

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

---

**VOL. 57 No. 7**

**JULY, 1989**

---

## **INAPPROPRIATE ARDOUR**

Few of those watching, on T.V., the several attempts to bury the dead body of Ayatollah Khomeini, and the struggle to get the corpse through the screaming masses of hysterical mourners, could fail to be impressed or moved by the spectacle. The frenzied mobs, at one stage, toppled the body from its bier, and seemed to come close to tearing the dead Ayatollah to pieces: they certainly fought with one another to tear fragments from the graveclothes as a memento or talisman. It was only after many delays and several attempts at getting Khomeini to his last resting place, that the burial was finally accomplished, and the frantic hordes of mourners could shuffle off home to their dull lives of abject austerity, and begin the forty days of official mourning. It is not often we witness a funeral attended by over two million mourners: mourners who have been beating themselves silly, quite literally, with self-inflicted blows for several days on end.

In life we never saw this man's face without it having a scowl, and he spread more misery and death in the world than any leader since Hitler, but until those grotesque scenes at his funeral we little imagined the full extent of his power, or his hold upon the people. Of course we shall never know how much of the histrionics was orchestrated, and much of it was probably skin-deep, yet the mystical fascination the Ayatollah exerted over the people will probably be greatly enhanced by his demise, and he will continue to influence events from his grave. But time will tell. Certainly when we see, on T.V. newsreels, the deadly passions of Iranian mobs, and them lashing themselves into a frenzy, we can readily see that they are greatly susceptible to mass hysteria: and men most surely behave in a mob as they would not, as individuals. Time will tell how genuine was the grief and the emotion. And I suppose we should remember that grief was not the only ingredient in the chemistry of that emotionally-charged day, but religious fervour in general: the kind of fervour scarcely ever under control and always seemingly intent upon a blood-letting spree. It is difficult to understand how any nation could honour in death (or in life) one as ruthless as the Ayatollah whose life-time stock-in-trade was plotting, political intrigue, torturing, death squads and mass murder (all bound up in a religious context with strict moral observances, prayers and holy masqueradings in clerical garb).

Assuming that much of the religious fervour is genuine (and it probably is), what conclusions are we to draw from these events? Surely it shows that, in many instances, religious fervour and zeal is sadly misplaced. I suppose the words of Paul (in Rom. 10:2) immediately come to mind when he said, with reference to Israel " ... they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge".

## ZEAL MISDIRECTED

It must be extremely doubtful that Paul would ever have used these words with reference to a person such as Ayatollah Khomeini, or the rest of the Iranian nation, but he paid the compliment to Israel. They most certainly had a positive zeal for God but sadly it was not coupled with knowledge (or truth) and thus rendered itself invalid, null and void. Surely a great and necessary truth is being set forth here for us. Can we grasp it? Religious zeal and holy ardour, commendable (and indeed essential) as they are, are quite pointless unless founded and grounded in God's revealed Truth. In this portion of Romans 10 Paul admits his great disappointment that whereas Israel had a considerable zeal for God it counted for nothing: being misdirected and not based upon faith in Christ. Their zeal was based upon God's word but restricted to God's word through Moses and failing to recognise God's word through Christ. Paul says that the salvation of his own people, the Jews, was not only his greatest desire but was also the object of his prayers. This, of course, merely confirms that, notwithstanding their ardour for God, they were not in a 'saved' state. Had they been lethargic and apathetic he might have despaired of them altogether, but their zeal constituted that slim ray of hope that they would yet come to an understanding of the truth.

How did their lack of understanding undermine their chances of salvation and cancel out their zeal? How serious was their misinterpretation of God's truth? We can only touch upon it here. Had the Jews correctly comprehended their O.T. they would have rightly recognised Jesus Christ as their long-awaited Messiah, and would have acknowledged Him as Lord. **"But"**, says Paul, **"being ignorant of God's justification they sought to establish their own, and had not been obedient to God's justification"**. (v.3). And so the Jews erred on the question as to how men are justified. They rejected Christ and sought justification through Moses and the law. Paul briefly contrasts the two concepts i.e. justification through Moses and his law: and justification through faith in Christ Jesus. **"Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law: The man which doeth these things shall live (receive life eternal) by them"**. Paul says this was Moses' own definition: which, of course, it was. The Jews seemed to believe that they could merit their justification by their deeds, doings and works, and could claim their salvation as a right and a debt from God. Paul, elsewhere, makes the self-evident point that no Jew could claim to have kept the law to perfection (and to fail in one part of the law was equal to failing it all), and that God's mercy was based not upon any indebtedness to man but to God's boundless grace. **Justification through Christ**, on the other hand, was not subject to personal merit through works, but by faith in Christ: and Christ **"was the end (or culmination point) of the law"** (v.4). Here (v. 6-8) Paul actually quotes the law (Deut. 30: 11-16 i.e. "who shall go up into heaven: or cross the sea" etc.) and skilfully amends it to show that Christ's gospel, and His justification, is just as real; tangible; easily accessible; readily available and widely acceptable as ever Moses' commandments were. It was within easy grasp of Jew and Greek alike and, like the law, **"was nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart. FOR with the HEART man BELIEVETH unto righteousness, and with the MOUTH, CONFESSION is made unto salvation."** (v.10). To this the Jews were blind, then, and seem, even today, to read the scriptures with a veil before their eyes. The apostle goes on to hammer home these eternal truths: that God is rich unto all those who call upon him: and that whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord, whether Jew or Greek will be saved. Each time, he quoted chapter and verse from the **Old Jewish scriptures**. All these things were taught in the O.T. but, notwithstanding their undeniable zeal for God, the Jews seemed entirely unaware of it: and, worse still, hostile to accepting it.

