

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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OUR REAL ESTATE

THE changing world will demand a changing approach if we are to make any impact upon it with the Christian witness. And we do not like to change our tactics! We would prefer to continue with "business as usual" and pad our reports to make it appear that we are gaining. We have been betrayed into a "tried and true" philosophy which has convinced us that anything we have tried is true, and anything we have not tried cannot be. But time is running out on us while the world is outrunning us!

It is difficult for us to contemplate taking the world for Christ without becoming involved with building programmes, structures and edifices. Accordingly, because of this emphasis, our concern is often not to find where stark need exists, but where we can find a building site with space for parking. We may deliberately move out of an area of real mission into one of unconcern, but which is compatible with our "image." But we may find that some things which we regard as essential are only incidental to the work of the Master in our generation.

We cannot always retreat from reality. We must go back into the world which we left for it is a part of the "all the world" into which we have been sent. And it doesn't make any difference how sticky, or dirty, or smelly it may be. We were not told to go into the clean, sanitary part of the world, but into all of it, and some of it is pretty messy, and often bloody!

"Go . . . Preach"

Suppose we resolve to leave our air-conditioned salt shakers and penetrate the strange world at our urban doorsteps, to lose our lives in order to find them! No one can ever really influence those who are forced by a hundred factors, known and unknown, to dwell in the inner city ghetto, unless he moves into the area, and identifies with them as Jesus did with us. Gospel meetings and crusades will not reach them. Those who conduct such spectacles really hope they will not be packed with the unkempt and unwashed, the pimps and prostitutes, the addicts and alcoholics. Nothing would create more consternation than for a great multitude of these to "come early and get a good seat." The people who "amount to something" would soon absent themselves from the place and regard the effort as a flop!

You can't really do much good by bringing a little "Jesus talk" and dumping it in the inner city each evening, and then racing your car from the area as soon as the "ordeal" is over. You have to drop behind the lines as a volunteer commando for Christ, and learn to go native, and to live off the area. You have to get accustomed to flies and cockroaches in the bedroom, and to rats and mice in the kitchen. You may have to ride elevators to vertical many-storied slums, which stink from urine and fecal matter. And you may also have to endure with compassion the language of those who accost you while drunk on cheap whiskey or canned heat, or who are half-stupified from "pot" or "grass."

Our problem is that we must learn to love mankind and not just a certain kind of man. We must become human sculptors in the school of Christ, and envision the image of God, scarred and broken, underneath the hard exterior. We must learn how to bring it to the surface with the tools of love and faith.

And this requires more than mere casual association. Often we are held back from the "inner city" because we have no church buildings, and yet these could prove a hindrance.

When a few people are led to Christ in a block of flats let them meet in one of the flats. Let those in other buildings do the same. Each place may arrange its time of meeting on Lord's Day to suit the schedule of the attendants. A little "church in the house" whose adherents must work all day as chaffeurs, or maids, or cooks, might meet early in the morning, or late in the evening. The coffee table in the living-room, or the breakfast table in the kitchen, could become the Lord's table. There might be as many communities of the saints as there are great buildings in a housing project! Jesus can be in a good many places at the same time!

Such meetings could be more "sharing experiences" than anything else. Stately ritual, robes, choirs, and all the other paraphernalia of the modern institutional church would seem out of place in a small apartment. There would be little need for someone to bring in a pulpit stand and deliver a formal address. But it would be relatively easy to capture the family feeling which provides warmth and understanding. And it is the sense of "belonging" which the Way must restore in our day of the lonely crowd. The larger the congregation the harder it becomes to implement the command to "bear one another's burdens," but a house church in the teeming inner city can develop a real sense of compassion for all.

The True House of God

It is not really a valid argument that we must own an elaborate meetinghouse in which to proclaim Jesus to the lost. Christianity had its greatest growth during the almost 300 years when it owned no buildings. A study of the book of Acts will reveal that the Good News was heralded forth in the Jewish temple, in synagogues, in a vehicle on the main highway, in private homes, on a river bank, in prison, in the inner city marketplace, in a Greek lecture-hall, in a Roman court, etc. The only place where the preaching was not done was the one place where most of it is done in our day—a house constructed by the saints for the purpose!

We do not argue that it is wrong for the saints to own communal real estate, or that it is wrong to speak in ecclesiastical edifices, or that we should disband suburban or rural communities of believers. Not at all! We simply say that when we use the lack of church-owned real estate as an excuse for not penetrating any area we are badly at fault in our reasoning. The church is people! And people who are saved can fulfil their mission only when they confront people who are lost with the claims of the risen Lord.

In the Bible we do not read of a Christian moving a sinner from where he was to go hear someone tell him what to do to be saved. Our task is to get men and women into Christ, not into buildings. It may yet be proven that we made a mistake in providing funds for mission compounds and structures in foreign lands. We might have helped more by taking a knowledge of Christ and allowing the natives to erect their own meetingplaces or to gather where they would and could, even under the shade of trees. Often we have constructed a command headquarters before us in some places to abandon our comfortable barracks and go back to the foxholes and trenches on the edge of "No Man's Land." It would not always be a tragedy if we forced to flee to Christ instead of to the suburbs! Our *real estate* in Him does not depend upon real estate.

