

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 46. No. 3

MARCH, 1978

MAKE IT HAPPEN

RECENTLY at the Mutual Benefit Meeting (held regularly by the churches in the Slamannan district of Scotland) the question was discussed 'Are the churches of Christ Languishing' and it may well be that they are – they certainly seem to be dragging their heels. The subject is extremely important and worthy of a wider consideration especially if someone can come up with an accurate account of the causes and a practical and sensible list of suggestions for remedy. Apart from the fact that the churches may be going the wrong way about making the gospel known (i.e. placing an emphasis on gospel meetings instead of a more concerted effort on personal work and 'cottage-type' meetings) – apart from that issue, I suppose the truth is that individual members of the church could do more. One of the clear weaknesses of mutual ministry is not in the fact that mutual ministry is not scriptural or not effective, but that we do not fully practice it. Too often the bulk of the workload is left to the few and so the congregations just 'tick-over' but do not move forward on all cylinders. Imagine if you will the fantastic transformation which would overtake the churches if each member was working 'all out' for the furtherance of the gospel and the saving of souls. The sad truth is that a few are willing to work and the rest are often willing to let them. The blame for lack of progress is then blamed on 'Mutual Ministry' when in fact mutual ministry, as a system, cannot be improved upon. If everyone is doing their utmost in the Lord's work – then such a situation cannot be improved upon.

If these remarks are logically and scripturally sound, and I believe that they are, and progress is not forthcoming then it follows (1) that all members are not giving of their utmost and best; and (2) if all are giving of their best then their efforts are misdirected i.e. not being used to the best advantage. Perhaps a bit of both applies to the churches today. Firstly, it is obviously true to say that we are not all pulling our weight, and even those of the congregations who think that they are pulling their weight could do even better if they tried a little harder. Secondly, it may well be that we do not harness the available manpower / womanpower to the best advantage i.e. by holding public gospel meetings sparsely attended by the public (and sometimes, to our shame, sparsely attended by church members). Perhaps we should, as churches, have a re-appraisal of our methods of preaching the gospel and have a conference together about it. Some might say that we have talked too much about it already and we should now be doing something. Certainly the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses seem to have found better methods.

Enthusiasm is something which catches on to others, they say, but so does depression and lack of activity in the churches has, I believe, a depressive effect, eventually upon even the most enthusiastic members. We quite often hear some members say that the church isn't

doing enough. It has been suggested that when members say that, they are really reflecting their own position, i.e. that they personally are not doing enough. Nevertheless it may well be true that many congregations are not doing enough – or indeed doing nothing at all. When this situation occurs one can only suggest to those who think too little is being done, that they themselves take active steps to alter the picture. Indeed many members look to others for a lead, and when that lead does not seem to be forthcoming they relapse into a state of inactivity and even resentment. Such unproductive frustration could be overcome by such members themselves giving a lead. This is particularly true when young members look for a lead from the older members. When that lead is not present they feel that they ought not to intrude with their suggestions for activity. Thus frustrations and depressions build up to the detriment of the spiritual wellbeing and progress of the congregation. Perhaps this traditional notion amongst the congregations, that the pace should be set by a few of the older members, is the most damaging of all to the cause of Christ. Members should not wait on others to show the way but should show the way themselves, and should themselves take the initiative, I suggest this, always within the context of things being done decently and in order, of course, and am not advocating a chaotic situation with everyone 'doing their own thing'.

Where churches have properly qualified and ordained elders then members must be subject to those elders, and in any case, churches with elders will be those not likely to experience the frustrations previously mentioned, but generally will be thriving and vigorous. Nevertheless within the confines consistent with decency and order, members should not always be waiting for someone to show the way but should show others the way. In this way enthusiasm will surely be engendered and others warned into activity. Those who lead will thus be encouraged to seek ways to sustain and harness the new-found energy and progress will begin. Nothing is more depressing than for all the work and enthusiasm to be expected from one or two members. To those dissatisfied with progress, the remedy is for them to demonstrate that if progress is to depend upon them they will not fail it. To those who feel that nothing is happening – let them get busy and make it happen.

