

THE SCOTLAND

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 37. No. 6.

JUNE, 1970

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Carlton Melling

V: EFFECTS OF THE SERMON ON THE LAW — A GREAT PREACHER

IN the light of what we have seen of the theology prevailing in the time of the Campbells, with its treatment of Old and New Testaments as equally binding upon Christians, and when passages from both Testaments were indiscriminately quoted to guide people to salvation, we can understand what effects such a discourse as the "Sermon on the Law" would have. A preacher at the gathering immediately protested that this was not "Baptist doctrine," to which another retorted that it might be "Christian doctrine."

There is still need for understanding the purposes of and the differences between the Old and New Testaments. We are not yet free from a confused attitude to the relationships between Law and Gospel. Many today require us to live under the Ten Commandments, regarding them as binding upon Christians. Campbell's discourse, therefore, was not of merely temporary interest and application: where possible it should be studied. It will be found printed in the "Christian Messenger," vol. 3, 1847, pp. 8-29.

The effects of the address were twofold. On one hand it aroused bitter and at times ignorant opposition. Charges of infidelity and licentiousness were hurled at Alexander Campbell and those who agreed with him. Families were divided, business relations interrupted, hatred engendered between those who previously had been brethren. But on the other hand the logic and truth of Campbell's exposition were unassailable. The fearless exposition of error was the means of causing many to embrace what Alexander termed "the ancient order of things."

What had been accomplished so far ?

The progress so far made by the movement led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell towards original Christianity can be summed up as follows:—

1. Divisions among God's people seen to be sinful. Unity can be achieved if the Bible be adhered to.
2. Adoption of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, making all creeds unnecessary.
3. Rejection of infant "baptism" as human tradition, nowhere taught in the word of God, and the practice of immersion as the only scriptural baptism.
4. Instead of confession of religious experiences as pre-requisite to baptism, the adoption of the New Testament confession of Jesus as the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10).

5. Refusal to acknowledge the popular divisions of Christians into "clergy" and "laity."
6. Observance of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.

The Campbells had set themselves to restore Christianity inside the church: by their constant emphasis on the teaching of the Bible they were exposing the unauthorised teachings and practices of the denominations. It was not to be expected that such a movement would at first make great numerical growth, for its converts were almost entirely from religious groups which had long held their followers in spiritual thralldom by the "traditions of men."

Walter Scott

But again in this great movement we see the hand of the Lord guiding. There was raised up one, Walter Scott, who was to be the means of preaching the New Testament gospel in the New Testament way, with like results.

Walter Scott was a Scotsman, like many other leaders of the Restoration Movement. He was educated at Edinburgh University, and sailed for the United States in 1818. He had been reared a Presbyterian, but was baptised on finding in the Bible no support for infant sprinkling. His constant study was the Bible. In its pages he found a sublime simplicity, especially when contrasted with the involved theological theories of surrounding religious bodies. He had a remarkable ability to discern the salient features in a system, and to arrange those features in logical order. He was convinced that Bible teaching, in Bible terms, was sufficient to save men. He found that the gospel consisted of

Facts to be believed;
Commands to be obeyed; and
Promises to be enjoyed.

Which of our preachers, young or old, has not used these headings in presenting the gospel, often without our realising their origin? Scott analysed the way of redemption into what he termed his "five-finger exercise":— (1) Faith, to change the heart; (2) Repentance, to change the life; (3) Baptism, to change the state; (4) Remission of sins, to cleanse from guilt; and (5) the gift of the Holy Spirit, to make the Christian partaker in the Divine nature. These divisions of the gospel have been preached so often by brethren in churches of Christ that to us they may seem commonplace; in Scott's day, however, they came like a new revelation.

Scott put his convictions to the test. Even Alexander Campbell had treated the subject of baptism in a detached theoretical manner, rather than as a practical necessity. Preachers did not urge upon their hearers the importance of following up their belief in the gospel by obedience to it. In his first experiment Walter Scott broke new ground by inviting the hearers of his message to come forward and be baptised for remission of sins. There was no response, which was not surprising, for Scott's hearers must have questioned, as did the people in Christ's day, "What is this? A new teaching!"

