

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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I know how Hardly Souls are Wooed and Won

A FEW days ago a brother in Christ remarked as we left a gospel meeting, 'It's terribly hard to win people to Christ these days.' In the meeting a powerful message had been given on 'The thief on the cross.' There could be no doubt that all hearing the address were convinced of the need to follow Christ and to be cleansed from sins as they obeyed Him in the waters of baptism. One marvelled that any could leave the meeting without making known their decision to be immersed into Christ. Yet there were no responses to the preacher's invitation. And this is a common experience among us. We put in strenuous efforts, organise and prepare to the last detail, visit and give many invitations, advertise, spend hours in preparing the messages to be given, and much time in prayer, to ensure, as far as we can, the success of the missions we hold. Yet what disappointing results, in our view, are the outcome. So much willing labour for so apparently meagre fruits.

God's Way and Man's

The church of Christ finds it much more difficult to win souls than do religious denominations around. With them only a signal like coming to the front, raising a hand or staying behind for prayer after a meeting is needed to 'accept Christ as Saviour' or 'experience salvation.' By many revivalists these people are assured that they are born again, although in a manner of which the New Testament knows nothing. Yet if these 'saved ones' came to our gospel or mission meetings we should have to begin with them where their previous teachers left off. We have to disabuse their minds of their cherished beliefs.

So our task is doubly hard. Firstly, it is to present the gospel to those who many never before have heard it, and thus to make it that the simplest will understand; and secondly, it is to clear away the unscriptural rubbish which many in religious denominations have been taught and to replace it with the pure truth of the New Testament.

The gospel meeting is not an end in itself but a means to an end. The gospel is not something we are to 'enjoy' in the sense of having had a good time listening to it, but it is to be obeyed. Something is expected of the unsaved—to yield themselves to the Saviour, as He and His apostles have made clear (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Here let us state that when we speak of obedience we mean something more than baptism. It would be regrettable if we should give the impression that the only obedience the Saviour requires is to be immersed in water, as though when one has been immersed he has fully obeyed the Christ. But we stress baptism because it is the step from which so many shrink, the test which so many fail to pass. Many people believe wholeheartedly in Jesus Christ as Saviour, Son of God and Lord; are ready to show they love Him by turning from their past manner of life to do the things pleasing to God; are not ashamed of showing, anywhere and any time, and with whoever they are, that they glory in Jesus. Yet when immersion is set before them as being equally necessary they will not admit its necessity. They will do almost anything in the name of Jesus Christ but be immersed in water, while at the same time acknowledging that there is no doubt that immersion is Christ's way and that through immersion remission of sins is given to the believer. It is amazing that so many draw back from doing that which they agree to be right.

Why so few Conversions?

All this calls for examination of ourselves. What are the causes of the rarity of conversions to God? Are we making the right approach? Is the preaching as forceful and convicting as it should be? Are we depending too much upon human organisation? Are we praying as we should? Are the Scriptures being used as the word of God or are we relying upon eloquence, oratory or emotion?

We must admit that we are not doing the Lord's work with the zeal we should; that we need more real and deeper faith in God's word as the convicting and saving power; that we must give ourselves more to prayer that God may be able the better to use us in saving others. But when all that is said we have still not solved the problem. It is easy to show from the second chapter of Acts how simple was Peter's message: that it consisted of testimony concerning Christ's life, teaching, works, death, burial and resurrection: that this simple message cut the hearers to the heart so that they cried out wanting to know what they must do: that Peter told them in plain terms, and that the same day 3,000 believed, repented and were baptised and added to the church. It has been commented that in those days one sermon produced 3,000 converts, while now the ratio is the other way—3,000 sermons produce one convert! We yearn for those days of proof of the power of the gospel to return and some suggest that we have only to reproduce the zeal and the preaching to see the results repeated. But have we? Does anyone seriously think that to repeat Peter's words at Pentecost would turn the hearts of people so that they would flood into the church of God?

The Spiritual Warfare

It is said that the same causes will produce the same effects. But this problem of soul-winning is a far more difficult one than a problem in physics or mechanics. Cause and effect do not work so inevitably in the spiritual sphere as in the physical. We know that in the latter realm certain causes will produce certain effects. But not so in spiritual things. The realm of the physical is mechanical, impersonal. In the realm of the spiritual forces are at work of which we have little knowledge or which we too often leave out of account. Yet many times in the New Testament we are told of mighty spiritual powers which fight against the gospel.

Satan himself is spoken of as 'a roaring lion' and, far more dangerous, 'an angel of light.' His constant work is to 'blind the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel . . . should not dawn upon them.' (2 Cor. 4:4). Christians are soldiers in a spiritual warfare: 'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, the powers, the

world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' (Eph. 6:12).

The winning of souls is an intensive warfare, not a joyous good time. It is easy to forget that the devil is at work whenever the gospel is preached, as well as the Holy Spirit. Too often we are unaware of this. Yet Paul warned as urgently as he could, 'that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices.' (2 Cor. 2:11). It is a maxim in warfare to know the enemy and not to under-rate him. This is equally true in the spiritual conflict.

Once we realise this we shall not so easily be puzzled or discouraged by the lack of response to the gospel. We shall see that the enemy of God and man is doing his work when he is persuading hearers of the gospel to put off decision until some more favourable opportunity presents itself; or he is assuring them that they are God's children already and are doing His work as it is. Jesus warned us of this in His parable of the soil—'Then cometh the evil one and snatcheth away that which had been sown in his heart.'

Thus responsibility is upon not only the church and the preacher, but upon the hearer. The utmost we can do is to get people to hear the full gospel. The hearer must make the decision for himself to accept and obey or to reject or neglect the gospel. To be faithful is our responsibility, to guard that which is committed unto us ['guard the deposit']. For the commendation and the blessing are to the faithful—'Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful . . .'

