

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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ELECT FROM EVERY NATION

Prompted by the coming General Election, last month's article consisted of a cursory glance at Peter's words "**Make your calling and election sure**" (2 Peter 1:20). Having embarked on such a study and having last month dealt with our **CALLING**, I will, this month, offer a few remarks upon our **ELECTION**. In the previous article we saw that God "**Calls**" mankind by **THE GOSPEL** and that that call was intended for everybody. How then can the term "**ELECTION**" be related to a call which was meant to be universal? The 'Elect' would seem to be a selective group whereas God's "**Call**" is general and all embracing.

Before considering the meaning of "**The Elect**" or "**Election**", let us notice a few random examples of the use of these terms. Jesus, speaking prophetically of the sacking of Jerusalem (by the Romans in 70 AD) predicted that there would be a temporary lapse in the hostilities allowing many Christians to escape with their lives from the beleaguered city, and said, "**And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for THE ELECT'S sake those days shall be shortened.**" (Matt. 24:22). Again, Jesus speaking a parable to the end that even human Judges and Magistrates can sometimes be prevailed upon to avenge a suppliant's cause, asks "**And shall not God avenge HIS OWN ELECT, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them.**" (Luke 18:7). The apostle Paul also in the context of the close-knit bond which exists between Christ and His followers asks, "**Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's ELECT. It is God that justifieth.**" (Rom. 8:31). Again, Paul (in Col. 3:12) exhorts the Christians at Colosse to "**Put on, therefore, AS THE ELECT OF GOD, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.**" Paul also claimed "**. . . I endure all things for THE ELECT'S sake, that they may also obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**" (2 Tim. 2:10). Both Peter and Paul sometimes addressed their epistles "**To THE ELECT according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.**" (1 Peter:1 and Tit. 1:1).

These comprise only a few of the many passages referring to Christians in general being an 'Elect' or 'Chosen' generation, but we also encounter instances where particular individuals were also thus described: e.g. Rufus was "**Chosen in the Lord**" (Rom. 16:13) and Paul talks of the "**ELECT sister**" (2 John 1:13) and, of course, Paul himself was "**a chosen vessel unto God**" (Acts 9:15).

ELECTION: ITS DEFINITION

Nearly everything we do is in response to our own choice. Amongst all the different alternatives open to us in any given situation we, in a free society, eventually choose for ourselves our subsequent actions. However, when we think of some choice

being reached by an **Election**, we immediately envisage the casting of votes. Obviously this perception is due to our minds being conditioned by the political set-up in this country, and in democracies in general, where political choice is made by vote-casting. I suppose if we lived elsewhere we might not see it that way, for in some lands 'Elections' are a bit farcical with only one candidate on the ballot-paper, and big chunks of the electorate not allowed to vote. However, in the **scriptural** use of the term (Election or Elect) is any element of voting in view? After all, there are many instances of voting in the Bible, and decisions by "casting lots" goes back in time to the Book of Leviticus. And we know that when a replacement for Judas Iscariot was chosen, the apostles "**gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.**" (Acts 1:26). We should also bear in mind that some versions of the Bible replace the word "Elect" with "Chosen" and quite often the two words seem interchangeable. The English Dictionary is not much help and gives a fairly similar definition for both words. Apparently the word "Choose" is from the Old English (Ceosan) meaning to select, pick out, prefer or elect. "Election" (or "Elect") is from the Latin (Electo) and means much the same as choose: i.e. to choose, select, pick out or prefer. We can, of course, short-circuit problems with the Latin and Old English by going back to the language which predates both these tongues; i.e. by going back to (the original language of the N.T.) the Greek. Vine tells us that "Election" comes from **Eklektos** and simply means chosen, picked out, preferred or selected: and this always by **God Himself**. **Voting does not, therefore, play any part whatsoever in Biblical Election**, because God never needs to vote. "Choose" or "Chosen", according to Vine, comes variously from eight Greek words, having slight shades of meaning, but essentially meaning to select, prefer or elect.

ELECTION: ITS SCOPE

God had, and still has, an **eternal purpose** for the salvation of mankind. This purpose was formed even "**before the foundation of the world**", and in keeping with that purpose, God has chosen men, (particular men), to fulfil His aims and objects, and not only men but angels. Paul says to Timothy, "**I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and THE ELECT ANGELS, that thou observe these things .**" (1 Tim. 5:21). It might surprise us that Timothy should be adjured or charged in such terms, where angels are placed on such a high level (with Deity; God and Jesus). Presumably 'Elect' angels are thus described to distinguish them from the fallen angels that sinned, and "**the angels which kept not their first estate**". (Jude 6).

In considering God's 'Elect' we notice at once that **JESUS, Himself**, was the Elect of God. The apostle Peter, in describing how Christians should regard Christ, says, "**To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men but CHOSEN OF God, and precious . . . Wherefore also it is contained in scripture. Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, ELECT, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded**". (1 Peter 2:4). Christ, pre-eminently, was God's **chosen and elect**. At the transfiguration, we read that a voice came down from heaven saying, "**This is My Son, My CHOSEN, listen to Him**". (Luke 9:35 RSV).

While it is generally true that Paul was "A light to the Gentiles", and Peter likewise to the Jews, yet when Ananias remonstrated against any alliance with Paul, the Lord said, "**Go thy way, for he (Paul) is a CHOSEN vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel**". (Acts 9:15). Likewise Peter could say, "**Men and brethren ye know how that a good while ago, God made CHOICE among us, that the Gentiles by MY mouth should hear the word of the gospel**". (Acts 15:7). And so both Peter and Paul were **specialy chosen** to take the gospel to all nations, Jew or Gentile.

