

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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COMMENDATIONS OF JESUS

I suppose there are very few of us who do not suffer from vanity in some form or another, and doubtless we all-like-to-be commended now and again. Some exploit this weakness of human nature and push commendation to the point of thinly disguised flattery. Jesus often condemned what He heard and saw; sometimes commended what He heard or saw but never flattered. Unlike flattery, commendation is quite legitimate but suffers if overdone. There are qualities of character we see in others which fill us with a warm glow, not least the complete innocence of very small children. Parents, for instance, are always very pleased to receive some unsolicited remark from some outside source that their children are well-mannered, industrious and kind. Jesus was similarly pleased to see in humanity that which was well-pleasing and He was not blind to the virtues of men as well as the vices. Jesus delighted in that which was good and wholesome, and when He encountered these attributes in men He commented on it with pleasure. I believe that we can profit as much by considering what Jesus commended as by what Jesus condemned, and in this short little article I propose to direct attention to the circumstances and qualities He encountered which caught His eye and brought forth His commendation. What, then, were the characteristics which brought praise and compliments from the lips of the Master? By what was he favourably impressed?

Faith

Probably the best known commendations of Jesus relate to the degree and depth of faith displayed by the Centurion and the Syrophenician woman, all the more remarkable because neither of them were 'of the people of God' but were Gentiles. Indeed the Centurion, as his title suggests, was a Roman soldier. Luke tells us (Chap. 7) that this Centurion had a servant near to death and when he heard of Jesus he sent unto Him some Jewish elders to beseech Jesus to come and save the servant. The Jewish elders recommended that Jesus should do this on account that the Centurion was a worthy cause "For he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." When Jesus was not far from the house the Centurion, knowing that Jews would not be disposed to enter the house of a Gentile, asked Jesus not to trouble coming into his unworthy house but merely to say the words and he knew that his servant would be healed. "When Jesus heard these things He marvelled and turned around, and said to those that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so

great faith, no, not in Israel." This was praise indeed when the faith of a Roman officer exceeded the faith of Israelites. Jesus 'Marvelled' at this man and Jesus only 'marvelled' twice in the New Testament — the other occasion being when He marvelled at the unbelief of the Jews (Mark 6:6).

Matthew (chap. 15) tells us, that on the only occasion when Jesus during His ministry went outside Palestine, that Jesus went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and encountered the Syrophenician woman (a woman of Canaan) who followed Him crying "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." This Gentile woman acknowledged Jesus as Lord and "the son of David" which was more than most of the Jews did. However Jesus ignored her for some time and his disciples urged Him to send her away because she was becoming a source of annoyance. Eventually Jesus explained to the woman that He had come to the lost sheep of Israel and she was thus excluded from His mission. The woman persisted however and Jesus had again to explain that He could not possibly take the "children's bread and give it to dogs." The astute woman accepted the inference that the Jews were God's children and regarded Gentiles as dogs but still she persisted and countered our Lord's words with "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." With this wonderful and ingenious retort our Lord conceded 'game set and match,' and in surrendering completely said, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Her faith certainly *was great* — she had approached Him with hesitation being a Gentile: she had been rebuffed twice but she still pleaded when obstacles had been presented and had persisted in waiting at the feet of Jesus until He had mercy. What a wonderful example.

Penitence and Humility

One of the best known of Jesus' parables, directed in this case to those who considered themselves righteous and despised others, must be the parable concerning the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee in his prayer thanked God that he was not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even publicans. He fasted twice a week and gave tithes of all that he possessed. Righteous as he undoubtedly was he disgusted God with his pride and with his disdain of others. Much more to God's liking was the Publican, sinner as he was, who stood afar off with downcast eyes and who smote his breast with anguish for his sins, and cried "God be merciful to me a sinner." Jesus certainly commended the Publican and said that he went down to his house more justified than the Pharisee. God cannot exalt those who exalt themselves — He can only exalt the truly humble. Is it possible that there are some in the church who, like the Pharisee, consider themselves righteous and despise others?

Sacrificial giving

The late brother Crosthwaite used to say that we should give until it hurts, but some of us were too easily hurt. Mark tells us (chap. 12) how Jesus on one occasion, sat beside the Jewish Treasury and watched the multitudes putting their money offerings therein. He noticed how many that were rich cast in much. And then there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. The Greek word from which the word 'poor' (poor widow) is translated means abject poverty, well below the bread line and in imminent danger of real starvation. Thus we can perhaps understand why Jesus called her to the attention of his disciples and said, "Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in *all that she had*, even all her living." The widow was quite oblivious to the fact that Jesus was closely observing what was put into the treasury and by whom, and was equally unaware that her two mites had brought

forth this splendid panegyric from the Lord. Church collections might be greatly enhanced if we thought that Jesus was standing by watching what we put in. To God, the gift, or contribution, into His treasury is measured not by its intrinsic value but by the sacrifice made to give it. Although she was a destitute widow, verging on starvation, she cast all that she possessed into God's treasury, obviously with complete trust in God's providential care. Many Christians have extravagant houses, cars, gadgetry and pastimes but the widow was *extravagant in giving*, and she little thought that men would be writing about her 2,000 years later. A preacher when visiting a certain congregation and seeing all the cars outside the meeting place wondered where all the poor members were — after hearing the amount of the collection he wondered where all the rich members were.