We are, far too often, conscious of the lack of activity on the part of others and forget to examine our own contribution. Nothing succeeds like success and until all members of the Lord's body strain every muscle and sinew to achieve success – we don't deserve it. To get the churches in general moving again each member must surely begin with himself (or herself). God helps those who help themselves but even God cannot bless our efforts if we don't make any. Progress, or the lack of it, is something which depends, quite definitely, on the attitudes and efforts of each single one of us. We can make it happen, if we really want to. EDITOR.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

THE balance shows that we have sufficient funds to cover our costs through 1978. However, a more detailed examination of our expected income and costs for this year show that we need to increase the subscription rate from June to £2.00 for the U.K. with suitable increases in the overseas rate as necessary. The increase is essential to secure the future from constant appeals for financial help. We hope we shall continue to have your support.

Several brethren have shown interest in the circulation figures and so we print them below for your information. Please help us increase these as far as you are able.

Finally, if you have any problem with non-delivery or short delivery of your Scripture Standard please contact me and not the printer as I have all spare copies.

DECEMBER 1977

J. K. KNELLER

Africa 43; Australia and New Zealand 14; England 292; Scotland 180; U.S.A. and Canada 45; Elsewhere 3. Approximately 35 of these are sent free of charge, mainly to Africa.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD BALANCE SHEET 1977

INCOME

Balance Brought Forward	992.51	Printing 12 Issues	781.08	
Subscriptions	1104.85	Printing Reading Cards	26.50	
Gifts	307.04	Printer's Postage	82.59	
Bank Interest	54.77	Distributing post Expenses	113.73	
			12.00	
				1015.90
		Cash in Current A/C	525.57	
		Cash in Deposit A/C	874.01	
		Cash in Hand	43.69	
				1443 27
	2459.17			2459.17

Audited and found correct J. S. McLuckie.

ASK

“Could we with ink the ocean fill,
 And were the sky of parchment made,
 Were every blade of grass a quill,
 And every man a scribe by trade;
 To write the love of God would drain the ocean dry,
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
 Through stretched from sky to sky”.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” Ephesians 3:20.

ASK ...WHAT DO I ASK?... “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God” 2 Thess. 3:5. The Love of God. Once again the Word of God speaks to my soul by way of admonition:— “Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” Exodus 3:5. I marvel at my audacity in daring to write on this theme “the love of God”. Well known preachers have, and no doubt with profit, blazed forth the message. Millions of words have been spoken and written, yet, they have not, and never will, exhaust all that could or should be said, on this great subject. I would like to draw your attention to a word used by the Apostle Paul, in his 2nd letter to the brethren at Corinth chapter 9 verse 15, a word that I desire to borrow, and use in relation to our meditation on “the love of God”. In the Authorized Version the verse reads: “Thanks be unto God for his UNSPEAKABLE gift”. In the Revised Standard Version the sentence reads: “Thanks be to God for his INEXPRESSIBLE gift”. In the New English Bible the words are: “Thanks be to God for his GIFT BEYOND WORDS!!” In the Englishman’s Greek New Testament it reads: “Now thanks to God for his INDESCRIBABLE free gift.

This mighty man of God truly amazes me, his language is sruely out of this world, these wonderful words are given to us by the Holy Spirit, working though this slave of Christ. I am astounded ... Lost in wonder ... Spell-bound ... surprised. The Apostle of course was thanking God, for the gift of Jesus, and he said, of the free gift, it was INDESCRIBABLE, will you forgive me if I use this word also to describe – “the love of God”. Strange isn’t it – trying to describe – the indescribable.

May I at this point ask you a question? What word would you choose to describe the love of God? Wonderful! Marvellous! Excellent! Perfect! Glorious! Magnificent! Splendid! Peerless! Matchless! Priceless! Precious! Everlasting! Eternal! All very good, but words that still fall short to show fully the love of God, so we will borrow this word used by the Apostle Paul :- "INDESCRIBABLE".

INDESCRIBABLE – INDEFINABLE – BEYOND EXPRESSION.

May I draw your attention once more to Paul's wonderful prayer for the brethren at Ephesus, I am quoting from the Revised Standard Version;- "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Eph. 3:14-19. If words mean anything at all, these words tell us that the love of Christ, is beyond all knowledge and all thought, and I suggest that also applies to the love of God. That does not mean of course that we cannot describe the love of God, or that we cannot seek to know our Lord Jesus Christ better we must yearn, search, seek, find, and know something of that love, so "that we may be filled with all the fulness of God".