EDITOR

Christian Science, the Cult of Mary Baker Eddy

II. Wrong Views of God, Christ, Man and Sin

AS we compare the tenets of Christian Science with the revealed word of God, the Bible, we do so remembering that we are dealing with the dearly-held beliefs of millions of people, either directly by reading, or indirectly by training Bible-Christians to point the important lessons, that these words of criticism are penned.

A Wrong View of God the Father

'The ideal man corresponds to creation, to intelligence, and to Truth. The ideal woman corresponds to life and to love. In divine science, we have not as much authority for considering God masculine as we have for considering Him feminine, for love imparts the clearest idea of Deity.' [S. & H. p. 517, lines 8-14]. These views of man and of woman are purely arbitrary and open to great difference of opinion, but the Bible is unequivocal in referring to God in masculine terms only. It is certainly amiss to alter the Bible view of God because we may not have a very exalted view of the male sex and its propensities!

God's Mercy

'Divine Science reveals the necessity of sufficient suffering, either before or after death, to quench the love of sin. To remit the penalty due for sin, would be for Truth to pardon error. Escape from punishment is not in accordance with God's government, since justice is the handmaid of mercy' [S. & H., p.36, 4-9]. This appears to the writer utterly at variance with the whole of scripture. From beginning to end, the Bible is concerned with the coming of 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' whose chief

purpose was to suffer, bleed and die that we might not need to pay the price of sin. He stood in our room and stead. In the great commission, 'saved' and 'condemned' are used as the very antitheses of each other. Again 'God is not willing that any should perish . . . ' (2 Pet. 3 : 5). What of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery ? What does remission of sins (Acts 2 : 38) mean, if not that one may escape punishment ? Such a flagrant misunderstanding of the very pith of the Bible can only arise from a biased partisan study of it as a happy hunting ground for proof texts to bolster a hobby-horse theory.

Wrong Views of Christ

(1) 'After the author's sacred discovery, she affixed the name "Science" to Christianity, the name "error" to corporeal sense, and the name "substance" to mind. Science has called the world to battle over this issue, and its demonstration . . . To those natural Christian Scientists, the ancient worthies, and to Christ Jesus, God certainly revealed the spirit of Christian Science, if not the absolute letter' [*S. & H.*, p.483, 13-21]. The implication here is clearly that Jesus was inferior to Mrs. Eddy in His revelation—yet scripture says that he had the Spirit given 'without measure' (John 3 : 34). Again the apostles were promised that the Spirit would lead them into 'all truth' (John 16 : 13), not just an inkling of it.

(2) 'Wisdom and love may require many sacrifices of self to save us from sin. One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner's part. That God's wrath should be vented upon His beloved Son, is divinely unnatural. Such a theory is man-made. The atonement is a hard problem in theology, but its scientific explanation is that suffering is an error of sinful sense which Truth destroys, and that eventually both sin and suffering will fall at the feet of everlasting love.' [*S. & H.*, p.23, 1-11]. This again is a flat denial of scripture, where much is made of the better new covenant with its one all-availing sacrifice (Heb. 9 : 23-28 ; 10 : 11-14 ; 9 : 11-13 ; 2 : 9) ; where salvation by works, such as here suggested, is put firmly out of court (Rom. 5 : 15-21 ; 3 : 27-28) and where we are plainly told that despite His great love for the Son, unnatural or not, it 'pleased God to bruise him' for our sakes (Isa. 53 : 10). Clearly one must decide once and for all whether the Bible or *Science & Health* was inspired of God, for assuredly both cannot be, with such contradictions.

Wrong Views of Man

(1) 'Separated from man, who expresses Soul, Spirit would be a nonentity ; man, divorced from Spirit, would lose his entity. But there is, there can be, no such division, for man is coexistent with God.' [*S. & H.*, p.477, 29 to 478, 2]. The Word of God is said to be sharp unto the dividing of soul and spirit (Heb. 4 : 12). Paul speaks of the possibility of having an existence and even experience out of the body (2 Cor. 12 : 2), so that some sort of separation of body and soul was known to him by revelation.

(2) 'We are commonly taught that there is a human soul which sins and is spiritually lost—that soul may be lost and yet be immortal. If Soul could sin, Spirit, Soul, would be flesh instead of Spirit. It is the belief of the flesh and of material sense which sins. If Soul sinned, Soul would die.' [*S. & H.*, p.310, 18-23]. Again the plain pronouncement of God is—'the soul that sinneth it shall die.' (Ezek. 18 : 1-25)—no doubt being left as to the possibility or otherwise of a soul being able to sin. If this were an impossibility, God's Law, here referred to, would never have been given utterance. But this further denial is needed to remove the plan of salvation from the horizon of Christian Scientists—a diabolical intention. Beliefs cannot sin—to say so is just to abuse the meaning of the words. Persons sin—responsible persons.

G. LODGE

(To be continued).

The Sixth Day

At Jacob's Well

IN the New Testament reckoning of time, the length of each hour varied a little according to the season. The day was divided into twelve equal parts between dawn and sunset, but invariably the sixth hour was noon. 'The burden and heat of the day' is an apt expression for work at that period. But who, of all the sons of earth, has so wrought at that hour as our Lord Himself? In John's gospel, chapter 4, we are told of His journey from Judea to Galilee. At the sixth hour He arrived at Jacob's well and rested. But the very weariness was a prelude to a mighty outgoing of His power. With His thirst as a basis of conversation, He led the Samaritan woman into a realisation of her need of life from above. Her response was to Him a refreshing portion, for He said to the disciples returning from the city with food: 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.'

On the Cross

Another sixth hour was needed ere our Lord could say, 'It is finished.' It is named by all four Evangelists, and, including the three hours preceding it and the three hours following, is the period of the crucifixion. What a work was this—the means whereby the redemption of the world was obtained, yet at the central point of noon the Lord had care for one soul, the dying thief.

