

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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APRIL, 1970

DIFFERENCES AND DIVISIONS 1.

R. B. Scott

IT is unnecessary to say that these exist in every community, in every family, and, to carry the point even further, between husband and wife. Where the closest contact is made, differences and divisions become more evident to those immediately concerned, but may never reach a wider sphere or even be visible outside the immediate circle. Much depends on the nature of the differences. We might quote the case of Jack Sprat and his wife, where the difference in taste made for harmony and economy! The other factor deciding whether or not the matter becomes serious is in the characters or make-up of the persons concerned. In points where no principle is at stake, only trouble is caused by silly obstinacy or illwill.

The one and only justification for divorce among Christians is the unfaithfulness of one or other partner to the marriage bond. Separation, not divorce, can take place for other reasons, where the maintenance of proper marriage relationship becomes impossible for either partner. This is a very sad occasion indeed for both parties. Differences involve division then.

In Religious Matters

Now in the case of religious differences which have been and remain the most serious divisions in the human family, there must be some that are justified and some unjustified. So far as the Christian religion is concerned we might say that there are three main divisions which have remained unsurmountable: the Roman Catholic, the Greek Orthodox churches and the Protestant bodies, the latter being widely divided in any case, and both the former having a measure of division in their own ranks. Perhaps we ought to say that until recent days both Roman and Greek would claim complete unity. Until there is complete confession and repentance for the awful history of persecution, calculated during the centuries of domination as responsible for the death of 35 million people, bodies which have waged war against each other cannot be regarded as truly Christian at all, and every one with a heart must welcome the *rapprochement* among professing Christian bodies. There never has been an excuse for trying to enforce a religion of love on unwilling objectors. It is surely quite impossible to reconcile killing with the teaching of Christ, in any circumstances.

We must come to the point then that any differences on any point, principle or otherwise, cannot justify harsh treatment of any kind by persons who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus. This obviously cannot mean that wrong behaviour has to be tolerated or condoned in members of the church. They may have to be excommuni-

cated (horrible word), but such a step can only be taken after much effort to correct the offender, and in a spirit of love and concern. Bad behaviour cuts us off from God, and puts us in danger against which we need straight and strict warning. Such would be kindness of a high order.

Divisions of the kind we have mentioned above have developed over centuries, and it has seemed to us, following in the steps of many in the past who have been troubled by the conditions, so obviously against the will of our Saviour, that there must be a way back to a united community of Christ. Surely it is clear that there was originally only one church of Christ, and that it is the addition to, subtraction from and perversions of the truth that are responsible for the changes that have taken place. It is useless to trace these back. They must be given up without regret or scruple. In imagination let us think of a few things we have got used to as essential parts of the Christian religion, but which are not mentioned in the New Testament. This is merely to draw our attention to the nature of the task. Suppose we look at "places of worship." In the New Testament we have the Temple courts, long since destroyed; house to house; synagogues; a school; a riverside; an upper room; several homes — other buildings not named or described. I wonder how many millions of pounds worth of great and small buildings are scattered around Europe alone "to the glory of God," and what priceless jewels, ornaments and vestments hang around them. Have they any real spiritual value?

Ought these then to be given up without regret or scruple? We dare not say, but we do know that one humble home in which God is worshipped, loved and obeyed is very precious in His sight—the church in their house. We also think of the great organisations and institutions which employ quite a proportion of the communities, which live upon the rank and file membership. When we think upon the enormous numbers of people engaged in what we know to be evil trades—drinking, gambling, smoking, munitions of war—we recognise that they have a powerful hold upon society. So likewise every division in the professing Christian world has its vested interests, and those who depend upon it for a living. They have to uphold the tradition of their bodies.

The "Co-operation" and the "Old Paths"

The restoration movement of which we are a part has its troubles also. What was expected to be a real means of reducing, if not abolishing, division, has itself landed into divisions. We had in this country at the end of the nineteenth century at least two institutions—the "Co-operation of Churches of Christ" and the "Christian Association." Efforts were made over the years and finally a union was formulated in 1917, upon certain principles, which, however, never satisfied those who stood with the original "Co-operation for Evangelistic Purposes ONLY." The combined "Association" remains today with much reduced numbers, and keenly follows the ecumenical line of co-operation with all religious bodies. Most of the churches thus associated use instrumental music and aim at a minister for each church.

