

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Conferences, Committees and Churches

Leeds, 1924

IN February, 1924, a meeting was held in Leeds to protest against the Higher Criticism and Modernism being disseminated from Overdale College and through the pages of the *Christian Advocate*. Through the kindness of the former editor of the S.S., we have been able to read the account of this meeting. We have been impressed by the courage shown by the brethren, many of them still with us, who led the opposition to those teachings which have had such disastrous effects upon the churches in the Co-operation of Churches of Christ.

The little one shall become a thousand

These brethren took an unpopular position. They suffered the obloquy of many who should have stood with them. Some of their own number left them when it seemed the fight would be hard and long. It was seen that, if appeals and protests had no effect in turning the Co-operation leaders from the popular way they desired to tread, it would be best to come out from the Co-operation rather than be any longer identified with denial of the written word of God. This was too much for some. To them the Co-operation was the Kingdom of God, and to withdraw from it was to cease to be a church of Christ.

Yet this loyal movement grew. Those few brethren were the remnant, the nucleus, round which have gathered, over the past thirty years, many other loyal brethren and whole churches. Let us never forget that faithful band; and let us give thanks to God that 'He left not himself without witness.'

Co-operation through Committees

We need to remember the things against which protest was made. These brethren sought to restore the cause of restoration of New Testament Christianity. A vast work, in all conscience. They had a big enough battle in seeking to restore the pure faith and to assert the utter reliability of the Scriptures. They voiced their protests in the Annual Meetings and through committees of the Co-operation, when neither Annual Meeting nor Co-operation had any authority from the New Testament or the churches to do the work of the church of God.

The growth in organizational machinery has been greatly accelerated in the Co-operation of Churches these past thirty years. To-day about twenty Committees exist, and scarcely a year passes without the addition

of a fresh one, all of these co-ordinated by an over-ruling, all-authoritative Central Council. Yet the state of those churches to-day is patent for all to see.

Why our Evangelistic Committee

The protest of the brethren at Leeds thirty-two years ago was not against the committee system of running the churches. This is not surprising, for they had grown up in the committee tradition. It seemed natural, therefore, that a committee should soon afterwards be appointed to co-ordinate the aims and work of the scattered brethren who desired to present the faith of the New Testament. Moreover, there was a further reason: as yet only one or two churches, as such, had shown their sympathy with these loyal brethren. Appeals were made to churches as a whole to stand against the Modernism and Higher Criticism being so widely accepted. But very few did so, although many individual brethren allied themselves with the task of restoring and following the 'old paths.'

But the pure gospel must be preached. It was not being done by Overdale-trained preachers. It was vital, therefore, that men thoroughly reliable should be sent out and supported in this work. Hence, a Committee was formed to co-ordinate this and other necessary work of the church. Over the years, many worthy brethren were sent out and supported by money contributed to this Committee, so that it came to be known as the Evangelistic Committee.

At first this Committee was spoken of as an expedient. But we believe that the time has come when the churches as churches should do their work of evangelising. For the past two or three years the Committee has done next to no evangelising, due, we admit, to circumstances sometimes out of its control. So we now term it the Conference Committee, responsible for the arranging of annual conferences. Even this latter work is now largely done by the church inviting the conference.

A more excellent way

What does all this point to? Surely to the fact that it is now time that the church undertook the work for which they exist—evangelisation. In 1856, Thomas Hughes Milner uttered a warning when a Co-operation of Churches was suggested, on the grounds that:

- (1) It is an admission that something other than the church is necessary.
- (2) Once begun, divergence from the divine model will increase.
- (3) Assumption of official position by the few deters the many from personal action.

Can any deny that these fears have been realized in the history of the Co-operation of Churches of Christ?

But we are not immune from the dangers, especially the first and third. It is said that to appoint certain brethren on a committee is only a way of the church doing its work. But is it? When was a committee appointed by the churches? The appointment is made by brethren interested enough to attend a conference, but who have not the slightest authority to speak in the name of the churches.

That the church has the authority and responsibility goes without saying: part of her reason for existence is to do that work. Surely none would deny that the church should evangelise. Why then appoint a further body to do that which the church is fully qualified to do? And if it be said that the churches are unable or unwilling to carry out this work, is not the reason largely because we have looked upon that work as the responsibility of a body of our own, not God's, appointing? Is it not time we gave the churches the full right and opportunity to preach the word of the Lord?

We say 'the churches,' by which we mean not necessarily the local church, but churches co-operating *as churches*, not in committees. We have yet to see the power of such evangelistic effort. It may be objected that some central body would be necessary to receive funds and to guide or suggest the movements of evangelists, and that would be a committee. But if elders or other brethren were appointed by the churches to act in this way, it would certainly be the churches doing their work.

The Wigan Conference

Brethren, we are called upon to decide upon these matters in the conference at Wigan on March 31st. It should not be beyond us to reach decisions true to the word of the Lord and therefore able to receive His blessing. Let us all be ready to be guided by His word and conduct ourselves with humility and readiness to follow the truth; to sink any prejudice or personal feelings we have, that the will of the Lord alone may be done.

The work of evangelism is languishing among us. We are not making the impact of the gospel felt upon men as we should. By our failure to face and settle this matter we have hindered the progress of the gospel. May our wholehearted prayers be that we shall, at Wigan, so experience the presence of the Spirit of God that He may guide and over-rule all our discussions, 'that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.' May God grant that we 'may stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.'

EDITOR.

Approaching the Word of God. VII.

FINALLY, here are a few considerations—one might almost call them rules since they are essential, though not exhaustive, principles of study—which will help us to the right understanding of the Word. They are culled from leading writers in last century's movement to restore the primitive faith.

1. 'On opening any book in the sacred Scriptures, *consider first the historical circumstances of the book These are the order, the title, the author, the date, the place and the occasion of it.*

'The *order* in historical composition is of much importance; as, for instance, whether the first, second, or third, of the five books of Moses or of any other series of narrative, or of even epistolatory communications.' So wrote Alexander Campbell in *The Christian System*. It is good to note in passing that he had no doubts about the authorship of the Pentateuch.

