

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Why Not? (7.)

WHY NO MINISTERS?

(Continuing our extracts from Bro. David King's writings we come to his studies in the New Testament on ELDERS).

WE hold that a church without a plurality of elders, each possessing all the items of qualification named by Paul, has not attained the full stature of the church of the New Testament. We cannot say that wanting in this it is not a N.T. Church, because the churches of the apostolic times existed . . . in two classes—those fully set in order, and those only advancing to the conditions requisite to that perfect order . . . The provisional condition should be terminated so soon as a church can discern in its membership the duly qualified men. Then as to the qualifications: We believe them reasonable and attainable. Many men in the churches have them not, because they do not sufficiently yield themselves to the requirements of their high and holy calling.

But who and what are Elders? They are those duly qualified who . . . have had committed to them oversight in all matters appertaining to teaching, guiding and ruling. They are not *all* the senior men in the church; for many of that class know themselves as completely destitute of duly specified qualifications. Nor do they consist of *all* those who think, feel, or judge themselves qualified; for men often count themselves competent for office when all around know them as wholly unfit. Age is a first element in the qualified elder—not *nonage* or *dotage*, but age sufficient to guarantee the requisites for . . . acquaintance with men and things . . .

New Testament terms for Elders

Elder (presbuteros) in the N.T. is used to denote: 1. Simply comparative age; as "The *elder* son was in the field" (Luke 15:25); 2. An official person; a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim (Matt. 16:21); 3. An ordained officer in a church (Acts 11:30; 14:23). In this particular, then, it is like *diakonos* (deacon) used in its *generic* and in its *appropriated* sense . . .

The ordained elders of the church in any one place are the presbytery (*presbuterion*) of that church. The word occurs three times in the N.T.—twice applied to the Jewish Sanhedrim (Luke 22:6; Acts 22:5) and once to the elders of the church (1 Tim. 4:14). Elders have official standing only in the church in which they are members and . . . elsewhere they are not elders, and consequently form no clergy, caste, or order, claiming official status and distinctive titles wherever they may go.

Elders are also designated Bishops, Overseers, Pastors. That these several terms are applied in relation to one and the same office is apparent. Paul from Miletus "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church," and . . . said to them "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you OVERSEERS, to FEED the Church of God." (Acts 20:17-28).

Here the elders sent for by Paul are designated *overseers*, and the word thus rendered (*episkopos*) is, in every other instance in the N.T., represented by BISHOP. Thus, then the elders are termed *bishops*, or *overseers*, and required to *feed* or *tend* the flock, which is the work of a *shepherd* or *pastor*. We also read, "For this

cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain ELDERS in every city, as I had appointed thee; . . . a BISHOP must be blameless." (Titus 1:5). Here, most clearly, the terms *elders* and *bishops* are used interchangeably. Again, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder . . . *tend* the flock of God, OVERSEEING it . . . And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:1-4). Here, too, the elders are *shepherds* or *pastors*, who have to *tend the flock*. They, too, are *bishops* or *overseers*, and as such are to oversee the flock . . . As pastors or shepherds they are under the Chief Shepherd, from whom they will receive their reward. It is, then, as clear as demonstration can make it, that elder, pastor or shepherd, and bishop or overseer, are terms appertaining to one and the same officer in the *Church of God*.

. . . In the English N.T. we have both *pastor* and *shepherd* where in the original *poimeen* only is found, of which *shepherd* is the exact equivalent. The term *pastor* is from the Latin, and originally signified shepherd. But it has now come frequently to denote a hired preacher, as distinguished from the elders of the church, neither an elder nor an evangelist. As, then, *shepherd* is the true idea, expressed by the term in Bible usage, let us speak of our elders as the *shepherds* of the flock, and leave the term *pastor* for those who have improved upon apostolic order. So too with the term *bishop*. Overseer . . . is once used to translate *episkopos*, while in the other instances it is represented by *bishop*. We have here two words, where in the original there is one. One of these two (overseer) exactly represents the term it translates. It is pure and simple English that everyone understands.

Duties of Elders

The duties imposed upon the Eldership or Presbytery of a church are most important. Though elders are not essential to the being of a church, they are most certainly indispensable to its well-being . . . Churches make elders without regard to the required qualifications; whereas they are authorised to do so only when the qualified men are manifested. Misrule is the result . . . In every case the church on the one hand and the overseers on the other should distinctly comprehend what is to be committed to the elders . . . and their induction into office should in no case take place until it is ascertained that they and the church are . . . perfectly in the same mind.

Some have expressed regret that we have not a statement of the duties of the eldership as concise and distinct as Paul's statement of what a man *must be* who fills the office. Such statement would no doubt be quite convenient but . . . it is not absolutely needful . . . it is not thus requisite, for the terms by which the elder is designated, together with the stated qualifications, clearly enough indicate the duties . . .