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God".

Shall we now take a few examples, to show how difficult it is to describe – the indescribable, and perhaps more so when dealing with the love of God. How would you describe to my brother in Christ, Carlton Melling, who is blind, his lovely little grand-daughter, her beauty, smile, and her cute little ways?

How would you describe colours to those who unfortunately have been born blind. The red's, pink's, yellow's, white's etc.?

How would you describe the working's of God's cultivation of the soil? I look out in the winter time to view my Rose Garden. It certainly is bleak and bare, and as far as one can see the trees are lifeless. Then in the Summer Time a transformation, glorious colours, some magnificent flowers. Can you describe what happens?

How would you describe the working of the human brain? A marvellous internal-communication system. A sort of telephone. A recording of intelligence, memory, idea's, thought, actions. How about using the word "Indescribable"?

How would you describe to me pain ... tooth-ache, ear-ache, stomach-ache?

We find it difficult to describe beauty, colours, God's cultivation of the soil, the human brain, and pain, yet, I have the audacity to try to describe to you "the love of God". What a task! What a mountain to climb! He was a wise man who said: "All things I thought I knew; but now confess The more I know I know I know the less". May the Lord bless the efforts of all His people who try by lip or life, to glean from His precious word, a few of those "unsearchable riches of Christ", that are available for His children;

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God".

The Apostle John in his 1st Epistle Chapter 4: verse 8 said:- "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love". In the words of Job 23:3 can we say "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" We can find Him in Christ. The Word of God teaches that no man hath seen God at any time; yet by the eye of faith, we can, if we are His children, see someone whom the world cannot see, for like Moses we can see one who is invisible. "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible" Hebrews 11:27. "God is love", how was this fact to be made known to a sinful world? "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth". John 1:14.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels preached, unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” 1 Timothy 3:16.

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” 2 Corinthians 5:19.

So like Mary, we need to sit at the feet of our Lord Jesus, to learn from Him, that the greatest thing in the world is “the love of God”, and we can find that love demonstrated through the life and death, of the Son of the living God. That love cannot be measured, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” Psalm 103:12.

In the year 1975 we had a glorious holiday in Scotland, and shared fellowship with brethren at Buckie, Brother and Sister Bill Mair, very kindly allowed us to share their home in Portknockie. One morning I took a walk in the village and found myself surveying the vastness of the sea from an old railway bridge. I looked from left to right and saw what seemed to me to be miles and miles of God’s handiwork, and there came to my mind the chorus:-

“Wide, wide as the ocean, High as the heaven above,
Deep deep as the deepest sea is my Saviour’s love,
I though so unworthy, still am a child of His care,
For His love teaches me that His love reaches me everywhere”.

ASK ... WHAT DO I ASK? ... “The Lord direct your hearts into the Love of God”.

May the Lord’s richest blessing be your portion. LEONARD MORGAN

P. S. God willing I hope to continue with our theme “the love of God”, next month.

“USED OF GOD”

THE greatest aim of any christian should be to be used of God. To experience this wonderful happening, man needs to be diligent, patient and humble. Three simple attributes, but sadly lacking in many of us. God in His plans, has used people throughout the ages to do His work. God’s chosen vessels all had these same characteristics and we must cultivate them too in our endeavours for God.

Are we, as Christians of this age, diligent in all matters? Do we have a patient and humble attitude in our work for God? If not, we cannot really expect to be of much service to God. Shall we note:-

(A) The man or woman God uses is the person who has but one great desire or purpose in life.

A divided heart can never accomplish complete satisfaction. A man of many interests will seldom make a success of any – this is a known fact. If one is to succeed in business, greater time must be given to it. It is the same with anything. Diligence the keyword. The apostle Paul exclaimed, “This one thing I do” this was the secret of his success. His sole purpose in life was to make known the gospel of Christ. He worked at it day and night; diligent in all matters. Are we diligent in God’s business?

(B) The man or woman God uses is he or she who has placed himself or herself at God’s disposal.

Are we available to Christ – not just on the “Lord’s Day” but all the time; anytime? The disciples of old were always on hand. They were used of God, because they allowed God to use them. Say, “No” to selfinterest for a while, and say “Yes” to Christ. Say, “Here am I Lord, use me, use me” in a humble way and see what happens.