The word "Election" or "Elect" is also applied to the faithful "Remnant" of the Jews. Paul, speaking of the choice made by God between Esau and Jacob, (even

before they were born) says that this was so **“that the purpose of God according to ELECTION might stand not of works, but of Him that calleth”**. (Rom. 9:11), and, again, talking (contemporarily) of the Jews in general, said, **“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the ELECTION of grace”**. (Rom.11:5). Paul seems to equate the ‘Elect’ with ‘The remnant’ and says (v7) **“What then; Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh after; but THE ELECTION hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded”**. It is important to note (by reading v.8 onwards) **how and by what** the rest of Israel were blinded, for some theologians in support of the Election Doctrine, suggest that God blinded them; which is quite untrue.

And so **Christ** was the Elect, or chosen, of God; as were the **Elect Angels**; as were certain prominent **individuals** such as Peter and Paul; as were conspicuous **groups** such as the Jewish remnant; as were the many Gentile converts (Christians **generally**) for Paul said of the Christians at Thessalonica that he gave thanks for them, **“Knowing, brethren beloved, your ELECTION of God”**.

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

As many Bible students will know, some theologians equate God’s “Election” with the doctrine of predestination, which in its very simplest form alleges that God, at the dawn of time, ‘drew up a list’ of those ordained to salvation (The Elect) and the rest are destined to be damned. Obviously this is an over-simplification of the doctrine but basically this is what it amounts to. In short, some people are ‘Chosen’ for heaven and some for hell, as per God’s foreordination, and there’s not much that can be done about it. Natural justice and reason, let alone the good and gracious nature of God, rebels against this despicable idea, obviously based upon a thorough misunderstanding of scripture. One such scripture is (Eph. 1:4) where Paul, talking of how Christians are blessed in so many ways in Christ, says, **“According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children . . .”** Yes, God has chosen Christians, but surely the question is **HOW**, and on **what basis**, did God make His choice? Was it a question of pulling names out of a hat, or some more positive principle? There are, of course, several other well-known passages quoted: such as Rom. 8:29 which says, **“For whom He (God) did foreknow, He also did predestinate. . . moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”** Another ‘proof’ passage is 2 Thess. 2:13 which says, **“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”**. (But even in this latter passage readers will notice the **basis** on which God’s choice was made; i.e. **“through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”**.) The ‘chosen’ were those who would believe the truth: the gospel.

The doctrine of predestination was espoused by Calvin: some might even say that it originated with him, and today it is still very widespread. As an illustration of the general acceptance of the teaching, I quote the following from the Imperial Bible Dictionary, an otherwise excellent volume, where the author (Rev. Patrick Fairbairn) under the heading “Election”, while dismissing objections to the doctrine, says, (Quote) **“Another theory of the subject is that of an election of characters as contradistinguished from persons: i.e. an election of such as believe and obey. A very few sentences will suffice to show that this kind of election has no place in the word of God ... Faith and obedience are never set forth in scripture as the ground of the decree of election, but, on the other hand, are themselves included in it, and secured by it. We are elected not because we believe and obey, but to believe and obey. (Unquote). This short quotation surely indicates that, according to the ‘election’ dogma, God’s choice is **not** based upon the faith and obedience of the chosen (for these have nothing to do with**

election, says Mr. Fairbairn) but rather, their faith and obedience is forthcoming only because they have been chosen.

CONCLUSION

I suggest that the words of Mr. Fairbairn show that he puts the cart before the horse and that the reverse of all that he says is true. He says that 'the election' is not rooted in characters but persons but surely the reverse is true. God, at the dawn of time, did not draw up a list of names of those destined to be saved but rather a list of the characteristics of those who would be saved. Those whom God chooses (the Elect), are precisely those who believe and obey God. People complain that their lack of success in some job, or other endeavour, was because "their face did not fit": and are we to suppose that God makes similar arbitrary judgements? Mr. Fairbairn goes on to say that "Faith and obedience are never set forth in scripture as the ground" of election. One wonders what he made of statements such as "**He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned**" (Mark 16:15) or (2 Thess. 1:7) which says that Christ will come "**In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Many similar scriptures could be cited. Mr. Fairbairn also says that "We are elected not because we believe and obey but to believe and obey" In short, if we believe and obey it is upon no merit of ours, but it is because God has ordained it. This dogma would seem to strip man from all responsibility in his religious actions, or lack of them, and seems to be second cousin to the 'Once saved always saved' doctrine. Yet, Paul, who indeed was 'chosen of God' was very much aware "that having preached to others", he, himself, "**might be a castaway**" (1 Cor. 9:27). If Paul had thought that he was on God's list, safe and invulnerable, how could he ever envisage being a rejected castaway? He was of The Elect but obviously did not regard his salvation as a certainty. In the scripture with which we began, Peter said, "**make your calling and election sure**". Why should it have to be made sure if it is already a certainty: or do we imagine God has a list which He will later have to alter?

Most of the parables of Jesus, and especially that of the Sower would be farcical if our Election were not contingent upon our faith and obedience. God, being omniscient, foreknows who will be lost and saved, but certainly has not foreordained it. There is a big difference, He has, however, foreordained the type of person who will be lost: i.e. those who reject Christ and the gospel. But "**God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**" (2 Peter 3:9). And HOW are Christians to make their Election sure? By faith, obedience and good works. "**For IF ye DO THESE THINGS ye shall never fall.**" This implies the converse. What things must we do? "**Add to faith, virtue: and to virtue, knowledge: and to knowledge, temperance: and to temperance, patience: and to patience, godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.**" These should abound.