As Paul appointed Timothy to remain in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, that they might set in order the wanting things and ordain Elders, it was most fitting that he should remind them concerning the qualifications prerequisite to that ordination. Accordingly, in writing to Timothy he said: "A Bishop (Overseer) *must be* . . ." and then follows a specification of said requirements. In instructing Titus he wrote: ". . . that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders . . . ; if any be blameless . . ." and then there follow several indispensable qualities substantially agreeing with those cited to Timothy. Reference to 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 gives them as under:

TIMOTHY

Blameless.
Husband of one wife.
Vigilant.
Sober.
Of good behaviour.
Given to hospitality.
Apt to teach.
Not given to wine.
No striker.
Not greedy of filthy lucre.
Patient.
Not a brawler.
Not covetous.
Ruling well his house.
Not a novice.
Good report from without.

TITUS

Blameless.
Husband of one wife.
Having faithful children.
Not self-willed.
Not soon angry.
Not given to wine.
No striker.
Not given to filthy lucre.
A lover of hospitality.
A lover of good men.
Sober.
Just.
Holy.
Temperate.
Holding fast the Word.

The foregoing specification indicates what every Elder *must* be: When men thus qualified are ordained, then may be said to them, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers" (Acts 20). Elders qualified and ordained according to the direction of the Holy Spirit through the apostles are made Overseers by the Spirit whose law and rule are thus observed.

Some have argued that we are not to look for all the specified items in each elder, but to find the whole in the sundry brethren of whom the eldership is composed. But that fancy is groundless. The ordination is restricted to the qualified; none other are warranted to allow themselves to be ordained, and neither evangelist nor church have authority to ordain any other. Nor are the qualifications marvellous exactions. Which of them should a Christian husband and father be content to want? Everyone should aim to become all that is here required.

Faith and Confidence

ON one occasion, as recorded in Luke 8:22-25, Christ and His disciples went into a ship to cross the Sea of Galilee. As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep and while asleep a storm of wind swept down on the ship and they were in jeopardy. The ship began to fill with water and the disciples woke Jesus and said, "Master, master, we perish." After rebuking the winds and calming the raging waters, Jesus asked His disciples, "Where is your faith?"

Jesus did not rebuke them for not having faith. His question did not accuse them of being faithless but of having a misplaced faith. This was their sin. They had placed their confidence in the wrong thing.

Possibly they had trusted in the ship. Four of the disciples were sailors and sailors must trust in their ship. But ships can be sunk. Those who were not sailors might have trusted in the four who were sailors. They had sailed these waters before. They had certain knowledge of the elements. But man is fallible and faith in men has a definite limit. Whatever it was they were trusting in it was wrong.

The sin of these disciples is the sin of today. This sin is as old as the human race and as universal as mankind. We today put our confidence in something. What we are and what we will be depends on what we believe in and are guided by. Hear the parable of the pumpkin: "A farmer exhibited at a county fair a pumpkin grown to the exact shape of a two-gallon jug. 'When it was no bigger than my thumb,' he said, 'I stuck it in a jug and let it grow. When it filled the jug, it quit growing.' What the glass jug did for the pumpkin, our beliefs do for us. Our lives are shaped and fashioned according to our faith and we grow only as big as the things we believe in."

What is Faith?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The word "substance" in this scripture could be rendered "confidence" and is in Hebrews 3:14; 2 Corinthians 9:4; and 11:17. It could read, "Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for." There can be no faith unless there is confidence in our receiving that for which we hope. This confidence is based on evidence (conviction) that the things not seen are real. The soul that has faith in God has confidence with respect to things hoped for and conviction with respect to things not seen. Thus faith and confidence makes those things that are not seen real to us.

True faith is exemplified in the relationship of a child and his father. I read somewhere that a five-year-old boy and his father were looking at the moon. The boy asked, "How high is the moon?" The father said, "I would have to put you on my shoulders and climb that telephone pole." What simplicity of faith voiced by this boy. Reaching the moon was as real as climbing the pole. It bespeaks his complete confidence in his father. Such confidence must be ours in God our Father.

Faith in Our Life

Faith and confidence have always been characteristics of God's people. In the Christian's life this is the power which lifts him above the level of the world. By faith we draw closer to God. It puts things in their right perspective. Faith is to the soul what light is to the eye. Without faith life is drab, colourless and meaningless. Faith gives strength and courage to live above the world. Paul's faith led him to say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Christ told His disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17:20). But someone is ready to say, "This is miraculous faith." This may be true. But faith in God and confidence in His promises can remove mountainous obstacles that tend to hinder our living for Christ. By faith David slew Goliath; by faith we too can slay our Goliaths.

Possibly there is worry and anxiety in our lives about what we shall eat, drink and wear. According to Christ (Matt. 6:25-34), this is due to "little faith." God cares for the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field; surely He will care for His people. Here is something all can have confidence in: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Have faith in this promise and your life will take on new perspective. Faith casts out worry and anxiety about material things.

Faith Is Victory

When the Goliath of fear invades our lives there is only one reason why it is there. In Matthew's account of Christ stilling the tempest, the disciples woke Christ and said, "Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 8:25-26). Little faith causes fear. Strong faith is the antidote; it will cast our fear. Faith caused the five-talent man in Matthew 25 to work for his master; fear led the one-talent man to neglect his master's work and thus be lost.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). What do we have to fear in this life? Christ has promised to be with us. This we can believe and have confidence in. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6). You too can live above fear. How? By faith and confidence in God and in His Son Jesus Christ.