Churches not agreeing with the union in 1917 and standing against a moderate form of "higher criticism" and drift into the sectarian bodies, maintained their original position and withdrew from the Association. They formed their own Evangelist Fund and held half-yearly conferences. This was a very loose association and for a time a pitiful remnant so far as numbers were concerned. As the associated churches drifted further into denominational ways, more of the original "Co-operation" churches separated themselves and in most cases joined up with the loose association known for a time as "old paths"—a title not desired, but in a measure certainly justified.

They were united in supporting a paper called the "Bible Advocate" (which incidentally had been carried on for many years under similar names—"Apostolic Messenger," "Interpreter," "Old Paths," and later the "Scripture Standard," still being issued). The Evangelist Committee, composed of brethren who led the movement away from the "Association," supported evangelists who were trained personally by Walter Crosthwaite in his home. The arrangement seemed to be working well and some headway attained when influences from the States brought forward the idea that any committee

is unscriptural. Quite a number of us were moved by this plea, and in anxiety to be right, some evangelists supported by the committee, decided they could not work under it. The church at Hindley undertook support of evangelists from her own congregation, and also meantime the church at Kentish Town, with funds allocated by brethren from overseas who had been "fellowshipped" there during war service (plus her own funds accumulated while war conditions prevented activities), employed Brother Channing full time. He served other churches up and down the country by request, and in most cases contributions were received from them. Finally it became impossible to give him sufficient support and he moved to Aylesbury, where he is now supported from the States.

(To be continued)

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Carlton Melling

IV: THE BAPTISMAL QUESTION AND ASSOCIATION WITH THE BAPTISTS

WE have seen that Thomas and Alexander Campbell had not yet attained to decided views on the nature and purposes of baptism. They had treated the subject theoretically rather than practically. But it is often found that into one's life comes an experience which forces one to a decision on a matter previously treated in a detached way. Such an experience was Alexander Campbell's.

In 1811 he had married, and a year later, when his first child was born, the question of sprinkling the baby arose. Alexander was of that logical make-up which was not satisfied until an issue had been settled, and settled right. As in other matters he wished to be guided by the teaching of the Bible. He therefore searched the Greek New Testament, striving to shut out all his earlier beliefs. There he found what all such searchers find: that only penitent believers are fit subjects for baptism, and that immersion was the scriptural practice. He realised that he had never been baptised, and not only decided that his child should not be sprinkled upon but that he himself would be immersed. His wife, his father and mother, his sister Dorothea and two others, all as the result of their independent convictions, were baptised on June 12th, 1812. Not only so, but, in contrast to the procedure of testifying to "religious experiences" practised by the Baptists, they were baptised simply on the confession of Matthew 16:16.

The Baptists

A church had been formed in 1811 at Brush Run, Pennsylvania. Its two guiding principles were The Authority of the Bible and the Union of God's People. Questions of baptism and the way of salvation had not been raised; but, following the baptism of the Campbells, most of the members of the Brush Run church were baptised too. Other results were that some divided from the church, while some who had been baptised were persecuted and misrepresented by their former brethren, the Presbyterians. As a consequence the Brush Run church entered the Redstone Baptist Association in 1813, provided they be "allowed to teach and preach whatever they learned from the Holy Scriptures"—a significant condition.

The Baptists of this history were an intensely Calvinistic sect. Most of their churches were bound by the "Philadelphia Confession," with its insistence on "Sovereign Grace," "Total Depravity" and "Final Perseverance of the Saints." From the beginning Alexander Campbell was not at home among the Baptists. While the Baptists were delighted at having such a champion of "Believers' Baptism" among them, Campbell warned them that "I have as much against you as against the Presbyterians." Among some there is the need for this lesson to be learned afresh today.