There must be vast numbers in the religions of the world, cults and denominational segments of Christendom, whose religious fervours are carried to lengths which astonish us: men who would readily die for their beliefs: and yet who share this basic drawback of the Jewish religion – zeal misplaced.

### A CONSUMING PASSION

What could be worse than this we ask: what could be worse than having a genuine passion for God: a passion however, unrecognised by God because it is not according to knowledge? What could be worse than that? The only thing worse than that is to have the Truth; **but no zeal**. Think of all the grand claims we hear, and make, that we have God's truth, that we (alone it seems) speak where the Bible speaks, and so on: and yet our zeal sometimes barely gets us to the meetings: or barely gets enough financial resources to print tracts or gospel material? Paul could empathise with his fellow Jew in these things for he, himself, had had a great zeal for God which was **based upon ignorance** rather than knowledge. Indeed he cites, as a prime example of his own Jewish zeal, the fact that he persecuted the church of God: an episode in his life which seemed to haunt him ever after. Paul knew firsthand the possibility of ardour motivated by ignorance: but his zeal certainly **increased** when he had embraced the truth (such zeal as he describes in 2 Cor.11). I suppose he felt he had a lot of ground to make up and was "chief of sinners". Paul had much to say about zeal. To the Galatian Christians he said that some seemed to be "zealously affected" but that we should only be "zealously affected in some good thing." (Gal.4:17). Even in the church, we must be zealous about the right kind of things. In his second epistle to the Christians at Corinth Paul rejoiced to see the effect his first letter had had. What penitence it had caused, what alarm, what eagerness, what indignation, what care, what vehement desire and **what zeal** it caused. So much that their zeal was a striking example to all in Macedonia and had provoked (stirred) many into action. To Titus, Paul gave that wonderful reminder of God's eternal purpose when he said, "**Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people: zealous of good works.**" This certainly is God's purpose, but how zealous are we? How is our zeal?

In Numbers 25 we read of the swift and almost instinctive action of Phineas, grandson of Aaron, which averted God's wrath upon Israel. God was so impressed with the way Phineas took his own individual, but decisive, action in the crisis that He gave him an everlasting covenant of Priesthood because "**He was zealous for my sake**". And so we can take it that zeal for God's sake, or lack of it, will not go un-noticed. John records the fact (John 2:16) that when Jesus made the scourge of small cords and had cleansed the temple from being a house of merchandise and den of thieves, that the disciples "**remembered that it was written The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up**". The disciples were not always so perceptive and we can but assume that the Holy Spirit had a hand in the matter. Nevertheless the righteous indignation which assailed Jesus and spurred Him into such unexpected action must have brought that quotation from the Psalmist to mind: "**the zeal of God's house consumes Me**". Have we a consuming zeal for God's house, or church? Would our zeal spur us into some such precipitate action? As they say "We've either got it or we haven't got it" but we can certainly get it, if we have a mind to. In the closing book of the Bible (Rev. 3:14) in God's admonition of the church in Laodicea, which was in a state of Luke-warmness, God said, "**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent.**" These are words to the wise and that seems to be the only cure for us if we are amongst the tepid brethren: "**Be zealous: repent.**"

I have no intention of even trying to draw a comparison between Christ and the Ayatollah Khomeini, for there are no similarities whatsoever, but when we see the

kind of ecstatic veneration given by devotees of the Ayatollah, and compare it with the adulation, service and preference in our lives, we give to Jesus it must make us think. Millions of Iranians would have done anything for Khomeini: how much do we do for the King of Kings? What could be worse than zeal without Truth? Truth without zeal.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

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

**WE QUOTE – J. RICHIE**

"James R. – was an apprentice. He got half-an-hour to his meals only, and worked from early morning till late at night. I saw James was "growing," and asked his master's wife how he got on in the house. "Oh," she said, "he sits with his spoon in one hand and his Bible in the other." That explained it. He was feeding on the Word of God, and growing thereby; as it is written – "I wrote unto you, young men because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you." (1 John 2:14).

**SOLID ... ABIDING ... EVERLASTING**

"The house in which the Lord would have His people live hath foundations – solid, abiding, everlasting; and when the winds blow it abideth, because it is built into the rock."

**MAN**

"You want him to be a man. It doesn't make so much difference whether he is a "gentleman," so called, or not. But a man is a man the world over. Imagine Pilate leading the Man of Nazareth, thorn-crowned and robed in purple mockery, before the people, crying: "Behold the gentleman!" Fancy the "two men in white apparel" saying to the men who were to revolutionize government and religion and conduct, all over this world: "Ye gentlemen of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Your boy shall be a man, and the model of his life you will help him to find in the manhood of the New Testament. Meekness of spirit, noble aspirations, a merciful disposition, purity of heart, cleanliness of thought, chastity, right conduct, moderation in speech, generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness of wrongs, modesty, loyalty to duty, charity in judgment, practical wisdom – all these he will find in the Sermon on the Mount. All the cardinal principles, the sure foundations, upon which pure, true manhood is builded, he will find in the teachings and model of the New Testament. There is no other standard, no other model of faultless manhood."

R. J. Burdette.

**THE OBJECT OF PREACHING**

"Above all to feel and to know, though it passes knowledge, the love of God in Christ; to feel and to know that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and to make others partake of this personal conviction – that, I suppose, is the object of all sermons – Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and since it is only by believing on Him that we can have life through His name, it must be the preacher's highest and most constant aim to preach Christ – not in vain shibboleths, not in intricate dogmatic definitions, not by the mere wearisome iteration of 'Lord, Lord,' or any other formulae – but to preach simple Christ to simple men, and to set forth 'Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end.'"

Dr. Farrar.