"MISSION MESSENGER," June, 1967.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.

(Psalm 56, 3.)

—There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists. The time for believing is always. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand, and one of these is of use all the day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe.

But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(Luke 12, 48).

—What our Lord forbade was sinful anxiety, or the overloading of today's work with worry about the day that has yet to come. We may be sure our blessed Lord knew what was in man when He gave so much space in His sermon to this one tormenting sin, and repeated six times over His entreaty to avoid it. Worry is not only a sin against God but ourselves also.

STUDIES ON THE TABERNACLE

No. 5: The Tabernacle and the Church

(Reading Heb. 9:1-22).

IN the study under the above heading, by far the most important to this dispensation, we recommend readers to study also Heb. chapters 5 to 10 to get the subject in context, for we are about to study that of which the tabernacle was a type, the church of the living God, "the pillar and ground of the truth," of which we His children are members, and members one of another. Verse 11 makes it plain that there is a building in mind, "not made with hands," a "greater and more perfect tabernacle," referred to in 1st Peter 2, verse 5 as "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, built up of living stones," and in verse 9 as "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," destined to "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

We see therefore that the tabernacle was a type of the church. Now type, any printer will tell you, is not for ordinary reading: in fact many people could not read it, as the letters are the wrong way round, but once an impression has been made the words become at once readable to all who care so to do. Here we have then, type and print, type and anti-type, shadow and substance.

As the first of the "types" here in the Tabernacle we have the "Outer Court." This Court was the part of the tabernacle grounds to which all had access: it was here the priests could be seen going about their priestly office, no doubt to the curious a source of wonder and surprise. This in our humble judgment speaks of the public work of the church among men, and embraces all the work of the church in the sphere of bringing people to the Gospel, in whatever capacity we are engaged; in other words the place where the people of the world can read "the gospel according to US."

The Altar of Sacrifice

We now come to our next "type," the altar of sacrifice. This speaks of the Cross, where the Lamb of God without spot or blemish was slain (Heb. 9:24-28; Rev. 13:8), "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), who also is our High Priest, (Heb. 6:17-20; Heb. 7:23-28). How true this is of the sacrifice of our Lord, the cross where "he bore the sin of many" (Isa. 53:12) and to which the repentant sinner must come and lay down his burden of sin for the Lord to take it away. In accepting Christ as our Saviour we testify to our belief in his sacrifice and saving power of his gospel; and until we are willing to confess our faith in him in this respect, no matter what else we do we cannot be his disciples let alone inherit eternal life—the great message of the Gospel is to save men from their sins and bring them to eternal life. It is the "first step" the penitent believer must take on his way to salvation. No longer does he need the blood of bulls and of goats to act as propitiation for his sins, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (1st John 1:7).

Passing the altar we come to the laver, used by the Priests for washing (Exod. 30:17-21). This washing had to be done before they entered into the tabernacle or performed their priestly office, "that they die not."

Now the principal office of a priest was to offer sacrifice: in this our Lord, besides being the sacrifice for sin, was also the High Priest, who offered himself and then entered the holy place, heaven, through the veil which is his flesh (Heb. 10:20). All Christians are priests (1st Peter 2:5, also v. 9): our function is to offer spiritual sacrifices, after washing at the spiritual laver which is baptism. Let it be noted that only the "washed ones" were priests. It follows that in the spiritual tabernacle, the church, it is those who have been washed and cleansed who can enter upon the priesthood, of which all Christians are members: that is, those who have been washed at the laver of baptism, who have "put on the Lord in his own appointed way." "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) and again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

Christians then are priests by Baptism, (1st Peter 3:21; Heb. 10:19-22); have put on priestly garments (Rom. 6:1-6; Eph. 4:22-24)—righteousness and true holiness. Note: in the tabernacle only those priests who had been washed and sanctified and donned priestly garments were allowed in the Holy Place. Where do those stand who think that the unimmersed can have equal standing with the immersed into Christ. In Old Testament times they had to conform to the laws laid down "that they die not."

The Holy Place

This, the tabernacle itself, contained three items of furniture; the candlestick or lampstand, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense.

It hardly needs emphasising that the table of shewbread is a type of the Lord's table. We read (Lev. 24:5-9) that the priests ate of this shewbread every sabbath day. Again we must emphasise that the priests and the priests only ate at this table of the Lord, and it was to be eaten in the Holy Place. There is no mention of anyone else partaking. We recommend our readers to take up their Bibles and read John 6:22-59 with special emphasis on verses 48-51. Christ is here referred to as "the bread of life which came down from heaven. At the institution of the feast in the upper room he spoke of the bread and wine as a token of his body and blood, "shed for many for the remission of sins." As in Old Testament times so in the New: sacrifice must be paid and blood must be shed, for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Christ our Paschal Lamb paid once and for all for the sins of the world and those who in faith and obedience come to him He in no wise casts out.