There is the Goliath of doubt. It seeps into the soul and causes us to wonder about God and His promises. In Matthew 14, Jesus came to His disciples walking on the water. Peter desired to go to Him, so Jesus said, "Come." He began to walk to Christ, but when he looked around at the waves he began to sink. Jesus saved him and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Complete faith in Christ will keep doubt from our hearts.

Even the greatest and strongest of God's servants sometimes lose heart and doubt. After John the Baptist had been imprisoned he began to doubt about Jesus. He sent to Christ saying, "Art thou he that should come or look we for another?" (Luke 7:20). In hours such as this, God doesn't leave us or cause us to doubt. We weaken in faith and begin to lose heart; then doubt creeps in.

What shall we say then? Faith and confidence can reach into every phase of our life. It can bring real joy to life (2 Cor. 1:24); it will be the means of our overcoming temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Read Hebrews 11. Here are described heroes of faith. They met and overcame every obstacle of life. They triumphed over every force that would crush them and rob them of the grace of God. This faith when tried worketh patience (Jas. 1:3), whereby we can overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5).

Before us is the future. Where is your faith and confidence? Christ said, "Have faith in God." Why? "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). We do not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future. Therefore, let us put our faith and confidence in God and we shall never be moved. —Selected.

Whither Now!

THROUGHOUT the years, churches of Christ in Britain have been confronted by many problems, the solution of which must have given rise to much anxiety and heart-searching. Undoubtedly there are many brethren better qualified than I am to recount such problems. But there is a problem confronting us now which I personally find to be not a little disturbing: I refer to the activities of full-time preachers from America, assisted by full-time preachers in this country, who are now supported by churches in America. Why should this be thought to be disturbing? Surely, many would argue, the preaching of the gospel ought to be an occasion for joy, no matter who does the preaching. With this I agree, but commendable though the effort is I still feel that there are certain features which give rise to concern. Let me just point out what I consider those features to be.

In the first place, why should we have American full-time preachers actively engaged in the setting up of assemblies in this country when the work here has

been going on for so long? There are two possible explanations: either they have been asked to come, or they have been sent. If they had been invited, it seems reasonable to assume that this would be common knowledge and that their support would be provided by churches in this country, but this does not seem to be the case. If, on the other hand, they have been sent, then it seems that the churches in America who support them must think that missionary work ought to be done in Britain. If this is so, then it appears that there is a general assumption that the activities of churches of Christ in this country are at a very low ebb, with the added implication that there is an unwillingness to be about the Lord's work. If this were merely assumption then I would not feel concern, but I think that many brethren understand that similar assertions have been made publicly in the past by some of our American brethren and possibly they have reported on the same when they have returned home. If these assertions were true then there would be no reason to complain, but I refute the charge that we have been unwilling to work, and I defend our competence to do whatever may be necessary for the successful maintenance and promotion of the Lord's work. How is success reckoned? Is the counting of heads all-important? Comparisons are odious, of course, but it seems to me that churches in America have greater resources at their disposal than we have and consequently our efforts must seem puny by comparison. But even with their greater resources we do not see any startling advancement numerically in the Western European countries, in which many full-time preachers have laboured. Traditionally, people in these countries are not easily converted. Is the harvest seen to be whiter in Britain? Has the full-time preacher to justify his existence by numerical results? Is this the reason for the missionary work in Britain?

Secondly, two outstanding questions have taken a heavy toll of our effectiveness in recent years: I refer to the "committee" and "cup" questions. I make no apology for mentioning these because if these questions and others remain unresolved then we shall not need to worry too much about effectiveness; all that will remain will be nostalgia.

The origin of the "committee question" is not easy to determine. Wraithlike it seemed to spring from the ground and it was among us before many knew what was happening; but unlike a wraith it had substance and explosive content. I suppose that if a history of churches of Christ in Britain were compiled the historian would, perhaps, mention certain places and names from whence this question emanated; but history has a distressing habit of being too factual. I am convinced in my own mind that certain external pressures were brought to bear and that the ill-conceived and hastily-executed attack on the Evangelistic Committee has done much to destroy the effectiveness of churches of Christ in this country. Coupled with this, and possibly because of it, undue emphasis has been placed on the authority of the local assembly; but this is an urgent matter which needs consideration elsewhere.

The origin of the "cup" question is more easily determined: it came from America and was virtually unknown in this country until comparatively recent years. The fact of its coming from America would be unimportant if it had scriptural warrant; but many brethren here do not grant it such warrant. The most tragic aspect of this question is that the introduction of individual containers into worship has offended many brethren and has divided many assemblies. So far, the brethren responsible for introducing them have been unresponsive to pleas made to them, and it seems to me that they must carry a heavy weight of responsibility for hindering the work of Christ in this country. Furthermore, when American preachers come here to establish assemblies and into such assemblies they introduce forms of worship which are not acceptable to many British brethren, they only aggravate an already inflamed situation. Why has there been a reluctance to talk over these problems? By whose authority are the feelings of many brethren violated?