(C) The person God uses is the person who has learned to prevail in prayer.

Most men used of God in bible history have been mighty in prayer. They prayed with patience, humility and reverence; prayers from the heart. We may be clever, gifted, and capable for the service of God, but if we have not learned to be instant and constant in prayer we cannot look for God to bless our labours. All will be in vain.

(D) The person God uses is the person who is a student of the word.

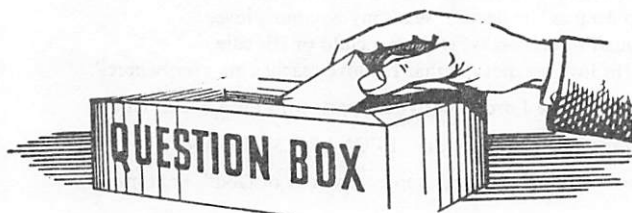
Brethren, God's word is our armoury. It is the sword of the Spirit. Wield it aright and win battles for the Lord. Can we handle it aright? Are we diligent students of the word? If not we shall strive in vain. Our approach to it should be with humble heart but we must search the scriptures diligently and often.

(E) The person God uses is the person who works in and through the Holy Spirit.

Brethren, let us place ourself at God's disposal and give to Him our talents and time. Let the Spirit work and flow through us. Quench not the Spirit but give Him free course in our lives for the spirit militates against our human desires, and must prevail.

Let each one of us place ourselves fully at the disposal of our God — let us each add our weight to the glorious ministry of our Lord, showing all diligence, patience and true humility of mind. Let God use you.

ANDREW P. SHARP. Newtongrange.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

THERE seems to be an increasing number of personal problems for christians these days. Should the christian be better equipped to deal with them than other people are?

THIS is an interesting question. It is a fact that God has never said that His children would be immune from personal problems; nor has He said that these problems would be less severe than those suffered by other people. What He has said is that His children can call on resources which are denied those who do not have close communion with Him. Whether or not individual christians avail themselves of these resources, or whether or not they are willing to do so, even allowing that they know that they exist is a matter of some conjecture. But if equipment is available to christians for their use, then their failure to use it will be a measure of how well they cope with their personal problems.

The Nature of Personal Problems

For some years now, whether we realise it or not, we have been living our lives under increasing pressures. These pressures have increased because of such things as insecurity of employment, financial downgrading, family relationships, inter-personal relationships other than family. Our young christians are finding it increasingly difficult to live with the social cynicism which they encounter each day, and when we add to this the moral bankruptcy which seems to be afflicting many people, we can understand what sort of pressures they are under if they are to adhere to their christian principles. The problems are being compounded because they are now appearing in the church where the application of the criteria for their resolution are so different from that which the world would apply.

So far as the individual is concerned we must analyse this question, from the relative standpoints of 'output' and 'input', to use a little technical jargon. How many times have we heard people say, "I'm just about drained". or "I've put up with it so long, but I can't put up with it any longer", or, "He blew his top"? These expressions, if they mean anything, mean that the emotional experience of the individual has left him/her exhausted of energy; nervous energy, I think we can call it. It is the sort of feeling that one has when leaving an examination room, or after a particularly harrowing interview; you know, that 'limp' feeling. This extreme out put

of nervous energy will leave the individual in a very vulnerable state, and he will react to various stimuli, some bad, some good. What is clear is that the individual will need some 'input' so that the responses to stimuli can be controlled, because it is becoming apparent that when a person through trying to deal with a pressing problem, feels himself to be 'drained' and 'empty', then that person will be in a state where there is a predisposition to both physical and mental illness. So what sort of problems cause this state, and how are we to get the 'input' that will keep us stable?

The Problem of Readjustment

A man named Professor Holmes listed a number of life events and relative to these devised what he called a Social Readjustment Rating Scale. It is not my intention to list all the life events which he listed, but just to illustrate how much or how little social readjustment is necessary, I will give a few from each end of the scale with their ratings.