"So grew the Word of the Lord"

Although disappointed, Scott resolved to go on. At his second attempt, when he repeated the words of Acts 2:38 a young man named William Amend came forward and asked to be baptised. This young man had searched long for a preacher who would tell him exactly what to do to be saved; now at last he had received the answer. Perseverance in the scriptural methods bore scriptural results, and the same week seventeen were immersed. In a year from that date there were a thousand conversions.

Alexander Campbell was somewhat concerned by these phenomenal results, fearing that the evangelist would be led into doctrinal errors. At Alexander's request his father visited the scene of Scott's labours in 1828. As a result Thomas wrote to Alexander: "Theory and practice in religion are matters of distinct consideration. We have spoken and written many things correctly concerning the ancient gospel, but I am, for the first time, where the thing is being practically exhibited."

“So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.” From a threatened state of stagnation the Restoration Movement was in two years transformed into a state of pulsating spiritual life, by the power of the word of God. As the result of Scott’s preaching of that word great numbers were added to the church of the Lord, some of whose names became famous in after years as leaders in the cause of New Testament Christianity.

(To be continued)

“RAISED”

To Life

IN Ephesians 1:20-23 Paul is instructing the minds of these saints concerning the power of God exhibited in the raising of Jesus from the dead:—“The energy of the might of his strength which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” This was he of whom one in authority three times asked “What evil hath he done?” (Luke 23:22); others could only cry out, “Crucify him”—which they did. But a higher authority decided — “it was not possible that he should be held in subjection by it [the grave]” (Acts 2:24) as Peter says: “Jesus of Nazareth . . . you did crucify and slay; whom God raised up.”

In 1 John 1:1-4 we have this Apostle stating that the resurrection of Jesus had been subjected to Apostolic scrutiny during a period of forty days (compare Acts 1:3); thus he is able to say “WE have seen, and do testify, and declare unto you . . .” Why? “That your joy may be full.” We must not think this scrutiny strange or even unnecessary. The Apostles had to be witnesses: they had a message for the nations which was dependent upon their testimony. No less a person than the Apostle Paul acknowledges that others could testify as to his own veracity,—“Let him acknowledge the things which I write, that they are of the Lord.” Here is food for thought.

To Leadership

Jesus was raised to life—but it did not end there. It went further. According to Paul he was raised to a position of supremacy, to sit at the right hand of Him who had raised him from the dead. It was to a very gracious and exalted position, of such a character that Paul uses the term “in the heavenlies” to describe it. In Heb. 2:9 Paul gives us a further view of Christ’s position:—“We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour.” He tells the Ephesians that “God hath subjected all things under his feet,” even also as Jesus himself claimed: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18).

The Psalmist was willing to say,—“Teach me thy way O Lord, and lead me in a plain path” (Ps. 27:11). To the Jews as a nation, by the mouth of the prophet God said, “I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee the way that thou shouldest go” (Isa. 48:17). The Jews refused this leading, resulting in the loss described in the following verses. Jesus reminds those Jews of his day of this sad fact and warns that worse conditions lie in wait for them (Matt. 23:37). To his disciples he says, “Neither be called leaders, for one is your leader, even the Christ” (Matt. 23:10). This should preserve us from accepting this title ourselves or giving it to others. Jesus should be the unrivalled leader to all his saints, it being a position to which God has appointed him. Paul in Phil. 2:10 affirms that ultimately this high position of Christ will have to be acknowledged.

To Liberty

Jesus said of himself on one occasion, “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27), and on another, “I am come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). The prophet wrote:—“In his humiliation his

judgement was taken away" (Acts 8:33). But now with Christ's resurrection Paul is able to say, "and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all." From servitude to liberty. Yet not for himself alone, but that he might be the means of "bringing many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10). As he has been raised to liberty he is able to liberate those who were in bondage (servitude). So we can listen to Paul saying, "With freedom did Christ make us free. Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). In fact James calls the Gospel the Law of Liberty, because it sets free from the law of sin and death those who will accept it (James 1:25). We should, with Paul, see Jesus, Raised to Life, Raised to Leadership, Raised to Liberty.

