

## 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17 BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

“As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing citation is the historic view of the Word of God among Baptists. Our lives are constrained by the Word of God. We cannot go beyond what is written in Scripture. By the same token, we dare not neglect that which God has revealed since it is a perfect revelation of the mind of the True and Living God.

Foundational for Baptist faith and practise is the authority of the Bible. Though cognizant of traditions, we do not appeal to tradition for our faith and practise. We look to the written Word of God. It matters little what I may think, or what some other preacher may think, when formulating our faith and practise. We must be guided by the sacred Scriptures, and when there is a question of how we should act or a question of what the will of God may be, we submit to the Word which He has given.

**WHAT ARE THE SACRED SCRIPTURES?** When the Apostle drew this particular missive to a close, he pleaded with Timothy, the young theologian who pastored the Ephesian Church. “When you come, bring ... the books, and above all the parchments” [2 TIMOTHY 4:13]. When you come, bring *tà biblía málista tàs membránas*. Bring *tà biblía*—the scrolls—*málista tàs membránas*—especially the parchments. Two words are in view which must occupy our attention— *tà biblía* and *tàs membránas*. The words likely refer to copies of the sacred Scriptures which the Apostle wished to have to read in his final days.

The books of the Bible were first written on scrolls made of animal skins, or more commonly, papyrus stalks wetted and beaten to form paper. The pages would be pasted together, forming rolls which were wound around sticks forming a scroll. As you read one column of print, the scroll was rolled onto the leading stick and the following stick would be unwound by one column. It was difficult to carry around the scrolls due to their bulk and due to the extensive library of materials which composed the sacred writings.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the **Holy Bible, English Standard Version**, © 2001, Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

<sup>2</sup> The Baptist Faith and Message, Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000

Very early in the history of the churches, Christians began to cut the scrolls into strips—one column to each strip. They then bound these strips together at the back, and this strange creation they called a *biblíon*—a Bible. That is how we came to have what we recognise as modern books—Christians wanted a handy means allowing them to read the sacred writings. The common name for those scrolls, and later for those bound copies of the sacred writings, has come into our language as identifying the Scriptures by the term Bible. This is the Book; this is the Bible.

Therefore, the Apostle asked that Timothy bring the scrolls, but especially [*málista*] the Apostle wanted the parchments [*tàs membránas*]. This is a Latin word [*membránas*] which came into the Greek tongue. Especially important writings, information which would be kept for long periods, were penned onto animal skins which had been scraped until they were smooth. Today, historians would speak of such skins as *vellum*, but the Greeks borrowed a Latin word—*membránas*. It is immediately obvious that we obtain our English word *membrane* from this Latin word.

We are reasonably certain that the Apostle was requesting copies of the Old Testament. In our text, the Apostle refers to these texts as *hierà grámmata*—“sacred writings.” Later, he will speak of “all Scripture” [*pâsa graphā*] as being “breathed out by God” [*theòpneustos*]. The Scriptures are the sacred writings of the Faith. They are those documents which we have received as being given through the intermediacy of the Spirit of God. We understand the Scriptures to be a perfect revelation of the mind of God.

Later, Peter will struggle to explain his deep concern that believers understand all that God meant to communicate. He speaks of his personal efforts to teach the full will of God. So, he writes, “I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.”

Then he makes a bold assertion. “We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,’ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” [2 PETER 1:12-21].

Peter testifies that **the New Covenant constitutes eyewitness accounts**. The words of the Son of God were remembered and copied down, as John testifies. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” [1 JOHN 1:1-3].

Moreover, Peter makes it clear that **all that has been written and received as Scriptures was uncontaminated by human opinion**. “No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” That which was written originated in the will of God; and that which the various writers penned was superintended by the Spirit of God to ensure that precisely what God intended to be communicated was written. This book is not simply another book; it is the revelation of the mind of God.

The Spirit of God so superintended those individuals who wrote Scripture so that what they wrote did not violate their own personality, yet revealing precisely the truth God intended to convey. As you read these books and letters, these songs and pithy sayings, you realise that the personality of the writers shines through. Each of the writers is an individual, and the individuality of each is apparent as you read what each has written. However, God’s Spirit superintended each writer to ensure that only that which was true and accurate would be revealed. This is the reason we say that the Word of God is inerrant and infallible, and thus it is authoritative and true. Therefore, where God speaks, we obey; and where God is silent, we enjoy liberty.

