

Scripture Standard

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

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"Progress but Whither.

SO cried Thomas Carlyle, and his query is pertinent for to-day. Madame Roland, just before being guillotined, cried: 'Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!' The same may be said of progress. Progress directed by human wisdom has landed the world into an awful mess, and has brought about the divided and helpless condition of the Churches.

When at an Annual Conference of Churches of Christ an enthusiastic brother proposed that a paper should be written on 'Progressive Christianity,' Bro. Davi. King, said: 'Will you define what you mean by Progressive Christianity? Where do you want to progress to?'

There may be progressive Christians, but Christianity is unchanging. Either we have in the New Testament Scriptures a perfect religion for all people and all time; or if it is imperfect, and can be improved by men; then anything and everything that has been added since may be right.

In recent attempts to defend 'infant baptism' it is claimed that to regard New Testament baptism as a model for all time is to ignore 'the development which has taken place, and which ought to take place, in a living Church, guided by the Holy Spirit.' If it is justifiable in the name of development to change believer's immersion into infant sprinkling, why object to the Pope, the Confessional-box, purgatory, etc.?

Romanists claim the right to go beyond the Scriptures, and say it took centuries to develop their elaborate ritual and service. Some leaders in Churches of Christ seem likely to reach the Romanist position much quicker.

Statements by leaders in official publications that the position of Churches of Christ has never been that of the Scriptures only, are allowed to pass unchallenged, though all who know the history of the Restoration Movement know that the persistent cry of the pioneers was: 'Where the Scriptures speak we speak. Where the Scriptures are silent we are silent.'

Of course some now render the latter half of that maximum: 'Where the Scriptures are silent we may speak; and by additions and innovations have sown seeds of discord and division in the

Churches. If where the Scriptures are silent men may speak, why object to or oppose anything taught and practised by any religious body? Why trouble about anything the Scriptures say? For those who say they have progressed beyond the above quoted watchword, and who scoff at verbal inspiration, to spend time in studying, to give expositions and explanations of the words of Scripture seems to us a solemn farce. Why preach on passages of Scripture, and seek to win people to the Churches of Christ if the progressive development theory is right? And what hope is there for union on that ground?

One thing is certain, the Holy Spirit will not contradict, or lead us contrary to His own revealed word. Many who claim to have developed as guided by the Holy Spirit do exactly opposite things; *ie* some immerse believers, others sprinkle babies, and some do not attempt to keep the Lord's ordinances. When you ask these people how we are to decide what is right they all refer us to the Scriptures. So with Paul, we say: 'Let us hold God to be' true, though every man should prove to be false.'

But should not Christians progress? Certainly! But not beyond what is written. 'Whosoever,' wrote John, 'goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching the same hath both the Father and the Son.' Guided by the Scriptures we can 'grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ.'

But no man whatever his position, pretensions or scholarship, knows anything with certainty about the person, character, work of the Lord Jesus, or of His will for us, only as he has learned it from the Scriptures.

Keep to the Scriptures, and again, as in the early days of the glorious Restoration Movement, we shall see real progress.

EDITOR.

The Athiest's Fear.

AN atheist said: 'There is one thing that mars all the pleasure of my life. I am afraid the Bible is true. If I could know for a certainty that death is an eternal sleep, I should be happy. But here is what pierces my soul, if the Bible is true, I am lost for ever.—'The Defender'.

Some Centenary Reflections,

OBVIOUSLY the centenary of the first Annual Conference of the Restoration Movement in Britain held in 1842 raises enquiry as to how the Conference came into existence. Also it naturally causes reflection on connected matters, and particularly why so very little progress has been made recently.

The Conference was the outcome of an impassioned appeal by George C. Reid, the Movement's pioneer evangelist, a sketch of whose character and career appear in the 'S.S.' for July and August, 1935. Reid was a man of magnificent powers and still more magnificent Gospel enthusiasm. Convinced by impartial New Testament investigation of the soundness of the Restoration Movement's principles, he was baptized in 1839, and immediately devoted his energies and abilities to the Movement's furtherance. 'His courage and fidelity in defending the truth, and his zeal, perseverance and success in the cause of the Lord,' said James Wallis (the editor of the 'Christian Messenger'), in 1847, were 'surpassed by none.'