Why has Paul brought these facts to the notice of these saints at Ephesus? Well, in chap. 1 he had said that they were "blessed," "predestinated," "accepted," "redeemed"; and in verse 13 "you heard," "you believed," "you were sealed." But it was all in Christ. His prayer for them is that they may be assured that the security of their new position in Christ is based upon the same power which raised Jesus from the dead and placed him in that position. What God could do for Christ He could do for them. This fact was their security. Though the resurrection of the saints is not mentioned in this Epistle, yet we have a symbolic one mentioned, "But God . . . raised us [believers] up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"; and in chap. 2 it is from being "dead in offences" to being "alive in Christ." Thus we have it: "death to life"; elevated from one position to a higher. It is this high position, with all its associated blessings and privileges, that is the burden of this Epistle, and is authoritatively set forth by the Apostle,—"that they may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ" to them,—even him whom God raised to Life, Leadership, and Liberty.

ALFRED JACKSON

THE CHALLENGE OF THE DIFFICULT

TO those who are fortunate in being able to escape from the humdrum of daily life and enjoy a holiday, either by the sea or in the quiet of the countryside, comes the chance to relax and to profit by one's meditations. There are enormous opportunities to do this, especially if one is blessed with the faculty of being observant.

Life, we know, consists of "ups and downs." Our way through the years has been over hills and across valleys, and it is best that this should be so. How very ordinary our days would be if all the way were flat. We can all think of moments when we lived on the hills. Our experience of God at those times was so very real that we would have chosen to stay there if we could, but duties called us to the valley below. What joy it was to look back to the hilltops and remember the uplift we received then!

Sometimes life reverses this way of thinking and it has been the peace of the valleys that was so pleasant and the hills seemed merely to stand in the way. The Christian knows that whether he is dwelling on the heights or in the valleys, what matters most is that his way should be committed to God. Hills can be a source of strength, or they may be hot and barren. But *God is God* in all our circumstances and as long as we follow *His* lead we shall arrive at our hearts' desires.

Whilst on holiday in Switzerland I was fascinated by the greatness and solidarity of the great *Matterhorn*, 14,700 feet above sea level, standing like a sentinel. It appeared to challenge any who dared to climb its precipitous slopes. *Indeed a challenge of the difficult.* In a lonely spot near that great mountain there is a grave of an unknown climber and the simple gravestone bears these words — "*He died climbing.*" It is an epitaph to a brave man who was not content to remain all his life on the flat but felt the call to ascend and accepted the challenge of the unknown. May our prayer be, "God give me hills to climb and the strength for climbing."

No one ever climbed a mountain by studying its picture. S. W. COLLINS

OUR FIRST LOVE

“UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because *thou hast left thy first love*. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:1-7).

This message to the church at Ephesus was not intended for the Christians there alone, but for *all* who are disciples of Christ, as is obvious from the last words, “. . . he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.” This surely includes all of God's children.

This study has to do particularly with the Lord's admonition in verse 4. The question may be asked, “What is our first love?” It is important for us to know, seeing that the Lord had somewhat against the Ephesians, in that He blames them for leaving their first love. He calls upon them to repent, or else He will come quickly and remove their candlestick. It would appear that all their good works and their zeal were of comparatively little value without continuance in their first love.

Jesus told His disciples on one occasion that if any man loved his father or mother, son and daughter, sister or brother more than Him, they were not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37, 38). In many instances this means bearing one's cross, because to be obedient to the Lord often brings about antagonisms with those whom we have always loved.

On another occasion a certain lawyer asked Jesus, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:36-40).

Here the Lord teaches us that to keep the commandments of God is to love Him. It is true that we must love our neighbour, for it is commanded us by God. God is love, and the Apostle John tells us, “. . . Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He first loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). Again, we read in 1 John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.”

It would appear in these modern times, that this order is reversed. Men are so concerned about loving their relatives, friends, and neighbours, that they deal in a light way with positive commands of God.

“Lovest Thou Me?”