It is not my intention to be hypercritical nor to impugn too much, but to appeal to a sense of Christian responsibility. I do not call into question the sincerity of those brethren who preach the gospel; the work is never easy and is many times difficult. But I feel that the time has come to give urgent consideration to these outstanding problems. To this end I would suggest that (I) a critical examination of the executive and legislative (if any) authority of the local assembly ought to be made; (II) that there ought to be some form of consultation between leaders of assemblies in this country and those full-time preachers from America who are seeking to establish assemblies here, to discuss how the work should proceed for the benefit of all; and (III) that we MUST explore as a matter of extreme urgency a plan of evangelisation which will be acceptable to all. Burying our heads in the sand and hoping that things will resolve themselves is too naive. Brethren, whither now?

A. MARSDEN.

There's a Difference

NOT long ago I visited an old abandoned meetinghouse in a rural area. It was a dilapidated frame building. The siding was truly "drop siding" in some places and the paint had long ago flaked from the surface. The interior was both dusty and musty. A bird flew through a broken window as we entered. Wasps and "dirt daubers" buzzed about, angry at our unwarranted intrusion upon the domain to which they had filed claim. The seats were all gone and now occupied places on the back porches or under the shade trees of homes in the community. But the old speaker's platform was still there with its faded carpet tacked upon it—a carpet from which the pattern had been worn away just behind the speaker's stand. The brackets were still upon the walls indicating where the kerosene lamps had once hung to give forth a pitiable little yellow light falling upon the pages of hymn books held high to catch their dim glow.

The couple who took me to this site then drove to town to display the new brick structure in which the congregation was meeting. This was the second house which had been built since the old rural location was abandoned. The air conditioned interior provided welcome relief from the heat. The cushioned pews offered comfort to a fatigued body. My host broke the silence. "Quite a difference, isn't there?" he said. I agreed but as we talked further it became obvious that there were differences which were not merely material. The more I thought about them the more I wondered if the congregation had gained or lost.

The baptistery with its clever lighting arrangement, its heating element, and its gaudy depiction of the Jordan River for a backdrop, was certainly more convenient than the pool under the big sycamore down at the creek. But those who stood on the bank above the clear water filled with darting minnows and sang, "Shall we gather at the River?" often found themselves unable to continue the song because of their unashamed weeping that a precious life had been born anew. And as they crowded forward to extend the hand of fellowship to the blanket-shrouded dripping figures there was a warmth of sincerity that all too often is lacking today among those who do not even trouble to catch the name of the one being immersed.

Granted that there are much larger audiences than there used to be, except at the "big meeting" but try to get them to visit the sick and you will be amazed at how many are really concerned. Gone are the days when the wife baked an extra loaf of bread or an apple pie, and the husband came in from the field for an "early supper" so they could have time to visit and sit with a sick neighbour and carry food to help the worried wife of the patient. Gone, too, are the days when friends gathered in to share the grief of those who sat huddled around a casket in the parlour—the room opened only when death or the preacher visited the home. Certainly we feel a sense of relief at a time of sorrow when a smoothly-functioning organisation commanded by a suave mortician grabs our dead and whisks them out of sight, not to be seen again until time to debate solemnly whether to leave the glasses on the sightless eyes of the corpse or remove them. But I am not so sure that our well-chosen expressions of sympathy are not as shallow as an old-fashioned coffin.

I admit there is a difference in the amount of the offering as shown on the polished walnut board hanging on the front wall to the left of the pulpit and that formerly scrawled in uneven figures on the cracked blackboard with a piece of white chalk in the country church building. There has to be if you are going to hire someone to do the things that were formerly accepted as a part of life and done freely without pay. Did one of the members become sick during the summer? All of the members suffered with him. On a chosen day they met to plough his fields, or to gather in his harvest and transport it to market, while the women cooked dinner for the whole group. Not luncheon—but dinner! You would have grossly insulted these people if you had offered them money. They didn't think of it as manifesting their religion or serving Jesus. They simply thought of helping a needy neighbour, and that's why it was really helping Jesus!

They had their troubles in the old days because they were human but they also forgot them in times of stress and need. They couldn't take time out to have a nervous breakdown and they didn't have the money to do it anyhow. It costs a lot to do things like that. So they didn't get the "jumping jitters" when a baby cried at home or in meeting. I think sometimes that cushioned pews have softened one end of our anatomy and cushioned preaching has softened the other end. It seems that the larger our buildings grow the smaller our hearts become. We have cooled both our buildings and our spirits. Maybe we have sacrificed concern for comfort!

'The Scripture cannot be broken'

THE Jews were ready to stone Him and had taken up stones for this purpose. Jesus questioned them, "I have shown you many good works from the father; for which of these do you stone me?"

"We stone you for no good work, but for blasphemy; because you, being a man make yourself God," they answered.

Jesus responded, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" (John 10:31-38).

Jesus' Argument for Divinity

This interesting exchange between our Saviour and his people shows the authority with which our Lord spoke. His argument rests on the major premise, "Scripture cannot be broken." From this position He first defends Himself. But He further drives home the fact of His own authority.

To accomplish His first purpose He argues that the unbreakable Scripture calls even mortal judges gods in the Psalms (82:6). Therefore, it is no blasphemy for Him to call Himself God. But He does not leave His argument so shallow. He drives the point deeper. The Scripture, which cannot be broken, calls civil judges gods. Therefore, Jesus, consecrated and sent into the world by God as demonstrated by His works, is called God in a yet higher degree. The Scripture cannot be broken, and this writing reveals Jesus to be divine and God's Son.

