

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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AUGUST, 1968

EVANGELISTIC CO-OPERATION

Dear Editor,

The plea forming the basis of the "Open Letter" [June and July "S.S."] must be made again. Brother Wood's letter makes it apparent that the plea for co-operative evangelistic activity was not understood.

The Situation

The situation is:—

- (a) although the proclamation of the gospel is necessary many Christians find American evangelistic procedure and practices unpalatable;
- (b) these Christians criticise this activity: thus implicit in their criticism is that they must preach the gospel (even the most ill informed amongst the concerned Christians would accept brother Wood's definition of the "whole purpose of the gospel," though many would not use the phrase) in a manner which according to their thinking is based on command, example or inference;
- (c) British congregations are too small to support full-time proclaimers. Accepting the need for full-time proclaimers we plead again for Christians to make known their willingness to co-operate for the sake of the gospel.

Let no one deny the importance of the breaking of bread, the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship or of prayer, but let every one deny the use of the sacred records in such a manner which allows the interpretation placed on Acts 2:41-42 by brother Wood. We will search hard and long for support for such a statement as "foremost among the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God on earth; first among the commandments to the people of Christ, is the observance of the Lord's Table." Acts 2:41-42 allows us to say that "they that gladly received the word" continued resolutely in the activities that are listed. No man has the right to build an hierarchical structure or practice or doctrine on this description of the activities of the saints in the first century. No man has the right to say that of the activities which are listed in Acts 2:41-42 this one is "foremost" and this one is the result of observing the first among the commandments!

Jesus did command his disciples to observe the feast; the records make it clear that the observance was in a particular way, which excludes all other ways. But I am of the opinion that brother Wood's fight against what he considers to be "faithless practice," his crusade in the columns of the *Scripture Standard* against his "adversaries," has blinded him to what we are about.

- (d) the Evangelistic Committee has been greatly weakened by those who deny that this is a scriptural expedient; the Dewsbury experiment has failed; Christians are concerned because there is very little growth in the numbers of disciples and the maturing process is hampered in individuals because of differing areas of opinion in "the body of Christ."

The Plea

One finds very little of constructive value in brother Wood's letter to further the plea made. There is an insistence in his letter, through the words of Alexander Campbell, that "the bible alone, the bible only in word and deed, in profession and practice, this alone can reform the world and save the church." Amen. No sane Christian can take issue with brethren Campbell and Wood on this statement. But there is a problem: the "loyal brethren"—these we must define, and the "adversaries" (a most unfortunate and emotive appellation) both make the same plea. One feels that there is implied here that we must discuss in private or public debate, smite the "adversaries" hip and thigh, and having aired the issue—the container question—we shall then arrive at a uniformity of practice which will satisfy brother Wood's beliefs and mine.

Conversation, debate and pleas have been tried on this particular issue. All attempts thus far have been marked by varying degrees of failure. Not having taken up pen to contest with Christians in the pages of the *Scripture Standard*, nor having shouted loud for public debate does not imply lack of knowledge of the publicity of such matters. Brother Wood's wondering as to my whereabouts can cease: I have been in the midst of local debate and dissension concerning the issue he specifies, and at the moment, together with a handful of devoted servants of God, am concerned with picking up the pieces of a congregation shattered by the selfsame issue. Let brother Wood not talk of ignorance. The point is that debate, etc., has failed to solve this question, and the effective propounding of the gospel is suffering. Great harm was done in public conversation with brother Channing at Scholes, Wigan, in 1964; little of value resulted from the confrontation at Eastwood in 1967; pleas have been ignored from a meeting convened at Hindley Bible School, made right at the beginning of the then newly developing situation. All this is water under the bridge. I advance the plea made in the "Open Letter," this time in the form of an affirmation of duty: there is a real need for the awakening of evangelistic zeal which finds a fitting expressing in a willing wholehearted devotion, not only of money, but of every power and ability with which we are gifted, to the service of the Master who bought us. This will begin to effect the cure for the diseases which affect the "body of Christ."