In 1841 and the early months of 1842 this whole-souled evangelist traversed many parts of Scotland and England in exhausting preaching tours, accompanied by rich Divine blessing, and became immensely impressed with the open door for the truth, and the urgent need for collective effort to utilise these apparent opportunities. He wrote: 'In what state are the Scotch Baptist Churches in consequence of their supineness after so many years' existence? At death's door! Shall we follow in their wake? Every grateful heart says No! no! never! In what state would the Reformation in America have been now but for the exertions of its zealous and self-denying proclaimed? And shall Britons lag behind? The simultaneous shout we hear even now is, "We will go forward."' Consulting together, at his suggestion, the various congregations specially interested arranged the 1842 Conference. It was hoped ere long to hold another, but it was deferred until 1847 so that Alexander Campbell, then on his visit to the British Churches, might be present.

With unquenchable Gospel ardour, Reid again and again pleaded for unremitting, well-planned evangelistic endeavour. In 1843, he urged: 'The cry is loud from every quarter: Come and help us; but come now.' In Fifeshire, there was every prospect of a great work to be done, were there the power to undertake it. Elsewhere there was 'not the most distant doubt of similar result, could we put in operation the same means the Saviour ordained, circumstances demand, and the first Christians

uniformly used, *viz.*, preaching the Gospel."

Naturally we ask: What has been the progress achieved during the century of the Movement's history in Britain? As so clearly shown in the Editor's leading article, August issue of the 'S.S.,' substantial, yea, remarkable, progress was evident by the membership returns of the first half-century, 1842-1892; moderate success the mid-half century; but no success, and even the reverse, in recent decades. Summarising the returns, we find in the double decade 1841-1862, an increase of 114 per cent.; the second double decade, 1862-1882, increase 138 per cent.; the third, 1882-1902, increase 89 per cent.; and the fourth double decade, 1902-1922, an increase of only 30 per cent. Alas, alas, in the almost similar period, 1922—1939—we omit the following three years because of admitted huge war-time difficulties—a decrease in membership of 6.6 per cent., and in that of the number of Churches 12.8 per cent. Also, a feature common to nearly all present-day religious bodies, the number of Sunday School scholars declined greatly in the last period, *viz.*, 43.8 per cent.

Why the admirable progress in the Movement's early decades, but such deplorably poor results recently? Prayerfully and earnestly to enquire into the reasons of this marked absence of success during the past twenty to thirty years is a patent imperative duty. To deal adequately with the many causes contributing to this recent failure is, however, beyond the limits of our present space, but we suggest briefly what we regard as three of the most important of these retarding factors.

The Movement, or the Brotherhood, has lost its ideal. The avowed aim at first, and long maintained, was the simple and complete restoration of New Testament Christianity according to the precepts, examples, and principles recorded in Holy Writ. Otherwise stated, it was to And out the Saviour's will as divinely revealed, and in personal and Church matters *to do that will*. To-day, and for a considerable time past, we have heard or read little from the official leaders of this grand purpose. In fact for several years such aim has been pointedly omitted from the explanatory sub-title of the official weekly organ. The desire has evidently been rather to shine prominently among the religious communities of the day, popularity rather than unswerving principle. Connected with this is the favour given to Higher Criticism teachings.

Then is it not beyond question that the spirit of worldliness pervades the Churches in no small degree to-day? Theatres, picture palaces, and other questionable forms of pleasure and relaxation, are openly approved despite their plain tendency against religion pure and

undefiled. Plays and even so-called Scripture plays, so abhorrent in our judgement to reverent regard for the sacred things of the Word, are practised among us. The Lord's Day sanctity is too often lightly viewed. Do these tendencies help towards true progress and soul-saving for eternity? Verily, no.

Thirdly where is the whole-souled Gospel enthusiasm of the Movement's early days? Where the utter self-abnegation manifest when George Reid wrote: 'Did the beloved Paul tell the Philippians that Epaphroditus had injured himself by over-exertion in the work of the Lord? Did Paul himself count his life dear to him? Did our blessed Lord and Master lay down His life for us! Is the world perishing for very lack of the Gospel, and are we afraid of losing a few years of life, and that life purchased by the blood of Jesus? Had I a thousand lives I would give them all to Jesus.' There are marked exceptions, but we fail to see much evidence of such devotedness in the late decades of the Brotherhood's history.