Works and Gratitude

On the Saturday before the crucifixion Jesus was in Bethany in the house of one Simon the leper, having been invited there for a meal and (as he ate) Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed His feet and His head with spikenard, a very expensive ointment from an alabaster box. Jesus' disciples were indignant at the extravagant act and Judas voiced their protest and demanded to know why such a waste had been allowed, pointing out the charitable use to which value of the ointment could have been put. Jesus reminded the assembly that the poor are always present in the world for those with charitable intentions but He was soon to cruelly die and Mary had come beforehand to anoint His body for the burial. "She hath wrought a good work on Me," said Jesus, "She hath done what she could." There was not much Mary could do — she could not alter the course of future events and she certainly could not prevent the crucifixion, but out of feelings of love, anguish and gratitude for Jesus *she did what she could*. Very often we are likewise powerless to influence future events albeit we can see them coming — yet we must do what we can. Mary would always be grateful to Jesus for bringing her brother Lazarus back from the grave and all she could think to do for Him was to expend upon Him this valuable possession she had — the spikenard ointment. Her act was therefore one of kindness, gratitude and deep love. Because she had done for Jesus what she could, Jesus said that the incident would be immortalised in the form of a memorial for her (not a marble statue or plaque in the wall), but wheresoever and whensoever in the world the gospel would be preached, her loving action would also receive mention. "She did what she could" for Jesus — what an eternal epitaph.

What about us?

Jesus did comment on the innocency of children and said that men would have to become childlike (not childish) to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus rejoiced also in persons like Nathanael and said when He met him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." This, strange as it may seem, can't be said of all those who claim to follow Jesus. There is, perhaps, more schemeing and political "wheeling-and-dealing" in the Vatican than anywhere else in the world, and who knows if any religious order is entirely free from it — even churches of Christ. When Jesus encountered the rich young ruler who came running to Him and claimed to have kept the law 'from his youth up' Jesus "loved him" — not because he was rich. And so we could go on. Surely when we consider the qualities and attributes which won the admiration and approval of Jesus, we must wonder if there is any such quality in us which Jesus could commend, and this certainly is a good exercise. Do we have a selfish lifestyle — do we care about others as Jesus did? In Burns' poem entitled 'Holy Willie's Prayer' Willie prayed only "For me and mine." What is there about us that Jesus could *not only approve* but take the trouble to actually *com-*

mend. Others may commend us and indeed we may commend ourselves, but it is important that *God* should be able to commend us. Paul says (in II Cor. 10:18) "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

— Editor.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM

Everyone in the religious world admits to baptism by immersion as a scriptural mode of baptism. The problem arises when it is claimed that immersion is the only scripturally authorised mode. Those who believe otherwise counter-claim by affirming that in the N.T. sprinkling and pouring were used by the Apostles and the Church. Verses have been cited along this line, and the rest of this paper will be given to reviewing the major arguments given in support of sprinkling as a mode of christian baptism.

Mark 7:1-5, is by all accounts the strongest argument for sprinkling in the New Testament, so most of our time will be spent here. Thomas S. Hall in his book "Is Infant Baptism Scriptural," chapter 7, pages 54-59, develops the point as follows. "In Mk. 7:4, we read that the Pharisees 'when they come from the markets except they wash (GREEK=BAPTIZE THEMSELVES), they eat not, and many other things they have received to hold as the washing (GREEK=BAPTIZING) of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables, 'HERE WE ARE TOLD THAT THE PHARISEES FIRST 'BAPTIZE THEMSELVES' before eating, whereas we see, from verse 2 f., the meaning is not that they immersed themselves, but that they WASHED THEIR HANDS. It is therefore, quite plain that the baptism here spoken of does not imply that the Pharisees immersed themselves. They BAPTIZED THEMSELVES SIMPLY BY POURING WATER UPON THEIR HANDS, which ever has been, and is to this day, the manner of washing the hands in Eastern lands (see 2 Kings 3:11). Again it is equally plain that the BAPTIZING OF TABLES SPOKEN OF HERE DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THE TABLES WERE IMMERSED. Thus we see how utterly mistaken is the idea that the word baptize means always to immerse."

Mr. Hall very cleverly gets the reader to think that the situation as described in verses 1-3, are exactly the same as in verse 4. Read again verses 1-3, notice what the writer emphasizes, that some of the disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed hands. Yet the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands. What the disciples were doing at that time, by eating with unwashed hands violated this tradition. Mark 7:1-3, focus the readers attention on the supposed violation, by the disciples. Verse 4, on the other hand, zooms in on the excesses of the legalistic Pharisees and Jews who, when they come from the MARKET PLACE; where no doubt they would have come in contact with pagan traders or members of the ordinary populace, and thereby contracted a greater uncleanness; would baptize themselves. There is something more than just eating with unwashed hands here in verse 4, this defilement required a more thorough purificaton. Mr. Hall is not content with implying that the situations are the same in verses 1-3 and in verse 4 but that the word "wash" in verse 3 is exactly the same word as in verse 4.