We now find Alexander the acknowledged leader in the movement for restoring Christianity as at the beginning. He took full advantage of his liberty to teach what was

in scripture, and his preaching was a revelation to many. In contrast to the mystical expositions of the Bible and the elaborate discourses on "Election," "Operation of the Holy Spirit" and other favourite doctrines of the Baptists, which burdened and confused their hearers, Campbell's clear and incisive teaching showed the scriptures in a new light. Of mighty intellect, he yet made those scriptures which had been obscured easy to be understood, by the simple method of "handling aright (rightly dividing) the word of truth." Such was his understanding of the Bible that he would preach almost without notes for up to two hours, in a plain, matter-of-fact manner. As most of the meetings in those days were held in the open air, in woods and glades, there was then no problem of clock-watchers to be solved! Or, as Campbell Morgan once said, "Sermonettes from preacherettes for Christianettes"!

Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law"

One such address was that called the "Sermon on the Law," delivered before the Redstone Baptist Association on September 1st, 1816. Taking as text Romans 8:3 Campbell showed under his first heading exactly what the law was as spoken of in the Bible:— that the law was one and entire; that no such divisions were recognised as the popular divisions into Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial Law; and from 2 Cor. 3:7-14 he demonstrated that the law was "done away."

Under the second head Campbell showed the things the law could not accomplish: It could not give righteousness and life; while it taught that certain actions were sinful it could not exhibit the malignity of sin; it could not be a rule of life for all mankind, for it was given only to the Jews: "What things soever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law."

Thirdly, Campbell demonstrated why the law could not accomplish these objects— because of human weakness. The law made nothing perfect, but it introduced "a better hope." If the law had been faultless there would have been no need for the gospel.

Next, the means by which God has remedied the defects of the law were expounded. The remedy is that "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." What the law could not give—righteousness and life— He gave. Whereas the law had been unable to exhibit sin's awfulness, God had condemned sin in the person of His Son. The Son of God on the cross crying, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and expiring in blood was a monument of the demerit of sin.

Lastly, from the arguments set out Campbell drew his conclusions. For illustration these can be tabulated:

LAW

"The letter; ministrations of death;
Old Covenant; Moses."

"That which is done away."
Demanded righteousness.

GOSPEL

"The Spirit; ministrations of the
Spirit; New Covenant; law of
liberty; Christ."

"That which remaineth."
Bestows righteousness.

In Romans 6 & 7 Paul taught that Christians "are not under the law" but are "freed from it," "dead to it," "delivered from it." The Jewish law is not a rule of life to Gentiles or Christians; the Jews claimed the law and boasted that it was theirs. But to the Gentiles has been given a new law (Isa. 13:4) containing all that was best in the old, and new and more glorious promises.

Campbell meets the charge that such teaching would give rein to licentiousness by quoting and expounding Rom. 6:15: "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?

It is unnecessary to preach the law to prepare men to receive the gospel. The apostles were to preach the gospel (not the law) to every creature, and were thus ministers of the New Testament, not of the Old. All references to the Jewish law, the Old Testament, to justify "baptism" of infants, observing of "holy days" and religious

fasts, the keeping of the Sabbath (the seventh day) as holy, and the establishment of religion by law, are irrelevant and are contrary to the authority of Jesus Christ.

Campbell wound up his discourse by urging the excellency of Jesus Christ over that of Moses, pointing to Him of whom "Moses in the law, and all the prophets did write"—"the Lord our Righteousness."

(To be continued)

AYLESBURY CHURCH AND THE 'S.S.'

[Arising from the letter and comments in February "S.S." under the heading "POISON! —Not to be taken," we have received the following letter from the brethren at the meeting referred to]:—

March 1st, 1970

Dear Brother Editor,

In regard to the letter from Bro. Harold Baines, which appeared in the February issue of the *Scripture Standard*, we wish to point out to your readers that the problem has arisen through a misunderstanding, due to our brother's unfortunate and increasing deafness. Had we known that the letter was going to be written, or had the matter been referred to us before publication, this could have been avoided.

We do not consider that the *Scripture Standard* is always suitable for distribution to the general public. We therefore decided that it would be wiser to find some alternative method of distributing the paper, other than in the church building. Bro. Baines was assured that there was nothing personal involved in this request. The brethren subscribing to the *Scripture Standard* completely agreed with this decision.

During the meeting called to discuss the matter, concern was expressed about the general spirit of the paper, which is often neither edifying, especially for those young in the faith, nor helping the relationship of the brethren. On the other hand it was acknowledged that the paper could be a power for good.

