

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Our prayer for all readers is that throughout
the New Year the Lord will cause His face to
shine upon them, and give them peace.

A Neglected Lesson.

*'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto
wisdom' (Psalm 90:12).*

THIS Psalm is 'a prayer of Moses, the man of God,' and was probably composed during the wilderness journey of the children of Israel. During that long trying journey, subject to many changes, seeing men carried 'away as with a flood,' Moses looks above the temporal, fleeting things, to the Eternal Unchangeable One. 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.' 'Thou,' who 'from everlasting to everlasting art God,' who formed the mountains and the earth, the Creator of all, art our dwelling place, our refuge, our eternal home. What a contrast between the everlasting God, and poor frail mortality!

'To all, life Thou givest—to both great and small:
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all:
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but nought changeth Thee.'

We too, are on a journey, all things seem to say 'this is not your rest.' How quickly the days and years roll by. As they pass on they bring many and great changes. Men come and go, friends are taken from our side, and as we look round our family circles, our hearts are sad as we see the vacant chairs. As we have stood by the graves of loved ones we have realised how true it is that we shall go to them, but they shall not return to us. We are surrounded by the fleeting and transient, and sick of these changing scenes we look up to the Eternal One and find in Him shelter, rest, and peace.

With an unknown path before us, we pray, and sing—

‘Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last,
And our eternal home!’

In view of all this, it is surely important that we should learn to number our days. To have a right estimate of time is essential if we would use it well and live wisely. Neglect of this great lesson accounts for many failures. Many, like the rich fool, build upon a wrong calculation. He said: ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry’; but a solemn messenger upset all his plans. ‘This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?’ (Luke 12:16-21).

Others, like those described by James, are saying, ‘To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.’ Are you thinking of some such plan? You talk of continuing a year and making a fortune, ‘Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away’ (James 4:13-14).

So many of the plans of men are built on nothing better than a vapour. Well may we pray, ‘Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am.’ This seems a difficult lesson to learn. We hear of people dying all round us, but we act as though we are fenced about with immortality. How true is the saying: ‘All men think all men mortal but themselves.’ The Bible, in many striking metaphors, sets before us the shortness and uncertainty of life, for life is like a soon-forgotten dream; a transient shadow. To many it is ‘as a sleep’; they seem to be sleeping and dreaming while years roll by all unobserved by them. To such, the hour of death is a great awakening, and they are haunted by the ghost of a mis-spent past.

Our life is ‘like grass which . . . in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up: in the evening it is cut down and withereth.’ ‘We spend our years as a tale that is told.’ The chapters are varied, for there is shadow and sun for everyone, as the years roll on, but all the chapters are alike very short.

Our days are swifter than the weaver’s shuttle, and as uncertain as the weaver’s thread. ‘I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off from the loom’ (Isaiah 38:12).

It is because our life is so short and uncertain that it is so great and precious.

‘Not many lives, but only one have we, frail, fleeting man,
How sacred should that one life be, that narrow span,
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour bringing in new spoil.’

Our life is like ‘water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again’ (2 Samuel 14:14). We shall not pass this way again, we cannot undo the past, but profiting by experience we can so live that we shall have less to regret.

How did ye spend last year? If we wrote down a faithful record could we view it with joy or grief? Have we grown in ‘grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,’ and in imitation of Him? Remember the infallible Reporter has all written down, and we will one day be called to give account to Him. Can we say, ‘I have done what I could’ in service, or in giving of our means to Him? We do need to cultivate the grace of liberality, to imitate Him who gave Himself for us, and who said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

The apostolic injunction is, ‘Redeem the time,’ buy up the opportunities, as a wise merchant does. ‘The children of this world are, in their

generation, wiser than the children of light.' If some men ran their businesses as they try to run Churches they would soon be in the bankruptcy court. 'Whatsoever the hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' There will be no opportunity for making up lost time, nor for any amendment there. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith' (Gal. 6:10).

'Oh the world is full of sighs, full of sad and weeping eyes,
Help your fallen brother rise, while the days are going by.'

King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had seen the recent eclipse of the sun. 'No,' said the Duke, 'I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven.' How sad that so many professing Christians have time to attend to material things, to read trashy literature, to attend cinemas, and sports, but they have no time for the things of the Lord, to attend His House, to support by their presence Lord's Day, evening and week-night meetings! How much we need to learn 'to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'

What does the flight of time mean to us? Each night we are a day's march nearer the end. Does that mean joy or grief to us? Amidst all the changes 'Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' He will not fail nor forsake us. His word, like Himself, 'liveth and abideth for ever.' His Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. If we have believed and obeyed that Gospel, and are seeking daily to do His will as revealed in His word, the flight of time means that our redemption is near. 'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh'; and that will bring the time for which creation groans, when pain, sorrow and death shall be no more: when the 'day breaks and shadows flee away'; a day that shall never end, for 'there shall be no night there.' The faithful, loyal Christian, who is doing his best to serve the Lord, can joyfully sing—

'Ye wheels of nature speed your course, while mortal powers decay:
Fast as ye bring the night of death, ye bring eternal day.'

EDITOR.

Suggested Bible Readings.

THE Lord's Day morning readings for 1949 and 1950 have covered first the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew's gospel, then in Acts the record of the life and worship of disciples of the Christ, of the spreading of the good news of salvation through His name 'to the uttermost part of the earth'; in short, of the effect of that sinless life and matchless teaching upon those who believed in Him as the Messiah. As an orderly continuation of that sequence it has been thought fitting that in 1951 the readings in the New Testament consist of a portion of that inspired teaching contained in the letters of Paul the Apostle to those early Churches and as applicable to-day if Churches of the New Testament order are to 'keep the faith' in life as well as in name.

