

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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What is that to thee?

IT was the third time that Jesus had appeared to His disciples after His resurrection. The scene was the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had told Peter some things that concerned that apostle's future, and had given him his commission—'Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. He had spoken of the witness which Peter must bear in life and death. But not content with this knowledge of what his own work and responsibilities were to be, Peter wanted to know what the work of his fellow apostle, John, who was closely following, was to be. Jesus replied very briefly and pointedly, 'What is that to thee? Follow thou me.' Peter in those few words was told in effect to 'mind your own business. Don't meddle with what God has not revealed: it is no concern of yours. Do what you have been told, and leave the rest with God.'

We cannot help but feel that in Peter we ourselves are depicted, for would we not have been curious as Peter was? 'What shall this man do?' The fact is that we not only *would* but we *do* want to know those same things about which Peter asked.

What about those who have not been correctly baptised?

In the first place, how often we are concerned as to whether certain people are saved and will enjoy eternal life. We examine the validity of their baptism: whether the words uttered over them before their immersion are the correct scriptural formula; whether the one immersed understands the meaning and significance of the act; or whether the immersion was 'for the remission of sins.' In how many cases does the person immersed understand all the meaning or appreciate the blessings attached to the ordinance? If God should make, our salvation dependent upon our knowledge, 'who then can be saved? Salvation is of the Lord; it is His gift. It is better to obey just what He commands, and not to go beyond what is written. God is perfectly able to carry out His own business without our deciding matters for Him.

What about those who have never heard of the Gospel?

Another question which constantly comes our way arises from our insistence that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord.' We are doubtful of so-called conversions which are the result, so it is claimed, of God's speaking directly to us, or of the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit upon the individual. In all too many cases such 'conversions' are not in accord with, nay, are even opposed to God's written word. If you doubt this, try drawing the attention of such a convert to

what God in the New Covenant Scriptures requires of a sinner with a view to his salvation. God's word is opposed, ignored or explained away by all too many of these people. It may as well never have been written for what guidance it gives to the way of salvation. When we insist on giving the Scriptures their rightful place we are asked, 'Do you mean to say that all those people who have never heard the gospel, or who cannot read the Bible for themselves, are lost?' Yet those who ask such questions are usually most zealous in giving and working to send the Bible to other lands, that all may read in their own tongue the mighty works of God. Strange inconsistency. To what purpose, if the written word doesn't matter?

But we do not mean any such thing as that those who have never heard the gospel are lost. It is not ours to enter into judgment upon them. That is God's business. It is our business to preach the gospel and to send the word of God wherever we can. The very ignorance of so many is an added challenge to and responsibility upon us on whom God's light has shone. Beyond that the rest is with God, and 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' But we cannot make the ignorance of others the excuse for ourselves not heeding God's word. Instead of wondering about those who have not the gospel we must realise that we have, and that we shall be judged on that fact. 'To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.'

What of the sincere people in the denominations?

A third objection against our standing for New Testament truth comes with the greatest force of all, because applying immediately to our circumstances. Religious friends, and even our own brethren who should know better, ask us if we mean to suggest that the many denominations can be wrong and we alone right; that the splendid scholars and consecrated men and women in those denominations are not equally well as or better qualified than we, almost unknown as we are, to understand the teaching and meaning of the Bible. In this connection we recall a magnificent exposition we once heard of Luke 3:2. Read the resounding names in that passage—Tiberius Caesar, Emperor; Pontius Pilate, Roman Governor; Herod Antipas and Herod Philip, Kings of the Jews; Annas and Caiaphas, High Priests. Yet to none of these great names did the word of God come, but 'to John the Baptist in the wilderness.' If the event were being recorded to-day we should read that past King, Ruler, Governor, Pope and Archbishop the word of God came to 'not many mighty, wise, noble, but to the foolish, weak, base, despised' (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

But suppose it should be shown that the denominations are right in many things? What then? What has been proved? Can we preach their gospel and adopt their practices? No. At the end we are left still with the plain New Testament and the responsibility to teach and preach it as God's wisdom and power unto salvation, and the perfect equipment to every good work for every man of God.

'What is that to thee' what other religious bodies do and teach? 'Follow thou me.' We are dissipating our strength if we look wistfully upon other religious bodies, wasting our efforts in a wrong cause. All the strength and time we have should be used in building up the Church of the Lord as set before us in the New Testament. It is not our business to be anxious about 'what shall this man do?', but to be true and faithful to the light we have. Neither the desire to stand well in men's eyes nor the asking of hypothetical questions about the standing of others justifies us in forsaking the one standard by which alone we shall be judged. 'The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day,' said Jesus.

'What is that to thee? Follow thou me.'

EDITOR.

The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life - II.

(Conclusion of the Hindley Bible School lecture, of which the first part was published last month.)

Work of the Spirit.

AS with the indwelling of the Spirit, so there are also misconceptions concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life which have tended to cloud the subject in unnecessary difficulty.

To begin with, the indwelling of the Spirit is not inspiration. He does not to-day reveal to us truth, either new or confirmed, apart from the Bible. Neither does he furnish us with an inspired interpretation of the truth. A number of people have the idea that if they come across a certain passage in the Scriptures which they do not understand, all they have to do is to pray about it, and it will automatically be revealed to them. But the Spirit is not a handy concordance, nor a substitute for lack of study. Pray about the difficulty by all means, but the answer has to come through the Word, for scripture is the key to scripture, and further diligent study will meet its reward. Again, as has already been mentioned, the Spirit's indwelling will not give us the power to work miracles. What then is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life? In answering the question we can divide His work into two aspects: what He does *in* us, and what He does *for* us.

What the Spirit does in us.