The Lampstand

This was the only source of light in the entire tabernacle. What does it signify? **The Word of God** (Psalm 119: vs. 105 and 130; 2nd Peter 1:1-19). So in the spiritual tabernacle, the church has only one spiritual light to illumine its worship. Many of the difficulties of the present-day church are due to having other lights of man's devising, putting out of focus the great spiritual light the Word of God.

Let us take a closer look at this lampstand: it had seven stems, three each side of a central stem. What can we deduce from these? We suggest, the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets on one side; the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles on the other side, with Christ the central figure to them all.

Further, the lampstand itself did not give light: it must have oil, and that oil must be lit. How many churches today claim to have the word of God, yet lack the Holy Spirit to give it light.

What are those seven lights? Let us take a look at Rev. 4: v. 5: "There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." Let us say here at once that it is with deep reverence that we attempt to bring this before our readers; it is not for us to try to analyse the nature and character of God, but very humbly we submit this explanation: the first three lights of the Old Testament suggest holiness, justice and truth, for does not God emphasise these throughout the Old Covenant Scriptures, love, mercy, compassion being emphasised in the New. When God was confronted with man's sin his holiness, justice and truth demanded restitution and punishment for the offender, but his love and mercy and compassion also demanded forgiveness. How did he meet the situation?

H. BAINES.

(To be continued).

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

AMONG the closing scenes of the book of Revelation, the vivid, picturesque portrayal of the battle of the "great day of God Almighty" is presented, the consummation of which is said to take place in "Armageddon." (Rev. 16:14-16.) This event has been labelled by various students of the Bible as "The Battle of Armageddon." The subject has impressed itself upon the imagination of many who seek knowledge of God's word. It has resulted in a number of wild fanciful expositions which are propagated with frenzied zeal and unending enthusiasm. A number of blunders would cause the serious student of the Bible to treat carefully the interpretation of this panorama of events. Even though a first-hand study of "Armageddon" causes one to get the feeling of passing through a mysterious, untraveled region, the subject can be understood. It not only can be understood, it must be understood, for it is a part of the revelation of God designed to make men perfect. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) The child of God will find a great blessing issuing forth from the subject if it is rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15), for "Blessed is he that readeth." (Rev. 1:3)

Theories About Armageddon

Throughout the New Testament the people of God are spoken of as warriors or soldiers with Christ as their leader guiding them forth to wage war with evil. This conflict between good and evil constitutes the theme of the book of Revelation. Hence, the battle of Armageddon is to be identified with the other pictures of

conflict for all of these the "kings of the earth" are doing battle against the heavenly armies. (Rev. 19:19.) The manner in which the conflict has taken hold on the imaginations of men is seen in the many artists' portrayals and writings. The various theories centred around "Armageddon" are each presented authoritatively even though there is no agreement regarding the basic elements of the subject as literal, while others look upon it as a spiritual conflict and in each of these areas there is diversity of opinions.

The most common theory is the one which regards everything described as taking place in a literal sense at some future date. The literalistic class is often described as the "Futurist" school of interpretation. To them the battle of Armageddon is a carnal war taking place in the literal "Valley of Megiddon," an area which runs through to the Euphrates Valley and Asia Minor. Implements of modern warfare such as screaming bombs, flames that belch forth, tanks, planes overhead, and men slaying men are all a part of this fantastic position. (Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation*, pp. 696-698.) This position is aptly summed up in the following quotation:

"Writers of this school uniformly consider the Beast to be the personal anti-christ of the last days, and think that his army will be a literal military force, brought to the land of Palestine for warfare against the Jews, who will by that time have repossessed the land." (Albertus Pieters, *Studies in the Revelation of St. John*, p. 269.)

That this cannot possibly be the battle fought on the carnal field with modern instruments of war is seen in the fact that Christ is the Prince of Peace and can never be the author of carnal war. His people can never engage in a carnal war in defence of the spiritual kingdom. This battle must be a "moral and spiritual conflict which is fought in the hearts of men." (B. W. Johnson, *A Vision of the Ages*, p. 201.) It is obvious that the battle pictured is not material, but is spiritual; otherwise, it is out of harmony with the spirit of Christ and would have no value for the first-century Christians who needed badly this encouragement found in the study of the book of Revelation. (Rev. 1:3.)

In "The Battle of Armageddon," by Orlin L. Mankamer, one will find another position argued. (p. 58.) This publication maintains that *fleshly* Israel will pass through a seven year tribulation consummated in the battle of Armageddon, after which they will turn to God. This "fiery trial" is said to be "Jacob's trouble" out of which the Lord is to save them, causing them to turn from rebellion against God to praise Him as "my Lord and my God." (John 20:26-27.) This theory completely misapplies the passages dealing with the restoration of *fleshly* Israel and stumbles over New Testament passages dealing with *spiritual* Israel. (1 Cor. 9:1-3; Rom. 11:25ff.)

