

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## SEEING IS BELIEVING

WE have just read a newly-published book "What I Believe" (Allen & Unwin, 25/-). It consists of 18 essays edited by George Unwin. Of the 18 writers some ten are atheists or agnostics, two are Roman Catholics, one is an Anglican bishop, one a Quaker, one a scientist, one a spiritualist, one a psychiatrist and the last we find it difficult to classify. Grouped in another way five are politicians, six authors, three scientists, one a philosopher, one a psychologist, one an artist and one an archaeologist and historian. The contributors include some of the most learned men and women of today. Yet in stating "What I believe" only about eight mention religion as a way of life, and with some of these it is of their own making, personal speculation, without revelation and completely excluding the supernatural. For the rest, there is little or no place in their thinking for God, the Christ of the Bible, or Christianity.

Yet, although the essays are the product of some of the most intellectual minds of the age, the writers seem to be unable to make themselves understood. Far from its being an exhilarating experience, the reading of the book was to us most depressing. The book would have been better entitled "What I Don't Believe," for very largely the writers are concerned with expressing disbelief in the fundamentals and teaching of Christianity. The question constantly to the fore in our minds while reading was "What do you believe?" Mary at the empty grave of Christ mourned that "they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." These writers reject Christ and replace Him with nothing, a vacuum. They adopt no authority of right or wrong, no standard of judgment. Though such fine scholars, they are themselves groping blindly, lost in the maze of the civilisation from which, as they think, God has been expelled as having no meaning, serving no purpose and totally unnecessary. Is this where scholarship, science, political science, our boasted freedom have brought us?

In one of our hymns we sing that "boasting reason leaves the mind bewildered in a dubious road." We felt as we ended the book "If these things be so, where are we now, and where do we go from here?" In the last century the humanist-scientist T. H. Huxley was proud of having coined the word "agnostic" — one who doesn't know. In Christianity as well as in other subjects, the one who thinks he has all the answers to all the questions is more of a hindrance than a help. We know a man who, whenever we meet him, bombards us with questions about the Bible and the churches of Christ. To some of his questions we have to admit we don't know the answers, although we may try to advance explanations of our own. But this book is not about "What I Know" but "What I Believe." No doubt had the writers been airing their knowledge they would have written much more succinctly and clearly. But in writing of their beliefs (or unbeliefs) they are often pathetically floundering, trying to get their feelings home in what is at times unintelligible language. It is taken for granted by many of the essayists that those who believe in God and in the Christ of the Bible, in the simple gospel and in the inspiration of the scriptures by the Holy Spirit are "fundamentalists," not to be taken seriously, left hopelessly behind by the advance of modern knowledge, out of step with the march of progress. We would expect something better to replace our myths and superstitions. But what have we? Are we to exchange our beliefs for these speculations?

The Bible is not a collection of "old wives' tales." It appeals to reason. God invites us to "reason together;" Christians are exhorted to be able to give a reason for the hope within us; Peter writes in his second epistle that he and his fellow apostles "have not followed cunningly devised fables;" and Paul writes, quoting from the Old Testament, that "things which eye did not see, nor ear heard, nor had entered the mind of men God has declared" and that these things are made known in the gospel. John tells us that through their senses Christians knew the things they believed to be true—"What our eyes have seen, our ears heard, our hands have handled" was declared to others for their acceptance and belief. Thomas the apostle in his disbelief was told by Christ to handle Him after His resurrection as to whether that resurrection was real or imaginary. Many of the early Christians were martyrs, witnesses, for the things they knew from their senses and experience to be true. And in the Bible we have the evidence of these eyewitnesses.

Yet the Christian's is a life of faith. We freely acknowledge that some of the things we wholeheartedly believe cannot be scientifically demonstrated or analysed in a laboratory. We are reminded of a story we heard in an open-air meeting many years ago. The speaker told of a Salvation Army lassie being asked by an atheist whether she believed the Bible story of the "whale" swallowing Jonah. "Yes, of course," she replied. "Can you tell me how it was done?" asked the atheist. "No" admitted the girl, "but when I get to heaven I'll ask Jonah." Oh, but suppose Jonah isn't there" persisted the atheist. "Ah, then you can ask him." With all of us there comes a time when we need to cry out "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

But we have more certain proofs of the things we believe. Not only does the Christian believe the truth of the Bible but he **knows** that it is true. Some of the most fundamental things in Christianity are not apologised for, nor stated in stammering, halting language, but are advanced as certainties of which there can be no gainsaying. Job cries out "I **know** that my Redeemer lives," and Paul in his glorious confidence asserts that "we **know** that to them that love God all things work together for good." What an inspiration is the cry of the once blind man: "One thing I **know**, that whereas once I was blind, now I see."

What a comparison between the doubts, frustrations and fears of these intellectuals and the certainties, the "I know," of those whose whole trust is placed in the living God. What a contrast between the learned, haughty, sceptical philosophers of Athens with their "unknown God" and the Paul who, with everything seemingly against him, could joyfully proclaim "I **know** in whom I have believed."