They are not, verse 3 has the Greek word NIPTO, for wash, and verse 4 has the word BAPTIZO for wash. R. C. Trench, on page 161 of his book "Synonyms of the New Testament," says that NIPTO 'Almost always expresses the washing of part of the body — the hands, MK.7:3, the feet JN 13:5, the face MT.6:17.' The definitions of BAPTIZO show it to be altogether different to NIPTO. W. E. Vine says of

BAPTIZO, "To baptize, primarily a frequentative form of (BAPTO), to dip, was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another." Arndt and Gingrich say of BAPTIZO, "Dip, immerse; (in non-Christian lit. also 'Plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm, etc), page 131.

It can be safely said that no scholar ancient or modern has defined the word BAPTIZO other than dip or immerse.

Now let us collate all this information, verses 3 and 4 present two situations. The word "wash" in verses 3 and 4 are different Greek words. The definitions of the words are distinct and different, making it clear that two wholly separate acts are under consideration in verses 3 and 4. Yet in the face of all this Mr. Hall wants us to believe, "They baptized themselves simply by pouring water upon their hands!"

Ignoring the consensus of scholarship, Mr. Hall proceeds in his argument to try and make it seem absurd to use immerse in verse 4, because as he says, "It is equally plain that the BAPTIZING OF TABLES SPOKEN OF HERE DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THE TABLES WERE IMMERSED." If one is using a modern translation the words "and of tables" at the end of verse 4, will not be there. The reason is that it is not sufficiently substantiated by the early manuscripts to warrant inclusion. Yet this is all Mr. Hall can offer by way of objection! Even if it was part of the text, his argument would still be incorrect, because these scrupulous Jews would, according to the context, go so far as to immerse a couch, (the King James wrongly translates the Greek word "KLINE" as table, it more correctly means, couch or bed, Thayers Lexicon, p.350) in order to remove its ceremonial defilement. Mr. Hall has granted this by saying that they "sprinkled" the couch to remove its defilement. It must be obvious to all that they would do whatever was necessary to make the couch ceremonially clean again. Their fanaticism, if it has a bearing on the subject, would support the extreme of immersing the couch.

Imagining a large cumbersome, modern couch, you may be thinking this whole argument is irrational. Yet the difficulty is more imagined than real, as the footnote in Weymouth's translation reveals "Of course they do not mean what we English call 'beds.' They were mere mattresses or thick rugs, travellers in Eastern countries often witness the complete submersion of 'beds,' which are then dried in the sun," page 115, note 5.

So Mr. Hall's initial statement, "It is equally plain that the BAPTIZING OF TABLES SPOKEN OF HERE DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THE TABLES WERE IMMERSED" is just not true! On the contrary, as the word BAPTIZO will not allow for any other act than dipping or immersion, it is equally plain that these "tables" were immersed. These immersions of couches were practicable and common place in Eastern countries, and the fanaticism of the Jewish legalist would insure that they took these extreme measures to sanctify even their couches.

How different all this is to our understanding of the verse when we read the proper definition into it, "And when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they (dip, immerse, submerge, bathe) themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the (dipping) of cups and pitchers and copper pots." Mr. Hall's contention that pouring equals baptism, has no foundation in reason or scripture.

As we have already established that the word "baptize," the experts, be translated "immersion" then 1 Cor. 10:2 should read, "Were all immersed unto Moses *in the cloud and in the sea.*" The illustration will suffice to prove that they were *buried* in the cloud and in the sea. Mr. Hall boldly claims "There was no immersion of the Israelites, for they all passed over on dry ground (Ex. 14:22)." Now who are we going to believe, the Apostle Paul, who says "they were immersed," or Mr. Hall who says, "There was no immersion?" The fact that they passed over on dry ground proves

there was no spray, because if there was, the ground would not have been dry! As the ground was dry, the sprinkling theory hasn't got a drop of truth in it.

The next problem Mr. Hall presents for our consideration is the baptism of the Apostles with the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:5. Let us remember from the outset that any terms used with reference to the reception of the person of the Holy Spirit will have to be figurative. With that in mind let us read verse 5 of Acts chapter one. "For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." John's baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism are loosely connected for good reasons. (One) the elements used in each case are different, John baptizes "with water," God baptizes with "the Holy Spirit." (Two) having noticed the differences we are now ready to consider the similarities, John's baptism required "much water" JN.3:23, those who were baptized were *overwhelmed* with water. Likewise those who were baptized in the Spirit were overwhelmed with the Spirit. Thayer (on page 94 of his Lexicon) says it means, "To imbue richly with the Holy Spirit." All the rich lustre of the figure of speech is lost to Mr. Hall; instead of the effulgence of Pentecostal Spirit baptism, he has "Mercy drops falling around them."

If these are not the reasons for the link between John's baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism, what is? It is also worth noting that had the inspired writer wanted us to understand that the Apostles were sprinkled with the spirit, he would have used the Greek word for 'sprinkling' which is RANTIZO, but he didn't. Even when the word EKCHEO, Eng. "pour forth" is used, Acts 1:17, it has ties more with the way God is *sending out* His Spirit, than with the mode in which the Apostles receive it. For when he talks about the mode of Spirit baptism, He says, "You shall be baptized (BAPTIZO = immersed, overwhelmed) with the Holy Spirit" Acts 1:5. It's as if the Holy Spirit is poured forth from God as a great river, a river in which the Apostles are to be baptized.