Jesus' Statement and the Old Testament

This incident in Jesus' life drives home more truth. By taking up stones against Jesus for blasphemy, the Jews appealed to their law. It was this law which commanded the act of stoning for blasphemy (Lev. 24:11-23). Jesus meets them on common ground by answering them with a commonly accepted authority. Jesus' postulate is that "The Scripture cannot be broken." It is thus obvious that he recognises the Old Testament authority. Notice He did not say, "It is not lawful to break the law." Such a statement would permit us to say Jesus did not respect the Old Testament, but simply appealed to an authority accepted by His hearers. Rather, Jesus said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." Here is an objective authority received by both Jesus and His hearers.

The authority of the Old Testament is also seen in the use of several words and expressions referring to Scripture in this passage. We first notice he appeals to this quotation from the Psalms under the word "law." In a specific sense the word law applied to the first five books of the Old Testament. But in a general sense we see the word Law referring to an Old Covenant book not in those first five. (So also John 12:34; 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21).

In this passage also is the expression "It is written . . ." This is a common designation for God's word, carrying with it a feeling of authority. The perfect tense of the original language indicates the past completion of the act of writing with the present influence of the act of writing remaining. One more term is coupled with these two—Scriptures. So in this passage "Law," "Scripture," and "It is written" are used synonymously.

Jesus' Statement and the New Testament

Recognising the Old Testament as God's authoritative word, Jesus in no way detracts from Himself as God's revelation with the consequential authority. He is "consecrated and sent into the world" by God (John 10:35). The implication here is the same as in Hebrews 1:1ff: God spoke in times past by the Old Testament prophets, but now God has spoken in a Son. The writers of the New Testament were fully commissioned by Christ to write his word (John 14:26; 16:13; Mt. 28:18-20). What we have in John 10:34-36 is the "unavoidable implication that the whole of Scripture is of irrefragable authority."

The Authority of God's Word

"Scripture cannot be broken." These words are used by God's Son to emphasise the importance of every word of God. First, he used an obscure passage which He held up to be just as authoritative as the Scripture's most familiar passage. But more than this, He stresses the inviolability of the Scriptures to be broken. The word meaning "to be broken" here means to loosen as to release someone or something tied. "Laws as having binding force are likened to bonds; hence *luein* is the same as to annul, subvert; to do away with; to deprive of authority, whether by precept or by act" (Thayer's Lexicon). The authority of the Scriptures is binding; and no one, in any way, can loosen that binding authority. "Every statement of the Scripture stands immutably, indestructible in its verity, unaffected by denial, human ignorance or criticism, charges of errancy or other subjective attack."

W. J. LEACH.

How Small is Small?

MARK TWAIN told of a time his little girl broke her doll, and he attempted to still her sobbing by making light of the incident. "You shouldn't cry over a little thing like that!" But she, looking up through her tears, said: "Daddy, what is a little thing?" He was unable to answer, for her broken doll was important to her.

One of the greatest utterances of the apostle, Paul, consisted of only four words. "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19). There are more saints than sinners that need to learn that this is not a small scripture. We seem to miss some of its significance. Some would look no further than to realise that this scripture tells them not to resist discovered and revealed truths of the Bible. I think there is much more to this scripture than that.

Did you ever undertake to do some good deed only to have some sorehead effectively stop you short? If so, you know what it is to have your spirit quenched. It was a small thing to him. He didn't lose any effort. He probably never even entertained the idea that he quenched the spirit. But he did. Yours! We members of the church of Christ have developed a real effective spirit quencher. If we are too lazy to participate in a good work, we can stop the work and ease our consciences in the bargain. Just find a scripture and by the tiniest twisting of it find legal grounds for opposing the work. More preachers have probably had their spirits quenched by lukewarm church members than by all the alien sinners combined.

Every time we resist a presented truth; every time we endeavour to support error; every time we are uncharitable in others; every time we frustrate someone's good efforts; every time we use vituperative language, we indulge in prejudice every time we violate our own conscience, we quench the spirit.

Such practices harden our hearts and kill us. It is a small scripture. But how small is small?

A Day

Regard each day as a fresh start, a new beginning, a precious gift as yet un-sullied, from the hand of God. Every rising sun shines on a day gleaming with infinite possibilities. Rain or shine come what may, resolve that for at least, this one day, you will find contentment in the path you must tread.—Selected.

* * *

Opportunity has hair in front: behind she is bald: if you seize her by the forelock, you may hold her, but, if suffered to escape—not Jupiter himself can catch her again.—Latin proverb.

We serve God if, with our whole might and for His sole glory, we obey Him and do the work which He has appointed. The high service of God is to be offered in a lowly spirit, whether it be in an exalted or a humble sphere.

* * *

"YE must be born again." (John 3, 7).

Regeneration removes the guilt of the past, enables us to have victory in the present, and directs our life in the future. The glory of this truth is that it is a Gospel which humbles man and exalts God; and it gives hope to all of us, because it opens heaven to the worst of us, by God's grace.

* * *

"WORKERS together with Him." (2 Cor. 6 1).