At the top end of the scale are, death of spouse (100), divorce (73), marital separation (65), death of close family member (63), personal injury or illness (53). At the other end of the scale are, change in sleeping habits (16), change in number of family get-togethers (15), change in eating habits (15), holidays (13), minor violations of the law (11). It is quite evident that the life events at the top of the scale are the ones that 'drain' a person of nervous energy, thus necessitating an input to compensate for the loss: they are also very difficult from the point of view of readjustment socially. The ones at the bottom are relatively unimportant and do not call for any serious readjustment.

Towards Stability

The person who has to cope alone with the high value readjustment life events is almost inevitably doomed to failure. This is supported by the statistical evidence of the number of people on tranquillisers, and the number who seek help from certain organisations. In my Samaritan experience I have talked with many such, and the problems which a person would normally take in his stride seem almost insurmountable to them. These are people who have lost loved ones and are now left alone to contend with a seemingly hostile world; wives who suffer gross and indecent cruelty from husbands who have long since ceased to care; children who are baffled and bemused by the break-up of the family unit; lonely people (the high-rise flats have made for a low-level community spirit). Most of these are 'drained' of real life; where do they get their input? Obviously they look for something of the moment, something ephemeral, transitory, the accoutrements of our age. The aspirin bottle and the gas tap always seem to beckon to such.

This should not be so with the christian. Many of the problems will be no less severe to him, but he has resources which are denied the person who has never found God. The God whom the christian worships is the infinite, eternal source of power. The bitter anguish of the christian parents who have lost a child is eased a little when they think of God, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son", and they know that they have a Father who shares their deepest anguish. The christian who has lost a wife or husband will still have to endure the dreary, unsolicited hours of loneliness, but they will be able to think of a loving Saviour who suffered alone the excruciating agony of the cross. Christians who have suffered marital separation will still have to claw their way out of the abyss of despair, but surely to realise that Christ was separated from the glories of heaven to tabernacle with and to die for sinful flesh will ease the despair a little. The words of that grand apostle ring down to us through the ages, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death" Philippians 3:8-10.

I sometimes wonder how much we christians have neglected, or down-graded the real value of christian fellowship. It is an extension of that divine fellowship that we have with Christ and God. How many burdens have been eased, and how many more could be eased because of the fellowship of the saints? To the saints with problems, the fellowship can be a

unique means of input. It can supply a pool at which the thirst for sustenance can be quenched; it can supply a valuable source of power; it can give the energy for life. With all its co-called faults and inconsistencies, the christian community is still the body of Christ, a people for God's possession, a loving and a caring community at heart. And why shouldn't it be; Christ died for it. In time of need, isn't it grand if there is someone you can turn to; someone who will care about you because Christ cared for him? If the fellowship can survive, then in spite of the severity of our problems we can survive also. If we try to pull down the fellowship, then God help us. If I read the signs aright we are living in days when we shall need the closeness of the fellowship of saints more than we have ever needed it before. We should pray to God for it to be strengthened; we should add strength to it ourselves, because it can be the life cell to christians who are desperately in need.

Yes, the christian should be able to bear problems better than other people. I am sure that God recognised our need when He gave us CHrist, the church, and the gracious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With resources like that, we must be able to successfully meet the most severe life events; the only danger to us is if we neglect or forsake that which God has given us at so great a price to Himself.

All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

APRIL 1978

- 2—Jeremiah 31:23-40 Hebrews 8
 9—Exodus 24 Hebrews 9:1-22
 16—Psalm 40 Hebrews 9:23 to 10:18
 23—Exodus 25:1-22 Hebrews 10:19-29
 30—Genesis 4:1-10 Hebrews 11:1-22

THE ONE AND ONLY HIGH PRIEST

WE have been looking at the visible High Priest and Priesthood, and the two orders. The greater fitness of Jesus to represent sinners before God is established. To crown the argument our attention is drawn to the position of the new and invisible but spiritual and permanent Mediator. He does not enter a material Holy Place but ascends into Heaven itself into the very presence of God, making the offering and giving the service there, Moses made a model designed to represent the reality in material form. It is not easy for us NOW to recognise that the things which we see are temporal even after all the teaching embodied in the Bible (2 Cor. 4:18). We can therefore appreciate the revelation through all the centuries as they enforce in symbol and figure what Jesus has taught us. "Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes" — so is Jesus now, but He was with us in the flesh to fulfill the purpose of the

Almighty towards us. As Paul puts it "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). He is in heaven now supremely executing the New Covenant, made in accordance with the promise of a spiritual covenant with a people of His own. As the priesthood is proved superior, so the covenant itself is superior, and the quotation from Jeremiah states some respects in which it differs, namely 1. It is written upon the hearts and minds of men. 2. It will be with a taught people (all will know God), 3. They will be a forgiven people. These of course indicate that they will be the subjects of a new birth and a new life. The Old Covenant made a natural birth and a fleshly ordinance the qualification of relationship with God.