It was not stated that there was a concerted effort to destroy the *Scripture Standard*. What was said was, that if the present spirit continues to be manifest, it will destroy itself. We are not alone in thinking this as the falling circulation clearly indicates.

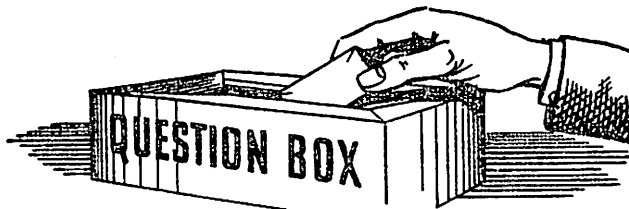
May we assure you that the misunderstanding between Bro. Baines and ourselves has without difficulty been amicably removed. He is in full agreement with this letter as will be seen by the fact that he is one of the signatories.

Yours in the Master's service,

Those Attending the Business Meeting

<i>A. Allan</i>	<i>H. Baines</i>	<i>L. Channing</i>	<i>R. Chappin</i>
<i>R. Coles</i>	<i>D. Grace</i>	<i>S. Hardy</i>	<i>T. Liley</i>
<i>A. Maude</i>	<i>A. Powell</i>	<i>J. C. Partington</i>	<i>F. Plater</i>
<i>J. Tomey</i>	<i>C. Tweedie</i>	<i>M. Wickenden</i>	

[We took every step that could be expected to ensure that the wording and contents of Bro. Baines's letter to us were accurate. We have therefore no apology to offer. As the letter from Aylesbury assures us that the matter between those concerned has been settled amicably, and if they are content, so are we.—ED.]



Conducted by
James Gardiner

“May a Christian eat blood, e.g. meat extracts, black pudding, etc., and is there any difference between these things and ordinary meat? What about things strangled?”

The Circumstances

IT is usually conceded without any controversy that Christians are commanded *not to eat blood*, and usually the controversy centres upon exactly what is embraced by the term “blood,” *i.e.*, are such foods as black pudding, meat extracts and so on included?

Perhaps we should start at the beginning and see what we can learn from the Word of God on the issue. We read in Acts 15 that some brethren came down from Judaea and taught the brethren that except the Gentile Christians were circumcised “after the manner of Moses they could not be saved, and Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them.” Some Jewish Christians always seemed to want to mix up the laws of Moses with Christ’s law of liberty, and, like today, disputations among the brethren were not an uncommon event. It was decided to approach the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for a decision in the matter, and the result is outlined (in vs. 19, 20) by James: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

The letter was duly sent and in it (v. 28) the authority of the Holy Spirit, as well as the apostles, is invoked. Thus the injunction to the Gentiles in the letter was not merely a *recommendation* of important men, but is a *commandment* of God. The “necessary things” in the letter were “that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well.”

Thus for all time the issue is settled that Gentile believers (and Jewish ones for that matter) are in no sense required to observe the law of Moses, and that salvation from sins rests, in no sense, upon compliance with any Jewish practice, custom or ordinance. Notwithstanding, even today men are still trying to bring us all back into the old economy.

The stipulations to the Gentile Christians contained in the apostolic letter were understandable, in that they constituted things to which the Gentile nations were particularly prone. Idolatry, fornication and eating of blood were commonplace and chastity the exception rather than the rule amongst the Gentiles; it was, too, quite a common practice for them to drink blood mingled with wine. Idolatry was rife and it was the practice to eat the meat of the animal used in the sacrifice.

We must not eat meat of animals which have been offered to idols and, of course, in this country the temptation or opportunity to do so is, fortunately, very remote. However, “whatsoever is sold in the shambles” is not to be investigated by us, and if we are invited to a meal we are to ask no questions for conscience’ sake (1 Cor. 10:20-28; see also 1 Cor. 8).