**THE BLESSING OF QUIET**

"Every true Christian life needs its daily silent times, when all shall be still, when the busy activity of other hours shall cease, and when the heart, in holy hush, shall commune with God. One of the greatest needs in Christian life in these days is more devotion. Ours is not an age of prayer so much as an age of work. The tendency is

to action rather than to worship; to busy toil rather than to quiet sitting at the Saviour's feet to commune with Him. The keynote of our present Christian life is consecration, which is understood to mean devotion to active service. On every hand we are incited to work. Our zeal is stirred by every inspiring incentive. The calls to duty come to us from a thousand earnest voices."

J. R. Miller.

#### SUFFICIENT

"Somebody once asked D. L. Moody: "Have you grace enough to be burned at the stake?" and Moody replied, "No." The questioner pressed him further: "Do you not wish you had?" "No," replied Moody again, "for I do not need it. What I need just now is grace to live in Milwaukee three days and hold a mission."

My Lord has never said that He would give  
 Another's grace without another's thorn:  
 What matter, since for every day of mine  
 Sufficient grace for me comes with the morn?  
 And though the future brings some heavier cross,  
 I need not cloud the present with my fears:  
 I know the grace that is enough to-day  
 Will be sufficient still through all the years.

J. Sidlow Baxter.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

### DESIGN OF BAPTISM

First of all, forgiveness of sins is not man's design for baptism but God's design for those who were baptized. Forgiveness of sins is a judicial act. It is an executive act of pardon. It takes place in heaven in the mind of God. It is not something to be secured by purchase or barter. One does not obtain it by trading off or swapping any act or deed. It is not, therefore, the exclusive design of baptism and may not be the most important motivation.

Secondly, there are at least nine "designs" for baptism set forth in the new covenant scriptures and the selection of one of these as the specific or superlative design which must be understood and recognized to establish the validity of obedience, to the exclusion or ignoring of the others, does not speak well for those who profess to revere all that the Spirit has spoken.

The primary design or motivation for baptism is the desire to unquestioningly "conform in this way with all that God requires" (Matthew 3:15). It is unthinkable that Jesus would be immersed in water purely for a secondary or inferior purpose, and this is the reason he gave when insisting that John immerse him in the waters of the Jordan.

The highest form of obedience of authority does not question or enquire what reward will be received for obedience, or what favour will be granted. It is prompted by reverence and respect for the will of the one whose requirements are met. It is not obedience to receive something but to honour the requirements of the one obeyed. It is upon that basis that our Lord set the example for us. Small wonder that, at the time, a voice from heaven declared. "This is my Son, my beloved, on whom my favour rests."

When a man is baptized to obey God, he is led by a proper motive; and I believe when he does this to obey him, God will forgive his sins, whether he knows the act in which God forgives or not. Man cannot be led by a holier or more acceptable motive than the desire to obey God and so 'fulfil all righteousness.' It is a dangerous thing to require more than God requires."

Men may be told that they were justified and forgiven upon the basis of personal faith and at the very moment of trustful surrender. They may accept it as factual and rely upon it, but there is nothing in this to motivate them to be immersed. Intellectually and philosophically, those who are immersed, believing their sins have been forgiven, are led to obedience for another reason. When sifted down it will generally be found that their desire is to obey God, to do his will, or to follow the example of Jesus.

They may be mistaken about the time when the forgiveness of God was accorded and when the pardon was decreed. They may be the victims of theological error in that respect, but such a mistake will not cancel God's gracious promise. It is not conditioned upon being correct about every theological point at the time of obedience. I do not serve the kind of God who bestows his love only upon those who have an intellectual key honed down until it fits every slot in the keyhole of mental correctness. This would deny grace, which, I suspect, is the real problem of all too many of us.

When a man from the Baptist tradition tells me he was immersed to obey God or follow his will I do not catechize him about how many wrong ideas he had at the time. I have immersed some people in my time who had some pretty scrambled notions but who sincerely sought to obey the Father in humble submission. I did not try to straighten out all of their hang-ups before I assisted them in their obedience to my Lord.

It will help you to remember that "unto the remission of sins" is not a part of the command Peter gave to conscience stricken enquirers on the day of Pentecost. When they cried aloud asking what to do they were told to do two things, "Reform your lives and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ." "For the remission of sins" does not express what we do for God but what he does for us. This is just as true of the Holy Spirit which is bestowed as a gift.

When any person reforms his conduct and is immersed upon the basis that he believes in Jesus Christ, he has done all that is required to receive the forgiveness of his sins. He may be incorrect in his information as to when God accords amnesty or bestows pardon, but this no more invalidates the promise than a mistake as to when the bank credits your interest wipes out your deposit.

Let me anticipate your next question. Certainly I have brothers in the Baptist party. In that respect I am just like Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb, and the great majority of restoration leaders. Not one of these would have dreamed of insisting upon "re-baptism" as essential to entering the fellowship of the Lord, unless the one seeking to be re-baptized positively stated that he did not believe in Jesus at the time of his immersion. I want to share with you a lengthy quote from the pen of Alexander Campbell which needs to be studied and considered by every person in our list of readers today.

**"Let me once more say, that the only thing which can justify re-immersion into the name of the Father of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is a confession on the part of the candidate that he did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God — that he died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, at the time of his first immersion — that he now *believes* the testimony of the Apostles concerning him, and desires to be buried and rise with Christ in faith of a resurrection to eternal life. The instant that re-baptism is preached and practised on any other ground than that now stated — such as deficient knowledge, weak faith, a change of views — then have we contradicted in some way and made void the word of the Lord, "he who will believe and be immersed shall be saved" — then have we abandoned the principles of the present reformation, instituted experience meetings, committees for examining candidates, changed the bond of union, and made something else than the belief of the gospel facts the faith of the gospel."**

If someone reared in the Baptist tradition tells me that he was immersed primarily and solely to become a member of the Baptist sect (and no one ever has) I will urge upon him that he has not really been immersed at all in the scriptural context, or for a scriptural reason. Baptism is not a partisan door. It is not a sectarian passport. When led by the Spirit, we are all baptized into one body and every person who has been baptized at the prompting of the Spirit through the good news is in that body.