All of the foregoing only serves to prove what has been accepted by the best scholars for generations, that the primitive form of baptism was by immersion. LUTHER — "The term baptism is a Greek word; it may be rendered into Latin by 'mersio': when we immerse anything in water, that it may be entirely covered with water." CONYBEARE AND HOWSON — Anglican. "It is needless to add that baptism was (unless in exceptional cases) administered by immersion." JOHN WESLEY — Methodist. "We are buried with Him" — alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." CATHOLIC DICTIONARY — "In Apostolic times the body of the baptized person was immersed, for St. Paul looks on this immersion as typifying burial with Christ, and speaks of baptism as a bath."

All Scripture and scholarship concur in teaching that baptism in the Apostolic times was by immersion only.

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GLEANINGS

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

The Bible Does Not Become Obsolete

"One of the most prominent characteristics of books written by men for the purpose of imparting information and instruction, is that they very quickly become obsolete, and must be cast aside and replaced by others. This is particularly true of books on science, text-books, school-books, and the like. Indeed, it is a matter of boasting (though it would be hard to explain why) that 'progress' is so rapid in all departments of learning as to render the scientific books of one generation almost

worthless to the next. Changes in human knowledge, thought, and opinion occur so swiftly, that books which were the standards yesterday are set aside today for others, which in turn will be discarded for yet other 'authorities' tomorrow. In fact, every book which is written for a serious purpose begins to become obsolete before the ink is dry on the page. This may be made the occasion of boasting of the great progress of humanity, and of the wonderful advances of 'science'; but the true significance of the fact is that man's books are all, like himself, dying creatures.

The Bible Is Always Fresh

'The Bible, on the other hand, although it treats of the greatest and most serious of all subjects, such as God, Christ, eternity, life, death, sin, righteousness, judgment, redemption — is always the latest, best, and only authority on all these and other weighty matters whereof it treats. Centuries of 'progress' and 'advancement' have added absolutely nothing to the sum of knowledge on any of these subjects. The Bible is always fresh and thoroughly 'up to date.' Indeed, it is far, far ahead of human science. Progress cannot overtake it, or get beyond it. Generation succeeds generation, but each finds the Bible waiting for it with its ever fresh and never-failing stores of information touching matters of the highest concern, touching everything that affects the welfare of human beings.'

Philip Mauro

The Romance of the Bible

"Turn to the romance of the Bible as to its nature. We call it a Book, and it is a great name for it, but it is not a book to begin with; it is a Library. Take this Book, and divide it into its component parts. We find it is a Library, having sixty-six books, in our present English edition, stitched together. These books were written by between thirty and forty authors, and were written over a period of fifteen hundred years. They were written in three languages, one classical, the Hebrew; two colloquial, the Aramaic, of which some may be found in the Old Testament, and the other the Greek of our New Testament.

Can We Use Our Imagination?

Once again, can we use our imagination? In the history of our own land, where were we fifteen hundred years ago? With that stretch of time, take up sixty-six books, very small, mere pamphlets, and stitch them together and make a book! That is what has been done in the case of the Bible.

In this Book there are two departments — the sacred writings of the Hebrew people, and the sacred writings of the Christian faith. Yet, when these books are brought together, they are correlated, Hebrew and Christian, so clearly, that we cannot do without any part of the one section, and successfully understand any part of the other section."

Campbell Morgan

Submission and Peace

'Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.'
Psalm 119:165.

"The marginal note says 'they shall have no stumbling block.' We do great injustice to this psalm — so exuberant in its praises of 'the law of the Lord' — if we suppose that that expression means nothing more than the Mosaic or Jewish revelation. It does mean that, of course, but the psalm itself shows that the writer uses the expression and its various synonyms as including a great deal more than any one method by which God's will is made known to man. For he speaks, for instance, in one part of the psalm of God's 'word,' as being settled for ever in the heavens, and of the heavens and earth as continuing to this day, 'according to Thine ordinances.'

The Expressed Will of God

So we are warranted in giving to the thought of our text the wider extension of taking the divine 'law' to include not only that directory of conduct contained in Scripture, but the expressed will of God, involving duties for us, in whatever way it is made known. The love of that uttered will, the Psalmist declares, will always bring peace.

The Submission of the Human to the Divine Will

Such an understanding of the text does not exclude the narrower reference, which is often taken to be the only thought in the Psalmist's mind, nor does it obliterate the distinction between the written law of God and the disclosures of His will which we collect by the exercise of our faculties on events around and facts within us. But it widens the horizon of our contemplations, and bases the promised peace on its true foundation, the submission of the human to the divine will.

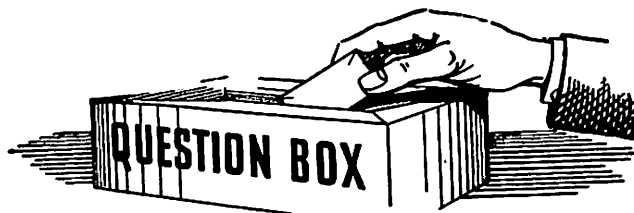
True Love to the Will of God

Let us then consider how true love to the will of God, however, it is made known to us, either in the Book or in our consciousness, or in daily providences, or by other people's hints, is the talisman that brings to us, in all circumstances, and in every part of our nature, a tranquility which nothing can disturb.

Of course, by 'love' here is meant, not only delight in the expression of, but the submission of the whole being to, God's will; and we love the law only when, and because, we love the Lawgiver."