Applies to Jews and Gentiles

Abstaining from blood and from things strangled are to be taken together, because in eating a strangled creature we are in fact eating its blood. The eating of blood was forbidden to the Jews (Lev. 17:10) and Deut. 12:16, 23), but actually the prohibition goes

right back to Noah's time. After the flood God instructed Noah and his sons thus (Gen. 9:3-6): "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, *which is the blood thereof*, shall ye not eat. And surely the blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

The prohibition was reiterated in the Mosaic law (Lev. 17:10 ff). If we read this carefully we find that Jews, and Gentiles who sojourned with the Jews, were under no circumstances to eat blood. Acts 15 extends the prohibition to *all Christians* (Jews or Gentiles).

From Lev. 17 (referred to above) we learn several things:—

(1) that it was *the eating*, or partaking of blood through the mouth, that was prohibited—blood transfusions do not fall within this description;

(2) the reason for the prohibition is that the life of all flesh is in the blood, and as such was capable of making atonement for the soul. The reason given was not that it was naturally repugnant, or poisonous, or bad for the health, etc. (although most of us no doubt would recoil from drinking it): the reason was that *the life was in the blood*;

(3) the hunter who had captured an animal or bird by snaring (things strangled) had to bleed the creature (presumably by cutting its throat) and pour the blood out upon the earth, covering it with dust. This is confirmed in Deut. 12:16 & 23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood, for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it: thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water."

"Things strangled" can be eaten once they have been bled, but the blood must be poured away.

"The Life is in the Blood"

The stipulations outlined above now apply to us, according to Acts 15, and did not have temporary or local application as some would suggest. The prohibition comes to us right down from Noah's time. We must exercise reasonable care, therefore, that we rigidly comply. The question asks if there is "any difference between foods such as meat extracts and black pudding and ordinary meat?" It is not the eating of "ordinary meat" that is prohibited, but the eating of blood. No doubt there are vestiges of blood left in "ordinary meat," but surely God does not expect us to adopt the extremes encountered in "The Merchant of Venice." However I understand that black puddings are made from blood boiled in large vats, and I suggest that such food would not be consumed by disciples of Christ. I am no expert in food preparation, and I can't say how meat extracts are produced, but I daresay they are made from ingredients in the meat *other than* blood. I understand that the blood of hares which have been snared is sometimes retained in a bowl and used to make hare soup. This would certainly appear to be contrary to God's intention, and the blood should be poured away—"poured out upon the earth as water and covered with sand"). I have witnessed the slaughter of animals at Edinburgh slaughter-house, and have noticed that much of the blood is retained in vessels for sale, as a commercial proposition—no doubt to makers of black pudding and such like foods. This is obviously contrary to God's will. Such blood should all be drained away, for *the life is in the blood*.

I know that Col. 2:16 is sometimes quoted in the matter: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, of the new moon, or of the sabbath days," and I know also that sometimes the matter is treated in a lighthearted fashion, but I suggest that God was being anything but flippant in Lev. 17 when he said, "I will even set my face against that soul" that eateth *any manner of blood*.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

APRIL 1970

5—Malachi 3	John 3:22-36
12—Isaiah 55	John 4:1-26
19—2 Kings 7:24-41	John 4:27-45
26—1 Kings 17:8-24	John 4:46 to 5:15

THE SAMARITANS

IT is true that in the time of our Saviour, some Jews preferred to avoid passing through Samaria by taking a very long circuit, crossing the Jordan twice. This illustrates the hatred subsisting between the two peoples, and the surprise of the Samaritan woman at being spoken to at the well. Yes, even being asked a favour by a complete stranger, a man too, and a Jew! Have you an enemy? Ask a favour of him. Perhaps a very satisfactory closing of the breach will follow. Contrariwise, if he has done you an injury, do him a favour. Are not these two of the unusual things a Christian ought always to be anxious to do? The Saviour "broke the ice" by His request, and "paved the way" to the woman's awakening, and her salvation.

The Samaritans

We will consider somewhat the origin of the Samaritans and the reason for the mutual bitterness we have already mentioned. But first let us observe the references to Samaria and the Samaritans in the New Covenant writings. Thirteen times the names occur.