The plan has been followed of reading these letters in the order in which they were written. We are aware that among Bible scholars this order is a vexed and disputable question. Into that controversy we have not ventured to enter, but have been content to follow the suggested order contained in Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*. We have reverted, too, to the time-honoured practice—as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be—of placing the Old Testament readings first. We find that our brethren, whatever their shades of opinion in

politics, are certainly 'conservative' in such matters as this. And perhaps rightly so, for often 'the old is better.'

Some difficulty has been experienced in always finding Old Testament readings harmonizing with the portion read in the New Testament. Indeed, it may appear to many that the harmony exists only in the compiler's mind! No matter: even if there is no apparent resemblance the Old Testament portion is well worth reading for its own sake.

As in previous years, reading cards will be obtainable in the near future from Bro. A. L. Frith, 12 Poulton Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire. When applying please state number required. The cards are supplied freely, but it is asked that stamps be sent to cover costs of postage.

CARLTON MELLING.

George Bernard Shaw.

OF this great and distinguished man, who recently passed away at the age of ninety-four, the following is written in *Biographies of Famous Men*:

'He has often been called—and at times has called himself—an atheist. Yet the Bible is to him the greatest of books. "You cannot begin to appreciate it until you are sick of the novels and plays and other trash that our grown-up babes feed on."

'As for his attitude toward Jesus, "I see no way out of the world's misery but the way of Christ, provided the teachings of Christ are taken out of the cloister and put into practical use. The Man (Jesus) has not been a failure yet; for nobody has ever been sane enough to try His way"' (p. 282).

Co-operation with our American Brethren.

3. The 'Communion Question.'

OF the problems that have arisen between the British and American brethren perhaps the 'communion question' is the most difficult. It is certainly a problem of long standing, for over the course of a century many words have been written on the subject, and sometimes much heat generated. I realise, therefore, that in embarking on this subject I am treading a path full of pitfalls, into which, if care is not exercised, one is liable to fall. However, I do so because I am convinced that if full co-operation with our American brethren is to be achieved, as I believe it can be, then this problem has to be faced and overcome. I want, therefore, to discuss the question as fully, and in as detached a manner, as possible.

Early History.

In discussing a question of this nature, it is necessary not only to appreciate that there is a difference in viewpoint between the American brethren and ourselves, but to go further, and try to understand why such a difference should have arisen in the first place. As was mentioned in the last article, failure to take into consideration differences in environment and historical background is a sure way to fall into error.

The Restoration Movement, which arose simultaneously in both this country and America, had most things in common, but from the beginning it was evident that there was one point on which there was a difference,

the 'communion question.' The reason was plainly the difference in background.

In the United States, many of the pioneers came from religious bodies who had 'broad' views on the 'communion question.' James O'Kelly came from the Methodists, Barton W. Stone and the Campbells had Presbyterian connections, John Wright came from the Baptists, while only Walter Scott, who came from the small body of Scotch Baptists then established in America, had a similar background of teaching to that of many of the English brethren.

On the other hand, the pioneers in this country came mainly from those who had strict views on the 'communion question.' The Restoration Movement in this country can in some ways be traced even further back than the Movement in America, for it has an indirect connection with the Glasites, formed by John Glas, a former minister of the Church of Scotland, about the year 1730. Although the Glasites continued the practice of Infant Sprinkling, they had very pronounced views on the Lord's Supper. They were in every sense 'close communionists,' only allowing those who had been approved of by the local congregation to partake. They were strong disciplinarians in this respect, as a perusal of the letters between John Glas and his son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, will show. Some went so far as to maintain that the Lord's Supper could not be celebrated at all without a presiding elder being present. Some brethren, to-day, maintain that only an elder can preside at the Lord's Table. Indeed, the idea of having a president at all may have come from this source.

When Archibald McLean and Robert Carmichael, who were former elders of the Glasites, broke away from that body and formed the first Scotch Baptist Church in the year 1768, they adapted the Glasite conception of 'close communion' to the new situation. When the Restoration Movement was fully launched in this country, as a result of the circulation of the writings of Campbell by William Jones and James Wallis (although there were a few independent Churches formed before this), nearly all the pioneers came from the Scotch Baptists. The 'close communion' conception was therefore again modified and carried over into the Churches that were then being formed.

Campbell's Visit.

Very early, then, between the Churches of the two countries differences on this question are seen, which came to a head in the visit of Alexander Campbell to this country. As far back as 1837, Wallis began urging Campbell to make such a visit, and at one time funds were being collected to finance the trip. Some time later, the Campbell-Rice debate took place. The British brethren, on examining the debate, discovered that Campbell had stated that he 'viewed with great satisfaction the fact that some Presbyterians, on their own responsibility, and that, too, without being the subjects of Christ's one baptism, had sat down at the Lord's Table with the Disciples of Jesus.' In consequence, the collection of funds were for the time being suspended. However, Campbell did eventually come to this country, but because of this difference on the 'communion question,' he was virtually boycotted. He presided at the second General Meeting held at Chester in 1847, and out of the eighty or so Churches then existing in the British Isles, only twenty-six were represented.

The statement of Campbell's is worthy of special notice as it shows clearly the basic difference in viewpoint which existed at that time on the 'communion question' between the British and American brethren. It is evident, by that statement, that the foremost concern of Campbell was for Christian unity. The British brethren's main concern, however, was for purity of worship.