A fitting illustration of first love to our Lord Jesus Christ is given in John's gospel, chapter 21. There, we read of Jesus appearing to His disciples after His resurrection. Although they had seen Him at least twice already, they seem to be somewhat dispirited. In this condition, Peter said to some of his brethren that he was going fishing, and the others agreed to go with him. They had fished all night and had caught nothing. In verses 4 to 6 we read, “But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore:

but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No: And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." Jesus invited them to come and dine, for He had prepared for them fish and bread. When they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" He saith unto Him, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

When Peter was first called by the Lord (Matt. 4:18, 19) the Lord had told him to "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." From that time on, Peter followed His Lord closely until Jesus was apprehended, when we learn of his denying Jesus his Lord three times. There is, I think, a significance between Peter's denying his Lord three times, and the Lord's thrice repeated question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?"

Day by day, we are somewhat in a like situation—of being required to make a decision between the allurements of the world, or our friends, even our relatives, and the Lord Jesus Christ. In all or any of these circumstances, the Lord requires our allegiance. It is incumbent upon all of His disciples to hear Him say, "Follow Me."

We read that though they had toiled all night, they had caught nothing, but when the Lord told them to cast their net on the right side of the ship they had a wonderful catch.

In this, they, by obedience, were successful—a lesson to them that obedience to the Lord's commands always brings a blessing.

SAM WILSON

'EKKLESIA' V 'CHURCH'

FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT, D.D. was co-author of the well-known, much used, Westcott-Hort New Testament in the original Greek—a sufficient recommendation of his Greek scholarship. The following quotations are from his "Lectures on the Early History and the Early Concepts of the Ecclesia," delivered at Cambridge University in 1888-1889, and published in 1897 and 1898. According to the name and date on the fly-leaf, our copy was first purchased in 1898—we were but two years of age.

Dr. Hort explains: "The reason why I have chosen the term *ecclesia* is simply to avoid AMBIGUITY. The English term *church*, now the most familiar representative of *ecclesia* (Note, he doesn't say, "translation," MSW) to most of us, carries with it associations derived from INSTITUTIONS and DOCTRINES of LATER times, and thus cannot at present without constant mental effort be made to convey the FULL and EXACT force which originally belonged to *ecclesia* . . . (Unless otherwise noted, caps ours—MSW).

"'Ecclesia' is the ONLY perfectly colourless word within our reach, carrying us back to the beginnings of Christian history, and enabling us in some degree to get behind words and names to the simple facts which they ORIGINALLY denoted" (in the Christian Ecclesia, pp. 1, 2). In short, neither "church," nor any other English word, "conveys the full and exact" meaning of the Greek word for which "church" stands in the N.T. Hence, no English word can translate EKKLESIA exactly.

Hort's "ecclesia" is merely the Latin form of the Greek word represented by "church." According to Webster's dictionary, the English "church" is from the Anglo-Saxon CIRCE, from the Greek KURIAKON, meaning: "the Lord's house" (or place). The dictionary defines it primarily: "I, a building for public worship"; a sense wholly foreign to the original Greek word. The word, "church," has been fastened on the English-speaking religious world through slavish devotion to the King James version. This version, according to Alexander Campbell, has "a sectarian character" and contains "many inaccuracies." (Preface, The Living Oracles, p. VI).

While it has nothing to do, directly, with the sense of ecclesia, in his "recapitulation," Dr. Hort makes a challenging comment, saying: "In this as in so many other things is seen the futility of endeavouring to make the Apostolic history into a SET of authoritative precedents, to be rigorously copied without regard to TIME and PLACE, thus turning the Gospel into a SECOND Levitical Code. The Apostolic age is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind: but the responsibility of choosing THE MEANS was for ever left to the Ecclesia itself, and to each Ecclesia (Congregation, MSW), guided by ancient precedent on the one hand and adaptation to present and future needs on the other. The lesson-book of the Ecclesia, and every Ecclesia, is history not a law." (*ibid*, pp. 232, 233).

Hort's "Levitical Code," in the context, indicates the meaning in his, "a law." So, brethren who have a legalistic concept of "the law of liberty" (Jam. 2:12), "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), cannot, with fairness to Hort, use his comment here as a launching pad from which to blast off into orbit around "liberalism" or "modernism."