The New and Old Sanctuaries

There can hardly be a greater contrast than that between the material manner and method of worship under the Old Covenant and that under the New. Yet there is the same underlying design and object to bring about a direct relationship between God and man. Thus all the items in the Tabernacle in the wilderness point to spiritual realities revealed and made plain in the New Covenant. Our writer mentions a number of them and then says "Of which things we cannot now speak severally (9:6). We can safely say that every material part of that "pattern shewed thee in the mount" had its spiritual significance, and a detailed study of these can be of great profit

— as some of our brethren have found". However we are concerned about the contrast in outward observances. Here we certainly have elaborate ceremonial in the Old with many material objects to illustrate and enforce God's holiness and perfection. It was so necessary that the people should be taught from earliest days the need for humility and reverence before God. The sacrifices so impressive in their demands upon a person's property, and so essential for God's satisfaction as to need a special class of person with special dress and qualification to dare to come close, and that very special day of atonement (Ex. 30:10) for sin. Yet under the New Covenant only two material ordinances and those of the simplest possible character, needing only water, bread and grape juice with no special garments or manner of approach. The religious world has perverted these, and the holiness without which no one shall see the Lord has been hidden under elaborate ceremonial special singing, special buildings, professional labour, almost a re-hash of the Old and defiled covenant. In spite of all this the enlightening influence of the teaching of Jesus has revolutionised society, and countless millions have found salvation and joy through Him. The prophet well said "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah: 6:8). The principles underlying all our relationship with God have remained unchanged since the foundation of the world, but man has failed to keep his covenant with God and continues to fail in spite of the additional enlightenment and the final revelation of His will in the New Covenant. It is indeed important that we should recognise how far we have come short, in order that we might be acceptable under the covenant we made when we submitted to the new birth and began the new life IN CHRIST.

The new sanctuary is the community He has built, composed of living stones, a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, a holy temple (1 Peter 2:5 & 9; Eph. 2:21 & 22).

Blood

The life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11) and therefore it is especially sacred in the sight of God and of men. The flood came upon the earth on account of violence which involved the shedding of blood, but it would appear

from the sacrifice brought by Abel that God had already ordained a form of worship involving sacrifice of animals. To Noah it was forbidden to eat blood and the law of Moses has made it plain in the passage above mentioned that blood was regarded as required for sacrifice to God, and not for any other purpose. Seeing that death is the penalty of sin it is not surprising that sinful man was required to offer this symbol of life to God for his sin. To the normal human being we think shedding blood is nauseating. We have thought that all of us would be vegetarians if we had to kill our meat. Yet under the law of Moses the sacrifice of living creatures was a continual requirement for the forgiveness and approval of God. Surely the purpose is clear. Sin is abominable in the sight of God because it destroys life, and His People must get their priority right and realise death itself is preferable to sin. Shall we ever realise this? All the material ordinances embodied in the law had served their purpose when Jesus came. They had all symbolic significance and many of them including circumcision had physical advantages — health of body being part of their needs. By obedience in the offering of blood they made atonement but could not cleanse the soul. Jesus made the offering of His own blood for fulfilment of them all, and for those to come. He was without sin and therefore death could not hold Him, "when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on High (1:3).

Confidence

This supreme sacrifice has removed the barriers imposed by the law and opened direct access to God. No longer do we have to approach God through the priests, and the animal sacrifices because He who loved us and gave Himself for us has taken away the barrier from the Holy Place by bearing our sins in His own body upon the tree (10:20). We may draw near 'with a true heart in fulness of faith' (10:22). While the restrictions have been removed there remains for us the fuller obligation to love and to serve, and surely the loss if we turn away is so much the greater. Warning his readers in particular the Writer bids them not to cast away their confidence because it has so wonderful a reward, and to have patience. We trust it will indeed be true of us "we are of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul". R.B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE CLASS

The early History of the Church of Christ
or, The Acts of The Apostles

Chapter 18.