Would that the Movement's early ideal, the pioneers' stern disapproval of worldly, questionable pursuits, and their apostle-like constraining, Gospel eagerness were again apparent! If so, the rich Divine blessing could again be expected, and doubtless, as formerly, be received.

CHARLES BAILEY.

Relative or Absolute?

Dear Bro. Editor,—

While not denying that there is a relative teaching in the New Testament, it seems to me that Bro. E. W. Jepson himself, fails to distinguish betwixt the relative, and the absolute. The examples he gives which are of the relative type are generally admitted to be such; each setting forth an underlying absolute principle which we would do well to observe.

To class the teaching given through the Apostle Paul with regard to the position of women in the Churches, however, with 'feet washing,' 'greeting with a holy kiss,' 'going the extra mile,' etc., shows the weakness of Bro. Jepson's case if he will pardon me for saying so.

An unbiased and unprejudiced reader can surely discriminate betwixt the local and circumstantial and that which is of an enduring nature; also betwixt the parabolic and the actual.

It would be impossible to deal with Bro. Jepson's reference to absolute standards and private interpretations in a brief way, and I shall leave that. It requires and deserves a special article. I would respectfully remind him, however, that he has failed to deal with my particular criticism, so far as he and the other two Brethren are concerned, in

their dealing with Galatians iii. 28.

It is this incorrect method of teaching the Scriptures which is at the root of most of our differences. I would repeat that we have no right to take a passage out of its context and give it a meaning which it does not bear. To bolster up a case by doing this shows weakness, and not strength.

With regard to Bro. Bailey's article, as this is a quotation I do not feel at liberty to deal with it. To do so without his permission would be a breach of courtesy. In the meantime, may we 'prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.'

J. HOLMES.

Dear Editor,—As a critic of *relative* ethics my chief reply is to express regret at having appeared uncharitable, quite unintentionally.

I understand 'ethic' to mean a code of morality, necessarily a permanent standard, capable of being applied. It cannot, therefore, be relative, because right and wrong do not vary with locality or period, *e.g.*, the ethics of going the second mile, washing feet, holy greeting, and unlimited giving are still part of the faith. Their outward expressions may not be in terms of Roman miles, water and sandals, kisses, or cloaks, but are, perhaps, generosity of various kinds, cleaning one another's boots, holy handshakes, and unrestricted generosity, even to thieves of modern garments, etc.

That does not deny *circumstantial* teaching in the Scriptures, but it does exclude the sanction of opposing *interpretations*. 'No Scripture is of private interpretation.' Two *opposite* ideas on, say, sisters teaching the Church, cannot both be right; they indicate an imperfect grasp of the Word on one side.

And, of course, it is useless quoting human literature in support of an unscriptural idea, however well-esteemed the writer may be.

The testimony of the Word is that 'private interpretation' cannot even approach 'absolute standard' let alone march in step.

R.A.H.

The Mighty Hero,

A LITTLE boy came to his father looking much in earnest, and asked, 'Father, is Satan bigger than I am?' 'Yes, my boy,' said the father. 'Is he bigger than you are, Father?' 'Yes, my boy. He is bigger than your father.' The boy looked surprised, but thought again, and asked, 'Is he bigger than Jesus?' 'No, my boy,' answered the father. 'Jesus is bigger than he is.' The little fellow, as he turned away, said with a smile, 'Then I'm not afraid of him.'

—'Sunday School Banner.'

Verbal Inspiration.

THE noisy ones will say, 'No scholar believes in verbal inspiration.' In this they bear false witness. Another expression in common use among them is this: 'Such belief drives men into infidelity.' And yet no one of them ever knew of a case. This class, with as much care and evident satisfaction as an infidel, hunt out the apparent contradictions and errors in the authorised and revised versions, and exultingly declare: 'Here is conclusive evidence that the Bible is not verbally inspired.' Some of these gentlemen are dishonest because, first, they know that most of these apparent errors and contradictions were long ago satisfactorily answered, even to the silencing of infidel scoffers; and, second, they know that no one believes that the translations and revisions are inspired. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is simply this: The original writings, *ifissima verba* (the very words) came through the penmen direct from God; and the critics are only throwing dust into the air when they rail against verbal inspiration, and attempt to disprove it, by pointing out the apparent errors and discrepancies of the authorised and revised texts.