How did we receive our Bible? Who determined what books should be included in the Bible? What criteria were applied as books were selected for inclusion? The answers to these questions will encourage us in study of the Word of God. The Hebrews accepted the thirty-nine books which comprise the Old Testament as Scripture, believing that the Law (the Pentateuch) was given by Moses, the various Prophets wrote their inspired prophecies as God directed, and that the writings were given as God directed.

One exceptional argument for authenticity and accuracy is Jesus’ own Word. He quotes the Old Testament, demanding acceptance of those writings as God’s Word. Jesus repeatedly appealed to the writings of Moses from every book of the Pentateuch, thus authenticating what Moses wrote. Moses wrote... Moses commanded... Moses said... These phrases were a constant refrain of the Master’s teaching. Moses’ writings condemned the Jewish leaders. Jesus warned, “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” [JOHN 5:45-47]?

We now have portions of the Old Testament Scriptures which are older than anything we have previously had available. The Isaiah scroll is one such ancient text. Written on beaten copper plate, this copy of Isaiah’s prophecy is over four hundred years older than any ancient Scriptural text previously available. What is fascinating is that the text agrees substantially with that which has come down to us through the Masoretes. That this is true is no great surprise to those familiar with the care with which the Masoretes prepared copies of the Jewish Scriptures.

As a page was written, the scribe would say a letter and copy that letter—one letter at a time. He would then count the number of letters in a line, comparing what was written to that which was copied, and then he would count the lines on the page. If the lines failed to have the same number of letters, or should the page have an inexact number of lines, the entire page was destroyed. Should the writing have been on metal plate or vellum, of course the entire portion was destroyed. Whenever the Name of God—the tetragrammaton—was encountered, the scribe was required to bathe and write the name with a new pen, which was then destroyed before proceeding to the next word.

The purpose of recounting these laborious steps is to demonstrate the great care that was taken to ensure that the Scriptures were copied precisely. The Jewish scribes were convinced that what was written was the Word of God. They were, therefore, cautious neither to subtract nor to add to that which God had given. Thus, scholars are not in the least surprised at the accuracy of the transmission of the Hebrew Scriptures.

With respect to the New Testament Scriptures, the canon was not so much determined as it was accepted. The books of the New Testament which were received as canonical were those which were either written by an Apostle or written under the supervision of an Apostle. These were the books which were generally accepted among the churches as Scripture.

Can we trust the New Testament we have received? We have available over five thousand ancient copies and portions of the New Testament, plus citations from multiplied church fathers who wrote primarily in Greek and Latin throughout the early centuries. In addition to manuscripts in these languages, there are many ancient translations of the New Testament writings in a variety of ancient languages, including Coptic and Syrian, among other languages. All these transcripts are in substantial agreement. The task of the translator is no longer deciding what God has said, but deciding how best to say what was said in a contemporary language.

We can trust the Bible as the Word of God. Dr. William H. Jones authored a helpful little book entitled, **What Canadian Baptists Believe**. Dr. Jones writes:

Under Christ's lordship and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Baptists turn to the scriptures for their authority in matters of faith and practice. They believe that the Bible is the authoritative word of Almighty God. Following the teaching to Timothy that scripture is inspired by God and "is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and giving instruction for right living" (2 Timothy 3:16) Baptists turn also to the Bible and accept its full authority.

...Most Baptists hold to a belief about the Bible that is clearly and demonstratedly shown to alter how one acts and serves Jesus the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

**OF WHAT VALUE ARE THESE SCRIPTURES?** The Scriptures have great value. In our text, Paul writes of four specific areas in which the Scriptures have value to the people of God. We will do well to take note of the impact of the Word of God in each of our lives. Though we may think the change in each of our lives to be minimal, or perhaps even consider such change trivial, there is change nevertheless.

Take careful note that **the Scriptures define the character of those who teach us**. "As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it" [2 TIMOTHY 3:14]. An old woman was chided because she constantly read the Word of God, though in her aged condition she had difficulty in remembering what she had read. "Grandma," she was told, "what you read runs through you like water through a thimble. You can't hold what you have read."

The old woman smiled as she replied, "It is true that I don't retain much of what I read; and it does run through me like water through a thimble. However, that water keeps the thimble clean."