- 1 Where was Corinth?
- 2 Were Aquila and Priscilla Christians when they left Rome?
- 3 Why did they leave Rome?
- 4 Give in your own words Paul's experience, as related in verses 12-17.
- 5 Describe Paul's movements (18-23).
- 6 Who was Apollos?
- 7 Describe the position of Apollos prior to the teaching of Aquila and Priscilla.
- 8 Give in your own words the new experience and activities of Apollos, described in verses 26-28.

Answers to Edward Jess, 34 Charles Street, Penicuik, Midlothian, Scotland. Use one side of the paper only please, and leave a margin.

HYMN BOOKS

THE stock of "Church of Christ" hymn books first published in 1957 is now held by:— JOHN PARTINGTON, 86 LORD STREET, HINDLEY, WIGAN, who will be pleased to supply at non-inflated prices (only 25 pence per copy plus postage or carriage). Orders in writing to agent ,please.

Our thanks and appreciation go to Bro. F.A. Hardy who has acted as honorary agent for these many years. J. Partington. (In connection with the above, I have just received a note from Bro. Partington to say that the hymn books have all now been disposed of (sold). Nevertheless our thanks are still due to brother Hardy and brother Partington and on behalf of readers I would like to thank them both very much. EDITOR)

NEWS AND ARTICLES

The readership of the "S.S." seems to be on the increase at least we are getting new readers from time to time and we hope that the trend will continue. If readers can find new readers then so much the better. If you can

think of ways of improving the paper please let me know. Over the New Year period I have had one or two letters, especially from overseas readers, saying that the 'S.S.' is greatly appreciated and enjoyed. Not least among those was brother Carl Ketcherside from the U.S.A. the happy memories associated with whom remain quite undiminished even after many years. All our overseas readers comment that they particularly enjoy any of the 'news' items especially concerning brethren with whom they are acquainted. With this in mind I would respectfully ask churches to ask their secretaries to send in as many news items as possible. We, like the overseas brethren, like to hear about the activities of the congregations.

Articles are always required, of course, and I am depending on getting them from you. Please write clearly (this saves me a lot of time and effort rewriting them). Don't make them too long — better, I think, to have shorter articles but more of them than long articles and fewer of them. Thank you. EDITOR.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bristol, Lowerknowle: With great joy the church here rejoice that Tracey Carey, the young daughter of our Bro. David and Sister Christine Carey, has obeyed the gospel call by being baptised into Christ. On her good confession in front of witnesses. On January 27th she was immersed. We pray that she may be ever faithful to Him who died to save us all.

IVOR CAREY

Haddington, Scotland: Our hearts rejoiced greatly as we witnessed the immersion, on Saturday evening, 11th February, 1978, of Mrs. May Broad (sister of brother James Moncrieff). Mrs. Broad has been attending our meetings for some time and was happy to be immersed in obedience to her Lord. The immersion took place despite the worst snowstorms we have had here for many years but the hearts of those present were warmed by the wonderful event. We thank the brethren at Tranent for the use of their baptistry and for their kind assistance. Miss Mary Murdie

OBITUARY

Bristol, Lower Knowle: It is with heartfelt sorrow that we report the very tragic passing of our dear Son and Bro. in Christ Stephen Carey (aged 24 years) who died accidentally at his parent's home whilst alone. Stephen was baptised into Christ at the age of 13; was a faithful church member, who loved his Lord, and the church.

We sorrow not as though without hope for we know in whom Stephen believed. It's a great comfort to us, his parents, Sylvia and Ivor in this our time of trial, and we have been very much strengthened by all our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our Bro. Len Daniell officiated at the service held at the cemetery. Bro. & Sis. Ivor Carey.

Eastwood: Arthur Riley died suddenly on February 4th 1978 aged 84 years. Brother Riley became a christian 61 years ago, and met with the brethren at Eastwood for the past two years. He was regular in his attendance at the Lord's table until his death. We commend his Son and family to God's love and mercy.