In giving His instructions to the twelve apostles heralding His coming visits to the towns and villages of the Jews, the Saviour told them not to go into "any city of the Samaritans," but to confine their work to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5). He correctly regarded the Samaritans as strangers (that is "aliens") in comparison with the Jews (Luke 17:18). They were just not Israelites, in spite of their claims. This did not preclude visiting and preaching to them as opportunity offered. We note the words in our reading, "He must needs pass through Samaria" (John 4:4). He could have chosen another route. So the road was deliberately chosen. Again towards the end of His ministry, the

Saviour travelled through Samaria. In one village He was refused lodging because He was travelling towards Jerusalem. James and John wanted punishment to be inflicted but the thought of Jesus was far otherwise (Luke 9:54). Surely these disciples learnt the lesson when the call came to bring blessing upon the believing Samaritans who heard the gospel from Philip the deacon (Acts 6:14). What a vital change in attitude this must have meant to them!

When wishing to insult and irritate Jesus, his Jewish enemies said the very worst they could of Him—"Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" (John 8:48). Demon-possession and being a Samaritan were equivalent in current Jewish feeling.

The very word "Samaritan" has come to have a good and happy meaning because it brings to mind kindness freely bestowed without partiality. No other story of kindly action has had such a worldwide influence as that of "The Good Samaritan." Jesus told it for that purpose. His questioner had a limited view of what "neighbour" meant, and was apparently thinking to have an excuse for not always "loving his neighbour as himself" (Luke 10:25-37). The Saviour took hold of that very opposite ruling spirit of national prejudice and spiritual pride to force home the lesson which we all know to be right, but find hard to practise, and it has affected the thinking of the world. Never was there a time in the world's history when this consciousness was more universal, and yet there are wars and preparations for war which contradict it.

We cannot but think that the visit of Jesus to Jacob's well and the subsequent interest of the local Samaritans had some considerable influence when the gospel was preached there in obedience to the Lord's programme (Acts 1:8). The success of the gospel in Samaria was rewarding and revealing (Acts 8:14). The Samaritans had been nearer to the ministry of Jesus, and had tasted the goodness of the Lord in His healing and teaching. We remember "He could not be hid" (Mark 7:24). It was essential that He must go to Jerusalem to perish, and to rise triumphant (Luke 13:33) so that the word of the Lord should go out thence (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2).

The Samaritans were next to Judaea geographically, and in their religious thought acknowledged Moses as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, although mixing this with error and superstition. They represented an apostasy.

We trace this apostasy back to Solomon's apostasy. Read 1 Kings 11, and note the underlying causes of the division of God's people. It is a sad story, and bears a relation to all apostasy and division. Jeroboam received a promise from God conditional upon his trust and obedience, but he thought he must change the worship of the ten tribes in order to keep the people for himself — NOT FOR GOD (1 Kings 12:25-33). In spite of startling divine warnings (1 Kings 13:33 & 34, but read the whole chapter) he thus started his people on the slippery slope culminating in their destruction and transportation by the king of Assyria in 722 B.C. The poorest of them were left and were integrated with the heathens imported by him. This is recorded in 2 Kings 17 and summarised, "So these nations feared Jehovah and served their graven images." Samaria was their capital. Their priesthood and sacrifices modelled on the laws of Moses were centred on Mount Gerizim, which they claimed was the appointed place. Their attempt to gain acceptance as Jews in the time of Ezra was rightly rejected, and from that time the enmity developed and continued. About ten families remain to this day as the remnant of these people, and claim to show a very ancient manuscript of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses only).

R. B. SCOTT

THERE IS A SOUL

Wendell Phillips once was accosted by a doctor. "Do you honestly think that a man has a soul? he queried.

"Yes."

"Well, did you ever see a soul?"

"No."

"Did you ever taste a soul?"

"No, indeed."

"Nor hear one?"

"No."

"Perhaps you smelled one?"

"No."

"Maybe you felt one?"

"I certainly did."

"Well, there are four of the five senses against you."

"Look here," said Phillips, "you are a physician."

"Yes."

"Did you ever see a pain?"

"No."

"Did you ever hear one?"

"No."

"Or taste one?"

"No."

"Or smell one?"

"No."

"Of course you felt one?"

"Yes."

"All right. Here are four senses against one. And yet, sir, you know there is a pain, and I know there is a soul."—*Selected.*

SOMEONE IN YOUR SHOES!

