

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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THE BIBLE AND THE MODERN WORLD

V: THE FAMILY

THERE is no doubt that we are today seeing a decline in the standards and joys of family life, especially in the more advanced and "civilized" countries, compared with family life of seventy to a hundred years ago, it is difficult to place a finger on the reasons. We have a strange contradiction here. In our own country living standards are far higher than was ever known previously: we have better housing, with more comforts and even luxuries and home amusements. Yet the words "family" and "home" do not convey the same meanings of love, happiness, fun and security that they did to our forefathers, although they never experienced those comforts that we today take for granted. There is no virtue in poverty and squalor and discomfort, and none of us would like to turn back to those times made rosy by memory, but which often meant suffering, hunger and need.

But there is a lesson in all this. It is that material prosperity and comforts do not bring contentment and happiness. In other words, to have what our materialistic civilization supplies us with may satisfy our physical or outer wellbeing, but there remains an emptiness, a dissatisfaction, a longing for that which we realise is still missing. These yearnings for fulness of life are inward, and cannot be assuaged by outward treatment. While it is difficult to trace the causes of the decline of home and family life in our age, these causes must be understood: it is not sufficient to condemn or deplore or to punish the violence and the delinquency which are so apparent. We must treat the disease at its root, its causes. It is no use applying a plaster to heal a disease which is inward. The word of God (Isaiah 1:5-6) points out the futility of treating inward troubles with surface remedies: "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they are not pressed out, or bound up, or smoothed with oil."

Although we set ourselves to fill our homes with attractions to hold the interest of our children, we find them on the whole still seeking other interests away from home and apart from the family. Even our radio and television, which we thought would give pleasure and fulness to them, become themselves a means of destroying the family fellowship and atmosphere. While listening or viewing, no one must speak to distract attention from what we are hearing or watching; thus social relationships are destroyed by lack of conversation. Our young people join social groups or even gangs. Lacking the feeling that they belong to the family they want a confidence of feeling that they belong to something. Thus home becomes a place to get away from a place merely to feed and sleep.

All this has its repercussions and effects upon other relationships. This attitude to home and family contributes to the wider ills of our society. It is a case of cause and effect, and until we find and deal with the causes we shall suffer the effects. The causes are deeper than social, deeper than economics (in spite of Marxism), deeper even than moral. They are spiritual. In this matter, as in all others connected with the Christian's life, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood but...against spiritual wickedness..." (Eph. 6:12). Hundreds of books have been written in these days upon these problems of home and family — elaborate, systematic, scholarly, scientific, social studies in great detail. They highlight the subject and put forward ways of treatment or cure. But almost always they treat the matter as one that can be diagnosed and treated by the psychiatrist or social worker alone. In almost every case one looks in vain for guidance on treating persons as persons, not as cases or problems. In contrast, when we turn to the Bible (and we keep in mind that this series is on "The Bible and the Modern World") we find a surprising amount of teaching, by command and example, that guides us on the subject, and that, when followed, will solve the difficulties and eradicate the evils.

Home and Family among the Jews

Even today there is no people among whom family relationships are closer and more affectionate than among the Jews. There are exceptions, of course, but it is significant that most of these exceptions are among those Jews who have largely discarded the teaching of their "Bible" — the Old Testament, and who are termed "liberal" Jews. These reject all of their scriptures except the Pentateuch — the "five books of Moses", and have no vision of or confidence in the coming of a Messiah, nor do they believe that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah. They are sceptical and cynical and materialistic, and have little in common with their ancestors whose history is portrayed in the Old Testament. Consequently they do not hold the traditional attitude of the more orthodox Jews to the home and the family. Their family life is of no higher standard and no better an example than that of other nations than the Jews..

But among the Jews who still adhere to their ancient traditions and who regard their scriptures (the Old Testament) as the revelation, the word, the law of Jehovah, the quality and purity of family life is still a wonder to others. It is based upon the word of God in its demonstration of love, affection, obedience and discipline, and the happiness which follows these virtues. This is evident throughout their scriptures, as will be shown later in this article. In those scriptures both the commands of Jehovah and the examples of responsibility and mutual contribution to the well-being of the whole household are set out, so that we learn how God conceives of the family and how His will is carried out in their lives and relationships. There we read of the strictness and purity of the marriage relationships, the privileges and responsibilities of husband and wife to each other and the joys and blessings of

fatherhood and motherhood, and the bringing up of children. But the scriptures are not one-sided. Children in their turn are not only to receive but to give loving devotion and service to parents.