In this controversy of belief and unbelief the materialist is always at an advantage. He believes in what can be demonstrated to the senses. The Christian is to believe and make known "things which . . . have not entered into the mind of man," but which are the revelation of God. To the unbeliever this world is all. To the Christian the revelation of God in Christ demonstrates the reality of the spiritual and the eternal.

EDITOR.

## CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

THERE are many good Christians who, at mere mention of biblical criticism, metaphorically hold up their hands in holy horror at such shameful sacrilege. The very presence of the Bible is a challenge to criticism. "Handle me and see," said Jesus to His open-mouthed, terror-stricken, sceptical disciples, and this challenge the Bible dares to make to a nation that is "sceptical half its time." It did seem as though a rationalistic criticism was going to burn out of existence some of the Old Testament books, but now the keepers who tend the fires are taking the books out one by one and telling us we may keep them as "being substantially contemporaneous history." Those which remain in the flames, like the three Hebrew children in the seven times heated furnace, are unsinged, and in their midst walks One like unto the Son of God.

If one, whose knowledge of "critical biblical scholarship" is but small, may offer a suggestion, it is that the critics of the Old Testament have failed to weigh with sufficient carefulness the evidence offered in its favour by Christ.

For the defence the strongest witness ought in fairness, to get a favourable hearing. If the testimony of anyone is to be accepted, surely it is His "who was

with God and was God." He, who in His pre-existent state looked on whilst one by one the books were compiled, who heard the "first burden of prophecy" and who saw the completion of the canon of Holy Scripture.

By a careful study of the gospel it has been my endeavour to gather together all the references that Christ made to the Old Testament. The sayings of Jesus are saturated with the Old Testament. There are parables and passages which on the face of them, show they have been suggested by the writings of the prophets. The man whose mind is full of the beauties of Britain's great literature, often quotes unwittingly. The writing of others have become part of himself. Two instances of this by Jesus may be noticed, Matt. 7; 12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even to them: for 'this is the law and the prophets.'" Here, in a sentence, Jesus sums up the highest moral teaching of all Old Testament writers, and shows how full is His mind of the Old Book.

Denouncing those who defiled the temple, Jesus said, Matt. 21; 13: "Ye have made it a den of thieves." He does not state it, but evidently He is quoting from Jer. 7; 11.

1. I ask you to notice that Christ made thirty-two distinct quotations, which are culled from ten books.

2. Consider, also, that Christ made twenty-four references to twelve books. Six of the books differ from the ten that are quoted. The sum of the testimony is, Christ used fifty-six references and quotations, gathering them from sixteen books. If in such small compass He refers to so much, what must He have referred to during the three years of ministry? Does not this thought suggest one or two searching questions for all teachers?

**Christ's designations of Old Testament writings.** Once Christ speaks of "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms"; twice of the "law and the prophets"; twice of the "prophets"; three times of the "law"; and six times of the "Scriptures." Once Jesus says "Therefore also said the wisdom of God."

**Christ's testimony to the authorship of the Old Testament.** The most constantly assailed books are the first five, which Jewish traditions has always ascribed to Moses. Many critics refuse to believe that Moses could or did write all or any of these books. So "Christ on the Pentateuch" becomes interesting. When discussing with the Sadducees the question of the resurrection, Jesus asks them, Mark 12; 26: "Have ye not read in the Book of Moses how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

After His resurrection Christ reminded His disciples of the things He had told them when with them, and added, Luke 24; 44: "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses." Whilst arguing with the Jews, Jesus declared, John 5; 45: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"

The first two passages may be met by the objection that Christ means that certain books contain the doings of Moses and the laws given by him; and Christ does not mean that Moses was the writer, he was only the actor. But such an objection cannot be raised on the third passage. There Christ distinctly affirms that Moses wrote of Him; and it is in the Pentateuch that we find references to the seed of the woman, the Blessed of all nations, Shiloh, and the Prophet like Moses. We divide the Pentateuch into five books, but to the Jews it was "one undivided whole"; and I would suggest from a study of these texts that Christ really believed it to have been written by Moses.

The authorship of Psalm 110 is settled for us by our Lord. Questioning His opponents, He asks how Messiah could be both David's Son and Lord; and, quoting from Psalm 110, says, David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou on, My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Luke 20: 42).

The authorship of the book received as Isaiah's is ascribed to him by Christ (Matt. 13; 14; and 15; 7).

**Christ's testimony to the Historical Incidents and Personages of the Old Testament.**

The incidents of the Old Testament are so outside our experience, and the miraculous comes into play so often that those who refuse to let God do anything outside their little range of experience, those who cannot believe what they cannot understand, those superior persons, whose sole claims to distinction is their own air of superiority, fling overboard the Old Testament.

Christ believed in and referred to the flood which drowned a godless world (Luke 17; 26); the cities of the plain, whose sins reaching high heaven, brought down the consuming fire (Matt. 10; 15); the eating of manna by the Israelites in the wilderness (John 6; 49); the unfailing cruse of oil granted to the widow of Sarepta, the healing of Naaman the Syrian leper (Luke 4; 25); the free passage that Jonah had inside the great fish, the result of Jonah's preaching (Matt. 12; 39); and the terrible destructions that overtook the cities of Tyre and Sidon in fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecies (Matt. 11; 21).

