

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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CHRISTIAN UNITY WHAT SHOULD WE DO ?

FROM a brother in Christ we have received an article published in the "Christian Herald" of February 26, 1966. The article is entitled "A Gulf that Cannot be Bridged" and is by T. Wilkinson Riddle. The words introducing the article show its subject and purpose:

"Thousands of sincere Bible-loving Christians are deeply disturbed at the present time by the attitudes and activities of many religious leaders in all denominations, who, in an earnest desire for Christian Unity, are failing to condemn the unscriptural claims of Roman Catholicism.

The writer begins by quoting from the letter of Jude:

"My friends, I was fully engaged in writing to you about our salvation—which is yours no less than ours—when it became urgently necessary to write at once, and appeal to you to join the struggle in defence of the faith, the faith which God entrusted to His people, once and for all" (N.E.B.).

and then goes on to say:

These are grave words. They might have been written yesterday for the needs of today. In any case, they express what thousands of God's people are feeling, and who are entitled to expect a definite lead from **The Christian Herald**, which, for a hundred years, has stood like a rock for the defence of the Reformed Faith and the principles of Protestant Christians.

They and we must 'join the struggle in defence of the faith,' and make it clear, with courage, courtesy and conviction, that any kind of reunion with an unreformed Roman Catholic Church is an utter and final impossibility. The gulf cannot be bridged.

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It would be idle to pretend that recent happenings have not caused profound disquiet and even dismay to Evangelical Christians everywhere.

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A well-known Jesuit priest is invited to preach in Westminster Abbey; when Roman Catholic clergy share with Anglicans and Free Churchmen in an open-air service in Trafalgar Square, and when Cardinal Heenan speaks hopefully of his contemplated approaches to Evangelical clergy and ministers of the Church of England, and of the major Free Churches.

I am well aware that superficially these things are attractive. 'After all,' it is argued, 'we all believe in God, and as unity is strength, how wise that we should all get together and show the world a united front.'

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Let me examine for a moment the first section of the pronouncement of the Vatican Council, passed in September, 1965, entitled: 'Declaration on religious freedom, on the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in matters religious.'

The first paragraph affirms, perhaps for the first time by the Roman Catholics, what Protestants have affirmed for the last three or four centuries, namely, the right of private judgment. Let me quote the actual words: 'The demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying making use of responsible freedom, not driven by coercion, but motivated by a sense of duty.' So far, so good.

BUT the second paragraph of this section affirms that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true Church, and claims that religious freedom 'has to do with immunity from coercion by civil society; therefore it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ.'

Two facts are perfectly clear to me: the first is that there is not the slightest departure from the assumption that the Roman Catholic Church exclusively is 'the one Church of Christ' (though to the Protestant this assumption is false); and the second is that the pronouncement 'leaves untouched traditional (Roman) Catholic doctrine.' In other words, there can be no change or variation or modification in Roman Catholic teaching. A Jesuit may preach in Westminster Abbey, but this does not mean that Rome is desirous of accommodating herself to the claims of the Church of England, whose ministry in her sight is irregular, and whose sacraments in her sight are invalid.

Until this fact is clearly understood by Protestant Christians, their eager hopes of ultimate reunion, on a Scriptural basis, with the Church of Rome, can only be a snare and a delusion. The Reformed Churches are regarded paternally by the Pope as prodigal sons. If they care to return, with due penitence and humility, they will be welcomed, but on no other terms. Rome has no intention of surrendering one jot or title of 'traditional (Roman) Catholic doctrine.'

But now we have to enquire into the nature of the gulf which cannot be bridged. Of what does it consist? It is not necessary to multiply words. One word is vital. It is Authority. The crux of the discussion, where Christian unity is concerned, has to do with the seat of authority in religion. In this respect, the gulf between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism could hardly be wider. For the Reformed Churches, the seat of authority is the Bible. In the famous saying of Chillingworth, 'The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants.' Protestants believe in the right of private judgment, and are fully persuaded that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation and for the guidance and direction of a holy life.

THE Roman Catholic Church, however, while paying lip service to the Scriptures, insists that Tradition must also be accepted. This explains the many strange and erroneous doctrines and practices which are characteristic of Roman Catholic theology and ethics.

A new doctrine was accepted on July 13, 1870, at the 85th General Congregation of the Vatican Council, namely, the infallibility of the Pope, although it is interesting to note that 21 archbishops and 65 bishops of the Roman Catholic Church voted against it.

The 'infallibility of the Pope' does not mean that, as a man, he never makes a mistake; it means that when he speaks, *ex cathedra*, that is, from the Chair, in his capacity as the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, then, to his people, his pronouncement becomes infallible, authoritative doctrine.