2. Concerning precepts, promises or exhortations consider who speaks and in which dispensation. Consider also who is addressed, whether Jews or Christians, believers or not, approved or not. This relates to last month's emphasis on 'rightly dividing the word of truth.' It is essential to the proper application of every promise or command in either of the Covenants. For example, not all the words in the Book of Job have divine approval. Job told his 'comforters' plainly, 'Ye are all forgers of lies; ye are all physicians of no value' (ch. 13:4). Understanding this is the right kind of Biblical criticism.

3. Consider each text in its context and beware of chapter divisions, which sometimes break the continuity of thought without good reason. The same can apply to verse divisions. These are not part of the inspiration of the Word but were added much later for convenience in reference.

4. Use normal philological principles. Accept the literal meaning of the words unless this is impossible, as in Rev. 20 : 1, 'the key of the bottomless pit,' or 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' in Matt. 16 : 19. On the other hand, figurative meanings can be accepted only if the scope and context of the passage allow and if parallel passages agree.

5. In figures of speech, symbols, types and parables it is necessary to ascertain the points of resemblance between the figure and the fact and keep closely to them. As an example, figures applied to the Saviour are limited in meaning. 'I am the door' signified the entrance to salvation, not any aspect of joinery. John's words, 'Behold the lamb of God . . .' could never have envisaged the *Agnus Dei* of the apostasy—depicting a lively lamb, halo round head, holding over its shoulder a banner inscribed with a cross. Beware so-called 'Christian Symbolism.'

6. Come within the understanding distance. The knowledge of God is comparatively easy to everyone who opens the Book of God with the single aim of knowing God's will. Campbell well said that God is the centre of a circle of which the circumference is humility, for he 'resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble' (James 4 : 6).

The following definition of Bible Reading may be helpful in conclusion. 'In one sentence, it is the devout, prayerful, habitual ponderings of the heart upon the facts, declarations, calls, precepts, promises, and threatenings of the Book of God; not an occasional reading of a book or a chapter in the volume—not a periodic, measured, daily attention to some portions of sacred scripture; but a concentration of the whole mind upon the whole subject of revelation, as the very elements of devotion, and unending springs of our pleasures and delights.' This happily phrased sentence is taken from David King's anthology of extracts from A. Campbell's writings, *Christianity as it was at the First* (1867) and sums up our considerations on approaching the Word of God.

R.A.H.

(Concluded)

Notes on my Life. VIII

By WALTER CROSTHWAITE

Standing against War

RETURNING to Yorkshire, I worked with the Churches in that division until the end of 1917. During the latter part of that year I felt compelled to resign my position as their evangelist. To trace the events leading up to this it will be necessary to go back a considerable time.

In August, 1914, the disastrous first World War broke out. I had always been anti-war, failing to see how a professing Christian could be anything else. My attitude to war was registered in the *Bible Advocate* while the Boer War was raging. I stated in a letter in that magazine, 'There is not in the whole New Testament a single passage that would justify war under any circumstances.' (June 15th, 1900). That has always been my firm conviction.

When the first anti-war conference was announced to be held, in Wigan on June 10th, 1916, I received a post-card from a member of the Yorkshire Evangelist Committee, on which was written: 'D.B.C. Am sorry to note Conference at Wigan. I trust you have thought seriously of the possible consequences to the Churches, and of the future effect on your labours.

For God's sake be advised not to have anything to do with it.' To this I replied, 'You may rest assured that we have not gone into this without prayerful and careful thought. We have been forced to make a stand because of actions and speeches of brethren on the other side. Any responsibility for serious consequences to the Churches will lie on those who, while professing to plead for a complete return to New Testament Christianity, support and glorify that which is condemned on every page of the New Testament. The main object of our conference is the union of the brethren on New Testament teaching.'

The Conference was held, and was addressed by Bro. Entwistle and myself. Three detectives were present, one of whom said at the close that it was 'the most level-headed meeting of the kind he had attended.' It was reported: 'The Conference was overflowing with enthusiasm, for in the number present, and in its tone it far surpassed our most sanguine expectations.'

My participation in such meetings, and my activities on behalf of conscientious objectors to military service, did not please the majority of those by whom I was engaged. Yet I had much sympathy for those who felt compelled to go to war, and visited many of them in hospitals.

My only regret is that my opposition to the war was not stronger. Churches of Christ, up to then, had taken a firm stand against war. When the Boer War was raging, the Annual Conference passed a resolution that we make a 'solemn protest against the military spirit now so prevalent in British society generally, and express our deep grief and regret that this spirit so largely permeates many sections of the Churches professing to be Christian, and which spirit we believe to be out of harmony with, and antagonistic to, the teachings of our Lord.' (*Year Book*, 1900, p.80).

But with the coming of the Great War in 1914 'the fever of war got into their veins and brains, and the delirium found furious vent against all who dared to condemn the war.' The foregoing quotation was written during the Boer War by one who afterwards supported the World War.

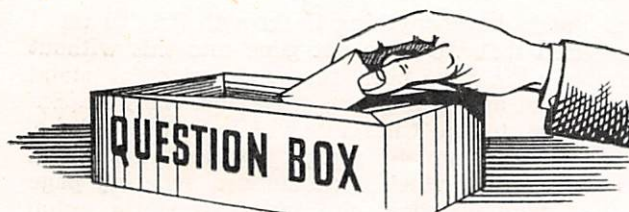
Amalgamation with the American 'Christian Association'

At the Annual Conference held at Leicester in 1917, another matter was pushed, the amalgamation of Churches of Christ with the Christian Association Churches. These latter-named Churches were the outcome of an attempt to hasten progress by the adoption of American methods. Money was lavishly spent, buildings erected, the best American preachers were brought over; open-communion, open-collections were practised, and instrumental music used in their meetings.

After some thirty-five years' strenuous effort they reported fifteen Churches, with 1,341 members. During the same period the older brethren, who were considered too slow, old-fashioned, and narrow-minded, established 73 new Churches, and added 11,165 to their membership.