In our next contribution we hope more closely to examine and expound these various components which together make a family and home — Father, Mother and Children. (To be continued) EDITOR

GREAT DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURE

II: GOD'S PROVIDENCE

THE most striking incident of God's Providence is found in the story of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, when God stayed Abraham's hand as he was about to slay his son. Because of this event Abraham called the name of that place "JEHOVAH JIREH", meaning "In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided" (Gen. 22:1-14R.V.).

It is essential that attention be drawn to a significant fact, often overlooked by those who view God merely as a philanthropist. Certainly He sends the rain on the just and on the unjust; many blessings of God fall alike on the saint and the sinner. But here we are concerned with PROVIDENCE, which goes far beyond the mundane, carnal blessings. The promise contained in 'Jehovah Jireh' has a limiting clause, "In the mount of the Lord" — where God dwells; even as the Psalmist says, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Jesus clearly shows the interpretation for today: "Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (the necessities of life) will be added unto you". The same condition applies 'in the mount of the Lord': "Seek ye first HIS". To enjoy the blessings of God's Providence, we must be where God dwells, we must be seeking His will and pleasure.

By "God's Providence" we mean God's interest and concern in that which He has created, for the ordered control and adequate provision for all creation.

Providence is considered by those who know not God and obey not the Gospel as

Providence in General

based on Gen. 2:2. Their understanding is that God created all things and then sat back to watch. He created all the material things, those which we can see and understand, and those things which are beyond our knowledge. For all such things He provided all necessary laws to govern behaviour (i.e. after its own kind) and set in motion the forces and functions of nature which would in turn supply food and nourishment; and He ordained the pattern for the movement of the universe. While He left man with a free will He also left him prone to chance and luck. Having done all this, "Providence in General" says that God withdrew and took no further part in the existence of that which He had created, leaving all things to operate according to His basic plan.

In contrast, the true understanding of God's Providence, is

Providence in Particular

In a simple statement Jesus gave the lie to 'Providence in General' when He said, "My Father worketh even until now" (John 5:17). In Gen. 2:2, God only "rested" from His creative labours. He is still minutely interested and greatly concerned and IN FULL CONTROL of all creation.

When God eventually replied to Job, (see Job 38-42) He claimed responsibility for everything created, and full maintenance of the same. Can anyone really suppose that He, who created with such beauty and infinite care and precision, could resign His control and relax His interest in all His creation? God shows Job's insignificance in comparison with God when in effect He demands of Job, "Can you do the things which I am doing? Provide the prey for the lions, feed the ravens, use the wild ox in harness, give the horse his strength, teach the hawk to fly?" God implies that He is so vitally involved with His creation that He is doing all these things constantly. God claims to hold all the treasures of the snow and hail in reserve, for use in time of calamity.

To those who read and study God's word, "Providence in Particular" is very evident. GOD IS INVOLVED. Was He not concerned in the days of Noah, when He saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth? (Gen. 6). Was He not vitally interested when men sought to build a tower that reached up to heaven? (Gen. 11). God *was* involved: He drowned the world, He confused the language. As always God is seen to be in full control.