The personages of the Old Testament are to many "historical myths," as real as our old-time friend the Giant Killer; but the testimony of Christ smashes such a theory into shivers. I would have liked to dwell a little on some of the names mentioned below, and contrasted Christ's testimony with the wonderful "myth theory," but must be content merely to mention the names of those to whom Christ testifies. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Daniel, Isaiah and Zacharias the martyred prophet.

#### **The divinity of Christ and the truth of these testimonies stand or fall together.**

His pre-existence assures us that when He spoke of persons, incidents or writers, He testified to that which He knew. That He who was "Truth and Light" adopted popular fallacies on these matters, and, rather than bear the storm which unpleasant truths would bring, left them to be told by present-day teachers, we can hardly conceive. The wise, safe and true course is to accept with simple, child-like faith the testimonies of Christ as the deliverances of the Highest. That Book which He thought well to pore over, to fill His soul with and to constantly refer to, we may well make the object of our deepest, truest and most sympathetic study, until like the swelling of the tide its mighty influence heaves and surges in our souls.

L.G.

## **THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONGST US**

### **5: One Church**

THE great mystery of the ages has been the formation of the church, that "called-out Assembly of believers", "a people from among people", speaking different languages, observing different customs, of different colours and races, and from different age groups. Its designer is God, who planned it, like the Bible, to outlast time. As the Bible speaks of a risen Lord, so the church worships a risen Lord. The church is of Divine order and system, is built on one foundation, Christ, the Apostles and prophets laying that foundation with the saints, past and present, its fabric. It has one ordinance of admission, baptism, and by baptism we mean believers' immersion. It has one table, the Lord's table, at which "they who have gladly received his word and have been baptised and added to the church" (Acts 2:41-47), sit and worship, breaking bread and drinking of the cup in memory of their Founder, Jesus Christ.

This Divine plan also makes for perpetuity with its inclusion of aged Christians, middle-aged Christians, and the young; the aged with their wisdom born of a long experience in the things of God; the middle-aged, with their experienced activity; and the young with their zeal and enthusiasm, often requiring guidance and understanding. The old to teach the young, and the young to be in subjection to the elder; in short the Old Testament principle, "Ye shall teach your children and your children's children."

The purpose of the church is to be a witness to all nations. Beginning in Jerusalem, it had to "preach repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:4), to "work out its own salvation in fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

The church was also designed to be governed by three tenets—principles, precepts and practices. Principles—fundamental truths; precepts—moral and spiritual laws; practices—the Divine examples given to us for our guidance in the New Testament. Its driving force—the force of love.

One might be tempted to ask at this stage whether, with all this guidance, should not the church be perfect? For in fact the church is far from perfect. Let us point out that, whilst the Divine plan outlined in the New Testament is perfect, you cannot have a perfect church with imperfect material; and the church being composed of persons themselves imperfect—in various stages of achieving

maturity, prone to sin, and of limited knowledge—there are bound to be imperfections. The Lord knew this, which is why the churches were formed and were given the New Testament for their guidance.

It is a remarkable fact that where man has not trespassed in God's domain there is order. It is only where man is that disorder reigns. As one writer put it, "Man has an almost infinite capacity for organising chaos." Yet the Bible teaches us that we are "God's workmanship"—God working on us and through us and in us that by His grace we may be His witnesses in a "wicked and untoward generation, among whom we are to shine as lights in the world."

So in spite of the many differences of race, language, colours and clime, with many different customs, thoughts and opinions we are to be "all one in Christ Jesus"—a formidable but a Divinely appointed task, and one from which we must not shirk, owning one Lord, and one God, one Bible, one church.

(Concluded)

HAROLD BAINES.

## 'IN THE BEGINNING GOD'

THE Bible opens with the sublime statement: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1). In his brief sentence the ancient lawgiver of Horeb reveals more concerning the origin of the universe than all the wisest philosophers of Greece and Rome ever knew. On the grounds of pure reason this is the most plausible account of the beginning of things that has ever been presented to the attention of man. It is worthy of the subject in question. Those who reject it in favour of a more scientific (!) explanation involve themselves hopelessly in manifold difficulties. The universe exists. It is an effect of stupendous magnitude. It must have had an adequate cause. In it are the unmistakable evidences of design, it must have had a designer; it is a universe of law and order, it must have had a lawgiver. God alone is a sufficient First Cause.