The only form of voting involved in Biblical Election is done with our feet, for we either "walk with the Lord" or, like the rich young ruler, we "walk away sorrowful". It has been said that God votes to have us and the Devil votes to get us, but WE, ourselves, have the casting vote.

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

CALLED OUT

"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." (1 Peter 2:9 R.V.).

WE QUOTE — F.C. DAY

CALLED OUT — “They heard and believed Jesus Christ died to save them, that He poured out His life’s blood on Calvary to purchase them, they repented of their sins, they confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord, they were buried with him by baptism, becoming united with Him in the likeness of His death, they were raised out of the watery grave, thus also becoming united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection, and now walk in newness of life with Him. They have yielded themselves unreservedly to Him, body, soul, and spirit, and must henceforth be proud to bear His name. It would be unthinkable to wear any other. So again Spirit-inspired Apostles lead us aright. Peter exhorts (1 Peter 4. 14-16); **‘If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye: because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God in this name.**”

F.C. DAY.

CALLED CHRISTIANS

In the Acts of Apostles II. 26, we read: **‘The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.’** Whether or not this was originally intended as a term of derision we neither know nor care, but we cannot imagine a more apt designation. Whose disciples were they? Christ’s! They had heard Him say: **‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.’** They were scholars (no matter how slow, no matter how little they comprehended of the fulness of the great claim their Teacher had made), and they had confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God — I say they were scholars of Jesus Christ.

F.C. DAY.

BRETHREN

The suffix ‘ian’ means a follower of. A physician is a follower of physics, a musician is a learner of or disciple of music, a Wesleyan is a follower of Wesley, a Swedenborgian, a disciple of Swedenborg, a magician one who studies or practises magical arts. Yes! and a Christian is a disciple of, a learner of, a follower of, a student of, one who practises, Jesus Christ in his daily life. Is it too much to suggest that here we have the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy in 62.2, **‘And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name?’** Hence we have the Church of Christ composed of Christians who become brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, all known under the generic term ‘brethren.’

F.C. DAY.

OUR COMMON STANDING AS BRETHREN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

“Calling the attention of His disciples to the vulgar ambition of those Jewish leaders who loved the upper rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues, and to be called of men ‘Rabbi, Rabbi,’ Jesus said, **‘But be not you called Rabbi, for one is your Master even Christ, and all you are brethren.’** If that warning had been kept in mind and acted upon, an apostate priesthood would never have been associated with the religion of Christ. God and the devil only know how much mischief has been done to the cause of truth and holiness through the introduction and continued existence of a clerical order, It is bad from beginning to end . . . ”

AS BRETHREN IN CHRIST

Thanks and praise to our God for having delivered us and kept us from such vanity and folly, and for having taught us so plainly that every disciple of Jesus is, or

should be, a minister of Christ. To sensible, thoughtful men it is a great commendation of our plea that we all stand upon one common platform as brethren in Christ, refusing to recognise any distinction of caste or rank or social position.

“There is neither bond nor free,
Great not servile, Lord, in Thee;
Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void.”

Recognising the principle of perfect freedom in all matters of mere speculative opinion, and many of us being active politicians, we bow down neither to an aristocracy, nor a democracy, nor plutocracy.

J. GRINSTEAD.

THE OLD CHURCH

“Rest assured God’s plans are the best. Failure must attend all substitutes. ‘Will-Worship,’ (a self-chosen order of worship) is an offence. The Saviour’s **“In vain do ye worship”** stands over against it. **“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”** Let us then cease from man and turn to God. “Let THE BIBLE be substituted for all human creeds – FACTS for definitions – THINGS for words – FAITH for speculation – UNITY OF FAITH for unity of opinion – THE POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD for human legislation and tradition – PIETY for ceremony – MORALITY for partizan zeal – THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION for the profession of it,” then, in rich abundance, will the love of God, the Grace of the Lord Jesus, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us.”

DAVID KING.

THE MINISTRY OF A TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

“In lieu of this broader and richer fellowship we have exalted the ministry of one man, and out of the limited pool of his experiences – and sometimes they are not even experience, but only fond and desirable assumptions – the whole community has to drink, while the rest of the many pools remain untapped. And oh, the treasures that are hidden in these unshared and unrevealed experiences! What have our matured saints to tell us of the things we wish to know? How did they escape the snare, or by what subtlety were they fatally beguiled? How did they take the hill, and where did they discover the springs of refreshing? What did they find to be the best footwear when the gradient was steep, and how did they comfort their hearts when they dug the grave by the way? And what is it like to grow old, and what delicacies does the Lord of the road provide for aged pilgrims and have they seen any particular and wonderful stars in their evening sky? Are not all of us unspeakably poorer because these counsels and inspirations are untold?”

J.H. JOWETT.

THE DESCRIPTION OF AN INSTRUMENT

“The Church is revealed here as a medium of manifestation, a vehicle of vision, an instrument of illumination. The Church is seen here purposeful — of which more anon. Then we have a description of the Church, a fourfold description: **‘An elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession’**. Then simply, if we have the description of the instrument, we have the simple declaration of the **purpose** for which that instrument exists in the world. Why this Church? Why this ‘elect race, this royal priesthood, this holy nation, this people for God’s possession?’ **‘That ye may show forth the excellencies, the praises’** — the old word is a beautiful word, but ‘excellencies’ is a little nearer the mark, perhaps. The instrument described exists in order that God may be revealed to the world”.

