

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Hold the Fort!

I REMEMBER a brother in the church once telling me of his being in a shop and hearing a woman holding forth about the "virtues" of her husband. This husband didn't drink, didn't go to the pictures, didn't smoke, didn't go to football matches and didn't do most of the things that in those days were reckoned as worldly. "Very good," thought the hearer, ; "but I wonder what the man does do and where he does go."

Negative and Positive

We say "Amen" to the belief that Christians should keep from the habits and pleasures from which this man abstained. We are all better and deeper consecrated saints of God by keeping from "all appearance of evil", from those things which use talents, time, effort and money, without profit. But that is the negative side of the Christian's walk. There is also the positive side.

Holiness and service consist not only in what we refrain from but in what we do and with what motive, and where we go. "We are (all those grand things pointed out in 1 Peter 2) that we may show forth God's virtues, who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." We are saved from and saved to. On the negative side we are to "put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life . . . and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." We are to "put off" and "put on": to discard, cast away, on the one hand and on the other hand to put on the garment of Christ's righteousness. "Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon," writes Paul in 2 Cor. 5.

In the Moody & Sankey evangelistic missions in the 1870s and 1880s one of the most popular hymns, sung with great gusto, was "Hold the fort, for I am coming." Rousing and enthusiastic though this hymn is, it is not a sufficient picture of the spiritual welfare of God's soldiers. We are servants of God not simply to maintain and preserve the church in the world, but to do all we can to save the world by bringing men and women to Christ.

To "hold the fort" is to give an imperfect impression of the church's purpose. It draws a false picture of the church beset on every side by her enemies. We do not find today that we are attacked or persecuted by the powers of the world (it might be better for us if we were). It is "respectable" and moral to be a Christian. "Christianity" is accepted as part of the civilisation we live in, part of the order of things. Rather than our "holding the fort" against attackers of the Bible and of God, we are ignored, not taken seriously. We are too insignificant to trouble our enemies, we are treated with indifference.

What Christ wants of the Church

In contrast with this, what picture does Jesus Christ draw of His church? He said of it that "the gates of hades would not prevail against it." A moment's thought will show that this is a completely opposite depiction of the church. She is not set on the defensive; she is not in an embattled fortress attempting to fight off her attackers. But she is taking the offensive: she is marching against the powers of the devil, sin and death, assaulting their gates. She is taking the battle to the enemy. True, this is the church as her Founder and Saviour saw her, an idealistic view, a prophetic picture, which, because He said it, would come to pass—"the gates of hades shall not prevail against it."

True, we are to "keep the faith", maintain it pure and unswayed as at its origin. But this very faith itself is a keeping and a saving faith. The apostle who could claim with absolute truth, "I have kept the faith" was the chief means of that faith being spread "to every nation under heaven" in his time.

"There is that scattereth, yet it increaseth; and there is that withholdeth, but it tendeth only to poverty" (Prov. 11: 24), or, as the Rev. Stand. Vers. renders the passage, "One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." Wise old Solomon was not counselling prudence or caution, but was glorying in the truth that giving and spreading good things liberally brings multiplied blessings upon the giver.

Guarding the Faith and Spreading It

We can be so concerned that we maintain purity of teaching and rightness of practice that we lose sight of the fact that the gospel and the joys of the Christian are for all, and that we are responsible for making known this news. Paul, who was the foremost in his writings and teaching to "keep the faith", ever realised the debt he was under to Christ to preach the gospel. "Necessity is laid upon me: woe to me if I preach not the gospel." This zeal he imbued into those he had won to Christ, glorying in the fact that through them the good news had been made known through the world. Those first Christians "went everywhere preaching the word." They did not wait until times were more opportune, until the right season. We so often pray or desire to speak a word "in season" to those without the gospel, when Paul's exhortation to Timothy is to "preach the word, in season, out of season." We wait so long before mentioning spiritual things, until the time is ripe, and so often convince ourselves that the time is not ripe yet. Only last Lord's Day we were warned against this in the words of The Preacher: "He who observes the wind will not sow; and he who regards the clouds will not reap . . . In the morning sow your seed, and in evening withhold not your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good" (Eccl. 11: 4-6). So often we wait for a more favourable opportunity, which may never come, to bring to a soul his need of a Saviour, and the fulfilling of that need in Jesus Christ. Only eternity will reveal how many have perished outside of Christ because I, we, did not tell them about Him; how many have remained unbaptised, and have therefore never become Christ's own, because I, we, waited for a more favourable opportunity to bring this teaching to them.

Christ Working Through Us

"This treasure we have in earthen vessels." The Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25: 14-30) is a wonderful prophetic foretelling of how the treasures which God commits to men would be used. When the master gave his servants talents, he entrusted them with what was his: it was not theirs, except to do the greatest good possible with it. Some let the talents do the work they were fitted to do, trading, buying and selling until they had brought forth double. But the anxious and cautious third servant would not let the talent work: he was afraid of risking it and losing it. He thought of his own position rather than the power to increase which lay in the talent if it were permitted to work. So he hid his talent in the ground. Jesus said "He who loses his life for my sake shall save it; and he who saves his life shall lose it unto life eternal." The master on his return showed this timid servant that a talent hidden is a talent useless. That which should have been returned to the master with fruit borne by it had failed to produce any in not having been used. And a terrible fate was pronounced upon the "wicked and slothful servant".