Again, Campbell's conception of worship around the Lord's Table was that the whole of the responsibility lay with the participant. That is seen by another statement from his pen. 'If I was asked the question, in the year of Christ, 1845, "Do any of your Churches admit unbaptized persons to communion?" I would still answer, "Not one, as far as is known to me" . . . Professors of unblemished reputation, of Pedobaptist Churches, are sometimes informed at our large meetings, that we do not suppose all unimmersed persons to be absolute aliens from the family of God, nor are they absolutely excluded from any participation with us in prayer or in the Lord's Supper; on the contrary, if any of them take upon himself the responsibility, being satisfied in himself in his own baptism, to participate with us at a table which is not ours, but the Lord's, we have no power to forbid him, and would not withhold from him the symbolic loaf and cup. But to make it a practice to receive such persons as members of our Churches into regular communion is a practice unknown to me in any one Church in the Reformation.'

This view persisted for a long time in the American Churches, particularly with those who afterwards digressed, and led to the rise of the expression, 'neither invite nor debar.' On the other hand, the British brethren contended that the responsibility lay with the administrator as well as with the participant.

David King and Isaac Errett.

Then came wordy battles over the question fought across the Atlantic, sometimes with as much warmth as logic, between David King in this country, and Isaac Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard*, in America. It is unfortunate that such a discussion should have ever taken place, for had they realised it, David King and Isaac Errett were at the extreme ends of the poles on this question. The former was leader of the loyal brethren over here, the latter the leader of a wave of liberalism, which was then sweeping the Churches in the United States, affecting not only this question but others as well, and finally ending, as we see to-day, in the establishment of the Modernistic Disciple or Christian Church group. Had the discussion been carried on with the loyal brethren in the States, such as Benjamin Franklin, who afterwards intervened in the discussion, or Moses Lard, it is possible that the problem would have been solved. As it was, it only served to widen the breach between the British and American brethren.

The Christian Association.

The position was made worse by the arrival in this country around the year 1878 of Disciple preachers, coming here at the instigation of Timothy Coop. At once it was apparent that the question of whether or not they would be allowed to work with the British Churches depended on their attitude to the 'communion question.' Being members of the digressive body in the States and liberal in their views, they were not acceptable to the British brethren. The result was that the Americans were left to work on their own, forming from the Churches they established the separate Christian Association in opposition to the Co-operation.

From then on, for about forty years, there existed only rivalry and a great deal of bitterness between the two bodies. Attempts at fusion were made at the beginning of this century, only to break down on the same question. Union was not finally achieved until 1917, but only at the cost of the sacrifice of principle by the rapidly digressing section of the British brethren. Even then, within the Co-operation itself, the problem was not finally settled until 1930. But let it be emphasised, and let us never lose sight of the fact, that we are here dealing with the digressive element in the American Churches.

Recent History.

In recent years, the controversy has again come to the fore by the distribution in this country of Bro. Brownlow's book, *Why I am a Member of the Church of Christ*. This book contains many fine things, but it is unfortunate that in regard to the Lord's Supper it refers to the 'neither invite nor debar' principle. We must understand, however, that the book was written primarily for American, and not British consumption, and therefore such an expression must be understood in its setting. He could not know that it was this very conception of the 'communion question' which had caused so much difficulty over here. However, slogans of this sort are dangerous, and are liable to be misunderstood, as has happened with the slogan of which we are fond, 'mutual ministry.' Further, the phrase is borrowed from the past as has been shown, and, in some ways, the digressive past at that, and as far as I have gathered from my recent observations in the States does not now represent the view of the loyal brethren there. Some of the younger preaching brethren especially who I questioned closely on the 'communion question,' had not heard of the phrase. I believe that I am right in saying that Brother Brownlow is going to delete that phrase from the later editions of his book, and for that I am glad.

Here, then, is a brief review of the 'communion question' as it has affected the relationship of the British and American Churches. As one looks back on it, one is struck by the fact that had the loyal brethren in both countries been constantly in touch with one another, and fully understood one another, such a controversy, with all that it has entailed, need never have arisen at all. And to-day, given understanding and patience, the problem can be solved, simply and Scripturally, as I will attempt to show in the next article.

L. CHANNING.

World Evangelism.

'AND Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matthew 28:18-20).

'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be condemned' (Mark 16:15-16).

'And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Luke 24:47-48).

The commission was undoubtedly given by our Lord to His apostles . . . 'Go . . . into all the world . . . to every creature,' but who amongst us would deny that it is the task of the Lord's people, to blaze forth the glorious message of redeeming love, to millions of men and women heading for a Christless grave, and hell ? Paul wrote to the Roman (10:14) : 'How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach except they be sent ? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things !'

The same writer declares (2 Timothy 2:2) : 'And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful

men, who shall be able to teach others also.' The Lord Jesus committed the task in the beginning to His apostles, they wonderfully completed the work (Romans 10:18). 'But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.'

Again in Colossians 1:23, Paul tells us they had heard the Gospel 'which was preached to every creature under heaven.' The torch must now be held by other faithful men, and we neglect to let our lights shine, at our own peril.

It is God's will that all men should be saved, 'and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (see 2 Timothy 2:4). 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved' (John 3:16-17).

Brethren, the words of the commission can be read in that word 'whosoever,' 'into all the world,' 'to every creature.' The outstretched arms of our Lord Jesus seek to embrace 'all nations,' 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28). And again, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37).

The writer is not unmindful of the fact that some of the 'whosoever' live quite near to his home, and many who are 'labouring and are heavy laden' live in his home town, and that some of the 'creatures' of the commission live in his home country, and that 'unto all the world' means England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. He also knows that the Gospel knows no frontiers or barriers, and he rejoices that the Gospel is being proclaimed in Nyasaland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, America, Canada, France, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the world over.

We salute all brethren whose lives are consecrated to the glorious task of preaching the glad tidings whether at home or abroad, and we rejoice over victories won for Christ. Let us pray for them. God willing, we intend to write other articles, under the following headings: 1, Our Outlook, World Vision; 2, Our Aim, World Conquest; 3, Our Mission, World Harvest; 4, Our Purpose, World Evangelisation.

LEONARD MORGAN.