A man does not become my brother by coming out of the Baptists party but by coming into Christ. I do not receive men because they are Baptists, Mennonites or any other kinds of "ists" or "ites," but because they are children of God. If I received one because he was a Baptist I would have to reject all who were not Baptists. But if I receive men because they are children of God I am free to receive all of God's children.

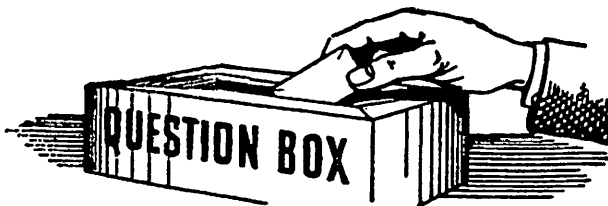
Certainly, I would prefer that we were not partitioned off and divided into separate corrals. It would be great if all of the walls were knocked down and we could roam the great pasture and eat the provisions of love with no cross-fences, but it is not that way, and until it is I am going to love my brothers where they are. I do not think you can argue or debate the fences down. I do believe they can be melted down by the warmth of love. God's love is a blowtorch when directed against steely barriers.

I can summarize by repeating that I do not recall meeting anyone who was baptized *because* his sins had been forgiven. I have met a lot of people who thought their sins were forgiven before they were baptized, my thought is, of course, that they were mistaken about it. But they did not give that as the reason for their baptism. I do not consider that their immersion was invalidated by their mistaken view as to something else, and neither do I think they have to have a clear view of the matter before they can obey the Father.

A lot of our preaching brethren who live in mortal fear and tremble at the thought that somebody may not be clear about when God's grace becomes efficacious, intone over a candidate. "I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ for the *remission of your sins*." But they do not know if they are baptizing one for the forgiveness of sins or not because they cannot read his heart. They do not know his thoughts or intents, and cannot guarantee that what they are doing is at all acceptable with God. We borrow a leaf from our Catholic neighbours when we assume that we can, by pronouncing a certain formula, place God in a position where he cannot deny our action.

"The one whom you are baptizing may not even believe that Jesus is the Christ. He may be submitting to baptism merely to marry one of the girls in the congregation, or because his father has threatened to leave him out of his will if he is not a member of the church. All we can do is to take the word of one who confesses that he believes. He may be lying at the time. We do not know if he has sincerely repented. Only God can forgive sins because sin is an offence against the majesty of God. Pronouncing certain words over the head of a person will not change his state.

W. Carl Ketcherside.




---

Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

---

"Can a person reach the truth simply by reading the gospel in their own N.T. i.e., without a Church of Christ member preaching it to them? If a person realised their need for baptism and got a friend to immerse them "into the Name of the Father, Son

and Holy Spirit" would this be valid; i.e., must immersions be carried out only by Church of Christ members to be valid? If a person was immersed because Christ taught it, but did not understand all the facts, e.g., remission of sins, 'putting on Christ' etc. would their baptism be invalid?"

There are three separate questions here, but since they are out of the same 'drawer', so to speak, I shall attempt to answer them as one, but still maintaining the essential emphasis of each question.

#### The Unerring Light

There are those who hold that the Scriptures are inerrant in what they teach and therefore anyone who reads the Bible without any explanation from other sources must inevitably come to an understanding of the truth which its pages contain. They will point to what the Psalmist says "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105), and they will deduce from this, metaphorically speaking, that since the word will light the path and illuminate where the feet are treading, they will not fail to find the way to God. They will also point to the fact that Isaiah says, "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8); consequently they will argue that the person of ordinary intelligence, so long as he has the word in his hands, is sure to find his way inerrantly to salvation. This reasoning may be fine so far as it goes, but I believe that it does not go far enough. The reader will understand, of course, that I am not questioning the truth of the Bible; what I am questioning is the assumption that such truth is readily understandable by someone who just reads the Bible without explanation by someone else. Having said that, no one realises more than I the dangers inherent in the sources from which the explanations may come: the questioner seems to appreciate this because he mentions quite specifically 'a Church of Christ member' as the possible source of explanation. I would go further than that; I would seek out someone to help me who had no denominational axe to grind and who would examine the text quite carefully and objectively. We must now address the question "Why do I believe some explanation is necessary".

There are several reasons. First and foremost is the recorded incident involving Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8: 26-40). Here is a man reading the Scriptures on his own; he holds a high position in his own land and therefore must be considered intelligent. Philip asks him, "Understandest thou what thou readest"? Back comes the answer, "How can I, expect some man should guide me"? The Eunuch had evidently not identified Isaiah 53 as a messianic prophecy and he needed someone, in this instance Philip, to explain it to him; once explained, he understood and went on to be converted. In this age when serious reading seems no longer to be the norm, we must conclude that many people would not understand the Bible unless it were explained to them.

My second example involves the risen Lord and the two on the road to Emmaus. The Lord joins Himself to them and they do not recognise Him. They recount their tale of woe to Him concerning the crucifixion of Jesus and their unfulfilled expectation that He should have been the One to have redeemed Israel. After chastising them for their lack of understanding of the Scriptures concerning the prophecies, the text goes on, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (See Luke 24: 13-27) They, whom we must conclude had read the prophets, just did not understand what they had read until Jesus explained it to them. This same fact emerged on many occasions when Jesus contended with the Jews of His day.

On this evidence alone, I believe we must accept that it is not a proven fact that people can read the Bible alone and, without some word of explanation, come to the right conclusions regarding salvation.