Jesus said, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth.' Where the Spirit of God is, there is life. Hence the first work of the Spirit in the heart is the new birth. Some writers leave the impression that the new birth is merely the implanting of new ideas, new thoughts, new aspirations. It is all this, and much more; for the one born again is a new creature, made a partaker of the divine nature. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

Again, the Spirit sanctifies. Peter could say of those in Christ: 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' To sanctify means to separate for God's use, and therefore it has within it the idea of holiness. Sealing, or anointing is closely akin to this. Paul could say in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 'Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our heart.' When a priest or king of old was anointed all men knew that he was set apart for that particular service. All men ought to be aware that we are the sanctified servants of God, from the Spirit-led and godly lives we lead.

Where there is the life-giving and sanctifying presence of the Spirit, there is also growth. Conversely, as in the physical, so in the spiritual, where there is no growth, there is no life. If some fail to grow, then it is a sure sign that although they may have been through the outward form of baptism, they have never been begotten by the Spirit. Some are born again, but 'quench' the Spirit, and go back into the world. Not that Christian growth is easy. Even Paul admitted that he saw two laws working in him, the law of his mind, the good aspirations and desires, and the law of sin, so that he did not always do the good that he would. But he could thank God that if he walked after the Spirit, '. . . the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

What is the evidence of growth? It is the bringing forth of the fruit of the Spirit. The fleshly life has its fruit, and how terrible it is (see Gal. 5:19-21). But how wonderful is the fruit when the Spirit of God is dwelling within! (See Gal. 5:22-25). The bringing forth of the fruit of the Spirit, is not just *part of* the Christian life, it *is* the Christian life. So often we tend to think of the life in Christ as if it consisted of merely outward attachments. But we may be devoted Bible students, or splendid Bible teachers, we may move in Christian circles, regularly gathering with the saints, we may be leaders among our brethren; but in the final analysis the only test is whether we are bringing forth in our lives the Spirit-borne fruit of godly virtues. If not, then all the rest counts for nothing. In short, the Spirit's work in our lives is the gradual transformation of our characters into the perfect image of Christ. Wonderful thought!

What the Spirit does for us.

As the Spirit is ready to work in us, so also is He ready to work for us. He is ready to aid us in prayer. Paul tells us in Roman 8:26, 'Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.' When we do not know how to pray as we ought, when the inner desires of the heart are such that we can hardly become articulate, then the Spirit takes those groanings which cannot be uttered, and He searches the heart, knows the mind of the Spirit and grants according to His will. Brethren, may we cease just saying prayers, and really learn the secret of Spirit-borne prayer.

The Spirit, too, should be the source of our praise. Why should we sing songs of praise to the Lord? Not because of custom, or to fill up gaps in our worship, but solely because they are the result of being '... filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18-20). They should be the outburst of adoration and praise of a Spirit-filled life.

And finally, the Spirit being the earnest or guarantee of our future inheritance, He will change our bodies. Paul says in Romans 8:11, 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

To put these truths in a nutshell we might say this: Jesus when He left this scene, left behind the Holy Spirit to work on earth, in us, and for us, if we will. How glorious, how complete is that work: the transformation of our souls, and the transformation of our bodies, the new birth, the new life, and new and glorious spiritual bodies.

We conclude with one of the wonderful prayers of the apostle Paul, taken from Ephesians 1:17-19, and rendered in Philips's translation: 'That God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the all-glorious Father, will give you spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of him; that you may receive that inner illumination of the Spirit, which will make you realise how great is the hope to which he is calling you—the magnificence and splendour promised to Christians—and how tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God.'

L. CHANNING.

I am the way

A MISSIONARY engaged a guide to take him across a desert country. When the two men arrived at the edge of the desert the missionary saw before him the trackless sands without a footprint or road. Turning to his guide he asked, 'Where is the road?' With a reproving glance the guide replied, 'I am the road.' The missionary was immediately reminded of John 14:6.

Where are you going?

'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death' (Proverbs 14:12).

IN the hustle and bustle of life, people are going in various directions: picture shows, dance-halls, sports-fields, salesmen to the markets, tradesmen to their work. If they were asked the reason for going in these directions, their answers would differ. The sportsman would speak of his sport, the picturegoer of pictures, the dancer of dancing, and the tradesman of his work.

It may profit us to look at this very important question in the light of everyday life and in its spiritual aspect, which is far more serious, since it has to do with Almighty God and His way of salvation.

When Jesus lived on earth, He was 'mighty in word and deed.' It was said of Him, 'Never man spake like this man'; He healed all manner of diseases, and drew disciples after Him who witnessed the things He did. Yet for all that the minds of many were directed against Him and, sad to say, were even some of His disciples. Judas's mind was directed to sell his Master; Peter's mind to deny Him; there had arisen hatred, envy, malice, bitterness, against Jesus of Nazareth.

And if each of them had been asked the reason for this, like the characters I have portrayed, each would give a different answer. The fact would be—they were going in different directions, in mind and spirit.

The disciples whom He had chosen had learnt to love Him. He had told them that He would be crucified, would be buried and the third day rise again from the dead. Yet when these things took place their minds and their confidence moved into faithless and doubtful directions. When Mary Magdalene, the other Mary and others had come to the sepulchre and were told by two men in shining garments that Jesus was risen and not there, and returned to tell the disciples, 'their words seemed as idle tales.' Yes, so soon had they forgotten Jesus's promise that it would be so. They were going in another direction!

Two of Jesus's disciples, Cleopas and another, were on their way to Emmaus, going in another direction. Why? Because they too had given up all hope that their Master would ever rise again. As Jesus drew near to them He asked them, 'What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?' Cleopas answers, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?' They were travelling in another direction. Thomas was completely in doubt, for he wanted to see the nail prints in the hands and to place his hand in the wounded side of Jesus. What a helpless and hopeless state in which to find men who once loved and trusted Jesus and at a moment when they should have been waiting in anticipation and expectation of this glorious event! So when Jesus drew near to these two on their way to Emmaus He outlined to them very clearly the prophetic scriptures concerning Himself, as to His suffering, death, burial and resurrection. Immediately they felt their unworthiness and said one to another, 'did not our heart burn within us?'