Grape Juice.

THE grape-producing plant is the vine, and this term is sometimes figuratively used of other plants, nations and men, as 'I am the true vine' (John 15). The only drink produced by the vine is grape juice. Jesus called this drink: fruit or produce of the vine (Matt. 26:29).

A well-known picture of grape juice occurs, where the chief butler 'took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup' (Gen. 40:11). This was real grape juice, good and wholesome for the King of Egypt, and fit for the 'King of Kings,' in the Lord's Supper. Grape juice is either preserved in its freshness or manufactured into intoxicating or poisonous, strong drink. Note: Strong drink is never produced by the vine, and should never be used as a drink. He who discovers a vine producing strong drink should instantly patent his find, or an enterprising wine manufacturer may forestall him and monopolise the ready-made product!

Another picture of grape juice is in Matthew 26:29. Jesus called it 'fruit (or product) of the vine.' The cow produces milk; the oak tree produces wood. No oak tree produces tables, chairs, or wagons; it is satisfied to produce oak wood. Who is the wood spoiler? Strong drink is a product of man's skill and labour, and not of the vine.

Another example of grape juice is in the parable of the trees (Judges 9:13). The vine said, 'Should I leave my wine which cheers God and man?' The only wine possessed by the vine is grape juice. For forty years the Hebrew nation, in the wilderness, 'drank neither wine nor strong drink' (Deut. 29:6). Christians are journeying through the wilderness to the promised land.

The juice of anything, especially if red, is termed its 'blood.' In Deut. 32:14 grape juice is called 'the blood of the grape.' Note that strong drink is never found in the grape. It has been objected that in this passage the Hebrew word *chemer*, quoted as 'fermented,' or pure blood of the grape, indicates that strong drink is here implied. The context will not bear this violent twisting! Also, the word *chemer*, or its Greek equivalent, is not in the Septuagint, nor was it in the Hebrew version translated by the revisers. Refer to the Revised Version!

All Hebrew priests, on duty, had to avoid strong drink (Lev. 10:9). Old Testament priests are types of Christians. Though God warned us that 'wine is a mocker' (Prov. 20:1), and instructed us 'not to look upon it,' because 'it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder'; some teach, though without proof, that God appointed strong drink for the solemn remembrance of the poured-out blood of the Saviour. It should be noted, the term 'wine' is never found in the New Testament, for the Lord's Table. God has so simplified this matter that the unlearned may readily understand it, and prevent discussion by the 'so-called learned.' Would God put such a great enemy to His salvation, into the feast of remembrance? All the details of New Testament law are given by Christ and His apostles, not by Moses and the prophets. Observe New Testament law, not Old Testament law (Hebrews 1).

The word *gleukos* in Acts 2:13, from *glukus*, 'sweet,' 'agreeable,' etc., means 'must,' 'cooked wine,' and every kind of sweet liquor. The context proves it was intoxicating (poisonous). It is quite a different word to the New Testament generic term for wine, *vinos*. *Gleukos* was used by mockers! During Passover, Old Testament law prohibited all fermented substances. Dr. Isaacs, a New York Jewish Rabbi, stated: 'Fermented liquor was excluded from Passover and marriage feasts.' He knew Jewish law!

'Dregs' or 'lees' content at bottom of wine casks could be unfermented or fermented wine. In Isaiah 25:6, the Lord of Hosts made a feast, typified by the ancient Hebrew feast. Here were no actual 'wine,' nor actual 'fat things full of marrow,' but the more substantial and abiding realities of the gospel age: forgiveness, sonship, gladness, joy, peace, hope and fellowship with God and man. No grape juice spoilers are here!

It is a serious offence to have strong drink at the Lord's Table and risk the overthrow of a brother for whom Christ died. 'It is good not to drink wine whereby thy brother is caused to stumble' (Rom. 14:12). Many Christian brothers have been victims of 'drink.' A lifetime abstainer, a sectarian pastor, had his appetite so stirred by strong drink put into the Lord's Supper that he became a drunkard. Do demons use strong drink? How they must rejoice to see the cursed liquor in God's house! 'Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 6:10).

Obey New Testament law and use only grape juice at the Christian feast and refuse to take 'the viper' into your body.

W. H. CUMMINS.

DO YOU WANT A REVIVAL?

IF all the sleeping folk will wake up,
And all the lukewarm folk will fire up,
And all the disgruntled folk will sweeten
up,
And all the discouraged folk will cheer
up,

And all the depressed folk will look up,
And all the estranged folk will make up,
And all the gossipers will shut up,
And all the dry bones will shake up,
And all the true soldiers will stand up,
And all the Church members will pray
up—
Then you can have a Revival.

Apostolic Succession.

NOW the first thing to be said about the doctrine of apostolic succession is that it is 'a fable,' as Wesley said. There is no proof of it: moreover there is no possibility of its being true. For it assumes that there was a line of descent from the Apostles to the bishops, and that this line is unbroken from the beginning. But that cannot be, for there were no 'bishops' in that sense of the word in the time of the Apostles. 'Bishop' (or overseer) and 'presbyter' (or elder) are names that were used indifferently of the same office in the ministry in the earliest days. It was only gradually, as Christianity spread and Churches in the cities grew larger in membership and such Churches came to have several ministers, that then one of them, the leader of the group, came to be called 'the bishop,' and the title was restricted to him while the rest were known as 'the presbyters.' But in the first age there was no bishops in the modern or medieval sense of a special order.

The doctrine of apostolic succession, as held to-day by those who call themselves Catholic, revolves entirely around the idea of *priesthood*. It is the magical authority of a priest that is conferred by episcopal ordination within the succession, and that cannot be conferred in any other way.