The Message

In John's record Jesus is reported as praying for "the men whom thou [God] gavest me"; later the prayer is extended for those "who are to believe in me through their word." The plea is made by the Son of God "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me . . . and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." By the same reasoning used by brother Wood in relation to Acts 2:41-42 one could claim the right to say that first amongst the priorities of the saints of God should be the implementation of this prayer, which immediately concerns us with the facts preached from the first concerning the person of the Christ. If we wish to talk of "foremost things" we ought to find a place, an abiding place, in our deliberations for the reminder of Paul to the Corinthians that "of first importance" was that which he received; which was "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve." This is the revelation to which we must attach our evangelising zeal. Realism prompts us to state that communities exist which have established a practice many of us consider not to be sanctioned by the records of the New Testament, and thus we proceed with our plea on the assumption that there will be congregations and individuals who will exercise the right, which they undoubtedly have, of not associating themselves with such a plea.

The position still remains. There is a need in the British churches for the more effective proclamation of the gospel. We plead with all interested and concerned Christians to consider how this need can be met.

Yours sincerely,

E. MAKIN

SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

“The Difference Is on the Inside”

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:11-12).

When he wrote these words Paul was a prisoner in Rome. This would be sufficient provocation to cause the average person to turn to discouragement and murmuring but Paul endured imprisonment without complaint.

How Does One Acquire Contentment?

One acquires contentment by honestly appraising oneself. Everyone should attempt to properly appraise his mental, physical, social and spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

In making this appraisal one should be careful not to under-estimate himself or “think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” Such an appraisal will cause one to take courage in his strength and to remove his weaknesses if possible.

Many weaknesses however, cannot be removed. We must learn to live with these. For instance, Paul had to learn to live with a thorn in the flesh. “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me, and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Another root of contentment is proper value of the material and spiritual. People who put the supreme value on things temporal and worldly could never learn to be content while suffering as unjustly as Paul suffered.

Paul did not spend his time cursing his persecutors, but turned his attention to spiritual things and the cause of Christ. He wrote several letters, both to churches and individuals, and there is no word of discouragement in them.

Why? *Because Paul knew the secret of contentment*—he had learned to be content in whatever state he found himself, whether abounding in abundance and plenty, or being abased by hunger and want.

Most of us have not learned the secret of contentment, as evidenced by the general dissatisfaction and unrest found in today’s world.

The secret of contentment is not difficult to discover.

What Is Contentment?

The word “content” comes from the Latin word “*continere*,” which means “contain, to hold together, restrain.” “Content” is defined in *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* as “having the desires limited to that which one has.” In *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, it is defined as being “happy enough with what one has.”

Contentment is not indifference. Paul was not indifferent to his condition. Some people have got to the point that they are so indifferent to their environment or circumstances that they do not care what happens to them.

Contentment is not satisfaction. Contentment is the state of not being disturbed by desire even though one’s wishes are not gratified. To satisfy is to appease fully one’s desire. Paul could not say that he was satisfied with his circumstances, but he could say that he was content with them.

Where Does Contentment Come From ?

Contentment issues from one's own heart and is not greatly affected by outward circumstances.

Two people can have almost identical troubles and hardships, and yet one is contented and the other is not. Two individuals are afflicted with similar body ailments; one is happy and pleasant and the other is sad and gloomy. Two men suffer financial setbacks; one is thankful for what he has left and goes on from there, while the other complains that it is useless and gives up.

The difference is on the inside of these people and not in external circumstances—one has learned the secret of contentment the other has not.

Covetousness

Contentment also comes as one curbs desires in order to be free of covetousness. One meaning of covetousness is "the desire to have more." Those who have little or no control over their desires for worldly things will find it impossible to be content.

Gratitude

Gratitude for blessings is another root of contentment. The discontented person constantly thinks of his new misfortunes and disappointments and spends very little time counting his many blessings.

Paul, who had reason to be discontented, reminds us that "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

Finally, one can acquire contentment by comparing himself with the less fortunate. If, when we begin to feel sorry for ourselves, we would look at the plight of others, we would soon find many who are not as fortunate as we. A woman who was complaining because her children were freezing, propped an old cellar door up over them to protect them from the wind. One of her little girls said, "Mother, what do poor little children do who have no cellar door to put in front of them?"