It is worthy of note that Moses, the writer of Genesis, took the existence of God as granted. He advanced no evidences to prove that God is. He assumed that his readers would accept his statement without proof or argument. Was it that he felt, as some in modern times do, that his readers would grant the existence of God on the basis of their innate sense of dependence upon, and responsibility to, a Supreme Being? (In this connection it is contended that wherever man is found, even in the rankest state of heathenism, he is not entirely destitute of this intuitive recognition of a Supreme Power and of dependence upon him. This seems to be true. Moffat, the missionary, reported that certain African tribes were without any sense of religion or of a divine existence; but his testimony was corrected by his son-in-law, David Livingstone, who said: "The existence of God is everywhere recognised in Africa.") Or was it that he assumed their belief in God on the grounds that the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." (Rom. 1:20)? And: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." (Psalm 19:1, 2). Whether these considerations were in the mind of the writer at the time Genesis was composed, we do not know; but it is certain that Moses knew that his immediate readers, the Israelites, had descended from a long line of ancestors, among whom, from Adam down to their fathers, knowledge of the true God had been kept alive. Besides, he knew that the Israelites had seen the mighty wonders of the Lord displayed in terrible judgment on the Egyptians; they had witnessed the exercise of his power at the smiting of the Red Sea; they had been the recipients of his miraculous provisions in the wilderness; and, above all, they had seen Sinai ablaze with his glory and had heard him speak in "the voice of words" (Heb. 12:19). The whole scene was awe-inspiring and unforgettable. Yet we do not know that this knowledge on the part of the Israelites accounts for the absence from Genesis of formal argument in proof of the Divine Being. But the existence of God is not all that is assumed in the statement.

It assumes, as Murphy in his able work on Genesis suggests, the eternity of God, for he is before all things; and as nothing comes from nothing, he himself must have always been. It implies his omnipotence, for he creates the universe of things; it implies his infinite freedom, for he begins a new course of action: it implies his infinite wisdom, for a *kosmos*, an order of matter and mind, can come only from a being of absolute intelligence; it implies his essential goodness, for

the Sole, Eternal, Almighty, All-Wise, and All-Sufficient Being has no reason, no motive, and no capacity for evil. It assumes him to be beyond all limits of time and place, as he is before all time and place.

But this introductory statement of the Bible is remarkable for what it specifically mentions as well as for what it assumes and implies. The adverbial phrase of time, "in the beginning," while undefined and indefinite in point of duration, suggests that the act of creation did not take place in past eternity, since eternity had no beginning. Some think that the phrase has reference to the initial moment of time and creation. How long since the period described as the "beginning" began, no one knows. Nor does anyone know how long it lasted. No one can tell how long the universe has been created. It is enough for us to know that "in the beginning" God — *Elohim*, the Mighty One — gave existence to the heavens and the earth. Of all the names and titles applied to the Almighty, it seems peculiarly fitting that, in this connection, the one which emphasises his limitless power should be employed. Scholars, in all ages, have called attention to the fact that *Elohim* is plural in form, being the plural or *El*, or *Eloah*. They have seen in this use of the plural, they thought, an intentional suggestion of the plurality of persons in the Godhead. Certainly other Scriptures teach that Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were active in creation. Also these same scholars have called attention to the fact that the verb "created" (*bara*) is in the singular. Consequently they have concluded that this first pronouncement of the Bible teaches both the plurality and the unity of the Godhead. The word "create" means to bring into existence something where nothing previously was. In this connection it means that the heavens and the earth were called into being by the divine command. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:9). "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." (Heb. 11:3).

This sentence refutes many false doctrines which have arisen since the universe, including man, was created. It denies atheism. It assumes the existence of God and describes him as the All-Wise Creator of the heavens and the earth. It condemns polytheism, for it sets forth the unity of God. It denies materialism — matter is not eternal, for it positively asserts the creation of matter. It upsets the very foundations of Christian Science, for it declares the existence of matter. It demolishes the doctrine of pantheism, because it assumes the existence of God before, and independent of, the existence of all things. He made all things that have been made. This one sentence disproves the doctrine of fatalism, for it assumes the freedom of the Divine Being.

Let the whole creation praise Jehovah, for "he commanded, and they were created." (Psalm 148:5).

G. N. Woods.

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### Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

(Eph. 6, 18.)

Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness.  
Wm. Carey.

Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. E. M. Bounds.

Prayer is the most important thing in my life. If I should neglect it for a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.  
Martin Luther.

### Have faith in God.

(Mark 11, 22.)

It is through the open door of our faith—that is, of our complete surrender and full trust—that Christ comes in, and it is while those conditions are maintained that He abides within to cleanse and keep us clean.  
E. W. Moore.

### I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

(Phil. 4, 11.)

We cannot make our own circumstances; we cannot keep away from our life the sickness, the pain, the sorrow, the misfortunes; yet as Christians we are meant to live in any and all experiences in unbroken peace, in sweet restfulness of soul.

# PRESUMPTION—THE SIN OF HELPING GOD

"THE law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:7-14). In this reading we learn, among other things, David's attitude toward the words of the Lord, and his desire to be innocent of presumptuous sins. This attitude could well be repeated by many today, in the church as well as outside of it. Presumption is defined as: "too great pride, hope, or confidence; also, something which is believed to be so, but not proved." Thus, presumption is a sin, either way it might be taken, and actually becomes a matter of trying to help God.