In report of a conference between representatives of the two groups, honoured leaders in the Churches of Christ declared, 'that faithful assemblies have a right to withhold co-operation from such bodies as the Christian Association.' When the amalgamation was discussed at the Leicester Conference, I was one of what was described by one leader as 'a miserable minority' who by voice and vote opposed it. The amalgamation was agreed to by a large majority. They soon proved to be the little leaven that leavened almost the whole lump. The day after their reception into the Co-operation, their men were pleading for the establishment of a theological college.

(To be continued)



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

Send your questions
direct to L. Channing,
9 Ripon Street,
Aylesbury, Bucks.

A GOOD number of questions has been received, and we appreciate the interest that is being shown in this feature. However, owing to limitation of space, we are faced with the choice of either trying to deal with a large number of questions at one time, and giving brief and perhaps superficial answers, or dealing with a few questions each month, and trying to answer them more fully. We prefer the latter method. All questions will be answered in the order in which they are received (the Lord willing).

Q. Is the Godhead three distinct *persons*?

A. Most of the errors on this subject are due to attempts to bring the Godhead down to the level of the human mind. But if this were possible, and we could understand everything concerning the matter, then one of two things would be true: either we would be equal with God, or God would be no higher than man. Jesus said, 'And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' (Matt. 11 : 27, see also Job 11 : 7). We can go no further than God has chosen to reveal.

The scriptures reveal that '... there is one God' (1 Tim 2 : 5, see Mark 12 : 32), but in three Persons, each Divine, equally called God : Christ is called God (Heb. 1 : 8-9) ; and the Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5 : 3-4), eternally one in Being. There are not three gods (see Isa. 42 : 8) but three Persons : Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the 'Godhead' (Col. 2 : 9).

O.T. Indications. In Gen. 1 : 1, the Hebrew word for 'God' is *elohim* (plural noun), while the word 'created,' is *bara* (singular verb). This unusual combination is used over 500 times in the Pentateuch alone, and suggests a multiple unity. Note the plural pronouns 'us' and 'our' (Gen. 1 : 26 ; 3 : 22 ; 11 : 7). In Deut 6 : 4 the Hebrew word for 'one' is *achad*, which can be used to denote compound, and not singular oneness (see Gen. 2 : 24 ; 11 : 6). In any case, this passage is not speaking of the unity of God, but is saying that to Him alone belongs the name Jehovah, in contrast to the many gods of paganism (see R.V. footnotes on this passage). Other indications are Psa. 110 ; Eccles 12 : 1 (literally 'creators') ; Isa. 6 : 3 (note the triple praise), 44 : 6 ; 54 : 5 (literally 'thy makers,' both plural).

N.T. Indications. Personal pronouns are given to all three Persons of the Godhead, including the Holy Spirit. Note that Christ speaks of the Spirit as a Person. We find 13 instances of this in John 16, R.V. alone. Also note Rom. 8 : 26 R.V. ('himself,' not 'itself,' as A.V.). It is as dishonouring to speak of the Holy Spirit as 'it,' as it would be to speak of Christ in this way. Clear indications of the three Persons are : at the baptism of Jesus (Mat. 3 : 16), (the voice of the Father and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit) ; and the Great Commission (Matt. 28 : 19 literally 'into the name' of each Person). Other indications are John 1 : 1 (note, 'with God'—a Person, yet the Word 'was God') ; John 17 : 22-23 (Jesus prays to the Person of His Father) ; 1 Cor. 12 : 3-5 ; 2 Cor. 13 : 14 ; Heb. 9 : 14 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 2 ; Jude 21. Study also Rev. 21 : 22-23 ; 22 : 3-4 ; and notice that although two Persons

are mentioned in each case—God and the Lamb—the words ‘temple’ and ‘throne’ are in the singular.

Illustrations. All human illustrations of this great truth are necessarily limited, but they may help. We give two. Firstly, man himself: one, yet a triune being: body, soul, and spirit (1 Thes. 5:23). Secondly, the old illustration of the shamrock: one leaf, yet three.

Q. As it is the contents and not the container which we partake of during the Lord's Supper, is it not immaterial how many containers there are?

A. This is a highly controversial question, but it is inevitable and proper in such a feature as this, that such questions should be asked. We must not attempt to gloss over the issues, but humbly seek to give a genuine answer, as we view the matter, leaving acceptance, or otherwise, to those who ask the questions.

There are really two parts to this question, the first dealing with the contents of the cup, and the second with the container itself.

(a) The Contents. Undoubtedly the scriptures teach that there is one cup. But what is the ‘cup’? Not the container, but the contents: the fruit of the vine. It is true that the Greek word for ‘cup’ in connection with the Last Supper is *poterion*, which was the usual word for a drinking-vessel. But the Lord used exactly the same word in relation to His suffering (see Matt. 20:22; 26:39; etc.). In what sense then is the word used in connection with the Supper? It obviously refers to the contents. ‘And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this (cup) and divide it (break up the container?) among yourselves, For I say unto you, I will not drink of the *fruit of the vine*, until the kingdom of God shall come.’ (Luke 22:18). Again in Matt. 26:27-28: ‘And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it; *for this is my blood of the New Testament.*’ Yet again, Paul says, in 1 Cor. 11:26, ‘For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup.’ Now note, not ‘drink of this cup,’ but ‘drink this cup.’

Do we ever drink the container? Surely the word ‘cup’ there is equivalent to the word ‘bread’ and means the contents of the cup. Further Paul says in 1 Cor. 10:16, ‘The cup of blessing which we bless.’ Note, that he does not say ‘you,’ in the sense of the Corinthians alone, but ‘we’ including himself, writing from Ephesus.

Now some seek to resolve this by saying that as the Lord used one container at the institution of the Lord's Supper, we must use one also. But this is not a safe nor simple answer, for in this we may be guilty of adding to the Word and making a law where the Lord has not made one. What has to be determined is whether the Lord used one container as an expedient to the carrying out of the ordinance, or as *part of the ordinance itself*. In view of the foregoing, the container is no part of the ordinance itself. That is fulfilled in the bread and the fruit of the vine. The container is merely equivalent to the plate on which the bread can be conveniently handed round. The analogy is in baptism. The water is a necessary part of the ordinance itself. The container, whether bath or stream, is of no consequence.