G. E. BULLOCK

Haddington, Scotland: The church here have mourned the passing of sister Annie Nisbet (beloved wife of Tom Nisbet) who passed this life on 20th January, 1978, in her eightieth year. Our sister had had indifferent health for some years, following a stroke, but had been improving. She took another stroke in early January from which she did not recover. She was a faithful follower of her Lord for over sixty years and will be sadly missed by all. She was indeed one of nature's true gentlewomen and died as serenely as she had lived. We commend all those who mourn her passing, to the God of all comfort and consolation. Bro. David Dougal officiated at the funeral, conducting the service both in the meetinghouse at Tranent and Tranent cemetery. A large gathering of brethren and friends attended.

J.R.G.

Hindley: We have recently passed through a period of sorrow upon sorrow. 3 of our

numbers have been laid to rest within a short period of time.

Bro. Herbert Winstanley son of the late Stephen Winstanley, an elder of this congregation, after a prolonged and very painful time of illness, fell asleep. The funeral service took place in the Scholes meeting house which was filled to capacity, a fitting tribute to one who had earned the love and respect of so many.

Sister Caroline Smart an aged sister in Christ who suffered so severely and yet bore with patience her tribulation. Twice she broke her leg and it was the second time that hastened on her death. Loyalty, she supported the meetings when she was able, and in her absence she never forgot the Lord's work, regularly contributing of her means in its support.

Sister Florrie Cunliffe, likewise advanced in years, was also a faithful member regularly gathering with the Lord's people. Towards the end she suffered much and it was a striking tribute to her that she faltered not.

To all who have suffered the loss of parting we commend the ever abiding presence of the Living Saviour who when He comes will bring the faithful ones with Him.

Our earthly loss is heavenly gain.

TOM KEMP

Peterhead, Scotland: Sister Jessie Strachan died on the 5th January 1978 in hospital. She had been ill for some time. Even to the end she encouraged all who visited her. Every one who saw her in hospital came away with a great spiritual blessing. We commend her family to God's comfort. She will be greatly missed by the brethren here at Peterhead and also by all who knew her.

Sister Margaret Falconer on the 24th of November 1977 died. She too had also had a long stay in hospital. She was the type of person who, if her seat was vacant at any of the services you knew that it was due to illness. She, like our Sister Jessie has left an example that will be with us for a long time.

Also, we were saddened at the passing of Sister Helen McPherson who died on 17th September, 1977. She was a faithful follower of Jesus all her life. (Sec.)

THANKS

Bro. Thomas Nisbet, Haddington, wishes to thank sincerely all those who sent him letters and cards of sympathy recently at the passing of his dear wife. He cannot possibly reply to all of the many senders but wishes them to know that the expressions of sympathy were very much appreciated and greatly helped him at this difficult time.

AN APPEAL

Ilkeston: Dear brethren, the church has been meeting here in Adam Street, Ilkeston for just over three years now, and during that time, the Lord has blessed us with a growth from approximately 24 members to around 50 at the present time. This year alone, six souls have been baptised into the body of Christ. We have an active and growing Sunday School which numbers around 50 scholars and serves as a means to reach into the neighbouring area to teach the Gospel to those who are lost. In view of the growth and the varied activities of the church, we have found that our building as it now stands is inadequate for all of our needs. We purchased the building four years ago from

the Plymouth Brethren and have since that time turned what was virtually derelict into a comfortable meeting place. Last year, we built a baptistry into it, paid for entirely by the church here. However, we desperately need classroom and toilet facilities. All of our Sunday School classes (five in all) meet in various sections of the main hall. Bro. John Partington (Wigan) has drawn up plans for a classroom and toilet extension which have been approved by the local authority. A local builder has agreed to do the work for £13,500. This extension will give us three additional classrooms and enlarge the kitchen so that it, too, can be used as a classroom. To meet the above figure, we have secured a loan for £9000 with the bank, which the church here will pay off over the next ten years. The remainder will come from existing church funds. However, this is just to erect the extension. It needs to be decorated, furnished, and the existing hall completely refurbished. To do this, we have set a goal of £20,000 to make our meeting place both functional and presentable to the many non-christians who visit our services. We are appealing to our brethren to help in any way that they can. If you can help us financially, please send us your donations to our treasurer, Dan Booth: 11 Barker Gate, Ilkeston. All donations will be acknowledged. Pray for us that God's Word may be put into the hearts of those around us.

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