Peter and Cornelius

There were yet many more sheaves to be gathered into the harvest of His love, and at Pentecost we see the beginning of this mighty ingathering among the Jews. To Peter it was given to proclaim the Gospel on that day, but to him it was also given to set forward the reaping of a yet greater field—the Gentile world. Peter had to be taught that the power was not his own, nor the planning of times and places when and where God would use him. He speaks of God's foreknowledge at Pentecost, and this truth was yet more forcibly brought to his understanding later when at the sixth hour of a certain day, he was given a revelation from heaven. Such a vision was necessary to prepare his mind for the unexpected development of God's plans now to unfold before him and already begun in the heart of a Gentile. The fervent prayers of Cornelius had been heard, and he had been told the previous day to send men to Joppa. These servants were nearing the house where Peter lodged, at the time that his mind was being prepared to receive them, and to return with them, that Cornelius and his kinsmen and friends might be gathered into the Church of the living God.

On the Damascus Road

But the harvest fields reached to distant places beyond the view of the apostles even yet, great as had been their task thus far. One who later said 'I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me,' had now to be commissioned for this purpose. We read of his call in Acts, chapter 9, and again his own accounts of this event in the 22nd and 26th chapters. In these he tells of the mighty effect of the light which shone upon him from the presence of the risen Lord, who had come in person to convict him of his sin and to set him on the new way. In the first narrative he relates that this revelation took place about noon, and in the second he says, 'At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun.' Therefore, at the sixth hour, our Lord manifested His choice of an instrument for the continuance of His widening work on earth.

The Shadow of the Cross

Calvary is the focus of God's love and work, and was the inspiration and the stimulus for all that Peter and Paul were enabled to do. So it has been for countless numbers from those days onwards to the present time. Not only did our Saviour suffer exposure to the midday heat, but the fiery darts of the arch-enemy of God and man assailed Him. This is described by Isaiah as 'Heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.' How wondrous it is that he tells of a shadow from that heat, and how wondrous, too, that we can sing :

Beneath the Cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand—
The shadow of a mighty rock, within a weary land ;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noon-tide heat, and the burden of the day.

Lately I have been re-reading a portion of a book which tells of the dreadful experiences of those who escaped, as by a series of miracles, from the Boxer Rising in China in 1900. The narrative reveals that which the world does not understand—the consciousness of a shadow, a home, and a rest as they journeyed. And what a journey it was, as they were carried from place to place, as goods, during the shimmering heat of that summer ! Confined to prisons at intervals, and then in the temple of an idol, there was hardship even at halting places. The author designated the latter, 'the very shadow of Buddha and his demon guard.' If we had been present on a certain Sunday morning we would have seen a little service of worship taking place, not to the one in whose honour the building had been raised, but to Him who dwells above, and these are some of the words we should have heard : 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an High Priest over the house of God ; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.' They are found in Hebrews 10. The preceding chapters lead up to this encouraging admonition, and in them Paul writes of the tabernacle in the wilderness as a pattern of the eternal dwelling place of God. It demonstrates the way of atonement by sacrifice and therefore of relief from sin. It had also, by reason of the cloud of smoke and fire above it, power to guide the children of Israel. It directed when and where to go, and when and where to remain.

Still the work goes forward, and blessed are they who are called to this service. It may be by toil, or it may be in sorrow and disheartenment, but, as was said by one who wrought mightily for the spread of the Gospel abroad, 'The work of God does not mean so much man's work for God, as God's own work through man.' With the knowledge and acceptance of that fact will come guidance, and the consciousness of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, and of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

MARY F. BOOTH.

'Take now thy son . . . whom thou lovest.'

SOME months ago, writing in the S.S. on the resurrection of Lazarus as evidential of Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, I mentioned with it Abraham's offering of Isaac. The intention was to follow up with a second article dealing with this much-discussed Bible incident, but too long time has been allowed to pass without its being accomplished. However, here it is.

Though apparently different from each other careful reading will show a real affinity between the two stories. They are each concerned with faith,

to which there is a measure of Divine approval: 'Now I know that thou fearest God,' is spoken of the one, and of the other, the exclamation of the two sisters, made separately, is a confession of implicit belief: 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died,' which is not denied.

The stories also reveal the way human affections may be used to further the Divine purpose. We read: 'God did tempt Abraham, and said . . . Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest'; and 'Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.'

Further, each incident tells of death and resurrection. In one, resurrection—the manifestation of divine power—is the obvious purpose behind what took place; in the other, we learn from the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews that Abraham, faced with a Divine contradiction of promises made to him, sought in his own thoughts a solution to the problem raised by the offering of his son, and we read, he 'accounted [reckoned] that God was able to raise him up from the dead.' Thus the New Testament gives the conclusion of a story written centuries before, but left incomplete until that last word is written. It is a statement which makes manifest the sublimation of faith in God's word.

There is yet another way in which these two incidents touch each other. They do raise the question of morality. Humanly speaking, any person acting as Jesus did in withholding his aid when appealed to, would be held guilty of inhumanity and counted blameworthy. There is something like that in the story of Isaac. The right of a father to sacrifice his son's life, on any account whatever, is not open to question, now nor then. It is against all law and is distinctly condemned by Scripture. Yet, if we are to believe the Scriptures, God commanded it in this instance. But the matter is raised to a much higher level when we remember, and apply, Paul's words to the Romans, that 'God spared not his own son, but delivered him up.' It should be noted that in the sacrifice of Isaac and of Jesus Christ there are the qualifying conditions of the one sacrificed taking upon himself the burden laid upon him, but that does not seem to apply to Lazarus. There is no indication that he knew beforehand of the ordeal he underwent. Concerning the sacrifice of the Christ, we have the remarkable testimony in Revelation of 'the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' That death should be thought of in the abode of bliss—heaven itself—is indeed startling.

As all these three events have their origin in God's will, an answer to the Lord given by Abraham on a matter of life or death (Gen. 18 : 25) is to the point: 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' It is to the intention behind each act that we must look for understanding.

