctrine and practice, will impress its own nature and tendency upon all its pupils to a greater or lesser degree. Long experience teaches this. It, therefore, becomes us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to look into this subject with true impartiality.

(To be continued)




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Conducted by  
James Gardiner

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**“ In Luke 22 : 36 Jesus commanded his disciples to arm themselves with swords against the dangers which would beset them in the future. Indeed He said that he that had no sword should sell his garment and purchase one. Was not this a plain authorisation of physical violence in self defence?”**

There are two main schools of thought on the above passage of scripture, but before mentioning them let us look at the circumstances in which the words were uttered. Jesus is about to be arrested, tried and crucified. He is having his last few conversations with his disciples and giving them last-minute advice and instructions. He points out that their preaching assignment will be a difficult and dangerous one, especially so after He has gone from their midst; and that their very lives would be fraught with danger. In this particular conversation in Luke 22, He says at verse 35, “... When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.” He was here alluding to their having been sent initially to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (see Matt. 10 : 5) and, being labourers worthy of their hire, they were to take nothing with them for their material needs (money, clothes, shoes etc).

They agree with Jesus that they lacked nothing when He sent them out in such circumstances.

However, in contrast to the first preaching commission, says Jesus, the second or “Great Commission” will be something quite different. They will need to take money and all other material needs from now on: (verse 36) “ Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”

Apparently they would no longer be travelling amongst their own people, the lost sheep of Israel and supported materially by them; but now were to go on long journeys into the wide world, amongst strangers, and amidst trials and dangers. They were to be prepared for hardship and difficulty.

Jesus goes on to explain why: “For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, ‘And He was reckoned amongst the transgressors’; for the things concerning me have an end.” Again Jesus is pointing out that imminently He would be leaving them, and the things concerning Him would come to

an end and by His crucifixion He would fulfil Isaiah 53: 12 "And He was reckoned amongst the transgressors."

"And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords: and he said unto them, It is enough."

As is often the case we are confronted with the problem of whether these words of Jesus are to be taken literally or figuratively.

### THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION

One school of thought maintains that Jesus was talking of a literal sword when He told the disciples to sell their garments and buy one. Their reasoning runs thus:- Self-defence is lawful and that men when encompassed with dangers may lawfully defend their lives. They say that Jesus at no time prohibited the use of force (physical violence) *in defence* where life or home was threatened, but rather spoke approvingly concerning it (as in the parabolic statement, Luke 12 : 39) When Peter used the sword at the arrest of Jesus, and was rebuked by Jesus for doing so, the explanation of this is that Peter's act was not *defensive* but *aggressive*, and thus he deserved rebuke. The rebuke was also justified because Peter was proposing to use the sword *in defence of the gospel* when in fact, it was intended solely to be a means of *self-defence* and only against actual *bodily harm*, not threatened attack. (It appears to this writer to be drawing a rather fine distinction, when one is fighting for one's life with a sword, to distinguish between *actual* bodily harm and *threatened* bodily harm, and between *defensive* blows and *aggressive* ones). Certainly, at first glance, it seems as if the instructions Jesus was giving concerning the swords was to be taken literally, especially when he said that he who did not possess a sword should sell his garments and buy one. At the same time, when the disciples produced two swords (and Jesus said, "It is enough") are we to suppose that two swords would be likely to form much of a defence in terms of carnal weapons? Surely Jesus must have been speaking metaphorically.