But the evangelical faith, which is that of the New Testament, knows nothing of any priesthood, except the spiritual priesthood of all believers, and the eternal priesthood of our Lord. If there is such a thing as priesthood in the Christian ministry why is the word never used? There is a perfectly good Greek word *hiereus* which means priest, but is never used except in reference to every believer as a priest, and to Christ as the great High Priest—and of course in allusions to the priests of the Jews and of the pagans. It is well to remember this, for there are signs that the battle of the Reformation may have to be fought again."—Dr. Henry Betts in *Joyful News* (Methodist).

The Name We Bear.

THE members of the Church of Christ should be named according to His good pleasure, and not by the choice of men, nor after men, nor after Church ordinance or polity.

New Testament Names

Acts 6:7: 'The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.' 1 Cor. 1:2: 'called saints.' Rom. 9:26: 'they shall be called the children of the living God.' Phil. 3:1: 'my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.' Looking at their relation to Jesus, the great Teacher, they were called disciples; at their relation to each other, brethren; at their relation to the Father, children of God.; at their character, saints. But while these designations are good and are always to be used, a more comprehensive designation is required; hence, Acts 11:26, 'And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.' Acts 26:28, 'And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian.' 1 Peter 4:16, 'But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.' Thus, their relation to the Father, Jesus Christ, each other, and to the world, is comprehended in the word Christian.

But even in the days of the Apostles, when as yet there were no so-called ('Christian sects, but the body of the Lord was one, 'The sect everywhere spoken against,' some were falling away to unauthorised designations, and to consequent divisions. Hence we have Paul writing:

1 Cor. 1:12-15: 'Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptised none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I baptised in my own name.'

1 Cor. 2:3-4: 'For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? for while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?'

As then, they were carnal, tending to divisions and sects, calling themselves after one or other of their teachers, so now, are those who do the like, or designate themselves after some ordinance, as Baptists, or after some item of Church polity, as Episcopalian, or Presbyterian.

But names are needful, we are told, in order to distinguish the denominations. Well, yes, if denominations are needful, or even allowable. But they are not, being evil, and that continually. They hinder, at home and abroad, that for which the Saviour prayed—that the world might believe—which He puts as a result of the manifested oneness of those who believe in Him. Let, then, names and sects and parties fall! Let the Church be known only as the Church of God, or Church of Christ, in such and such place, and let its members own only those names given or adopted by the Holy Spirit, and found in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists.

'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.' Let us, then, in relation to Christ and His Church, bear only names divinely sanctioned, and thus honour the Lord whose we are!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

January 7th:

Zechariah 4; I Thessalonians 1.

January 14th:

Ezekiel 2, 9 to 3, 14; I Thessalonians 2

January 21st:

Psalm 119, 33-56; I Thessalonians 3.

January 28th:

Zechariah 14, 12-21; I Thessalonians 4, 1-12.

Introduction.—There is no doubt this is the earliest of Paul's letters preserved to us. It was written while he was working at Corinth (Acts 18, 11 and 18), and conveys loving messages of encouragement, and exhortations to continued faithfulness. The fervent spirit of the apostle is very manifest, and it warms our hearts to see his great concern for those who had turned to God on account of his word. The Jews in this town opposed the gospel with great bitterness, but the Church had a nucleus of those of them who were responsive to the message. They would all have to endure severe persecution—in which of course the unbelieving Jews were the leaders. Read Acts 17, 2-9 for the story. The town

was a famous one, given over to commerce and pleasure. It has come through the centuries and is still of importance—under the name Salonika.

The Salutation and address.—Those who were Paul's fellow-labourers at Thessalonica were still with him, and are thus included in the greetings. The method of addressing is peculiar to the two letters to this town (Church of the Thessalonians). 'The Church at . . . ' is Paul's subsequent phrase. The Church was 'in God,' that is, not pagan; it was 'in Christ,' that is, not Jewish. Was it not a sort of outpost of God's empire?

Paul's Thanksgiving, and the reason.—In these few verses much is presented to the careful reader. Paul's prayers were full of joy because this Church had spread the gospel, and so withstood trials that Christians in all the region had been much encouraged. 'Work,' 'labour' and 'patience' had been outstanding. Though they received the word in affliction, it was with joy (Matthew 5, 11 and 12). Evidently Paul had worked miracles in their midst, and their conversions had been evidenced in an especial degree of repentance. They had in fact brought forth works meet for it. We note that the second coming of the Lord, and the warning of 'wrath to come,' had been faithfully declared.

More about the work and the workers.—The preaching at Thessalonica followed immediately upon severe ill-treatment at Philippi. It was obvious this had not influenced the preachers to water down the message in any way. They behaved as those who had to give account to God, not men. Their straightforward teaching impressed the hearers. Yet it was tenderly and graciously done, manifesting love and consideration for others, and unselfish sacrifice of self. They worked at a trade rather than be burdensome financially to those who began at once to bear a great burden of persecution through confessing Christ. Besides open expression of hatred and abuse, there would be the petty slander, the boycotting, and the strong endeavour to irritate and enrage. Example and precept combined to lead in Christ's ways.

More thanks to God.—When our hearers really believe we are speaking God's truth, not merely our personal witness, or our interpretation of the Word, a glow of gratitude fills our hearts. We know that then it is not the passing influence of one human character upon another, or mere sentiment, but a grasp of the Truth which makes free, a germination of the incorruptible seed. Paul was assured of this by the endurance of the Thessalonians. He cannot but think of the Churches of Judaea which had had to bear the same trials, largely due to the same hostile class. It is a dreadful thing to oppose God, and terrible was the retribution which fell upon that stubborn race. In 70 A.D. about twenty years after this letter was written, Jerusalem was finally destroyed as a centre of Jewish faith.