Men in Old Testament times were guilty of "helping God." When God promised to bless Abraham and his seed after him, Abraham had no child. This being true, and Sarah being barren, Abraham was not able to see how this promise would be kept. He committed the sin of presumption by attempting to "help God" in taking Hagar, his wife's handmaid, who bore him Ishmael (Gen. 16:1, 2). This was not only rebellion toward God's marriage law (Matt. 19:8), it was in ignorance of God's true purpose, revealed in Gen. 17:1-19. This sin of presumption led to family grief, in addition to being displeasing in the sight of God.

When God commanded Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites because of their sins (1 Sam. 15:1-3), and he returned with Agag, the king, and the best of the flocks, Saul's was the sin of presumption. He was trying to "help God" by saving the best for sacrifice. This was direct rebellion against God's order. God doesn't want such sacrifices: "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). For this, God rejected Saul from being king (1 Sam. 15:23).

Moses sought to "help God" by striking the rock, when God had commanded him simply to speak to the rock (Num. 20:8) in order to bring forth water for the Israelites. Moses no doubt believed that this should be done; yet, it was in disobedience to God's command, and because of it, Moses was refused the privilege of leading the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, the promised land. He presumed it would be pleasing, but it was not.

Uzzah committed such a sin by touching the ark of the covenant, which he, and others, were not allowed to (2 Sam. 6:6, 7). He too, thought he could "help God," but as a result was punished with instant death.

The question naturally arises with some, "What is wrong in such, when it is only an effort to help God;" for first it shows distrust of God — does He need our help? And then, it shows conceit — can we give such help?

These were not the only ones guilty of the sin of presumption; others in that age, and many today are guilty. Those who write creeds by which religious people are to be governed are guilty of "helping God." Does He need man's help in determining what is to be believed or practised? Can man give such "help?" Is he capable of it? Jeremiah said, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Though the human creeds are claimed to be simply a help in understanding what God has written, they are an addition to God's plan, and it is presumption for man to attempt to help God in this respect. Men presume (believe a thing to be right without proper proof) that many things are acceptable to God, when in reality they are in rebellion against Him. Sprinkling for baptism, baptism because one is saved, wearing of religious titles, and the like, are only a few of the presumptuous sins in denominationalism.

Various missionary arrangements, the "sponsoring church," and others, without scriptural proof are no less sins of presumption than the other mentioned; yet some brethren insist upon such. For man to think he can improve upon God's

arrangement, His organisation for His church, and His work, is to be guilty of "helping God," committing the sin of presumption. Additions to the divinely authorised worship and work of the church are among the sins of "helping God." He has revealed His will and His way, and expects man to walk accordingly.

Those who presume that they know better, and can do better with their promotions, go beyond that which is written (2 John 9), leading the way, as it were, in things without divine sanction. Such is an effort to "lead God," and is therefore, rebellion. Even though many are doubtless sincere in their efforts, it remains — Presumption is sin!

Eugene Crawley: "Truth," May, 1966.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

OCTOBER 1966

2—Deut. 12:29 to 13:5	1 John 4:1-12
9—Deut. 16:1-8	1 John 4:13 to 5:5
16—Deut. 18:9-22	1 John 5:6-21
23—Deut. 19:1-13	2 John
30—Deut. 22:1-12	3 John

### "RECALL TO FUNDAMENTALS"

THOSE who are reading the New English Bible will recognise our title this month and we make no apology for using it. We regard the letters from John the apostle as the "last words" of an experienced old man who had shared with his fellow-apostles an absolutely unique experience and responsibility. Like Peter he thinks it right "to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12), for although the truth had been revealed and passed on, the danger of DRIFTING AWAY from it was ever-present and some had already done this. While the faithfulness of many rejoiced his heart, he must have been deeply grieved to write to "the elect lady" and say "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world" and to instruct her to refuse hospitality to such. What heart-breaking sorrow must have been involved in dealing with Diotrephes' actually refusing apostolic instruction and imposing his will upon the church.

The urgent need for determined and persistent adherence to the ways and the commandments originally delivered on the authority and by the power of the Holy Spirit Himself presses heavily on the apostle's heart and the whole letter reflects this anxiety. He sees vividly the deadly attractions of the world, the flesh and the devil. He wants his beloved "little children" to have the same anxiety to abide where they began.

What a commentary has history made on the warnings and exhortations in these letters! Before the last apostle had passed away the "grievous wolves" (Acts 20:29) were at work in the "flock," drawing away from "the faith" those who had "escaped from the corruption

that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Preachers were already making merchandise of their work in the Church (2 Peter 2:3), and some actually "having eyes full of adultery" (verse 14), introducing sexual promiscuity where pure and holy love should have been. The bulk of the membership however continued to manifest a most wonderful faith in face of fearful persecution, and so by reason of this, heathenism gradually but surely faded out. By the subtle working of the "prince of the powers of the air" (Eph. 2:2), this apparent victory was turned into comparative defeat, and while the civilising influence of the Saviour's teaching began its work in Europe, the dark ages ensued with the Word of God hidden under the rubbish of human invention and perversion.

Now we have that Word as "the world's best seller." The extent to which it is taken into the heart and translated into action is the extent of its blessing in the individual. How sad it is that so few do fully surrender to the Saviour's claim, and who feel utterly confident that they have in fact the assurance of eternal life. The witness of the apostles is that God gave unto them eternal life in the person of His Son. He lived among them, they through their belief (faith) in Him became His, and through their witness passed on to us exactly the same happens to us. We take possession of Him as He takes possession of us.