There are little eyes upon you,
And they're watching night and day;
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say;
There are little hands all eager
To do everything you do,
And a little boy who's dreaming
Of the day he'll be like you.
You're the little fellow's idol,
You're the wisest of the wise:
In his little mind about you
No suspicions ever rise.

He believes in you devoutly,
Holds that all you say and do,
He will say and do in your way,
When he's grown up, just like you.
There's a wide-eyed little fellow,
Who believes you're always right;
And his ears are always open
And he watches day and night.
YOU are setting an example,
Every day, in all you do,
For a little boy who's waiting
To grow up to be like YOU.

Selected (Cape Town "Bulletin")

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.—Abraham Lincoln.

WOMEN'S PAGE

Conducted by Harold Baines

Text for the Month: Eccl. 3:2

THIS text chose itself, "A time to plant": who does not know that April is planting time, when gardeners (and some that are not!) look forward to the joys of spring and the promise of a flowering and fruitful earth. Well did the poet Browning say, "Oh to be in England now that April's there!"

A time to plant suggests many things: Work; seed-buying; planning of garden plots; changing over vegetable plots; weeding; gathering up and burning the rubbish of winter. All in preparation for sowing, and eventually reaping.

At no season more than spring is what Paul wrote more true. 2 Cor. 9:6: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully"; and again in Gal. 6:7: " whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Turn to Matt. 13:24-30—the parable of the wheat and tares. The tare spoken of here is believed to be the Palestinian weed, the darnel, which is indistinguishable from the wheat until the ear is developed, when the thin fruitless ear of the darnel is detected. Its root too so intertwines with the wheat that it is impossible to separate them until the harvest. The seed of the darnel is small, like wheat in appearance but turns black, and if ground and mixed with wheat flour can cause dizziness, intoxication and paralysis. We can thus see the terrible danger of tares in wheat. It is worth our while to read our Lord's interpretation of this parable in verses 36 to 43 in this same chapter; and if we look around us in the world of religion we can see the wheat and tares inextricably mixed, so that it is impossible to separate them. Thus we see the wisdom of our Lord's teaching to leave the sorting to the angels at the end of the world.

It is like this with sin in our lives: in its insidious way it creeps into the lives of the best of us, and if left too long will be almost impossible to uproot. Hence our need to note what we plant, for we are concerned not with the things we plant in

our gardens but with what we plant in our lives and in the lives of others. Are we planting seeds of love, kindness, joy, compassion, sympathy, understanding, comfort, and peace; or are they seeds of jealousy, envy, malice, spite, anger, hatred and strife? We are exhorted (Rom. 12:18) to "live peaceably with all men," and the writer of Proverbs sharply reminds us of what is an abomination to the Lord:—"He that soweth discord among brethren." So, whilst our minds are full of the joys and beauties of spring let us remember the other things we can plant that can likewise bring joy to those with whom we come in contact day by day: if we feel like criticising, don't; try kindness instead. Remember, life is always "a time to plant." Let us see that what we plant will reap for us and others a rich and abundant harvest of good.

* * * *

LESSER LIGHTS

3: Phurah the Servant

(Reading Judges Chap. 7. Texts vs. 9-11)

The hero of our story has even less said of him than the two previous ones, although this time he is named. The background to the story is typical of the age in which he lived—"wars and rumours of wars"; when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6). Ours is evidently not the only permissive age in which man has lived!

There were twelve Judges chosen by God and Gideon was the fifth. Phurah, the subject of our story, was his servant, and at the part of the story in which he appears Gideon had been given what would be to the mind of man a preposterous proposition—to go to war with an army of three hundred men against the hosts of Midian—"like the sand by the sea shore for multitude." "This too after his army of thirty-two thousand had been reduced to this miserable three hundred by the order of Jehovah.

We see here the wisdom of God. He knew his instructions called forth tremendous faith from his servant Gideon: hence the words which form the key verse of this discourse (verse 10): "But if thou

fear to go down, go with Phurah thy servant down to the host." It is evident that Gideon was all too ready to take Phurah along: apparently he *did* fear to go down, for we read in the very next verse that "he went down with Phurah his servant."