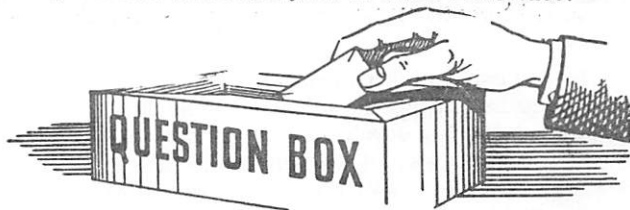
God's Providence Demonstrated

Many names could be brought forward to illustrate God's Providence in Particular, but the life of Joseph will suffice. We can look back over this life and see God's working. But do you think that Joseph understood God's Providence as each happening unfolded? When coming in peace and obedience to his father's command and for his brothers' well-being, he was roughly seized by them, stripped of his coat of many colours, bundled into an empty pit to starve to death, and later drawn out and sold into slavery? When having served Potiphar faithfully and well, he was cast into prison because of his tenacious refusal to sin against his master and his God? When having ministered to Pharaoh's butler and told him the meaning of his dream, he was forgotten by this man and was left to languish a further two years in the prison? It is not to be supposed that Joseph understood any more clearly than we can the incidental events in the full order of God's Providence. When we look back, as Joseph did, we will see, as he did, God's hand in everything. Notice the reply Joseph gave to his brothers when at the death of Jacob they feared that Joseph would now take vengeance upon them. "As for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good... to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). When we are inclined to question some particular event in God's Providence as it affects us, let us remember Joseph.

Should anyone still doubt that God was, is and always will be fully and completely involved with men, John 3:16 should dispel such doubt. God, so interested, so concerned, so involved to save man from his own destruction is clearly seen in the text, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." God provided the one and only sacrifice which could effectively make atonement and provide a way back to God for sinful man. In Jesus is seen God's Providence in Particular for every man and woman. Man has sinned, therefore man will die, physically and spiritually. The death of the physical body is of no moment, for, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". But the death of the soul, through disobedience, is of the utmost importance to man and God — of so much importance as to move God to sacrifice His only begotten Son for the salvation of man. If God is so concerned, ought not man to be equally so, seeing it is for his eternal blessing? The acceptance of God's provided mercy is most natural. Having accepted and become obedient, then our whole existence must be of ardent concern for others to know and follow God's Provided Saviour.

As Gen. 22:14 is the epitome of God's Providence in the Old Testament, so Rom. 8:28 fills the same place in the New Testament: "All things work together for good"! We will not be surprised to find that here also the same conditions are set out: "to them that love God...even to them that are called according to His purpose!" God is in full control: He has given man liberty but to the man who abides in His presence, who seeks His kingdom and His righteousness, who loves Him and is found seeking to do His will — that man can rejoice that God is truly involved with him to do him good. That man will rejoice in God's Providence.

P. JONES



Conducted by
James Gardiner

"In reply to John the Baptists' question, "I have need to be baptised of thee and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:14) Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". What did Jesus mean?"

AS we see around us today the many religious bodies which take a casual approach to the question of the necessity of baptism, it is well to remember that Jesus travelled over thirty miles specifically to be baptised by John, Jesus took baptism seriously and regarded it as a necessity. John 1:28 tells us that John at this time was baptising at a place called Bethabara. Mark 1:9 says that Jesus left home in Nazareth of Galilee to seek out John and to request baptism.

This is the first mention Matthew makes of Jesus since he was taken to Nazareth in childhood. He had remained there in obscurity, and now at the age of thirty He emerges to begin His public work as God's Messiah. He begins by being baptised by John, and God marks the occasion by sending upon Him the Holy Spirit and making a public proclamation of God's approval of His Son. (It is interesting to note that Jesus was apparently the last person to be baptised authoritatively by John—see Luke 3:21, Acts 13:23-25).

John Recognises the Messiah

When Jesus presented Himself to John and requested to be baptised, John tried at first to dissuade Him and suggested that Jesus ought to baptise John. John may have had in mind the baptism in the Holy Spirit, for had he not just been proclaiming that the One to come after Him would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire? The fact that John objected at first to baptising Jesus implies that he had recognised that Jesus was indeed the Holy One who was to come and whose coming John had been predicting. John's gospel chapter 1:33 informs us that John did not know of a *certainty* that he was speaking to the Messiah, for the sign had not yet been given. "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit." The sign was not, then, given until after the baptism, but from John's objection we assume that he was convinced that he was facing the Son of God. We can understand his humble reluctance to baptise Jesus. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Jesus had need of neither. To John the baptising of Jesus seemed strange and unsuitable, and it was more appropriate that Jesus should baptise John. John was a holy man and a prophet but still a sinner. Christ was faultless, supremely pure and good. Men are but men at best. Jesus was as far above the best of men as the stars are above the highest mountains; when one thinks of the stars the distinction between mountains

and the plain pales into insignificance. In power John was a strong and gifted man. yet how little he could do for the reformation of Israel let alone the redemption of mankind. He was but the labourer digging the foundations; Christ was the Master Builder who raised the great temple. John was but the prophet—Christ was the king. John was but a man, through the greatest prophet of all — but Jesus was the Son of God. Christ was designed for the highest honours yet in His first step He abases Himself and requests the baptism of repentance. John's modesty and humility regards this as an honour far too great for him to receive. His refusal is something akin to Peter's attitude (John 13:6-8) when he said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Thou shalt never wash my feet".