Campbell Morgan.
Selected by Leonard Morgan.

WE WOULD SEE JESUS

Reading:- John 12 verses 20 to 36.

The men referred to were evidently tired of heathenism and had turned to Judaism. They wanted to know more of the great Teacher, so they came to Philip, perhaps because they were Greeks. The name Philip is Grecian, and he might have been a Jew born amongst Greeks.

Philip tells Andrew, and together they tell Jesus. Jesus answers them by saying **“The hour is come that the Son of Man should be gloried. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it will bring forth much fruit.”**

The death of Jesus was the hour of glorification, for he later said, **“I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me.”** Jesus died not only for the Jews but for all throughout the world. He is the Saviour of both the Jew and the Gentile.

A grain of wheat may abide in a granary for a thousand years and be preserved, but it is useless there. It neither reproduces nor is food. It is when it is *put* into the ground and dies that it brings forth fruit. It is fruitful by giving itself up. In like manner Jesus gave Himself up in order that He might impart Life to the nations.

If we too would see Jesus we must see Him in the right way and accept of His gracious offering to appropriate to ourselves the efficacy of His Precious Blood and thus receive the benefits of His atoning sacrifice. To understand aright the word of God and to follow its instructions correctly, we must have a right view of the position which Jesus holds.

1. WE MUST SEE JESUS AS PROPHET.

Moses was told by God that **“The Lord Thy God shall raise up unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto thee.”** Deut. 18:15. It is to this prediction that Peter refers in Acts 3:22 and claims that Jesus is that prophet. The work of the prophet was to speak on behalf of God to men. **“God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers through the prophets; hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son.”** Heb. 1:1. On the mount of transfiguration we hear the voice of God testifying to the pre-eminence of Jesus over Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets. **“This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased HEAR YE HIM.”** Matt. 17:5. We are warned by the Hebrew writer **“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.”** Heb. 2:3.

2. WE MUST SEE JESUS AS PRIEST.

The Priest was appointed by God to speak on behalf of man. He was the mediator or go-between. It was his duty to offer up the sacrifices required by God as a covering for sin. The High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies once every year, first having offered a sacrifice for his own sin, then for the sins of the people. He was the type of Jesus who has offered up a more acceptable sacrifice. **“For it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a Body thou hast prepared for Me; in burnt offering and sacrifice for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will oh God.”** Heb. 10:4-7. At His death, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, no longer standing between God and men. Access is now possible through the veil of His flesh, he being made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. His offering was a pure, holy, sinless one, which God has accepted. The Blood of Jesus can cleanse for all sin. So we need to realise, Jesus is a reigning Priest who sits at God’s right hand making intercession for all who come unto God by Him.

3. WE MUST SEE JESUS AS KING

A reigning monarch, with all power and authority.

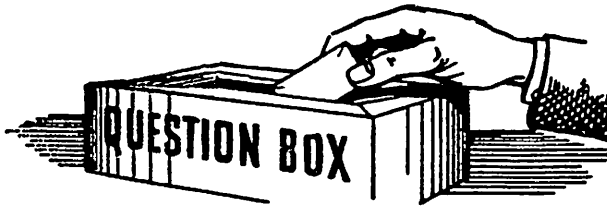
“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying. All power is given unto Me in Heaven and upon earth, Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:18-20. Jesus reigns Now over His Kingdom which began on the first Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead. **“He shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”** 1 Cor. 15:25-26. We enter His Kingdom by believing that He is the Son of the Living God; by repentance of sin and a turning from it to serve God; By confessing our faith openly before men; and by being baptised (that is dipped, immersed) in water for the remission of sins, for it is in this act that we identify ourselves with Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection; and thus rising to walk in newness of life. We crown Jesus our Lord and King and walk in the light of His Word.

Jesus is speaking from God to you. Are you listening ?

Jesus can speak for you to God. Are you allowing Him to?

Jesus can be your King. Will you crown Him ?

Tom Kemp, Hindley.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“During your experience in the Church, could you please tell us some of the things which have helped you in your Christian life, and some of the things which may have hindered you ?”

This question has arisen out of a talk I had with a young sister in Christ. After we had talked for some time, she asked could I repeat some of the points we had discussed for inclusion in the S.S. in the hope that others might be helped, to which I replied, “Well, put it in the form of a question and we’ll see.” So she did, and here we are.

EXPERIENCE

I’m glad our young questioner used the phrase ‘in your experience,’ because this takes us out of the realm of speculation and into the realm of actuality. Experience is defined as, ‘knowledge based on personal observation or contact; incident that affects one’. During my 45 years in the Church I have observed, and come into contact with, many Christians, and there have been incidents which have affected me profoundly; one might say they have left an almost indelible impression. But before we go into detail, let’s take a look at the scriptural emphasis on experience.

