

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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AUGUST, 1969

THE OLDEST ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

WHAT has been called "the oldest ecumenical movement in America" began over a century and a half ago in this spirit of free discussion and a desire for unity in Christ. This movement resulted from the efforts of men who came from various denominational backgrounds. Barton W. Stone of Kentucky, for example, was a Presbyterian. Walter Scott of Ohio was a Presbyterian; Elias Smith and Abner Jones of New England were Baptists; James O'Kelly of North Carolina was a Methodist. A number of these and others had begun the plea for discarding human names, organizations, and practices and returning to the Bible only, before Thomas and Alexander Campbell, who were Presbyterians, came to this country from Ireland in 1807 and 1809. The Campbells later became recognized as leaders in this movement.

The churches of Christ are among the heirs of this "Restoration Movement." The whole plea and purpose of this movement is to work toward the complete restoration of New Testament Christianity to a world that has been torn by sectarian strife and confusion. We must confess that our efforts to implement this plea have been far from perfect. But we believe that this ideal is most relevant to this "ecumenical age" in which we live.

We submit the proposition that the only right or workable formula for unity in Christ is that which is pictured in the New Testament. The first Christians enjoyed the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" for which we all long. How can we realize this ideal today? Here are a few suggestions:

Essentials for Restoration

1. *The acceptance of the Bible only as authority in religion.* This is a far-reaching principle. It means not only the acceptance of the Bible in theory as our only guide, but the actual discarding of all human creeds and standards and returning to the Bible only as our rule of faith and practice. Thomas Campbell wrote in his *Declaration and Address*:

"Our desire therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that, rejecting human opinions and the inventions of men as of any authority, or as having any place in the church of God, we might forever cease from further contentions about such things; returning and holding fast to the original standard; taking the Divine Word alone for our guide."

The all-sufficiency and the alone-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as our guide in spiritual matters is a fundamental teaching of the Bible. In the Scriptures we have that

which completely furnishes unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Christ came into the world as Emmanuel ("God with us") and was recognized by God as his Son and the prophet whom we must hear (Matt. 1:23; 3:17; 17:5). Christ was given "all authority in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). He gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles to guide them fully in speaking and writing his message as we have it in the New Testament (John 14:26; 16:13). This message in its written form is just as authoritative as it was in its spoken form (2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Cor. 14:37).

Thus we see the Holy Scriptures as a fixed, objective norm. Men can never come together on the creeds, the theories, and the doctrines of men. But they can come together on the Bible as the common authority and basis for united faith and action.

2. *A conscious and purposeful effort to realize the unity for which Christ prayed.* You will recall that Christ prayed that his followers might be one, as he and the Father are one (John 17:20-21). Surely he did not pray for that which is undesirable or impossible. For this prayer to be answered in our time, several things are necessary:

There must be an understanding and acceptance of the New Testament concept of undenominational Christianity. This concept requires the recognition of Christ only as the head of the church. Paul said that God "has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). The concept of undenominational Christianity also requires the acceptance of the ideal set forth by Paul when he said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all . . ." (Eph. 4:4-6).

It is clear that believers in Christ in the days of the apostles were united in one body and that our present denominational situation did not exist. In his *Declaration and Address*, Thomas Campbell stated this principle in these words:

"That the Church of Christ upon the earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one, consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct."

For believers in Christ to be united, there must be an appreciation of the distinction between faith and opinion. By drawing a sharp distinction between the opinions of men and what God has clearly taught, the leaders of the Restoration Movement showed that unity does not necessitate agreement on all of our opinions. They insisted that only what is expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God should be required as a basis for communion. Here I quote again Thomas Campbell in his *Declaration and Address*:

"That in order to this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything be admitted, as of divine obligation in their church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament church, either by express terms or by approved precedent."

3. *Proper efforts to restore "the ancient order of things."* To bring about the unity of all believers, it is needful that we go further than merely attempting a reformation of the existing religious order. We must rather go all the way back to the original ground of Christianity as pictured in the New Testament—beyond denominations and human creeds, beyond Rome, and back to primitive Christianity. We must seek in our times to reproduce the apostolic church in "its doctrine, its ordinances, and its fruits."