Another class of men known as the "Continuous Historical" school of interpretation view the battle of Armageddon as a conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the true church of the Bible, a symbol of victory for the forces of right. "Thus Megiddo fitly symbolizes the world-wide distress of righteousness and evil engaged in deadly combat." (Roy Summers, *Worthy Is the Lamb*, p. 89.) Armageddon is not a literal place of battle, "for in this battle of truth against error, and God against Satan, all the world is the field of battle." (Johnson. op. cit., p. 201.)

Discussion of the Figure

The context of Rev. 16:12-16 depicts two classes of combatants—the forces of righteousness made up of God's people who are kings (Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5-9) and the forces of unrighteousness (Rev. 16:13-14). God's forces come from the "sunrising," a term denoting the region of light and hope. (Rev. 7:1-2; Matt. 2:1.) These challenge the three anti-Christian powers, the latter being described as "three unclean powers" coming out of the mouth of the "dragon," out of the mouth of the "beast," and out of the "false prophet." (Rev. 16:13-14.) Their origin indicates their nature, and they are understood to represent the spirit of infidelity in the world, and false religion. They, too, have royalty but are of the "whole world" and not from the "sunrising" (Rev. 16:14; cf. Wm. Hendrikson, *More Than Conquerors*, pp. 196-198.)

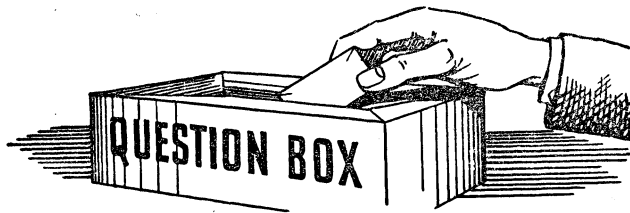
In verse 15, a solemn warning is issued: "Behold, I come as a thief." This coming is expected and is to the unrighteous for the purpose of overthrow. The righteous are asked to keep themselves in readiness. In view of this, the context goes further to describe the victory of truth. This is reserved for chapter 19, where the overthrow of the beast, the false prophet, and their forces is by sudden stroke (Rev. 19:19-21; 21:8.) These are punished "day and night forever."

The conclusion, therefore, is this: Armageddon is a symbol foretelling complete victory of the force of right over forces of evil. The battle occurs again and

again, the enemy taking various forms. The following quotation adequately sums up this conclusion:

"It is a vivid picture of a complete victory, an entire conquest, that we have here; and all the imagery of war and battle is employed to give it life. This is the symbol. The thing symbolized is obviously the complete victory of the Son of God over all the hosts of wickedness. Only a single hint of this signification is afforded by the language of the description, but that is enough. On two occasions we are carefully told that the sword by which the victory is won proceeds out of the mouth of the conqueror. We are not to think, as we read, of any literal war or manual fighting; therefore, the conquest is wrought by the spoken word—in short by preaching of the gospel." (Pieters, op. cit., p. 277.)

JIMMY TUTEN in "Apostolic Doctrine."



Conducted by
James Gardiner

Is the teaching in 1st Corinthians 11 regarding the covering of the head for women in the church, and the uncovering of the head for the men, binding on us today?

THIS is always a timely question, especially as one occasionally these days sees women turning up for worship with heads uncovered. I firmly believe that if we recall the reason for the covering or uncovering of the head in public worship, the answer to the question will emerge quite clearly.

Perhaps the issue is introduced by Paul in 1st Corinthians 11 because of overemphasis being given to the degree of emancipation enjoyed by women through the gospel. Certainly nothing has elevated woman more than the influence of Christ's teaching and His gospel. Gal 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." While this is true in the widest possible sense, i.e. "neither male nor female," yet it is also important to notice that basic differences of nature, sex, function and rank between male and female remain unimpaired, because some differences are age-lasting and require continual observance. The male is still the bread-winner and head of the family unit; the female is still the child-bearer, and indeed is still saved from the shame of Eve's transgression by this very function (1st Timothy 2:15). The woman is still the weaker vessel and entitled to man's love and protection: Eph. 5 says to the men, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it," and to the women, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body."

Difference in dress still constitutes a wide gulf of difference between man and woman and sisters must dress modestly and with propriety. Deut. 22:5 informs us that for males to wear women's garments and vice versa is an abomination to God, despite present-day trends. These few but important distinctions between male and female perhaps serve to illustrate that Gal. 3:28 ("there is neither male nor female") is not a blanket permission for distinction between man and woman to go by the board.