We speak of John as "the apostle of love" and this is correct. We must realise that "this is the love of God that we keep His commandments" (5:3). So in this letter three things are inextricably interwoven—faith, love and obedience. The negative and the positive are repeatedly put before us. We are instructed "not to believe every spirit" (4:1); "not to love the world" (2:15); "not to obey the instincts of the flesh" (3:8 etc.), not to heed false teaching (4:5 etc.). It is essential to believe the message of the apostles, for that belief brings the new life (5:1) but it cannot stop at mere mental assent. It must issue in love, and real love is active (3:16-18). It must involve us in confession of Jesus as Son of God, and it will bring us into collision with the world (3:13). False teachers will win "con-



verts" because they are "of the world" anyway, so popularity is no measure of real success and what goes for success may be victory for Satan. What is the test? One test, and it is infallible, is whether or not the apostolic word is accepted—"We are of God" (4:6).

Scepticism about the Word of God is fatal to the receipt of eternal life because it is refusal of the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

R. B. SCOTT

**POINTS TO PONDER**

Because of an inordinate desire to do all the talking a man has missed hearing a lot of needful information.

It is true that the willing horse gets the heaviest load. It is equally true that he develops the strongest muscles and gets the most corn.

A Christian is in the world but not of the world. His citizenship is in heaven. He thinks on heavenly things. He lives on a higher level. Unto the divine pattern—the life of Christ—he conforms his life.

When your neighbour's house is in flame, your own house is in danger. No man can live unto himself. To a certain extent, your own salvation is bound up with the salvation of others. When you lift a fellowman, you lift yourself.

Christian education makes youth aware that he has a soul as well as a mind.

If people would quit digging pits on Saturday night, there would not be so many oxen in the ditch on Sunday morning.

before the world of lost sinners, and that is: "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, that everyone who has faith in Him may not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16, N.E.B.). I think we must concede that the "giving" in this case carries more than just the idea that God sent His Son and left it entirely to men to treat Him as they wished. Surely we have not forgotten the beautiful sentiments of the hymn we have sung so often:—

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin;  
He only could unlock the gates  
Of Heaven, and let us in.

And so God "gave" Him to die because He alone could pay the price. This does not detract from the heinousness of those who cruelly crucified Him—nothing could have been viler. But on the other hand, it magnifies the "love" which prompted the gift, not only on the part of Jesus, but of the Father too.

This is not made in a spirit of harsh criticism, for I know that in your heart you agree with what I write, but I do think your emphasis is wrong. Let us place the right blame on those who perpetrated the cruel deed, but the almost excessive love which moved both the Father and the Son should be blazoned as though it was written on the vault of Heaven so that all could see it and read it for themselves.

Now for the reverse side to this matter: who sends whom to hell? On page 87 you conclude another line of reasoning with these words: "No, God does not send anyone to hell: a man sends himself, it is the result of his own choice" (last paragraph).

One can readily see what it is you are trying to convey, but again it is a matter of wrong emphasis. No man sends himself to hell, for if he had the choice at the close of his life he would not go there. Nor is the responsibility that of the Evil One who may have done the tempting. The responsibility for what God does at this point may be shared by the sinner and the deceiver, but the final act belongs to God. He consigns the sinner to his final home. But this should only serve, when adequately emphasised, to show the love of God more clearly; it is against this fate that God "gave" His only Son, as His death alone could save any one of us from this awful eternal destiny.

J. B. KENDRICK

**URGENT APPEALS**

Dear Brethren,—I am sure it is the desire of every faithful child of God to see a congregation of the Lord's people in every city, town and village. Being convinced of this I am appealing on behalf of Geoffrey Sheldon, a young

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear Carlton.—Will you permit me to call in question two statements you make in your editorial in August "S.S."?

The first concerns the Father's attitude to the death of His Son. This is found in your summary of your reasoning on page 86, last paragraph, in these words: "But Peter does not say any such thing. He says that Jesus Christ came into the world not to suffer and die by the will of God, but by the will of man. Peter says, not that Christ was crucified BY THE DEFINITE PLAN AND FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF GOD but by the will of men. This whole paragraph stresses this aspect of the Lord's death—that it was wholly and entirely the work of evil men."

Not for one moment would I reason against human responsibility for the death of the Lord, but to place it entirely on that basis destroys another aspect which needs to be emphasised

brother in Christ, for your help to try and accomplish this in Hucknall, his home town. This young man, whom I contacted at work and who was immersed recently, with a young lady who will be his wife when you read this, is planning to hold a campaign there from November 12th-20th.

Everything has been arranged, including the booking of the hall, but he is asking for your prayers and financial help in this matter. The cost is estimated to be about £50 and if churches or individuals can help him with this, will they send their donations either to me or direct to Bro. Sheldon, who resides at 66 Beardall Street, Hucknall, Notts. J. W. Dodsley, 17 St. Thomas Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts.