While we are unhappy and discontented because we don't have as nice clothes as we would like, many are freezing because they don't have anything but rags; while we complain because we can't afford T-bone steaks, others are starving because they cannot afford bread.

Blessings From Being Contented

Peace of mind is one. When people are discontented and impatient, they can have no peace of mind. Only by realizing that we are in the hands of God and that we must be content therein, can we have the real peace of mind that should characterize all Christians.

We are also kept from infidelity. Paul, after enjoining us to be content with what we have, goes on to say, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

How many people have fallen by the wayside because of discontentment! Practically every sin imaginable, murder, adultery, stealing is attributable to discontent.

Finally we also will be able to serve God acceptably. Certainly those who are content are more able to serve and worship God acceptably than those who are constantly chafing and fretting because of their "unfortunate circumstances." Contentment will help us worship God in spirit and in truth.

BIBLE STUDY

IV: BY VERSES

INNUMERABLE sermons begin with the words "My text today is taken from . . ." Preaching from a text is by far the most popular form. In this series, however, we are concerned not so much with preaching, "sermonising," as with teaching and the preparatory study of the Bible necessary to it. Preaching from a text is sometimes termed "textual preaching," because it is centred upon one particular verse or "text" of scripture. But although immensely popular, this is no proof of the usefulness or the accuracy of the method. Clever and learned sermonisers can take a Bible text and enlarge upon it with words which the meaning of the text does not justify. It is possible to remove a text from its setting and to strain it so that the immediate scripture meaning is ignored or lost. Campbell Morgan used to teach his Bible students that "a text out of its context is a pretext." We all have heard brilliant sermons preached on texts whose meaning bears no relationship to what the preacher's oratory utters. I myself remember two enthralling addresses, one on the verse "Then he called for a light" (Acts 16:29) and the other on "Where thou goest I will go" (Ruth 1:16): fascinating to hear, but not scripture exposition, not scripture truth.

Advantages of Textual Study

Nevertheless, in Bible understanding and exposition, the study of particular verses has much to commend it to students. A *first essential* is, as mentioned above, to take into account what the verses immediately before and after say. We may be puzzled by the verse itself, but careful reading of what leads up to and what follows it often throws considerable light upon the meaning. Scripture is almost always its own best interpreter.

Secondly study the *words* of the text—what the verse says. To do this efficiently it is necessary, or at least advisable, to read it in the Greek in which it was written. This is not as daunting as it sounds. For thorough understanding of the N.T. it is best if we have a good knowledge of N.T. Greek, and several helpful works are published on this subject. But one can obtain a reliable understanding of the original Greek by the use of what is termed a Greek-English interlinear Testament. As its name implies, this is a version in which the Greek text appears on one line and the literal, word-for-word English translation immediately below. Thus we have one line of Greek, then a line of English, then another line of Greek and another line of English and so on: hence the term "interlinear"—between lines.

Thirdly, and following naturally from the second point, be sure you are working on a correct text, a genuine passage of inspired scripture. One can wax eloquent and develop some inspiring thoughts from a passage which, on closer examination, says nothing of the sort, or is not even in the oldest and most genuine manuscripts of scripture at all. How can we be sure that the verse is authoritative and bears a meaning we are trying to bring out? The surest way is, *fourthly*, to read the passage in as many translations as we can get hold of, comparing one with another. Parallel translations of the N.T. especially are in print, which set out sometimes three or four versions in columns, which makes comparison easy. Such a publication is the recent *New Testament in four versions: King James A.V., Revised Standard, Phillips Modern English & New English Bible*, Collins, 1967, 60/-. This process is not, of course, an infallible way of proving that one has got the true meaning, for translators are as fallible as other men. But they are usually scholars, and to a large extent, realising our own limits, we have to depend upon them for accuracy of the Bible text.

