

# The Scripture Standard

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

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## **The Basis of Co-operation.**

THE Annual Conference of Churches of Christ, held in Leicester last August, decided that 'We co-operate on the basis of the Lordship of Jesus only, and that this is the only test of faith, both for membership in the local Church and for co-operation in the Brotherhood.' (Year Book, 1945, pp. 94, 95.)

Rightly understood, the Lordship of Jesus is sufficient. Paul places 'one Lord' in the centre of the seven units of Christianity. (Ephesians iv. 4-6.) If all accepted that with all its implications, there would be 'one faith'—that Jesus is 'the Christ the Son of the living God'; 'one baptism'—the one commanded by the Lord and practised by the first Christians, which all admit to be the immersion of a penitent believer into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; 'one body'—the Church built by the 'one Lord,' and set forth perfect and complete in the New Testament Scriptures.

But do not all bodies claiming to be Christ—Roman Catholic and Protestant—accept the Lordship of Jesus? Then why not co-operate with all? Those responsible for the decision at Leicester do not act upon it, for when the Free Church Federal Council, of which Churches of Christ are one of the 'constituent denominations,' pressed for 'closer co-operation,' it was refused on the ground that such co-operation, by ignoring conditions conscientiously held, could lead to nothing but confusion; certainly not to a unity worth having. ('Christian Advocate,' June 22nd, 1945; and Year Book, 1945 pp. 25, 26.)

So it seems that something more than the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus is necessary.

In the report of 'Discussion of Differences,' sent out by representatives of the Co-operation, they complain about 'close interrogation,' and our 'suggestion that a stenographer should be present at the next meeting.'

How could we get to know what they considered to be the basis of co-operation except by interrogation?

And why object to the presence of a stenographer? If what they stated at those discussions are their honest beliefs, why object to the Brotherhood knowing them?

We should be very glad indeed if all that was said on both sides could be heard by all the members of Churches of Christ. To hear both sides is the only fair and satisfactory way of judging a matter.

The questions we put to representatives of the Co-operation still demand an answer. In correspondence they referred us to the chairman's address at the Annual Conference of 1944, as representing their views.

In that address he spoke of Jesus as 'the true and only revealer of the Father.' 'He was very God.'

We asked, and still ask: Could Jesus be that, and yet be ignorant and capable of making mistakes?

One of them claimed that Jesus did make mistakes; and when asked to name some, he said Jesus led the people to believe that He was coming back soon, and He has not come yet. That is the kind of stuff we expect from out-and-out infidels, not from those who believe in the Lordship of Jesus.

Again, the chairman of the 1944 Conference said: 'None of us has any right to judge our brother or to make the question of interpretation a test of his loyalty to Jesus Christ.' We asked, and still ask: 'Then why not unite with those who interpret baptism to be infant sprinkling, and the Lord's Supper to be the sacrifice of the Mass?'

If leaders in present Co-operation ever knew what the Churches of Christ were established to plead for, they seem to have forgotten it all.

At the Jubilee Annual Conference, in 1892, Bro. David King read a paper on 'Fifty Years' Work and the Lessons it Suggests.' He clearly stated the position held by the pioneers, thus:

'Great principles propounded by the Campbells, tested and adopted by our pioneers, have been adhered to till now—as for instance—

1. Nothing ought to be received into the service or worship of the Church, or made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.

2. The observance of all divine ordinances, after the example of the Primitive Church and exhibited in the New Testament, without any additions whatever of human opinions, or inventions of men. That we return to the same ground on which the Churches stood at the beginning.



'3. That where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.

'4. Nothing to be received, as a matter of faith and duty, for which there is not produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms, or by approved Scripture precedent.

'5. The objuraction of human creeds, as roots of bitterness and apples of discord, as the permanent cause of sectarianism . . . Faith in Jesus, as the true Messiah, and obedience to Him as our Lawgiver and King, the only test of Christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion and co-operation; irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments and traditions of men . . . The Gospel has in it a command, and as such must be obeyed . . . That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which changes our state. That the union of Christians is essential to the conversion of the world.