And Thomas, after He had seen Jesus, also felt his unworthiness and exclaimed, 'My Lord, and my God.' All were going in different directions!

As Jesus had made a promise with His disciples in that day, He has made a promise with us. But in this dispensation many believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are no better in character or in spirit than Peter who denied Jesus, Judas who sold Him or Thomas who doubted. They have gone in different directions, on the roads of indifference, carelessness

pleasure, busybodies in other men's business, jealousy, prayerlessness, lack of faith. Those who travel in these many and various ways and directions are saying in effect, 'My Lord delayeth His coming;' 'Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.'

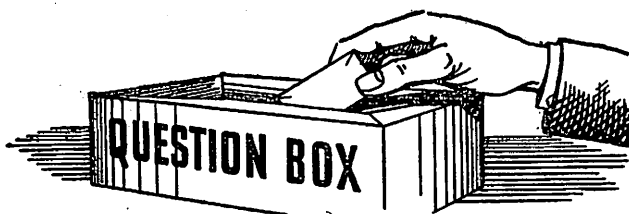
Going the way which seemeth right?

But, beloved, let us who fear God and love our blessed Saviour, realise more than ever before that there is no time to allow our hearts and minds to be travelling in other directions because we shall surely meet with deep regret and disappointment. Yes, Jesus will draw near to us, 'in an hour when we think not,' and then in which direction will He find us going?

It is a question we must answer individually. The same challenge that came to the multitudes at the hour of Jesus's trial in Pilate's hall: 'Whom will ye have, Jesus that is called Christ, or Barabbas?' comes to us to-day—the world as a type of Barabbas or Christ the Saviour as the sure and steadfast hope and sure road and perfect direction to life eternal.

Let us by the grace of God enter unitedly into the prayer of Paul when he, guided by the Holy Spirit, said: 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ' (2 Thess. 3:5).

T. W. HARTLE.



CONDUCTED BY
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Q. Who is to judge when his service is incompatible with Christ?

A. This question and the following one are sent in by a correspondent who is evidently a member of a trade union. They arise out of an answer given in the May issue concerning trade unions. Lack of space has prevented us dealing with them before.

This question concerns a statement which was made in the original answer: 'The only time a Christian employee should refuse service to his employer is when he is called upon to do something that is incompatible with his service to Christ . . . and not when he thinks it incompatible with justice to himself.' As to who should be the judge in the matter, this was also answered, for it further stated that, 'It is for each Christian to apply these (Scriptural) principles according to his own particular circumstances.' The sole standard by which a Christian must judge his conduct at all times is the Word of God, realising that he must not only avoid those things that are obviously wrong, but also those things that are of a doubtful nature (see Rom. 14:22-23). In so doing, he may be treated unjustly. But justice, particularly to himself, is not the first consideration, but loyalty to the Lord and His Word. (See Matt. 5:38-48; 1 Pet. 2:18-25; 4:14-16).

Q. Does the question of fighting for a better standard of living with his fellow-men, loyalty to his beliefs, his union, his fellows, to the men yet to come, mean nought to a professed Christian?

A. The last thing we desire is in any way to disparage the good that trade unions have accomplished, for a Christian should be ready to acknowledge good wherever it may be found. But this is not the issue.

The questioner virtually answers his own question, when he insists that a man should have 'loyalty to his beliefs.' As has been pointed out, for a Christian this means loyalty to the Divine revelation, '... the perfect law of liberty' (James 1:25). That being so, the Christian must inevitably, at times find himself in conflict with the rules of a society that is based merely upon imperfect human wisdom.

Trade unionism, as with many humanitarian societies, may change a man's environment, but only the Gospel can change a man's character (Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 5:7). Many Christians seem not to be able to appreciate this. They spend valuable time and effort in politics, trade unionism, temperance work and the like, which can, at best effect only a superficial reformation, when they have at their hands a power that can make all things new (2 Cor. 5:17). Again, trade unionism can hold an ideal before men in working towards the brotherhood of all men, but cannot give the power to attain it. The essential factor, love to God, from which love to your neighbour arises, is absent (see 1 Cor. 1:18-21). But most of all, the method of such societies and the method of God are entirely the opposite of one another. Trade unionism, political societies, and the like seek to work with the masses that they might reach the individual. This can never succeed. But the Gospel of Christ changes the individual, in order that through his witness it might reach the masses (see Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Cor. 3:2). Therefore, while fully acknowledging all the good that trade unionism has accomplished, we maintain that the greatest loyalty and good to his fellow men a Christian can manifest is to work for their salvation, employers and employees alike, through the Gospel of Christ.

Q. What right has anyone to ask for New Testament authority for anything other than: 1, Articles of Faith; 2, Acts of Worship; 3, Moral Principles?

A. The question is peculiarly formed, and may lead to a misunderstanding. Articles of Faith, that is, in a credal form, are not found in the New Testament. God has deliberately avoided this but, not being satisfied with the Divine wisdom, men are constantly attempting to crystallise their beliefs. The only statement which comes near an article of faith in the New Testament is the public acknowledgment of Christ's Deity, made in the Good Confession (see Luke 12:8; Acts 2:36; 8:37; Rom. 10:9; 1 Tim. 6:12). This is a creed of but one article, and embraces everything. If the questioner also means by acts of worship a definite form of ritual, then this is also absent from the New Testament. Some look upon Acts 2:42 almost in this light, but this is in error. It is but a summary of the activities of the early Church. Articles of faith and rituals are therefore not to be required of anyone, for they are not found in the Word of God.