### THE FIGURATIVE INTERPRETATION

The other main school of thought, is of course, that Jesus was in fact speaking in a *figurative sense* when He referred to his disciples arming themselves with swords. He was merely pointing out that in future their missionary journeys would be a different "kettle of fish". In the past they had lacked nothing : they had travelled amongst their own people and nation, and all their needs had been supplied. Now, says Jesus, things will be quite different: you will be going amongst strangers, into hostile lands, and you will require to pay your own way and be self-supporting. Also be prepared for the fact that you will encounter physical danger and your lives will be in jeopardy - look out for yourselves. Witness the things which will soon befall your Master and reckon also that these things will befall you too. These sentiments are all expressed, I believe, in verses 36 and 37. The following verse (v.38) confirms, surely, that Jesus did not intend His disciples to arm themselves with swords, when His disciples said, "Lord behold here are two swords. Jesus said unto them It is enough." or to paraphrase the answer "Enough of this" Jesus did not mean that two swords would be enough to engage the world in mortal combat, but merely meant "Enough has been said." Jesus shows here, as He did elsewhere, that He had no intention of meeting physical force with any other force than the force of love. He did not resist His arrest, nor was it ever His intention to do so. The disciples had grasped the wrong meaning from what He had said about the swords. His whole life and ministry were characterised by pacifism. His every word and gesture inculcated meekness and peace, and never once did He suggest that the Christian religion would depend upon physical resistance or the use of carnal weapons. Jesus was the Prince of Peace : yet in Matt. 10 : 34 He is recorded as saying "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth : I came not to send peace but a sword." Again He uses the word "sword" in a figurative sense and

in the ensuing verses explains how this would be so. Both by words and example Jesus taught His disciples never physically to resist evil ; but under reproaches and injuries, meekly and patiently to commit their cause to God. When He saw them on one occasion inclined to resent an injury He rebuked them most solemnly and said "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." If Jesus had intended His disciples to protect their lives by using the sword He had a good opportunity, a few hours after His conversation about the swords, of showing His disciples just how it should be done; but did Jesus use a sword? As it was, when Judas and the armed men came to arrest Christ He went as a "lamb led to the slaughter," It was never in His mind to resist arrest or physically to take His enemies on in sword-play. Indeed Simon Peter drew a sword and smote the servant of the High Priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus's rebuke of Peter's action was indeed strange if it was His intention that his disciples should carry swords for the purposes of self-defence. "Then Jesus said unto him. Put up again thy sword into its place. for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot pray now to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels." If it was God's intention to resist by physical force the works of darkness then, according to Jesus, God has many mighty angels at His disposal, and does not require His servants to resort to carnal weapons. Paul the apostle, on many occasions could have with justification drawn the sword *in self-defence*, but he never did so, probably because (apart from the fact he had no desire for one) he also did not carry one. In Eph. 6 does not Paul describe "the whole armour of God" and talk about the breastplate, shield, helmet and sword all in a figurative sense? We wrestle not with flesh and blood (v.12) thus our weapons are not literal or carnal. Paul however, although he did not carry a sword was not to be regarded as a doormat for all and sundry to wipe their feet, for he made use on more than one occasion of his civil and legal rights, both with reference to his citizenship and to his appeal to Caesar. A far cry however from carrying arms.

All in all I would suggest to the questioner that Jesus's words in Luke 22 : 36 be taken in a metaphorical sense and that in this case Jesus was merely conditioning the minds of his disciples for times of trial and danger ahead. As to the bearing of physical arms perhaps Paul sums the matter up well in II Cor. 10 : 3, where he says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds)."

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

### RISING EARLY

Abraham rose early to stand before the Lord (Gen. 19 : 27).	Joshua rose early to lead Israel over Jordan (Josh. 3 : 1).
Abraham rose early to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22 : 3).	Joshua rose early to take Ai (8 : 10).
Jacob rose early to worship the Lord (Gen. 28 : 18).	Samuel rose early to meet Saul (I Sam. 15 : 12).
Moses rose early to give God's message to Pharaoh (Exod. 3 : 10).	David rose early to do as his father said (I Sam. 17 : 20).
Moses rose early to build an altar to God (Exod. 24 : 4).	Job rose early to offer sacrifice (Job. 1:5).
Moses rose early to meet God at Sinai (Exod. 34 : 4).	Jesus rose early to pray (Mark 1 : 35).
Joshua rose early to capture Jericho (Josh. 6 : 12).	Jesus rose early to teach in the Temple (Jn. 8 : 2).
	The people rose early to hear Him (Luke 21 : 38).
	The women rose early to go to the tomb (Mark 16 : 2).

# IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

*A correspondence in a New Zealand newspaper between a Preacher of "THE BRETHREN" and BRO. SAM WILSON, formerly of Dennyloanhead, Scotland.*

## "THE BRETHREN" SAY

### Baptism

THE Word of God is the only standard by which to test the truth or error of what we have been taught on the subject of baptism.

"To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8 : 20).

"Prove all things : hold fast that which is good" (i.e. test all teaching by the Bible: hold fast that which is in accord with the Word of God (1 Thes. 5 : 21).

### Baptism Does Not Save

Baptism has nothing whatever to do with the obtaining of salvation.

The Word of God declares : "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3 : 36).

Search the Scriptures and you will find NOVERSE WHICH SAYS "HE THAT IS BAPTISED hath everlasting life ; and he that is not baptised shall not see life : but the wrath of God abideth on him."

### Every True Believer Should Be Baptised

While baptism has nothing whatever to do with the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins, it is the will of God that every person who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation should confess Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour by baptism.

THE NEW TESTAMENT KNOWS NOTHING OF AN UNBAPTISED BELIEVER, except in the case of the repentant thief. AND THE NEW TESTAMENT KNOWS NOTHING OF A BAPTISED UNBELIEVER...

## THE SCRIPTURES SAY

### Wonderful Words Of Life

JESUS said, "I am the way, the truth and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14 : 16).

"Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4 : 12).

Some were offended at the things He was teaching, and they left Him. Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God" (John 6 : 68-9).

From the above texts we learn WHO saves us, and there is none other. He only has given the words of eternal life.

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A preacher has written me concerning baptism having no place in salvation, and I quote : "It is a serious reflection upon Christ's perfect and finished work, that is caused when anyone should dare to infer that baptism has a share in salvation."

My reply to the preacher was : "I would not dare to say anything about it except what the Lord and His Apostles say. The Lord does not INFER. He affirms positively that baptism HAS a place in salvation, and He has said so AFTER His perfect and finished work on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead.

"And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Matt. 11 : 6).

We have never taught that baptism alone saves us. Nor any one scriptural factor, or just some of them to the



### THE GREAT COMMISSION

In the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ given to His disciples for the present dispensation we see the important place that baptism occupies in the mind of God. After His resurrection and before His ascension the Lord declared: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me; you, therefore, must go out and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost..." (Matt. 28:18-20, R.C. Transl. by Ronald Knox.)

Note particularly that those to be baptised are DISCIPLES, i.e. BELIEVERS, those who having heard the gospel have put their trust in Christ alone as their sin-bearer and Saviour.

There is no command to baptise the nations. Nor is there any passage of Scripture which says, "Make disciples of all nations, baptising these disciples AND THEIR INFANT CHILDREN..."

exclusion of others, but by obeying all of them. "Man liveth by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4 : 4).

The angel told Peter and John (Acts 5 : 20) "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people ALL THE WORDS of this life." To preach, believe and repent without confession and baptism is to mutilate the commands of the gospel. All are commanded, and to do all is to obey the gospel. The gospel is preached for obedience to the faith. "Except ye believe and repent ye shall die in your sins." (John 8 : 24).

"Confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10 : 10).

These three commands precede baptism, and after baptism is faithful continuance in all things that the Lord Jesus commanded His Apostles to teach the saints (Col. 1: 12-13).