This is severe judgement. In the words of Christ Himself not to use what in the gospel has been entrusted to us is to be without excuse, "wicked and slothful". This servant misjudged his master as being harsh, implacable, merciless, demanding. Yet he had not thrown away his talent nor wasted it, like the prodigal, in riotous living, nor robbed his master. He had simply done nothing with that which was his master's. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

To be an unprofitable servant, to merit eternal condemnation, we need not oppose God, defy Christ, blaspheme the Holy Spirit, ridicule the things of God, or persecute His cause. All we need do is simply to neglect: "how shall we escape if we neglect. . . ?" (Heb. 2: 3).

To the humblest of us, according to ability, God entrusts His talents. That which He gives us is His revelation, the gospel, the faith, the graces of His Spirit. According to those abilities and opportunities we have—wealth, reputation, learning—we are able to use these divine gifts and powers. As those servants were commended, and were given the privilege of entering into the joy of their Lord

for their faithful use of the things of God, so we, while our Master and Lord is absent, are to allow those powers to work. And He will make "a little one into a thousand". "What are these among so many?" asked Andrew of Jesus when the lad brought his tiny stock of loaves and fishes to the Master. Yet, yielded to His hands, Jesus took simply that which was given and made it a mighty blessing to the thousands. And, in some measure, He will do so with us.

EDITOR

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOVEMBER 1965

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|-------------------|---------------|
| 7—Isaiah 58 | Luke 14:15-35 |
| 14—Daniel 9:3-19 | Luke 15 |
| 21—1 Kings 3:1-15 | Luke 16:1-18 |
| 28—Deut. 15:1-18 | Luke 16:19-31 |

EXCUSES

(Luke 14:18-20)

YES! We all make them, or have made them. The more we sin, the more excuses we make—or shall we rid our souls of such folly? The prodigal son did not make any, he admitted his sinfulness without excuse. His motive was clear. Excuses dull the conscience and encourage us to go on sinning, or to avoid a path of duty. However they do at least manifest a consciousness of sin, and that can lead to sorrow for it and repentance—a change of action. If not, we get hardened.

Jesus was at a meal in the house of a Pharisee on a Sabbath day. He had not refused the invitation although it seems the motive of the host was subject to suspicion (see 11:53 and 54). Some were there watching for word or action for which the guest could be condemned. A little later Jesus ate with publicans and sinners (15:2). Where there was opportunity to teach, there Jesus went. Bad company is not good for folk but Jesus was good for bad company!

On this occasion Jesus was taking opportunity to teach several lessons. He first taught that the Sabbath day was not an excuse for escaping duties of human love and sympathy (14:1-5). Secondly, He warned against pushing oneself forward—self-exaltation (14:8-11). Thirdly, He reminded the host that hospitality given "with a view to the main chance"—hoping for a return invitation—or for personal satisfaction only, was not the best. It carried its own reward. There was something much better with quite priceless reward (14:12-14).

One of the guests at least recognised the honour of eating with Jesus, and expressed his thought of that future joy which Jesus preached—"the kingdom of God is at hand," when there would indeed be feasting of superlative quality. Jesus had just said "Call to the feast those who are handicapped and cannot

pay or repay, and thou shalt be blessed." The Jewish conception of the kingdom was alas a worldly one in which Jews had preeminence and to which they were entitled. Hence the Saviour's warning in the form of a parable.

The invited guests in the parable were of course the Jews. This was their prerogative. Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—not that they would have been pleased with the title. They considered their temple and their observances constituted righteousness, though they were mistaken; but it remained true that they had the divine invitation first. They had the most wonderful opportunity of hearing, seeing and believing the Christ, their longed-for Messiah. What a priceless privilege it was! Think of all His glorious work of teaching and healing in their very midst. Yet He had to say those fearful words of doom (10:13-15) concerning the most privileged towns—fulfilled in literal physical ruin long ago. There His multiplied miracles were done.

So this story was a very plain warning to host and guests in full view—so to speak—of their deliberate and persistent rejection of His person and His teaching, glad though they were of His work. Some of those present were engaged in making excuses in their hearts though not in their immediate actions. They were dining with Him and listening to His words, but the change of heart involved in acceptance of His way was not there. It may be we have the same fault in our midst, manifest to take an example, in the pious resolutions passed by religious bodies in times of peace but forgotten or put aside in times of war. We have had this in two world wars—persons becoming recruiting agents for the armed forces. Deception, too, practised by professing Christians.

So, when it came to the time, those invited guests, found excuses to avoid attendance. Not one was valid or genuine. The field could just as well have been viewed after the feast. The oxen could just as easily have been tested later. The wife could have waited and been just as well treated. No! They did not want to go, the feast was not to their taste. So the Jews did not want the holy and sublime teaching of Christ. It required, and does still, self-denial, continued effort, consecration to God, holiness and purity of life. The Jews who rejected the Saviour wanted material benefit and comfort.

God's yearning for the hearts of men must be fulfilled, and His church was to be filled with those without qualification in Jewish eyes. The feast was prepared. Those who had the first opportunity did not taste the good things. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him He gave power to become His sons." (John 1:11 and 12).

R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

"THREE COVENANTS"

Dear Brother Melling.—I have just received the September issue of the "S.S." and have read a criticism by Brother Worgan on Isaiah 24:5. The title, "Three Covenants," and the subtitle were not supplied by me.