(b) In regard to the latter part of the question, as to whether it matters how many containers we use, if the foregoing is correct—and we sincerely believe it is—then it does not matter. The church at Jerusalem is an example. The church at a very early stage must have reached a membership of at least 10,000: 3,000 on Pentecost, plus 5,000 ‘men’ besides women (Acts 4:4). It was obviously impossible for them to use only one

container for the fruit of the vine at the Lord's Supper. The argument that they did not meet as one group, but in each others' houses, (though they may have equally met in the temple) only makes matters worse; for if it were so, then we have *one church*, meeting in separate groups, therefore using many containers at the Lord's Supper, but still *one church*, under one set of apostles, later, one set of elders.

(c) But there is a third point, which, although not mentioned in the question, must not be overlooked; and that concerns the unity of the brethren on this matter. This is far more important than any issue over one or more containers. There are those who genuinely believe that the use of only one container at the Lord's Supper for the fruit of the vine is essential. This conviction must be respected, even as they must respect the convictions of those who differ from them. (See the principle of 1 Cor. 10). It therefore seems to the writer that a proper and sensible compromise, where the issue ever arises, is to give thanks for the fruit of the vine while in the one container, afterwards distributing it in as many vessels as necessary. This is the practice of some of the churches.

This question has been answered at some length, to prevent any misunderstanding of the answer.

Q. The people calling themselves 'Jehovah's Witnesses' have put out a translation in which the last part of John 1:1 is rendered, '... and the word was a god.' Is this correct?

A. The version to which the questioner refers, is the *Emphatic Diaglott*, by Benjamin Wilson. The reading is also found in *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. Both these versions are published by the Russellites, with the object of bolstering up their unscriptural doctrines. One of these doctrines is the denial of the deity of Christ. They claim that the Lord is merely a superior created being, the archangel Michael. Texts are manipulated in favour of this doctrine, and, where this is not possible, footnotes are added in an attempt to lessen the force of a particular passage. The *Emphatic Diaglott* claims to be a Greek-English 'Interlineary Word for Word English Translation,' the Greek being 'According to the Recension of Dr. J. J. Griesbach.' It also has an additional translation in the margin. There are three things we should note about this version, and particularly its rendering of John 1:1.

(a) Inaccurate. The full rendering of this text in this version is, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and a god was the Word.' It will be seen that the word 'a' has been inserted into this passage. But in the grammar of the Greek language, the indefinite article does not occur. In translating into English it is permissible under certain circumstances to use it. But this is certainly not so in this case, for not only does the use of it change the whole meaning of the passage, but by its use in this version the whole meaning of the verse is made to hinge on this one word, a word that does not exist in the language of which it claims to be a translation.

(b) Inconsistent. But the version contradicts itself, for the Greek text given, of which the interlinear English is supposed to be the *literal* translation, reads, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word.' It is further denied by the marginal translation, which reads, 'In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.' It will also be seen that in the interlinear translation, the first occurrence of the word 'God' in the passage occurs with a capital letter, but the second time is without the capital. In the Greek text the word *Theos* (God) is similarly rendered. It is an

attempt to make the first word 'God' apply to the Almighty, and the second to apply merely to an inferior 'mighty one.' Now the *Emphatic Diaglott* claims to be according to the 'Original Greek Text'; but the earliest copies of the New Testament we have contain divisions neither of words nor sentences, are without punctuation, and with all the letters the *same size*. Only an expert philologist can decide how a particular passage should be rendered. Strange, is it not, that the very authority for its Greek text the *Diaglott* professes to follow, namely Dr. Griesbach, renders in his own Greek New Testament, the word *Theos* (God), on *both* the occasions it occurs in this passage with a *capital letter*. Again, if *Theos* can be rendered on one occasion, 'theos' (a god), then it ought to be so rendered in other passages where the definite article does not occur, such as verses 13 and 18 of John 1. But again, the *Diaglott* is inconsistent and fails to do this, for this would defeat its purpose.

(c) Why have the Russellites gone to such pains to manipulate this passage? Because by it the Holy Spirit has anticipated and refuted every blasphemous theory that could arise in regard to the deity of Christ. The passage proves the eternity, personality, and deity of the Word. It answers completely, firstly, the theory that the Word was not pre-existent, but created of God; secondly, that the Word was merely a manifestation of the unseen God, without personality; thirdly, that the Word was merely an inferior deity.

Q. What should be a Christian's attitude towards cremation?

A. Again this is a somewhat delicate question with many. Some brethren feel that cremation is wrong because the manner of disposing of the dead in Bible times was by burial. But we must be careful to distinguish between the mere custom of a nation, of the times, and divine law. It is noteworthy that although in the Old Testament there are laws concerning those who had been in contact with the dead, nothing is commanded regarding the disposal of the dead, other than in the case of criminals (Deut. 21:22). Again, some object to cremation on the grounds that it has pagan associations. But so has burial for that matter. We must also carefully distinguish between the pagan ritual that often accompanied cremation, and the simple act of cremation itself. Some of the ritual accompanying Jewish burial, the professional mourners and the tearing of the clothes and the hair, would seem to us to-day to be objectionable. But cremation was not confined to paganism. Under certain circumstances it took place among the people of God (see 1 Sam. 31:11-13; Amos 6:9-10).

If we accept the tradition concerning the valley of Gehenna, we also know that cremation took place in New Testament times, but seemingly for the bodies of criminals only. The objection to cremation has also been put forward because of the body's rising again. But surely this is limiting the power of God? And more, the scriptures teach that this mortal body does not rise again: ' . . . and that which thou sowest; thou sowest not that body that shall be, . . . but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.' (1 Cor. 15:37-38).

In short, the whole question is a personal matter, to be decided by the individual (or his relatives) alone. As for this writer, he is not concerned with what happens to his body after death. Whether this dust shall return to dust through slow decay in the grave, or whether the process be accomplished in a few moments through cremation, is immaterial. The final result is the same. He is concerned with the new and spiritual body, which (please God) he hopes to put on, with his brethren, in the resurrection morn.