Old Testament Study

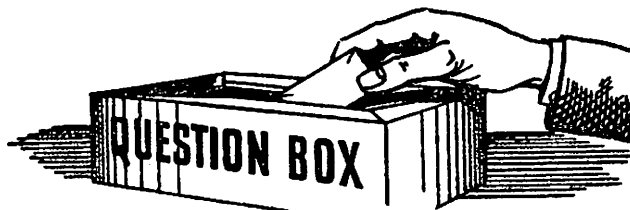
In all the foregoing we have not said anything about study and exposition of Old Testament passages. One reason for this is that by far the majority of our studies will be based on the N.T. But another reason is that much more material is available as helps to studying the N.T., and the Greek in which it was written, than are available for

the O.T. texts. Far fewer students or would-be teachers and preachers have any understanding of Hebrew (or even know the Hebrew alphabet) than those who have some little knowledge of the Greek. Consequently we cannot help ourselves as much in O.T. studies as we can in N.T. So far as regards the original texts or early manuscripts in Hebrew we have to rely almost entirely upon Hebrew scholars and their translations.

One final word about study of the Bible by verses: in the experience of almost all of us certain specific verses whether O.T. or N.T., have fastened themselves upon our memories, either because of some person who used those passages to our blessing and benefit; or because such passages applied vividly in times of need, stress, anxiety, joy or other emotion; or for some other reason. At such times such passages have brought encouragement and strength to us: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee . . ."; "the Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms"; "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God; believe also in me" and hundreds of other passages. In our need these words have been the word of God to us, have sustained us and given us new hope and assurance.

C. MELLING

Next Study: BIBLE STUDY BY WORDS



Conducted by
James Gardiner

"In 1st Corinthians 11:5 the apostle Paul allows women to exercise the gifts of prayer and prophecy, but in the same epistle (14:34-36) he seems to withdraw that permission, and yet again with greater stress in 1st Timothy 2:11, 12. How can we reconcile these passages of scripture and what part has a woman in the ministry when the church meets together for worship on the Lord's day?"

The questioner is asking much, concerning a vexed and difficult matter, but within the space at my disposal I shall attempt to be helpful.

Regulating of Prayer and Prophecy

In 1 Cor. 11:5 Paul is *regulating* prayer and prophesy, in that when men engage therein they must uncover their heads and women, conversely, must cover their heads. Our first problem is: In the case of women, does this apply always, or just at meetings of the church, or only when males are present? Prophecy was a spiritual gift which does not exist now, and so time has taken care of part of the problem: women (and men) no longer prophesy, although some brethren would equate present day exhortations with N.T. prophesyings. Prayer, however, appears not to have been a special gift of any kind, and women and men pray today just as in N.T. times. Therefore *wherever* and whenever a brother prays he uncovers his head and a sister covers hers (if a brother is present).

The questioner presupposes that prayer was a gift, as was prophecy. I would not have thought so. It is assumed very often from this verse that women can pray publicly in the assembly. Paul is merely saying that *when* women pray or prophesy attention to head attire should be given, but he does not suggest that women would be praying publicly. Indeed, I can find no example, in the church-age portion of the N.T., of sisters praying audibly and publicly in the assembly. Our sisters *pray* in the assembly each

first day of the week, as indeed everyone does, but I have yet to hear a sister publicly lead the prayers. It does not follow, when Paul enjoined the sisters to cover their heads while praying or prophesying, that he was at the same time, inferring that they prayed publicly in the assembly—albeit they prophesied audibly. Neither is it at all certain that women prophesied in the assembly. Indeed from 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 (the next passage mentioned in the question) it seems doubtful, especially when we remember that this quotation is in the same letter as 1 Cor. 11:5 and addressed to exactly the same brethren.