Christians Only

In going back to the original ground of Christianity, it will be necessary to discard all human names and practices and to be Christians only. Quoting Thomas Campbell again in his *Declaration and Address*, we see this ideal expressed:

"With direct reference to the state of things, and, as we humbly think, in perfect consistency with the foregoing. . . We declare ourselves ready to relinquish whatever

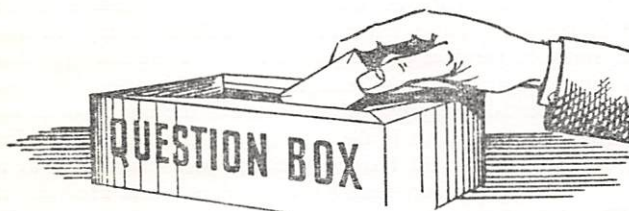
we have hitherto received as a matter of faith and practice, not expressly taught and enjoined in the word of God, so that we and our brethren might, by this mutual concession, return together to the original constitutional unity of the Christian church, and dwell together in peace and charity."

It is good in this connection that we recall what some other great leaders of the past have said. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said, "Would to God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms were forgot." Albert Barnes, noted Presbyterian commentator, said, "Should not and will not all these divisions be merged into the high and holy name Christian?" Henry Ward Beecher, a famous Congregationalist, said, "Let me speak the language of heaven and call you simply Christians." It was the plea of the great reformer, Martin Luther: "I pray, leave my name alone and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians." The renowned Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, put it like this: "I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will perish, but let Christ's name live forever."

Christ said the word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). That divine word, preached and received in its purity, will have the same results today that it had long ago. By believing, teaching, and practising the same things that the early disciples did, we shall see the same unity in Christ produced today that existed in the early church.

We live at an opportune time for the presentation of the New Testament plea for unity of all of the followers of Christ. There is evidence that some of the leaders among present ecumenical movements are willing to consider this plea. Some of their statements come very close to expressing New Testament ideals concerning unity in Christ. May the Lord hasten the day when all of his professed followers will be one, even as he and the Father are one.

H. G. SHELburnE, jr., in *Gospel Tidings*



Conducted by
James Gardiner

THE MILLENNIUM: II

LAST month I tried to show from the New Testament books (*other than* the Revelation) that any construction placed upon the Revelation (especially with reference to the commonly held belief concerning the "thousand years reign") could not be a literal one, and that at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ no room or place for such a reign could be found.

In this article perhaps a few thoughts on the book of Revelation itself would be helpful to our questioner. I make no pretence at understanding much of this book, and can but hope to provoke some points which each individual can pursue himself or herself.

What The Revelation Does Not Teach

Revelation 20:4 says that John saw ". . . thrones, and they sat upon them and judgement was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." From this verse many feel justified in saying that Jesus will return to this earth and begin a reign over all nations

for one thousand years' duration. I know of no verse in the New Testament which says that, when Jesus comes again, He will ever set foot upon the earth, much less reign upon the earth. Jesus is reigning *now*, and has been for some two thousand years, and will continue to reign *until* all His enemies shall have been destroyed. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, and death will be destroyed when Jesus returns, when death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Neither do the relevant verses in Rev. 20 mention anything about a "reign of Christ." Christ will not reign sometime in the future, *i.e.* when He comes again, but *has been* reigning, *is now* reigning and *will reign* until He comes again; *then* He shall cease from reigning. The verse quoted *does* say, however, that *certain* individuals will reign, and will reign with Christ, and these individuals were to be confined to "those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and who had not worshipped the beast." *They*—those certain souls—no more and no less a number—were not only to *reign* with Christ but to *live* with Him, for this certain period of time; in a special sense and in a particular way.

The Revelation Fulfilled

When we consider all the profound and momentous events which will accompany the second and final coming of Jesus, and which will take place simultaneously with His coming "in the wink of an eye," one realises that the predictions of John in the Revelation will not come to pass then, and therefore must have already come to pass. Indeed it is very doubtful if any of the Revelation has a future application. The book has, most likely, all now come to pass. It was addressed in general to all those Christians in the early days of the church who were about to undergo dreadful persecution, and in particular to the seven churches in Asia.