Because of moral considerations attached to them, some reject all stories of God commanding or giving sanction to the shedding of blood, as sacrifice, and usually quote Hos. 6 : 6: 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice,' as the complete answer against them. They say, Abraham's action was not from any command of God but was the outcome of his own imagination. It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that, in view of Abraham's intercession with God for Sodom, for its lives to be spared.

It may be suggested further that it is inconceivable that an old man who travels for three days under the power of an obsession so great as such a journey entailed, on reaching the place, and, having bound his son, stands before him with knife in hand to strike the blow, would be diverted from his purpose by the sight of a ram caught in a bush. Nothing short of killing would have satisfied a mind crazed to the extent his would have been, to have carried him so far and with such determination. The fact that the blow was withheld is proof that the cry, 'Lay not thy hand upon the lad' came from without, and was not the creation of an afflicted mind. If that call came from without—that is, from God—then the whole story, as it is recorded, is

shown to be true. There was no obsession. As James says: 'Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness.'

Let us allow God's word to speak for itself and we shall have the truth of the matter.

The author of Hebrews wrote: 'By faith, Abraham when he was called . . . went out, not knowing whither he went.' In Gen. 22, however, a destination is clearly stated. 'God did tempt Abraham . . . and said, take now thy son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah.' The mention of that place name is the first plain indication that the finger of God was in the writing of this story. Moriah is only twice mentioned in the whole Bible, here and in 2 Chron. 3:1, which reads: 'Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah,' so that the place to which Abraham was sent to make the sacrifice was Jerusalem. The prophetic nature of the incident begins to be evident, and it is emphasised when the full direction is taken into account. Abraham was told to 'get thee into the land of Moriah' and offer Isaac there 'upon one of the mountains I will tell thee of.' There was nothing haphazard about the choice of place—it was not left to Abraham to go where he would, and it was not to be Moriah itself, but to some other mountain in that district. The words of the children's hymn come to mind, of a 'green hill . . . without [outside] a city wall, where our dear Lord was crucified.' In the two events we have type and antitype, prophecy and its fulfilment.

The story is admittedly one of the most beautifully expressed in the Old Testament, but my purpose is not to dwell upon the scene as it unfolds before our eyes while we read. Our aim is to trace the finger of God in its writing. The first sign of that, as we have seen, is in the definite instruction as to where Abraham should go. But how our feelings are moved as we think of that old man making his three-day journey to the place of death, when he lifts up his eyes and sees the place afar off. He gathered together the wood he had brought with him, and laid it upon Isaac. The fire and the knife, he himself carried, and the story says, 'they went, both of them, together.' The lad said, 'Here is the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb, the offering?' 'And Abraham answered him, God will provide himself a lamb.' Notice the rather curious way in which that answer is phrased. If you accept the story as prophetic you will doubtless perceive a hidden meaning in the words, and those also which follow, true of the two thus travelling side by side, but also true of that Father and Son who traversed the road to Calvary. 'So they went, both of them, together.' Abraham, an old man, and Isaac, a young lad seventeen years of age or thereabouts, doubtless with all the virility and strength that belong to a youth of that age; but he shows no sign of resistance when the significance of Abraham's remark comes home to him. No! the words are repeated, 'they went, . . . both of them . . . together.' Does not the phrase so written signify the surrender of the son's will to that of his father, and to his father's God? We believe that conclusion to be inevitable, and again the discerning reader will see the son's attitude as a symbol of that other Son who, on a journey to the place of death said, in prayer to God, 'Not my will, but thine be done.'

One last piece of evidence that the story is factual, and proof that the recording of it is God-inspired is contained in the name that was given to the place of sacrifice, and what it implies. When Jacob had his vision of the future of himself and his family, he woke, saying, 'Surely God was in this place and I knew it not . . . And he called the name of that place, Bethel.' It represented an experience, vivid indeed, but something that he had passed through, and named it accordingly. Not so Abraham, for we read, 'And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh,' a name looking

to the future, meaning 'God will provide.' It went beyond that which had transpired, and on to that which was to come. Rotherham's version has it : 'As to which it is still said* : In the mountain of Yahweh† will provision be made.'

The apostle Peter writes of Scripture prophecy as a 'sure' word. It deals with mostly ascertainable facts.

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A word of comment may be allowed. We live in an age of scientific achievement which is positively amazing. It is most certainly true in this sphere as in human affairs generally we know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth. Here, there, and everywhere almost, some new thing is being provided to satisfy man's real or imaginary need or excite his mind. One thing is certain that real progress in the development of an idea always depends—not on opposition to—but on the understanding and right use of natural law. That is, that order of life or rule of action which was fore-ordained by God in the creation of the universe. It was not until these fore-ordained laws were begun to be understood that progress was at all possible.

As in the natural world, so also is it with spiritual laws, which are as much a part—or more so—of the phenomena of the universe as are the natural laws with which mankind is now so much concerned. The truly scientific mind will not stop at the study of natural law but will occupy itself with the things of the spirit, and the fore-knowledge of God as revealed in the Scriptures is just as much a challenge, or should be, to the really devoted mind as are the secrets of nature, now, with greater and greater rapidity, being brought to light. God's word, that is, the Bible, is the Spirit of God in revelation, and coming from the same source, the way of revelation is the same both in the natural and spiritual spheres. Here, in the words of Jesus Christ, is the way of discovery. 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' First the experiment, then the obedience, then the knowledge. Again as Jesus says, it is truth which 'sets free,' and truth alone, wherever applied or applicable.

* When Genesis was first written, more than 600 years after Abraham.

† Yahweh : Jehovah.