The Divine Order

Paul in 1st Cor. 11 highlights another important and age-lasting distinction to which we must give due regard and attention. This distinction, like some of the others, stems from, and dates back to, Genesis and is inherent in the different form of creation as between man (Adam) and woman (Eve). Verses 7-9: "For a man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." These are the emotional facts of creation. After man had

been created by God and placed in the garden of Eden "a help mate for him" was sought but could not be found, so woman was made from one of Adam's ribs. To emphasise this element of rank or status thus drawn between man and woman Paul says in verse 3, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." Just as Christ was always subservient to God, so should man be to Christ and woman be to man. The order of superiority and subserviency therefore goes thus: God; Christ; man; woman. It is because of this rank or station between male and female in the eyes of God that man must observe to uncover his head when praying or prophesying and woman must observe to cover her head — otherwise dishonour is done to their respective heads. Paul speaks strongly on this matter and says (verse 6): "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." The trend of his logic here, I think, is that if woman emulates man by uncovering her head at worship she should also, by the same token, be prepared to have her hair shorn short like a man's (and this would be a shame or a disgrace to a woman): therefore in keeping with femininity let her keep her long hair, but let her cover it. During the last war French women collaborating with the German troops had their heads close shaved by the French townspeople as a public sign of their deep disgrace. We would be shocked to see brothers sitting in worship wearing soft caps and bowler hats: we should be equally shocked to see sisters with bare heads. It is curious to note that we never see the former but sometimes see the latter. One is as binding as the other.

Head Covering

It is argued by some that a woman's hair is the covering of the head Paul was referring to. The hair is certainly the natural covering of the head as Paul says in verse 15, but hair covers the head of the male as well as the female and if the natural hair is the covering Paul is speaking of then, to my mind, it would be difficult for males to pray with an uncovered head unless they shaved their heads as thoroughly and as often as they shave their chins. Conversely it would be difficult to envisage the possibility, much less the desire, of sisters praying with heads uncovered. How could Paul reprimand (as in verse 5) sister praying or prophesying "with her head uncovered" if her hair was in fact the covering to which he was referring? Surely his whole argument would be pointless in such circumstances.

The precise question from our questioner was, "Is the teaching of 1st Corinthians 11 binding on us today?" As the observance of the covering and uncovering of the head is required by God because of creational differences between man and woman, distinctions which are obviously time or age-lasting, so the observance will of necessity be equally age-lasting and thus binding on us today, and every day, until He comes.

[Thank you for the questions to date. Supplementary questions to answers so far given and new questions are most welcome. Please address to James Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian].

IT TAKES SWEAT!

WHILE the specific English word sweat occurs only three times in the Bible, the toil that produces it is prominent everywhere. In the final analysis, after all, very little of a worthwhile nature has ever been produced without it.

Many years ago hives of bees were brought from a temperate climate to the tropical islands of Barbados. On arrival, the bees went to work gathering honey for the winter, as their instinct taught them. But winter never came. The bees found themselves in a land of perpetual summer. What happened? Why, those bees stopped gathering honey and spent their time flying around stinging people!

Here is a parable from nature. Perhaps the reason some of us have been in the stinging business is that we have been too relaxed! We have been living in places where Christian testimony could be rather indifferent. There has not been much encounter with the winter of worldly coldness and satanic opposition. Such a climate is not usually a challenge to spiritual growth and vigour.

We who live in the Western Hemisphere find ourselves in an area conspicuous for scientific advantage and high living standards. a climate conducive to laziness, physical and mental. The work week is constantly being whittled. Our radios and televisions do our thinking for us. The "digest" complex reduces our reading to a minimum. Our luxury-laden atmosphere presents a real danger to vigorous thinking and working.

Records of achievements in the past cry out in loud, condemning tones against this attitude. It is said, for example, that Gibbon spent twenty-six years writing his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Milton rose daily at 4 a.m. to write *Paradise Lost*. Webster worked thirty-six years to produce the first edition of the dictionary that bears his name. Cicero practised speaking before friends every day for thirty years to perfect his elocution. Modern actors labour for many wearisome hours to master their lines.

The Christian preacher or writer addresses himself to the most serious of all tasks, yet so often his preparation is desultory and halfhearted. A few hurried minutes in prayer, or a few hurried minutes with the Bible and the lesson, and away we rush to the platform! Again, how inadequate are our efforts to make our churches and our personal witnessing effective. The salesman who pounds the sidewalk and rings doorbells puts most of us to shame.

There is absolutely no substitute for thorough preparation and sweat if the work of God is to prosper in our hands. In 2 Timothy 2:6 we read, "the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." J. N. Darby has translated this verse, "The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits." While it is perfectly true that the farmer who has done the work should be the first to get a share of the crop, it is also true that he must toil laboriously before there will be a harvest. See that sweating farmer as he toils at his sowing or harvesting. See that Eastern porter bowed under his piled burden of freight as he carries it through the street. See that perspiring rower as he bends on the oar to propel his boat through choppy seas. These are toilers. They are sweating in their work.

"Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor. 3:8). Paul stated that he laboured night and day in behalf of his converts (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). Not only did he labour. He also suffered reproach (1 Tim. 4:10); and he ascribed double honour to the elder who labours in the Word and doctrine.

I am persuaded that one of the chief reasons for barrenness and ineffectiveness in much of our Christian work lies in our failure to really work. Success in Christian work, as in all else, is the fruit of serious, painstaking and concentrated effort. Beware of twentieth-century sirens that encourage shortcuts and substitutes. The Lord's work requires inspiration—and a whole lot of perspiration!—"Sunday School Times."