The book seems to have been written as a warning of things to come and also a comfort and encouragement when these things did come to pass. The liberal use of symbols and figurative language gives *us* much difficulty in understanding it *now*; but those to whom it was addressed were no doubt more able to understand and interpret the imagery. It is said that the signs and symbols were used in order to cloud the meaning of the book to those for whom it was not intended, *i.e.* the enemies of the gospel, and thereby acted in the sense that a letter in code would do today. In like manner Jesus, at one time, spoke in parables to the people but gave the interpretation thereof privately to His disciples. Certain phrases seem to confirm this outlook on the book and the fact that the fulfilment of the prophetic content of the book would not be long delayed, but would come to pass even in the lifetime of some then living: for example "Hold fast that which thou hast till I come." If this was intended to be a comfort to Christians living under persecution nearly two thousand years ago (and it was) then clearly it could not be referring to His *second* coming, but referred to His coming to them in some special way and making His presence felt in comforting them in their trials. The imagery of the book certainly seems to portend trials and tribulation—the beasts; famines; pouring out of the vials; scourges, pestilences and many other disasters—all seemingly indicative of imprisonment, torture and death itself in store for Christ's followers.

Assurance of Victory

In the sixth chapter; we have the vision of the "souls under the altar"—the souls of those beheaded for the testimony of God—an abject picture of apparent defeat. The scenes and symbols continue until this twentieth chapter where we see again the souls of those beheaded for the testimony of God—but this time in glory and victory and sitting upon thrones (this being described as a resurrection or vindication of their cause). There follows in the closing chapters of the book, the glorious eventual and ultimate victory of the church, emerging from those dark days of persecution and entering upon a more peaceful time. John's closing words again indicate the immediacy of the events foretold in the book, "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." Jesus promises to John and his contemporaries that He would "come" soon and give succour to them in the distressing times ahead, outlined in the book.

It would appear, then, that the prophecies of the Revelation were "shortly" to come to pass and for reasons best known at that time were "signified" to the early Christians in mysticism—a mighty contrast to the simple clarity of the other books of the New Testament, where the essential truths of salvation are expounded in such plain and open language. Nothing that God wants *us* to know *today* is clouded in symbolical or mystical terminology, and this fact alone, I think, tends to confirm the belief that Revelation had application and fulfilment in the early days of the church.

Literal or Figurative ?

The term "a thousand years" is the longest period of time referred to in the book. There are six references to it in the twentieth chapter and it occurs nowhere else. Three of the references refer to the time the devil is bound, and three to the time of the reigning of the saints. If all other numbers in the book had a *strictly literal* application, then the thousand years should doubtless be construed likewise; but since none of the others is held to a strictly literal application, why should the thousand years be? Were there literally 200,000,000 galloping horsemen, no more and no less? Did a literal stream of human blood, horse-bridle deep, actually run for 200 miles (and actually flow from the grapes in a winepress)? Were exactly seven thousand, not one more or one less, slain in the earthquake? Very little in the book is to be taken literally, and we ask upon what basis we should assume that the "thousand years" is to be regarded as a thousand literal years of time. The great millennial theory has been built up around the mention of a thousand years: but surely there is good reason for doubting that a thousand years, or any other specific period of time, was intended at all. When we think of a bottomless pit, of a great chain, of binding Satan with the chain, of casting the bound Satan into this bottomless pit, we surely must realize that all of that is a figurative treatment of the prophetic facts being announced. Satan is in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Do we really think this refers to a thousand literal years?

I suggest then that Rev. 20 says nothing at all about a millennial reign of Christ at His coming. The verse 4 ("... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years") says nothing about Christ's second coming, nor is it mentioned; nor does it mention a bodily resurrection of everyone; nor does it mention a reign on earth; nor does it mention any geographical location such as Jerusalem; nor does it mention David's throne. *Certain souls*, disembodied spirits, were to reign and live with Jesus for a period of time, in very special circumstances and in a very particular sense, and perhaps the fact that disembodied spirits are involved would rule out the earth as a venue for the reign.

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

"ALL THINGS NEW"

SOMEONE somewhere has well said that each man best understands a letter addressed to himself. Apply this to the New Testament Epistles and we shall see that seeming problems to us were not so to the men of those days. Add to this the fact of the personal presence of the Apostles among them and we see ourselves in a different position. The tendency among us to treat the N.T. as a mere text-book robs us of a clear insight into the dealings of God with men. Often the whole scheme of redemption is either ignored or unknown and speculative thoughts are expended upon topics outside its framework.