On Paul's salutation to "the church (ecclesia) of God" in Corinth, Dr. Hort says: "The Corinthians are here (1 Cor. 1:1-2) taught to look on themselves as united to 'all who in every place invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ'; and I believe we may safely add that 'theirs and ours' means 'their Lord and ours,' the one Lord being set forth as the COMMON BOND of union, and OBEDIENCE to His WILL as Lord, the uniting LAW of life . . . He assures them 'Faithful is the God through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord'—fellowship of Him, not only fellowship *with* Him, though that also, but fellowship with one another and with ALL SAINTS derived from that fellowship with Himself which was COMMON to them all." (*ibid*, pp. 119, 120).

The above was spoken by Dr. F. J. A. Hort about eight years before we saw the light of day, and was published about seventy-two years before we ever heard of it, or read it. But his words express what we have believed and tried to teach for about twenty years.

Now if the English "church" does not, and cannot, convey the exact sense of the original Greek EKKLESIA, what are we going to do about our official, exclusive, title, "the church (or Church) of Christ"? Well, having ceased long ago to recognize it as such, we will allow those who thus use the appellation to answer that question for themselves.

M. S. WHITEHEAD

Some folk carry their religion on their shoulders like a burden, instead of in their hearts like a song.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JUNE 1970

7—Isaiah 1:10-31	John 7:25-36
14—Micah 5:2-15	John 7:37-52
21—Daniel 9:1-19	John 8:1-30
28—Genesis 22:1-19	John 8:31-59

JESUS AND ABRAHAM

Abraham's name appears 54 times in the New Testament, and nine of these occurrences are in John 8! It does not appear again in John's gospel. The fact of descent from Abraham was in Jewish

eyes the hall mark of a pure Jew. The Gentile who accepted the Jewish faith with observance of circumcision and all the rites of the Mosaic law was regarded as of lower standing. Physical birth makes a Jew.

Thus in writing his gospel for Jews Matthew traces descent of the Saviour from Abraham. Luke writing for Gentiles goes back to Adam. Both report John Baptist's warning to Jews that this merely physical descent does not excuse from repentance and obedience. He was rebuking their very common thought that their connection with Abraham gave them a standing in righteousness. In our reading for this month how emphatic is expression

of this pride of race, and how plainly does the Saviour rebuke it. Pride of race was a prime factor in the causes of two world wars, and, strange inversion, excuse for wholesale murder of Jews. But the motive is very common in the world today. Many in many nations are wanting to press claims for national recognition as though further to divide the human family—almost going back to Babel! None of us is exempt from the temptation to national, family or personal pride. It can blind us to our faults and to the virtues of others (Matt. 3:9; Luke 3:8). "Our fathers were high-minded men" we sing. Let us follow their "high-mindedness" while bearing in mind that they had their faults—only ONE is faultless—and their virtues cannot save us.

However we do appreciate the greatness of Abraham, and all the more because our Saviour Himself both acknowledged and revered him. It was indeed "according to the Scriptures" that Jesus came, and it could not be from any other forefather that He came. God's design for the blessing of all nations must come through Abraham as promised. The Jewish nation has fulfilled that design, though perhaps unwillingly and defectively. God's purposes never fail, but are worked out in spite of, or because of man's behaviour: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psa. 76:10).

Physical and Spiritual Fatherhood

In our chapter, fatherhood is spoken of in several different senses. There is actual and immediate sonship—the relation of Jesus to His Father (see also 5:18 in particular). We should regard this as both a physical and spiritual fact—"the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35); "Thou art my beloved Son" (Luke 3:22). There is sonship by descent—Jesus is the Son of David, all Jews are sons of Abraham. Then there is the relationship of character, following a pattern of behaviour. Jesus was proving His relationship to God by doing always the works, and saying always the words of His Father. The Jews were proving their relationship with the devil by seeking to kill Him, and thereby disproving their relationship with Abraham. "This did not Abraham" (verse 40). Physically we are all sons of Adam; spiritually all Christians are sons of God. Obviously this latter

relationship is the more important, and it is shown in our behaviour. What a serious responsibility we have!

It is evident that many of those who listened to Jesus and witnessed His works, did come to believe in Him, but some found it hard to continue against the opposition of the religious leaders. They remained half-hearted, and Jesus spoke almost harshly to them (8:31 ff.). It was necessary they should realise so far as this is possible the stupendous truth that He was God's own Son. It is in fact something we can only partially understand when we recognise God as the Almighty Maker and Sustainer of the universe. The fact of the incarnation is so simple and yet so profound. Here was the carpenter of Nazareth teaching with unmistakable authority a way of life purer and holier than Moses, and claiming a greater authority than Abraham. It was little wonder that His hearers were astonished, but what excuse was it for opposition and hatred?