### Is It Valid?

In order to consider the second part of our question I would ask you to imagine the sort of dialogue which might take place between a man and his friend. "Oh, hello Bert. I've been reading my Bible and I have come to the conclusion that I need to be immersed in order to be saved. Will you do it for me?"

"I'll do anything to oblige, Alf. What have you got to be immersed in?" "Well, in water of course".

"I don't quite understand, Alf. If all you need to do is to be immersed in water, why do you not go down to the swimming pool, stand up to your shoulders in water, and then dip your head under. You'll be immersed in water then".

"It's not quite so simple as that, Bert. You see, I also have to repent and confess my faith in Jesus Christ before I'm immersed".

"Well, I don't know anything about repenting, and I hardly think I'm the one you should be confessing to. Shouldn't you be with people who believe like you do? It seems to me you won't get much benefit from just dipping yourself in water. But I'll push you under if you really want me to".

Some may think it a little facetious to quote such a dialogue, but is it? If the 'friend' is just a friend and not a Christian, then how could he or she be expected to understand the teaching relating to Baptism, and not only that, how could that 'friend' be expected to understand the complex relationship of the Godhead, and my relationship to the Godhead once I had been immersed? Furthermore, on what basis could this 'friend' assess my sincerity in seeking Baptism, and how could he or she point out to me the seriousness of the commitment I was making? It is true to say, of course, that there is no office of baptiser in the Church, but it is equally true to say that good judgment and prudence should be exercised, particularly with regard to safety, when one of necessity would have to consider the relative physique of baptiser and baptised. I suppose it would raise an interesting theological point if the baptiser allowed the one being baptised to drown in the water; there would also be a little legal fuss as well. But I'm sure you get the point I'm making. Baptism is an ordinance of the Church, and as such it should be conducted by the Church; after all, the one who is baptised is baptised into the Lord's Body, the Church, and in the Church can be spiritually fed and nurtured until maturity is reached.

### Validity Continued

Can anyone really know what a valid baptism is? Oh yes, we can witness the overt act of someone being immersed in water, but only God knows the state of heart and mind of the one being immersed. Is that person responding to congregational or family pressure, is the response made because of transitory emotional instability generated from the preacher or congregation; or is the response made from genuine faith and belief? It is no use saying, even time will tell, because we know full well that a person can go through life exhibiting the mechanics of Christianity without the heart being near to God. We baptise in faith and hope but ever ensuring that the teaching and practice of the Christian community will lead the convert ever upward.

I am sure that many Christians had the same experience that I had when I came into the Church. I knew that I had been baptised for the remission of sins because I cannot conceive of anyone hearing the Gospel preached and not realising that he is a sinner, but as regards understanding what 'putting on Christ' meant, and being baptised 'into Christ', I had not the faintest idea. I do not, however, consider my baptism to have been invalid because I did not understand everything at that point in time.

Response to the Gospel is not an easy thing to understand. One person may respond positively after hearing a Gospel message of about thirty minutes duration; another may take months to respond. I do realise the urgency in some peoples' minds

to get the potential convert into the water, but my training would indicate to me that some teaching ought to be given **before** a person is baptised so that he or she will realise the enormity of the commitment they are making to the Lord, and that structured teaching should be given **after** the baptism in order to consolidate that commitment which has been made. My own experience has proved to me that there are far too many Christians who, after many years in the Church, do not fully understand the fundamentals of the glorious Gospel which they have embraced. This is a task which teachers, preachers, and leaders have to rectify. How can converts progress to the 'strong meat' of the Word if strong meat is not on the menu of the 'table' at which they feed?

So what do I believe relative to the question? I believe that the Truth needs to be explained before it can be properly understood. I believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Church and should be administered by the Church, and not by 'friends'. I believe that a person's baptism will not be invalid even if that person does not know everything before baptism, but I also believe that a candidate for immersion should at least know **why** he or she is being immersed, and that they should understand the commitment they are making to the Lord and His Body.

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

### **“IF ANY MAN SPEAKS” ( 1 PETER 4.11)**

It is difficult for us to think in the abstract. Principles in a vacuum do not register in our minds. It is only when they are applied to examples that we appreciate what is meant. So it had been my intention to continue the 1987/1989 series under the above heading, applying the ideas propounded to issues at large, but other pressures took precedence. Brother Gardiner's encouragement coupled now with the devastating news of our beloved sisters Payne's plight has made me realise the need to speak out firmly, howbeit in kindness.

In a recent issue, Brother Gardiner mentioned that some Brethren felt the need to have a directory of 'old path' churches. Whilst I would depreciate the use of the term "Old Path" in a sectarian sense, I acknowledge the sad necessity of needing to know when travelling the British Isles, where one could break bread in the way our Lord desired it to be done. I would add that we who desire to restore New Testament principles need to be more aware of one another and to encourage one another to positive action. Isolation, even imagined, can breed despondency. We have been portrayed as difficult and stubborn people. Being cowed into silence, our reticence has left the field wide open for satan to busily infiltrate the ranks of the saints under the guise of an angel of light. Generations of loving toil that has gone into removing the encrustations of centuries of error, in laying the groundwork for the restoration of scriptural christianity, is now being eroded. The widening appeal of the "individual-cup/one-man-ministry outlook suggests that future generations will scarcely have anyone to direct their minds back to pristine purity in faith and practice.

Why should we be hesitant in teaching what we know to be important and true? If we are difficult and stubborn, we must put that right then, with the love of Jesus in our hearts, in prayer, to patiently and persistently teach scriptural principles with firmness and clarity because **"if the trumpeter uttereth an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle"**. In love with kindness because our desire is to "gain" our brothers and sisters not to demolish them. If we should be reviled, let us never revile. Those of you who remember the turmoil of the 1950's will understand why I feel obliged to say these things.