My article was written, as stated, to prove that the everlasting covenant spoken of by the prophet is a prophecy concerning the near end of the gospel age. This necessitated an examination of existing everlasting covenants at the time of his writing.

I found there were three everlasting covenants at that time. I only dealt with these three covenants to show that none of them had their ordinance changed.

Brother Worgan does make the admission that there are prophecies in Isaiah which are Messianic. Isaiah 55 verse 3 is one clear Messianic prophecy. The Apostle Paul when preaching at Antioch (Acts 13:34) said it was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Since Isaiah 55:3 is a Messianic prophecy, will Brother Worgan tell us what everlasting covenant the prophet is speaking of in chapter 24 verse 5, seeing that it cannot refer to the Noahic, Abrahamic or the Mosaic, covenants?

Brother Worgan speaks of "Historical setting." Surely I have supplied that. I then pointed out that there is only one other everlasting covenant spoken of in the Bible, and it is found mentioned in Hebrews 13:20. With regard to my mentioning the terms "perpetual" and "forever," as found in Exodus 31:16, 17, he has not read my remarks thereon with care, for I showed that the meaning of "perpetual" and "forever" was the same as "everlasting."

It is true that my purpose in dealing with this question of breaking the everlasting covenant was to show that to change the ordinance intimately joined to the covenant is to break the covenant. Brother Worgan of course sees this quite well. This troubles him and gives him great perplexity. He speaks of "oversimplification" of this problem. Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is per-

fect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Paul in 32 Corinthians 11: speaks of the simplicity which is in Jesus Christ. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

The practice of individual cups in connection with the Lord's feast is an innovation of comparatively recent times. It had its beginnings in a sectarian church. It did not emanate from the Lord and His Apostles. Isaiah 2:3 says "... for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The practice of individual cups did not come from Jerusalem. It originated in the United States of America.

The unity of the Church on this question is indeed a simple one. It only requires putting away the individual cups and resorting to the primitive order. The prophet Isaiah tells us how it is done. "... cease to do evil; learn to do well. ..." (Isaiah 1:16, 17).

It is true that we do not find the expression "common cup" in the New Testament, but the thought is certainly there. 1 Cor. 10:16 teaches: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" We know the Lord handed a cup to the disciples telling them all to drink of it, and we are told that they all drank of it. It is this same cup that the Lord declared to be "the new testament in my blood."

With regard to a congregation which requires two or more cups, the same principle is followed. In recent letters to the "S.S." I noted that a brother has dealt with this aspect of the question.

To give our Brother Worgan a good conscience on this, we refer him to another ordinance given by God to the children of Israel which it was physically impossible for some to fulfil. In this case, the Lord gave a law that might be called a law of accommodation. I refer to Exodus 12:3-4. "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house; and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Thus we see that in keeping the Lord's appointments common sense prevails.

With respect to the bread on the Lord's table. I believe that only unleavened bread should be used. Not only because

the Lord and His Apostles used it when the feast was instituted, but because we notice, in 1 Cor. 5:8, the Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian church to "... keep the feast ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "Unleavened bread" here is used by him in a figure of speech, but he could never have used that figure of speech unless unleavened bread was used at the Lord's table. This, of course, is what is called a necessary inference.

The same thing applied to the keeping of the feast on the first day of the week. There is no specific command from the Lord or His Apostles to meet for the breaking of bread on the first day of the week. We have, of course, the example of the Church at Troas, and to us an example is to be followed. May I note here what Paul says to the Church at Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17) "... who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every Church." It is teaching that is required among the Churches.

As in the case of unleavened bread, so also respecting the cup. It is by necessary inference we know that it contained the fruit of the vine. Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that it was or should be grape juice. This should be noted by brethren. The grape vine is not common in every country. Some climates are unsuitable for its cultivation, but they can grow other vines such as Brother Worgan mentions, black currant etc. Therefore black currant or similar fulfils the condition. The Lord in His wisdom has wisely provided in this way.

I am surprised that Brother Worgan should ask of me, "Where I think these congregations stand in relation to the Lord? Have they broken the everlasting covenant?" I would ask him to read 1 Corinthians 4. The same Apostle says that he will know the proof of us if we be obedient in all things (2 Cor. 2:9): "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things." And to this end, another word from the Apostle, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; 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" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

I trust that I have handled this subject reverently and consistently.

SAM WILSON.

"WHITHER NOW"

Dear Bro. Melling,—Bro. Slate's letter would arouse much sympathy from a generous and kind-hearted brotherhood, were it not for the indisputable fact that he has altered the commandment

of the Lord. This alone deprives any who claim allegiance to our Lord and King from showing tolerance to any who reject His commands, in order to give precedence to the vain traditions of man. If our brother were able to show us in any way, however slight, scriptural support for this unscriptural practice, we could be excused for sympathising with his unenviable and altogether untenable position. Until he can do this, to mention scripture is farcical. Jesus (not I) would have called it hypocrisy. The apostle John in his second epistle: 6. says: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments." Here we are enjoined, also challenged, do we love God? Or do we love the vain traditions of man, which contains no reward, only punishment for wrong-doing whilever it opposes His perfect will.

Our brother speaks of the fruits of his labours. If I described those fruits with truth and candour I may be charged with making unloving comments. This I wish to avoid, leaving all to consider the matter in the light of His precious truth. Let us be more and yet more obedient to His will, not to man and his vain traditions.