What is often lost sight of is the fact that in the N.T. we are reading of two dispensations and of persons who had lived under both (Rom. 7:4; 1 Peter 1:17-21). Also that the old dispensation, because of fault, was "to be taken out of the way"

(Heb. 8:8; Col. 2:14). The superiority of one over the other is discussed at length, notably in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Yet in our scrutiny we find that terms used in one carried over to the other and failure to note this leads to confusion of thought,—the guiding features being Faith following Law and Spiritual following Carnal. Thus then when we find terms describing privileges under the “Law” carried over to those of “Faith” we must be prepared to appreciate their higher values as being the “substance” of good things and not “shadows” of the Law (Heb. 11:1). So we read of “better covenant,” “better hope,” “better promises,” “better substance.” The “temple of living stones” follows the “temple of hewn stone”—“heavenly Jerusalem,” “holy nation,” a qualifying word being affixed to show the difference.

In addition the symbolic description is also carried over: Moses, Isaiah, and Jesus use the term “heaven and earth” to represent the Jewish Economy (Deut. 31:30 to 32:6; Isaiah 1:2-4; Matt. 5:18). In Haggai 2:6 the prophet speaks of the “shaking of heaven and earth.” In Luke 21:26-36 Jesus applies it to the Jewish Economy, and Heb. 12:27 refers to it and applies it to the Jewish Economy, which was removed; whereas they had received a kingdom which could not be shaken, that is Christ’s. These converted Jews to whom Paul is writing would have that prophecy before them to examine.

In 2 Peter 3:13, the Apostle speaks of “new heavens and a new earth,” which is a fulfilment of a promise. The Jewish Economy was upheld and ruled over by God. In Matt. 21:43 Jesus says this Divine system would be removed from the Jews and given to others, yet still under Divine rule. That is the Church. What Paul in Heb. 12:27 calls a kingdom, Peter calls a “new heavens and new earth.” Stripped of its symbolism it is purely a case of one system taking the place of another. Even in Rev. 21, we find the same idea—a system ruled over by the Dragon being overthrown by one ruled over by the Lamb.

In Isaiah 65:17 we find a promise: “For behold I create new heavens and a new earth.” In the next verse we are told that it is a people thus spoken of and not a material universe. Again in verse 20 we are told it is a place where sin can exist. Are we right in concluding that it is to this promise that Peter refers? For it is a fact that the Kingdom of God is righteousness (Rom. 14:17). Its King reigns in righteousness (Heb. 1:8; Isa. 32:1; Jer. 23:5-6), the whole being a *NEW CREATION, institutionally* (Isa. 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Heb. 12:18-24); *in subjects* (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:15; 4:24); *in worship* (John 4:23; Phil. 3:3); *a new destiny* (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18): the whole coming under the title “a new and living way” (Heb. 10:20).

Since Matt. 5:5 and 5:18 appear topical at the moment an observation may not be amiss. Both come within the framework of the Christian Economy. The first seems best understood by finding how those of N.T. times understood this prophecy in Isaiah 65. From Matt. 19:27-30; Acts 4:34-37; 5:8 the fact that material possessions were sold shows that they understood the blessings of the Gospel to be spiritual and not material. As regards Matt. 5:18 it appears that Jesus is qualifying His statement in the previous verse by saying that the Law could not become obsolete in its minutest enjoiner whilst the dispensation existed,—the term “heaven and earth” being the Jewish economy.

It should be kept in mind that the position in which God had placed the Church under the ministry of the Apostles was opposed by the nation of the Jews (Acts 28:22), preventing the Church from enjoying her rightful position in the world. With the fall of Jerusalem, and the Mosaic economy dissolved, this opposition ceased and the Church enjoyed her rightful position until the Gentile and Pagan persecutions. She was to be the “light bearer,” a position previously held by the Jews (Rom. 3:1-2). Even though the Church met this opposition and was to pass through what is termed the “tunnel-period,” through the providence of God she survived and there was again an open manifestation of the Church of Christ on earth (Rev. 21 & 22), due to the work of the Reformers and the termination of the Papal assumption of civil power (A.D. 1870). Hence our present position as churches of Christ. So the whole fabric of the Christian economy is seen as a new Kingdom whose King reigns in righteousness; a new nation

of righteous subjects who are "new creatures born of water and the Spirit"; a new order of worship, each being a priest in his own right; a new centre of authority and rule (the Elders); a new destiny—"ever with the Lord"; a new outlook—eternity; a new creation; "new heavens and earth," symbolically. All comprehended in "a new and living way" (Heb. 10:18).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1969