'That the word, or testimony of the apostles, is of itself, all sufficient and alone sufficient for the union of all Christians.' (Year Book, 1892, pp. 70, 71.)

On that platform Churches of Christ in Britain stood united until some thirty years ago. On that platform they can be united again. There is no other real basis of co-operation. It cannot be shown that those known as 'Old Pathers' have in any particular departed from that original position. We have steadfastly refused to bow to those who, in the name of progress and advanced thinking, have departed from the New Testament position so tenaciously held, and so courageously defended by our fathers in the faith. We remember the warning of the Apostle John: 'Anyone who is "advanced" and will not remain by the doctrine of Christ does not possess God: he who remains by the doctrine of Christ possesses both the Father and the Son.' (2 John 9, Moffatt.)

EDITOR.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENT

**Slamannan District.**—The half-yearly conference of Sunday School Workers in the Slamannan District will (D.V.) be held at four p.m. on Saturday, November 17th, at the Meeting-place, New Street, Slamannan. It is hoped that all interested in the work will endeavour to be present.

The conference will be presided over by Bro. D. Stewart, and the address will be given by Bro. Wm. Steele on 'How can we best exhibit Jesus to the children?'

J. NEILSON.

**Scholes.**—Sixty-third Anniversary, Saturday, November 17th, and Lord's Day, November 18th. Tea, Saturday four p.m., price 1s. Evening meeting, six p.m. Speakers: Bro. Walter Crosswaite, Ulverston; Bro. Alex. Carson, Nelson.

## The Restoration Movement.

(By Carlton Melling)

### IX.: Recent History in Great Britain

IN the previous article, the history of the American Disciples' mission in this country was traced. It may be asked what relationship the Christian Association now bears to the Churches of Christ in Britain. We shall attempt to show that a vital relationship now exists, and one which has considerably affected the British Co-operation of Churches.

Beginning in 1901, correspondence and conversations were entered into between the two bodies, with a view to co-operation. Reports on the outcome were published, by the Christian Association in 1904, and by the Churches of Christ in 1905. On the request of the Churches of Christ representatives, those of the Christian Association drew up a statement setting out the following points:—

'I. We believe that the Scriptures teach: (a) that we come into Christ, and therefore into His body, the Church, by faith in Christ, repentance of sin, and, upon confession of faith, immersion in water in the name of Christ; (b) that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance inside the Church, and that to be Scripturally qualified to sit at the Lord's Table, one must comply with the Scriptural conditions of entrance into that Church as above stated.

'II. We believe that in the case of the unimmersed coming or desiring to come to the Lord's Table, each Church should deal with such as soon as a suitable opportunity presents itself, either before or after communicating, by pointing out courteously their Scriptural obligations above set forth.'

The meetings and correspondence came to nothing at the time. A study of the two reports will show the reason why, for in spite of the definite Scriptural statement of the Christian Association under the first point, the statement under the second head nullified the former. What strikes one on a careful reading of the reports is that, on the part of the Christian Association, sentiment overruled the plain teaching of the N.T., whilst the Churches of Christ representatives remained absolutely true to that revelation.

There the matter stood until 1917. In that year, correspondence was again entered into with the Christian Association. Complete fusion was proposed. Agreement was reached on foundation principles, namely:—

1. We come into Christ and into His Body, the Church by faith in Christ, repentance, and immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. That the Lord's Supper is inside the Church, and Scriptural qualification to



participate is attained by compliance with the above conditions. On the communion question—that on which co-operation had been found impossible in the previous correspondence—the following agreement was affirmed:—

3. It is our duty to do everything in our power . . . to induce every unimmersed believer who present themselves at the Lord's Table to obey Christ in . . . immersion.

4. It is our duty to develop the abilities of all the members of the Church capable of taking part in the Lord's work, and to afford them suitable opportunities.