Jesus repeatedly acknowledges Abraham. When praising the faith of the Gentile centurion, He speaks of Gentiles sitting down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham (Matt. 8:11). He used the relationship of Abraham to God as a proof of the resurrection: Abraham, although long since dead physically, is living now (Matt. 22:32). Perhaps His most striking reference is to Abraham comforting the dead beggar in Hades, while the selfish rich man is there in torment, and warning that failure to listen to Moses means an unbelief which shuts out the possibility of believing in a resurrected Christ (Luke 16:22 ff.).

We bear in mind also that Jesus told His apostles that hearing them was equivalent to hearing God Himself (Luke 10:16). Abraham is set forth in their writings as an example of faith (Heb. 11; James 2) and "the friend of God." We conclude with the fact that "Abraham rejoiced" when seeing (we assume by faith in the promise of blessing for the whole race) the coming of Jesus to redeem mankind. That faith, expectation and joy could only be real because the communication came from the ONE WHO IS "THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOR EVER" (Heb. 13:8). R. B. SCOTT

WOMEN'S PAGE

Conducted by Harold Baines

LESSER LIGHTS

No. 5: MEPHIBOSHETH; By Royal Appointment

OUR character this month is a little known one from the Book of Samuel. He is mentioned only three times—2 Sam. 4:4; 9:16; and 21:7. In chapter 9 we read most about him. You may recall the love between his father Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 20:17). What happened to Mephibosheth is a direct result of that love.

When Mephibosheth was five years old and his nurse let him fall he became lame in both his feet for the rest of his life. He had a son Micha (2 Sam. 9:12). As a direct result of the love and covenant made between David and Jonathan, throughout his lifetime Mephibosheth ate at the king's table. Hence our sub-title "By Royal Appointment."

Beyond these facts we know little about his activities. In the eyes of the world he had nothing to commend him to that high and honoured position at the king's table. In those days to be physically afflicted was to be scorned. But David had loved Jonathan very deeply: their affection was born and nurtured in strife, and though Jonathan was dead, David bestowed the affection he had had for him on to his son.

There is one thing here we must observe: the character of Mephibosheth is shown in that he never sought to trade on the king's affection for his personal advantage.

In 2 Sam. 20 we read that David was at pains to spare his life when enemies would have taken him hostage.

We feel that you who have children, especially if they are afflicted, will understand David's feelings and the feelings of Mephibosheth. Left to the mercies of a cruel world the life of the afflicted Mephibosheth would have indeed been miserable; but he had the assurance of the king's continual care, and because he sat at the king's table he was constantly in touch with his benefactor.

We see in this simple story something of the relationship between us as Christians

and our heavenly Father. Were not we afflicted and needing love and care? Because our heavenly Father so loved us that Jesus came down to earth and at the King's behest we too "By Royal Appointment" sit at the King's table.

We are all aware of the significance of that term, "By Royal Appointment": it has to be earned by exceptionally high quality of the goods involved; once obtained it is highly prized; and once lost it can never be restored. Do we value our position in Christ as one "By Royal Appointment"? If an earthly monarch can so love one afflicted as David did Mephibosheth, how much more must our heavenly King love us that we also may sit at the King's table continually.

May this simple story help us all to be more worthy members of the King's Household of Faith.

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A PERFECT TRUST

Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust,
My loving God, in Thee;
Unwavering faith that never doubts
Thou choosest best for me.

Best, though my plans be all upset
Best, though the way be rough;
Best, though my earthly store be scant;
In Thee I have enough.

Best, though my health and strength
be gone,
Though weary days be mine,
Shut out from much that others have,
Not my will, Lord, but Thine!

And e'en though disappointments come,
They, too, are best for me,
To wean me from this changing world,
And lead me nearer Thee.

Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust
That looks away from all;
That sees Thy hand in everything,
In great events and small.

That hears Thy voice, a Father's voice,
Directing for the best;
Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust,
A heart with Thee at rest.