We mean by Inspiration that the words composing the Bible are God-breathed. If they are not, then the Bible is not inspired at all, since it is composed only and solely of words. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God.' (2 Tim. iii. 16). The word rendered Scripture in this passage is *graphe*. It means writing, anything written. The writing is composed of words. What else is this but verbal inspiration? and they wrest 'the Scriptures unto their own destruction' who teach otherwise.

Prof. A. A. Hodge says: "The line can never rationally be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture . . . That we have an inspired Bible, and a verbally inspired one, we have the witness of God Himself.'

Prof. Gaussen says: 'The theory of a Divine Revelation, in which you would have the inspiration of thoughts, without the inspiration of the language, is so inevitably irrational that it cannot be sincere, and proves false even, to those who propose it.'

Canon Westcott says: 'The slightest consideration will show that words are as essential to intellectual processes as they are to mutual intercourse . . . Thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as soul to body. Without it the mysteries unveiled before the eyes of the seer would be confused shadows; with it, they are made clear lessons for human life.'

Dean Burgon, a man of vast learning, says: 'You cannot dissect inspiration into substance and form. As for thoughts being inspired, apart from the words

which give them expression, you might as well talk of a tune without notes, or a sum without figures. It is as illogical as it is worthless,' and cannot be too sternly put down.'

A great many statements of the Bible plainly indicate that the words are inspired. The following are a few instances: 'Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.' (Psalm cix. 89). This is characteristic of the entire Psalm. 'The words of the Lord are pure words.' (Psalm xii. 6). 'Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' (Jer. xxiii, 29). 'The word of our God shall stand forever' (Isaiah xl. 8), and so on, almost *ad infinitum*. Everywhere in the sacred record you find the same suggestion of Divine authorship. Jesus and the Apostles always recognised it, and gave it prominence and emphasis. Its importance and value should not be underestimated.

This, then, is the sum of our contention: The Bible is made up of writings, and these are composed of words. The WORDS are inspired—God-breathed. Therefore is the Bible inspired—is God's Word.

This is plainly seen, first, in the uniform declaration of the Book. All the Old Testament Prophets, Jesus our Lord, and all the New Testament writers, bear the same testimony concerning this transcendently important matter. Not a single word or thought to the contrary can anywhere be found in all their declarations. The attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament, and His utterances confirm beyond question our contention. He had the very same Old Testament we have to-day. He believed it to be the Word of God, and proclaimed it as such. He said, 'One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' In thwarting the tempter He said: 'It is written! It is written! It is written!'

In confounding the Jews, He said: 'If ye believed Moses ye would believe me; for he wrote of me.' He never criticised the Scriptures, but always appealed to them as His Father's words, authoritative and final. (From article in 'The Fundamentals,' vol. vii).

L. W. MUNHALL, M.A., D.D.

Scripture.

'WE search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful
From graven stone, and written scroll,
From all old flower fields of the soul;
And weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the book our mothers read.'

Studies in the Pentateuch—VIII.

IN our last we referred to the fact of differences between the Levitical and Deuteronomy Code of Laws. The first is the list of clean and unclean animals (Lev. xi. and Deut. xi.). It will be noticed that the list in Leviticus includes four kinds of locust which may be eaten (verse 22—see also Matt. iii. 4, Mark i. 6)—and eight creeping things (verses 29-30) which might not be eaten. In Deuteronomy, all are omitted, which in its turn mentions several animals, as ox, sheep, goats (verse 4), that may be eaten, which Leviticus omits. "If we compare the two lists, we shall wonder what the Children of Israel lived on during the forty years wandering. The answer is in Exodus xvi. 35. 'And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan,' and as David says (Ps. lxxviii. 25): 'Man did eat angels' food; he sent them meat to the full.' They are about to enter into the 'land inhabited,' to enjoy 'goodly cities which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou fillest not, and wells digged, which thou diggest not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantest not.' (Deut. vi. 10, 11.) 'For the Lord thy God bringeth thee unto a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.' (Deut. viii. 7-9.)

We can understand the reason several animals are now allowed for food in the Deuteronomic list, more so, if we note what is said in Ex. xxiii. 29-30, and Deut. vii. 22, where the Lord says he will not drive out the inhabitants of the land in one year but, 'little by little, lest the beast of the field increase upon thee.'