"IM JUST TO BUSY"

NO matter what the chore may be, most Christians today are just too busy to help. And especially if there is little glory and much work involved. God's word has a great deal to say about being busy, and about that which should keep us busy.

GOD DOES NOT CONDONE LAZINESS. In the Roman letter (Ro. 12:10-11) the Apostle Paul addresses himself not only to the relationship between a Christian and his brother, but also to the one between the Christian and his Lord. Notice his instruction, "Not slothful in business;" (K.J.V.) or "in diligence not slothful;" (A.S.V.) both adding "serving the Lord." In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). When Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:50-58) he reminded them of the resurrection from the dead, the victory over death, given by God through Christ. Then, almost as a conclusion he added, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Notice, 1. always abounding in the work of the Lord, and 2. your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

A lack of work shows a lack of faith. In James 2, the writer shows the important relationship between faith and works. Abraham (v. 21) was said to have been "justified by works." But the real key seems to be given in verse 22, ". . . and by works was faith made perfect." If we have no works our faith is imperfect or incomplete. In fact, verse 26 tells us that faith apart from works is dead. And from verse 24 we learn that a man cannot be justified by faith only. So then, not by a dead faith, but by a faith perfected by works is a man justified.

LEFT-OVERS FOR GOD? There are some Christians who are too busy to serve God except occasionally. Their only appearance at the regular period of worship is at times of convenience. But, faithfully attending every period of worship is not the end of a Christian's duty. It is simply the beginning. Many who do faithfully attend are too busy to help with any classes, or to prepare for a series of meetings, or whatever.

I do not know the Bible well enough to say that God never called a lazy man to work, but I do know that many times he called those who were already busy. Moses was busy tending sheep when He called him to go and lead Israel out of Egypt. Saul and David were both busy when chosen to become Kings of Israel. Christ called his disciples from among men who were busy. Peter and Andrew were busy casting a net into the sea; James and John were busy mending their nets; Matthew was busy at the place of toll; Saul of Tarsus was busy persecuting Christians. That they were not afraid of work was evident when the Lord called them.

Why do we offer to God that which is left over of our time, our energy, our money or whatever? Could it be that our sense of values is a little warped? Could it be that we have lost sight of that which is really important? Paul was able to say in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Not only is our "old man" of sin crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6) but our own will is to be crucified too, so that Christ lives in us, directing us, through his word. If we give God the left-overs it is evident that we were not crucified with Christ in the same manner as was Paul. Christ's language in Matt. 6:33 is even more pointed: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Christianity is not a religion of left-overs.

SUMMARY—We are all very busy. And usually each of us thinks that he is much busier about important things than is his brother. But each of us has the responsibility to be "... always abounding in the work of the Lord." If you are giving God left-overs because you have too many other things to do please consider these possibilities: 1. That you are too busy for your own spiritual good; or, 2. That you are really lazy, because you are shirking part of your responsibility, and question—Who comes first, God or me?

A. E. SEWELL.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1967

6—Ezekiel 34:17-31	Philemon
13—Job 28:12-28	Ephesians 1:1-14
20—Proverbs 3:11-26	Ephesians 1:15-23
27—Deut. 7:1-11	Ephesians 2:1-10

THREE MESSAGES TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH

WE refer to Paul's face-to-face message through the bishops of the church as recorded in Acts 20:17-38, to his letter which we are now reading, and lastly to the Saviour's words dictated to the apostle John as recorded in Revelation 2:1-7. These all throw light upon the constitution and condition of the church. Profane history gives us the background of the town itself as a hot-bed of superstition, idolatry and licensed sin. We can add to our sources of information the letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3).

Paul apparently intended to preach in Asia, of which Ephesus was chief city, on his second journey, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to do so (Acts 16:6). The divine Over-ruler had other plans—the sowing of the seed in Europe. Paul managed only on that journey to pay a hasty visit on his return route to Jerusalem. He had with him Priscilla and Aquila, and his brief effort at reasoning in the synagogue was so successful that he was invited to stay. Apparently the

Jews in that very heathen city were more amenable than some. He left his two companions there with a resolve to come again. In the meanwhile Apollos with a limited knowledge of the gospel, but a thorough knowledge of the scriptures, came to Ephesus. There he con-sorted with Priscilla and Aquila and learnt the full truth from them. Apparently some of the Jews formed a body of believers and commended Apollos to the Corinthian church (Acts 18:27).

Carrying out his intention Paul came to Ephesus. He found twelve disciples who still took the original position of Apollos—they may have been brought to their baptism by his teaching. They received special spiritual gifts through the laying on of Paul's hands and must have joined the nucleus of Christians connected with the synagogue. They could indeed have been qualified for the eldership. We have no mention of deacons in the Ephesian church, but we know the bishops were divinely chosen (Acts 20:28). Paul's work then followed his usual pattern—"the Jew first." His effort at reasoning and persuading lasted three months and then the division developed and he was compelled to "separate the disciples." They found another place to worship and work together, and Paul used the school of Tyrannus for his "reasoning." We get some idea of his labours here from Acts 20. In some way he got publicity through the school, and so effectively that the whole province heard the gospel (19:10).