CORRESPONDENCE

An Appeal to the Brotherhood

For a number of years the church in Tunbridge Wells has been meeting in hired rooms. These are quite unsuitable for our purpose, being used for all kinds of social activities by the Y.M.C.A. Often these cause considerable disturbance and hinder our services. In addition, there are certain conditions arising through opposition to our teaching which make our tenancy increasingly difficult.

We have been trying for a long time to find a more suitable home for the church. However, it has been impossible to hire any suitable building, and it is obvious that we must either buy or build the accommodation we need. We have felt that we should not appeal to our brethren for assistance until there was a specific site or building in view; but recent events have compelled us to change our mind. Should a suitable building become available, we would be unable to act without a sufficient amount of money to deposit on it. Anyone familiar with this part of the country knows, moreover, that property prices are very high indeed, and a reasonable sum would have to be available for deposit on any building suitable to us.

For about three and a half years we have been setting money aside for this purpose. But owing to frequent demands upon our scanty finances (it is our principle never to refuse any appeal from a faithful church) we have only £120 in our building fund. We are therefore making this appeal to the saints everywhere. Will you help us?

Our actual membership is twenty-three. This includes a small number unable to attend on account of illness and infirmity. Our average attendance of disciples at the Table of the Lord is seventeen. We have a fine Sunday afternoon meeting for boys and girls, and maintain five meetings during the week: a devotional meeting, a gospel meeting and three home Bible studies. Our numbers are growing, slowly but steadily. We are committed to live, labour and pray for the establishment of a strong congregation of Christ in this town.

We make this appeal, confident that we have the Lord's approval. We desire only to serve Him, and have spent much time in prayer before taking this action. We have confidence in our brethren—that they will wish to strengthen our hands for the furthering of the interests of the Kingdom of God in south-east England.

—Any contribution, however small, will be received with thanksgiving to God, and should be sent to P. G. Ogden, 25 Lansdowne Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, or A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Yours on behalf of the church,

PERCY G. OGDEN,
ALBERT J. KEMP,
KENNETH SPENCER,
ALBERT E. WINSTANLEY.

[We are aware of the many appeals to the churches and brethren to help in the building of houses of worship. Yet these appeals are in themselves an evidence of spiritual life, faith and zeal to urge forward the cause of Christ.

The church at Tunbridge Wells needs our encouragement in this way. If we can do little to break the hard ground by preaching the gospel there, we can do much to hold up the hands of others in the spiritual war by sending them contributions as tokens of our support.

Let us try to fulfil the noble sentiment expressed in this appeal: "It is our principle never to refuse any appeal from a faithful church." We receive many testimonies to the generosity and promptness with which these appeals are answered. May we again respond as we are able.—EDITOR.]

'Pressed Down and Running Over'

It has been my joy and privilege to hand over to Mr. & Mrs. Dixon & Margaret £204 7s. 6d. Expenses were met privately. This work has warmed my heart, and those of many others. What a joy to see again handwriting I saw so frequently in the days of my work for the "S.S." The letters received have breathed the very spirit of Christ, and might have been written by Christians of the first century.

I doubt whether this glorious work in meeting human need could or would have been done by any other religious body in this country. The New Testament constitution of the Churches of Christ makes this possible.

Other religious bodies are burdened with large buildings, the one man ministry, the manse, the paid organist, etc, causing the continual round of money raising, much of it in ways not acceptable to God. They have a wrong sense of values, are too heavy, and have become centres for social intercourse and entertainment.

May the Churches of Christ ever retain New Testament simplicity in worship and giving, **and ever remember to meet human need first and always.** "Let nothing be done through vain glory," but to the praise of our Lord and Master. And let us ever remember

"We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
And we believe Thy word,
Though dim our faith may be;
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
We do it unto Thee.

My warmest thanks to the Editor for generous allowance of space. No doubt some gifts will yet arrive, especially from abroad. These will be acknowledged and handed over.

A. L. FRITH.

We have checked the receipts and find the amount shown above is correct.—Leslie F. Taylor, Eric Winter, Officers, Cleveleys Church.

Dear Friends,—We desire to express our heartfelt thanks to all who have so wonderfully helped us in a time of crisis, and as a result of the appeal in this magazine. Words cannot express all we think and feel. Our gratitude is profound, and we fervently thank God for such love and unspeakable kindness.

This has been in "full measure, pressed down, and running over." The loving sympathy shown to us, & the application of practical Christianity in our time of need, will never be forgotten by

STANLEY V. DIXON.
HANNAH DIXON.
MARGARET DIXON.

The Lord's Supper

Dear Editor,—In January "S.S." (p.8) quoting from *Westminster Bible Commentary*, you ask the question, "Why partake of the Lord's Supper in the morning?" but you leave the quotation to supply a rather uncertain answer. *Must we 'get rid of our modern idea of observing Sunday by gatherings at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.'?* Did the early Christians gather together on Saturday evening, as the quotation suggests? One can "sup" at any time of day, not just in the evening.

Pliny wrote to Trojan, about 106 A.D., describing Christians who were 'accustomed to meet on a stated day before it was light and sing in concert a hymn of praise to Christ as God,' and later the same day to 're-assemble to eat in common a harmless meal.' Undoubtedly the feast of remembrance was on Sunday. If the disciples at Troas met on Saturday evening (which is not absolutely certain) they were beginning the Lord's Day (by Jewish reckoning) with worship. If we meet on Lord's Day morning we do the same thing (by modern reckoning) and run no risk of drifting to Seventh Day worship. R. A. HILL.

[Bro. Hill, in his closing sentence, makes exactly the point we had intended in the quotation. We are sorry we did not drive it home with greater force.—Ed.]

Bible School Work

Arising from Bro. Lodge's article, "About Bible School Work," in December "S.S.," Sis. A. Sprake, of the church at Hereford, writes: "I have been suggesting for some time that we should have a school for the young here in Hereford, but have seen that it is quite easy to get going on wrong lines, and not so easy to change to right lines afterwards . . . I looked eagerly in this month's (January) 'S.S.' for the views of the brethren, which you had invited, and was very disappointed that the whole subject seems to have been dropped. . . ."