I HAVE been reading again Bishop Strossmayer's spirited protest on that memorable day in 1870, when he said that having studied the Scriptures, 'I do not find one single chapter, or one little verse, in which Jesus Christ gives to St. Peter the mastery over the apostles, his fellow-workers. If Simon, son of Jonas, had been what we believe His Holiness Pius IX to be today, it is wonderful that He had not said to him: "When I have ascended to My Father, you should all obey Simon Peter as you obey Me. I establish him My vicar upon earth." Not only is Christ silent on this point, but so little does He think of giving a head to the Church, that He promises His apostles twelve thrones, one for each, without saying that among those thrones one shall be higher than the others—which shall belong to Peter.'

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Anything in the nature of corporate reunion with the unreformed Roman Catholic Church, even in the most remote future, is out of the question.

If this is recognised and acknowledged frankly and finally, there will be less disposition to encourage those approaches which work on the assumption that

reunion is the ultimate goal. But, is it recognised frankly and finally? If so, what is the purpose in inviting a Jesuit priest to preach in Westminster Abbey, or of parading Roman Catholic representatives in Trafalgar Square as though reunion between the various churches were already a *fait accompli*?

It seems to us that the hour has struck for Evangelical Christians of all denominations to close their ranks; to return to their first love and the principles for which our fathers fought and died, by a passionate and concerted effort to win the unsaved for Christ and to unite them with some Evangelical assembly.

We believe that the forthcoming Greater London Crusade of Dr. Billy Graham will be used by the great Head of the Church to quicken His people, and to build them up in their most holy faith. Already, thousands of God's people are praying that this may be so.

We pledge the unfaltering support of **The Christian Herald** to the sacred cause of Protestant principles, and pray that this day we may light a torch for the future, which, by God's grace, shall never be put out."

* * *

The article is illustrated by photographs of so-called united meetings in London of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Nonconformist churches through their ecclesiastical representatives (even the Salvation Army is there!)

COMMENTS

The brother enclosing the articles writes: "I would very much like to know or read your and other brothers' views on this question, and what, if any, action members of the Church of Christ should take."

We understand our brother's request for help and guidance, for most of us who are concerned for New Testament Christianity are faced with the same dilemma. We have often a feeling of frustration that we fail to raise our protests as a body of Christians against many things we know to be wrong, in the religious, political, educational, or other spheres of our civilisation. This impotence arises partly from our not having a centralised authority to express the views of the churches as a whole, and partly from the smallness and seeming insignificance of our numbers. We feel we ought to register our objections, but we do not know how to.

The Editor, in seeking to answer our brother's questions, can express only his personal view. We have no authority and make no claim to express the views of the churches or of individual brethren on this matter in question or on any other.

Our view is that we should not attempt to unite with other religious bodies in protest against these unity movements towards Roman Catholicism. There are some fields of activity in which we could unite—for instance, the colour bar, war and the legalising of sexual immorality. But this matter of "Christian Unity" is different. It is a matter of scripture teaching, of the Christianity of the New Testament. With the article in the "Christian Herald" we are very largely in agreement—we mention points of disagreement below. In other words we think the writer has reached a correct diagnosis but that he does not prescribe the right remedy.

The brother asking for guidance mentions in his letter the work of the "Kensit Society" (the Wycliffe Preachers, or Protestant Truth Society). We have had a little personal experience of this Society. Some thirty years ago we co-operated with them in Wigan in their work of opposing the teachings and practices of Roman Catholicism. We even spent several days touring on such a mission in one of their caravans. We know personally the M. A. Perkins who led the opposition to the preaching in Westminster Abbey of the Jesuit priest. He has stayed in our house and we have visited his. We were pressed to become a "Wycliffe Preacher." We enjoyed this work. But all the time we had the uneasy feeling that we could go "thus far but no farther" with the teaching and preaching of those with whom we were co-operating in this cause. Time after time we found that their tenets were no more true to the New Testament than were the tenets of the Roman Catholicism against which we were protesting. We found too that the P.T.S. was established to oppose and destroy Roman and Anglo-Catholic practices in the **Church of England** and that its founders were proud of being staunch and loyal members of that Church. They insisted upon the Church remaining as "by law established" in the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It is fair to say that such movements in Protestation go back only so far as to the Reformation, and not as far back as to the New Testament. What we are seeking in the churches of Christ is **Restoration not Reformation**.

Chillingworth did indeed say: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." But is it? In co-operating with religious denominations, however evangelical or Protestant, we shall soon find ourselves involved in tacitly accepting or vigorously opposing beliefs which are not found in "the Bible alone"—tenets such as infant sprinkling; mostly or irregular observance of the Lord's supper; salvation by faith **only**; ignoring of immersion or belief that immersion is simply an act of obedience having nothing to do with our salvation; views of the ministry having no authority in the New Testament, and other differences. And it will be found that to point out what the N.T. teaches and the error of these "Protestant" views is to alienate or be alienated from those with whom we thought we could co-operate and unite.