Alexander Maclaren

Selected by Leonard Morgan



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Why do Churches of Christ attach more importance to the first day of the week rather than the Sabbath Day (Saturday)? Surely there is more evidence for Sabbath Day Observance than there is for what you call 'the Lord's Day'."

I am constantly amazed at the way questions such as this one keep recurring, but perhaps it is because of our unique plea, "we speak where the Bible speaks." We have always insisted that there should be a critical analysis of the text and a correct reference to the context, but having done this, and exhorted others to do it, we are left with that other great imponderable "rightly dividing the Word of Truth"; this, seemingly, causes the greatest difficulty.

Is there one single, simple recipe for inducing someone to believe what another teaches? The mind is a wonderful instrument, but it is undoubtedly influenced greatly by previous ideas and teachings which have invaded it in the past. Can there be such a state when the mind can turn to a problem without bringing to bear on that problem some pre-conceived ideas. Can we, as often as we so often and fondly pray, "empty our minds" so that we can concentrate fully, and without pre-conception, on the problem at hand? If we can, then the teacher is encouraged to go ahead. If we

can't then the teacher is faced with the colossal task of removing a fixed barrier before he can even begin to impart new truth. I have gone to some length to say this because I consider it to be fundamental to understanding. If a question is valid, then it must be approached with an open mind; if this essential pre-requisite is missing, then the question becomes mere rhetoric (in the bad sense).

The Sabbath

It is undoubtedly true that Sabbath Day observance was commanded by God, *but not to everyone*. The word Sabbath is from the Greek word SABBATON and means, 'a complete cessation'. The idea is not of relaxation, but of a complete cessation of activity.

The observation of the Sabbath, therefore, was given as a 'sign' between God and His earthly people Israel. After six days of creative activity, God ceased from His activity on the seventh day, and decreed, "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign *between me and the children of Israel* for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed (Ex. 31:16, 17). One major point which we have to notice here is that the observation of the sabbath was a sign between God and the children of Israel. Nor should the word 'perpetual' trouble us overmuch; this is obviously modified by the phrase 'throughout their generations'. The sabbath was to be kept by the old Israel of God throughout *their* generations; its observance is not enjoined upon new Israel of God, the Church, as revealed in the N.T. scriptures.

In Exodus 20:8-11 we find that the teaching relating to the Sabbath is part of what we know as the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. These were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. You will remember, of course, that when Moses came down from the mount and saw the people worshipping the golden calf he was so angry that he smashed the two tablets of stone on which were written the Commandments. He was instructed by God to hew two more tablets like unto the first (Ex. 34:1), and then to ascend Sinai again. He did so, and he was in the mount with God forty days and forty nights while God delivered the Commandments again. After this, the Lord said to Moses, "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel" (Ex. 34:27).

The Two Covenants

We must now turn our attention to the teaching given by Paul to the Christians in Galatia. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, one by the bondmaid the other by the freewoman. Paul goes on, "for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:22-26). The reader will notice, of course, that when Paul refers to Agar (Hagar) he is referring to the mountain and not to the bondmaid's name. However, the allegory that Paul uses is quite clear and precise. We have Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac, the old covenant and the new covenant, the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem. The disposition of the women and their sons is made quite clear by Paul, "Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Gal. 4:30, 31).

But someone will say, what does all this mean? Well, I believe that the law given by God to Moses was the old covenant. It was rooted in Judaism and its earthly centre was the earthly Jerusalem. It was written on stone. This law was given to

Moses on Sinai (Agar), and as Paul put it, it was that 'which gendereth to bondage.'

We are taught that the children of Israel were unwilling to keep this covenant so God had to make another (new) covenant with them. Jeremiah prophesied that this new covenant would not be like the one made with their fathers when God brought them out of the land of Egypt; it would be written on the heart and not on tablets of stone; it would be of the Spirit. (Jer. 31: 31-34). Paul, commenting on this in his second letter to Corinth says, "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in the fleshy tablets of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3). Paul then goes on, "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?" (2 Cor. 3:7), but read the whole third chapter). Here Paul precisely identifies Sinai because if we read Exodus 34:29-35 we shall see that this is where the face of Moses shone, after that he had come down from the mount.

I have read that some people say that the old covenant was "the law of Moses" and not the Decalogue, but listen to what 1 Kings 8:9 says, "There was nothing in the ark (of the covenant) save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt" (Read also Heb. 8:6-13).

From the foregoing we cannot but conclude,

- (a) the law of Moses was the Decalogue, and also the old covenant.
- (b) the law embodying the old covenant has been done away.
- (c) the law contained the commandment about Sabbath Day observance, therefore, this also is done away.

(Read also Gal. 5:4; Rom. 7:4; note also in Rom. 7:7 Paul says, "for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Therefore, Paul again identifies 'the law' with the Decalogue).

The First Day of the Week.