**THE "SCRIPTURE STANDARD" —
A BRITISH MAGAZINE**

The *Scripture Standard* is published by Brother Carlton Melling. I have been acquainted with it for about 25 years. It is a very worthwhile publication. It attempts to adhere strictly to "that which is written." Due to so many Americans being stationed in the British Isles during World War II and so many going there since then, an effort started many years ago to Americanize the British congregations. Individual cups were unknown in the British Isles until then. As they began to be introduced through the American influence, the *Scripture Standard* began to oppose them. To be fair, they allowed the pro-cups brethren a hearing. Now the cups brethren have their own paper, and this has hurt the *Standard's* circulation. It needs our help by way of subscriptions.

Like any other paper, things sometimes appear in it which some of us cannot endorse. For instance, the Sunday School is sometimes referred to favourably. Yet, the paper is open (as I understand it) to articles in opposition to the *Scripture Standard* practice. I understand that what they call Sunday School there is far different from what goes under that name in the U.S.

The subscription price is \$1.80 per year. I suggest that you send \$2.00. And, as Brother James Orten, 616 Northwest 21st, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is in constant touch with Brother Melling and will be glad to forward subscriptions, I suggest you send yours to him.—J.D.P.

The Truth, March 1970

[We thank Bro. J. D. Phillips, editor, for his kind notice and comments on the "S.S."—Ed.]

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Doncaster.—The church at The Holmes, Doncaster, will meet for the last time in its present building on Lord's Day, May 31st. This is due to the coming demolition of its meeting-house under a redevelopment scheme.

Please address all correspondence relative to the church to Bro. W. S. Bradley, "St. Ives," Ash Tree Avenue, Bawtry, Doncaster.

Stretford. — On Thursday evening, the 23rd April, Kenneth George Olawumi was immersed into Christ at the Church of Christ meeting-house, Bloom Street, Edgeley, Stockport.

Kenneth, a school friend of Stephen Ashurst, has attended many of our meetings since we began our work in Stretford and we have watched with a mixture of anxiety and joy his faith in his Lord grow and deepen. We thank our God and Saviour for this demonstration of the power which lies in the gospel and pray that our young brother will be used mightily by the Lord for many years to come; if He tarry.

We thank our brethren at Stockport for the ready assistance they gave us.

On behalf of the brethren at Stretford,
Allan Ashurst

Stretford.—The church which meets in our house is again rejoicing over the decision of a young person to follow his Saviour. Emmanuel Oladele Scott was immersed into Christ at Stockport on the 29th April. We pray that he will be richly blessed in his new-found faith and that he will continue to grow in grace to the glory of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Allan Ashurst

OBITUARY

Three Men of God: An Appreciation

Dear Bro. Editor,

I write to pay my tribute to the Three Men of God referred to in the May issue. I do so with sadness for the passing of these faithful souls from this earthly

scene, yet with a certain amount of pride and joy.

I first met Bro. Frith in 1934, and for the next thirty years had most happy fellowship with him and his wife in various aspects of the Lord's work. Many times I was a privileged guest in his home as we served, in the gospel, in Blackpool (Gadsby Street), Fleetwood and Cleveleys. On several occasions I was privileged to see some of the work he put in for the "Standard."

He was of unfailing good humour, and I remember with affection the many jokes exchanged at one another's expense, especially where Lancashire and Yorkshire were concerned. I thank God for his life and example.

My association with Bro. John Garnett goes back even further, to 1920, and for the next forty years we had almost unbroken fellowship in the gospel, especially during the thirty years I was privileged to serve the church in Doncaster. Your references to his humility, kindness, sympathy and understanding are no exaggeration, but are true of his life and character. Bro. Garnett was a faithful steward and a noble example to all who follow the Lord. We thank God for his life and work.

Of Bro. Gregory, I can write in similar terms although our association only goes back to 1953. I soon found him a real child of God, and remember with warm affection the times of fellowship enjoyed with him. Our most recent meeting was at the Spring Conference at Eastwood, when it was apparent that he was feeling the recent loss of his wife very keenly. We offered what condolence we could, little realising that it was the last time we should see him.

We thank our heavenly Father for, "These noble souls and wise, whose hearts beat time to the music of the skies."