We have mentioned that we think that the article in the "C.H." prescribes the wrong remedy in exhorting Protestants of all denominations to unite against the common enemy. Our objections to Romanism are equally strong with theirs. Even stronger, in that while they examine the Roman Church in the light of Protestantism and the Reformation we examine it in the light of God's word. What remedy, for instance, is contained in the revivalism of Billy Graham, so eulogised by the writer of the article? In some respects the way of salvation preached by Billy Graham is as far removed from Bible Christianity as is the teaching that the R.C. Church is the only true Church of God and that to be within its fold is the only way of salvation. We are not set to oppose and destroy the Church of Rome but to uphold and build up the Church and Christianity of the New Testament. There we learn what the unity of the church is, and on that basis and by following that teaching alone shall we experience this unity today.

What then can we do in face of the situation? The answer applies individually to every Christian. It is to bear positive testimony to what the Church of Christ is in the New Testament; faithfully to carry out its teaching and to live as a Christian should. And on the negative side, to oppose and refute in the light of God's word whatever will not measure up to God's revelation. On the positive we must preach and live the truth; on the negative we must oppose error. This can be done only by our reading, searching and studying the word of the Lord, giving us a deeper knowledge and fuller understanding of God's way as contrasted with human plans and devices which hardly ever make reference to God's word, in their attempts to bring about "Christian Unity."

In short, our mission is not to make "Catholic Christians" or "Protestant Christians" or even "Bible Christians," but simply Christians.

EDITOR.

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONGST US

2: Restoration, Reunion, Regeneration

IT has been said that Christians can be divided into three classes—the Dogmatic, the Enigmatic, and the Rheumatic. The Dogmatic knows where he stands and says so: the Enigmatic doesn't know, so doesn't say so; and the Rheumatic he can hardly move for it hurts him any way.

What are dogmatists? dogmatics applied to Christianity is "the Science of Systematised Christian Doctrine"; so a dogmatist is one who sets out in order the things he most surely believes, which is precisely what we are attempting to do here. We are aware that many people are afraid of that word dogmatist, but we are not. We hope to say more of this in our next article.

What we want to discuss, and dogmatically, is the three subjects at the head of our article. First:

RESTORATION

The first question that comes to our minds is, What do we restore? Taking a look at the world around us, it need not be emphasised that the moral decline in our country has been enormous in the last forty years: standards of conduct that were the accepted way of life in those days have now been ruthlessly set aside. Take gambling for instance: once it was a back street crime, forbidden by the law of the land, frowned on by society (with the exception of the racecourse). But today it is not only legal but betting shops are flourishing on every hand. Then again, we have reached the highest point in the increase in crime; burglaries, murder, rape, commercialised brothelery (although the latter is against the law, there are those who would legalise it if they had their way, and any who live in big cities know of its activities: one constantly reads of cases of men being summoned before the courts for living on the immoral earnings of women and girls.

The increase of venereal disease, particularly amongst young people, is giving concern; even children of thirteen and fourteen are reported as being victims of it, which alone tells of the alarming increase in promiscuous behaviour amongst young people. All this coincides with the decline in Christianity in our beloved country, once known, but alas no longer, as "Christian England."

The rise in divorce cases, revealing broken homes and lives, is another sign of moral decay, coinciding again with the fact of the bible now being a banished book from the homes of the people. How true, that "the family that prays together stays together;" people seem to take a pride in ridiculing—the fine virtues of the Christian faith, but that principle of our Lord still holds good: "As a man sows so shall he reap." And what is said of men is said of nations: no country or people can set aside the laws of God and get away with it. "They who sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption", and today this nation is reaping what it has sown, and will continue to do so in a greater degree until a halt is called to the moral decline from which society is suffering today. So much for the world outside the church. It certainly needs some restoration. Even sociologists with no professed faith, are alarmed at the state of things and various remedies have been and are being tried with very little success.

This is where Christianity ought to come in, and by Christianity we mean the laws of God as given by Jesus Christ and expounded by the Apostles; not the glorified, modernistic sob-stuff palmed off by certain schools of thought as Christianity. In the world outside the church we see sin minimised, wickedness glorified, iniquity glamorised. And what of Christendom as a whole? We see, "church buildings chancelised", "sermons intellectualised, singing organised, services ritualised, evangelism paralysed," salvation minimised, the Gospel fossilised. Where-as the early church knew poverty and power, the modern church knows wealth and weakness.

There is talk in the world of a "New Morality"; in the church we hear of a "New Theology". The "New Morality" is nothing but immorality, dressed up, and the so-called "New Theology" is infidelity dressed up. We quote from a magazine "The Midnight Cry", which in turn quotes the "Look" magazine: "Radical young theologians want to abandon the word "God" because people use it as a nickname for superstition." Others, shocked, fear this New Theology degrades Christ to a myth. Bearing in mind the meaning of the word theology—"God knowledge"—it seems a strange theology that would leave out the name of the very person they are professing to seek a knowledge of.

When we call to mind the modernistic teaching of recent years that makes a myth of bible account of the origin of things, and disbelieves so many bible stories, and the evolutionary teaching in our modern schools, no wonder the world is going to pieces morally. So in the church there is desperate need for new thinking on more positive lines than hitherto, to get rid of the spiritual rheumatism that has paralysed our attitude to present-day problems. Physical rheumatism is caused by an accumulation in the system of poisonous substances that the body has failed to eliminate. So with the spiritual body the church: we have failed, and are still failing to rid ourselves of the poisonous substances that hinder our work and paralyse our activities.