Jesus insists on being baptised

Jesus accepted John's humility but not his refusal. "Suffer it to be so *now*"; said Jesus, acknowledging some force in John's objection, but intimating by the use of the word "now" that the appearance of His inferiority to John would be but temporary — "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Some render it "...to fulfil every ordinance" or "...to fulfil every institution" and this seems to be the obvious sense of the phrase. It is true that the baptism administered by John was for penitent sinners who came confessing their sins. Jesus had no sin (not even years later when He died) and thus could not confess His sins or have them remitted. However, sinlessness does not parade itself as sinless nor hold itself aloof from the world's sin. Jesus became flesh and as a man sojourned amongst men, assumed their responsibilities and the burden of human duties. Jesus observed the Jewish law. God had sent John into the world to baptise with water (John 1:33) the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus was a Jew and it was incumbent upon Him to obey this appointment of God. Had remission of sins been the only result accomplished by John's baptism, then Jesus need not have come to John at all. Thus it was necessary for Jesus to explain to John the reason for His insistence that His being baptised was "*to fulfil all righteousness*". Baptism (John's and Christ's) has two aspects:— (1) It was an act in connection with which remission of sins took place and (2) It was an act of obedience to a positive command or ordinance of God.

It was for the latter reason that Jesus firmly insisted on being immersed by John — "for thus it becometh *us*" said Jesus. It *becometh me* (Jesus) to be baptised (in response to God's command to John), and *becometh you* (John) to baptise *me* (in response to God's command to John). Kings and princes might get the idea that being regal personages they are exempt from the commandments of God. Jesus, however, destroys in these words any such idea. He sets a glorious standard and a wonderful example to all men in all time — that the precepts and ordinances of God must receive our due regard and full obedience. We must fulfil all righteousness — execute to the full the will of God, yield complete compliance with the will and wishes of God. This is what Jesus meant by "*fulfilling all righteousness*". As it was becoming for both Jesus and John to fulfil all righteousness it is equally becoming for every one of us to do the same. Jesus attached great importance to anything commanded or stipulated by God. Thus He attached great importance to John's baptism and to *obedience to it*.

The Pharisees' Rejection of Baptism

Take, for instance, the conversation Jesus had with the chief priests and elders in the temple (Matt. 21:23-27). They came to Him as He was teaching and asked Him by what authority He taught such things and who gave Him such authority. "And Jesus answered ... I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, likewise I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying. If we shall say, From heaven; he will say ... Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say,

Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And he said ... Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

From this it is clear that Jesus was greatly displeased with those who did not avail themselves of John's baptism. It was from heaven and yet these chief priests and elders had disbelieved John and had shunned his baptism. Clearly *they* had not fulfilled all righteousness. One could not reject John's baptism and at the same time claim to be fulfilling all righteousness. If this was true of *John's baptism* it must be more so true of *Christ's baptism*. How then can men today claim to be fulfilling the will of God and yet quibble about Christ's baptism, as to whether it is necessary or not, or whether "it is essential" to salvation? How indeed? Jesus was deadly serious about John's baptism — are we to suppose He is careless or nonchalant about His own?

Purposes of John's Baptism

Take another example, recorded for us in Luke 7:24-30. Here Jesus is speaking to the crowds concerning John the Baptist and his work and says, "This is he, of whom it is written. Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptised with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of Him".

From this incident we learn that John's baptism involved more than the question of remission of sins. Those who obeyed it and were baptised *justified God* (or as the word means, "declared Him to be right"). Therefore when one was baptised of John's baptism he or she not only received remission of sins, but their act of obedience was a justification and confirmation of belief in God's command. Those who were not baptised of John's baptism had, in effect, rejected the counsel of God (and that against themselves).