We learn from the Word of God in three ways: firstly, by direct command; secondly by example, which in matters concerning the Church is most often found in apostolic example; and thirdly, by necessary inference. Note that it is *necessary* inference, that which is legitimate, and consistent with revealed truth. An illustration of the application of these principles can be seen in regard to the Breaking of the Bread. As to its observance, we have a direct command: 'This do in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19). As to when we should observe it, namely, on the first day of the week, we have apostolic example: Acts 20:7. As to how often it should be observed, namely, every first day of the week, we draw a necessary inference (Acts 20:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

It may be, however, that the questioner is desiring to obtain a distinction between faith and opinion? If so, then two of the finest statements on the subject this writer knows are given in the book, *Great Pioneer Papers*, published by the Old Paths Book Club. The first is that of Alexander Campbell, and is quoted from the *Christian Baptist*: 'Faith begins and ends with testimony; opinion, a deduction beyond testimony.' The second statement is that of Dr. Richardson, and is quoted from the *Millennial Harbinger*, 1852: 'We distinguish then: First Opinions, as inferences of human reason in respect to things not actually revealed or treated of in the Scriptures; Second Faith, as belief or sincere reception of the Divine testimony in its full meaning, and as regards all the subjects which it presents in view.' As to which is binding upon Christians, again let Alexander Campbell supply the answer: 'The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been, private property.' (*ibid*).

Points for Preachers

[This and succeeding articles are published in an endeavour to help especially younger brethren desirous of teaching and preaching the word of God, and who may desire guidance on how to proceed in this work.]

'Study to show thyself approved unto God' (2 Tim. 2:15).

IN taking up preaching, the young Christian, to whom these articles are primarily addressed, needs first and foremost to equip himself with a working knowledge of the Book from which he is to preach. Without that knowledge he will never make a preacher, neither will he perform the function of a preacher, which is to save souls, and to build them up in the Faith. This includes himself.

There are of course many other qualities a preacher must have to be a successful exponent of God's Word. I purpose to deal with some of these in subsequent articles. But first, Bible study.

The Preacher's Text Book: The Bible

To the new reader the Bible appears rather an awesome book, with its books of the Prophets, Psalms, Gospels, Epistles, etc. Let us clarify our approach to this greatest of all books.

First: a few facts. The Bible is the greatest book in the world. Its pages cover the whole of time and eternity. It has had many critics, and has survived all attacks upon its integrity. It stands supreme in literature as the world's best seller. Even from a sales point of view no book can approach the Bible. Intellectually, it is like the heavens. As no astronomer has been able to reach the heights or plumb the depths of the universe, so no intellect can attain to the heights and depths of Holy Scripture. These facts, however, should not hinder us in exploring its wondrous teaching and thereby learning all we can about the purposes of Him who created the wonders of the universe. In the Bible He has given a record of His mind and will for the guidance of man back to his ultimate destiny—the God who created him and gave him life.

The parts of the Bible

The Bible has two main divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The former has 39 books, the latter 27, making 66 books in all. A library in itself.

The Old Testament or Old Covenant Scriptures

The first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, are known as the Pentateuch, a Greek word meaning 'five-fold book.' They contain the account of the Creation, the origin of man, and his fall; a history of the Patriarchal age, of God's first judgments on the earth in the Flood, and of the great fathers of the Jewish race, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The next books, from Joshua to Esther, are mostly history, though in the case of Ezra and Nehemiah they could be classed as Prophets, in the sense that they forthtold a message to their generation: Ezra to restore the law and ritual after captivity, and Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The prophets were not so much *foretellers* of the future, although God used them for that purpose, but they were '*forth tellers*' of God's will, often punctuating their messages with a 'Thus saith the Lord.'

The next five books are called the poetical books. Job tells of the sad experiences and trials of the man of God whose name the book bears. The Psalms were the Psalter or hymn book of the Temple, and were composed chiefly by King David; while Proverbs is a book of wise sayings collected together by King Solomon. The books of Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon complete the poetic books.

The rest of the Old Testament divides itself into two groups of Prophets, the Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel; and the rest, from Hosea to Malachi, being classified as Minor Prophets.

It is impossible to give here more than a mention of these books of the Old Testament, but if the reader divides the Old Testament into these sections it will help him to understand the different ages and circumstances in which the books were written.

The New Testament or New Covenant Scriptures

These consist of four gospels or biography; one history book, Acts; twenty-one Epistles; and one book of prophecy, Revelation.

The four gospels have as their subject the life of Christ: His work, His death and resurrection. These four books should be read together, when the reader will readily see that they complement each other, not contradict as some assert. Particular attention should be paid to the 'Sermon on the Mount' recorded in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. In this sermon our Lord outlines His doctrine and a close study of His life will reveal how thoroughly He carried out His own teaching. A severe test for any teacher.

The Acts of the Apostles contains a record of the first thirty years or so of the Church's life, from the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Christ's resurrection, to Paul's two years' ministry in Rome A.D. 63-65.

We now come to the epistles or letters. Of the twenty-one, thirteen are known to have been written by the apostle Paul. The Epistle to the Hebrews bears his name in the title, but this is assumption; for, though much of the teaching in Hebrews is Pauline in character, it is not known authoritatively that he wrote it. Every epistle Paul wrote bears his name, but not the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Of the remaining epistles, one each was written by James and Jude, two by Peter and three by John, who also wrote the Book of Revelation.

It will be seen that the Bible was written by about forty different men, spread over almost 2,000 years. It teaches a religion which can be called, in the Patriarchal age a *family* religion, in the Jewish age a *national* religion and, in the present age a *universal* religion.

The Bible can also be profitably split up in this way : the Old Testament, preparation ; the Gospels, manifestation ; the Acts of the Apostles, propagation ; the epistles, explanation ; the Book of Revelation, consummation.