Take my life, O Lord, and use it as a cog geared to Thy will, that together, Thou in Thy greatness and I in my nothingness, we may do great things for Thy kingdom.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

SEPTEMBER 1964

6—Ezra 9	1 Cor. 7:1-24
13—Psalm 39	1 Cor. 7:25-40
20—Psalm 115	1 Cor. 8
27—Deut. 24:10 to 25:4	1 Cor. 9

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE IN CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR

A PRINCIPLE is "a right rule of conduct." There are other related meanings but this is what we have in view. A basic principle of Christian conduct is "Overcome evil with good." This is a simple statement but the principle is difficult to apply. The nature of the evil to be overcome and the circumstances involve varieties of behaviour. The universal application of this to the world's problems would solve them, but it has to be voluntarily accepted. In the case of our Saviour complete application of it in every way culminated in His death on the cross. Many following the same path have suffered also.

Several principles come before us in our readings this month. The general principle of behaviour in the matter of sex relations and reaction to conditions of life is stated in 7:17—"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches." Again in verse 24: "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." These last two words are vitally important. Two illustrations are given. The first is nationality—Jew or Gentile. The second

is slave or freeman. The change of heart brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in it will not alter nationality or status, but will alter behaviour. Christ will shine through nationality, and will make a good slave and a good freeman. The development of holy living in any state will in due time transform society in general.

The relation of man to woman has in a measure been treated in chapter 6, and the answer given to enquiries from the Corinthian Christians follows naturally. Some human philosophers and sects have placed a very high value on complete abstinence from sex relations; others have made marriage and child bearing the highest ideal of life. Christianity does neither, but requires the highest standard of purity in or out of the married state, and insists upon monogamy. Thus we have Paul's strong desire, backed by cogent reasoning, for Christians to remain single in order that they may more unreservedly serve God in the church. However, he recognises that this can be inconsistent with proper behaviour for several reasons. Moral conditions in Corinth were specially bad, and at least among heathens in all other parts were low, and could best be improved by true married life. "Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Their proper relationship is defined in 7:3-5, and this will set an example of Christian living.

With the spread of the gospel and its acceptance by some and rejection by others it was and is possible for the peace of a household to be endangered by unbelief. Here the rule is clear that the believing partner is not to separate from the other. If however the unbeliever insists on separation, that will not incriminate the believer, but it should be avoided if at all possible. No doubt there were and are cases of extreme cruelty or enmity making separation necessary, but Christian patience and forbearance at their highest minimise this risk.

Thus these questions are left open for individual decision subject to godly and prayerful consideration, and the normal conditions of society maintained while those with special qualities are free to exercise self-denial of a high order. Jesus Himself made no law and His words agree with the apostolic injunctions we have been studying (Matt. 19:11): "All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb: there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Young brothers and sisters with a longing to serve Christ, need to think carefully before taking up responsibility of either kind. Immediately

after this record there is the account of the Saviour taking up the children and blessing them, but there is a far greater blessing for them in bringing them to the knowledge of the gospel than bringing them into the world.

We note the humility of the apostle in giving his opinion, where he is certainly right but does not pass on a divine commandment. The charge to married Christians is definite and clear from the Lord—they are not to separate (7:10 and 11), but where an unbeliever is involved, the condition is different. There is also the opinion that "in view of the impending distress" Christians should remain married or unmarried as the case may be. It is worth consideration that we should place emphasis on the words, "Seek not a wife," and not allow the desire to marry by either man or woman to be an absorbing passion, but rather to leave it to the circumstances of life. There are some most important words in 7:39—"only in the Lord."

R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

REFERRING to the article, "Geared" from "Light and Joy," I would like to ask, at what time the Apostles held their Sunday schools, if any. Surely, the accepted times for holding services and Sunday schools are only "traditions of men." There is Biblical authority for holding a meeting at midnight, if found convenient.

The teenagers and middle-aged day-trippers are unlikely to be coaxed into Church by more services! Let us rather spend part of Sunday going out to find them in their own houses, or wherever they are. Once converted, they will bring up their children in a Christian atmosphere that lasts seven days a week, and spend the Lord's Day in the way they believe most pleasing to Him.

(Miss) R. Payne.

"WHAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR SAID"

The reason for the "S.S." was to present truth as revealed in the scriptures, and not to make our own standards by expressing opinions that are contrary to scripture.

I still say that Daniel was right in stating that Nebuchadnezzar saw a fourth person "like unto the Son of God." God was the first existence known, so Jesus could be rightly called a Son. To whom did God speak when he said "Let us make man" (Gen 1:26)? I agree that He did not have a Son in the flesh at that time, but it seems beyond doubt that He did exist. I would like Bro. Barker to quote a few scriptures, where Christ or the Son did not exist. I have noted all that Bro. Barker has quoted from

learned men, and always have recognised the blessings we have received by their learning; but during the past years it has been obviously the difference of opinion on biblical matters. Re: "The Son of the Gods" as suggested should be read. Would Bro. Barker tell us to whom the Son here refers? Also would he answer the question in my last letter, To whom did he compare him?

My understanding of the rendering "Your God is the God of all Gods" would be "Your God is above all the Heathen Gods," not to place him on a level with Heathen Gods.