"I think we must regard our children as sinners in need of a Saviour. Adam and Eve sinned, and being sinners could only give birth to a race of sinners—they could only produce their kind. Nevertheless, I think children could be led to the throne of Grace by a believer and taught

to pray, suitable prayers—giving thanks for food, shelter, clothing, flowers, trees, beauty, parents, friends, books, the Book; petitions that they may be . . . kind and sympathetic to those around them and obedient to their parents and teachers. And I think they could be encouraged to sing carefully selected hymns: those which tell a Bible story, like "There were ninety and nine", 'A little ship was on the sea', . . . and the chorus "The wise man built his house upon the rock"

" . . . It is not children, as children, who are 'of the Kingdom', but those (adults) who resemble little children in certain respects; and the next verse makes clear in what respects adults who wish to enter the Kingdom are to resemble children. They are to receive God's gifts with gratitude, humility and faith, knowing that they have not earned anything but death—the wages of sin—but that God gives all good gifts, even life itself, because He loves, just as their fathers gave them gifts because they loved them.

"I learn from a friend here who meets with the "stricter brethren" that they used to have a 'Sunday School' but gave it up because they believed 'the lambs should feed with the sheep.' What do you think about that? . . . A. SPRAKE."

SCRIPTURE READINGS

4—Judges 13.	Acts—10 23b—48.
11—Psalm 2.	11 1—18.
18—Isaiah 62.	11 19—30.
25—Daniel 6 1—24.	12.

The Case of Cornelius

That this is a very important event in the history of the early church there can be no doubt. That we appreciate this sufficiently may well be doubted because we have grown up in a society where every kind of religious belief is tolerated. Within the British Commonwealth of nations in particular, and of course in the United States of America, the idea of religious freedom has flourished. This is good, for persecution and religious bigotry never did any good, nor ever won a soul for Christ. There is of course a tolerance that is wrong, through which disunity and disaster have come into and still do come into the church. Failure to "contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered", and failure to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" indicate where and how intolerance is necessary (Jude 3; 1 Cor. 5:13).

True love of God demands discipline in the church.

But in the world of Peter and the other Apostles chosen during the Saviour's ministry, there was one division of society—Jew and Gentile. It was a division of divine origin, and therefore absolutely right. God called His own people out of "Egypt" and separated them to Himself. The promises and prophecies of the Messiah indicated a reversal of this, but this side of their salvation was hidden from the Jewish rabbis by their self-righteous and selfish attitude to the Law. Jesus has made plain in His final commission the worldwide nature of the gospel, but again this side of the commission was hidden from the disciples until it was very specially and miraculously revealed by the case of Cornelius. It would seem that in the meantime some of the Jewish converts, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who had lived among Gentiles all their lives, reached the truth about this matter before Peter, seeing that they had been scattered by the persecution which followed the death of Stephen (Acts 11 20 & 21), but we cannot be certain of this as their extending the Word to the Greeks may have followed the events recorded in Acts 10, though recorded after them.

We shall miss the point of the vision granted to Peter on the housetop when he was praying and became hungry if we do not look over the instructions given through Moses about clean and unclean meats. See Lev. 11:2—47; Deut. 14 4—20. and Mark 7 19 R.V. (the last indicating what became afterwards clear to those who heard Jesus speak). God's requirements in this matter do not represent an arbitrary regulation, but a rule to prevent the fatal failure of the Jews to keep themselves separate from their Gentile neighbours, and so keep clean. There was but one way for a Gentile to get close to God—joining himself unreservedly to the Jewish nation by circumcision and by observance of the Law. The same is exactly true in relation to becoming a Christian today save that the law of entry is by faith, repentance and baptism, and the submission is to the law of Christ, not the Law of Moses. So in the vision God commanded Peter to disobey the Law of Moses. So far there had not been that break with Judaism which was completed when the Temple at Jerusalem was finally destroyed in 70 A.D. The prejudices of generations were already cancelled in Christ—the veil of the Temple already rent in twain, but Jews brought into the new relationship with God had not thrown off all the shackles clinging to them through their human weaknesses. Is it the most wonderful thing about the early church that the shackles were so soon removed, and the strongest advocate of this freedom was

Paul who so sincerely and strongly held to them before this conversion?

In last month's notes we saw Ananias reluctant and even argumentative against a divine voice. Here we see Peter defying a voice from heaven. Lot had almost to be dragged out of Sodom, "the Lord being merciful to him", so God has to save us in spite of our obstinacy, and men are still divided and arguing whether it is necessary to obey a plain commandment "unto remission of sins", and reluctant to give up things which are shot through with folly and wickedness like taking alcoholic liquor, indulging in selfish habits, spending the Lord's Day in their own pleasure, and introducing doubtful expedients into God's service. But God's ways are kind and gracious. He emphasised His command and explained it thrice, and His servant "thought on" it, and received further instruction lest he should still doubt the rightness of his disobedience to Moses.

The picture of Cornelius is a delight to dwell upon. Here is a Roman—a thoroughly heathen race; a soldier—not an innocent profession. Yet he is a devout man—we Christians can learn something from this word—a generous man, a man who feared God. His influence was felt around. His household also feared God, his friends and his kinsmen were also prepared to listen to the Word of God with respect and a readiness to obey it. We rejoice to see Peter's complete acceptance of God's way, and surely it rejoiced his heart to find such ready respect and reverence in this Gentile meeting. How it contrasts with the rage of the rulers of the Jews, the murderous designs of the elders of his own people! There is a wonderful joy in coming into the company of those who love God. The brief record of Peter's words indicates that the facts about the Lord Jesus' life were well known, but so far no one had conveyed the truth of the gospel to those who were outside the covenant of the promise (according to Jewish views). Now the listeners gladly hear the news of forgiveness through a Saviour crucified, but raised, in their hearts accept the truth, and receive direct from God a miraculous manifestation of divine approval. No doubt thoughts and words of praise had often been theirs but the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak with eloquence the thanks and praise which filled their hearts. This gave proof, perhaps needed proof, to Peter that the same provision was made in the gospel for the Gentiles as for the Jews. The manifestation of divine favour, wonderful though it was, did not alter the requirements of God, and therefore they were baptized, thus fulfilling the will of God, and receiving the forgiveness of sins. No signs of grace or goodness in a man's life excuse him from obedience

or assure him of salvation; that is granted upon the assurances of God's word, not on what a man is or does—yet he must "walk in newness of life", and have "the Spirit of Christ, else "he is none of His".