It is absolutely right, of course, that the New Covenant scriptures should concern themselves with Jesus, the Christ; He is the central figure around which all else revolves. Consequently, Paul says to the Colossians, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or in the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (or substance) is of Christ" (Col. 2:16). This is a reference to the age which started at Pentecost, when the shadows became substance in Christ. It seems to me to be quite logical that the early Christians should want to remember Christ on the day on which He rose from the dead. Undoubtedly, what the Church of Christ calls the 'Breaking of the Bread,' and what other religious groups call the Eucharist, was, from the early days, celebrated on the first day of the week, Sunday. Already in the first century A.D., and certainly at the beginning of the second, Sunday was the chief day of worship, and the reason given was that it was "the Lord's Day," the day that Christ had been raised from the dead (See Luke 24:1 ff; Mark 16:9). The choice of the first day of the week indicated that the early Christians had their faith firmly rooted in the risen Christ. It seems that the first service was held before dawn, with readings from the Scriptures, chants, homilies, and prayers. The Eucharist would follow in the early hours of the morning. One interesting and, we might say, onerous task of the deacons was to see that all occupied their proper places and that no one whispered, laughed, nodded or slept.

Also at this Meeting there would be a 'laying by' for the needy saints. This would be completely in line with the instructions given by Paul to the saints in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-3). There would also be preaching and teaching (See Acts 20:7-12). It

would also seem that the deacons here had not been too observant so far as Eutychus was concerned). Justin Martyr wrote in A.D. 140, "But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day — and Jesus, our Saviour, on the same day rose from the dead." Both Justin Martyr and the Didache affirm that the Eucharist (Breaking of Bread) was open only to immersed believers.

Well, there it is. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the early Christians, in line with New Testament teaching, worshipped quite simply upon the first day of the week. It is equally certain that it was the Judaisers, with their obsessive insistence on the 'dead' law, who campaigned for Sabbath Day observance. W. E. Vine states, 'For the first three centuries of the christian era the first day of the week was never confounded with the sabbath; the confusion of the Jewish and Christian institutions was due to declension for apostolic teaching' (Dictionary of N.T. Words). We in the Church of Christ would say Amen to that, and would further add that not only the teaching regarding the sabbath, but confusion over other teaching has been due to declension from apostolic teaching. Let those who have named the name of Christ be careful not to wilfully throw away our hope of life in the risen Christ, by adhering to the law, for, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Hayfield, Wigan, Lancs).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY 1982

- 4 Psalm 51 I Tim.1
 11 Prov. 31,10-31 I Tim.2
 18 Psalm 1 I Tim.3
 25 Ecc. 12 I Tim.4

Father to Son

This is a special relationship, the natural relationship being a picture of the spiritual. The son owes his life to his father, the father owes a deep responsibility to the son. He has to teach him how to live and that involves setting him an example. Jesus told his disciples not to call any man Father on earth for One is your Father in heaven. He was speaking of those claiming spiritual authority over one another. Paul's claim on Timothy is justified through his being the means of bringing him to Christ, and it is a lovely relationship in which they are bound together under the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Christ. The close affectionate attachment is shown in his concern for his

youthfulness (4,12), his bodily health (5,23), his spiritual strength " and longing to see him (3,15: II Tim. 1,4).

Through it all there shines the common heart burden, "the care of all the churches" (II Cor. 11,28), the maintenance of true Christian behaviour firmly based upon the truth of the gospel "once and for all delivered" (Jude 3). The letters truly fulfill the relationship (I Tim. 1,2: II Tim. 1,2 and Titus 1,4). Every young (and old) christian needs the fatherly instruction. The subscriptions shown in the A.V. are late additions without reliable authority — "ordination" came with apostasy!

That Dreadful Catalogue (1, 9 & 10)

"Whatsoever things are lovely" (Phil. 4,8). These should rather occupy our minds, but there ARE other things for which LAW had to be made (and applied). Paul had before mentioned them (Eph. 4,19 ...), and listed some in Romans (1,29) and First Corinthians (6,9-11) and some brethren in Ephesus were occupying themselves with law rather than gospel. Paul would be well acquainted with the quibbling of the Rabbis about genealogies in which the Jews took pride, and the Greek mythologies on which Greeks argued

(Acts 17,21). Give heed to law to learn the horrible nature of evil-doing!

In our own times there does seem to be a turning towards those evils which dominated the pagan world. Paul's work in Ephesus had freed men and women from the twin evils of idol worship and superstition so that trades built on both suffered some relapse.

Jewish and pagan influences would be hard to break from, in a young church, and we do learn that members of the church had retained their scrolls of magic arts (Acts 19,19). Timothy had the task of stopping talk and discussion of trivial and unhelpful matters, and encouraging study of the sayings and doings of Jesus which required spiritual thought and effort. We might well consider the contrast of behaviour required by obedience to the "sermon on the mount" to that of uncleansed worldly folk. There is a mighty difference between "United Nations" thought and pagan philosophy though "United Nations" is not christianity! There is at least a recognition of right and wrong.

Exhibition of Grace

Timothy had been reared on the law and the prophets, and was brought to submission to the gospel by Paul's instrumentality, who had heartily opposed the truth of God's abounding grace, and had been guilty of murders of his brothers and sisters in excess of zeal for that law. He thus became a supreme example of that same grace, being chosen to be foremost among the apostles in demonstrating God's love for the Gentiles. He had chosen Timothy to be his close associate in the great work and left him as his personal representative in that church at Ephesus, where we might borrow a phrase and say "Satan's throne was" (Rev. 2,13). What an outstanding honour was this for this chief of sinners, Paul, and what a responsibility for his young delegate to continue the development of a faithful and vigorous congregation in a mainly hostile region. It is clear that special divine help was

available through gifts of the Holy Spirit imparted by the laying on of the apostle's hands (1,18:4, 14 II Tim. 1,6). We may assume Timothy had special prophetic power by which he was able to teach the truths of the gospel and the words of the Lord Jesus (6, 3) seeing it is unlikely he had written testimonies of those words and deeds. He would be able at once to detect unwholesome words and unsound doctrine. He was himself a testimony to the divine Grace.