Great reformers have sought to rally their supporters with slogans and battle cries. The great American President, Abraham Lincoln, used the phrase "Government of the people, for the people, by the people" that has become the cornerstone of democracy. We recall that the Liberal Party in the early nineteen hundreds sought to win a General Election on the Statement of Policy, "Reconstruction, Retrenchment and Reform." Today we have "Ban the Bomb", and other movements seeking to solicit support for their cause.

What of the Churches of Christ? We need today something more than mere slogans. Our forefathers had slogans, but they were definite principles of policy, definite outlines of what they believed and taught. Let us glance at some of them and see if they hold good today.

Number One: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent we are silent." Here we see emphasised a respect for the voice of Scripture and also its silence, seeking for a "Thus saith the Lord" for all we believe and practice. The Bible speaks in any of three ways: by direct command, by example, and by necessary inference, thus covering every field of human thought in the Christian realm. That is why we emphasise our next thought, "The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible." Again, "No Creed but Christ", and again, "Let names and sects and parties fall and Jesus Christ be all in all."

Let us again point out that these slogans were not to our fathers empty platform catch-phrases, but definite principles of policy. They had three objects. One: They constituted a challenge; Two: They meant what they said; Three: They met

the needs of the day. Who can say that these are not the needs of today? The Churches of Christ need a policy; what is more, a united policy to meet the challenge of our time. That challenge is, first and foremost, the Unity of God's People on the Basis of the New Testament. Here we Suggest our Subjects, "Restoration, Reunion, Regeneration"—Restoration of Christianity as it was at the first; Reunion of God's People on the only possible basis of reunion, The New Testament Scriptures, Regeneration of all God's people by the Spirit of Christ, which can only be accomplished by men of courage, conviction and conquest, men who, having the courage of their convictions, are "more than conquerors."

By Restoration we mean, not renovation, decoration or reformation, but Restoration—of Christianity as it was at the first, in all its purity, principle and power. We do not mean the renovation of modern Christianity by patching up its worn fabric with a smattering of New Testament doctrine to suit the jaded tastes of many present-day so-called Christians. We are not seeking to either patch up, cover up or doctor up, but to Build up that which has been broken down, the faith our fathers stood for and sought to build into the fabric of our nation.

It is recorded that a Chinese Emperor, the Great Khan, was once interested in what a Christian missionary had to say about Christ. He asked for a hundred men, "learned and intelligent, able to enter into controversy, and clearly to prove to idolaters and other folk that the law of Christ was best." To the disgrace of the Christian Churches of those days, mostly Catholic and Greek Orthodox, only two persons were found willing to go, and even they turned back. Thus a priceless opportunity to evangelise China was lost. Before we condemn these people, let us ask ourselves if we today would be any better. Would the Christian Churches today be able to find a hundred men willing to risk their lives in Communist China, even if invited to do so, in order to "enter into controversy" and clearly to prove that Jesus is the Christ. We quote here an ancient prayer that we feel meets the needs of today.

From cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From laziness content with half truth,
From arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord, deliver us.

H. BAINES

TRAINING FOR SERVICE

VIII: The Dispensations of Scripture

ALTHOUGH the dispensations of scripture are an important subject, and necessary for right understanding of the Bible, the word "dispensation" is found only four times, and then in the New Testament. These four times are: 1 Cor. 9:17 (R.V. "stewardship"), R.S.V. "commission"); Eph. 1:10 (R.S.V. "plan"); Eph. 3:2 (R.S.V. "stewardship") and Col. 1:25 (R.S.V. "divine office").

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary definitions of "dispensation" are: "Act of dispensing or dealing out; distribution; economical disposal; process of dispensing medicines; action of administering, ordering or managing; stewardship; ordering; especially of events by divine providence."

"Theology: religious order or system conceived as stage in progressive revelation, expressly adapted to particular nation or age, as patriarchal, Mosaic or Christian dispensation."

The Dictionary further informs us that "dispensation" comes from Latin *dispensatio*.

The word used in the N.T. is *oikonomian*, from which we get our English words "economy" and "economics". From this we shall readily see that, as the Dictionary says, "dispensation" has to do with stewardship, administration. Even the everyday use of the word illustrates its N.T. meaning: we speak of dispensaries and dispensing when we go to the chemist's with a doctor's prescription. The chemist dispenses, measures out, exactly what the doctor has prescribed.

In the Bible a dispensation as used in this sense is what we might term the "amount of revelation" given by God to men at certain times. God has not yet fully revealed Himself, but gradually through the ages He has let men know His will so far as they are able to understand it.

Three Great Dispensations

The three dispensations with which we are concerned in this study are: (1) the Patriarchal (age of the Patriarchs or fathers); (2) the Mosaic (so called after Moses) or Jewish; (3) the Christian. These dispensations embrace the Old and

New Covenants, and so link up naturally with our previous two studies. The laws of the Old Covenant governed the Mosaic or Jewish Dispensation, which forms almost the whole of the O.T. scriptures. The N.T. is the New Covenant, governed by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). The Patriarchal Dispensation was governed by God's direct speaking to men as recorded in the book of Genesis.