Paul's designs.—Paul's tender heart was filled with a great longing to visit the Thessalonian Church and give all possible help and encouragement. He wished them to maintain Christian faith and virtue at a time when there was every temptation to fall back. All he could do at the time was to send Timothy although that meant loneliness in his work at Athens (Acts 17, 15 and 18, 5 for a sidelight on this). He expresses here his heart's deep longing for the spiritual upbuilding of these comparatively new born babes in Christ. We note the prayer in 2, 12 and 13 for the development of Christian love in their treatment of one another, and the development of holiness of life. These remain the crying needs of Christians to-day. In all we have so far considered in this letter, there is a welling up of thangs for the faithfulness already exhibited, and yet with it anxiety lest Satan should succeed in ruining the wonderful work.

Practical advice.—We know that the heathens were addicted to sexual vice of one sort and another, even having it as a part of their worship. Hence there was

a special need of warning in this particular matter for the town was full of idolatry. The great wonder of the work at Thessalonica was 'They turned from idols to serve the living God.' The exhortation to chastity and proper behaviour towards one another in the matter of marriage is one also much needed to-day. We may not have the idols but we have the sexual vice in increasing measure, and with growing shamelessness. Love towards one another was a strong point already in this Church, yet it required still to be impressed further. Perhaps the persecution had been the means of binding them together. Another vital question was the matter of earning a living. It is essential to do this earnestly for two main reasons, first, to show an upright industrious attitude towards others outside the Church; second, to have enough to live upon. Later we shall see why this should be pressed upon the readers.

R. B. SCOTT.

PUT UP THE SWORD

PUT up the sword, the voice of Christ
once more,
Speaks in the pauses of the cannon's
roar;
O'er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped,
And left dry ashes over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; o'er cities starving
slow
Under a rain of fire, through wards of
woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs.
From tortured brothers, husbands,
lovers, sons,
Of desolate women in their far-off homes
Waiting to hear the step that never
comes.
O men and brothers, let that voice be
heard
War fails, try peace, put up the useless
sword.

J. G. WHITTIER

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A. L. FRITH

CORRESPONDENCE

THANKS FOR SYMPATHY

Bro. John McLaren and family wish sincerely to thank all who sent kind and encouraging letters in their recent bereavement; also to Bren. H. Clarkson and R. Fleming for services at the funeral; and to Bro. Slater Wilson, who so kindly sent on medicine which did much to relieve the pain of their loved one. They are very grateful to all.

THE AMERICAN SCENE

Dear Editor,—The opening sentence of Bro. Ferguson's letter surprised me much. He says: 'I am pleased that Bro. Winstanley admits that there can be no point at all in discussing issues with our brethren in America.' That is the very thing I refused to admit! In my previous letter I wrote: 'I heartily disagree with his (Bro. Ferguson's main contention . . . that there can be no point at all in discussing issues with our brethren in America . . .'. Bro. F. evidently read 'agree' instead of 'disagree.' I do not agree with him—I most heartily disagree.

He and I have two opposite, irreconcilable positions in this matter. He insists that there is no point at all in us discussing differences with our brethren in other lands. Indeed, he said that this was 'a waste of words and precious time.' That I deny. I contend that frank and honest discussion is our imperative duty. As I formerly wrote: 'Christians here and abroad can, and must, learn from one another.'

Bro. F. further writes: 'His next point suggests that I am wrong in thinking we have nothing to learn from the U.S. That is far from my meaning, etc.' Surely this reveals the inconsistency of his former assertions—that we have nothing at all to learn from others, for that was the basis of what he previously wrote. He says: 'There is no use learning if it has no advantages . . .'. But, surely, if he and I can learn anything from any child of God anywhere—here or abroad—advantages must accrue from that enlightenment. If others have something to teach us—and he now admits that—then the sooner we learn the better. But how can we learn what others have to teach us without honest discussion and frank investigation?

The great weakness of our brother's position is his assumption that we in this country are right on every 'issue' in religious life. How else could he suggest that we have nothing to learn from discussion? But obviously that position is indefensible. Just as surely as we have something to give our overseas brethren, they have something to give to us. All the truth is not shut up in this small territory called the British Isles.

Moreover, if Bro. F. opposes discussion with believers in other lands, why doesn't he take the same position about discussion with saints in this country? I previously mentioned differences existing among the members of the Churches in our own land. What of women's work, laying on of hands, and military service? Take the last as an example. I doubt if there is a single Church in the country where all the brethren agree on this matter—some are 'for' and some 'against' military service. Now, whatever side Bro. F. takes, many of his brethren are opposed to him on the issue. What will he do? Will he refuse, under any circumstances, to discuss it? I think not. It would surprise me to learn that he never discusses these 'differences' with those who do not agree with him. Then why should it be any way different honestly to investigate differences with those of like faith in other lands?

It is my personal conviction that many of us here have been much too like our island in years past—insular, shut in to ourselves, and refusing to recognise that the Church is not merely within the bounds of these islands. There are those of like precious faith in other lands. True, there are some outstanding points of difference between us and some of them. But it is not realism either to close our eyes to these differences or to think that they can be ignored. It is our solemn duty to get to the root of them and to do our utmost to realise the unity for which the Lord prayed, on the basis of His eternal truth. Whilst there is recognition of differences, sorrow for these causes of disunity among Christians, and frank discussion in honest endeavour to solve our problems—just so long is there hope that true unity will be realised between Churches of Christ here and elsewhere. But let honest investigation be removed and apostasy, division and sectarianism will surely flourish.

It is not always easy to avoid misunderstanding in a written discussion. I wish, therefore, to add that all I have written has been in a brotherly spirit. In these letters, as in all my writings, I seek only that truth shall be known. Whilst I differ so definitely with Bro. F. I respect him none the less. I commend him for raising this matter, and I commend to him once more this fact: in writing his letters he has admitted the principle for which I contend. Let us never hesitate to discuss those things wherein we differ—whether among the Churches here, or between ourselves and believers in other lands.