J. A. GREGORY.

"WHITHER NOW?"

Dear Brother Editor,—Brother Slate's letter in last month's "S.S." refers to remarks of mine and I shall be glad if you will give one opportunity to make a few comments.

Our brother complains about the inadequacy of the columns of the "S.S." in which to conduct a controversy or state a belief, and thinks so little of it that he "hopes that its value for edification does not have to be proven." I believe the tolerance and good manners displayed in these columns by the brethren participating in a difference of views compares more than favourably with that shown in many debates in the U.S.A.—debates in which it is sometimes difficult to believe members of the Lord's body are involved.

Brother Slate should know that controversy is seldom edifying, and perhaps least of all in the U.S.A. Britain may be looked upon as a "mission field" by the churches in America and evangelists may be sent over to bolster up us backward brethren, but surely we should be allowed the intelligence to conduct a controversy amongst ourselves. Other brethren can express themselves in the "S.S." and I fail to see why Brother Slate should regard himself to be different in any sense. I also fail to see the need for any special arrangements in discussion in this matter, and I am sure the subject of discussion is not as complex as our brother would have us suppose. I doubt greatly if we would hear anything we had not heard before.

Indeed, many of those brethren present at the public discussion at Slamannan recently, between brothers Jess and Porter, were no doubt intrigued, if not amazed, to hear that sanction for individual containers was based apparently on the idea that if we propose to stick scrupulously to the New Testament and use one cup at the Lord's table we must, in the name of consistency, meet in an upper room, wash feet, give up meeting in church buildings, give up Sunday schools and always immerse in running water: as no-one can insist on always baptising in running water no-one can insist on having one cup. I see no feature in the controversy which requires any special treatment or arrangements.

My remarks about brother Slate being able to justify immersion in a quarter of one column I repeat. There is a wealth of scripture authorising immersion and it could be printed in a quarter column. This of course was the whole point of the remark—a point which our brother seems to have missed. Due to his lack of scriptural support he must insist on more space in which to "reason" individual containers into existence. Without scripture his task is a delicate one and so I repeat my suggestion to him that he could justify immersion in a tiny fraction of the space he will require to make individual containers a New Testament practice. I can well understand why the adoption of "containers" by a congregation is preceded by a long course of "study" by a proficient evangelist.

I did not say that all questions raised by a half-witted affusionist (an unfortunate term) could be answered in a quarter column, as our brother seems to suggest. The bible is profoundly silent upon the use of individual containers and if we claim to subscribe to the slogan "that where the Bible is silent we are silent" we should in all honesty remain silent as well. Let's give up the practice or give up the slogan. The N.T. does tell us to contend earnestly for "the faith once delivered to the saints." I ask our brother if his practice is part of this faith or was ever delivered to the saints."

I ask our brother if his practice is part of this faith or was ever delivered to the saints? If it was not, then I suggest he should not contend for it. For myself I find it difficult to see how it can possibly be argued that a practice which is man-made and only eighty years or as old can be part of that faith, or that an idea (albeit lucrative) conceived in the brain of a Presbyterian "minister" can in any way be regarded as apostolic or as the will of God. It surely is indeed strange that the N.T. should be invoked to substantiate such a practice and perhaps we are drifting

away from our fundamentalism and adopting the outlook of "seeing that all things are made according to the (American) pattern."

I wonder why brother Slate should refer us to his personal excellence amongst the churches—his obvious fine personal qualities have never been in question, certainly not in my mind, and I have no doubt that the churches he mentions can speak well of his "fruits." However no-one can fail to be conscious of the fact that the presence here of our American brethren, and the financial support they supply, has been responsible for another kind of fruit amongst many of the brethren in this country—I mean of course the bitter fruit of discord, distress and disunity. This may be something which is of little consequence to our visitors (and indeed seems to be) but it is of infinite importance to most of the brethren in this country, especially perhaps the older brethren, who all their lives have laboured, doubtless slowly, to build what churches there are.

I do hope that when our visitors assess their progress and rejoice over their successes they may be unselfish enough to recall what it all has cost, not themselves but others, in terms of happiness, brotherliness and progress.

If this correspondence has been in the "S.S." tradition and therefore perhaps unedifying I am sure it has accomplished one thing—it has placed upon permanent record the complete cause of the present divided situation—something which could be vulnerable to some distortion at a later date. I bear no-one any animosity whatsoever but must say how regrettable it is that the bond of love and understanding, the existence of which is frequently given expression to by our visitors and described as being strong, is unfortunately not strong enough to permit the laying aside of what is freely admitted to be a "mere personal preference," in the cause of that same Christian love and in the keeping of the Lord's body in unity and in the bond of peace.

JAMES R. GARDINER.

"WHITHER NOW?"

Dear Bro. Melling,—Bro. Slate now claims that he has been misquoted and misrepresented, and that his sentences have been torn apart with evil intent. Since this is the case, it will be necessary for me to ask you to print the full text of his sentences with the hope that I shall not then be accused of taking these sentences out of the context of his letters. I would point out that each phrase, sentence, and each article can only be interpreted in the wider context of this whole controversy—a fact that Bro. Slate seems to have overlooked.