Next month we shall study together how to bring out the Bible's richness and beauty in sermon preparation.

HAROLD BAINES.

Interpretations of Prophecy

ONE of the most amusing experiences in life is that of listening to someone who pretends that he is an authority on something, when we happen to know that he is talking through his hat.

Television, radio, and the press are particularly burdened at this moment with men who claim that they understand the prophecies and can faithfully interpret them. These acrobats can leap on the springboard of prophecy and do amazing flip-flops into the future.

All of us can look into the past and recognise moments that were decisive—moments when the whole course of our lives was changed. But at that precise moment most of us didn't recognise it for what it was.

Likewise with prophecy. Even the Rabbis of Jesus' day did not recognise the prophecies that were being fulfilled at the time. They knew the Law and the Prophets. But none of them recognised the prophecies as being fulfilled. Even the apostles did not recognise it until it was revealed to them by inspiration. In fact, no man ever knew that a prophecy was being fulfilled at the moment it was fulfilled unless God by divine revelation told him so.

The people on Pentecost did not recognise the fulfilment of prophecy until the Holy Spirit told them : 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.'

So when we hear a man who is sure he knows that the prophecies are being fulfilled by specific events to-day, we know we are hearing a man who doesn't know what he is talking about. *Firm Foundation.*

History Repeats Itself

FOLLOWING is an extract from an article in *The Christian Advocate*, reprinted in *The Christian* of 1881. We are indebted to Bro. J. Holmes for sending it.

'Are we weakening in our original plea for a return to apostolic Christianity? Are we coming to the conclusion that we must become like other people, a sect among the sects? When this time comes, if it ever does come (which we earnestly pray may never be), our power will be gone, and then we will be ready to formulate a creed and do as other people do. Such a pressure is having its influence over some of our Churches now. These Churches are not growing. The preaching there is not distinctive, not apostolic. Even the members of those Churches are forgetting the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. This should not be. Our only hope of great successes is in the old beaten path, the plain way to the New Jerusalem.

'If we surrender the Bible and do not accord it the prominence originally given it in this reformation ; if we surrender our distinctive name and plea there is not a shadow of excuse for our existence as a Church. The sooner we give up and become as the sects around us, the better it will be for all concerned. When we become unwilling to wear the Name, to submit to the ordinances, and live the Christian life our glory is gone.

'But we are persuaded better things than these of our brotherhood. There is a great distinctive work for us to do. Let us see that we are worthy stewards of the Word given into our hearts. If the Bible is true, we want to stand by it; if apostolic Christianity is what God wants us to have now, we cannot please Him and turn away to fables; if the Gospel is the power of God to save men, we want to preach this Gospel in its simplicity and purity. Finally, if we want to get to heaven, we must hear God and follow Him.'

These words were spoken by J. H. Garrison, an American (Christian Association) evangelist working with the Church at Mornington Road, Southport. Commenting on them, the then editor of the *C.A.*, G. Y. Tickle, said: 'This, if acted upon, would leave nothing to be desired. It would take away all fear of making the Word of God an "iron bedstead" and be promotive of union where there is now division.'

Alas that the Disciples in America, of whom J. H. Garrison was a member, had already begun to tread the road of popularity against which he warned. And alas, that the Christian Association came to desire all those things he mentions. The tragedy is heightened by the fact that this Christian Association was received into the Co-operation of Churches of Christ in 1917, since when the Co-operation has unashamedly gone the same disastrous way.

Let us take note and be wiser.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

2—Daniel 12.	1 Thess. 4:13-5:11
9—Proverbs 25.	1 Thess. 5:12-28.
16—2 Kings 17:7-23.	2 Thess. 1.
23—Joshua 1.	2 Thess. 2.
30—Proverbs 4.	2 Thess. 3.

Paul's Second Letter to the Christians at Thessalonica.

Paul's stay at Corinth was at least eighteen months (Acts 18-11) and during part of that time Silas and Timothy were with him (Act 18:5). It seems safe therefore to assume that both the letters to Thessalonica were sent from there. Also one followed the other fairly soon, for the second indicates some misinterpretation of the first, which urgently needed correction. The main purpose, in fact, was to make that correction and guide the Church in proper treatment of false teachers.

1. 'Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly' (3:6).

2. 'With quietness . . . work . . . and eat bread' (3:12).

3. 'If any man obey not . . . note that man, and have no company with him' (3:14).

So prone are Christians to fall into error that the word of God is full of warnings, and the New Covenant writings show that all kinds of false teachings soon became rife within the Church. If in the very presence of the apostles under divine guidance there was this liability to go astray, how vital it is we should adhere closely to what has been revealed and not 'to thine own understanding' (Prov. 3:5). The less we use our own ingenuity and thus feed our own pride, the more likely we are to serve the purposes of God, and make real progress as against the false progress of getting worldliness into the Church.

We see that in spite of continued persecution the young Church at Thessalonica is growing. The active faith, the glowing love and the patient endurance of wrong which were so rejoicing the apostle's heart when he wrote his first letter have been increasing in the meantime, so that he can use the terms, 'groweth exceedingly,' and 'aboundeth,' and can glory in them among the other Churches.

The faithfulness of the members under these conditions are, says the apostle, a

sign or promise of future victory. They submit themselves to suffering in obedience to their Lord, being quite certain that justice will be done by him in due time. We meet the same thought in Philippians 1:28, but here it is elaborated somewhat. God is enabling them to bear all with patience like their Saviour in order that their persecutors may see the truth, which has surely often been the case—as with Saul at Stephen's martyrdom perhaps, and justifying the proverb 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.' But inevitably it is true 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' 'God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.' The persecutors must face the 'flaming fire' of God's wrath ultimately unless the goodness of God and the faithfulness of His people brings them to repentance. The awful nature of the divine retribution is called 'eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord'—and is also pictured as the 'lake of fire' (Rev. 20:14, 15; 21:8). The same coming which banishes His enemies from His presence, brings glory and joy to His saints. Finally the position of persecutor and persecuted is reversed. Which is most to be pitied even now?