The characteristics of the different dispensations can be seen in the table set out below:

DISPENSATION	THE GIVER	PERIOD COVERED	REVEALED WORD	PRIESTHOOD	SACRIFICES
Patriarchal	God to individuals	Adam to Moses	God speaks directly	Father of family	Animals
Mosaic	God through Moses	Moses to Christ	Law and Commandments (O.T.)	Aaron & descendants	Animals
Christian	God in Christ	Death of Christ to Second Coming	New Testament	Jesus Christ for ever after order of Melchizedec	Jesus Christ

To illustrate the gradually increasing and full revelations Alexander Campbell compared the Patriarchal Dispensation with the starlight period, the Mosaic with the moonlight and the Christian with the sunlight. The ministry of Jesus Christ can be likened to the twilight period between the darkness and the light.

Hebrews 1: 1-2; 2: 1-4 and 12: 18-29 teaches us as richer blessings and nobler privileges are given under each succeeding dispensation, greater responsibilities are also involved.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God give His revelations gradually and not fully and completely at once?
2. Illustrate how the comparison of the dispensations with starlight, moonlight and sunlight is a fitting one.
3. Explain from passages referred to in Hebrews how under the Christian Dispensation we have greater blessings and responsibilities than in previous dispensations.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1966

- 1—Psalm 69:1-15 2 Cor. 1:1-22
- 8—Psalm 107:1-16 2 Cor. 1:23 to 2, 17
- 15—Exodus 34:21-35 2 Cor. 3
- 22—Psalm 107:23-43 2 Cor. 4:1-15
- 29—Genesis 5:18-32 2 Cor. 4:16 to 5, 10

A STIMULATING LETTER

WHEN planning readings in the Acts of Apostles for 1964 we had thought to introduce Paul's letters at the times in that story when they were written. This we felt would have occupied a long period, and reduced readings from the gospels too much. "All scripture" is invaluable to the Christian but the life of the Saviour has a special value when we meet to remember Him, and that is the time for which our reading list is designed. However, the "Wonder of the Book" is its vital application to every time and part of life, and our four months' readings in this great outpour-

ing of the apostle's soul will provide everyone who puts thought and effort into the exercise with deep spiritual stimulus. Paul was able to say with holy confidence "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1): a safe rule, but how far we come below it!

Much is revealed on its own pages of the circumstances in which this letter was penned. The first letter provides the background of relationship between writer and readers. We rejoice that, though the work in Corinth began "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2, 3) with hard work at tent-making and severe persecution, the Lord had "much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). So the assembly was a large one, and sometimes met in one place, perhaps every Lord's Day (1 Cor. 11:20). It was made up of very ordinary people (1 Cor. 1:26), but immeasurably enriched by the gospel. They had acquired that completely new outlook on life, with the dazzling expectation of the coming of Christ, which we should equally have; and were living to please God and do good to others. The revolutionary change brought many problems

on which they needed the help and advice of their spiritual father (without that title, however (Matt. 23:9).

It is probable that this "first" letter was written about two and a half years after Paul's work at Corinth was ended, while he was busy in Ephesus (read Acts 18:18 and 19). He may have written in the meantime also of course, but we do not know this for certain. It is a sign of grace and respect for the apostle that they had asked questions of him (1 Cor. 7:1), and he was disquieted by division and sin which had arisen among them. **We have to remember that "shameless sexual promiscuity" existed in Corinth, presenting temptations we can hardly realise—but the same is growing here and now.**

However the "second" letter followed the "first" in anticipation of a visit which might have to be severe. Visitors had gone to Corinth as they had to other churches, seeking to detract from Paul's influence and character. They represented him as fickle (1:15-22), conceited (3:1-5; 12:10-8), unauthorised (10:7-11; 23:12-11). He vigorously rebuts these charges, and names his traducers "false apostles, deceitful workers" (11:13). Read also Gal. 2-4, where the same kind of "Christians" were at work. They had not reached up to the universal character of the gospel, and appear to have hated Paul for his complete dedication to it. The same attitude survived for two centuries but by that time its advocates were separated from the church. In the meantime the Corinthian church held its founder in "affectionate and unquestioning veneration" as we learn from the epistle of Clement, written soon after Paul's death.

Compelled to leave Ephesus on account of the riot recorded in Acts 19, Paul was awaiting report by Titus of the conditions at Corinth, and the result of his "first" letter. He expected to meet him at Troas on his way into Macedonia (Acts 20:1), but it was not until he was there that Titus came (7:5-7). Then this letter was written and sent by the same messenger. The visit of three months in Greece (Acts 20:2 and 3) must include the promised visit to Corinth, passed over in a few words by Luke—but what a busy and profitable time it must have been. The noble work of love for the Judaen Christians was completed, the collection brought away, and so much personal spiritual help given to the struggling and sorely tempted members of the church there. They would never tire of reading their apostle's description of his efforts with and for them, his vindication of his character, behaviour, authority and labours; and so it has been preserved for our edification, instruction and enlightenment.