I would refer again to his statement in the March issue (par. 4): "Many brethren who accept the plural-container position, including the writer, are willing and ready to discuss or debate, publicly or privately, orally or in writing, the container question." I understood from the eight possible combinations of this statement that Bro. Slate was personally willing and prepared to debate this issue in public, and I asked him (May issue) to state his proposition. In June issue he writes, "Notwithstanding my expressed unwillingness to meet this issue (i.e. the number of containers on the table) via the 'S.S.' correspondence column, I am virtually being called upon to do so." If this statement was not an answer to the offer made in the preceding issue—to debate the matter publicly—he has in fact given no answer.

Thinking brethren will naturally want to know, and will be asking why. So far as I know, no-one has asked Bro. Slate to debate via the columns of the "S.S.," although he has been asked to produce a few of the "facts" he keeps referring to. We have been waiting for these facts for years. Why are they not forthcoming? What about the brief article which would suffice to explain the scriptural permissibility (authority) for more than one container? If Bro. Slate can produce any real evidence of this kind this controversy would be terminated. But where is this evidence?

I again refer to para. 4 of his March letter, together with the final sentence of para. 3, in which he gives his reasons why he would need such a lot of space in the "S.S." He states, "Therefore I suggest that some arrangement be made for fuller discussion of the issue, **primarily by representative men on both sides.**" He now states, "Nor can anything I have written be fairly regarded as a call for a "conference," especially since I deny the validity of a conference to solve church problems." But how does Bro. Slate propose to have discussions by representative men on both sides if they are not to come together in conference? In view of the foregoing, it would be interesting to know precisely what Bro. Slate has against a conference.

Bro. Slate is caught in a web of confusion and self-contradiction of his own making. The harder he struggles to extricate himself, the deeper he sinks in the morass. If this is what he proposes to offer in defence of an anti-scriptural practice, I, and I am sure many brethren, stand firmly opposed to the precious space of the columns of the "Scripture Standard" being used for this purpose.

Meanwhile, if he is still prepared and willing to face this issue squarely in public, the opportunity to do so is still open. I therefore ask him again to state his proposition for consideration.

JOHN M. WOOD.

STOP!

DEAR Brother Editor,—Having read during the past months in the columns of "Scripture Standard," the many and varied articles under the general heading "Whither Now?" I think it is time we said STOP!

On the heading of this magazine it says "Pleading for a complete return to Christianity as it was in the beginning." How can we justify this aim when we allow articles that cause dissension and disunity to appear with alarming regularity? For cause dissension and disunity they do! Quite recently a young brother has had the seeds of doubt planted in his mind by the advocacy of the UN-Scriptural and ANTI-Scriptural practice of using individual containers at the Lord's Supper. Would our Lord feel it right that His people should squabble over the way in which they remember Him?

It is nothing short of abominable that Christian brethren professing to uphold the principle of speaking only where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent, should be allowed to voice in public in a Christian paper such totally unfounded ideas, and it is a great pity that those who stick solely to the Scripture teaching should find it necessary to reply by trying to justify their own practices. They have no need to justify, explain, excuse or defend themselves in what they do, if it is done only according to God's word.

Let those who do not have this foundation justify themselves, BUT ONLY within their own hearts and their own assemblies. Not by calling for open discussions with other Christians, for it would seem from recent correspondence, that they are not only trying to convince others of the rightness of their actions, but themselves also.

I am not trying to hide this issue. IT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN RAISED. Those responsible should take account of their situation and responsibility lest any man should cause a brother to stumble.

Any constructive discussion on God's word by Christians is a great blessing to all, but a personalized slanging match is a disgrace to those bearing the name.

The correspondence on the subject "Whither Now" has degenerated to this level—the lowest it could go, and so I call from my heart, a cry echoed I am sure by many Brethren much older in the faith than I: let us say STOP! Let us say it in the largest print available to this paper, and let us say it from our hearts. Then let us read anew the Word of God, no matter how many times we have read it before, and ask ourselves this question—AM I RIGHT WITH GOD? S. F. EVILL

[Yes. With these letters the correspondence "Whither Now?" can fittingly close. The controversy has been carried on for several months, in addition to the articles and letters for and against individual cups which were published in the "S.S" in 1960.

Full liberty has been given to the various views in the correspondence. Some readers think it has continued for too long, or even that the subject should never have been opened at all. The controversy has caused much heartache among those concerned for the church in these parts. But we feel that it has been worth it. We cannot agree that the pages of the "S.S." should never have been open to the expression of views on this topic. The issues involved are far too serious to be glossed over, or treated as though they do not exist. Strong feelings constantly simmer beneath the surface, due to the ill-advised ignoring by our American brethren of the deep feelings of their brethren here on such matters.

In our view those favouring the use of individual cups at the Lord's table have failed to produce necessary justification for the practice—justification from the New Testament. It would have been better in this and in all similar matters, to have demanded scripture example or room for the practice. It can never be anything but right to do what the Lord Christ did at His table. Onus of proof to the contrary lies upon those introducing different practices.

The chief good that has come out of the correspondence is that the views expressed are now in print for any to read. As Bro. Gardiner writes, they form a record for time to come of who introduced division and how, and the protests of brethren who simply adhered to the Scripture pattern.

We fear that at times the correspondence has got somewhat heated. But it cannot be said that it has diffused "more heat than light", for, harsh words apart, there is no doubt where the facts and truth of this issue lie.

We make a further appeal to our American brethren to remove this contentious practice, and take at least this step towards that outward and inward unity we all desire. Even one step at a time is a move in the right direction.