3—Psalm 45	Hebrews 1
10—Psalm 8	Hebrews 2
17—Numbers 14:26-45	Hebrews 3
24—Psalm 95	Hebrews 4:1-13
31—Exodus 28:1-12	Heb. 4:14 to 5:14

THE THRILL OF WORDS

THE incident recorded so skilfully by Luke (ch. 24) of that memorable walk to Emmaus, indicates the power of words to thrill. The words of the Saviour made their hearts burn within them. In this case there were two influences at work: the words themselves and the personal presence of the speaker. His hearers would not have been moved had He not spoken. It was His conversation, without knowledge of His identity, which stirred their emotions and stimulated their thought. The subject of His talk was indeed one which stirs every truly Christian heart. Words convey thoughts and thoughts inspire motives, thus developing character and controlling attitudes and action.

"In the beginning was the WORD," writes the apostle John. HE is the one true source of the knowledge of God, and He is so by the revelation of His person in words. But they are LIVING words, the inspiration of every good endowment and every perfect gift (James 1:16). The original words of the holy writings have the power to thrill our human personalities. The gospel, good tidings in words, is the power of God unto salvation when those words become to us reality and truth and are accepted and thus generate the new life.

To the writer, and it may be to some extent peculiar to him, this letter to the Hebrews, which we are reading and studying for nearly four months, has a special charm. Charm may not be the correct word. It is inadequate. Reading chapter 11 in prison is an experience not

to be forgotten. Try it when you, dear reader, feel discouraged. We would, however, like to take a special look at the opening thoughts of the letter at this time.

We know of course that it was not written in English, but our "authorised" version is a monument of English at its best. It is universally acknowledged to have a beauty of language all its own. We attribute this to the object and motives of the translators, godly men drawn from the scholars of all religious bodies of the time, to provide a version which would have the respect of all the people, and give them in their mother tongue the very thoughts and ideas of the "holy men of God who spake [and wrote, of course] as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The translators made mistakes, and acknowledged their fallibility. Their work has endured in a most remarkable way, and has undoubtedly been the means of bringing millions to the knowledge of the true God. We are glad of our newer translations. We have wondered sometimes whether the grandeur of the English translation reflects a grandeur in the original tongues, and feel convinced this is so. Although the New Testament Greek is not classical but "vulgar" [common], the whole tenor of the literature is so superior to any other literature in the world that the actual diction is on a higher level. The subject of a story elevates or degrades that story. Much modern writing is repugnant to the saints, as is much that comes out of the B.B.C. with its "damns," and "blasts" and "good Gods"—expletives which should never soil a Christian's thought or words. Christianity is founded on the highest and noblest standards known to man. It elevates anything it touches.

Farrar writes of our letter: "In its rhythm and balance it has been described as 'elaborately and faultlessly rhetorical.'" The Writer "is never ungrammatical, never irregular, never personal; he never struggles for expression . . . He has less of burning passion, and more of conscious

literary self-control . . . The eloquence of this writer . . . resembles the flow of a river: the rhetoric of Paul is like the rush of a mountain torrent amid opposing rocks." This refers to the original language, not the English. But who will rival "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" (1:3)? As a mental exercise with spiritual result, we repeat the efforts of other translators:—

R.V. "The effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance."

R.S.V. "Reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature."

N.E.B. "The effulgence of God's splendour and the stamp of God's very being."

Phillips. "Radiance of the glory of God, flawless expression of the nature of God."

Rotherham. "An eradiated brightness of His glory, and an exact representation of His very being."

Weymouth. "He brightly reflects God's glory and is the exact representation of His being."

Moffatt. "Reflecting God's bright glory and stamped with God's own character."

Perhaps our readers will excuse this concentration on so short a passage, but it illustrates the power of the original words to stimulate the thoughts of the scholars who translate and pass on the inspiration of the Spirit of God to us who, unable to do the work ourselves, receive the very impression and stimulation they themselves received. In this connection we most warmly recommend the introduction to the original edition of "Letters to Young Churches" by J. B. Phillips, and his later book "Ring of Truth." "Verbal" inspiration is however the only explanation of what we have been writing, meaning by that, of course, inspiration of the original words, not the translation of them. There is a striking and necessary humility on the part of translators, but how greatly we in this age have been blessed by their painstaking and exacting labours. Wherever there is the longing to pass on, not to interpret exactly but to transmit, blessing of inestimable value is brought.