Order in the Church

We first read of provision for special duties in the church at Jerusalem when the special circumstances of the earliest days of the redeemed men and women brought them together. They did gather in the Temple courts for worship, but their fellowship was manifested also in their dwellings day by day.

The apostles did the service of food and other needs but the task proved too much, making them neglect their greater service of prayer and the word of the Lord. Thus brethren were chosen to give the material service and the apostles were able to do their primary duty. No other mention of "deacons" meets until our present readings and in Philippians (1, 1). However "elders" combined with the apostles in Jerusalem later (Acts 15,2: 16,4). It had become a practice with newly formed churches to appoint "elders" to take oversight (Acts 14,23), a natural take over from the Jewish synagogue. Timothy and Titus had the duty of choice of suitable men. It is reasonable to suppose both "bishops" (overseers) and "deacons" (servants) were approved apostolic appointments, and should be undertaken by those responsible for beginning new causes. It is not surprising that some would hesitate to accept "office" in view of the conditions laid down, but obviously the oversight is to "a good WORK," rather than an "office" (I Peter 5, 1 & 2), a very humble service to God and the church! We only know of two churches where deacons were appointed unless

Phoebe had that "office" at Cenchrea (Rom. 16,1). If there is to be harmony in the church all the members must be ministers, serving one another and mankind in general — "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20,28). The instructions for prayer (2, 1 & 8) and the behaviour of the sisters indicate order in the assembly (see also I Cor. 11, 2 ...). There is the over-riding requirement that "all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14,40 and earlier verses).

Apostasy

Our fourth chapter makes it difficult to avoid seeing the Roman Catholic Church as fulfilling prophecy.

R. B. Scott.

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

"That they may all be one." — John 17:21

One Body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." Eph. 4:4-6.

- 1 **The One Body** — "For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free." — 1 Cor. 12:16.
- 2 **The One Spirit** — "Know ye not that ye are a Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" — 1 Cor. 3:16.
- 3 **The One Hope** — "That, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the Hope of Eternal life." — Titus 3:7.
- 4 **The One Lord** — "To us there is one God ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him." — 1 Cor. 8:6.
- 5 **The One Faith** — "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in my heart that

God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." — Rom. 10:9.

6 **The One Baptism** — "Then answered Peter, can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptised?" — Acts 10:47.

7 **The One God and Father** — "We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one." — Cor. 8:4.

"And they shall become one flock, one Shepherd." — Jesus (John 10:16).

J. M'Cartney

THINGS WE ARE SAVED BY:

"Not by Faith only." — James 2:24

- 1 **By Grace** — "For by grace have ye been saved through faith." — Eph. 2:8.
- 2 **By the Gospel** — "Who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved." — Acts 11:14.
- 3 **By Belief** — "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." — Acts 16:31.
- 4 **By Confessing Christ** — "And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." — Rom. 10:9,10.
- 5 **By Calling on His Name** — "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." — Rom. 10:13.
- 6 **By Baptism** — "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism." 1 Peter 3:21.
- 7 **By Renewal** — "He saved us by the renewing of the Holy Spirit." — Titus 3:5.
- 8 **By Hope** — "For by hope were we saved ..." Rom: 8:24.
- 9 **By Christ's Life** — "Much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." — Rom. 5:10.
- 10 **By Perseverance** — "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." — Matt. 10:22.

"The Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation." — Paul (2 Tim. 3:15)

J. M'Cartney

SOMEONE HAS SAID

There is no good reason for men to lie about each other. Most of the time the plain truth would be bad enough!

When the outlook is bad, try the uplook. Happiness cannot be multiplied unless it be divided.

No man is free who is not master of himself.

If there is anything better than to be loved, it is to love.

BELIEF

The apostle Paul told the Christians of Thessalonica that God had chosen them "to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

In other words, we might say that because of their *belief of the truth*, they had been *sanctified by the Spirit* and so had been *chosen by God to be saved*.

In these few words we have one of the most momentous statements ever made to human beings for their consideration. They are concerned with the eternal destiny of every man and woman. What is more, they are addressed to each one who reads them as the word of the Almighty God himself. This is proved by Paul's words to the same church: "... when you received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also *in you that believe*" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The last few words are emphasised because, if the word effectually worked in them *then*, is it not reasonable to assume that the same word would have an equally beneficial effect on all who likewise believed ever since that time? The apostle's statement, therefore, deserves our closest attention.

Four Questions

The kernel of the opening statement of this article is in the word *belief*, because of the important results which

follow from it. In order then to understand the full significance of Paul's statement, which he declares is the word of God, let us put it in four questions:—

1. What does belief mean?
2. What truth are people required to believe?
3. What is the sanctification of the Spirit which follows therefrom?
4. What is the salvation to which Paul refers and which he ascribes to God himself as the giver?