If Jesus had not been baptised it could have been said by some that He disbelieved that John had been sent by God and/or that He had rejected the counsel of God against Himself. Criticism could thus have been directed towards Him. If He had neglected John's baptism He would have fallen thus far short of perfect righteousness, and this defect would have clung to Him to the end of His life. But Jesus knew better than that, and was the perfect example we know Him to be. He insisted to a reluctant John, and set the standard God requires of all those who would be well pleasing to Him — that of trying as best we can "to fulfil all righteousness".

"A Greater than John"

The lesson is that what is true of John's baptism is more so true of Christ's. The baptism of Christ, whence was it? from Heaven? or from men? Do we, like the sinners, justify God by being baptised into Christ? or do we, like the Pharisees and lawyers, reject the counsel of God against ourselves, *being not baptised of Him*. These are important questions for us if we think that we can adopt a casual approach to the baptism commanded by Christ and His apostles, in the New Testament.

After *Christ's obedience* to the ordinance of God came the opening of heaven and the public proclamation by God of His approbation of the Son, and His solemn appointment to the office of the messiah: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FEBRUARY 1973

4—Isaiah 29:9-24	Mark 7:1-23
11—Deut. 4:1-13	Mark 7:24-37
18—Exodus 16:1-18	Mark 8:1-21
25—Isaiah 53	Mark 8:22 to 9:1

"THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS" (Mark 7:3)

THERE was no dispute or doubt among the Jews at the time of our Saviour as to the inspiration and reliability of the books of Moses. These were accepted as the word of God, and enshrined His law. Jesus very plainly agreed with this view, and we must do so too without quibble. For an example, all Jews whether Sadducees, Pharisees or Herodians, agreed that "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy..." must be obeyed. Where differ-

ences arose among themselves and with Jesus Himself was in the application of "not working". The principle forbade "work" to the individual and to servants or associates, so giving the day for contemplation and worship for EVERYBODY. However even when the Israelites were in the desert, fresh from hearing the voice of God giving the commandment, there were sick people and sick animals, straying flocks and accidents of all kinds which compelled some action on any day, including the Sabbath, God could not be pleased with neglect of necessary help.

Around the basic law "tradition" had developed, both oral and written, some wise and some unwise, The principle was hedged about with details, such as how much weight one could carry, how far one could walk, even what footwear could be worn, and so on. We are quite sure Jesus observed the law to the full; but He had to defy some "traditions", and thus became guilty in the eyes of those who invented and observed them. They put their tradition before acts of

kindness and love, which certainly did not involve "work" in the sense of the law. The religious leaders hated Him when He unmasked what was a sham.

The tradition we are immediately concerned with in this passage is that relating to the washing of hands. "The Israelites", who, like other oriental "nations"; fed with their fingers, washed their hands before meals for the sake of "cleanliness". But these customary washings were distinct from the ceremonial "washings"; in the former, water was poured upon the hands; in the latter, the hands "were plunged in water" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools*). Thus while in verses 2 and 3 the Greek for normal cleansing of hands is used, in verse 4 "wash" and "washings" represent the word "baptizo", meaning dip.

Inward Cleanness

Jesus had by this time acquired the position of a Rabbi with His disciples. It is interesting to note that even the Pharisees treated Him as such, perhaps reluctantly—and so Nicodemus regarded Him (John 3:2). He was expected to instruct and require His followers to observe the ceremonial washings. The "common people" from whom His disciples were chosen would not follow this in their busy, daily occupations. Jesus did not require them to do so—hence the objection and criticism. "He could not be an approved Teacher unless..." we suppose they thought. The accusation did not mean that their hands were dirty, nor did it in the case of Jesus Himself (see Luke 11:37 & 38).