Harold Baines

Blackburn (Hamilton Street). — With deep sorrow we record the passing of Sister Lily Lever on April 17th. For over 20 of her 57 years she had been confined to her bed, but circumstances did not prevent her devising ways and means of witnessing for her Lord. She was an

example to all, by her faith, her courage and her fortitude. She corresponded with Brothers and Sisters all over the country, and in this way kept herself informed of the activities of the various churches—her one regret that she could not do more for the Saviour she loved so much.

The affection in which she was held was shown by the numbers present at the service in the chapel, and the many letters and cards of condolence received by her sister Esther on Lily's behalf. We do indeed sorrow, but not as those without hope, and we look forward with joy and expectancy to the day when we shall meet again.

Our Sister Esther and the family we commend to God, knowing He is faithful to fulfil His promise "to supply all our needs in Christ Jesus." John Pritt

Ilkeston. — The church has suffered another great loss—this time an elder—Fred Gregory. He was a member for 64 years, having been baptised in November, 1905. His wife Kate died last November. Since then Bro. Fred had seemed to lose interest in this life and became ill. He was taken to the home of his youngest son at Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston. He became worse and was removed to hospital in Nottingham, where he improved a little. He returned to his son's home, but was able to meet with the church for only three Lord's Days before his death on April 9th. He was buried in Kirk Hallam Cemetery, Brother Barrie Sharpe (Loughborough) officiating.

His two sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren we lovingly remember at the Throne of Grace. "Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13). Reuben Gregory

Wallacestone. — We record the passing on 21st April of Bro. Tom Forsyth. He was 87 years of age and was baptised 23 years ago. His latter years were spent comfortably in an old folks' home, and though unable to meet with the church for some time the Lord and His work was his theme of conversation whenever he was visited.

He was laid to rest on Thursday, the 23rd April, Bro. D. Dougall officiating at both services. James Grant

COMING EVENTS

Ilkeston (Burns Street).—The ninetieth anniversary, on Saturday and Sunday, June 6th and 7th.

Saturday, June 6th.—Tea 4.30 p.m.; Gospel Service 6 p.m.

LORD'S DAY.—10.30 a.m. Breaking of Bread; 6 p.m. Gospel Service.

Speaker at all services, Saturday and Lord's Day: Brother Leonard Morgan (Hindley, Wigan).

A warm welcome to all.

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

'Twas battered, scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste his time on the old violin;
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good people?" he
cried,

"Who'll start the bidding for me?"

"A dollar, a dollar?" Now two; only
two;

"Two dollars, and who'll make it
three?"

"Three dollars once; three dollars twice—
Going for three"—but, no;

From the room far-back, a grey-bearded
man

Came forward, and picked up the bow.
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening up the strings,

He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as the Angels sing.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars; and who'll make it
two?"

"Two thousand dollars, and who'll make
it three."

"Three thousand once; three thousand
twice,

And going—and gone," said he.

The people cheered; but some of them
voiced:

"We don't quite understand, what
changed its worth?"

Swift came the reply—"The touch of a
Master's hand."

And many a man with a life out of tune
And battered, and torn with sin,
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,
A game, and he travels on.

He is going once, and going twice.

He is going, and almost gone;

But the Master comes and the foolish
crowd

Can never quite understand

The worth of a soul, and the change that's
wrought

By the touch of The Master's Hand.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, including postage, 14/-; two copies 24/-; three copies 34/-. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 80 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 3 St. Laurence Crescent, Slamannan, Stirlingshire.

All correspondence, including articles, news items, coming events, etc., to be sent, before the 10th of the month, to the Editor, C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

NOTICES. Scale of charges: 3/- for first 3 lines or less; 8d. each subsequent line. Repeats (if notified when sending copy) half original charge. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

DISTRIBUTING AGENT: Ronald Maiden, 41 Comberton Park Road, Kidderminster, Worcs.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

CONFERENCE SECRETARY: TOM WOODHOUSE, "Jesmond," 8 Shoulder-of-Mutton Hill, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. NG17 7DX.

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley, Leeds, Yorkshire. Tel. Morley 3255.

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd., Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. 2266 Langley Mill.