I think everyone would agree that the teaching of the Church should be of paramount importance to all concerned, particularly to those who do the teaching; it is in this area, however, that the Word offers some strictures. The Writer of the Hebrew letter says, **“At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC of God’s revelation to men. You have become people who need a milk diet and cannot face solid food. For anyone who continues to live on ‘milk’ is unable to digest what is right – he simply has not grown up. ‘Solid food’ is for the adult, that is, the man who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and what is evil”** (Hebrew. 5:13. J.B. Phillips). In

my experience, there has been no **unified** teaching of the Church (apart from the Gospel) and in quite a number of cases the teaching has been non-objective and unstructured. Perhaps this is because teachers and speakers have 'gleaned among the sheaves' of denominational authors and commentators for something to teach and speak on, which would satisfy what they believe to be Church of Christ criteria. Please don't misunderstand me; I am not appealing for a Church of Christ creed, but I **do** believe that there should be a **recognisable pattern** of teaching relative to any local assembly which purports to be part of the N.T. Church. If we can achieve it in the Gospel, we ought to be able to achieve it in other areas of the Church's teaching. So the idea seems to be this: if we are 'unskilled' or 'inexperienced' in the word of righteousness, then we are 'babes' in Christ. But we are of 'full age' if we have exercised our senses to discern both good and evil. I am fully persuaded that this principle of the application of experience can be usefully demonstrated in most spheres of our lives.

I suppose what I am really saying is that I shall be attempting to give a **mature** view of my own experiences in the Church.

INTOLERANCE

The noun 'toleration' can be defined as "the recognition of free thought and practice in religious matters as a policy." I have said that from assembly to assembly there should be a 'recognisable pattern' of teaching and practice, but it is highly unlikely that you will get **everyone** teaching and practising the same things exactly. That being so, it should naturally follow that unless the thoughts and actions of others are 'beyond endurance,' we should be mature enough to be patient with the different opinions sometimes expressed by them. In my experience, however, this has not always been the case. Some have adopted a somewhat aggressive stance toward those who happen to disagree with them, and not only that, they have sought to influence others to **their** way of thinking. The practical effect of this has been that some brethren (particularly speakers) have been 'blacklisted' by some assemblies because of some opinions which they may have expressed at some time or other. They have been classified, quite arbitrarily, as 'unsound', whatever that may mean. The end result of **this** has been the onset of acrimonious debate in some instances or, more importantly, the loss of the blessings of **real** fellowship; in either case, brethren have been hurt and there has been consequent damage to the witness and worship of the Church. What I have failed to understand during my lifetime in the Church is how an individual or a group have reached the conclusion that **their** interpretation of the Scripture is of necessity the **right** one to the exclusion of all others; surely the only tolerable and Christian way to reach such a conclusion is by careful and prayerful study of the Scripture with those who may have different opinions, together with a readiness to accept that the other person may **conceivably** have a valid point to view. Too often, however, we enter study and discussion sessions with preconceived ideas and, rather sadly, nothing that is said is going to change those ideas. If some, myself included, had adopted **that** attitude, then they still would have been languishing in the wilderness of denominationalism. I am all for 'guarding the deposit', as Paul exhorted Timothy but I must also accept the responsibility that in so doing I do not harm **'the pillar and ground of the truth'**, the Church. I plead for tolerance toward those **within** the Church, and also toward those **outside** the Church, in the fervent hope that we might be able to win them for Christ.

CONCERN

Over the years I have been deeply impressed by the concern expressed in many ways by Christians toward their fellow-Christians. A dictionary definition might give us 'solicitous regard', but in respect of the fellowship of the Church, such a definition would be totally inadequate. Over the past three years or so, the horizons of Edna, my wife, and myself have been bounded by hospitals, consulting rooms, and surgeries, but what has been a joy and blessing to us has been the loving concern expressed by

many Christians in many places. We are not unique in being the recipients of this loving concern because I know that many brethren have experienced the same thing during their lives, especially when 'their lines have not fallen in pleasant places'. On reflection, though, we shouldn't marvel at this, especially when we truly appreciate the loving concern of our Heavenly Father and His Christ as expressed in our salvation, but it is a cause for real joy when we see such loving concern reciprocated in His children here on earth toward each other.

We realise, of course, that loving concern is not a prerogative of Christians, but it is a Christian virtue. The fact that it can be, and often is, expressed universally is a measure of God's influence among His creation. Sometimes I am saddened when I see old people, alone, frail, and dependent, whose families are either dead or uncaring. It is then that the thought strikes me with startling clarity that the Christian has a great and loving family, motivated by a great and a loving Father, and that the members of that family **do** care for each other as their Father, has taught them to do. The experience of this has been a great blessing to me down the years. What a blessing the fellowship of the Church is!

HOPE

In the world of today there are many thousands of people who seem to be bereft of hope. Children are born to the sound of gunfire, and during their degraded and miserable existence they have to scavenge for food or die because of the lack of it, and if they survive, they either become part of the trigger-happy community to which they belong or they flee to places where no one really wants them. Why do I then, you might ask, want to talk about hope? The answer is, of course, because I have come to understand, as have many others, that the only **real** hope for the world **must** come from the promotion and acceptance of the Gospel world-wide. This is why the Church **must never**, in my opinion, see itself in 'monastic' terms in 'cloistered seclusion' in a hostile world. The Church has the message of salvation from the One who procured it; "**I am come,**" said Jesus, "**that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.**" I am filled with hope when I see young men in the Church who are willing and able to take the Gospel into distant lands, sometimes at great personal cost to themselves. Sometimes, perhaps to our shame, we have engaged ourselves in prolonged arguments about the purity of our sources from which the funds came in order to undertake this programme of evangelism; consequently, we have done little to further the programme. I have seen, though, in some of the younger men within the Church, a determination to fulfil the demands of God regarding the Gospel, and this gives me great hope for the future. May God bless them and their efforts.

Experiences? Yes, they are meaningful, and if we are really trying to obey the 'upward call of God in Christ Jesus', I believe that properly appreciated they can help to mould us into the sort of Christians He would like us to be.