These propositions were accepted as a satisfactory basis for union by both parties, and at the Annual Conferences of the Christian Association and the Churches of Christ in 1917 union was approved. Minute eight of the latter Conference read: "That the following fourteen Churches of the late Christian Association be added to the list of Churches co-operating, viz., Birkenhead (Alvanley Place), Cheltenham, Northgate (Chester), Fulham (Tasso Tabernacle), Gloucester, Hornsey, Ingleton, Lancaster, Liverpool (Empire Street, Potter Street, and Upper Parliament Street), Saltney, Southport (Mornington Road) and Woolston."

What had happened in the period intervening between the contacts with the Christian Association to warrant this union, whilst previously even co-operation had been rejected? Look again at the statements made by the Christian Association. Is there any difference to be seen in those of 1901-5 and 1917? None. They are almost identically the same. Where then was the change? Obviously in the Churches of Christ. We succumbed to the glamour of becoming a more influential and larger body, and, to achieve that end, compromised vital principles. For the statements of the Christian Association were an equally unsatisfactory basis for union as they had been in 1901. It should have been seen at the time that no good could come of a union so insecurely based, and history since has shown the folly of that union. To those with any knowledge of the Churches of Christ in this country to-day a glance at the names of the Christian Association Churches received into the Co-operation will show some of our most "advanced" Churches, practising open communion and taking collections from the unimmersed. These Churches have had a harmful effect on other Churches previously loyal to the N.T. teaching on the Church.

We have shown that the Churches of Christ in 1917 had moved from the unassailable position they had held in 1905. With the inclusion of the Christian Association Churches the retrograde movement was given added impetus. It is true that the fusion of the two bodies was an absorption rather than a union. It was hardly a question of co-operating together; rather, the larger body swal-

lowed up the smaller. But just as what is taken into the body affects one's physique and life, so the Christian Association has influenced the body which assimilated it. And that influence has not been for good. Whereas before 1917 the Churches of Christ adhered altogether to the Scriptural position of communing at the Lord's Table, now it is stated quite openly in the Churches of Christ reply to a questionnaire sent out by the Commission on Intercommunion of the World Conference on Faith and Order that 'the practice of these American-British Churches tends to be that of open communion, and that in the British established Churches there is a growing feeling towards open communion amongst some city Churches' (emphasis mine), and the late Bro. A. W. Kuypers said in his chairman's address at the 1939 Annual Meeting: 'Some Churches in our Co-operation make no secret of the fact that they take public collections.'

But not only in the above two particulars did we depart in 1917 from the position held so firmly in 1905. The leaven of the Disciples soon began to work in other respects. The growth and now ready acceptance of instrumental music among Churches of Christ is traceable to their influence. The whole weight of the co-operating Churches forty years ago was against this addition to the worship of God. One has only to read issues of the 'Bible Advocate' (predecessor to the 'Christian Advocate') of that period to see that this was so. Indeed, the then editor, Lancelot Oliver, who was one of the Churches of Christ representatives to confer with those of the Christian Association in 1901-5, stated that among 'certain matters of difficulty' that would have to be looked into before co-operation could be considered was 'the question of instrumental music.' Do we really stand where our fathers stood for purity of worship?

The formation of Overdale Theological College, too, was largely a result of the fusion. The sad results of the modernistic teaching which has emanated from the college are too widespread and evident among us to be contradicted. There is no doubt that we are making the same fatal mistake as the Jewish nation of old, in desiring to be like the nations around them. We have looked with envious eyes on the elaborate organisation of the denominations, their vast numbers, and their accepted position in the world. We have been proud to be included among them on the British Council of Churches, the Free Church Federal Council, and 'ecumenical' councils. And the result? We have become a denomination among denominations, and have been so courteous in our attitude to those who do not accept or follow the Scriptures as God's standard for His Church, that we have been prepared to sink 'our distinctive witness' rather than to offend. Bro. L. Grinstead wrote in the 'Christian Advocate' of December 2nd,