The whole law of Moses required both physical, ceremonial and spiritual cleanliness, because God wanted a clean nation to represent Him. And the principle holds good today for us, in even stricter measure, the main emphasis being upon spiritual purity—"His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16). "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

The conflict with official religion had developed very early in the sacred ministry of Jesus. It had now reached the stage when Pharisees and scribes from

Jerusalem (the headquarters so to speak) came deliberately to Galilee to watch Him. They were determined to hinder, stop or destroy Him. They are now openly His enemies. They found themselves powerless to destroy His popularity with the "common people", but still thought it possible to "show up" His failure to satisfy the established authority of the official exponents of the Law, in which the nation took such pride. The rulers and elders with the highest offices in synagogue and Temple had a firm hold on the populace—which must partly at least account for their final success in turning the mob against Jesus.

However, their efforts on this occasion, as on others, met with both rebuke and exposure. Any attempt to overawe Jesus was doomed to failure. Not only were they defeated in argument, but their own falsity and the hollowness of their rules and regulations were brought into light. This time He seems to have deliberately extended His discourse to the crowd (7:14) so that the crowd would know He had opposed those who had come against Him (7:1).

There is much for us all to learn from the sad condition of the religious world of our Saviour's time. The leaders were concerned to observe the ceremonials, neglecting the condition of the heart with which almost solely God was concerned. It is important we should not stickle for New Testament forms without the all-pervading motive of love.

R.B. SCOTT

THIS IS THE WORST — — —

Of all loves: to love without being loved.
 Of all wounds: to be wounded by a friend.
 Of all fears: to be afraid of one's self.
 Of all treason: to betray one's own conscience.
 Of all failures: to fail without regrets.
 Of all defeats: to be defeated because we did not fight.
 Of all religions: to be content with things as they are.

The Converted Catholic

THE DEPTH OF SIN

THOMAS Ward Beecher could not bear deceit. Finding a clock in his church was habitually to fast or too slow, he hung a placard above it, reading "Don't blame my hands — the trouble lies deeper."

That is where the trouble lies with us when our hands or feet or lips or thoughts do wrong. The trouble lies so deep that only God's power can deal with it. Sin goes deep, but Christ goes deeper.

HINTS TO SPEAKERS

DON'T speak because you have to say something, but because you have something to say.

Begin low, speak slow;
 Take fire, rise higher;
 When most impressed be self-possessed;
 At the end wax warm
 And sit down in a storm.

(From *ABC of Chairmanship* by Sir. W. Citrine)

WAR MAKES SIN APPEAR RIGHT

People accept the theory that "all things are fair in love and war," Every advantage is taken in war to whip the enemy. All kinds of deception are practised; anything to put the enemy off guard.

Is this what the Lord wants His children to do? If so, what is the good of listening to what the New Testament says? In time of peace we would not dare to do what is done in war. Sin is sin, whether in war or in peace. H.M. Phillips

"PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF"

Thou must be true to thyself if thou the truth must teach;
 Thy soul must overflow if thou another soul wouldst reach;
 It needs the overflow of heart to give the lips full speech.
 Think truly, and thy thoughts shall the world's famine feed;
 Speak truly and each word of thine shall be a faithful seed;
 Live truly and thy life shall be a great and noble creed.
 H. BONAR

IT WORKS

A mechanic was called to repair the mechanism of a giant telescope. At dinner hour the chief astronomer came upon the mechanic reading his Bible. "What good do you expect from reading that out-of-date book?" asked the astronomer. "You don't even know who wrote it." The mechanic said, "Do you use the multiplication table in your calculations?"

"Yes, of course."

"Do you know who wrote it?"

"Why, no."

"Then how can you trust it?"

"Because it works."

"Well, I trust the Bible for the same reason - it works."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District: On Saturday, 9th December 1972, a large number of brethren met at Motherwell for mutual benefit, to discuss "the role of the church in the world today".

The discussion was led by Bro. W. Black, Dalmellington and Bro. Tom Nisbet Haddington, and was presided over by Bro. Maurice Ferguson, Easthouses.

The discussion which followed each speaker's presentation of the subject was both varied and interesting, and mention was made of what the attitude of the church should be towards social and political life. It was voiced that *each member* of the church could engage in certain spheres of life, if desired, but not *the church*. Like Jesus, however, we should "Do good to all men", but do right things in the right way so that God is glorified.

It was generally agreed that the speakers had brought out the main role of the church in the world today.