Our May readings form part of what we may call Paul's experiences and his reaction to them, all stemming from his dedication to his work in preaching Christ. We may select two points. First there is the thought of the transitory nature of the sufferings borne so courageously in comparison with the eternal reward (4:10-18), and secondly the final and completely satisfying destiny of "the common earthenware jar" (4:7) or "earthly tent" (5:1). It shames some of us to consider "our light affliction" when we think of what is pictured in this phrase by the apostle.

R. B. SCOTT.

WAS JESUS THE SON OF GOD?

IN May, 1965, an article appeared in this magazine from this writer (W.B.) which had in it these words: "We begin this with a statement which must surely be true or scripture contradicts itself. This statement is that the child born of Mary was not and could not be the son of God." Then followed remarks to show why those words were written.

Time passed without producing any apparent challenge or denial of any kind, and the statement was taken as generally accepted.

In February of this year, however, in this magazine, there appeared a criticism written by A. E. Winstanley, of a book published by a Jewish writer. With this book and its writer we are not here concerned, but we are concerned about words with which the criticism is concluded. They read: "Our faith is that Jesus was more than man: He was truly the Son of the living God."

That Jesus was more than man we also believe. That he was the "Word" makes him more than man, for "the Word was God," but there is nothing there that teaches us that he is the "Son" of God. Will he show us from scripture how he who was the Word at the "beginning" became "the Son of God" as he designates Jesus? Definite statements such as this is should be covered by proof, which is not given. Will he please do that?

We venture a question for his consideration. Will he show us how Jesus could become the Son of God, when both the assumed "Father" and "Son"—we are taught—eternally existed? When was this relationship entered into and how did

it come about? When did "Father" become father and when did "Son" become son, each of them being eternal, both in being at the beginning of time?

We offer here a clue to the understanding of this. Not as our brother puts it which makes a problem beyond understanding, but as scripture expresses it: instead of Father and Son in an eternal relationship of that kind, think of God and the Word as two Spiritual Beings, who can be visualised as existing together. A possible eternal relationship—or so we think. But an eternal son of an eternal Father—both eternally in existence is beyond comprehension. It is an insult to the intelligence to suggest it.

It is revealed that Mary was a virgin, chosen by God to become the mother of a son. She became the mother of a son, and remained a virgin, but she did not become the mother of a son begotten by God, as our brother appears to believe, or she would not have remained a virgin. Paul it is who explains this.

A word or two about Paul as a witness. He was the one man who stood out above his fellows for his harsh treatment of men and women who were believers in Christ. A man hard to convince, stubborn as a rock. But he it is who, convinced of the errors of his ways, is chosen by God's Holy Spirit to be the instrument to make known a hard truth, difficult of belief. It is he who tells the story (Phil. 2: 6-11) in language which, perhaps, is the greatest piece of writing in a book full of wonderful things. He shows how the word who was of divine nature, "degraded" himself, step by step, and stage by stage, until the glory of divinity is reduced to its lowest necessity to carry out the Divine Will. So it is that a young girl became the mother of a human being, having no father.

I have noticed Bro. Winstanley's interest in scientific knowledge from writing of his that has passed through my hands, at various times. Has the idea ever occurred to him that God, because of His nature, could not become the father of a human child? So it seems to the writer: The new English version appears to point that way too. An incident is recorded, in story fashion, of what took place immediately after the Resurrection of Jesus. The disciples were gathered together and began a general conversation among themselves and one of them said, "Where is he?" (Luke 24: 36) "As they talked about all that, there he was standing among them: startled and terrified: they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said 'Why are you so perturbed? Why do questionings arise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is myself. Touch me and see. No ghost has flesh and bones, as you can see that I have.'"

On a previous occasion, he had said to them: "God is a spirit". Being a spirit without bodily parts, how could God become the father of a human child? Each after its own kind is creation's doctrine of heredity. Could the Son of God "who is spirit" be any other than spirit?

Or, putting the question the way we want it, to get the answer we seek, could Jesus who was human—and proved himself to be so to his disciples, be the Son of God, who is Spirit. The answer is there and is it not plain that our brother is wrong when he claims that Jesus is the Son of God. The real answer to this lies in the words of Paul who shows Jesus as the word humiliating himself to become the light and Saviour of mankind.

A PERSONAL note. During the last few months, there have appeared in the S.S. by Editorial permission several articles over my name, prompted by my own Bible reading, mainly Messianic fulfilment of prophecy. They really date from noting the translation most often used in many versions of the words in the Authorised Version: "the Word was made flesh" now changed to "the Word became flesh."

One thing that has interested me chiefly is the accuracy to the original prophecy of each fulfilment. The lesson I would like to pass on is the necessity of being correct in the use of Bible words. It is that which has prompted the above, written under stress, and the next, which, God willing, we hope to publish shortly, "The Son of God."