We have quoted the apostle John, and have been impressed by his variety of

expression and his similarity of thought to the Writer to the Hebrews. May the supreme glory of our Saviour be deeply impressed on us all as we read.

R. B. SCOTT

A Series for our Womenfolk

LESSONS FROM LIFE

No. 5: LIGHT

"I am the Light of the World"

(John 8:12)

"Ye are the light of the world"

(Matt. 5:14)

OUR previous studies have all been centred round commodities that we use as food or as drink. We are now in this the last of this series going to study the element we all need to work with—LIGHT. The two texts at the head of this article may seem to be contradictory; but actually they are complementary to each other. What Christ is here stating is that there are two sources of spiritual light—He as one, we as the other. In some respects this is not unlike the sun and the moon: one is a source of light, the other a source of *reflected* light.

As on previous occasions when our Lord has used earthly elements to teach celestial truths He has shown that in one there are the elements of the other. Let us note some of them.

What Light Does

First, light is a dispeller of darkness, not darkness a dispeller of light. Darkness is merely the absence of light, and even the humble match in a dark corner can soon dispel darkness. It is a truism that the greater the darkness the brighter the light. As a small boy I used to watch colliers coming out of the local pit carrying their pit lamps. At the time we wondered how they managed to see with such dim little lights as they appeared to be. In later years we were privileged to go down a colliery and to experience at first hand the apparently impenetrable blackness of a coal mine and to see how effective the little Davies lamp was in penetrating that blackness.

Secondly, all light must have a source, whether oil, gas, electricity or natural light; and it is worthy of note that, good as artificial light is, once the sun comes

out in all its brilliance, all other man-made lights are needless.

It is interesting to review the development of light these last seventy years. In our childhood the only means of illumination in our home was an oil lamp set in the middle of the table; to enter other rooms we had to carry a candle in a candlestick. Our house, in addition to bedrooms, had what is known as a cellar: readers in northern industrial areas may be living in similar houses to-day. We recall our feelings when we were sent down into what to us seemed the gloomy depths of that dark cellar to fetch up the coal, and how glad we were of the friendly light of the candle!

Later on we graduated to gaslight, and oh the glorious brilliance of that new-fangled form of lighting! Why we could even go to bed with it and dispense with the candle. Later still we reached the electricity stage: and oh the shock we got when that dark cellar was illuminated in this searching light—dust and cobwebs everywhere! The very next day we got busy cleaning to make that cellar look more respectable.

That brings us to our next point:

Light is a revealer of things hid: it shows up all the dark hidden things, the dust and grime that have accumulated over the years. How much more so are lives lacking the light of God's love, overgrown with the grime of sin and iniquity.

Intellectual and Spiritual Light

As *artificial light* takes many forms, so there are other forms of *intellectual light*. We have the Light of Love, the Light of Understanding, the Light of Knowledge, Learning and Wisdom. How dark the world would be without these, and, most of all, without the Light of God's love to illumine our way.

In recent years we have come to live out in the country and have found it very healthy and invigorating in the summer. But our first winter in these country lanes was an experience; we had to search out forgotten war-time torch lights and go seeking batteries; the unlit country lanes after the bright lights of the town seemed dark and menacing—a situation that the country people around one took in their

stride. We have of course got used to it, but it was an experience nevertheless. We recall an old hymn we used to sing

“Holy Father, cheer our way
With Thy love's perpetual ray;
Grant us every closing day
Light at eventide.”

Now for our two texts. Here Christ is linking Himself with his followers as bearers of light: He teaches what ought to be obvious, but often isn't—that a light to be of use has to be high up; you don't put it under a “bushel” (a cover), He said, but on a candlestick that it might illumine the house, and we are told so to let our lights shine that people may see, not us, but the light of good works done in his name with the object of glorifying God.

The sceptics may ask why does God require us; well, He has ordered it so. This is illustrated by the well-known hymn:

“Brightly gleams our Father's mercy
From his lighthouse evermore;
But to us he gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.

“Let the lower lights be burning;
Send a gleam across the wave;
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.”