Events indicate that we are at a crucial point in the history of the churches in this country. It depends on the courage of the few to be prepared to brave abuse and

to speak out now if the tide is to be turned, so that again the brotherhood will be committed to speaking only as the oracles of God.

### Underlying Principles

Speaking as the Oracles of God does not mean that we must be legalistically pedantic.

Solicitors are employed to help companies to get away with as much as possible without technically breaking the law of the country. So often the reason for Parliament passing laws is often thwarted.

If a Christian is involved in doing this sort of thing, the world is quick to point out that it is hypocritical. How much more hypocritical would it be for a Christian to be this way with the laws of God?

If a man, ostentatiously dressed, when shown the scripture; 1 Timothy Chapter 2 v.9-10 **"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array: But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."** should reply, "that only refers to women". He would be legalistically right but morally wrong.

We should, then, always take to heart the underlying spiritual principles of Bible instructions. Legalism deadens.

In the 1988 September issue, it was shown that someone who greets a fellow Christian whom he secretly hates with a hypocritically warm hand-shake violates the underlying principle of the command **"Greet one another with a holy kiss"**. I don't need to labour this point. It is obvious to all. Can we also see, then, that greeting a brother or sister in Christ with a warm embrace that expresses our appreciation of them being our brother or sister in Christ, is fulfilling the command to "Greet one another with a holy kiss", even though there is no kissing. Let us look at an "issue at large" in the light of this.

### Head Covering

Is it, then, deadening legalism to insist that ladies heads be covered in public worship? Is this arrogant chauvinism? Shouldn't we rather look for the underlying spiritual principle and apply it where it is relevant today instead of pedantically insisting on a practice that was appropriate to a bygone age?

I propose to address these questions in the next article.

Allan Ashurst, Manchester.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

|         |              |                    |
|---------|--------------|--------------------|
| Aug. 6  | Psa. 22:1-24 | Mark 15:21-41      |
| Aug. 13 | Job 19:19-29 | Mark 15:42 to 16:8 |
| Aug. 20 | Gen. 12:1-9  | Mark 16:9-20       |
| Aug. 27 | Neh. 1       | 1 Thess. 1 to 2:9  |

### Crucifixion

This method of execution was borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians. In O.T. times dead bodies were occasionally hung on a tree as a warning (Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23; Joshua 10:26). Such a body was regarded as accursed (Galatians 3:13) and had to be removed and buried before night came. This practice accounts for the

N.T. reference to Christ's cross as a tree (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1 Peter 2:24), a symbol of humiliation.

In Roman times only slaves, provincials and the lowest types of criminals were crucified, but rarely Roman citizens. Crucifixion was abolished by the Emperor Constantine in 315 A.D.

Paul wrote: **"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness ..."** (1 Cor. 1:23). **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"** (Gal. 6:14). **"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even**

the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). To Paul the crucifixion was at the heart of the gospel message.

At Motherwell we use a large Bible which features the drawings and paintings of the great Dutch artist Rembrandt (1606 -1669). One of them is entitled **The raising of the Cross**, which he painted for Prince Frederick Henry of Orange. It now hangs in the museum Alte Pinakothek in Munich, West Germany. In it, a man in a blue painter's beret raises Christ upon the cross. That man is Rembrandt himself – a self portrait. He thus stated for all the world to see that his sins had sent Christ to the cross. How true! That goes for your sins, dear reader, and mine as well. We are all guilty. But remember, we can now all lay down our burdens of sin at the foot of His cross and be saved.

#### The Resurrection

Peter in that great address on the day of Pentecost declared: **"This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"** (Acts 2:32). He quoted a Psalm on that occasion: **"His soul was not left in sheol (Greek hades), neither His flesh did see corruption"** (Psalm 16:10). So the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead was the subject of prophecy and was certainly fulfilled.

Jesus Himself foresaw His rising from the tomb. **"And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again"** (Mark 8:31). **"For the Son of man shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spat upon: and then they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again"** (Luke 18:32,33). **"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"**. (Matthew 12:40).

The Christian's hope lies in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. As Jesus conquered Satan and death so anyone in

Him can do likewise. What is hope? Hope is expectation coupled with desire. Hope is looking forward to the joys of heaven wherein God dwells. Alexander Campbell in his book *The Christian System* wrote: "There is not one dark cloud, not one dark speck, in all the heavens of Christian hope. Everything seen in its wide dominions, in the unbounded prospect yet before us, is bright, cheering, animating, transporting." Thanks be to Jesus for the Christian hope!

#### Mark 16: 9-20

There is much more controversy over this passage. Many believe that it is a later addition to the Gospel. C. E. Graham Swift has written: "These last 12 verses, relegated to the margin in RSV, present one of the major textual problems of the N.T. The principal facts are as follows. The two codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus omit the whole section, though their scribes possibly knew of it. Four other MSS of less weight supply an alternative and much shorter ending also given in the margin, and three of them add an explanatory note. Most other uncial and cursive MSS, together with versions and patristic writers, support the inclusion of 16:9-20." Arthur S. Peake has commented: "The consideration of the genuineness of this passage belongs mainly to textual criticism. The MS evidence is in itself almost conclusive against it, and the internal evidence is almost as clear, both as regards connexion with the preceding context and characteristics." Another commentator has said: "These twelve verses were certainly added at a very early time, perhaps at the beginning of the 2nd century. They seem to have been formed in part out of the other Gospels and they truthfully describe the beliefs of the apostolic churches on the subjects with which they deal." Finally, I quote Alfred Edersheim: "I may here state that I accept the genuineness of the concluding portion of St. Mark. If, on internal grounds, it must be admitted that it reads like a postscript; on the other hand, without

it the section would read like a mutilated document."