What is Meant by Silence

1 Cor. 14:34, 35—"Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted for them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Obviously we must try to decide for ourselves what is meant by "silence," "in the churches" and "speak." "Silence" is from the same Greek word as "silence" in v. 28 of this same chapter, and we know what was intended on that occasion. Paul seems to anticipate queries regarding the meaning of the word "silence," and forestalls them somewhat by giving a rough definition—"... for it is not permitted unto them to speak." Paul then presents a reply to those who would persist and who would, in effect, say, "But surely, Paul, you don't mean silent altogether, because if she is to learn anything at all she must be allowed to ask questions?" Verse 35: "And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home": why? "... for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Another reason being that women are commanded to be under obedience as sayeth the law (see Gen. 3:16; Num. 30:6-15). Notice this limitation of silence is only to be effective while "in the church." We are in the church (body of Christ) all the time, and so obviously Paul must mean "in the assembly." We often get the old question about those women who perhaps don't have husbands at home, the single women and the widows, and cannot therefore "ask their husbands at home." Paul is surely generalising here and the spirit of the instruction is that any questions sisters wish to ask should be asked somewhere other than "in the assembly." This restriction of silence is qualified, as we know, by reason of the fact that *all* members of the church are required to offer their praises to God in spiritual songs—Eph. 5:19: "... speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..." and Col. 3:16: "... teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." In this sense then, and apparently it seems in this sense only, do women "speak" and "teach" in the assembly. We can speak to someone in a song and we can teach a truth in a hymn, but there is still a great difference between singing and "speaking" in the present context. If God enjoins "singing" but forbids "speaking" there must be difference between the two, it seems to me.

Position of Women

1 Tim. 2:11, 12: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman..." The restrictions are not because women are of inferior intelligence, but for the two reasons stated. This passage does not appear to have an application limited to "the assembly" but has reference to teaching as between woman and man. Woman in learning must learn in "silence" (in this case "silence" meaning deference to man and being in subjection to him. The Greek word for "silence" here is *hêsuchia*, a different one from that used in 1 Cor. 14:34, and means "quietness and peaceableness." Woman is not to usurp man's authority or make inroads into man's domain by setting herself up as a teacher in the body of Christ. Paul gives the reasons: Adam was first formed and Eve was first deceived. Adam was not deceived. This obtains only within the body of Christ, and Paul's instructions are to Christian women only; outside the church women can teach men. In the Acts of the Apostles we have, in the case of Priscilla and Aquila an instance of a woman joining her husband in the informal teaching of a gospel preacher, Apollos. It appears therefore that 1 Cor. 14 prohibits women speaking "in the church," and 1 Tim. 2 precludes women teaching men in the kingdom of God

or teaching in the presence of men. They must seek to learn, however, and can ask questions at home (*i.e.* other than in the assembly). The woman must learn quietly, in humility, not attempting to challenge or question man's undoubted authority. It is often said that man can waive his authority and give sisters permission to do that which Paul forbids, and if he does so there is no question then of the woman trying to usurp his authority. Surely, however, God gave the injunction to preserve inviolate man's authorities and His purpose is defeated if man cancels this divine arrangement. It is by giving such permission to women that some sectarian bodies have now reached the sad position of having "Reverend" women preaching from their pulpits.

Work of Women

The latter part of the question asks what part a woman has in the ministry when the church meets together for worship on the Lord's day. The "Lord's day" limits the question, of course, and does not take account of woman's position at other meetings, such as Bible studies. "The ministry" means, no doubt, what part can or does she take in the worship on the Lord's day. A brief answer is that she occupies the same position as the brothers who do not audibly take part (apart from the singing by all). The women (and the men) pray along with the brother who actually voices the prayers. Like everyone else she sings, gives of her means, participates in the remembrance feast. Like everyone else she is exhorted and taught from the word of God, and if she has any questions she asks them later. As singing is not "speaking" I suppose she could lead the praise if required, although some brethren might feel misgivings about this. Some brethren feel, in extremely small congregations, perhaps with only one male member and several sisters, that the sisters could help by announcing hymns. Each congregation must decide for itself if formal announcements constitute "speaking" or "silence" in the sense intended by Paul, of course, and while announcing a hymn seems innocuous enough it must be remembered that all digression starts in small ways and with good intentions. With reference to meetings other than the assembly on the first day of the week we must, doubtless, be guided by the type and purpose of the meeting. 1 Cor. 14 would not apply to Bible study meetings or to business meetings, or to social gatherings; 1 Cor. 11 and 1 Tim. 2 would. In "women's meetings" perhaps none of these three scriptures would apply, and the sisters could lead the prayers, read the scriptures, preach and teach.