Now why did God choose Phurah the servant? Surely some great general or at least a captain or someone more versed in the art of war would have been taken. For some reason God knew that Phurah the servant would be a far better companion than all the fighting men in Israel. We can draw one or two conclusions about this servant Phurah.

First, we suggest Phurah was a *congenial* companion, one who would be "good company" on this hazardous enterprise. Congenial means, "of kindred disposition." Phurah was evidently a man like Gideon himself, probably also God-fearing. Furthermore because he was a *congenial* companion he would also be a *courageous* companion: no one lacking courage would have ventured on an enterprise such as this. Suppose he had been fearful himself of going with Gideon, would Gideon have gone down without him? No: God knew the qualities of Phurah, so chose him to go. Furthermore Phurah would be a *faithful* servant, one who could be depended upon to carry out his duties without demur, not questioning the wisdom or otherwise of the actions of his master.

What followed was a complete victory for the Israelitish host. But we have often asked ourselves what would have happened if Phurah had let his master down and fled at the time of battle. But he didn't, and so Phurah, whose name is mentioned only twice, because he faithfully carried out his duties, was chosen of God to labour in the work for which he was gifted, and to be a companion to one of God's servants in the carrying out of the divine plan.

So once more one of God's "LESSER LIGHTS" has illumined our pages, and by his faithful carrying out of his duties has earned for himself a place in history, so that we of this generation, some three thousand years later, can find encouragement from his example.

IN LIGHTER VEIN

We have been amused at the interpretation children sometimes put on the hymns we sing. Here are a few examples: see if you can recognise any of them:—

"Wild shepherds washed their frocks by night";

"Hark our Harold angels sing"
(according to a young sister of mine).

After the preacher had been discoursing on the parable of the fig tree, according to a youthful hearer:

"From fig tree unto fig tree
His army shall he lead."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buckie.— We are extremely happy to report two new members added to the church. On Lord's Day, 15th February, Ian and Nancy Smith made the good confession and were baptized.

Our brother and sister have been studying with us for some time. We pray that God will bless them both and that they will prove of valuable service to their Lord and the church. John Geddes

OBITUARY

Slamannan.— We regret to record the death of another of our members, Sister Arthur Gardiner, in January. Sister Gardiner came to reside in Slamannan a number of years ago after the death of her beloved husband, who was a brother to Bro. Andrew Gardiner, sen. She had a humble and contented disposition, although she had the great handicap of deafness.

Our sympathies are with her daughter, in whose home she died.

She was interred in Muiravonside cemetery, the service being conducted by Bro. Andrew Gardiner, jun. M. Neilson

COMING EVENT

Kentish Town.—Mission for three weeks with Brother John Breakell of Wigan. First meeting Saturday, 25th April, 7 p.m.: Fact and Faith film "Signposts Aloft." Meetings on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Each Saturday at 7 p.m. a film.
R. B. Scott

Wait on thy God continually. (Hosea 12, 6).

PRAYER is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. The spirit of devotion is the spirit of prayer. Prayer and devotion are united as soul and body are united, as life and heart are united. There is no real prayer without devotion—no devotion without prayer.

* * * *

God intended for us to be IN—not OF—the world.

PSALM 46: VERSE 10

"Be still and know that I am God":
Whatever ill may us betide,
Death or the grave—what power have they
If we but lean upon the Guide?

"Be still and know that I am God":
Forget the surge and swell of day,
Leave worry, care and stress behind,
For quiet hours with Him to pray.

We may have many trials small:
They seem to us the chastening rod;
But we arise clean, purified
If we can say, "He is our God."

Ponder it slowly, calmly, till
We realise just what it means:
"Be still and know that I am God,"
The rock on which the Christian leans.

A Scottish Sister

BIRTH

To Edward and Isabel Bennett, a daughter, on Monday, March 2nd, Janet Isabel, a sister for Judith Ruth.

MARRIAGE

Leonard Morgan and Selina (Reneé) Whitton on Wednesday, March 18th, at Argyle Street, Hindley.

We offer warmest congratulations to Leonard, ever a faithful friend and a generous supporter of the S.S., and to Reneé, a devoted servant of God in the church at Albert Street, Wigan. Our prayers are that God's blessings may be richly bestowed upon them.

Editor

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