1938: 'After reading the current Year Book, where the President of the Conference seemed to be cancelled out by the writer of the Conference paper, I have wondered how much of the plea remains, and if what remains is worth maintaining a separate existence for.' In the same magazine of September 24th, 1941, the editor wrote: 'We have become more and more efficient, and less and less effective.' Our literature has 'put us on a level with Churches much larger than our own . . . But what is the good of all this if we are a diminishing community?' To quote again from the issue of January 3rd, 1936, the then editor wrote: '... the future holds no place whatever for a body of ten thousand souls which is nothing more or less than a denomination among denominations.' We are perilously near to becoming 'a body of ten thousand souls' judging by the latest Year Book returns, and as for our being 'a denomination among denominations,' a letter in the 'C.A.', of March 16th, 1945, contained the statement that 'To seek for unity through complete conformity with the details of our traditional practice will only result in perpetuating a denomination (which Churches of Christ have inevitably become)' (emphasis mine). 'The only hopeful prospect for us is to learn to think in terms of the ecumenical Church and our contribution to it.'

There are various other trends which have become very noticeable of late years, and which space forbids us to do more than mention. There is the deadly spirit of wordily-mindedness which is gripping many members of the Churches, and with that lack of the spiritual mind which worships God in spirit and in truth, a definite stress on worship as an art to be cultivated and imposed from without rather than coming spontaneously from within. And there has grown up a love of theological language not found in the Scriptures, terms which when analysed are largely meaningless, for example: 'Churchmanship,' high doctrine of the Church, the 'Christian ethic,' 'the essential genius of our movement,' 'sacraments,' and like terms.

It is not pleasant to write in this strain. It would be much more pleasant, and easier, to ignore these modern trends. But the time has come when no good purpose is served by remaining silent. A crisis has been reached in the history of the Churches of Christ in this country. We can be no longer neutral. The challenge comes to us as clearly today as when it was first uttered by the great prophet of God: 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' On our answer will depend the future glory or shame of the pure and noble movement for the restoration of N.T. Christianity

'With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.'—Psalm.

## Training for Service

IN response to many requests we have decided to run a correspondence course on

### THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This is a great and important subject. We shall do our best to make the work as simple as possible.

As in other courses, study papers will be sent out, and students are requested to send in their answers each fortnight if possible.

We still have some papers on the fundamentals as set forth in Hebrews. 1, and we advise beginners to take that course first.

Those who wish to take either of the above-named courses should write at once to W. Crosthwaite, Ford Villa, Hart Street, Ulverston, Lancashire.

## The Work of an Evangelist.

Dear Bro. Editor,—The references and passages of F. S. Gammon's letter are quite Scriptural, but they fail to do justice to the subject of evangelism at present. He says: 'That Christians in general are not responsible for the work.' The Church is composed of Christians, and the New Testament is their only guide on all matters relative to the preaching of the Gospel. There was no such thing in the early Church as a New Testament, and it was necessary to have a Spirit-guided preacher to convey the message around. Paul says: 'Whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'

The perfect thing is in our possession and we must consult it on all spiritual questions. The Gospel must be proclaimed and the Church is God's only earthly institution for carrying out His divine will: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. . . . And lo, I am with you to the end of the age.' 'God has withdrawn these special gifts, but His Spirit remains, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.'

The Church is not tied down to any hard and fast rules concerning the appointment of evangelists: 'Let all things be done decently and in order. For where there is no law there is no transgression.' Paul speaks of fellowship in the Gospel and tells us of their boldness in proclaiming it.

It is not necessary to be a great orator, as we have often experienced that many



As above shows the dispute between brother Gray and late Frederick was for matters of importance, we decided that brother Gray would not come and stay with us at Namiwawa here, lest he compel us to the strange things which the Bible does not speak at all. But he and Miss Bannister would stay at Gowa, and they would come only to visit us, and we should do likewise. But Bro. Gray wished very much to come and stay with us at Namiwawa, Zomba.—Namiwawa is more famous than Gowa.