Before proceeding further, let us consider another matter which bears relation to the foregoing. There are those who say the Deuteronomic Law was neither known nor observed until the time of Josiah. -What we should like to know, in view of only Deuteronomy containing the declaration that the ox, sheep and goat were permitted for food, how did anyone know of this permission between the time of Israel entering Canaan, and finding the book of the Law in the Temple during Josiah's reign, if Deuteronomy was neither known nor observed? How is it Abigail came to meet David with 'five sheep, ready dressed,' for him and his followers as a peace offering (1 Sam. xxv. 18), or that after

the Israelites had smitten the Philistines, they slew sheep, oxen and calves, and did eat them—although they sinned inasmuch as they 'did eat them with the blood'? (1 Sam. iv. 23). Also how about the provision for King Solomon's household, which consisted of five kinds of animals, namely: oxen, sheep, hart, roebuck, and fallow deer, allowable under the Deuteronomic Code? (1 Kings iv. 23).

If the discovery of the Book of the Law hi Josiah's reign was its first publication, how then comes Amos writing nearly two centuries before to know about the tithes of the third year (Amos iv. 14), a law found only in Deut. xiv. 28 and xxvi. 12, and that the thanksgiving cakes were leavened (Amos iv. 5) the only occasion wherein Moses allowed leaven to be used in the worship of God? (Lev. vii. 3). Evidently Amos knew something of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and remember he was not of the 'school of the prophets,' but simply a herdman (chap. 1) and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (vii. 14). What was it that the Levites had with them when they went throughout all the cities of Judah teaching, the people in the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xvii. 9) some two and a half centuries previously? Note also it was the duty of Levites to teach people. (Lev. x 11, Deut. xxiv. 8.) If we turn to 2 Chron. xv. 3, we find a statement of the condition of Israel between the reigns of Solomon and Jehoshaphat. This no doubt can be pinned down to Jeroboam, who cast off all the priests and Levites from executing their office unto the Lord, and ordained his own priests to officiate before the golden calves he had made (1 Kings xii. 25, 33, 2 Chron. xiii. 4, 12). Jeroboam did his best to get rid of the book. Manasseh was not far behind in later years. Yet someone had done better still, they had preserved it and put it where it belonged, and it was taken to him whose duty it was to read it (Deut xvii. 18-20). He did read it and obeyed, inasmuch as the Passover which he (Josiah) kept is recorded: 'There was no Passover like to that kept in Israel, from Samuel the prophet, neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel that were present and the inhabitants of Jerusalem' (2 Chron. xxxv. 18). It is fair to assume, from this verse, that there were other Passovers kept by previous kings, but not 'like to' that of Josiah's. ALFRED JACKSON.

IF we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on and continue to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.

DANIEL WEBSTER.



Young Folk's Corner.

CONDUCTED BY UNCUS BERT

Motto: '

'HAVE faith in God.' (Mark 11: 22.)

Faith.

What would you say if you were asked: 'What is faith?' It is important that we should know what the word 'faith' means, because the Bible tells us many times, and in many different ways, to have faith in God. It tells us, too, that whatever else we may have or be, 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' Perhaps you remember, too, that the Lord Jesus rebuked His own disciples for their lack of faith, saying: 'O, ye of little faith.' So it is important to understand just what faith is—then to possess it.

A preacher was once asked to explain faith. 'Faith,' he said, 'is this: If God tells me to jump through a brick wall, it is my business to jump, and the Lord's business to provide the hole.' That's a curious explanation, isn't it? But the thought is quite right. Having faith in Jesus means believing in Him as Son of God, and then *fully trusting in Him*. In other words, unquestioningly obeying His every command.

Shall we, then, have faith in God—committing our lives to Jesus, believing implicitly in Him, trustingly obeying Him in all things?

The Things that Count.

Not what we have, but what we use.
Not what we see, but what we choose.
These are the things that mar or bless
The sum of human happiness. *
The things nearby, not those afar.
Not what we seem, but what we are.
These are the things that make or break,
That give the heart its joy or ache.
Not what we take, but as we give;
Not as we pray, but as we live—
These are the things that make for peace
Both now, and after time shall cease.

Answers.