W. BARKER

"I can do all things through Christ."
(Phil. 4, 13)

THE Christian life is not clenching your teeth and struggling to be good: it is looking to Jesus, and letting the Lord Jesus do His work in your heart and in your life. A. P. Wood.

Unto God would I commit my cause.
(Job. 5, 8)

LEAVE it in My hands Thy burden that's too great for thee. I understand—All power is Mine I can command thy storm to cease, Thy wages—'Be still' and give my peace.

SHOCK-ABSORBERS

IN the old dictionaries the word shock-absorber does not appear. Yet, for ages men have tried all sorts of devices to take some of the jolts and bumps out of life.

I am thinking of other kinds of shock-absorbers, more necessary than the springs and tubular oil-pumps that make our automobiles ride more comfortably for us.

The mind must have certain aids to relieve the jolts. I have a few friends who make travelling easier and more pleasant. It's pretty rough going on the old road of life without a few friends. The Master put friendship near the top of human excellencies.

I find that, with the world blowing up like a volcano all about us, I need a shock-absorber which is called Faith. So many things happen to us that jar our reasons. There are so many super-brutes among the sons of men. One is tempted to ask, "Why are such things allowed?" A man who had thought and lived and suffered, said, "The wrath of man is made to praise God." Pretty hard to see while the wrath is active. After wrath has spent its force, it is sometimes possible to see great movements for human betterment arising out of the ashes of destruction. The Bible makes no promise of easy lives for any of God's children, but it does picture men and women who could not be defeated in their hearts by the rough treatment they suffered from others.

A letter came to me one day from a triumphant woman who had recently lost her husband by death. "I thought I could not go on living for a while, but my faith in the God revealed by Jesus has helped me more than I could have believed to be possible."

I have a wonderful shock-absorber in my library. It is a large book which came to me from my grandparents. It is a Bible that was carried to Iowa by pioneers a century ago. My grandmother used to sit at her little west window as evening gathered, and read from this old book. When she was left alone in late life, she seemed to read this book more than ever. It was her shock-absorber.—Selected.

MIRACLES AND PROPHECY

Miracles may be said to have been the great proofs of revelation to the first ages which saw them performed; prophecies may be said to be the great proofs of revelation to the last ages which saw them fulfilled. (Bishop Newton).

If God did not exist everything would be permitted. (Dostolevsky).

PROPHETIC NAMES OF CHRIST

How instructive to mark the growing distinctness, the gradual unfolding of predictions. A German writer of the eighteenth century pointed out that the promises were always adapted to the times in which they were delivered; that when the gift of children was the highest possible form of blessing, the Redeemer was promised by God under the name of **Seed** . . . that when wickedness had spread over the face of the earth Enoch prophesied of the coming of the Lord as a **Judge** . . . that after the sons of Jacob had learned to reverence their father as a prince we have Jacob's prophecy of the **Shiloh** . . . that when in the days of Moses the nation had learned something of the power and authority of a **Prophet** that name was appropriate . . . that it was not until the splendours and conquests of David's reign that the Messiah was called **King**; and not until the priesthood was in its most flourishing condition that He was spoken of as a **Priest**.

* * *

The origin of the idea of God may well be God Himself. (Descartes).

I have never heard much about the **Resolutions** of the apostles, but a great deal about the **Acts** of the apostles. (Horace Mann).

CORRESPONDENCE

MAY I express my sincere appreciation to Bro. Harold Baines for his splendid article and timely warnings against the dangers of open communion and open fellowship, in the April issue of the "Scripture Standard." Warning voices are heard too infrequently today. Too many of us like the easy way out, and have not the courage to speak the "word in season."

There was a time in the history of God's people when "the fences were broken down." In those days God "sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." (Ezekiel 22:30).

How sad then! How sad now! Fences are again being broken down, gaps are appearing in the restoration plea. The dangers ahead: individual cups, open communion, open fellowship, one-man ministry, war question, to name only a few.

The call goes out again for men who will stand in the gap, and help to repair the broken fences. I pray that the Lord will not have to say "but I found none."

LEONARD MORGAN.

FAMINE RELIEF FOR BRETHREN IN INDIA

Readers of the "Scripture Standard" will have heard or read of the serious food shortage which is threatening the vast population of India.

Out of a desire to have fellowship with our brethren in India, the church at Ince recently sent a small gift as a token of love and concern for them. We think that other brethren, too, would like to know that Brother J. C. Bailey, the Canadian brother working in Madras, will be happy to receive whatever is sent for the purpose of feeding the hungry. His address is: Annex 19, Aspiran Garden, Madras 10, India.

In a letter acknowledging our gift, Brother Bailey reports that a great door has been opened in the work in India and the number of those baptised now stands at 4,639.

May we sincerely commend this good work to every congregation?

Frank Worgan.

on Lord's Day, 20th March. There was a large attendance of visitors from Blackridge, Castlemilk, Dennyounhead, Dalmellington, Edinburgh, Motherwell, Newtongrange, Tranent, Wallacestone and other places. We thank these brethren for their support.