God willing, we hope next to meet at Tranent on Saturday 24th March 1973 to discuss "what were the demons in the

N.T. scriptures and do they exist today?" led by Bro. Maurice Ferguson, Easthouses and Bro. L. Purcell, Motherwell, presided over by Bro. Hugh Davidson Motherwell.

We thank the brethren at Motherwell for their hospitality. HUGH DAVIDSON

Notes on the paper presented by William Black below, Tom Nisbet's notes held over to next months issue, owing to lack of space.

William Black

"The role of the church in the world today":

This is very important to every member it has never changed.

Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers".

1st day of week - "Do this in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26).

A Faithful Witness

The church is responsible for the furtherance and defence of the gospel.

The message must be proclaimed:

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they heal without a preacher?" "Go into all the world preach the gospel (Mark 16:15)

The defence of the gospel in this modern & religious world. Here again the church plays her part in carrying out the instructions given by Paul to Timothy. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

Woodstock, Capetown, South Africa: On 30th October 1972 Ronald Dickenson was baptised.

A series of gospel meetings, in which Bro. Claud Flynn of the Turfontein congregation was the preacher, was "crowned with success" when Edwin Greeff was baptised at midnight on 10th November 1972 T.W. HARTLE

OBITUARY

Blackburn, New Wellington Street: With sorrow we record the death of a dearly loved Brother—Edward Haworth—at the age of seventy six years. Bro. Ted was held in high esteem by many, especially by his brethren here, who admired his patience and cheerfulness over many years of physical suffering, and his faithfulness to the Lord whom he loved. His example will long remain with us as an encouragement to serve our Master as our brother did—in confident expectation of that great day when He will return to claim His own. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Bro. H. Davenport led the assembly who met to show their respect to a brother well loved. We commend those who remain to the comfort of the Saviour. R.R.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Beulah Road: It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Bro. Alfred Jackson, aged 72, on 12th December, 1972.

Bro. Jackson had been in fellowship with the church here since his immersion into Christ on January 19th, 1930. He was a faithful brother, respected by his brethren, particularly for the deep and faithful study of God's word which he sought not only to know but to teach and pass on to the church. He was an interesting and in some ways a unique personality. He possessed much musical and artistic talent, and although he was a good conversationalist, he rarely failed to turn the topic round to the Scriptures, with good effect.

He had been in failing health for some months and displayed courage in spite of many setbacks. He has now gone to a deserved rest, confident in the hope of the resurrection and eternal life. We commend his widow Winifred to the grace

and love of the Eternal God, and we pray that her memories of her loved one will comfort and cherish her.

Our brother was laid to rest on Friday 15th December, the services at the meeting room and at the interment being conducted by Bro. Albert Winstanley.

T. WOODHOUSE.

Kirkcaldy, Hayfield Road: With deep regret we record the passing on January 1st, of Bro. T. Steedman, one of our elders. Bro. Steedman was a long serving member of the church, first at Rose Street and then at Hayfield Road. For many years he served as Sunday school teacher, superintendent, song-leader, deacon and elder. His cheery smile and willingness to help will long be remembered. Latterly, owing to a disability, he was unable to meet with us physically, but was always with us in spirit.

We commend our Sis. Steedman her son Bro. Tom to the loving mercy of our Lord and Saviour in their hour of sorrow, and join with them as they sorrow, but not without hope.

Bro. J. Moyes conducted the service at the crematorium, where many brethren and friends met to pay their last respects.

A. ROBERTS

COMING EVENTS

Spring Conference and Rally: The church at Dewsbury invites you to the above on Saturday April 21st, 1973.

Business Session 2-30 to 3-30 p.m.

Devotional Session 3-30 to 4-30 p.m.

Tea Interval

Gospel Meeting 6-30 p.m.

Book the Day.

Lower Peel Street, Bradford Road,

DEWSBURY, Yorks.

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ARTICLES AND OTHER LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS are welcomed by the Editor.

NEWS ITEMS, REPORTS OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES and notices of COMING EVENTS are invited. The Editor is solely responsible for decisions as to the inclusion or exclusion of any such contributions forwarded for publication, whether by churches or individuals.

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