Re: the existence of Christ, or the Son of God, I would like to ask any interested readers to note especially in the N.T. the words come, came, and sent. Mark 10:45: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto"; John 3:13: "No man hath ascended to heaven but he that came down from heaven"; Luke 19:10: "The Son of man came to seek and save"; John 3:17: "God sent not his Son"; 1 John 4:9: "Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world"; Gal 4:4: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son."

The Greek word for "come" is *katabaino* which means "to descend," or, as Dr. Harding Wood states, "coming from one place to another." The main reason for quoting this and the passages of scripture is to emphasise that, as God sent his Son into the world, He must have been existent with Him.

I am at a loss to understand Bro. Barker's last paragraph, in which he infers that word or thought was existent before God. How could there be thought before a mind?

I shall not continue this correspondence any further, but I would not mind hearing the views of others.

J. E. Breakell.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

THE CAMEROONS

(In our January issue, page 11, appeared an appeal through Bro. James Gardiner, Haddington, Scotland, for financial help to support native evangelists who are preaching the word in the Cameroons, West Africa. Since then Bro. Gardiner has reported twice in the "S.S." as to the response to that appeal. Bro. Gardiner has now sent us, from Bro. D. Elangwe, a detailed report of the amounts received, and their donors. We think that those who gave would prefer that their names and gifts be not mentioned, but we append a note of thanks from Bro. Elangwe, with statement of the position of the fund. May we remind

you that the need to support this work is still urgent and constant; in addition, we commend to your prayers and help the further appeal from Bro. Elangwe for the purchase of a printing press. Here is Bro. Elangwe's statement):—

D. N. Elangwe, Bible Training College, Box 35, Abak, E. Nigeria.—On behalf of the few Cameroon Christians I very sincerely thank all the brethren who are responding to my appeal which appeared in the "Scripture Standard" early this year. I also thank the "S.S." Editor and his staff (!!! Ed.) for their co-operation. Bro. James Gardiner informs me that many of the contributors do not want their names published, so I give the following report.

	£ s. d.
(Total gifts)	49 1 6
40 Bibles, 3 debate books, literature	19 10 2
Cash in hand	29 11 4

APPEAL

I perceive that I would find it difficult to pay a regular monthly support if I engaged a preacher. At the moment I am helping the Eastern Nigerian brethren to develop a monthly publication "As the Oracles of God," for the promotion of Christian unity. I experience a difficulty with the printers. I will have things more difficult in Cameroon where there are very few printing presses. I have therefore decided to buy a medium printing press instead of engaging a preacher who would work for a short time and leave. Apart from gospel work the press will do jobs and so be able to support some preacher some time. The press will be a lasting contribution. With it I shall be able to provide our people with scripture literature in the local tongues.

Our people reason and readily accept the truth. I know many of you would like to come and preach to them if you had the opportunity. I strongly appeal to you all for your co-operation to help me raise the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds (£750) for a printing press, small building to house it and its accessories. If there is a brother who can handle the business of procuring and shipping a printing press to Victoria, Cameroon, let him contact Bro. James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. I appeal also for your prayers that I may remain steadfast and devoted to our common cause. God reward all richly in grace, peace and ability.

All praises to God the Father.

D. Elangwe.

Aylesbury.—From July 19th to August 2nd the church here held its first Summer School, on the general theme "Training for Service." The school was by way of an experiment, but we are

happy to report that it was a great success. Classes were held Monday to Friday of each week, from 9.30 a.m. until 5 p.m., including a discussion period. Subjects covered were, 'New Testament Evangelism' (a study of the Acts); and "Church Problems" (a study of 1 Corinthians), each led by Bro. W. B. West, of Memphis, Tennessee. Other subjects covered were "Christian Evidences," led by Bro. Virgil Trout, of Lubbock, Texas, and Bro. Philip Slate, of Wembley; and "Visual Aids in Teaching," a series for women, led by Sis. Becky Tilotta, of Freeport, Texas.

Brethren attended (some for one week, some for the whole period) from England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland and U.S.A.

In addition, each evening for fifteen nights, Bro. West lectured on the Book of Revelation. These lectures were advertised to the public, again as an experiment. The response was very heartening, with a good number of local people being present each evening.

Everyone attending agreed that the school and the evening lectures were a great success. The teaching was clear, informative and inspiring, and the fellowship was truly uplifting. We would like to thank all those who by their interest and attendance contributed so much to the success of this effort. Especially our thanks go to Bro. West, Bro. Trout and Sis. Becky Tilotta, for having come so far to help us, and for their ability and devotion in conducting the classes.

The success of this venture has led us to consider the possibility of making this an annual event, and greatly extending its scope.

Aylesbury.—On Wednesday, July 29th, during the period of our Summer School, we rejoiced to see Frederick Plater put on the Lord in baptism. He has been attending our services for some time. His wife and eldest son are already members of the church. We rejoice that one more in this fine family has been added to the Lord. We pray that our new brother in Christ may grow into a mighty man of faith in the Lord's service, as a leader not only of his family, but in the church.

Blackridge, West Lothian.—The church has been given fresh courage by the baptism on Lord's Day, August 9th, of the daughter of Bro. and Sis. Alexander. We are grateful to the church at Motherwell for the use of the baptistery there.
John McCallum.