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<sup>3</sup> William H. Jones, **What Canadian Baptists Believe** (ChiRho Communications, 16 Vanguard Drive, Etobicoke, ON M9B 5E6, 1980) 6, 8

Again, **the Scriptures make one wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

“From childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” [2 TIMOTHY 3:15]. I cannot save anyone, but I can cite the Scriptures and God will use them to work in a person’s life.

I recall an incident when I discussed the Bible to powerful effect with an agnostic. During my doctoral rotations, I worked in the laboratory of an agnostic. As we worked, he would ridicule the Bible and ridicule my new-found Faith. Whenever he slandered the Word of God, I would simply say, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” [ROMANS 3:23]. As he continued his rant, I would inform him, “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [ROMANS 6:23]. His frustration would grow and he would speak more harshly still against godliness; I would say, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” [ROMANS 5:8]. By this point, he would be quite agitated, and I used the occasion to instruct him. “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and are justified, and with your mouth one confesses and is saved” [ROMANS 10:9, 10].

I would answer each assault by citing Scripture and inevitably, he would plead, “Don’t tell me what the Bible says. I especially resent you quoting the writings of Paul.” Near the end of that rotation, he confessed that my quoting Scriptures made him feel responsible and guilty; and he did not wish to be saved. It was a lesson I never forgot.

The story is related of a captured tiger kept caged in the front yard of a family home in China. Neighbourhood children would taunt the great beast and tease the little boy who lived in that house. They would laugh and claim that the tiger was just a big, old pussy. They said that tiger couldn’t hurt anything.

The little lad was in turmoil at the constant teasing which he endured and which his tiger endured. One day, as the neighbourhood children entered his yard and again began to taunt the tiger, he walked to the cage and lifting the latch said, “You say my tiger can’t hurt anybody? I’m going to let this tiger loose and then you will see what my tiger will do.” Opening the door just a crack, the little lad asked, “Want to try my tiger?”

Don’t waste time debating Scripture. Turn it loose! Let people see that it is the power of God to salvation.

God chooses to work through the written Word to accomplish His work. We are taught in the text before us that **the Scriptures are useful** [*ophélimos—beneficial, adapted to a particular outcome*]. In particular, **the Scriptures are useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.** “All Scripture ... is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness” [2 TIMOTHY 3:16].

When you come to church, you don’t want to hear a lecture on economics or a non-threatening discourse on how to be a good scout. People do not come to church to hear a lecture on scientific methodology, or to hear the Marxist dialectic or the latest social theory. Seated in this congregation are men and women grappling with serious issues in their lives. They are asking, “How can I be godly in the midst of a godless world? How can God love me when I am a sinner? Will God stand with me when I am old and weak? Does God care that I grieve?” You who share our services want to know, “What does God have to say?” You come week-after-week, expecting to hear a Word from God, and not to hear my opinions or my particular suppositions. You come, hoping to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need [see HEBREWS 4:16].

**The Scriptures are given in order to equip the people of God for every good work.**

“All Scripture ... is profitable ... that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” [2 TIMOTHY 3:17]. We live in a world in which men don't know what is expected of them. There is no guidebook given to teach men how to be husbands and fathers, save for this book. Women who share our services have no training in godly womanhood, save for this book. All of us seek to find what would honour God; and we do not see that goodness modelled in the world about us. We do hear in the Word what God expects, and by that Word, we are equipped to honour God.

More than anything else, the Scriptures transforms lives. Those individuals who read the Word of God and permit it to work in their lives are changed for the better. A remarkable illustration of this fact comes from the life of Dr. Harry Ironside. Early in his ministry, the great Bible teacher was living in the San Francisco Bay Area working among the Christian assemblies commonly known as Brethren. One Sunday as he walked through the city he came upon a group of Salvation Army members conducting a meeting at the corner of Market and Grant. There were probably sixty of them assembled there. Some among the Salvationists recognised Ironside, so they asked if he would give his testimony. He gladly did so, telling how God had saved him through faith in the bodily death and literal resurrection of Jesus.

As he spoke, Ironside noticed on the edge of the crowd a well-dressed man take a card from his pocket. As Ironside finished his testimony of God's grace, this man came forward, lifted his hat and very politely handed him the card. On one side was the man's name, which Ironside immediately recognised. The man was one of the early socialists who had made a name for himself lecturing not only for socialism but also against Christianity. As Ironside turned the card over, he read, “Sir, I challenge you to debate with me the question, ‘Agnosticism verses Christianity’ in the Academy of Science Hall next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock. I will pay all expenses.”