W. BARKER.

The Organisation and Government of the Church of Christ

AS far as the Scriptures are concerned, it would appear that whole-time evangelism should be taken up only in the more mature years of life, after some experience has been gained. During the earlier years, there is nothing to hinder a potential evangelist from learning a secular trade or profession. Compare Paul, the tent-maker and evangelist, and Timothy who was ordained when over 30 years of age. 'Let no man despise thy youth,' says Paul of him (1 Tim. 4 : 12), showing that youth, so far as the scriptural age for evangelistic work is concerned, seems to commence about that age. Doubtless, between the ages of 18 years, when Paul first met him, and 30 years, Timothy had been gaining experiences and studying the Scriptures (possibly at the feet of Paul) before venturing out as an evangelist. No doubt also the presbytery at Ephesus recognised this and his qualifications, when they decided to 'lay hands on him.'

It is inexpedient to lay down any hard and fast rules for the appointment of evangelists. The proof of whether an evangelist is qualified to be

one or not rests on the results of his teaching and conduct ; and these results lie rather in the spiritual than in the secular or educational sphere, in the 'wisdom of God' and not in the 'wisdom of men.' When we consider the chaos that so-called education has brought to the world, not only in the political, but also in the religious field, we can appreciate the danger of relying on secular standards. Hence the wisdom of God in leaving the appointment of evangelists to the Church.

We have to remember that it is in this way the Lord gives the Church these officers, that He is no respecter of persons and that they will come from all walks of life.

The Ordinary Member

So far nothing has been said about the members, both sisters and brothers in the Lord, who do not hold office in the Church. Much could be said about the part they have to play, within the scope of church organisation, but, since this exposition has been mainly concerned with evangelists, those things will have to remain unsaid. If such brethren, however, think that they have but to wait on the officers of the Church to do the work, whilst they take a 'back seat,' then they have lost sight of the great and glorious part all of us have to play in the life of the Church. It is a question of perspective again, for the officers of the Church are but the shepherds or guardians of the flock.

Let all of us study reverently the third and especially the fourth chapters of the letter to the Ephesians and it will be seen that a whole-time task confronts us, that we are all in this work together, for necessity is laid upon us by the Lord of Life and Glory Himself.

Conclusion

I have endeavoured to bring some of God's light to bear on what has been for so long a thorny problem in our midst. It has existed from the time the Church was born and has, I believe, led to the divisions in the religious world to-day. The cause is failure to study what the sure Word of God says, and to substitute for that sure Word our own theories and opinions, instead of, as Paul says (2 Cor. 10 : 5) 'Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

I have endeavoured, as far as in me lies, to bring all my thoughts on this problem into such 'captivity' and into conformity with the will of our Lord as revealed in His Word. It has of necessity been a long study, longer than I had thought. Having started upon such a thorny subject, however, one has to proceed as the scripture leads from one thought to another, in case some truth lay undiscovered. However, I trust it will benefit all lovers of the truth, since it has confirmed what may have remained as mere conjecture : and that is that the Word of God is indeed all sufficient for the effective working out of His Divine plan of salvation for mankind without any human innovations, additions, interventions or subtractions, provided only we put it into practice.

If we do that, then will His grace richly abound in us and unite us, above all barriers of race and frontier, in the 'One Body, one Spirit, one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is above all and through all and in us all : to Whom be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.'

(Concluded).

W. BROWN

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Brother Editor,

There is a point in Bro. W. Brown's article, 'The Organisation and Government of the Church of Christ' VI, which I feel I must take up. He cites the action of the Church at Antioch in sending brethren to Jerusalem to get a question decided. He uses this, and other points in the history of the early Church as premises for an argument in favour of a delegate meeting to decide what we are to do about support of evangelists. He then mentions later that such a meeting would not voice an opinion on doctrinal matters; this however was precisely what that one and only meeting of more than one church was intended to do—to decide a matter of doctrine, Judaism in the Church. These men went to Jerusalem because there were the apostles and others who had been very close to the Lord, the only group ever existing who were able to pronounce in this way. It is hardly sound logic to use as an argument an event which is not at all the kind of event it is desired to justify.

There is no example in Scripture of the kind of meeting visualised in our brother's suggestion, and I doubt very much if it is the Lord's will for any sort of national or regional body to function. It is the 'natural' way for us to think that if something is a desirable end we must organise to achieve it in the way a business house would do, and so we get round to trying to justify such procedures. Instead of being able to reason because of this and this Scripture we ought to be doing so and so; it is rather a case of because of this and this, surely we may do so and so.

The first conferences known in Britain, and the Co-operation, and the protest meeting which became the Old Paths conference, were all conceived as permissible largely on the reasoning our brother uses for his very well-intentioned suggestion. But in every case we are offered only an inference—not a necessary inference. I feel personally that this has been a major stumbling point.

The situation we have, of many small churches scattered about, was known in the first years of the Faith, but these central meeting plans were never initiated. They seem to have managed quite well by each church just doing its work within the framework of God's ordained plan. There were churches who were able to send out preachers, and there were others, e.g., Philippi, that

didn't, but were happy enough sending money to men they did not control in any way. O that we had a simple love like theirs for the Lord's work and workers and no shadow of pride to make us yearn, as I feel some do, for a 'national executive' to give us form and substance like the sects around. Let us be very careful of seeking to do good by wrong means.

G. LODGE.

A Second Letter to a Truth Seeker

Dear John,

I am pleased and grateful that my previous letter helped you and that you have decided, after careful thought and investigation of the New Testament, to be immersed into the name of Jesus Christ. Now you ask me, 'Which church should I join?' Let me say kindly in reply that the idea of joining a church is altogether foreign to New Testament teaching and practice. In your search for truth you will have discovered that the church of the New Testament is spoken of as the body of Christ, and as the family of God. Therefore does it not follow that, when one is born again, of water and the Spirit, he is by that very act added to that church, and becomes a son in the household of the heavenly Father, heir of God, and joint heir with Christ?

'And the Lord added to the church day by day such as should be saved', or, as the Revised Version gives it, 'those that were being saved' (Acts 2:47).

It certainly is true that many do join their particular denomination, but denominations are human institutions, and do not form the church or body of Christ, the church of the New Testament. This may sound dogmatic and intolerant, but is it not the truth?