EDITOR]

Training for Service

3: NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATIONS

BY far the greatest part of what we teach and preach will be based upon the New Testament scriptures. This is necessarily so, for they are the writings of the New Covenant which God has made with His people. The Old Covenant has passed away, having been fulfilled in the New (Jerem. 31: 31-34; Heb. 8: 8-12). The New Testament scriptures are the New Covenant scriptures. The Old Covenant scriptures applied to the Jewish people, God's people under that covenant. The New Covenant scriptures apply now to all, Jew or Gentile, apart from race, colour, nationality, status or sex (Gal. 3: 26-29). Their message is for today, and it is we who are to deliver that message.

We must therefore be familiar with the N.T.; we must understand its plan and contents. We must read and study it constantly, and in as many translations as we can. We shall often find that the best commentary on scripture is scripture itself: we can best understand scripture by comparing it with scripture. As Cowper wrote in another setting: "God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain." To compare translations is to be more sure of the correctness of the passage of scripture on which we are speaking. The great preacher and expositor G. Campbell Morgan used to impress upon students, "Always be sure that you are working upon a correct text." It is possible to speak upon a passage and give an exposition which does not render the meaning the writer had; or even to preach eloquently upon a text which is not found in the original scriptures!

We will understand, then, the reason for devoting this whole lesson to the subject of New Testament Translations.

Since 1900 almost all these translations have been in modern speech, or what we might term "popular everyday English". They have been numerous, too many even to mention in this lesson. We therefore select a few of the more popular, which on the whole have proved their accuracy and worth to Bible students and preachers.

TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT 1902. About twenty translators collaborated in producing this version. They were not linguists or scholars, but men from various walks of life who had as their aim the reaching of ordinary men and women with the N.T. in their everyday speech. It is remarkable that though the translators were not scholars the translation is scholarly and accurate.

Helpful features in this translation are: the dividing of the text into cross-headings and indented sub-headings, making it easier to find specific passages, subjects or incidents; quotations from the O.T. are given in italics, with their references at the foot of the page; and the arrangement of the books according to what is believed their date of writing, e.g. Mark is the first of the gospel narratives and 1 & 2 Thessalonians the first of the epistles.

WEYMOUTH (Richard Francis) NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN SPEECH. Weymouth was a scholar of University College, London, and later headmaster of Mill Hill School, London. His "N.T. in Mod. Speech" arose out of his previous publication "The Resultant Greek Testament". The NEW TEST. was published in 1930, edited by E. Hampden-Cook. A revised edition was issued in 1924, from which the peculiar beliefs appearing in the first edition were omitted.

As with the "Twentieth Century N.T.", indented subject headings are included. Whereas the former translates money into modern values, Weymouth gives its Bible value. As an illustration of how the A.V. is made simpler and clearer especially in rendering the long, involved sentences of Paul, the passage Ephesians 1: 7-12 should be read.

AMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT, 1958. This was produced by twelve editors on behalf of the Lockman Foundation, California. Its characteristic is that the original scripture is amplified by alternative or explanatory readings in brackets, by the use of italics, etc. The version forms almost a commentary on the N.T., and as such is better for private study than for straightforward or public reading.

J. B. PHILLIPS: NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH, 1958. This forms a collection of four sectional translations by the same translator—"Letters to Young Churches" 1947 (the epistles); "The Gospels in Modern English" 1952; "The Young Church in Action" 1955 (Acts); and "The Book of Revelation" 1957. The four parts are of uneven value, but the "Letters to Young Churches" is one of the best translations of the epistles for an ordinary reader. The whole translation aims at giving the homely, sometimes rough grammar and idiom in which the original scriptures were written, and is excellent for reading straight through. In the gospels and Acts the narrative is presented in a most interesting, even thrilling manner, and in the epistles of Paul one discerns the masterly arguments unfolding gradually to their climax and application.

H. J. SCHONFIELD: THE AUTHENTIC NEW TESTAMENT, 1955. It is necessary to explain the title of this version. It is not meant arrogantly, as though all other translations are not authentic or genuine. The meaning, explained by the translator, is that the translation aims to reproduce the "authentic" sound, meaning and background of the writings when they left the hands of the scribes. Schonfield says that he approaches the documents "as if they had recently been recovered from a cave in Palestine or from beneath the sands of Egypt, and had never previously been given to the public."

The translator is a non-Christian Jew (one marvels at such research and such a translation coming from one who is not himself persuaded by the documents he handled that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah). Being a Jew he gives valuable information in his introduction and notes on Jewish references in the N.T. The translation is stated by scholars to be of high quality.

For references to texts or passages this version is a little difficult to use. To find a particular quotation one has to use the index of texts at the back. But it is a test of one's familiarity with scripture as to whether he is able, without the taken-for-granted chapter and verse divisions, to be able to find such passages.

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT, 1961. In 1964 a committee of the Church of Scotland, the Church of England, the Free Churches, the B. & F. Bible Society, the Bible Soc. of Scotland, and the Oxford & Cambridge University Presses was formed to consider the question of a completely new and modern translation of the Bible. Four sub-committees were appointed for the translation—one for the O.T., one for the N.T., one for the Apocrypha (the non-inspired and excluded books) and one a Literary Panel. This last was unique in Bible translation. Obviously it was realised what a deep and affectionate place was held in the

hearts of Bible-lovers by the Authorised Version, with its unconscious literary beauty; and that, if the projected new translation were to be widely accepted it would have to be presented in comparable beauty of language. It can be said that this has been largely achieved.