We are reminded of a story of a visitor at a seaside town, where a tall lighthouse stood almost at the harbour entrance. He was puzzled by a smaller iron standard with a light attached. He could not see the use of such a small light when the great lighthouse was there sending its powerful beam across the sea. It was when he was returning from a trip out to sea after nightfall that he saw the significance of that little light: he learnt that the navigator of that ship looked for the point when the greater light from the lighthouse was in line with the “lesser light,” and knew thereby he was opposite the harbour entrance and could go ahead with safety. That little light had its uses, in co-operating with the greater light, in thus guiding ships safely to harbour.

We are greatly blest these days with abundance of light in a variety of forms. Let us show our appreciation by being lights ourselves, illuminating our homes with the light of God's love. We may not

be great lights in God's world, but we can be most important "lower lights" that may help some soul to find its way into the safe harbour of God's love.

H. BAINES

(Concluded)

CORRESPONDENCE

"PLEASE HELP BIAFRA"

On page 65 of our June issue under the above heading an appeal is printed to help those in danger of perishing in Biafra through hunger. We realise that political and military issues are holding up the supply of life-giving food and other necessities, even through the Red Cross, to these dying ones. We know that the situation in Nigeria is explosive and fraught with danger to and suspicion of those trying to ease it. Even since the appeal was published two months ago events have demonstrated all the more clearly this danger and suspicion. We have not the least desire to take any political or military part in this fearful conflict. We simply want to help, for the sole reason that these people need help, and we can give it.—[EDITOR]

*Copy of letter from
SAMUEL OLUFEMI DARAMOLA,
AGEGE, NIGERIA, 3/7/69.*

Dear Brother Scott,

It is a pity that the Scripture Standard posted on June 3rd arrived on July 3rd. The fact that you did not know the situation of Nigeria present war as well as other brethren yonder and my staying here is a good advantage to give you the contents of the war.

In the first place I want you to suspend your aid toward the contribution to the suggested fund of the unexisted Biafra republic. It is a mere propaganda of collecting money to buy equipment of war. This is not a religious war but political war. If at all there should be any aid from you, it should be sent to the Nigerian members of Church of Christ to be distributed among the liberated areas. The majority of the Church of Christ had been liberated from rebels' hand and Nigerian congregations are sending relief

to them though we need other brethren's aid towards the re-organisation of the deserted churches. There is no single Church of Christ under the few villages held by the Biafrans. The few citizens under them had escaped and now under federal troops' protection. The only few men under the control of Biafrans are soldiers who had no opportunity, or a second to think about the progress of churches but ways of tricking the world and collecting money to prolong the war.

In such case, Church of Christ should not jump into such aid without thorough investigation of the situation. Jesus prayed for the unity of churches and also applicable to the nations as well.

Please, Brother Scott, tell our people yonder to beware of having hand in this situation without information from both sides. Biafrans promised to come and give you information about the situation, they will never give you the correct information of the situations. They must be definitely one way sided.

Unlike the other churches, Church of Christ must be a good example to the world. The church is still young in Nigeria. Outside interference into the political national affairs can jeopardise its reputation.

If the presence of any member here can be of advantage to brethren yonder, we can arrange for two men to come and give you the correct information about the situation. Please reply in time and publish the most important clauses of this letter to enlighten the brethren. Why are you always slow in replying to my letters? The reply of this is very urgent. The situation is not as Biafrans had explained it.

Yours in Christ,

(signed) S. O. Daramola

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Ilkeston. — The church celebrated its 89th anniversary on June 7th and 8th. On the Saturday about ninety members and friends, including members from churches in the Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire, sat down to tea.

The evening service was well attended, and was ably presided over by Bro. Kenneth Faulks of Ilkeston. We were favoured once again with the presence of Bro. Allan Ashurst of Manchester as our guest speaker, who took for his subject "What is Christianity's claim to Originality?"

On Lord's Day, when 43 members were present around the Lord's Table, Bro. Ashurst gave a fine exhortation. At the gospel service, when again there was a good number of members and friends present, Bro. Ashurst took for his address "I'd rather have Jesus," making a powerful appeal to take Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The church wishes to thank Bro. Ashurst for his faithful preaching of the gospel. May God bless the sowing of the seed in His vineyard.