Now in the natural sphere, when a child is born it is added to its father's family by birth. No child can 'join' the family, because it is born into it. Exactly so in the spiritual realm: no-one can 'join' the church, God's family, because he enters it by birth—the new birth—and is added by the Father.

I do hope this will be clear to you, and that you will see the beauty and grandeur of the divine plan. It is for you now to seek out where you live those who, like yourself, have rendered obedience to the Saviour and King. I am sure you will find these people, your brothers and sisters in the Faith, ready and eager to fellowship with you, and to share your new-found joy. With them may you experience the blessedness of service in the Kingdom of God and Christ, and seek by divine aid, through the Holy Spirit, and the Word, to lead others also into 'the more excellent way'. It is a grand

thought that you are now united with God's people throughout the world who await the coming again of our blessed Lord in glory to reward His faithful ones. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.'

J. HOLMES.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

DECEMBER, 1957

1—Leviticus 20:1-10.	John 8: 1-30.
8—Genesis 17:1-10.	" 8:31-59.
15—2 Kings 6:8-23.	" 9.
22—Ezekiel 34.	" 10: 1-21.
29—Leviticus 24:10-23.	" 10:22-42.

ONE THING I KNOW (John 9.25)

In these words the man born blind stated his experience of the power of Christ. We must have the same positive assurance about the gospel of Christ before we shall be able to defeat His enemies in argument. The story of the chapter should convince us of this need of ours, and should also demonstrate that Christianity requires argument. There is in some quarters a disposition to decry it, and to say that love is so essential that there should be no arguing. That could be true of a love which has no regard for truth. A love which disregards justice is not God's love.

What we call 'trains of circumstances' are the normal workings of God's providence. The disciples, the Jews, and most of us connect misfortune with sin, and the idea is not wrong. It is inevitable that punishment follows crime: it may not be evident always to us, but it remains true nevertheless that 'God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'. Nevertheless it is not true that misfortune is always deserved. In the case of the man born blind this just could not be true, and perhaps in many, many cases we suffer as a result of the working out of a law of God in nature which we cannot understand, and which is unexplainable by such a rule. It is a solemn thought that 'no man liveth to himself'—that is, his actions affect others for good or bad.

In the case we are considering we have the assurance of Jesus Himself that the blindness was not the fault of either parents or child. It has been suggested

that Jesus did not say that this "accident of birth" occurred in order that God's work might be shown forth, but that, not answering the question, He said merely 'that the works of God should be made manifest I must work the works'. This does not, however, satisfy the obvious thought that God's purpose in the deprivation of sight at birth was to be fulfilled by Jesus in demonstrating His power and goodness. Every misfortune is the opportunity for the people of God to demonstrate God's love. To what extent as individuals are we fulfilling this purpose?

There is no question but that Jesus need only have said the word, and the sight would have been given, but He chose to make clay, and anoint—and to require obedience. Why should the pool of obedience be called 'Sent'? Nothing in the world is outside of the purpose of God. We do not know what part the clay had in the cure. Those who want to remove the miraculous from the life of the Saviour would make it the natural cause—and it might be. If so, who enabled Jesus to know the diagnosis and cure? Nothing can make it any less wonderful that the man received his sight upon following the instructions he was given. How is it that through the giving of the life of Jesus, the shedding of His blood, we can have our sins removed, if we follow the instructions God has given through His servants?

The demonstration of the truth of the gospel message is a matter of history, and consequent individual experience. We know and must hold fast the pattern of sound words which has been delivered to us. If those profound truths which are embodied in the Word of God are not to be relied upon, and if we have to rely on a man's or men's decision as to what we are to believe, then we are left bewildered in a doubtful road. Just so certain as was the restored man that his sight was restored by the power and word of Christ, so may we be sure that whereas we could remain blind by rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the Word, now we have spiritual sight, and the things which might well appal us in the present condition of the world merely fix our hopes upon an eternal future where all that grieves God has passed away.

There was one thing the Pharisees knew (verse 29), and one they refused to know,

although it was quite as evident. They claimed to be disciples of Moses, and they were absolutely right in trusting his revelation, but were blinded by their own prejudices and wrong thoughts. They could not see the fulfilment of his words in Jesus, the prophet whom the Lord their God had raised up from among themselves. Thus they misinterpreted the Sabbath law, and condemned Jesus wrongly for His action on the Sabbath day. They felt that here they were on safe ground because the Sabbath law was so clear. However Jesus reveals the falsity of their thoughts as well as their deductions and interpretations when he denounced them for hypocrisy.

‘Those who confess their ignorance and contend against it, (1) cease to be responsible for it, (2) have a good prospect of being freed from it. Those who deny their ignorance and contend against instruction, (1) remain responsible for their ignorance, (2) have no prospect of ever being freed from it’ (A. Plummer). It is necessary that we should preserve a readiness to accept facts proved by God’s word, even when they conflict with inclinations or prejudice. ‘Prove all things, hold fast that which

is good’ (1 Thess. 5:21). The Pharisees disliked Jesus but they had no real grounds for doing so. This proved their failure to believe Moses in a real spiritual sense. They had modernised Moses’s teaching and needed to get back to those basic principles without which his law ceased to be God’s—or that of Moses. The Jewish nation had fallen back into heathenism in their worship and then corrupted their morals. The captivity had brought them back to worship the true and only God so far as the form was concerned but their hearts were still far from Him. The restoration of Christianity to its original purity involves both purity of motive and purity of worship, the inward consecration as well as the outward confession and profession.

The recipe is embodied in the words of Jesus—may we all take them to heart—‘He that willeth to do the will of the Father shall know of the teaching whether it be of God’ (7:17). The humble and comparatively ignorant man was able to refute the false arguments of the learned Pharisees because he was willing to accept evidence. He built his faith upon the truth, and therefore could say, ‘I know.’