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

THE DENOMINATIONS

In a recent article I gave a very rough outline of the Christadelphian Church and some readers found this most helpful. Indeed, a good brother has suggested a series of articles on the various denominations, and to this end has supplied me with a copy of "the Shattered Cross" by William Robinson, formerly Principal of Overdale College, in which the author gives brief but succinct sketches of many of the denominational bodies. The latest edition of Bro. Robinson's book was 1976 and so none of the articles will be seriously out of date. Given this advance notice of our proposal to print one such article per month, readers may wish to extract these and make a collection of them

The first of these articles follows:—

— EASTERN CHURCHES

We begin our study of the Churches with the most ancient and the most remote from us. These Churches scarcely touch our life, but it is likely that, through contact with Russia, they will touch it more in the future.

East and West.

Christianity spread along the Mediterranean basin and was established in the main cities during the life-time of the Apostles. This Church was a Greek-speaking Church, except in parts of Syria, where Aramaic was spoken. Gradually, towards the end of the second century, Latin came to be the language of the Church in North Africa east of Alexandria, and later in Rome and the western part of the Roman Empire. Greek-speaking Christianity was established in such centres as Ephesus, Jerusalem, Alexandria and, later, Byzantium (Constantinople). Latin-speaking Christianity had but one centre, Rome. Thus arose the distinction between East and West. Generally speaking, the West was more for order and regimentation; the East for free discussion and a mystical rather than legal attitude. As yet there was, however, no division. But it is flying against historical fact to assert that the Eastern Bishops felt themselves to be under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. In their whole history they have declared themselves to be free from such jurisdiction. In the fifth century there were two serious divisions in the Eastern Church, both having to do with the doctrine of the Person of Christ. Thus, two so-called unorthodox branches of the Eastern Church came into being. That is why the rest of these Churches style themselves 'Orthodox.' These two were the Nestorian and the Monophysite Churches. The former is represented today in Syria, Irak, parts of Persia and South India. The latter is represented in Egypt and Armenia. The actual division between East and West came in 1054, when the Bishops of the East refused submission to the Pope. From that day to this the two Churches have remained apart except for proselytising on the part of Rome. In some areas Rome has brought over whole dioceses, and these are known as Uniat Churches and are under the jurisdiction of Rome, whilst being allowed to retain many of their Eastern customs and to use the vernacular in their services.

Distribution.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches function in Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia, Roumania, Palestine, Syria, Alexandria and Russia; also in parts of Poland and other Eastern European countries. In their long history they suffered the main brunt of Mohammedan persecution and, wherever possible, they have always been subject to persecution from Rome. In many ways they have remained static since the fifth century and represent Christianity much as it was then. Each Church is autocephalous under its own Patriarch and they are, of course, all episcopal. The Patriarch of Constantinople is the Ecumenical Patriarch but has no Jurisdiction over the national Churches. They do, not, like the Roman Church, believe that the head of the Church has *temporal* as well as *spiritual* power, though in their long history they have often been guilty of political chicanery, as in Russia before the Revolution, and, like the Church of Rome and some Protestant Churches, have used the State for persecution in their own interests.

Customs.

Whilst they hold firmly to the hierarchy of Bishop, Priests, and Deacons, the laity play a more significant part than in any form of Western Catholicism. They hold to the authority of General Councils, but they do not believe that this authority is valid until it has been witnessed to in the life and faith of the Church. There must be a *consensus fidelium* to give it validity. Their credal standard is the Nicene Creed, and they have no expanded standards, like the Tridentine Decrees of Rome, the Thirty-nine

Articles and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Thus their theologians have a good deal more room to move about in. They continue to baptize by immersion, though they baptize infants. Immediately after Baptism they administer Chrism, which corresponds to Confirmation in the West. They also practise infant Communion, on odd occasions after Baptism. They use no instrumental music in their services and their singing which is led by small choirs of men and women, usually hidden from the worshippers, is the finest anywhere. The chief service of worship is the Eucharist, celebrated every Sunday and on other days but they know nothing of 'early Communions' and 'private Masses', The service is sung in the vernacular and not in a foreign tongue. They reserve the sacrament for the sick, but there is no adoration outside the service, and such things as Roman Benediction and Exposition are unknown. The service is definitely corporate, and private Masses of priests, so dear to Romans and some Anglo-Catholics, are unknown. The Bread and Wine are administered by intinction and not separately, a spoon containing the Bread being dipped into the Cup. Married clergy are allowed, but no one can marry *after* ordination, and married Bishops are infrequent.

Worship the Centre.

Their whole life is characterised by what the Russians call *sobornost*, which might be translated 'fellowship' or 'togetherness.' They have a vivid understanding of the Body of Christ as one, and this extends to the Church in Heaven as well as the Church on Earth. They practise prayers for the dead but know nothing of purgatory indulgences and the like. Mariolatry is, however, well established amongst them. Everything with them centres in mystical worship. One might say that their orthodoxy in belief is preserved through worship rather than through detailed elaboration of doctrine in standards. Such are these ancient Churches which are now once again coming into contact with the western world. With what result? Who can say? Already change of outlook is manifesting itself, especially in a group of the exiled Russian Church in such men as Berdyaev and Boulgakov. Certainly there is leaven at work, and we do not know what we shall find when the curtain is fully lifted from Russia and the Eastern European countries.