1. Jeremiah 13: 23.
2. Lord to Job. Job 38: 11.
3. Goliath. 1 Samuel 17: 43.
4. Paul. Acts 23: 3.
5. The Lord Jesus. Luke 6: 44.
6. The Lord Jesus. Matt. 5: 34.'

Who?

1. 'Rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass'?
2. 'Took stones . . . and put them for his pillow'?
3. 'Shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh'?
4. 'Found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof and went down into it'?
5. 'Sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word'?
6. 'Took them, the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway'?
7. 'Was cumbered about much serving'?

Expediency.

HOW often in the history of the Church of God has the word "expediency" been used to excuse some fancied innovation in the worship, or to cover the intrusion of a human whim! In reality, an expedient will never be anything but a needful accessory, essential for the carrying out of a Divine command or for the imitation of an Apostolic precedent; but to-day Christendom uses it to mean any sort of decorative accessory from a reversed collar to a piped organ, just as the whim demands.

However we cannot seriously describe a musical box as an expedient in these days, when singing and the understanding of harmony are so widespread as to facilitate unaccompanied praises. What was unnecessary in the Church's early days is equally unnecessary to-day. Scarcely could any songs of praise have been more divinely acceptable than those of two Philippian prisoners, singing at midnight from full hearts in bruised bodies—"the fruit of the lips"—a true sacrifice of praise!

The Faith remains unchanged; so do prayer and praise. So do the needs of mankind, and it is because Christ is still yearning to overcome the fundamental and persistent self-assertion of mankind in sin, that the Church, His agent, should not dare to enlist the help of any but the barest essentials in administering the eternal graces of His Gospel, or in rendering worship to Him. R.A.H.

Does Social Work Pay?

THERE are, I am sorry to say, parts-of the country where we have made our Churches largely into social clubs, and these are the very parts where our hold upon the young people is the weakest.

W. H. ARMSTRONG.
Moderator, Free Church Federal Council.

Work.

SOME preachers we know of never preach unless they have a good house, a large congregation, and everything exactly fitted to their ideas of what is desirable. Some young men never will commence preaching until just the condition of affairs that they desire presents itself. Some must have just, so much of an education, or they will do nothing. Now, brethren, all these things are desirable and to be attained as far as may be; but we have been observing a little in passing through life. Our observation teaches us that the man that never starts on a journey until every surrounding just suits, stays at home. The man that waits until he is just ready in every particular to marry, dies an old bachelor. The man that never works until he gets everything to suit exactly, never works at all. So it is in life. If we wait for all obstacles to be removed out of our way before we commence earnest life, we live miserable, lounging drones in the busy hive of human beings. The part of true manhood is to work in spite of difficulties, to bravely face evil surroundings and surmount obstacles, that lie at every step of our pathway through life to test our faith and courage. The man that cannot preach in a bad house, or no house at all, if need be, is not fit to preach in a comfortable one; and the man that has not faith and brains enough to preach without a scholastic education will never be able to preach with one. The man that cannot preach to small congregations ought not to be allowed to preach to a large one.

So go to work, Christian: in just, such circumstances as surround you, and work bravely and earnestly, and God will open to you better opportunities, new fields, and give you more talents as you prove yourself deserving by the faithful use of what you have. But it is a fatal delusion to think that Providence will give you better opportunities when you fail to use to his honour those he has already entrusted to your keeping. See the parable of the talents.

D. LIPSCOMB.

RECENTLY a speaker recalled a story of Spurgeon's concerning a class of boys who were having a Scripture lesson on Daniel. One of the boys was asked to read some verses aloud, and presently he came to verse three in chapter six, which reads ' . . . because an excellent spirit was in him' but by mistake the boy rendered it ' . . . because an excellent *spine* was in him.' It was undoubtedly bad reading, but it was excellent theology, for Daniel was a man of real 'backbone'—strong courageous.

—New Century Leader.*

Nyasaland.

FOLLOWING upon the anticipations roused in the September 'S.S.' that possibly readers might expect a report of the Nyasaland Conference, it is gratifying that this has come to hand. As readers will perceive it is a glowing report of stirring and stimulating meetings of our brethren in that distant country.

Bro. Ronald says there were twenty-four representatives of from Chafala, Chikala, Chiradzulo, Kamrunguti, Kunyande, Makala, Malimba, Mlanje, Mpanyila, Ncheu, and Nkhongeni.