Ironside reread the card aloud and then replied somewhat like this.

“I am very much interested in this challenge... Therefore, I will be gladly agree to this debate on the following conditions: namely, that in order to prove that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ has something worth fighting for and worth debating about, he will promise to bring with him to the Hall next Sunday two people, whose qualifications I will give in a moment, as proof that agnosticism is of real value in changing human lives and building true character.

“First, he must promise to bring with him one man who was for years what we commonly call a ‘down-and-outer.’ I am not particular as to the exact nature of the sins that had wrecked his life and made him an outcast from society—whether a drunkard, or a criminal of some kind, or a victim of his sensual appetite—but a man who for years was under the power of evil habits from which he could not deliver himself, but who on some occasion entered one of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s meetings and heard his glorification of agnosticism and his denunciations of the Bible and Christianity, and whose heart and mind as he listened to such an address were so deeply stirred that he went away from that meeting saying, ‘Henceforth, I too am an agnostic!’ and as a result of imbibing that particular philosophy found that a new power had come into his life. The sins he once loved he now hates, and righteousness and goodness are now the ideals of his life. He is now an entirely new man, a credit to himself and an asset to society—all because he is an agnostic.

“Secondly, I would like Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ to promise to bring with him one woman—and I think he may have more difficulty in finding the woman than the man—who was once a poor, wrecked, characterless outcast, the slave of evil passions, and the victim of man’s corrupt living ... perhaps one who had lived for years in some evil resort, ... utterly lost, ruined and wretched because of her life of sin. But this woman also entered a hall where Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ was loudly proclaiming his agnosticism and ridiculing the message of the Holy Scriptures. As she listened, hope was born in her heart, and she said, ‘This is just what I need to deliver me from the slavery of sin!’ She followed the teaching and became an intelligent agnostic or infidel. As a result, her whole being revolted against the degradation of the life she had been living. She fled from the den of iniquity where she had been held captive so long; and today, rehabilitated, she has won her way back to an honoured position in society and is living a clean, virtuous, happy life—all because she is an agnostic.

“Now,” he said, addressing the gentleman who had presented him with the card and the challenge, “if you will promise to bring these two people with you as examples of what agnosticism can do, I will promise to meet you at the Hall of Science at four o’clock next Sunday, and I will bring with me at the very least 100 men and women who for years lived in just such sinful degradation as I have tried to depict, but who have been gloriously saved through believing the Gospel you ridicule. I will have three men and women with me on the platform as witnesses to the miraculous saving power of Jesus Christ and as present-day proof of the truth of the Bible.”

Dr. Ironside then turned to the Salvation Army captain, a woman, and said, “Captain, have you any who could go with me to such a meeting?”

She exclaimed with enthusiasm, “We can give you forty at least just from this one corps, and we will give you a brass band to lead the procession!”

“Fine,” Dr. Ironside answered. “Now, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, I will have no difficulty in picking up sixty others from the various missions, gospel halls, and evangelical churches of the city; and if you will promise faithfully to bring two such exhibits as I have described, I will come marching in at the head of such a procession, with the band playing ‘Onward, Christian Soldiers,’ and I will be ready for the debate.”

Apparently the man who had made the challenge must have had some sense of humour, for he smiled wryly and waved his hand in a deprecating kind of way as if to say, “Nothing doing!” and then edged out of the crowd while the bystanders clapped for Dr. Ironside and the others.<sup>4</sup>

The power of the living Christ operating by means of the Holy Spirit through the written Word of God changes lives. This has been true throughout history, and it is true to this day. It is a powerful proof that the Bible is indeed the Word of the Living God.