### ANOTHER URGENT APPEAL CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

In the July issue of the "S.S." I, as the administrator of the above fund, published an urgent appeal. I am happy to say that many good brethren have responded and although we have not yet achieved what we set out to achieve I am still very confident that we shall. All we need is a little more help and in this report I will try to indicate to what extent.

As I mentioned in the last report the printing apparatus is being purchased in three consignments. The first two have been paid for—£340, and indeed have arrived in Africa. We cannot yet, however, take receipt of them because of the customs duties imposed by the Cameroons Government. At first they said that religious material would be duty free, but now say that only materials used in church services is free of duty, and that machinery is dutiable at 60 per cent. Their first estimate was 45 per cent and when this was contested, it was raised to 60 per cent. Brother Elangwe has been remonstrating with the Cameroons Ministry of Economy and has shown me the correspondence. While we may deprecate having to deal with customs officials who are administering a system of customs and duties less sophisticated than our own British ones, nevertheless we still have to pay what they ask, and pay it as swiftly as we can to reduce storage and wharfage charges.

I have already sent £154 to Brother Elangwe to help meet these customs duties but we need approximately another £76 before we can take receipt of these crates. The third crate will probably cost £100 but we are postponing the purchase of this until we have met the charges on the first two. I have been trying to save the money for the third consignment and have saved £58 4s. 8d. but may have to utilise this for the charges just mentioned.

I am reluctant to ask brethren to help who have already given to the fund, and some weeks ago I circularised the churches which had not previously contributed. We hope that all churches able to give a little will do so—no contribution can possibly be too small; and in this way we can together get access to the printing machinery and commence the production of tracts and gospel literature. Please give serious thought to this request brethren for we are so near to accomplishing this good work. Remember our African brethren in your prayers. As before send all donations to: James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Beulah Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield.** — Those who joined with us on July 16th to note the occasion of the anniversary of the church's being established here will agree that a time of wonderful fellowship was experienced. About 80 sat down to tea and this number was increased to over 100 for the gospel meeting in the evening. The brethren were addressed by two speakers, Bro. Eric Winter of Cleveleys and Bro. Philip Partington of Ince, who acquitted themselves nobly in the exposition of the word to the edifying and uplifting of all present. We take this opportunity of thanking both brethren for their labours in the Lord to usward. Bro. Partington also served the church most capably on the Lord's Day and we were indeed strengthened on our Christian journey.

It was made known to us on the same weekend, that two young people whose sincere interest in the gospel and the true way of salvation had been evinced after long contact with Bro. John Dodsley, were now desirous of putting on the Lord in baptism. On Monday, July 25th, they were added to the Lord at an extremely well attended meeting. Bro. Dodsley presided and Bro. Winstanley performed the baptisms, following this by an address on conversion. We trust that the Lord will bless our young brother and sister on their way.

Tom Woodhouse

**Loughborough (Oxford Street).**—All present at the Bank Holiday Monday meetings (August 29th) agreed that this experimental venture was a great success. The 9 a.m. prayer meeting was followed by a 10 a.m. study session at which Frank Worgan gave a lecture on Personal Evangelism. A helpful discus-

sion period followed. At 2.30 p.m. fifteen-minute talks on The Church's Praise were given by Geoffrey Ellis, Eric Limb, John Dodsley and Albert Winstanley. This too was followed by a thorough discussion in which many visiting brethren participated. At the evening meeting Raymond Hill and Leon Crouch, both of Liverpool, spoke on the theme "The Call to be Different," and "The Divine Call." A large crowd, including some non-members, gathered to hear these messages.

On Tuesday evening, Frank Worgan lectured on the question: "The Book of Mormon—does it contain 'the fulness of the everlasting gospel'?" Once again the discussion period was extremely valuable.

We thank God for all who helped to make these meetings such a time of blessing and encouragement.

A. E. Winstanley

**Morley.**—Much interest has been shown and prayer made for the effort of the Morley congregation to realise their hope of being able to have Bro. Philip Partington working with them in a full-time capacity.

We are pleased therefore to be able to inform you that with the promise of financial support from sister churches, the Evangelistic Fund and other donations sent for this cause, Bro. Partington will commence his labours with us on October 1st.

We ask that you continue to remember us in your prayers, that we shall go from strength to strength, many be converted from error, and Christ's name be exalted.

We thank you for your help and prayers and ask for your future support as we labour in His vineyard together.

Michael Gaunt

**Peterhead.**—Again we rejoice in hearing "What must I do to be saved." Our young sister Anne Brown was immersed on Lord's day, August 28th.

She is the granddaughter of Bro. and Sister John Cowie. May she go from strength to strength in the service of our Lord.

We ask for your prayers brethren for the month's mission with Bro. Tom Nisbet. May we see many souls won for His Kingdom.

Alex E. Strachan

**Slamannan District.**—A large number of brethren from the churches in the Slamannan district supported by brethren from Haddington, Kirkcaldy and Buckie, met in the Motherwell Church Meeting-house on Saturday, September 3rd, 1966, for mutual benefit in the discussion of "Bread at the Lord's Supper—Leavened or Unleavened?"