S. WILSON

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1971

2—Isaiah 62	Acts 11
9—Daniel 6 : 1-23	Acts 12
16—Psalm 36	Acts 13 : 1-15
23—2 Samuel 7 : 18-29	Acts 13 : 16-41
30—Isaiah 42 : 1-17	Acts 13 : 42-52

### REMOVING THE BARRIERS

IN spite of the scripture we have been reading, the work of scholars and commentators and our own thoughtful endeavours, we suppose that only a "dyed-in-the-wool" Jew could estimate the power of the barrier which separated Jew and Gentile in that ancient world. Probably there are nearly as powerful barriers of national, tribal, religious and other kinds remaining with us and working amongst us now. Of some of them we might personally be sharing unconsciously today. Each person grows up in an environ-

ment which makes a big impact on one's whole life. We might well illustrate the case by referring to temptations to which we are subject, differing very widely. To one man it may be a strong temptation to pass a public house. Parodying a song someone has said, "Dare to pass a public house, and take your money home". To another passing such a place would be no temptation. He would be nauseated by appearance and smell.

These differences produce barriers if they are allowed to, but a law of God implanted by birth and upbringing (like the law of Moses on Jewish life at the time of the Saviour and in the land of Israel) produced the very deepest conviction - and rightly so if the spirit as well as the letter were observed. Thus we cannot be surprised that Peter's having broken the barrier produced repercussions in the church at Jerusalem. It was natural. Perhaps we should say too that it was right and served God's purposes and intention to remove the barrier. Had the matter been side-tracked or shelved, it would not have been faced honestly.

So Peter, the most prominent of the Apostles, was called to account and was able to set out clearly God's dealing with him. To make everything plain beyond dispute he had six brethren - certainly Jewish Christians - to witness an out-pouring of the Spirit from heaven. There could be no question of imagination or deceit, and the demonstration could only be compared with the day of Pentecost. We enjoy reading "they held their peace and glorified God." It was a matter of joyful surprise that God had granted repentance also to the Gentiles. We know that not all had their prejudicial barriers removed, or there would not have been any Judaizers working against Paul in later years ; but the main body - surely the church then contained the most earnest and godly Jews - was won over to the universality of the gospel.

Our readings this month record the widening-out of the stream of gospel light. The persecution by Saul and others resulted in preaching well outside the borders of Jewry and Samaria; but it was at first limited to men of Jewish race. The excursion, however, of Jews from their own land into other countries, with the Lord Jesus in their hearts, resulted almost naturally in Gentiles hearing and believing. We think this may well have happened before or at the same time as Peter's very special revelation. The effect of the gospel on the foreign-born Jews would be seen in their daily attitudes, as well as heard on their tongues. It is probable that the words "The hand of the Lord as with them" 11 : 21 indicates miraculous signs. Antioch was a very important town, and had commercial and cultural ties with Jerusalem, so the news travelled there.

We note with pleasure the choice by the church of Barnabas. In divinely granted wisdom a man of generous mind (4 : 36 & 37). Cyprian origin and "son of encouragement" fitted into the situation at Antioch. Not only did he rejoice at the sight of redeemed and sanctified souls, but he was instrumental in increasing the numbers further. We wonder whether at his meeting with "Saul" at Jerusalem (9 : 27) he learned of the special mission for which God had appointed him (22 : 17-

21). and the sight of the Gentile believers in Antioch made him seek out Saul at Tarsus. This in any case was the time when the great work of the "apostle to the Gentiles" began. How close a relationship these brethren had! They did have a difference on one occasion (15 : 39) indicating Barnabas's specially sympathetic nature, but their mutual esteem surely remained the same (1 Cor. 9 : 6). Both outstandingly served the Lord. They were in the forefront in removing barriers because they preached the gospel without distinctions of any kind.

It was through the revelation made to Peter that the church first became a community of believers recognising that others than Jews with the same faith do repent unto life - life in Christ. Both Peter and Barnabas did allow at a time of weakness the old barrier to influence them (Gal. 2 : 11-13). "Let us who think we stand, take heed lest we fall" with a similar fault. For this they were justly rebuked by the one who was born into the church "out of due time" (1 Cor. 15 : 8), and who was mightily used for removing what might have been a fatal division in the body of Christ. He sets out the unifying power : "For as many of you as were baptised into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3 : 37 & 28).