Personally, I go along with Ederheim. I know the subject is beset with considerable difficulties (as I have discovered during my personal research), but I am convinced in my own mind that Mark 16:9-20 are genuine verses. (For further information on the matter I suggest you contact my good friend and brother Graeme Pearson of Dunfermline, whose knowledge of Biblical Textual Criticism far exceeds mine.)

### I Thessalonians

WRITER: The Apostle Paul.

DATE: c. A.D. 52, during Paul's second missionary journey.

PLACE: Corinth.

THESSALONICA: The city was once called Therma (hot spring), but Cassander in c. 315 B.C., one of the successors of Alexander the Great, took residence there and called it after his wife Thessalonike. It was a city and seaport of Macedonia. Macedonia was once an independent country until subdued by the Romans.

In Roman times it was an *urbs libera* (a free city) and Via Egnatia, the main artery through which life flowed from Rome to the remote extremities of the Asian world, passes directly through the centre of Thessalonica. It had a celebrated amphitheatre where, for example, gladiatorial shows were held and a circus for public games.

Thessaloniki today is a flourishing modern city, centre of government for northern Greece, and second only to Athens.

CHURCH FOUNDED: by Paul himself in c. A.D. 50. See Acts 17:1-9.

PURPOSE: "Being thus prevented from visiting the Thessalonians again as he had intended (2:17, 18) he sent Silas and Timothy to visit them in his stead (3:6), and on their return to him at Corinth (Acts 17:14, 15: 18:5), he wrote it . . . to convince them of the gospel's truth, and to confirm them in that faith, lest they should be turned aside from it by the

persecutions of the unbelieving Jews, and also to excite them to a holy conversation, becoming the dignity of their high and holy calling" (H. T. Horne).

### Sound It Out!

The Thessalonian saints became followers (imitators) of Paul, Silas, Timothy and, of course, the Lord, and also became models for other believers. Paul wrote: "You were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" (1:7). Also we read: "From Thessalonica the word of the Lord rang out; not in Macedonia and Achaia alone, but everywhere your faith in God has reached men's ears. No words of ours are needed for they themselves spread the news of our visit to you and its effect." (1:8, N.E.B.).

As I write this article I have just received a telephone call from America to inform me of the sudden death of my good friend and brother, W. Carl Ketcherside of St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. He is one of my favourite writers and I wish to quote him on this passage. "Today we 'sound in' the word instead of sounding it out. We pay men to rehearse in our ears what we should be speaking in the ears of others. We refuse to free those who have the ability to take the word of life to the dying. We want them to spend their time talking about life to the living. Jesus refused to spend his time with those who thought there was nothing wrong with them. He said, 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' He went to publicans and sinners, instead of to Pharisees and the sanctimonious."

The beginning of the second chapter deals in what manner the gospel was preached unto the Thessalonians. I like the thought that Paul and the others were as a nursing mother unto them (2:7). Clearly they showed great care, love and affection.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

Sincerity is a form of currency that defies counterfeit.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Haddington:** Our last Saturday evening gospel meeting of the present series took place on May 20th when a large attendance heard a very fine gospel address from Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline, based upon I Peter 3:21. Graeme was a member of the Baptist Church at one time and so has a wide experience in the subject. We again wish to thank all those who were able to be with us, and especially those who came all the way from the Stirling area, and other distances away. These meetings have been well supported by the brethren, and by visitors, and we know that if we sow the seed we shall yet reap. Again we had tea and chat after the preaching and a very enjoyable time was had in fellowship. Again we thank all those who came great distances to speak for us.

Last Sunday we had as visitors, brother and sister Murray Postle from the Elkton area of Oregon, and enjoyed their fellowship, and encouraging exhortation from our brother.

Ruth Nisbet.

**Kitwe, Zambia:** A bomb blast disturbed the peace of the Woodhall home on Wednesday May 17th 1989. The bomb exploded at the nearby house of a Zambian businessman and killed a man instantly in the bedroom. The businessman's wife, in the same bedroom was unhurt in the explosion which ripped off the side wall. A baby asleep in the room was seriously injured. The bomb blast has led to the arrest of the businessman and his associates on suspicion of murder. The businessman and his family are well known to the Woodhall family. The newly planted congregation in this section of the Copperbelt town of Kitwe engage in regular door to door visitation of all households with the challenge of the Gospel of Christ.

Angela Woodhall,  
Kitwe, Zambia.

## OBITUARIES

**St. Louis, Missouri:** Many brethren in this country would be greatly saddened to hear of the passing of a greatly beloved and highly esteemed brother, W. Carl Ketcherside. Brother Ketcherside and his wife Nell made two visits to Britain and both times were well received and made lots of friends. His first visit must have been as far back as 1946 but I was so impressed that I (and no doubt others) can easily remember the subjects upon which he spoke. I can even remember the colour of his suit. He truly was an 'unforgettable' personality. Brother Ketcherside was a marvellous orator and this coupled with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the scriptures made him a rather special preacher of the gospel. He made no attempt to exploit the British churches when here and deplored those who would. Indeed brother Ketcherside campaigned relentlessly against division amongst brethren and vigorously opposed the "Church of Christ-ism" which has arisen, and the sectarian tendencies apparent in many churches. Naturally such a man would be regarded as 'controversial' by some, but nothing he said can be ignored. Everything he said was interesting and all that he wrote makes compulsive reading. Truly he was one of the great men of our time and is a real loss to the brotherhood. He certainly must be greatly missed by the church where he lived and by his children and grandchildren. To them we offer our sympathy and very genuine condolences. There are many here in Britain who remember brother Ketcherside with great affection. As a tribute I have published in this issue a little excerpt from his thought-provoking article called "Designs of Baptism" - well worth a read.

Editor.