We observe that man cannot reverence God without having a sincere sense of his own sinfulness. The more he loves and fears God the greater is his consciousness of sin. The devotion and godness of Cornelius made his longing for the divine favour and forgiveness all the more keen.

It was good that those in Jerusalem questioned and argued with Peter for what appeared to be his disobedience, for that would bring home to all who heard him the truth, which they must even more fully appreciate as time passed. He also would be greatly strengthened as he repeated the story of the revelation in all its details. It may be that some in the church remained obdurate and backward in their acceptance, but the sequel so far as the church as a whole was concerned brought joy and enlightenment, manifested in silence of consent, and praise to God, and the words, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." The joy we share with the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth is just like that. The vista opened up to the minds of those present on that occasion must have been wonderful indeed—"The whole wide world for Jesus, that should out watchword be". Our readings in this enthralling book continue the story of its fulfillment, and still today hearts are being opened, and lives changed, by the divine agency—the Word of God—by the foolishness of preaching. R. B. SCOTT.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bedminster.—It is with joy we report the baptism on January 29th of three more into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are Pat Britton, Sidney White, and Cyril Tanner, the last named having come out of the Church of Rome. Brethren pray for this brother, that he may be used of God to lead his wife to a like decision and be united not only by family ties but in the Faith also. He has need, and asks for, our prayers. It was also our pleasure, on Feb. 5th, to welcome into fellowship Ivor Phillips, already a baptized believer. We pray that all these will remain faithful until the end; that they may hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant" from the Lord they have now confessed.

F. W. WILLS.

Buckle.—The Church here rejoices again in seeing another soul won for Jesus. On Sunday, January 29th, we had the joy of hearing the good confession of Margaret, daughter of Bro. and Sister S. Hunter. She was buried in baptism with her Lord the same night. We thank God that the Gospel has not lost its power, and trust that our young sister may be steadfast in the faith. Brethren, pray for us as we pray for you, that we may preach a pure Gospel, and that we might hold fast to the faith that was "delivered unto the saints."

JOHN GEDDES.

Capetown (Woodstock).—On Lord's Day morning, 15th January, we were privileged to have with us Bro. and Sister Merritt and family, missionaries from Northern Rhodesia, at present taking care of the work of Grassy Park Church. Bro. Merritt addressed the meeting, pointing out the necessity, when once having put hand to the plough, for pressing on amid the many things which confront the Christian in his work.

On 28th January, a recording and colour pictures which I took of our Young People's anniversary on 3rd December, 1955, were shown. There were more than 60 in attendance. The whole programme served as an encouragement to Christians by Gospel messages, hymns and anthems, and as a witness to the glory of God, and we hope that it may have provoked interest in the hearts of the unsaved.

Our young people, in their co-operation, are an asset to the assembly here, for which we praise the Lord. To extend the Gospel they have formed groups in which some go to hospitals, others visit homes of the members on Lord's Day afternoons, and in other ways seek the extension of the Kingdom.

Since my release from commercial life to do full-time service for the Master, and through the prayers and co-operation of the brethren, there are prospects of souls being saved. Some of the friends contacted have opened their doors for the preaching of the Gospel. Pray for us, that God might supply our needs both physical and spiritual.

T. W. HARTLE.

Dewsbury.—We had been looking forward to the visit of Bro. Albert Winstanley on January 21st and 22nd. Unfortunately the weather was most severe and hindered many from being with us, and several of our own members were prevented by illness. We extend our thanks to those who "braved the elements". Despite the severe conditions the weekend was enjoyed by those present.

It is with real pleasure that we record the baptism of Edeltraut. She has been attending the meetings regularly since she came here from Germany.

with her sister Irminda, over four years ago. She had been a devoted Lutheran all her life. We earnestly pray that she may find joy in a fuller surrender.

R. McDONALD.

Holland; Haarlem.—We are pleased to read in *Holland Mission News*, November-December 1955, the report of a further baptism. On 5th January Bro. van Dracht obeyed the gospel.

Ikeston.—Again we have been made glad, and labourers in the school much encouraged, by the addition of five young people to the Church. On Wednesday, 25th January, we had the joy of baptising into Christ Margaret Keightley, Kathleen White, Wendy Gregory, Joseph Winfield and Gerald White. These were all given a welcome into Church fellowship on Lord's Day, 29th January. Another, whose baptism had to be delayed owing to an accident she had, will follow later when recovered. Difficult as work is these days among young, and after long and patient sowing of the good seed, we rejoice in these fruits of harvest. More so, because we see in these dear young people most valuable Church members and workers in years to come. May God richly bless them all.

S. JEPSON.

Slamannan.—With joy and gratitude we record another addition. On 25th January another of our Sunday School scholars, Margaret Harley, was immersed into Christ. The Church has been encouraged and we pray that our young convert may be richly blessed.

M. NEILSON.

Slamannan District.—The New Year social gathering was held in Blackridge Church meeting house on January 2nd, 1956, under the presidency of Bro. D. Dougall. The attendance again showed the desire of many to enjoy God's presence and each other's fellowship on the threshold of another year in the service of our Lord and Saviour. The large gathering included members from all the Churches in the Slamannan District, also from Peterhead and the Churches in Fife, and many non-members. Our thanks are due to the Blackridge brethren for the work carried out by them behind the scenes and to all those responsible for the success of the meeting. Bro. Dougall, in his remarks, wished one and all the compliments of the season and exhorted all to do the work of the Lord in the days that may lie ahead.

Bro. Wm. Steele, of Tranent, was our first speaker. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, a summary of his address has not come to hand and therefore cannot be given here.