Duets, solos and pieces by the Wallacestone and Rose Street choirs contributed to a very enjoyable and uplifting time. The ladies very capably attended to the material wants of the gathering of about 200.

Sunday, 21st March. The church was greatly encouraged by hearing the good confession and witnessing the immersion of Rena Seath, daughter of Sis. Seath. We pray that our young sister will be blessed with a long and faithful life in the Master's service. A. Roberts.

Loughborough.—Our Campaign for Christ (5th March to 3rd April) was a great blessing and encouragement to the church here. Donald Daugherty (Paris) and Andrew Gardiner (Edinburgh) preached the gospel very effectively to good audiences. A large number of non-members attended, many being people who had never been inside our meeting-house before. The fact that there have not yet been any baptisms does not in the least discourage us. It has been our aim throughout the effort to ensure that those attending were thoroughly taught. Studies and discussions continue with a number of friends, and we are confident that final, lasting results will accrue. We are hopeful that shortly a number of regular bible studies will be conducted in private homes.

We are grateful both to the two evangelists for their zealous services, and also to all who came from other congregations to encourage us. These included some from Ilkeston, Eastwood, Birmingham, Leicester, Kirkby, Aylesbury, Wembley, Reading, Ince, Scholes, Newtown, Morley, Dewsbury and Hindley.

Brethren, pray for us. Tom Stones.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buckie (Aberdeenshire).—During March we have had the services of Bro. Jack Stevenson, (evangelist from Ireland). Our brother laboured hard during his stay, and made many new contacts. He also wrote an article every week for the local paper. We rejoice that two souls were added to the church. Mr. and Mrs. James George Addison (Cullen) were buried in baptism with their Lord. It was very encouraging to the brethren, and to our brother as he proclaimed the word of truth. We pray that our young brethren may be kept faithful, and attain the crown of life which fadeth not away.

We also pray that God will richly bless our Bro. Jack as he labours in His service. Brethren from Peterhead met with us on the last Saturday of the mission, when we enjoyed an hour's fellowship.

Brethren pray for us, as we now look forward to May, when Bro. Tom Nisbet will serve the church, and our Bro. David Dougall during September.

John Geddes.

Kirkcaldy (Rose Street).—On Saturday, 19th March, the church held its annual social meeting under the chairmanship of Bro. J. Davidson.

Bro. John Partington gave a splendid address and also ably served the church

OBITUARY

Dear Bro. Mellings,—May I, on behalf of all the Daniell family, express through the pages of the "S.S." our deep gratitude to all those who have written or in some other way expressed their sympathy with us in our loss. It has been of great comfort to us to know that we have the prayers of so many brethren throughout the country.

It is our intention, in course of time, to acknowledge each letter individually, but until such time as this can be done we trust all will understand that their sympathy has been greatly appreciated.

G. M. Daniell.

COMING EVENTS

Dewsbury—Special Whit Weekend Meetings in conjunction with a Mission to be conducted by Bro. Frank Worgan, May 28th to June 5th.

Wigan: Albert Street.—The autumn rally will be held on Saturday, September 10th, 1966: meetings afternoon from 3 o'clock; gospel meeting in the evening at 6.30. Tea will be served at 4.45. Names of speakers and other details later, also Lord's Day meetings September 11th. This early notice is given so that members may make forward arrangements and come to help us in this time of fellowship. Members desiring to stay the weekend give details to W. Smith, 262 Scot Lane, Newtown, Wigan.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Bedminster, Bristol.—Leonard Daniell, 59 Enfield Road, Fishponds, Bristol.

BIRTH

To Sister Joy Pontin (Bristol), on 31st March, a daughter Karen.

PRAYER

Prayer is the impulse of the renewed soul; and the constancy of its beat is the test and measure of its spiritual life. (O. Winslow).

Prayer will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off praying. (A. Fuller).

Pray to God at the beginning of all thy works, that so thou mayest bring all to a right ending. (Xenophon).

WHEN DAY IS DONE

When day is done I shall not regret
A single act of kindness I have done
To anyone.

The burdens of the day I shall forget,
And just remember blessings I have
known,
At set of sun.

I shall not pause to sigh because some
friend
Has failed to understand my best intent
Along the way;
But I'll be glad for hearts I tried to
mend,
For prayers I prayed, for cheering
letters sent
At close of day.

I never shall recall the cross I bore,
Nor question why I shed the bitter
tears
With heaven begun;
For just one glimpse within God's open
door
Will quite erase the sorrow of the
years—
When day is done.

Kathryn Blackburn Peck

THE NURSE'S PRAYER

Dearest Lord, may I see Thee today
and every day, in the person of Thy sick
and whilst nursing them minister unto
Thee.

Though Thou hidest Thyself behind
the unattractive disguise of the irritable,
the exacting, the unreasonable, may I
still recognise Thee and say, Jesus, my
Patient, how sweet it is to serve Thee.
Lord, give me this seeking faith, then
my work will never be monotonous.

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