**Bedminster, Bristol:** With much sadness we report the passing from this life of our dear sister Dorothy Blackmore who lived at Weston-super-Mare. She was known by many readers of this paper

and will be lovingly remembered by all. Many will have cause to be thankful to her and her husband Tom for their generous support of many good works. During recent years, her health had declined to the point that she needed constant care in the nursing home that had become her home.

Our prayer is now for our brother Tom in his loss and we commend him to the comfort of Almighty God in whom they have, both trusted during their lives.

Geoffrey Daniell.

**Haddington:** The church at Haddington regret to announce the death on 24th June of our Sis. Betty Gardiner, devoted wife of Bro. James Gardiner. Sis. Betty became a member of the church in Trant in her teens and was later a founder member of the church in Haddington. She bore illhealth for many years without complaint and although latterly in great pain, she was always a faithful attendant at the meetings of the church. Her example will be greatly missed by the church in Haddington. We extend our Christian love and sympathy to Bro. James and family and commend them to our Heavenly Father for all true comfort and consolation.

Ruth Nisbet,  
Secretary.

---

### THANKS

Brother Tom Blackmore, has written to ask me to print a little notice in this paper thanking all those who took the trouble to send him a letter, or a card, or telephone call, to extend sympathy to him in his recent bereavement and passing of his dear wife Dorothy. Tom nursed Dorothy virtually night and day for the last four years and appreciates all the many expressions of kindness and consolation he has received: many calling at his home.

---

The Bible is perfect for its purpose: and its purpose is to make us perfect.

### “WHAT THE ARTIST LEFT OUT”

Readers may like to know, and particularly those churches and individuals who sent financial help, that the printing of the tract has been very successful. All bills have been paid and of the 50,000 tracts printed more than 40,000 have now been distributed. I have been sending them to all over, to England, Ireland and Wales and abroad and have only about 8,000 left. So, anyone wanting more should let me know. We have made no charge for them but have received, in some cases, a very generous contribution. Again I would like to thank all those who rallied round, sent money, letters of encouragement and made the project possible.

Editor.

---

### CROSS-BEARING FOR CHRIST

— It does not consist simply in speaking or exhorting in social meeting. Praying in public does not exhaust the subject, nor the larger part of it. It is more — much more — than these. It is large forbearance — long-suffering — great patience under severe trials, for the sake of the cause of our loving Lord. It is to endure with resignation the loss of property, of friends and dear ones by death, and to say sincerely and reverently, “Thy will be done.”

It is to meet with calmness and fortitude the blasting of the brightest hopes, and to bow with unfeigned submission before the irretrievable ruin of the grandest of our earthly prospects. Crosses are not arbitrary, nor do they lie across our paths by accident. In many instances they are not a bane but a blessing. How often the turbulent, passionate nature is subdued into the most submissive and gentle of spirits by years of Cross-bearing.

Many times the men who move the world are those who are born into it with the strongest and fiercest of passions. Witness John, the apostle, and James, his brother. Both of these men partook of the ambitious spirit of the mother in

seeking the greatest place of honour in the coming kingdom.

Unsanctified ambition is a heartless, selfish passion in the human heart. Ambition is the supremest passion in the loftiest spirits. The Saviour rebuked it, to give it direction, and pruned it that it might produce celestial fruit. When the Master was rejected by the people of a village in Samaria, both John and James said, "Lord, will thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did!" Here was the fiery passion of revenge. It was unhallowed in the Master's sight. Jealousy prompted John to forbid one casting out demons in Jesus' name, "because he followed not with them." It was not of "the godly sort." The Master surnamed the brothers, "The sons of Thunder." And yet after suffering for years the greatest persecutions for Jesus' sake, the heart of John became a perennial fountain of sweetness. The love divine that ejects earthly and carnal jealousy and demon-like revenge, was dominant in his heart. The lessons of Jesus were wonderfully helpful; his life and example assisted much; but these, without some of life's severest trials, would not be sufficient. The refining fire must burn and destroy the dross and melt the pure gold. It is in the molten gold that Christ sees and

rejoices in, His image. John Bunyan was one of the vilest of blasphemers. He swore so terribly in an English village that the air seemed laden with moral infection. A mother of a lot of boys rushed out of her house and besought him to depart. The world will never forget the purified Bunyan. Without the gloom, restraint and sorrows of Bedford prison, he might not in a given period have passed so far on the "heavenly way." It was after the sore trials in the years of prison-life in Caesarea; after suffering cruelly from injustice before the courts of Felix and Festus; after the almost unparalleled voyage through storms and perils, to Italy; after years of sorrows as a prisoner in Rome; that Paul, the aged in the mellowness of his spirit, gave to the world that charming letter — the gem of his epistles — to his "joy and crown" in Philippi.

Paul's "thorn in the flesh" helped to bring into his soul a richer stream of Divine grace.

Nothing short of such personal tribulations could have produced such a Christ-like spirit. The character of Paul, thus exalted, can not be "hidden." In all the horizon of time, this grand character will stand out before the eyes of humanity, like a city of burnished gold on the highest mountain top.

— Guide.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly.

PRICE PER YEAR — POST PAID BY SURFACE MAIL

|                                       |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| UNITED KINGDOM and COMMONWEALTH ..... | £ 6.00  |
| CANADA & U.S.A. ....                  | \$10.00 |

AIR MAIL please add £1.50 or \$3.00 to above surface mail rates

DISTRIBUTION AGENT & TREASURER:

JOHN K. KNELLER, 4 Glassel Park Road, Longniddry, East Lothian, EH32 0NY  
Telephone: Longniddry (0875) 53212 to whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 87 Main Street, Pathhead, Midlothian,  
Scotland EH37 5PT. Telephone: Ford 320 527

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by  
Lothian Printers, 109 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian. Tel: (0368) 63785