Finally, let us all remember that one appellation of God's children in this age of grace is 'disciples.' Disciples are 'learners.' Let us be humble, honest minded, willing to embrace the truth any man can teach us. Let us 'buy the truth and sell it not.'

A. E. WINSTANLEY

CONVERTED JEW

I WAS brought up in a good orthodox home, and since a child was taught the Law of Moses, and also to attend Synagogue regularly. Despite this, I also used to pray in English to God every night before retiring to bed. I was very happy until the age of about twenty-five years. A certain restlessness then set in, which made me physically ill, with the result that I decided to change post after working with a particular firm for seven years. After this, I changed my position again and finally, together with a friend, bought three shops in a row from a Christian gentleman, who also employed a Christian by the name of Mr. Hartle. Here, for the first time, I heard about the possibility of Jesus Christ being the Messiah. I naturally repudiated this and had the most wonderful arguments in my favour.

In the meantime, Mr. Hartle left us in favour of another job, and we in turn broke our partnership and sold out. I managed to get another job, but again was very unhappy. This restlessness encompassed me, and I started reading the Old Testament quite regularly. Then I heard that one of the shops that I had sold was for sale again. A strange feeling of elation possessed me. Although I never had sufficient capital I never rested until I managed to raise over £1,000 on loan, which eventually enabled me to purchase the business. Strangely, in the interim, Mr. Hartle was also very dissatisfied with his job and was offered his old position which he accepted.

Mr. Hartle taught me the truth about the Bible, and after much seeking and prayer all the old arguments just faded away. I accepted Jesus Christ as our only true Saviour and was baptised on Sunday, September 24th, 1950. Now, and only now do I know true happiness.

ABE NOCKIE

BOOK-KEEPING

An advertisement in a newspaper read as follows: 'The Whole Art of Book-keeping Taught in One Lesson. Send P.O. for one shilling, etc.' A large number of people sent the required shilling, and received the following by return of post: 'The Whole Art of Book-keeping Hangs upon Three Words: Never Lend Them.'

The editor of a magazine wrote some years ago: 'It is said that you can judge a man's character by the books on his shelves. Judged by that most of our friends must be kleptomaniacs.' In some books the following lines are found:

'If thou art borrowed by a friend,
Right welcome he will be,
To read, digest, and not to lend,
But to return to me.'

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Nelson.—Our Bible School anniversary and prize distribution will take place (D.V.) on Saturday and Sunday, February 10th and 11th, 1951. Speaker, Bro. Albert Winstanley. Saturday, tea 4 p.m. Meeting 6 p.m. Lord's Day, all services as usual. A hearty invitation is extended to all Churches.

Slamannan District.—The Annual New Year's social gathering of the Churches in the district will take place, D.V., in the meeting place, New Street, Slamannan, on Monday, January 1st, at 12 noon. Chairman, Bro. T. Nisbet (Tranent). Speakers, Brethren D. Allan (U.S.A.), David Dougall, and John Hunter (Aberdeen).

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

God willing, the Bible School will again be held at Hindley (Argyle Street), Saturday, May 12th, 1951, to Thursday, May 17th, 1951 (inclusive). Book the dates. Book early. Further particulars later.

SPRING CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, 24th MARCH, 1951

All intending to attend the Spring Conference at Tranent, East Lothian, Scotland, please write to W. Steel, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian, as soon as possible.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

East Grinstead.—On Saturday, October 21st, we held our eighth anniversary, when we had visiting Brethren from Birmingham, Bristol, Aylesbury, Kentish Town, and Tunbridge Wells. Fifty sat down to tea. The speakers at the evening meeting were Brethren A. E. Winstanley and Eric McDonald. There were several non-members present and they were all greatly impressed.

Some of the Brethren stayed over for the Lord's Day, when Bro. Eric McDonald served the Church. It was a most uplifting week-end for all concerned, and we take this opportunity of thanking all our visiting Brethren for making it such an enjoyable time of service for the Saviour.

W. HILLMAN

Hindley.—It is with great pleasure we record two more added to the Church since our last report. On October 22nd, John Taylor accepted Christ as his Saviour, and was immersed the same night. Lord's Day evening, November

5th, Bro. Muskett obeyed His Lord and was buried with Him in the waters of baptism, having boldly stepped out for Christ and confessed Jesus as Lord before witnesses, following the appeal of Bro. Frank Worgan. We pray God's blessing to rest on them and trust they may lead others to the Fountain of all life.

L. MORGAN

Ilkeston.—Lord's Day, November 19th, 1950, was a day long to be remembered in the history and fortunes of the Church here. The Church assembled at 10 a.m. with prayer and fasting for a solemn service of ordination of elders and deacons, prior to the 'Breaking of Bread.' The whole combined service was conducted by our esteemed evangelist, Bro. A. E. Winstanley, with that quiet dignity, simplicity and reverence in keeping with such an occasion. After four New Testament readings by four brethren, and a talk thereon by Bro. Winstanley, the qualifications and work of both elders and deacons, with the sacredness and importance of each office and work, were very clearly and definitely revealed. After solemn promises being made by each candidate in answer to searching questions put to them concerning the work and responsibilities of the office, Bren. F. Gregory, S. Jepson, and R. Gregory, elected by the Church as elders, were then solemnly ordained to that office. After similar procedure, Bren. D. Booth, W. Britton, E. Gregory, G. Gregory, and G. E. Bullock, elected by the Church to serve as deacons, were ordained accordingly. Another short talk by Bro. Winstanley followed, making quite plain what the attitude and duty of the Church should be towards her elders and deacons as taught in the New Testament.