Ephesus was a very important town for population, religion and trade of world-wide fame, and therefore admirably suited for the dissemination of

the gospel. We have an insight into full-time ministry as executed by Paul. He worked with his hands to support himself and his fellow-workers (20:34). His ministry of teaching and warning was done at all hours (20:31), often so earnestly as to be with tears. His preaching was without fear or favour and knew no distinction between Jew and heathen. It was public, and private (house to house). It brought him into danger—plots of the Jews, and rioting by Gentiles (19:23-41). But so wide was the influence exercised that valuable books were put into a bonfire, and traders dependent on superstition found their sales decreasing and instigated a riot. Eminent men in the city were influenced, and befriended him (19:31).

With all this he knew that the bishops of this congregation needed special watchfulness, and the farewell constitutes a solemn warning and puts an inspiring and perhaps exacting example before them. Paul understood better than they the temptations and trials which would befall them; and the saddest thing was that some of them would fail (Acts 20:30, etc.).

The epistle was written three or four years after this. It may have been rather a circular letter than specifically to Ephesus. The absence of the words "at Ephesus" in some ancient manuscripts, the general tone of the letter and lack of any personal greetings or messages indicates this possibility. Some have supposed it to be the letter referred to in Col. 4:16. The N.E.B. translators have entitled it quite happily "The glory of Christ in the church" and perhaps the first chapter particularly shows this. Paul enlarges upon the universal eminence and power of Christ. He stands out supreme in heaven and earth, and the church is His. We share in His glory as His redeemed people, regardless of any previous position or relationship. But this involves us in a standard of behaviour detailed later in the letter.

We suppose Revelation to have been written some years later, probably after Paul's "departure to be with Christ." It reveals a church which seemed to have taken to heart the apostle's teaching and example. We can almost envy its toil, its patience, its intolerance of evil men, its hatred of immorality, and its vigour. We would say "I wish this could be said of the church where I worship." So what can be wrong? Jesus said that when iniquity abounds "the love of the many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). The freshness of their love had gone. They were working, but the motive was not right. We may be correct in many ways and yet fail in the supreme Christian virtue—love.

"And the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

R. B. SCOTT

THINK HIGH THOUGHTS

"Keep your mind on the great and splendid things you would like to do, and you will find yourself seizing the opportunities for the fulfilment of your desires. Picture in your mind the able, earnest, useful person you desire to be, and the thought is transforming you into that individual."

Wise and true words, but much better stated in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true . . . honourable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

HYPOCRITES

Men often sneeringly besmirch
The hypocrites who go to church;
Yet no one has a word to say
Of hypocrites who stay away.

"The good confession."

I will own my Lord and Master, with my
mouth I will confess;
Here before the congregation His exalted
name I'll bless.
With my Lord I will be buried, in His
own baptismal grave.
"Lord, I all to Thee surrender; Thou wilt
bless and Thou wilt save."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Ilkeston.—The church celebrated its 87th anniversary on June 3rd and 4th, and we were supported by brethren from churches far and near.

Saturday, June 3rd, a good number sat down to tea. The gospel meeting in the evening was ably presided over by Bro. M. L. Bradley. Bro. Alan Ashurst (Scholes, Wigan), was speaker for the weekend services. His subject for Saturday evening was "Hell, and how to get there."

On Lord's Day, June 4th, the Breaking of Bread service was well attended. At the evening gospel service there was a large attendance of members and friends to hear Bro. Ashurst speak on "Heaven, and how to get there."

The final meeting of the day was held at an Old People's Home we visit every month. Bro. Ashurst gave a fine address on the "Ethiopian eunuch," and at the close Thomas Bowley, aged 85 years, asked to be baptised. On the following

SLICES FROM THE BREAD OF LIFE

To start your day:—

Sept.	1	Isa.	1, 2
"	2	"	3, 4, 5
"	3	"	6, 7
"	4	"	8, 9
"	5	"	10, 11, 12
"	6	"	13, 14
"	7	"	15, 16, 17
"	8	"	18, 19, 20
"	9	"	21, 22
"	10	"	23, 24
"	11	"	25, 26
"	12	"	27, 28
"	13	"	29, 30
"	14	"	31, 32
"	15	"	33, 34
"	16	"	35, 36
"	17	"	37, 38
"	18	"	39, 40
"	19	"	41, 42
"	20	"	43, 44
"	21	"	45, 46
"	22	"	47, 48
"	23	"	49, 50
"	24	"	51, 52
"	25	"	53, 54
"	26	"	55, 56
"	27	"	57, 58
"	28	"	59, 60
"	29	"	61, 62
"	30	"	63, 64

For your evening's meditation:—

Rom.	1, 2
"	3, 4
"	5, 6
"	7, 8
"	9, 10
"	11, 12
"	13, 14
"	15, 16
1st Cor.	1, 2
"	3, 4
"	5, 6
"	7, 8
"	9, 10
"	11, 12
"	13, 14
"	15, 16
2nd Cor.	1, 2
"	3, 4
"	5, 6
"	7, 8
"	9, 10, 11 to v. 15
2nd Cor.	11 v. 16 & Ch. 12 & 13
Gal.	1, 2
"	3, 4
"	5, 6
Eph.	1, 2
"	3, 4
Phil.	1, 2
"	3, 4
"	5, 6

day, Penelope Gee, daughter of Bro. and Sister H. Gee and grand-daughter of Bro. and Sister R. Gregory, also desired to be baptised. These two decisions for Christ made the weekend a mountain-top experience.