R. B. SCOTT.

From a Christian’s Diary

By Berean

Indirect Giving. Whoever thought of this phrase as a comprehensive description of bazaars, sales of work, whist drives, and other ways of coercing unwilling supporters to subscribe money to needy funds, must have been a master of understatement! That there can be any form of giving in a transaction in which the one who pays receives something valuable in return seems very doubtful to me. The following quotation from a religious ‘digest’ suggests the same doubt in the writer’s mind:—

‘Indirect giving is not a healthy method of financing the work of the Church. Sales of work and bazaars train people to use commercial methods of profiteering and to expect something in return for what they give to the Church. It also leads members of the Church to expect that the Church will be supported by those who don’t use it. One bazaar is no sooner over than the whole activity of the parish is taken up with preparing for the next. Many churches are like

the barren fig tree: concerned only with the effort to keep a few leaves over its head, to keep the church roof repaired, with no time for any other work.’

This is the opinion of a ‘parish priest’ but it is broadly in agreement with New Testament teaching on giving. The early disciples in their overflowing love for the Lord and zeal for His kingdom sold their surplus possessions and laid at the apostles’ feet the proceeds of such sales as an absolute gift (Act 4:31-37). The church has never been authorised to enter the rag-and-bone market, conduct sales, or in any other way ‘raise’ money for the preaching of the gospel.

* * *

Impregnable Rock. We read periodically of new discoveries in the field of archaeology and perhaps the thought may cross our minds that perhaps one day a discovery may be made which will cause us to revise our understanding of parts of the Bible. I believe that this may have

been the outcome of the finding of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' and the necessarily long waiting period while they were being restored and translated. There is no need, however, for us to harbour any vague doubts about the accuracy of the manuscripts from which the Word is translated. Fresh discoveries of such MSS can only lead to the confirmation of existing material and perhaps to a refining of detail. As for discoveries in the line of secular history, so many have been made and shown to substantiate the truth of the Old Testament that it would surely be extremely difficult to credit any which did not fit into the standard pattern of the records.

An expedition led by Professor H. Ing-holt of Yale University recently found a number of clay tablets which once belonged to members of the Hurrite or Horite tribe. These cuneiform tablets are dated between 1500 and 2000 B.C. and include a number of epistles as well as a complete code of laws. The Horites were a Semetic race who were among the peoples whom Chedorlaomer defeated in Abraham's day (Genesis 14:6) and originally occupied Mount Seir until the Edomites invaded and mixed with Seir's descendants (Gen. 36 and Deut. 2:12, 22). Robert Young dated the sons of 'Lotan, son of Seir' (Gen. 36:22) as 1780 B.C. So here again destructive critics will seek in vain for discrepancies. 'Scripture cannot be broken.'

* * *

Facing Both Ways. The death of a Roman priest would not normally call for reference here but the passing of one of Rome's most learned converts brings to mind the R.C. attitude to modern versions of the Scripture, such as that by the late Ronald Knox. In the secular Press (for Protestant consumption) there has been some show of pride that he translated the Scriptures into everyday language but in R.C. periodicals little has been written of this or any other effort of R. A. Knox. Roman dogma does not look favourably upon the translation of Holy Scripture into the common tongue. The 'Council of Trent' ruled 'that if the Holy Bible translated into the vulgar tongue be indiscriminately allowed to every one the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise.' This was underlined by Pope Leo XII in 1824 when, referring to 'Bibles in the vernacular'

(common speech) he exhorted his 'venerable brothers' to turn away their flocks from 'these poisonous pastures'.

It is clear, then, that Knox's translation of the Scriptures was a reluctant sop of propaganda to Protestantism, though actually against Papal dogma. The Church of Rome thus outwardly appears to champion Bible reading but in reality the opposite is the rule.

* * *

Superfluous Effort. Knox spent fifteen years on his translation—an unnecessary effort whether viewed from the angle of Rome or from that of any serious Bible student. There have been so many versions since the Revision of 1881. One can name Goodspeed, Moffatt, Weymouth, Rotherham and the 'Twentieth Century'. Of this decade J. B. Phillips, E. V. Rieu and Schonfield are notable. To my mind Weymouth's is the most rational, digressed and helpful for students. Moffatt and Twentieth Century have dangerous trends associated with liberalism and Phillips tends to paraphrase rather than translate. As for any Romish versions, they are usually suspect on account of their footnotes and subheadings which always exude papal dogma, though in the main their text is quite sufficient to refute the claims of Rome.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—A very enjoyable and spiritually helpful time was experienced by all who attended the meetings in connection with our 92nd anniversary. On Saturday, November 2nd, after tea in our own chapel premises we adjourned to the nearby more commodious Ormond Street Mission Hall, very kindly lent us for the occasion, where, under the chairmanship of one of our elders, Brother Frank Jones, we had a feast of good things. Our speakers were Brethren Edmund Hill from Loughborough and Colin Leyland, evangelist from Peterhead. The former gave excellent teachings and warnings by answering the question, "Does God mean what He says?", and the latter drew helpful lessons from the teaching of Jesus concerning the relationship that must exist between the Good Shepherd and His sheep, based on John 10. We were delighted by an anthem rendered by some of the members of the Ilkeston Church,

while the presence of other well-wishers from Bristol, Bedminster, Eastwood, East Kirkby, Leicester and Loughborough and local assemblies further enhanced our joy. On the Lord's Day Brother Leyland ably served the Church with an exhortation in the morning and by preaching the Gospel at night. We bless God for another wonderful experience and pray that it may all redound to His glory and the extension of His Kingdom.

FRED C. DAY.

East Ardsley.—The Church held its forty-second anniversary on Saturday and Sunday, October 26th and 27th. On Saturday a goodly number took tea. In the evening the meeting room was full, and a welcome was given to members from Doncaster, Dewsbury, Morley, Wortley, Wakefield and Rhodesia. A good lead was given to the meeting by Bro. Jack Robottom (Wortley), who acted as chairman. Then followed a fine and searching address from Bro. J. Garnett (Doncaster) on the theme, 'What are we making the Church—a house of prayer or a den of thieves?'