The restriction of "silence" does not seriously curtail the great work to be performed by the sisters. Dorcas was more eloquent with her needle than her tongue. Every good work is open to women. Women, not men, ministered to Christ. Such is always required and women have the unique talent for bearing the brunt of the daily round and the family problems and duties and of caring for the sick. The elder women additionally must teach the younger (Titus 2:4) and widows (widows indeed) relieve the afflicted and follow every good work.

These views of the question are solely the writer's and doubtless will not be shared by all. However I hope you will continue to send questions to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season. (2 Tim. 4, 2).

PRESS on! Seek the lost! give your heart and service to the salvation of men, relations, acquaintances and strangers. Be determined! Say as Livingstone did: "I refuse to be disappointed; I will only praise." Cry to God for more love to souls. Believe that it can be done, and that sinners can be turned Zionward through you.

The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1, 16).

I SOMETIMES say to young people, Remember three things about sin. First of all, never expect to sin. Why should you with such a Saviour? Secondly, never excuse sin. Thirdly, never excite sin. There is no half and half affair about it. You have to throw your whole soul against it. If you do, God will see you through.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1968

4—Psalm 49:1-15	Matthew 16:13-28
11—Deuteronomy 34	Matthew 17:1-13
18—Exodus 39:1-16	Matthew 17:14-27
25—Ezekiel 34:1-19	Matthew 18:1-14

HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS

The almost feverish activity we noticed in our July readings, including the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand people, is followed by a measure of retirement. Our August readings present us with teaching and action relating more especially to the apostles. We have first the Saviour's questioning them about the attitude and opinion of the people about Him. We will bear in mind that such enthusiasm followed the feeding of the five thousand that some "men of violence" would have made Him king by force. Here is a crisis which Jesus met and rejected, and His subsequent teaching estranged many of His followers. The disciples could but echo public opinion, and we suppose Jesus was not very interested in this. It was His object to bring those closest to Him to a positive decision and confession of their own faith. Characteristically Peter was the first to speak.

We must recognise that Peter had a very different conception of what his confession meant—to its real meaning. If we can dare to put ourselves into the place of Jesus's followers at that time, we would likely have had the same ideas as Peter, and they were such as must be corrected and the true conception of the kingdom implanted thoroughly on the minds of all the apostles. They never did grasp these until He was risen from the dead. Strange to say, the members of the Sanhedrin had understood the promise of resurrection better than the apostles themselves (Matt. 27:62-66). However God had revealed to Peter the truth of Christhood (or Messiahship), and he spoke for all the apostles. They thought it strange that they were bidden to keep the fact to themselves.

Having accepted this declaration and assigned to Peter the honour of the "keys"

and the decision of right and wrong in the kingdom, Jesus begins His careful instruction and warning about His own condemnation, suffering and death. So from the height of honour we descend to the depth of humiliation, and Peter descends from honourable eminence to exercise of Satanic temptation—no doubt innocently, but also insolently. He would be astonished at the rebuke (16:23). The way of the cross is the Christian way, as it was Christ's way. To expect our confession to be easy and comfortable is wrong. Air-conditioned and pretentious meeting-houses are a sure sign of apostasy, and luxurious living is spiritually enervating. Jesus made this very clear to His apostles, and their experiences fixed their hopes on heaven. They lost their lives for His sake and so found them here and hereafter.

It was fitting that at least some of the apostles should have a mountain-top experience after the revelation Jesus made of His future suffering and death. Only Peter, James and John were selected for it, as they had been also for the raising of Jairus's daughter. They were in the closest touch with the Saviour and could be trusted to keep the experience secret. When we consider how God was to use these humbly-born men to lead in the greatest revolution in human history, and the effect of their self-sacrifice, we are not surprised that they had the amazing privilege of seeing heavenly glory. The power which Jesus had exercised upon them was on the level of humanity, not divinity. Nevertheless He was divine, and in the transfiguration His divinity was made visible to human eyes. This would bring home the tremendous fact that He was indeed the Christ of God, the anointed Son of the Father, appointed and authorised as a human and divine personality.