W. Robinsion.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

May 3	Ezekiel 47: 1-12	Rev. 22
May 10	Psalm 1	James 1
May 17	Genesis 22:1-19	James 2
May 24	1 Kings 3:1-15	James 3
May 31	Proverbs 3:21-35	James 4

REVELATION CHAPTER 22

In the first section of this chapter the river of the water of life is mentioned. It is interesting to note that we read of rivers at the beginning and end of God's word. (See Gen. 2:10-14.) The source of the river in Revelation is "**the throne of God and of the Lamb**" (22:1).

"**The tree of life**" (22:2) brings to mind the tree of life in (Gen. 2:9; 3:22).

This connection and others were seen by the great Puritan poet John Milton, who wrote "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained".

The second coming of Jesus is an important theme in this chapter. We know not when He will return, but this we know that we must be prepared for that great day when "**He will judge the world in righteousness**" (Acts 17:31).

The final verse of the book of Revelation is a great one: "**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen**" (22:21).

EPISTLE OF JAMES

AUTHOR: possibly James, the actual brother of the Lord (Matthew 13:55). He was a pillar in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18;

Gal. 1:19).

DATE: unknown, but possibly before A.D. 48/49.

DESTINATION: Christian Jews, who had been scattered by persecution or force of circumstances (1:1).

PURPOSE: "The teaching closely follows that of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and reads like a collection of short homilies. It deals particularly with the dangers of an uncontrolled tongue, snobbery, belief in God unaccompanied by Christian conduct, and trusting in material prosperity. The emphasis in this letter on behaviour has sometimes been supposed to contradict Paul's teaching on 'justification by faith'. In fact, it does not contradict but complements. Paul says that a man is 'justified' before God not by achievement but by a real faith: James says that the test of a real faith is whether it issues in appropriate behaviour".

J.B. Phillips.

KEY TEXTS: 1:27; 2:26.

LOVE

The Christian Jews in James' day were warned not to favour the rich and to despise the poor (2:1-12). This was the sin of social partiality. Love was the key to overcome it (2:8). One writer has commented: "Under the old covenant there was the love of law; under the new covenant there is the law of love". And remember what Christian love is: it is the unceasing, undying, uninhibited concern for another's good, manifesting itself in positive action to promote that good. That active and beneficent goodwill stops at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object. It is the application of the new God-nature to all human circumstances, problems of association and relationships.

FAITH

Faith implies reliance upon God and obedience to God. From my understanding of the Scriptures, I contend that

we are not saved by faith alone, but by faith at work. "Yea, a man may say, You have faith and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works". (2:18).

There was once an incident in the life of the great Scottish evangelist, James Anderson, which brought home to me the importance of faith at work. Brother Anderson was debating with a man on the subject of faith alone. I quote from his autobiography: "The only thing which seemed a little unusual was that once when he rose he devoted nearly the whole of his ten minutes to reading the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. This, of course, was to show what was done by faith. In following him, I also gave the most of my time to the same chapter and the greater part of that time, like him, I also gave to reading the chapter. But in reading I kept on inserting the word **alone** so as to make it fit his theory. For example, I read 'By faith **alone** Noah ... prepared an ark.' 'By faith **alone** Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went' 'By faith **alone** Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come'. 'By faith **alone** Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.' 'By faith **alone** Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones'. 'By faith **alone** they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land'. 'By faith **alone** the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days'. These are samples of my readings of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. I need not add that my friend on the other side did anything but enjoy it. I called special attention to the fact that my friend was only losing his time when he was quoting passages to prove that salvation is by faith. We believed that as firmly as he did. It was the **alone**

that was in dispute; and there was nothing in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews about blessings coming by faith alone.”

Faith is not worth anything if it is not tested. Abraham (2:21-23) is one of the great examples of a man who passed the test. God today does not ask us to sacrifice a loved one on an altar, but He will bring us to the test in other ways of His choosing. May we never be found wanting.

THE TONGUE

Alexander Campbell has written: “No uninspired man has given such a picture of the power of human language, as that drawn, in a few words, by the eloquent Apostle James (3:2-12). To that great instrument of speech he ascribed a transcendent potency.” Another writer has commented: “It is the careless or idle word, the chance act, which gives a glimpse into the heart. You cannot judge a man so well by his formal as by his informal speech. Since judgment has to do with the man as he is, this is the proper criterion – the word idly spoken, the careless or thoughtless expression”. Jesus warned in His day: **“By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”** (Matthew 12:37). In Proverbs we read: **“A soft answer turns away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger ... a wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness is a breach in the spirit”** (15: 1-4).

I am sure all of us have regretted things we have said and wish we could take them back. A study of James’ words will surely help us to control our tongues better. The Christian must strive towards the position that his tongue does not contradict itself, but that it speaks only such words as he would wish God to hear.

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JOHN PARTINGTON

Along with many others I will always have many dear memories of John. His

sudden death was a shock to all who knew him but even more so to his close family to whom is extended our deepest sympathy.

The Word of the Lord springs to mind – “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them.”

As one who has for many years been closely associated with John, I can say ‘Amen’ to those words which befit him as a worker for the Lord and his Church. From the first time John came to serve the Beulah Road church, we came to know him as a true and sincere brother in Christ. He was reliable in all his speaking appointments, his preaching and teaching was edifying and inspiring and his integrity as a witness for Christ was without question. I know also that other local churches such as Eastwood and Ilkeston, where John also served will echo those sentiments, a brother well-known and well loved.

John also devoted a great deal of his time to the work of the Evangelist Committee of which he took over the position of Treasurer after the demise of Bro. Robert McDonald. This work has gone almost unnoticed and unsung but there are a number of churches and causes here and overseas who can testify to the worth of John’s efforts and surely appreciate what John did in this respect.