After the usual interval during which everyone took the opportunity of talking

to each other, Bro. Crosthwaite, who was our other speaker, addressed us as only he can.

[We hope to publish an outline of his message in an early issue of the "S.S."—ED.]

We were favoured during the meeting with choir pieces from the Motherwell and Kirkcaldy choirs, and solos, a duet and trio by members of Blackridge, Motherwell, Slamannan and Peterhead Churches. All were much appreciated.

We look forward to a happy and prosperous year in the work of the Lord.

HUGH DAVIDSON.

OBITUARY

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—Our Sister Miss Elsie Keight fell asleep in Jesus on Monday, 13th February, after a long and painful illness. After being in several hospitals for operations she was sent to a nursing home where she stayed for about three months, but as there was obviously no improvement in her condition she expressed her wish to return to her home. This she did, and seemed more contented, but lasted only a fortnight. She was in her 67th year and had been a member of this church for nearly 49 years. She was ever a faithful member of the church, and most constant in attendance at all the means of grace whenever circumstances made it possible for her to be present. We shall miss her much but are glad her term of suffering is now passed.

FRED C. DAY.

Hereford.—It is with sorrow we report the death of Sis. Clara Sheppard on the 26th January 1956, in her own home, after a short illness. She was a native of Hereford and never left it except for the five years she spent at Schools for the Blind at Bath and Bristol, where she learned something of the "Light of the World". She was received into fellowship here in Oct. 1951, having been formerly immersed. She was an example to us all of patience, courage and fortitude. She was widowed four years ago, having lost her parents about forty years ago, and in spite of her disability she earned her own living by long hours of toil and retained her independence to the end of her 83 years. She had a good knowledge of God's word and very definite ideas of its meaning, but in our

discussions would never speak unless invited to, when she would state her views clearly and briefly. We commend her to a merciful and loving Saviour until that day when "this mortal shall put on immortality".

A. SPRAKE.

Ilkerton.—The Church, including many near and dear in the flesh as also in the Lord, mourn the sudden loss by the hand of death of a dear sister—Bertha Severn (née Gregory) wife of Bro. Albert Severn Sis. Severn passed from our midst suddenly after a long and trying illness on Saturday, 14th January. She suffered much and most patiently and heroically ministered to her family almost to the very last. Immersed in 1915, she was brought up in home and school to love, serve, and obey her Lord, and had patiently continued to do so. She had the joy of seeing her husband and family all in the Church and the advent of two grandchildren. Whenever there has been the need for a helping hand in the work of the Church, our sister was there to do what she could. We shall all miss her happy fellowship in the Church and her valued help. Our loving sympathy is extended especially to her devoted husband and family. Her mortal remains were laid to rest after service in our own meeting-house on the 18th January by Bro. A. E. Winstanley.

S. JEPSON.

Tunbridge Wells.—On Saturday, January 22nd, Brother Arthur Francis Steptoe departed this life, being seventy-five years of age.

Our brother became a member of this congregation in October of last year, having been formerly associated with a denomination for a number of years. We first met him when going "from house to house" teaching the truth. Our great impression of him then was that he was honestly seeking the truth. He invited us into his home to expound the Scriptures to him. It took him some time to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly, but when he did he embraced it—even though it meant breaking long associations. We honour his memory as one who loved the truth, and desired above all else to follow it.

During the past few months our brother suffered greatly. We rejoice that his sufferings are over. He was quite ready to pass into the Saviour's keeping—confident of a resurrection to life. We look forward to meeting him again. May we who remain keep faithful.

The funeral took place on Wednesday, January 25th, at Hawkenbury Cemetery, the writer officiating

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

COMING EVENTS

INCE (Wigan). Gospel Mission during April, 1956 (D.V) to be conducted by Bro. Andrew Gardiner. Meetings, Lord Days, 8 pm. Tuesdays; Thursdays; Saturdays: 7.30 pm. In the Co-operative Hall, Keble Street. Please remember this effort in your prayers.

An Important Conference

will be held, God willing,
on Saturday, March 31st, 1956

in the Meeting House at
Albert Street, Newtown, Wigan.

Conference: 2 p.m.

Subject: Evangelism—Ways and Means.

Tea: 4.30 p.m.

6.30 p.m.: The Gospel—The Way of
Salvation.

Speakers: John Pritt (Blackburn); A. E.
Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells).

A warm invitation is given to brethren
to attend and make this Conference a
great success.

Will individual members, church secre-
taries, and parties please notify us in
advance? This is important, to assist
in catering for tea.

Light refreshments will be provided
before the afternoon conference.

We will endeavour to give hospitality
to those intending to stay the week-end.
For accommodation please write early to:
James Barker, 33 Kimberley Street,
Wigan.

All other communications to the under-
signed, from whom tea tickets also can
be obtained: Walter Smith, 262 Scot
Lane, Newtown, Wigan.

HINDLEY BIBLE SCHOOL.

Saturday May 19th to Thursday May
24th 1956 (God willing). Early Morning
Prayer Meetings; Lectures on The Holy
Spirit; Forums on The Qualifications
and Work of Elders and Deacons, and
their Selection and Appointment for
Office. "Questions Answered"; Discus-
sions on Forums; Open Air Services;
Gospel Services. Mountain Top Experi-
ences. Happy Fellowship. Write for hos-
pitality to Tom Kemp, 52 Argyle Street,
Hindley, Lancs. Further particulars
from L. Morgan, "Glen-Iris", 44 Lord
Street, Hindley, Lancs.

FRANKFURT (GERMANY) LECTURE-
SHIP

Will any desiring to take part in a trip
to the Continent this year for the above
event please communicate with Ralph
Limb, 36 Percy Street, Eastwood, Notts.,
as soon as possible.

This year the trip will be for two weeks
and will include a visit to as many Euro-
pean congregations as possible.

RALPH LIMB.

BOUND VOLUMES. 1954-55.

The printer is able to bind 30 Volumes
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If you have not already placed an order
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Dec., 1955. Received from Reading Post
Mark the sum of Three Pounds (£3).
—W. Steele.

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

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