Question four is the grand climax upon which the answer to the first three questions hang, as we shall see — and what consideration could be more important to us than that which deals with our eternal salvation? The Author of salvation put it this way, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Are You Interested?

No matter how disinterested people are in "religion," as they understand the word, they are, as a rule, intensely interested in the truth. This was the case some 1,900 years ago, when the ordinary people had little time for religionists as such, but were intensely interested in the sayings of One called Jesus. Of him it was said (and that by his enemies), "Never man spake like this man." Indeed, he was always able to put the religionists of that time, the Scribes and Pharisees, severely "in their place."

"It was Jesus who made such stupendous statements to them as these:

"I am *the light of the world*. He who followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

"I am from above; ye are of this world: I am not of this world. I said, therefore, unto you that ye shall die in your sins, for *if ye believe not that I am he*, ye shall die in your sins."

"He that is of God heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because *ye are not of God*."

Are You Godless?

As you read that statement of the Lord, would you like to have the words addressed to you, "Ye are not of God?" Would you not rather have it said of you, "You are of God?" I imagine you would. Then doesn't it follow that you must hear God's words?

Note that Jesus says, "Ye shall die in your sins if ye believe not that I am he." Compare this with what he said (in John 3:16-18) to Nicodemus, one of the chief religionists of his day, who came to Jesus by night. Note also how many times the word "believeth" occurs.

Belief in What and Why?

Belief in its highest form is surely predicative of belief in the truth as it is revealed by God's Word. "What is truth?" Pilate asked, and did not wait for an answer. Our investigation into the why and wherefore of belief will be continued in monthly instalments. If you are interested in these important questions, the answers to which are contained in the Word of Truth inspired by Jesus, the Author of salvation, read the next edition of "Truth In Love." It will deal with the question, "What does 'Belief' mean?"

Exercises in Belief

In the meantime, as an exercise in belief, have a good look at Romans 10:17 and Acts 18:8 and compare these verses with Mark 16:16, where the Lord Jesus Christ says, "He who believes and is immersed (from the Greek word *baptizo*, meaning 'to immerse') shall be saved." To what conclusions do these statements lead?

W. BROWN.
(To be continued)

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Cape Town, R.S.A. I am labouring with the Bokmakierie church and by the grace of God the work is progressing.

Attendances at meetings are commendable especially at our Wednesday evening Bible Study and Cottage Meetings. Lord's Day 28th March, in the evening we will present a Visual Aid film on "The Day Christ Came — Again" and we pray that the results will be great cause for rejoicing.

T. W. Hartle.

Haddington, Scotland. The church here rejoiced to see the baptism of Mrs. Joy Gray and Esther Moncrieff on the evening of Saturday, 1st May. Joy has been coming to our meetings for some weeks now and Esther is the daughter of sister May Moncrieff. We commend both to our Lord and Saviour and pray that they will remain faithful and be of great service to the Master.

A. Nisbet.

OBITUARY

Blackburn, Lancs. It is with deep regret that we record the passing of still another of our aged members — sister Sophia Walsh. She was immersed about 18 years ago when crippled with arthritis in both hips. At 80 years of age she had both hip joints replaced and took on a new lease of life; being a constant attender at all meetings. Two years ago she went into an Old Peoples' Home and she has died there. She was 95 years of age and is greatly missed — however her example of courage and faithfulness lives on. When visited (just before her death) the passage of scripture in John 14 ("Let not your heart be troubled") was constantly upon her lips. Bro. Roy Renshaw officiated both at the Meeting Place and Committal Service. She died on April 4th and was laid to rest on 8th April. She left an example we will do well to follow and we leave her now in the care of Jesus.

H. N. Holden

DID YOU KNOW?

That the nervous system of your body is like a wonderful telephone system? It sends messages back and forth, keeping your brain informed of what is going on around you. Your eyes, ears, taste, touch and smell are like windows in a house, and from these "windows" information from the outside world is sent to your brain by electric currents. A lot of wires are needed to carry this information to the brain. For instance, each of your eyes has 130,000,000 rods and 7,000,000 cones, the sensory terminals of sight, which are connected to your brain by over 300,000 separate, private, "telephone" lines.

When you look at any scene, it is broken down by these millions of sensory points, and graduations of light, shade and colour of tiny areas are sent to the brain as separate signals. The brain rearranges them in some way yet unknown, to give us the impression of visualising the scene. So, in reality, you "see" (just as you touch, taste, hear and smell) with your brain.

The poorest education, that teaches self-control, is better than the best that neglects it.

On behalf of the church meeting in Burn's Street, Ilkeston, I am desirous to thank those who responded to our urgent appeal for financial help with regard to our heating system devastated last winter. We made this appeal both in the Christian Worker and the Scripture Standard, and up to date we have received the sum of £347.94. We are deeply thankful to the Lord for this demonstration of Christian love from our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are determined to carry on the Lord's work here. We truly believe that our Father has great things in store for his people. We thank him for this encouragement and also for all the help we receive from those who pray for us, because they love the Lord.

The total amount that we need is £900, which means that we must raise £452.06. Any further help however large or small will be gratefully received. We assure our brethren that we are doing everything we possibly can financially. Every gift will be acknowledged by myself. God bless you all.

W. S. Bradley,
212 Park Road,
Ilkeston, Derbys.

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