'Brethren and sisters began to arrive on the 24th and 25th of June. Our hearts were gladdened to see a really large gathering met for the simple purpose of strengthening each other in the things most surely believed amongst us.

'Of the twenty-four delegates, seven were sisters who had walked for three days about one hundred miles from Ncheu, Northern Province, to attend the conference. These sisters have not failed to be present at conferences in 1940 to 1942. We commend them that by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ they have been enabled to undertake the long journeys. They have shown a wonderful zeal for the work of the Lord.

"The opening service on the first day, June 26th, was conducted by myself, basing my remarks upon Hebrews xiii. 5.

'After this, reports were presented from the different Churches. About two hundred people were present, and they were pleased and encouraged to hear the responses to the call of the gospel in the Northern Province.

"The sisters, from the North asked the sisters of Namiwawa to visit them in the North, as did Phebe. The invitation was heartily accepted and with great feeling the Namiwawa sisters promised, God willing, to return the visit.

'Next morning, the service was conducted by Bro. R. L. Chinyengo, who roused the brethren when speaking of the Ten Virgins of whom it is written: "Behold, the "bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

'The chairman, during the year, with other evangelists, had arranged two long journeys to visit the brethren in the far country, as Mlanje and Cholo (Southern) and Lilongwe and Dowa (Northern). The conference was very much encouraged to hear of their visits.

'On Sunday, June 28th, three confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus, and were buried in the water of baptism. One was restored to the Church. Bro: W. B. Kunde conducted the service at the stream before many people. Bro: James Katunga conducted the "Breaking of the Bread."

'On Monday, the 29th, we had our farewell meeting. This day we considered

the question raised by elders of the Northern Churches, who asked about payments of the tribute money, as the Government had increased the Hut Tax by one shilling. The elders asked: "Can we pay it?"

'Bro. Hetherwick was the first to answer and said: "We pay the Hut Tax, as we have always done, and we must pay the added shilling." Others took part in the discussion, after which the chairman quoted the Lord Jesus who took a coin of His day and from the Inscription on it gave His decision in response to the questioners. "The coin of to-day bears the image of the King, therefore we must render unto Caesar the things that are his and unto God the things that are the Lord's." Again the Lord recommended His disciples to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. The meeting was evidently pleased with the discussion, and the decision to pay the increased Hut Tax was taken.

'Further the chairman exhorted them that they be more faithful to the word and work of the Lord always.

'The visitors were given a little money to help them on their homeward journey. So we separated in peace and rejoicing, and with shakings of hands we bade one another God-speed. And they went home to anticipate the return visit of the Namiwawa sisters, for the hearts of all burned within them as they talked of the work of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Brethren, how splendidly encouraging is the report of this Conference of our fellow Christians in Nyasaland. Who would not have liked to have been there? May God crown their labours with His blessing and add to their numbers in the days ahead many who may be saved.

W. M. KEMPSTER.

News,

Morecambe.—Owing to dark nights the breaking of bread service from October 3rd will, D.V., be held on Lord's Day afternoons at 2.45 p.m. Visiting brethren will be gladly welcomed.

Obituary,

Newtongrange.—The Church here has sustained a great loss in the passing of our esteemed brother Joseph Holgate, who fell asleep in Jesus on August 10th. He was one of the oldest members. His acceptance of the gospel and surrender to Christ, thirty-six years ago, made a great change in his life, to which all can testify, and brought much happiness into his life and home. He often spoke of the goodness and mercy of God, and continued in his humble way to serve the Lord faithfully. Though not gifted for public ministry of the Word, in conversation he could present and defend New Testament teaching, and the commands and promises of Jesus. His* witness for truth was manifested in regular attendance at the services of the Church for over thirty-six years, until he met with a serious accident. His life during his illness was a fine testimony to the power of the gospel. Strong in faith, not a murmur, but always cheerful and of good spirit. He was a true philanthropist both inside and outside the Church. An office-bearer for many years, he did good service in many ways, known and unknown to the brethren. He died as he lived, trusting firmly in Jesus. We shall miss his sweet fellowship. We sympathise with the family in their bereavement, but our sorrow is not without hope. 'For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him,' and they shall be for ever with the Lord.

S. II. ALLEN.

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