It was an impressive service all through, which, following on much teaching which has recently been given on these matters, served to emphasise the wisdom of abiding strictly by New Testament teaching in the matter of Church leadership and government, recognising but one Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ. The appropriate hymns and prayers, particularly one committing the elders and deacons to God in their respective spheres of responsibility and work, all helped to bring us into the deep atmosphere of worship; we felt indeed the Divine Presence and felt sure of the Divine approval as we consciously followed the teaching of the Word. As we continued in the observance of the Lord's Supper, we could not help but feel and realise the Divine honour, dignity and blessing on the Church—that one Divine institution in the world, providing it be according to the New Testament pattern. We pray that this event may open up a new era of success in the life and witness of the Church for her Lord at Ilkeston.

S. JEPSON

Morley.—We are pleased to report that the Lord has blessed the efforts made during October, November and December by the Church in Morley, served by Bro. Len Channing. Five have been immersed: J. Pamment (who will be in fellowship at East Ardsley), Mary Harper, John and Dorothy Thomason, and Savilla Lockwood. We hope that they may all be kept faithful, and that they will speedily become useful and active servants of the Lord. We are grateful to the Kentish Town Church for making fresh arrangements so that Bro. Channing could continue to help us.

G. LODGE.

Nelson (Southfield Street).—We are very glad to report another successful anniversary (in the judgment of some the best so far), held Saturday and Lord's Day, November 18th and 19th. Bro. Leonard Morgan, of Hindley, was our speaker for the week-end. On Saturday, about ninety sat down to an excellent tea provided by the Sisters. At the evening meeting, a large audience was very appreciative of the message on 'Led by the Spirit,' given by Bro. Morgan. Brethren from Hindley and Blackburn rallied round on Saturday and rendered items which helped to make it a memorable meeting. On Lord's Day, Bro. Morgan exhorted the Church, spoke to the scholars in the School, and preached the Gospel in the evening. Truly a memorable week-end for which we thank God.

A. CARSON

Newtongrange.—During the last three months we have indeed been having a great spiritual uplift. Bro. David Allan, from the Church of Christ in Pontine, U.S.A., has been labouring with us and has not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God to large and appreciative audiences. The meetings at present, especially on the Sunday evening, make us remember the times we had with Bro. Bailey, many years ago. We thank our Lord and Master that up to the present four have been restored, and we pray that they may remain faithful to the end of life's journey.

We crave the prayers of all our Brethren to our Heavenly Father for the success of this mission, more especially as fully half of those attending are non-members. We trust that their hearts may be touched, and that they may yield to Him who died that they might live.

The Church at Newtongrange is sending Bro. David Allan to labour with the Church at Slamannan during January, 1951, and to Hospital Street, Glasgow, for February, 1951.

W. H. ALLAN.

Scholes, Wigan.—The Church is encouraged by the baptism into Christ of Brian Parker, aged thirteen years, who has been taught in our Bible School from infancy. He was baptised on Lord's

Day morning, December 10th, and was welcomed into the fellowship of the of the Church at the Lord's Table immediately afterwards. We are working and praying that others too may thus be added to the Church.

C. MELING

Tranent.—We are very happy to report another four additions to the Church here. Bro. John Peden was baptised on Lord's Day, November 19th, and Bro. David Colgan on Lord's Day, November 26th. On Thursday, November 20th, our hearts were further rejoiced by the baptisms of Bro. and Sis. Wm. Logan. We thank God for these further proofs of the power of the Gospel and pray that more may follow.

D. SCOTT

Tunbridge Wells (Silverdale Road).—On Lord's Day, November 26th, Albert J. Kemp was received into the fellowship of this Church. Our brother had been previously immersed, and had been associated with a section of the body known as the 'Brethren' for many years. Through his own study of the Scriptures he came to see the errors of 'faith alone,' and was convinced of the truth of what Churches of Christ teach. He immediately asked that he be allowed to join us.

Bro. Kemp is known to most members of the Church here as a very sincere follower of the Saviour, and a most earnest Bible student. We thank God for his willing acceptance of the truth, and pray that his life may be much used for our Father's glory.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

OBITUARY

Hindley.—It is with deep regret we record the death on Friday, October 27th, of Sister Simpson, at the age of seventy-five years, after a short illness. Our sister had been failing in health for a while, but remained active until near the end.

We pay tribute to her love for the Lord, and His Word; and record her readiness to pass on her knowledge to the sisters meeting her. We know that, having died in the Lord, she will receive the reward.

L. MORGAN

Newtongrange.—The Church has suffered a severe blow, as on Wednesday, 29th November, Bro. James Brunton was fatally injured whilst at work. Our hearts in sympathy go out to our Sister Mary (his wife) and the two boys, who have been left. We commend them to our Heavenly Father, who is a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the widow, in the sure and certain hope that one day, if we remain faithful, we shall see him in that land where all tears are wiped away and where there shall be no more pain or crying, and where we shall be forever with the Lord.

Bro. David Allan officiated at the house and also at the cemetery.

W. H. ALLAN

Slamannan.—With deep regret we record the death of our aged Bro. John Wilson, who died on 23rd November. Bro. Wilson, who had reached the age of seventy-six had been in feeble health for about two years, but all through that time of much physical weakness he remained bright and cheerful in his disposition and passed very peacefully away. He was a true and faithful member for almost fifty years, and led the praise of the Church for twenty-five years.

Our beloved brother always took an active part in the welfare of the Church, and was never absent from the Lord's Table or any other meeting, sometimes being present when in very poor health.

Much sympathy is extended to his two sons who are members of the Church here.

Bro. David Dougall, Evangelist, conducted the service in the home and at the graveside.

M. NEILSON.

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Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 8 Torquay Avenue, Owton Manor, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

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