I, as the writer, will miss John’s presence, for a presence he certainly had. John will be missed, but not forgotten by those who loved him, and especially not by our Heavenly Father who knows all things.

T. Woodhouse.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District: The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting of the above District was held at New Cumnock on Saturday, 7th March, 1992, when the

subject to be debated was "What day is referred to in Heb. 10:25 'See that day approaching?'. The Chairman was Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline, and the speakers were David Chalmers, Ayr, and James Moncrieff, Haddington. Numbers were slightly depleted on this occasion due to illness and other circumstances but a rich time of fellowship was enjoyed. As usual many interesting points were raised and much discussion engendered. God willing, our next meeting will be at Wallacestone on Saturday, 23rd May, 1992, at 2.30 p.m.

The speakers will be John Kneller, and John Colgan, Tranent, and the Chairman Jimmie Grant, Wallacestone. The subject will be "How do we reconcile Rom. 8:29,30 and Rom. 9:17,18 concerning predestination: and calling and raising up of Pharaoh".

Hindley: On behalf of the church meeting at Argyle Street, Hindley, may I express to brother Bill Cook, our sincere thanks for the work he has done in Ghana. On returning from that country, he stayed with Bro. & Sister Martin Price for a short while.

On Lord's Day, January, 26th he served the church, speaking morning and evening, and in both messages was able to tell us something about the work in Ghana. We thank Bro. Bill for the work he has done, and the sacrifices he has made on behalf of the brethren in this country. I am very pleased that the church here has been able to help, along with other churches, and individuals, sending donations for the work.

May I also thank Bro. Graeme Pearson for his love and concern for the work in Ghana.
Leonard Morgan.

Dunfermline: The Dunfermline church were pleased to witness the baptism of Agnes Pearson (wife of Gary) on Saturday, 7th March after the Mutual Benefit meeting at New Cumnock. Kirkcaldy very kindly gave us the use of

their baptistry at a very late hour. Agnes had been studying God's Word for a few weeks prior to this happy occasion.

Graeme Pearson.

NIGERIAN APPEAL

Bro. Samuel M. Hayioye, Enwan Church of Christ, 101b Imieszua, Enwan Town, P.O. Box 87, Ingarra, Edo State, Nigeria, an evangelist, seeks supporting and sponsoring congregation for new work with great potentiality for growth. Bro. Hayioye has been preaching since his conversion in 1978 "under great difficulties and persecutions". He is 30 years of age, married with three children. He seeks your help and support.

Bro. Chidi Nwachukwu, is an 'Old Path' type of evangelist, who is appalled at the 'liberal' churches in Nigeria. He has no financial help at all and lives a spartan existence. Over 90% of northern Nigeria is Moslem territory and he works under great difficulty. Is looking for help (any help) from churches or individuals. Contact him at P.O. Box 10076, Kaduna Town, Kaduna State, Nigeria, West Africa.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Tom Kemp is now residing at Thorley House (Room 21), Hazelmere Gardens, Hindley, Wigan W.N.23QD.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Wayne and Diane Campbell (Kirkcaldy) on the birth of their son Euan, born 23rd January, 1992

EVANGELIST TRUST FUND

Please note that any future donations or correspondence should now be sent to the acting Secretary: T. Woodhouse, 8 Shoulder-of-Mutton-Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham NG17 9AR.

COMING EVENTS

KIRKCALDY ANNUAL SOCIAL

Saturday, 11th April, 1992
at 3.30 p.m.

Speaker: John Mooney
Ruth Moyes, Sec.

FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND

Longshoot, Wigan, Friday, 1st May –
Monday 4th May, 1992. For details of
Programme and Booking Information
please contact Bob Marsden (0942
212198) or Doug Melling (0942 53020)
or Alf Marsden (0942 223694).

NEW CUMNOCK SOCIAL

Saturday, 2nd May, 1992
at 3.00 p.m.

Speakers:
Ian Davidson, Motherwell
Dean English, Livingstone

GHANA APPEAL

In the month of March £2,750 was
sent to our Brethren in Ghana leaving
35p in the Account. £1,186 was allocated
to the Building fund and will be divided
among five congregations. £1,030 was
allocated to Medical and will be divided
among 17 congregations. £500 was
allocated to Gospel work and the
remaining £34 to assist in travel costs to
encourage delegates from small
congregations to attend meetings in the

Accra church.

There are a number of congregations
requesting Bible Correspondence
Courses to be sent out to Ghana to be
administered by preachers and teachers.
A few hundred sets have already been
sent out and there is a need for more.
Money for Bibles (to be purchased out
there) is also required.

Our Brethren in Ghana greatly
appreciate this assistance.

Anyone wishing to assist in this work
please send crossed cheques made
payable to:— Graeme Pearson (Ghana
Appeal) and send to Graeme Pearson,
13 Fairways, Dunfermline Fife KY12
0DU. Telephone 0383 728624.

“COME UNTO ME”

I have a life in Christ to live;

I have a death in Christ to die

And must I wait till science give

All doubts a full reply?

Nay rather: while the sea of doubt

Is raging wildly around about

Questioning of life and death and sin,

Let us but creep within

Thy fold, O Christ

And at Thy feet

Take but the lowest seat

And hear thine awful voice repeat

In gentlest accents, lively, sweet,

“Come unto Me and rest;

Believe Me and be blest.”

Principal Sharp.

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