While Peter, James and John were thus being honoured the other apostles were in the valley of humiliation, faced with hostile critics and a problem they were unable to solve—the lunatic boy. We note the crowd must have collected because of the application of the boy's father for cure of his son. Scribes were there to criticise, indicating their opposition to Jesus, mounting as His popularity increased, and even extending to a comparatively out of the way district. Something in the

appearance of Jesus caused the crowd to regard Him with terror (Mark 9:15). What is here said of the crowd is said of the Lord in Gethsemane and of the women at the tomb (Mark 14:34 and 16:5). So down from the mountain with the sign of His glory still on Him the Saviour and His closest apostles descend into the valley of trouble and disappointment. We can well appreciate that the nine disciples, left to themselves and faced with a very difficult case of physical and spiritual sickness, lost faith. The critics would question and seek to discourage them too, and were so much their superiors in education as to promote inferiority complex. The disciples had experienced the power to heal and cast out demons and had rejoiced in it (Luke 10:17-20), but this time they failed. Had they failed in another sense in the short absence of their Master (17:21 and Mark 9:28 & 29)? The personal glory of Jesus was magnified, the strength of Satanic influence exposed and all the witnesses, especially the apostles themselves, taught the vital lesson of the necessity of trust in divine power for victory in spiritual conflict. The word of the Saviour vanquished the evil spirit, leaving the boy with a final paroxysm, from which "Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up" (Mark 9:27), and restored him to his father.

We are reminded of the apostle Paul's explanation of God's refusal to remove his disability, "that I should not be exalted overmuch" (2 Cor. 12:7). The "ups and downs" of life must keep us in our place, and the solemn warnings in chapter 18:1-10 enforce the thought.

R. B. SCOTT

"LESS AND LESS"

Paul in A.D. 59—"least of the *apostles*" (1 Cor. 15:9); A.D. 54—"less than the least of all *saints*" (Eph. 3:8); A.D. 65—"chief of *sinner*s" (1 Tim. 1:15); at the end of his life—"nothing" (2 Cor. 12:11).

One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty councils. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat. *President Woodrow Wilson, at the Peace Conference, 1919.*

CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

Thanks again to all those brethren who continue, some many times, to express their interest in the above work in a tangible way. Your contributions are always greatly needed and thus warmly welcomed. Thanks also to the two anonymous donors of money to the fund, post-marked Bristol and Edinburgh. My grateful appreciation to you all.

Please remember the Cameroons work in your prayers and if you can spare a shilling or two please send your contribution to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

Are you going to treat a man as what he is or as what he might be? *Morality* requires that you treat him as *what he might be*, as what it is in him to become. *Business* insists that you should treat him as *what he is*. And you cannot get rid of that strain except by raising what he is to what he might be. That is the whole work of education. *Archbishop W. Temple*

The family that prays together is the family that stays together.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Brighton (Oxford Street).—We rejoice in the baptism of Geoffrey F. Mills on 23rd June. Geoffrey has been attending regularly for some time past, and has taken his decision after careful study at home, and has encouraged us all by his sincere manner. We look forward to useful and helpful service from him and pray that the Lord will richly bless him.

W. J. Ascough

Buckie.—From 22nd June to 3rd July, Bro. Albert Winstanley served the church. Brethren from Peterhead were with us on the first Saturday of the mission, when two meetings were held. Our brother preached every evening and there were quite a few interested. Bro. Winstanley

took special interest in the young, with choruses and quizzes and did much visitation and tract distributing.

We hope and pray that the word preached may bring forth fruit, and many souls be added to the church.

John Geddes

Ilkeston.—The church held its anniversary services on Saturday and Lord's Day, June 8th and 9th.

Saturday, June 8th, tea was served to about 70, including visitors from other churches.

The evening gospel meeting was ably presided over by Bro. Stanley Booth, when about 80 members and friends were present. Bro. Allan Ashurst of Wigan was the speaker, and took for his theme "Is God just?"

On Lord's Day Bro. Ashurst exhorted the church, and took for his text "Twas on that night when doomed to know." The evening meeting was attended by a good number of members and several non-members. Bro. Ashurst preached on the subject "You need Jesus." At the close he made an earnest appeal to those outside Christ to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

The church thanks Bro. Ashurst for his valuable help, and prays that God will bless the seed sown.