R.B. SCOTT

### KEEP ON GOING

One step won't take you very far:

You've got to keep on walking.

One word won't tell folks who you are:

You've got to keep on talking.

One inch won't make you very tall:

You've got to keep on growing.

One little deed won't do it all:

You've got to keep on going.

A preacher wrote to a wealthy and influential businessman requesting a subscription for some worthy charity, and received a curt refusal which ended: "This Christian business is one continuous give, give, give."

The preacher answered, "Thank you for the best definition of the Christian life I have ever heard."

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Woodstock, South Africa: On 20th. February Raymond Firth was baptised into Christ.

**Dalmellington, Ayrshire** : With great joy we witnessed the immersion into Christ of Tommy, eldest son of Bro. & Sis. McGinn, on 9th. April. May the Lord bless our young brother: we hope that he will be of much use in His service.

H. MCGINN

**Mayfield, Edinburgh** ; With great joy we report the baptism of Keith Ferguwson and Daniel Sharp. Both young lads have been attending Sunday School and gospel meetings for some time. They were baptised into Christ on Sunday 21st. March. These baptisms have given the brethren at Mayfield much encouragement and we pray that in their service of the Master the two young lads will be bountifully blest.

We thank God for the power of the gospel.

ANDREW P. SHARP.

**Wigan, Scholes** ; On Lord's day April 11th a somewhat different form of gospel meeting was held, which has on two previous occasions proved interesting and beneficial to the congregation. Instead of one gospel message we had three. Our young Bren. Joseph Layland, Gordon Melling and Douglas Melling, each gave a 10-minute message on various aspects of the gospel. The idea was derived from the classification of the gospel by Walter Scott, a preacher in the United States from 1820 onwards. He stated that the gospel consists in (1) Facts to be believed; (2) Commands to be obeyed; and (3) Promises to be enjoyed. These topics were treated in that order by Gordon Melling, Joseph Layland and Douglas Melling, scripturally, and with directness, interspersed by hymns.

It was a pity that no visiting friends were present, but the teaching given was of equal application to the church, being informative, educative and edifying. We commend the idea to other congregations.

### A CODE FOR FAMILY LIVING

#### These truths we will remember

- 1 God made us a family.
- 2 God gave the True standards for family love, and loyalty.
- 3 God made us dependent on one another.
- 4 God wants us to be the greatest possible help to each other.

#### These should be our aims.

- 1 To be the kind of family God wants us to be.
- 2 To understand and love one another.
- 3 To make amends for any unfairness or wrong to the other.
- 4 To forgive one another gladly.

#### This shall be our purpose.

TO serve God and His Kingdom. On Him we depend for every grace, and to Him we pledge our first and highest loyalty.

*Woodstock (S.A.) Church Bulletin.*

### LIVING EPISTLES

FOUR preachers were discussing the merits of various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James version for the beauty and simplicity of its language. Another the Revised Version, because of its accuracy to the Hebrew and Greek. Another Moffatt's, because of its up-to-date vocabulary.

The fourth preacher remained silent. When asked to express his opinion he replied: "I like my mother's translation best." The others were surprised, not knowing his mother had translated the Bible. "Oh yes she did," he said "she translated it into everyday life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever read."

*Religious Digest*

MEN who have much to say use the fewest words.

H.W. Shaw

## COMING EVENTS

**Wigan (Scholes):** Mission Saturday to Lord's Day, May 22nd to 30th, 1971.  
Preacher : Bro. Paul Jones, Slamannan District Evangelist.

**Meetings :** Gospel Lord's Days.-May 23rd. and 30th; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, May 25th. to 27th; Saturdays, May 22nd. and 29th. All at 7.30 p.m.

**Children's Meetings,** Monday's, May 24th. and 31st. at 6.30 p.m.

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