The discussion was led by Bro. Angus Davidson, Motherwell, and Peter Stra-

chan, Tranent, and the meeting was presided over by Bro. David Sneddon, Slamannan.

The chairman's opening remarks and the addresses given were well thought out and presented and led to lively discussion on this theme.

Again it was felt that these meetings are well worth while, a fact clearly revealed by the number of brethren present. God willing, we hope to meet next in the Haddington Church Meeting-place on Saturday, December 3rd, 1966, to discuss "Gambling—Why Not?" led by Bro. J. Moncrieff, Haddington and Bro. Mark Plain, Tranent and presided over by Bro. P. Strachan, Tranent.

We thank the brethren at Motherwell for the use of their meeting-place and all who helped in the catering.

We thank our Heavenly Father for his blessings, and we trust through these studies of His word we shall be led to walk closer to His desires.

Hugh Davidson

**Wallacestone.**—With great joy we report that on Wednesday, August 31st, Charles Grant, eldest son of Bro. and Sis. James Grant, put on the Lord Jesus in baptism. After our brother's immersion Bro. D. Dougall preached a strong message on "The Wedding Garment." On August 21st, we also had a sister restored to fellowship. We thank God for these additions to our number and take fresh courage.

James Grant

**Wigan (Albert Street).**—The Autumn Rally of the churches of Christ took place on Saturday, September 10th. These meetings, designed to foster love in and towards the household of faith, proved a real tonic to members from many churches as they heard inspiring messages in the afternoon from Bro. John Dodsley, of Kirkby-in-Ashfield on "What it means to be a Christian," and Bro. Eric Winter, of Cleveleys, on "The Purpose of the Church." Both were followed by profitable discussion. The meeting was presided over by Bro. John Breakell who gave a warm welcome to all concerned. Afterwards about 90 partook of tea provided by the sisters in the Church.

In the evening, Bro. W. Smith presiding, about 130 joined in a short session of hymn singing arranged by Bro. Jack Parker, followed by an appeal and thanks to the church by Bro. Charles Limb. The good news of salvation was presented by Bro. John Wood of Dumfermline, whose message greatly strengthened and inspired all who were present. Bro. Wood exhorted the church and Bro. John Dodsley preached the gospel on the Lord's Day. We trust that the seed sown may bear fruit in the future, and we express our grateful thanks for help and labours given in the Master's service.

W. Smith

## COMING EVENTS

**Ince-in-Makerfield (Lancs).** — Special Gospel Effort. Saturday, October 15th, to Friday, October 21st. Meetings nightly at 7.30 p.m. Preacher, Jack H. Exum (Evangelist from Belfast). Please support us by your prayers and presence. Accommodation gladly provided.

**Lessons in Greek** taught by Bro. Leon Crouch of Liverpool will commence on Monday, October 10th at 7.30 p.m. These meetings will be held every fortnight.

**Main Street, East Ardsley.**—51st Anniversary, Saturday and Lord's Day, October 29th and 30th.

Saturday: Tea 4.15 p.m. Evening 6 p.m. Chairman, David Barlow (Morley). Speaker, Frank Worgan (Ince).

Lord's Day: Breaking of bread 2.30 p.m. Gospel 6 p.m. Speaker, Frank Worgan.

Come and join us in our celebrations.

## MARRIAGE

Kenneth Faulks (Ilkeston) to Christine Beatrice Eccles (Birmingham) at the Church of Christ, Burns St., Ilkeston, on Saturday, September 3rd, 1966. F. Gregory, officiating.

On Saturday, 10th September, 1966, Bro. David Dougall officiating. William Sharp to Kay Findlay, both of Wallacestone church. Will reside at 28 Carse Crescent, Laurieston, Falkirk.

Douglas Melling (Wigan) to Margaret Longden (Kirkby-in-Ashfield) in the meeting-place at Beulah Road, Kirkby, Saturday, September 17th, Tom Woodhouse officiating.

## THE LAST BAGGAGE

WHAT may we take in our cold dead hands,

To the great white throne away?  
What may we take to plead for us,  
In the light of judgement day?

The crumbs of bread to a hungry waif,  
The words of cheer to the poor,  
The heart of hope that we left behind.  
When we entered that troubled door.

The little song that we blithely sang,  
When the words were needed so;  
The cheerful look and the kindly hand,  
We may take when called to go.

But never a cent to the Throne of God,  
Though millions we may claim;  
Never a cent to plead for us,  
Save the pennies in His name.

The little words in kindness said  
To a heart that was burdened so;  
The flower we left in the withered hand  
Before we turned to go.

For we never can tell in the casual friend.

Just how will fall the spray.  
We are only sure that the things we give,  
Are the things we take away.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Edward Pickersgill, secretary of church at East Ardsley, Wakefield: 7A New Bank St., Morley, Yorks.

## CHANGE OF SECRETARY

As Bro. Philip Partington will be commencing full-time preaching on October 1st, 1966, Bro. Wm. Hurcumbe, 61 Ladies Lane, Hindley, Via Wigan, Lancs., will be the new secretary.

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