The only portion of the Bible yet issued is the New Testament, 1961, the 350th anniversary of the publication of the A.V. The O.T. is scheduled for about 1967 and the Apocrypha later.

The translation of the N.T. is on a varied level. The gospel narratives and Revelation seem not nearly so well rendered as the epistles, especially those of Paul. In the writer's view these latter are simply magnificent in their rendering. One senses the depth of love and passion with which Paul penned or dictated his words. Especially in his two Epistles to the Corinthians can be detected the indignant anger and the biting irony with which the apostle addresses his detractors in Corinth.

Only personal opinions of the various translations of the Bible and of the N.T. have been expressed. It is not to be expected that we should all like and use the same translation: we must each make our own choice. As has been suggested, we should try to use as many as possible, for, in Bible translation as in other matters, "in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." Above all we must ever remember that the first essential in translation is accuracy—the knowledge that, so far as is known, we are reading and studying that which God by His Holy Spirit originally caused to be written.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it advisable that the Bible student use as many translations as possible?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 7 in two or three translations. Do you consider that as a result you understand Paul's meaning better, and in what way?
3. Acts 8: 37 is omitted from recent translations, although in the A.V. Do you think that this affects the confession that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God"? From what other scriptures can this truth be proved?

NEXT MONTH'S STUDY: OUR MESSAGE—THE GOSPEL

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Blackburn (Mill Hill).—The brethren have had further cause for rejoicing. After some years of faithful teaching in the Lord's day school and gospel meetings, Stanley Frost and Joan Cotterell were baptised upon the confession of their faith on September 21st, 1965. Our prayer is that they may remain "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The church at Argyle Street, Hindley, assisted us greatly by allowing the use of their baptistry. R.R.

Buckie, Aberdeenshire.—During September we have had the services of Brother David Dougall. At mid-week meetings our brother lectured on Paul's missionary journeys, and on the Epistle of James at our Bible Reading on Saturdays. We have all been encouraged to go forward by our brother's ministration in so humbly and forcibly proclaiming the word of truth. All meetings were well attended.

Brother Dougall laboured hard in visitation. We pray that God will abundantly bless him wherever he may go with the glorious gospel, and that His blessing may be upon the good seed sowed. Brethren from Peterhead met

with us at the close of the Mission. We also take this opportunity of thanking visiting brethren who have served the church throughout the year.

John Geddes.

Kentish Town.—The anniversary meetings on Saturday, October 9th brought together about seventy brethren and sisters filled with goodwill, and looking for an interesting and inspirational time. We are grateful indeed for their support. Aylesbury, Brighton, Bristol, Eastwood, Ilkeston, Loughborough, Reading, Tunbridge Wells and Wembley congregations were represented and a brother from California came too. Our brother Winstanley who served the church here in the very early days of his work, provided a feast of good things from the Word. We had an afternoon with "The greatest of these" (1 Cor. 13), an evening with "Predestination." On the Lord's Day in the morning he encouraged us to fight against temptation—an unavoidable part of the Christian's life. In the evening he made a heart-searching appeal for decision based on the problem of pain. He also interested the children with the story of Elijah on Mount Hermon. The sisters provided tea both on Saturday and the Lord's Day, when we were joined by a number of interested friends. We had the pleasure of welcoming Sister Beaden to our fellowship who was baptised at Tunbridge Wells the previous week. R.B.S.

Kentish Town.—It is a joy to report the baptisms of Brother Terence O'Looney and his two daughters. We pray others may follow their example, and that they may be much used of our Father.

Liverpool.—The church meeting in Dudley Institute, Blenheim Road, Liverpool 18, has appreciated the services of Bro. Leon Crouch from Lubbock, Texas (now resident here) during most of August and the month of September. His Sunday morning studies on the Church, its head, its organisation and worship, have been extremely valuable, and a new series which began on 26th September promises to be an excellent summary of John's Gospel for the new members.

September 26th also brought a record attendance of 25 for worship when Bro. Tom Rowlands was identified with the congregation, having been scripturally baptised in his youth. He is the husband of Sister Doris Rowlands who was united with Christ during the July campaign. We share their joy and admire the faith and courage of several of the young in faith who have visited former religious associates in order to explain the change in their own lives and the need for restoration of the New Testament faith. R.A.H.

Loughborough (Oxford Street).—Our anniversary meetings were held on September 18th and 19th, and we were greatly encouraged by the large number of brethren who gathered with us—something over 160 being present on the Saturday night. At this meeting Bro. V. L. Hunter (Wembley) spoke on Philipians 3:12-16, and Bro. A. E. Winstanley (Loughborough) on "The man they called God." On Lord's Day Bro. Hunter served the church, and we thank him for his service. We praise God for such "seasons of refreshing." Tom Stones.

South Africa (Landsdowne).—On August 12th a man and his wife were immersed into Christ, and on the 29th, the last of a series of meetings, two young women were immersed.

Woodstock (Cape Town).—In July Mrs. Frankfort was added to the church, and on August 19th Walter Justice was immersed.