F. Gregory

Morley & Dewsbury.—The two churches combined in a mission at Morley from June 17th to 23rd.

The preacher was John Justin, evangelist working with the church in Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

All meetings were well attended, and a number of unimmersed visitors was present at each. The gospel was preached powerfully and convincingly by Bro. Justin. Much door-to-door work has been done, and now we look in hope for additions to the churches.

E. Pickersgill

Wigan (Scholes).—Eileen Melling, wife of Bro. Gordon Melling, was immersed into Christ on Tuesday, June 25th. The church rejoices greatly in this further demonstration of the saving power of the gospel. Eileen had been regularly present at gospel meetings for some six years.

James writes "Let patience have her perfect work" and Paul that "love never faileth." Both statements are fulfilled in the experience of our new sister in Christ. We know that God will bless and keep her as one of His children. His is the glory, and to the church is the blessing.

OBITUARY

Birmingham (Summer Lane).—It is with great sorrow that we report the passing from this life of our beloved sister Minnie Drew, aged 78 years. She was baptised in December, 1932, after a serious illness during which she had been ministered to by members of the church. It may be said that she was won for Christ more by the Word in action than by preaching. Sister Drew lived a faithful Christian life, tinged with much pain patiently borne, but lived to see her husband and two children become Christians. We praise God for her faithful service and are encouraged by her quiet example. Her husband, children, and all her loved ones are commended to Him who alone is able to give true comfort and consolation. "As in Adam all die, even so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

Ilkeston. — With the passing of Sis. Patience Keightley there ends the link in the Church at Ilkeston of a remarkable family of thirteen, eleven children and their parents, all of whom became members of the church in Ilkeston. The influence of that family — the Gregory family — is shown by the number of members in the Church here who are related either by birth or marriage.

Patience Keightley was born on February 8th, 1874, and died on May 10th, 1968, aged 94 years. She was baptised on February 1st, 1891, at the age of 17 years, and was thus for over 77 years a member of the church. She has been a faithful and constant follower of her Lord during her long life, and until ill health came with advancing years, she was always in her place around the Lord's Table.

A faithful and loyal disciple has gone to her reward. She leaves behind her two sons and a daughter to mourn her loss.

The writer conducted the funeral service.

F. Gregory

COMING EVENTS

Conference. Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts., Saturday, 14th September, 1968.

Subject: Machinery for inter-community co-operation in the furtherance of the gospel. Training for preaching; voluntary preacher, paid preacher, support, allocation of services, literature, magazine. 2.0 to 5.0 p.m.

Tea: 5.0 to 6.0 p.m.

The Need for the Gospel: 6.0—7.0 p.m. Address.

Hospitality. Write T. Woodhouse, 8 Shoulder of Mutton Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts.

NOTE.—At the last two conferences a call was made to modify the personnel of the conference committee, without success. Since the employment of Bro. John Dodsley by the committee in October, 1967, financial support has been quite inadequate.

Hindley (Argyle Street). — Mission, Saturday, September 14th to Lord's Day, September 22nd, 1968. Also week-night meetings Tuesday and Thursday. All meetings 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Bro. David Dougall, Scotland.

Help us to help others.

"NO ROOM"

No room for the baby in Bethlehem's inn,
Only a cattle shed;
No room on this earth for the dear Son
of God,
Nowhere to lay His head.
Only a cross did they give to my Lord,
Only a borrowed tomb.
Today He is seeking a place in your heart:
Will you still say to Him
"No room" ?

BOOK WANTED

"Memoirs of David King"

For the use of a young bible student. Price, etc., to F. Gregory, 204 Heanor Road, Ilkeston, Derbys.

MARRIAGE

Elizabeth M. Adams (Aylesbury) to Mohammed Farrash-Khalvat at Oxford on January 11th, 1967. (Late entry—notice received July 15th, 1968.—Ed.).

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Roy Renshaw (Sec., New Wellington Street, Blackburn): 1 Cobden Street, Waterfall, Blackburn, Lancs.

Gretchen and Allan Ashurst and family, 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester, Lancs.

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