It is often said that the early Christians expected the second coming of Christ within their lifetime, and that this was one of the mistakes of the apostles. Apart from the fact that it is never a mistake to expect this in one's lifetime because the Saviour's own teaching is 'Be ye also ready,' we have ample proof in the case of both Peter and Paul that they were not under this misapprehension, believing the matter to be one of uncertainty, except for the point on which Paul had already given an instruction before he left Thessalonica (2:5). He had made it plain to them that a power, an influence or a person was holding back 'the apostasy' (rendered 'the falling away,' R.V.; 'a falling away,' A.V.). The Thessalonian Christians were being deceived by false teachers, claiming divine authority (spirit), or by persuasive talk (word), or by misinterpretation of Paul's letter, or forgery of one, that the coming of the Lord was immediate. So they were being 'shaken out of their senses' by sensational teaching of this kind.

It is clear that 'the mystery of lawlessness' which was to be personified in due

time, was already at work within the Church. It was to be 'working of error' which would deceive those 'who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.' This would have to be a religion with a Christian outward appearance, but no real inward spiritual power, transforming the character into harmony with God. It harmonises with the prediction of 2 Timothy 3:4, 5—'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.' There was no difficulty in identifying the personal position which personifies apostasy but we have to beware of our own personal proneness to error, already mentioned in these notes, lest the principle of mere religious appearance should get hold of us as it has and does so often with professors. Let Christ indeed take possession of the citadel of the heart, and the 'Man of Sin' will not gain entrance. The Dark Ages of religious ignorance under the domination of spiritual Rome followed the time of terrible persecution and cruelty under political Rome. Let us be thankful that the Bible has been brought within reach of so large a section of humanity—though it is still needed much more. Knowledge of its sacred pages is essential to true enlightenment but the practical outcome must follow or there is condemnation rather than salvation. Acceptance of the truth must be followed by love of it (2:10).

Tradition is unreliable when it comes from men, but the traditions we have had passed on to us by the Holy Spirit are our one safe guide, and are in the New Covenant writings, preceded and supported by the old. To the Thessalonian Christians the one gospel had come through the apostle Paul, but it was abundantly confirmed to them also by the miraculous powers conferred on him by the Holy Spirit, and his holy behaviour, loving and unselfish, manifested among them. That same word is with us to be loved and humbly obeyed.

The concluding portion of the letter shows the same confidence and joy as the commencement and as the first letter, but there is insistence on working for a living and for others, and a warning against idleness and gossip. Any who had been 'shaken out of their senses' must come back to face the realities of life, and not make the coming of the Lord an excuse for avoiding its obligations.

R. B. SCOTT.

READINGS FOR 1957. Perhaps I have been a little daring in giving Exodus a special prominence in the first six months instead of the usual New Testament readings. Those who prefer to teach primarily from the New will find the more paried selection in those six months useful. It is good to recognise the place of the Old Covenant writings in the life, work and words of our Saviour—'if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me.' We can apply the test to the teachers of to-day, for if they do really believe Jesus, they believe Moses. Unbelief masquerades somewhat under the guise of superior knowledge, knowing better than the Word. It will be noticed we return to Galatians and then to a study of John's gospel, to be continued in 1958, all if the Lord permit. The brethren are under no compulsion in this matter. The Readings and the Notes are humbly submitted in an effort to be useful. Criticism and suggestions will be welcomed.

R.B.S.

[Reading cards can be obtained from Bro. Paul Jones, 122 Heathfield Road, Birmingham 19, price 1d. each. Please state number required and enclose also stamps to cover postage.]

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Birmingham: Summer Lane.—We had an inspiring time at our 91st Anniversary meetings on 3rd and 4th November. On Saturday, after tea served in our own building, we adjourned to the more commodious Hall in Ormond Street, kindly lent us for the occasion. The congregation well filled the room, thanks to visitors from many of the churches in the Midland Counties. Our brother Marc Mountford presided over the meeting and Brethren Geoffrey Lodge and Philip Partington gave stirring messages through thoughtful addresses. On the Lord's Day the former exhorted the church in the morning and the latter preached the gospel at night. We are much encouraged by all the interest shown in our work here and gladdened by the readiness of brethren to share our rejoicing.

F. C. DAY.

East Ardsley.—The Church held its 41st anniversary on Saturday and Sunday, October 27th and 28th. A good company sat down to tea. The evening meeting was presided over by Bro. H. Baines, of Morley, who gave a good spiritual lead to the meeting. Then followed two helpful and inspiring messages from Bro. T. McDonald, of Dewsbury, and Bro. A. Carson, of Nelson. Bro. Carson served the Church on the Lord's Day, when again there was a time of uplift and spiritual rejoicing.

Edinburgh.—Three were baptised in a splendid meeting in which brother Len Channing preached here. He also spoke at Haddington, Tranent, and Kirkcaldy. Those baptised were James Brown, Mrs. Truman Clark and Mrs. Thomas Jamieson. I have recently spoken at Kirkcaldy, Slamannan and Newtongrange. Our Sunday School is still being wonderfully attended. We are expecting others. Several have completed our thirty-lesson correspondence course. C. P. FINDLAY.