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).—Rejoice with us, and give God the glory, for a further manifestation of the power of the gospel of Christ in our midst.

On Thursday, 25th June, 1964, Joyce Whitehouse confessed Jesus as Lord and

obeyed His gospel by being baptised. Joyce, a young lady in her twenties, first heard the gospel nearly two years ago when Bro. Dieter Alten was labouring with us. Since that time Joyce has been living and working in London, but the seed had fallen on good ground, for, when she returned home a few months ago, she came back to our meetings, and is now a Christian.

Joyce has now returned to London and is meeting with the Wembley church. Pray with us for her growth in grace and knowledge, that she may be a useful servant in the Lord's vineyard.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield.—We were very much encouraged by the support we received when we met on Saturday, the 18th July, to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of our meeting-room at Beulah Road. A good number sat down to tea and nearly 100 gathered in the evening to take part in the gospel meeting addressed by Bro. Leonard Morgan, of Hindley. We experienced an uplifting time, and were built up by the address of Bro. Morgan, who fanned the flames of our faith and brought a living Christ before us, exhorting that we might truly serve Him who gave His all for us.

Bro. Morgan continued to serve the Church on Lord's Day, teaching and preaching the word with zeal. We thank him for his service in the Lord and all who joined with us to make this an occasion to be remembered.

T. Woodhouse.

Loughborough.—We rejoice to report the addition of two new members to the church. Following a week of inspiring gospel preaching by Bro. H. B. Frank, of the U.S.A., we were happy to hear the good confession and witness the baptism of Valerie Stones. Valerie is the eldest daughter of Bro. and Sis. Stones. The following evening (Lord's Day) Allan Spence also made the good confession and put on Jesus in the waters of baptism.

The whole week was marked by good attendances both by Christians and non-Christians, and we pray that more of the seed sown may yet have fallen on good ground.
T.S.

Tunbridge Wells (Corner of Cambrian Road and Upper Grosvenor Road).—Brother Alex Allan preached in a gospel mission here, July 18th to 26th. A number of non-members came in to hear the Word, and we feel confident that the faithful presentation of Christ crucified deeply impressed them. On July 23rd, our hearts were overjoyed when Bro. Allan's son, Raymond, decided to give his life to the Saviour. He was baptised the same evening. We praise God. We are grateful to Brother Allan for giving up his holiday to labour with us.

A. E. Winstanley.

AUTUMN RALLY

The Autumn Rally will be held at 2 p.m., 12th September, in "Onward Hall," 207 Deansgate, Manchester 3 (Please note change of venue from that announced in August "S.S."). At this rally the relationship between the new "machinery for evangelisation based on Dewsbury" and the "conference committee machinery" will be discussed under resolution of the Eastwood conference of 28th March, 1964.

Accommodation etc. It will be necessary for brethren to arrange their own accommodation. There are numerous cafes where luncheons and teas may be had. The Deansgate municipal car park is at easy walking distance.

It is to be hoped and prayed that the difficulties, which, for twenty years, have handicapped effective co-operative effort among us in the gospel, may be overcome, and that happier fraternal relations should characterise all our activities, so that the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ for ourselves and the world may have fulfilment.

"I pray—for those who are to believe in me through their (the apostles) word, that they (ourselves) may all be one, even as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become maturely one, so that the world may acknowledge that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me." (John 17:20-23).

Surely it is necessary to have a well-informed, deeply interested, consecrated, co-operating membership to make progress.—A. Hood. For the committee.

"LET nothing be done through strife or vain-glory." (Phil. 2, 3).

COMING EVENTS

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).—Saturday and Sunday, 12th and 13th September, 1964 (D.V.). Weekend visit of Bro. A. E. Winstanley. Gospel meetings at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday, 19th and 20th September, 1964 (D.V.). Weekend visit of Bro. Andrew Gardiner. Gospel meetings at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday, 24th—Friday, 30th October, 1964 (D.V.). Meetings to be addressed by Bro. Fausto Salvoni (former Roman Catholic priest of Milan, Italy). Fuller details later.

Loughborough.—The Church invites you to the following meetings: Saturday, September 19th: Anniversary meeting, 6.30 p.m., speakers Bro. R. Andrezejewski, of Lille, France, and Bro. L. Channing, of Aylesbury. Tea at 4.30 p.m.

Lord's Day, September 20th: Bro. R. Andrezejewski will serve the church. Breaking of Bread at 11.15 a.m. Gospel meeting at 6.15 p.m.

Wigan: Albert Street, Newtown.—Gospel meetings, D.V., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Lord's Day from October 5th to 18th: all meetings at 7.30 p.m.

Speaker: Bro. David Dougall, of Scotland.

We give a hearty invitation to all members and friends to come and help us in our effort to win souls to the Master and extend His kingdom.

Morley.—Autumn Rally. Speaker: Bro. D. Dougall. Saturday, 4th October. Tea, 4 p.m.; Meeting, 6 p.m.

Sunday, 5th October: Breaking of Bread, 2.30 p.m.; Gospel Meeting, 6 p.m.

Come and help us in this time of fellowship.

NOTICE

Please address future communications to the Blackridge Church to John McCallum, 20 Riddochhill Crescent, Blackburn, Bathgate, West Lothian, Scotland.

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