F. Gregory

KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD—WIGAN DISTRICT

On Saturday, July 5th, a fellowship out of the ordinary was enjoyed by brethren from the above districts. Some weeks before an invitation had come from Kirkby brethren for the Wigan brethren to join them as their guests in a day of social fellowship. A portion of a comprehensive school, with part of the playing fields, was booked. Although great difficulties were experienced in obtaining transport, due to the unflagging efforts of Bro. John Partington a saloon coach was arranged and some 40 adults and children formed the party. The day was fine and, joined by a good number from the Kirkby church, games and good fun and fellowship were enjoyed. There were three outstanding events: (1) a cricket match, in which Kirkby defeated Wigan by 112 for 6 wickets to 80 runs; (2) the refreshing enjoyment of the swimming baths in the school; and (3) a well-attended gathering in the meeting-house, consisting of singing and a thought-provoking talk by Eric Limb (Eastwood) on reaching others with the gospel, followed by lively discussion.

Thanks, especially of the Wigan brethren, are most warmly given to the sisters at Kirkby for their provision and serving of

tea, to Bro. Tom King, who did so much to arrange for the use of the school and fields, and to John Partington for his overall arrangements.

This was an experience which is worth repeating and is commended to other churches and districts.

OBITUARY

Ilkeston.—The church is sorry to report the death of Bro. Walter Thomas Swann at the age of 57 years. Our brother was immersed into Christ on February 23rd, 1958, and since that time, when not having to work, was regular in his attendance at the Lord's Table.

Since coming into the church he did much voluntary work on the premises, being a man who could put his hand to most kinds of work. He was much respected and loved, and will be missed very much.

He was taken to hospital on May 4th, where he died on June 8th. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." He leaves behind him his wife and son, whom we commend to the loving care of our heavenly Father, who is able to sustain and strengthen.

The funeral service was on Friday, June 13th, Bro. R. Gregory officiating.

F. Gregory

Newtongrange.—With deep sorrow we record the passing of our sister, "Peggy" Carson, on 8th July. Our sister was a devoted worker for Christ and a loyal member of his church.

She was well known, loved and respected by all. Leader of the women's meeting, she not only preached Christ, she lived Christ, and now she has gone to be "with Christ." We thank God for knowing such a christian as she.

To our Bro. George, her son and her daughter, Bro. David and Sis. Fay and her family we give our deepest sympathy and commend them to God.

The funeral was conducted by Brother E. Tess.

M. Ferguson

COMING EVENTS

Kirkby - in - Ashfield (Beulah Road). — Anniversary, change of date. Will brethren take this as a preliminary notice of our Anniversary date, 16th August this year. We have obtained the services of Bro. Leonard Morgan and anticipate a rich time of fellowship in the Lord's work.

Tom Woodhouse (Secretary)

September Conference

The Ulverston church is again entertaining the conference, on September 13th. Speakers: Bro. T. Nisbet, afternoon; Bro. John Partington, evening. President: Bro. Black of Ulverston.

Accommodation can be obtained by writing to Miss I. D. Marsh, Sefton House, 39 Queen Street, Ulverston, Lancs. B. & B. 21/-; Dinner, B. & B., 27/6; Garage 1/- nightly; or by writing to Bro. J. Thistlethwaite, 3 Lancaster Street, Dalton-in-Furness.

Book the date and come. Support the work of evangelising Christ.

T. Woodhouse (Secretary)

Newtongrange.—Intensive mission, week commencing 6th September. Preacher: Bro. Tom Kemp, Hindley, Lancs. Gospel meetings every night commencing 7.30. Please book the dates.

Pray for us, brethren.

M. Ferguson (Secretary),

17 Lawfield Road, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian. 031 663 1899

IF EVERYBODY KNEW

Would I be called a Christian if everybody knew
My secret thoughts and feelings and everything I do?
Oh, would they see the likeness of Christ in me each day?
Oh, could they hear Him speaking in every word I say?

Would I be called a Christian if judged by what I read?
By all my recreations and every thought and deed?
Could I be counted Christlike as I now work and play.
Unselfish, kind, forgiving to others every day?

—————
To those who believe, no explanation is necessary; to those who do not believe, no explanation will satisfy. *Franz Werfel*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

John Dodsley, 59 St. John's Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Wigan (Albert Street).—Michael Mannion, 8 Mount Crescent, Orrell, via Wigan, Lancs. Tel. Wigan 83670. (From 1st September, 1969).

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