**BY WHAT AUTHORITY ARE THE SCRIPTURES COMMUNICATED?** “All Scripture is breathed out by God”—*pâsa graphè theópneustos*. Many translations read, “All Scripture is inspired by God.”<sup>5</sup> However, the word *theópneustos* means quite literally “God-breathed.” “Inspired” speaks of breathing in, but the text declares that God breathed out each word.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from H. A. Ironside, *Random Reminiscences from Fifty Years of Ministry* (Loizeaux Brothers, New York, 1939) 99-107, cited in James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith* (InterVarsity, Downers Grove, IL, 1978, 1979, 1981) 64-66

<sup>5</sup> e.g. NASB

The point which I would have you remember is that Scripture originated in the mind of God. God gave the Word, and therefore the Bible is a perfect revelation of the mind of God. Within the Bible itself, *God* and *Scripture* are sometimes used interchangeably. Referring to words spoken directly by God to Abraham [GENESIS 12:3], Paul wrote that “Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’” [GALATIANS 3:8]. Later, in the same chapter, the Apostle again personifies Scripture as God, declaring that “Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe” [GALATIANS 3:22]. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote that “Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth’” [ROMANS 9:17].<sup>6</sup>

When you read the Word of God, it is as though you were hearing the voice of God. When God wishes to communicate to man, He gives us the written Word. Thus, for us as Bible-believing Baptists, we accept the Bible as our authority. This Book stands as an infallible guide for faith and practise. It is given without error and we are responsible to obey all that God has revealed through this Word.

The liberal Christian submits the Word of God to culture, asking what culture thinks of the Word. Opposed to this, because we are committed to the authority of the Word of God we submit every practise—both those of our religious observance and those of our culture—to the Word of God. Ultimately, every aspect of one’s belief system is judged by the standard that the individual has adopted. For us, we have adopted and accepted the Bible as the perfect standard by which we judge every thought and each act.

Many professed Christians are lavishly liberal with the truths of God. No man can be more liberal than the Bible and yet be true to Christ. No one has a right to cull and cut, pervert and reject in order to build up a system according to his own fancy. The advocate of modern liberalism bids to sell principles he never possessed for a popularity he never deserved. The less principle a man has the more liberal he can be with truth and sacred things.<sup>7</sup>

Tell me honestly, when the time comes to die and you’re facing that final and ultimate journey to the unseen world, what do you think you will wish to hear as you seek strength and comfort in that hour of trial. Will you say, “Bring me my chemistry text that I might again see the formulae?” Will you wish to have someone read to you the latest economic theory? Perhaps you will wish someone to again read how you descended from a monkey as they struggle through Darwin’s **Origin of Species**.

In honesty, won’t it be that you will seek someone to read to you from the Book? Perhaps the Pastor, or perhaps a family member, or perhaps a dear friend will read those words of comfort—words that have spoken to our hearts throughout the long years. Tell me, when I lay dying, how Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going” [JOHN 14:2-4]. Tell me of the hope He offers and of the life that He alone gives.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., **The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy** (Moody, Chicago, 1995) 144

<sup>7</sup> J. G. Bow, **What Baptists Believe and Why They Believe It** (Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, TN, nd) 4-5

The Scottish bard, Sir Walter Scott, after a lifetime of labour and work came to the end of the way. Dying, he turned to his son-in-law, Lockhart, and said, “Son, bring me the Book.”

The son-in-law replied, “My father, there are thousands of books in your library. Which book?”

The dying bard replied, “Son, there is just one Book.”

Lockhart went into the library and brought to Sir Walter Scott the Bible. The great Scottish bard died with the Book in his hand.

There’s just one Book, cried the dying saint,  
Read me the old, old story.  
And the words that can never fade  
Winged his soul to glory.

There is just one Book. And this is the Book we proclaim and by which we live. It is the Book to which we turn even in death. It is the Book that tells of life in the Son. It is the Book that warns of judgement to come. It is the Book that reveals the grace of God and which calls us to life. We submit our faith and practise to the teaching of this Book; let us ever preach this Book. Let us never depart from its precepts. Let us proudly proclaim our confidence in this which God has given and let us gladly bear the Name which says that we are a people of the Book—Baptists.

Perhaps as the message has been delivered today, you realise that you have yet to put your faith in the Son of God. The message is a call for you to submit, not only to the Word of God, but to the God of the Word. This is the message of life that proclaims, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” [ROMANS 10:9-13].

Perhaps you have yet to place your life in the fellowship of a church which stands for God and for good. This is such a church, and our invitation to you is to come. Confess Christ. Identify with Him in baptism as He has commanded. Place your life in the membership of the church as He has taught. Come, be a Christian. Be a Baptist with conviction and with courage. Come, while we stand and while we sing. Amen.