In 1931, some brethren of Mlanje District called brother Gray. Bro. Gray left Gowa for Mlanje to visit them. On his way back from Mlanje he stopped at Namiwawa, and visited Frederick with much flattery, saying he would not keep the law of the Federal of Nyasaland, etc. By reason of his flattery, we allowed him to stay among us.

In November, 1931, a call came to me from Phalombe, Zomba District, for a number of people who came out from Church of Scotland wanted me. Then I went to attend the call, and arranged with them for baptism. When I came back from Phalombe I went to brother Gray to report about these people. Brother Frederick was away on a journey to Mlanje to visit brethren there. When Mr. Gray understood that the people who repented and wished to be baptised were from the Church of Scotland, he went to 'Rev. Alexander. 'Rev.' Alexander told him that these people belonged to his church at Phalombe. When Mr. Gray returned from seeing 'Rev. Alexander he told me I was not to baptise the people. I looked at him eagerly, and said: 'Why not baptise them?' Bro. Gray answered 'They are members of the Church of Scotland, therefore you cannot baptise them.' After talking with him a long time I told him I would baptise them on Sunday for they are sinners who have repented. Sprinkling water upon the head is not commanded. We separated them.

When I went home, I began to think, and since Frederick was away in Mlanje District I called together the elders who were with me, and we met in the home of brother Moses.

The elders who were present were: Elliot Mitumba, Moses Chinganga, Lazaro Masozo, Hetherwick, Jackson Nazombe, Tabao Chisiiano, Bulanje Katunga, Benson Tulisya, Simon Chirwa, Bizwick, Peter Chakama, Lapken Chuleni, Peter Mitumba, Wellem Kunde, Goodson Chisupe, Harry Chamangiliza. I stood among these sixteen elders and spoke all that Mr. Gray said about the people; that he had prevented me entirely to go and baptise

the people from the Church of Scotland who had repented. Therefore, I have called you to this meeting to consider well and to understand that to refuse to baptise these people is to agree with the Federal of Nyasaland, which Mr. Gray wants us to join.

After discussion, fifteen elders agreed with me; one elder agreed with Mr. Gray. Our chairman, Bro. E. Mitumba stood up and said: "We agree to send brother R. Kaundo to baptise the people and if Mr. Gray says something contrary to that, we shall separate from him

I asked them to send three elders to tell Mr. Gray that we had a meeting to consider the question, and have agreed to send R. Kaundo to baptise these people this week. The chairman chose brother Hetherwick, brother Moses and brother Jameson to go to Mr. Gray. Mr. Gray said to them: 'If R. Kaundo will go and baptise those people, I shall write the District Commissioner to alter the prayer house there.'

On Sunday morning, I received a letter from brother Jameson telling me that they went to meet Mr. Gray, but Mr. Gray does not change.

We went to Phalombe and baptised the people. After this I sent word to brother Frederick, so he came quick to us, and again on the Sunday we baptised more (Frederick and I).

From the baptism of these people the trouble started. Mr. Gray wrote to Mr. Georgeson at Gowa, Mr. Georgeson and Miss Bannister did not wish to come and see us as brethren. They told Mr. Gray to finish the matter with us. On receiving this letter from Gowa, Mr. Gray announced a general meeting where he said: 'I have been sent from Great Britain and Ireland to come and work here as representative of the F.M.C., therefore, I have called you together here to tell you that I shall not work together with Frederick and Ronald, because they do not obey my command. I told Ronald not to baptise the people.'

This opened the eyes of many brethren, for since brother Hollis had come to us they had not heard that people from Church of Scotland should not be baptised, or from any church where water is sprinkled on the head.

Mr. Gray excommunicated the late brother Frederick and me as sinners and we were robbed of our prayer house, which we had made with our own hands.

This, a true and real statement of the facts of the division, I am sending by air mail to you, with Christian Greetings to you and all my brethren.

Yours faithfully,

R. KAUNDO.

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