Haddington, East Lothian.—In January of this year you rejoiced with us and with the angels in heaven over the repentance of our brother and sister Fred Gell. Once again we are glad to report that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for another young married woman here has put on her Lord in baptism. Most of the work of carrying the gospel to our new found sister was done by our brother Fred Gell. While we were distributing copies of 'Truth in Love' in this place, Fred was asked into the home of this young woman, with whom he was already acquainted, as she wanted to know more about the church of Christ. Thus was the door opened to him to preach the good news to her and her husband. Eventually they both attended the meetings held in the Town House here. Soon after this, she was confined to bed for a short period and at this time our sister, Mrs. Fred Gell, helped a great deal by looking after her infant son when necessary. When she recovered she made known her decision to be baptised into the name of Jesus the Christ, and by the courtesy of the church at Tranent, who gave us the use of their meeting place and baptistery, she was so baptised. Brethren, we would request your continued prayers for the work here and for our new-found sister, Mrs. Brash, that she may be kept faithful unto the end. To God be all the glory and all the praise.

JACK NISBET.

Kentish Town.—We gathered on Saturday, October 13th, to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the opening of Hope Chapel. It was a happy occasion in which brethren from several other churches joined us. About 60 were present, and the evening attendance rose to between 70 and 80. The sisters provided a good tea between the sessions. After a brief report, with reminiscences, seven different brethren spoke briefly and effectively on 'Scriptures which have helped.' This was entirely *ex tempore*, and was interesting and helpful. In the evening Bren Rogers and Tweedy from Aylesbury gave us their 'maiden' rally addresses. We much enjoyed the exhortation and instruction given, and are most grateful to all who supported us. These are occasions of humble thankfulness, and sweet fellowship. R. B. SCOTT,

Germany: Munich.—Brother Salvoni, of Milan, Italy, conducted meetings in Germany during the summer. He preached in Hamburg, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Augsburg, and Munich. Crowds average from 100 to 500 each evening. Many Roman Catholics came out to hear this brother tell why he had left the Roman church. Even Roman Catholic priests visited the services. In most places discussions were held after the regular services. In Munich, the discussion periods lasted until 11.30 and 12 o'clock each evening. Brother Salvoni always met his opponents in love and kindness, yet with profound and unanswerable arguments. Even though he is a very learned man, and knows several modern and two ancient languages, he never infers that he knows more than the most unlearned brother in the congregation.

His German sermons were printed and thousands of copies were mailed to those who requested them. The fruits of his labours will be seen for years to come. There have already been fruits borne in some places; and in Munich a Roman Catholic priest has continued to attend services and has asked for private instruction.

Fausto Salvoni is about 45 years old. He was Professor and Doctor of theology in the Roman Catholic University of Milan. He studied the sacred scriptures for himself and decided he could not remain in the Roman church and at the same time do the will of God as revealed in the New Testament. He left the Roman church and his teaching position as well and went alone and forsaken into the world. After two years of wandering about seeking the true church, he heard of our brethren in Milan. After studying the scriptures with them and proving their teachings, he was baptised. He began immediately to preach and has held many gospel meetings not only in Italy but also in France and Germany. He is always severely persecuted wherever he goes to preach. His life is ever in danger, so let us pray for him that God may give him a long life of service among the churches throughout Europe. He can do much to strengthen many and bring others out of darkness into God's glorious light. JACK NADEAU.

Nelson, New Zealand.

SINCE our arrival in New Zealand four young women have been added to the church at Richmond, Nelson, which now has 19 members. This may not look outstanding; yet when we compare it with the fact that there were five loyal brethren at the beginning of the year, all but one over 70 years of age, we consider this to be fair progress, and news that we would like our brethren to share.

One thing that we are now certain of in this land is that the teaching given is best done in the home. In this way there is plenty to do. We keep an open home, and trust that more results will be made known shortly. Meetings for preaching are held in Nelson each Lord's Day evening and on Thursday evenings. Interest is being shown in the gospel preached by E. Paul Mathews. Maybe we shall see the work grow as the meetings become better known. The Richmond brethren plan to have up a building of their own about June of next year. This should give us greater opportunity in our work for the Master. The greatest need for the work in this place is for sound men who are able to teach others. It is stated that the Mormons have 300 Missioners in New Zealand making many converts, and we know that this is about true. If American false teachers can make such inroads how much more could a British brother do with the truth of God.

We have been well received as English; Americans are not so well received. If any reader of this letter feels the urge to leave his home and country and do the work of an evangelist, where the fields are truly 'white unto harvest,' please do not delay, but write us, that we may work while it is day.

Is the missionary spirit of enterprise a thing of the past in the British Churches? New Zealand is a call and a challenge. We are seeking to work a 40-hour week, to cover our needs for food and clothes; the rest of our time is mostly taken up in the pushing out of the borders of the Kingdom.

W. J. COLE.

Newtongrange. — We were overwhelmed at our annual social by the brotherly love shown in the record number who met with us. There were brethren from as far as Buckie, Dalmellington, Germany and the U.S.A. To brother Clyde Findlay go our grateful thanks for using the opportunity to exhort us in our Christian duty as individuals, to go; preach the gospel. Too often we are content to wait until someone comes to hear the gospel, ignoring that vital word—Go!

Bro. Leonard Morgan glorified God in his preaching when he used for his text 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him?' How vain we sometimes become until we remember that until His only Son died for us, we were without hope before His throne.

We wish to thank all the brethren who through a common, uniting love, travelled long distances just to be with us and our Lord, rejoicing in yet another year of witness in Newtongrange.

A. J. BROWN.

CORRESPONDENCE

A MEETING OF PRECENTORS

Dear Editor,

Some time ago a meeting of those who lead the praise in our churches was suggested to me. In view of the hope that the new hymn book will be ready soon, I have been wondering if there is a desire for precentors to meet. I should be happy to try to arrange such a meeting if a sufficient number are interested. Will those who would like this please write me and say what they think would be the most suitable time and place. No doubt a week-end could be arranged, and churches might do well to cover the expenses of brethren to such a meeting where this was desirable.