Tunbridge Wells (Corner of Cambrian Road).—The church here was built up by the preaching of the gospel by Bro. Andrew Gardiner during a five nights' intensive campaign from October 2nd to 7th. In addition he did valuable follow-up visits resulting from our July mission and was able to consolidate the work done then. We rejoiced on the Wednesday evening when as a result of teaching given by means of filmstrip lessons Sister Beeden put on her Lord in baptism. Our sister was on holiday with her friend Sister Duffield who invited us to study and show the filmstrips in her home. As Sister Beeden lives near Wind-

sor we shall not see her as often as we would like, but know that she will take advantage of any opportunity to meet with congregations around the area.

Altogether, 14 non-members were present during the five nights and we are convinced that only good can result. We thank Bro. Gardiner for his labours and assure him that his visit will live long in our memories. Pray with us that others may be found who desire only to know the truth. D.L.D.

OBITUARY

Ilkeston.—The Church here suffered the loss of two sisters on September 30th, Elizabeth Stenson, aged 86, and Joyce Brierley, aged 45 years.

Sister Stenson was one of the early members of the church in Ilkeston. She was baptised on January 5th, 1898, thus having the long period of 67 years of service. She has been a true follower of her Lord, being a steadfast and active member until advancing age made it impossible for her to attend at the Lord's table. She kept her interest in the church until the last. She was a great lover of her precious bible, and especially fond of the Psalms. She passed peacefully to her rest. Our sympathy is for her two daughters who cared for their aged mother until the last.

The death of our sister Joyce Brierley came as a great shock to all of us. Only 45 years old, she had not been well for several months, but after treatment in hospital we all hoped she would get well again, but it was not to be so. She was baptised on November 30th, 1955. Of a quiet disposition, our sister endeared herself to all by her faithful attendance at the Lord's table, travelling about seven miles each Lord's day to be present. Our sympathy is to her husband, also her father, brothers and sisters.

Our sisters will be greatly missed, yet we sorrow not as those without hope. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," and we know they have joined the great throng of those who await the crown of righteousness which is laid up in heaven. Brethren F. and R. Gregory conducted the funeral services. F.G.

Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.—It is with deep regret that we record the passing of our beloved Sister Roberts senior in her 88th year on September 5th. She was interred in the Bennochly Cemetery on the 8th September.

Our sister was the oldest member of the church in Rose Street, having a record of 73 years. She was truly a "mother in Israel," beloved by everyone. She was consistent in her attendance at the Lord's table and all other meetings

of the church until prevented by illness. Our sister set us an example in Christian living.

We "sorrow not as those who have no hope." She has gone to be with her Lord "Till the day dawns and the shadows flee away." Our prayers are for her family who are left to mourn.

The writer officiated at the services.
S. W. McDonald

Motherwell.—With deep sorrow the church records the passing of our beloved Brother John Wilson. Bro. Wilson found great happiness in his Christian life. We mourn his passing, but realise that "Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord."

Bro. William Wardrop conducted the funeral services which were attended by many of the brethren. L. Purcell.

Wigan, Albert Street.—With deep regret we record the death of Bro. John Gibson on September 17th, after a long illness. He had been a member for many years but through sickness had not been able to fellowship with us in the later years of life. He leaves our Sister Gibson, two sons and four daughters to mourn his passing.

We also record the passing of Mr. Duncan Patterson, the husband of our Sister Patterson and father of Dorothy, after a short severe illness. We commend our sisters and all the relatives to the care of our heavenly father in this time of bereavement. W. Smith

COMING EVENTS

Bedminster, Bristol.—From 31st October for two weeks we are to hold a mission. Bro. Frank Worgan preaching. Your prayers are requested for the success of the mission and, if possible, your presence at one or more meetings.

Times of meetings: Sundays 11.0 a.m. and 6.0 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m.

Films will also be shown on the Wednesday evenings.

Aylesbury.—Young People's Weekend, November 6th-7th:—

Purpose: A cordial invitation from the young people of the Aylesbury church, to the young people of other churches of the Lord, for a period of fellowship, worship and discussion.

Age Limit: From 15-25 years, approximately.

PROGRAMME: General Theme: "The Young Christian in Modern Society."

Saturday, November 6th:—

3 p.m.: Panel Discussion. Questions submitted by young people and discussed by a panel of young people. Please send us your questions, whether you are able to attend or not.

5 p.m.: Tea provided by our young people.

6 p.m.: Film "The Prior Claim," a fact and faith colour film. Young people are urged to invite their friends to see this film.

7.30 p.m.: Surprise Item.

Lord's Day, November 7th:—

10.15 a.m.: Bible School.

11.15 a.m.: Lord's Table. Speaker: Bro. Robert Goldstein, Australia.

6.30 p.m.: Evening Service. Speaker; Bro. Robert Goldstein.

7.30 p.m.: Hymn Singing.

Hospitality: Will be provided free by the Aylesbury church.

Communications: Regarding hospitality and questions for discussions to: L. H. Channing, 10 Mandeville Road, Aylesbury, Bucks.

WANTED

The church in Buckie (Aberdeenshire) is in need of copies of the old hymn book—"Hymns for Churches of Christ." Will churches or brethren who can supply any please forward them or write to the secretary, John Geddes, "Elmbank," Ianstoun, Buckie, Scotland?

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 12/-; two copies 20/6; three copies 28/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 80 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

All correspondence, including articles, news items, coming events, etc., to be sent, before the 10th of the month to the Editor, C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

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

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