And last Lord's Day evening, Albert, Esme and Michael Gregory, the son, the daughter-in-law, and grandson of Bro. and Sister F. Gregory, along with Lyndis Atkin, the daughter of Sister Enid Atkin, and grand-daughter of Bro. and Sister S. Fretwell, of Cresswell, were immersed into Christ.

This makes the addition of six—three adults, and three Sunday school scholars. The decisions of the three adults is due to the earnest and faithful preaching of the gospel by Bro. Ashurst, and the church is very grateful to him for his labours.

We pray that these new converts may be kept faithful. F. Gregory.

OBITUARY

Blackburn: Hamilton Street.—We record with sorrow the sudden death of Bro. W. Renshaw on Lord's Day, June 18th; he was laid to rest on June 22nd. Bro. Renshaw was a man of quiet disposition who served the Lord in the work

which he himself believed he was capable of doing. He will be missed, for he was regular at his attendance at the Lord's table, and also at the gospel meetings. We commend his dear wife, Sister May Renshaw and Brethren Roy and Derek to our loving heavenly Father, asking that He will comfort them in this their great loss. May they look to Jesus for their consolation, for only in Him can their hope be realised, that "when days and years are past, we shall meet in heaven." Bro. John Pritt conducted the services both in the meeting place, and at the graveside.

Jim Pritt

Kentish Town.—Freidrich Konradt, a refugee from Rumania, met with us most consistently for several years. He was suffering throughout the time from Parkinson's disease, a nervous trouble of a very trying kind, which he bore with patience. Owing to this he was taken into an old folks' home in south-west London, and so separated from the church here. He continued his worshipping habits there, and passed away suddenly on Saturday, June 24th. Language difficulties made him in some senses a lonely man, but he was kindly befriended locally by a German lady, who with the writer and two of his "home" companions attended the funeral service to pay the last respects.

R.B.S.

COMING EVENTS

Birmingham.—The church at Summer Lane, Birmingham hope to hold their 102nd Anniversary on Saturday and Sunday 26th and 27th August. Tea will be at 4 p.m. on Saturday and the evening meeting will commence at 6 o'clock.

We give a cordial invitation to all who can be with us and feel sure the time will be well spent. This is the Bank Holiday weekend and anyone who would like to spend the whole weekend in Birmingham should contact Brother H. Hardy, 67 Broomhill Road, Perry Common, Birmingham, 23 straight away, as accommodations will be rather limited.

There will be a ramble arranged for the Monday if the weather is fine.

Loughborough (Oxford Street).—Gospel Campaign and Vacation Bible School, August 5th-13th, 1967. Preacher: James R. Petty, Montgomery, Alabama.

Gospel Meetings: Saturday 5th — 7 p.m.; Sunday 6th — 6.15 p.m.; Tuesday 8th — 7.30 p.m.; Thursday 10th — 7.30 p.m.; Saturday 12th — 7 p.m.; Sunday 13th — 6.15 p.m. Mission theme: "Meeting Contemporary Needs With Christ."

The Vacation Bible School will be on Monday to Friday inclusive, August 7th-11th, with classes for all age groups. Bro. Petty will teach the Adult Bible Class.

Hospitality will be provided in the homes of members for any brethren able to be with us for the whole, or part of this period.

Information: A. E. Winstanley, 59 Frederick Street, Loughborough, Leics. (phone: Loughborough 3978).

CHANGE OF MEETING-PLACE

Church of Christ, Ulverston: Meeting in Oddfellows Hall, Fountain Street. Breaking of Bread 2.30 p.m.; Evening Meeting 6 p.m.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Brighton.—W. J. Ascough, 9 Parkmore Terrace, Dyke Road Drive, Brighton 6.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Frank Worgan, 83 Steyning Close, Corby, Northants.

WEDDING

Geoffrey Daniell to Yvonne Edwards on Saturday, June 17th at St. John's Lane meeting-house, Bedminster, Bristol, Bro. Albert Winstanley officiating. New address: 21 Stoneleigh Crescent, Knowle, Bristol 3.

—♦—

If a man would be a soldier he'd expect,
of course, to fight;
And he wouldn't be an author if he
didn't try to write;
So it isn't common logic, doesn't have
a right true ring
That a man to be a Christian doesn't
have to do a thing.
If a man would be a hunter he must go
among the trees;
And he couldn't be a sailor if he didn't
sail the seas:
How strange for any member of a
church to think that he
Can stay away from worship and a
worthy member be!

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