Please write to me at 12 Poulton St., Fleetwood.

A. L. FRITH.

PRAY FOR AND HELP HUNGARY

The radio and the newspapers have impressed upon us the need to send help in money, clothing and food to those Hungarians who are suffering under the merciless and enslaving tyranny of Russian Communism. Such appeals are receiving prompt and generous response from many sources. It is fervently to be hoped that Christians will not be lacking in sending help. Leaving out any political considerations, here are men and women and children who are in want. That alone calls upon our love and care. The Christian standard of giving is higher than political expediency; it does not ask whether people be our friends—'If thine enemy hunger, feed him.' And those in want are not enemies. They are covered by Christ's all-embracing 'Inasmuch . . .'

We feel sure that individual brothers and sisters and churches will be moved by the need to help in any way possible. We are sorry that this unavoidable interval has elapsed between the appeals and this notification to our brethren.

Appended are some addresses to which help can be sent:

Money only—British Red Cross Society, 14 Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1.

Goods in kind, particularly clothes and blankets—Save the Children Fund, 5 Crescent Row, Goswell Road, E.C.1; and Central Committee of Hungarian Exiles in Great Britain, 5 Arundel Gardens, W.11.

In addition, the Lord Mayor of London is launching a national appeal, and no doubt local appeals will be set afoot in

many parts. There are thus many avenues through which help can be sent.

Help for refugees arriving in this country should be offered to British Council for Aid to Refugees, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1. If other avenues are sought we shall endeavour to put those interested in touch with the right channels, if they will inform us of their desires.

By coincidence only a few days ago I finished reading a book 'Signs in the Storm,' by Joseph Nemes. The author, a Hungarian, describes his dreadful experiences, as a follower of Christ, in opposing the Communist regime when it took over the country at the end of the war. Though he does not draw a harrowing picture the writer's very soberness sets out with greater clarity the horror of this system. Finally Nemes escaped from Hungary, and he is now a clergyman in the Presbyterian church in New Zealand.

No help could be given to the despairing appeals over the radio from Hungary, but here is a way in which we can respond to the cry of need. Let us respond as unto Christ.

EDITOR.

OBITUARY

Eastwood.—The Church has suffered a loss by the passing of our Bro. James Hewes. We shall miss him. We testify to his faith and his willingness to be of service. His passing was sudden, but his last act was to serve at the Lord's table. During this he was taken ill and passed away the same evening, Sunday, November 4th. We commend our Sister Hewes and her two daughters unto the Lord, whose promises are sure.

CHARLES LIMB.

[The news of Bro. Hewes's death came as a great shock. Only the week before, when we served the Eastwood Church, we visited him and his wife in their home. In our brief acquaintance we learned to esteem our brother for his humble and devoted service of His Lord. Reared in the Church of England, where he was for many years a member of the choir, he was willing to break from tradition and ties that bound him, to identify himself with Christ and His church in the way appointed. We sorrow especially for Sister Hewes, who recently underwent a serious operation and is still attending hospital for treatment. For our brother our sorrow is turned into joy through the realisation that, because Christ lives, we shall live also.—EDITOR.]

POSTAGE RATES FOR THE "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

In June, 1956, a further increase took place in postages on printed papers. This affects the *Scripture Standard*. We regret, therefore, that from January, 1957, it will be necessary to increase slightly the subscription rates for copies of the magazine sent by post to readers in this country. The new rates will be: One copy for one year, 8/-, two copies 14/-, three copies 20/-.

We know our readers will appreciate the need for this, and hope they will continue in their loyal support. Each copy of the magazine is still produced at a loss of about 2½d., but generous subscribers enable the paper still to be published. We appeal for a continuance of this support. If there could be a greatly increased sale the *Standard* would no longer be produced at a loss. Please do all you can to spread its circulation.

HOLD HIGH THE TORCH

HOLD high the torch: you did not light its glow;

'Twas given you from other hands, you know.

'Tis only your to keep it burning bright,
Yours to pass on when you no more need light,

For there are little feet that you must guide,
And little forms go marching by your side.

Their eyes are watching every tear and smile,
And efforts that you think are not worth while

May sometimes be the very helps they need—

Actions to which their souls would give most heed,

So that in turn they'll lift it high and say,

'I watched my mother carry it this way.'

NELL B. BRADLEY.

COMING EVENTS

Slamannan District.—The annual New year social gathering will be held (D.V.) in the Slamannan Church Meeting-House on Tuesday, 1st January, 1957 at 12 noon. Speakers: Bren. L. Morgan, Hindley; Walter Crosthwaite, Ulverston. Chairman, Bro. David Dougall. A very hearty invitation to all.

H. DAVIDSON (Dist. Sec.)

NEXT CONFERENCE

Preliminary Notice

The Church Meeting at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs., invites the brethren to meet in conference on Saturday, 20th April, 1957.

Afternoon session. It is anticipated that the business will be transacted inside ninety minutes and that the remainder of the time will be spent in discussion of 'Useful activities for the younger members of the church'; the discussion to be introduced by three eight-minute talks.

Evening session. The Glad Tidings.

TO CHRISTIANS NEAR READING

Sister Mrs. E. C. Payne is an isolated member of the church, living at 1 Kenilworth Avenue, Southcote, Reading, Berks. She asks that her address be inserted in the S.S. in case there should be other members living near.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE READINGS, 1957

The list is again being compiled by Bro. R. B. Scott. Please send orders for reading cards to PAUL JONES, 122 HEATHFIELD ROAD, BIRMINGHAM 19, stating number required and enclosing one penny for each card.

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All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (news items the 15th) to the Editor: C. MELLING, 76 Tickhill Street, Denaby Main, nr. Doncaster.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, Lumley House, 4 Clarke Street, Westboro, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Nr. Wigan.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian.

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