This was followed by a powerful and descriptive message by Bro. A. E. Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells) on 'Love.' On the Lord's Day Bro. Winstanley again addressed good gatherings. At the gospel service a number of the senior scholars from the Sunday School attended, when our brother delivered a strong and telling gospel message on 'Predestination'. All agreed that it had been a week-end of uplift and mountain-top experience.

Eastwood, Seymour Road.—We rejoice that the gospel continues to make progress. Margaret Kirk, having attended our meetings for some time, became convinced and, confessing her faith in Christ, was baptised into the ever-blessed name.

CHAS. LIMB.

Great Yarmouth rally.—The fishermen from the North of Scotland, their relations and friends, and well-wishers from various parts of the country, over eighty in number, met on Saturday, October 26th, in a room kindly lent to us by the Baptist Church. Bro. Dougall was chairman. The meeting was conducted in Scottish fashion, with hearty hymn-singing and solos by our Scottish friends. The first speaker was Bro. C. Limb (Eastwood); then tea and refreshments were served. Then followed more singing, and Bro. R. McDonald gave a message. After more singing the meeting closed at ten p.m. A time of rich fellowship was enjoyed by all.

The meetings on Lord's Day were held in the Labour Rooms, when we met around the Lord's Table under the leadership of Bro. F. A. Hardy (Morley), assisted by Bro. Donald Hardy. Bro.

Limb exhorted the members. At the evening service Bro. McDonald preached the Gospel, when some non-members were present.

This year we were favoured by beautiful weather, and had the pleasure of seeing the fishermen reap rich rewards for their work. This annual week-end at Yarmouth is a time when visitors learn to appreciate more than ever before the difficulties of those who toil on the deep.

We should like to express a united appreciation of the fine way Bro. Dougall so willingly does all in his power to help workers and visitors. We were pleased to see Sister Dougall with him—her presence was very much appreciated.

R. McDONALD.

Wigan, Albert Street.—A two-weeks' mission in October was concluded by Bro. Albert Winstanley. Unfortunately the 'flu epidemic was raging at the time and our meetings were not so well attended as on previous visits. Meetings were held on Saturdays, Lord's Days, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and a number of visitors were present. Although no additions can be recorded we feel sure the seed sown will bear fruit. Our thanks go to our brother for the inspiring messages and we have all been enriched by the effort. We thank also members from other churches who so willingly supported us.

W. SMITH.

OBITUARY

Buckle.—The Church has sustained a further loss in the death of Bro. Samuel Reid, after a long illness, on October 26th. Baptised in early life, Bro. Reed earnestly contended for the faith. In him we found a splendid Christian, refined, and of a gentle and gracious disposition; a true saint of God, reflecting many of the virtues and graces of a Saviour he loved. We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for our brother.

We commend to God those left to bear the sorrow, especially William George and Meta, who never spared themselves during his illness. The funeral took place on Tuesday, the 29th October, Brethren John Geddes and Peter Innes officiating.

JOHN GEDDES.

Rose Street, Kirkcaldy.—On November 7th Sister Margaret Glass passed from this scene to be with her Lord and Saviour. Sis. Glass was our oldest member, having been baptised on March 20th, 1892, and was a faithful and respected member. During the past few years illness prevented her attending the services. We extend our sympathy to her family and pray God's blessing for them in their hour of sorrow.

JOHN MOYES.

WHY WE ARE LATE

Owing to a mis-direction of proofs to the home of Bro. Melling, instead of to Wigan, their return to us was much delayed. This has held up the production of the magazine, which we much regret.

'GUINNESS'S FOR STRENGTH'

The National Commercial Temperance League's magazine, *Outlook*, contains in its September-October issue the following story:—

'A schoolmaster known to us was dining in a northern restaurant just prior to the war. A lady sitting opposite him whispered something to a waitress who shortly after brought her a bottle of a well-known brand of intoxicating liquor. She had difficulty in removing the stopper and appealed to the schoolmaster for assistance. She volunteered the information that she "didn't really like the stuff" but only took it on doctor's orders and "purely as a medicine to keep my strength up". When further questioned she claimed to have been taking two bottles of "medicine" every day for four years; and the schoolmaster replied, "Madam, do you realise that you have consumed about three thousand bottles of this 'medicine' at a cost of over £100, and you haven't even enough strength to remove the stopper?"'

WEDDINGS

On Saturday, September 7th, at Lochside Chapel, Tranent: Bro. Philip Sneddon to Sir. Margaret Brown, Bro. Wm. Steele officiating.

Saturday, September 7th, at Argyle Street, Hindley: Bro. John Partington to Sis. Jean Barker, Bro. L. Morgan officiating.

COMING EVENTS

Slamannan District.—The annual New Year's Social Gathering of the Churches in the Slamannan District will be held (D.V.) in the Meeting House of the Church at Blackridge, on Wednesday, 1st January, 1958, at 12 noon. Speakers: Bro. L. Morgan (Hindley), Bro. F. C. Day (Birmingham); Chairman, Bro. D. Dougall. All welcome.

SPRING CONFERENCE

Will any church desirous of entertaining the Spring Conference on April 5th, 1958, please communicate with A. Hood, Secretary of Conference Committee?

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

W. Steele, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid. Lothian. Telephone: Portobello 3363.

SCRIPTURE READING CARDS FOR 1958

These will be obtainable by the end of this year from Bro. Paul Jones, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22a. Please state number required and enclose postal order or stamps to cover cost of 1d. per card.

THE OLD HYMN BOOK

Any church desiring copies of the old edition of the hymn book (both single and double-column editions) can obtain them for cost of postage on application to Tom Kemp, 52 Argyle Street, Hindley, Nr Wigan, Lancs.

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

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

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