

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

THE Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church of England have agreed to join together in "full communion" and to call themselves The United Reformed Church. This union has been decided upon after many years of discussions between the two bodies. It has been voted upon and accepted by overwhelming majorities of both clergy and "laity" of both Churches. By other religious bodies it has been welcomed as a further step towards the breaking down of denominational barriers, leading to the realisation of the great worldwide Church of the Ecumenical Movement.

### Signs of Strength or of Weakness?

But are such fusions demonstrations of strength or of weakness? So far as concerns the two denominations affected, both have for many years shown alarming declines in church membership and Sunday School attendance. Of course this decline has been experienced by almost all denominations. The urge towards "Christian Unity" has gathered momentum these past twenty years, until more and more it is taking the form of "Christian Union". Such unions as are taking place are of those who must realise that one of their best hopes of continued existence is to unite with other bodies who are in the same plight. We do not wish to be hurtful or cynical, but we think this is a natural course to adopt. It is a paradox that they look to union with other Churches in order to maintain their own existence and traditions - to abolish denominations by preserving them! Nathaniel Micklem, a noted Congregationalist minister of the earlier part of this century, once wrote to the effect that he hoped to live to see the day when there would be no Congregational Church, or any other separately named Church, but that all Christians would be simply The Church.

But the Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church of England have many different traditions. The chief of these is their systems of church government. The Presbyterian Church has a central Synod as its directing and controlling authority; the Congregational, as its name indicates, holds that the local church, the congregation, is the authority in its own affairs. (It has been pointed out that, as the word church means congregation, the name Congregational Church means Congregational Congregation or Churchy Church!) As both Churches will not let go their traditions there is a unity of two irreconcilable systems, yet a continuation of both!

With such differing traditions which they aim to maintain what genuine union (or even unity) can there be? It can be but little else than unity in numbers. In my home town the Presbyterian Church of England has been "ready to die"; while a few years ago two Congregational Churches in the town centre joined as one. In the immediate district a woman is minister to at least two congregations. Naturally the best hope to remain in being is to unite.

### True Unity

But unite on what? Over the past twenty years Synods, Assemblies, Conferences and other central Church authorities have discussed "Christian Union". Even though rejected at first (especially by the "laity") voting has swung more and more towards such unions—witness the trend of voting for union between the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Church of England some years ago, and the discussions still proceeding between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. It will be seen that almost always the clergy are at first more for union than the "laity". But the "laity" themselves are coming gradually to be in favour of union.

This suggests two things: (1) that the clergy are concerned to maintain their own authority and position and (2) that the "laity" are equally concerned to maintain their systems of ministry: they must have some to minister to them in their traditional ways.

All this is far removed from the teaching and guidance of the New Testament, upon which all the ecclesiastical systems claim to be founded and from which they claim their authority. Many traditions will have to be discarded if we are to enjoy the unity for which Jesus Christ prayed (John 17:20,21): "I pray...also for those who believe in me through their [the apostles'] word; that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me." That is the true "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" which Paul (Eph. 4:3) tells us we must be "eager to maintain". To *maintain*, not to *attain*.

In all the activities of ecumenism there is singularly little reference to the New Testament. If there were it would be seen that there is little in the word of God which justifies or authorises commonly accepted systems and practices of our religious denominations. In scripture, as in all things necessary to salvation and the church, the teaching on the unity of Christians is simple and clear. To illustrate this we take the liberty of reprinting a part of our article "Unity in the Body" (S.S. March 1967, pp. 26 and 27): .....

### Unity in the Body

We must all be humble in this cause that the word of the Lord and the Lord of the word may be glorified, in His people being "one... that the world may believe." G. Y. Tickle wrote in one of his hymns:

"We'll plead for unity on this truth alone—  
That Jesus is the Lord."

But Tickle was a member of the churches of Christ! Yet he did not speak any more strongly than Charles Wesley, who in his hymn prayed that "Names and sects and parties fall; Jesus Christ be all in all." We must be ready to see our own particular groups go out of existence if thereby the One Body of Christ be realised in the world.

But in the light of the word of God there can be no misunderstanding of, and therefore no compromise as to what that One Body is and who are in it. It is not within our authority to say who are not in the Body: that is in the province of God: that is in His own power. The scriptures teach quite clearly who are in the Body and how. The New Testament is positive on the matter, and we must be also. Its teaching is that those who are immersed in the name of Christ, in obedience to Christ, are joined in one in His Body. To assert that any others are is to leave the

realm of the certainty of God for the realm of human speculation.

But within the Body we have further responsibilities. We cannot through our wisdom or systems bring about unity. Only God does that, and has done it. The outstanding chapter on unity in the outstanding epistle on unity is Ephesians chapter 4. There (v.3) Christians are pleaded with to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Not to attain, but to maintain unity. We are not to introduce or insist upon any teaching or practice which has not the authority of the word of God behind it. We are not to make views or opinions into fundamentals. We are not to make standards of fellowship which are not so made in scripture. We are not to bring in any expedient, any nonfundamental, which is offensive to or cause offence to, or hurts any member of the Body, or causes division, So to do is to show that we are not "eager to maintain the unity" which Christ by His death has accomplished. As we expect other religious communities to let go those beliefs and practices which Christ and His apostles never taught, so we ourselves must adopt the positive attitude, that a thing is right, before it can be taught or practised in the church.

It is not sufficient that "it is not forbidden; no principle is involved; the word of God is not violated," etc. No church lives to itself, nor does any single member. We are to consider one another, and the effect of our teaching and actions upon the rest of the members of the Body, Christ's standard is that we "walk in love towards one another;" "each to esteem the other better than himself;" and for no-one to put a stumbling-block in the way of his brother. Thus will we show ourselves "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." First must come unity within each member: that will ensure unity within the Body. Only then will the world believe that God has sent Christ, and only then shall we be "all one in Christ Jesus."

EDITOR

## WHY THE BIBLE SCHOOL?

### An Address to Encourage Teachers

"WHEN I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

Paul is teaching that the knowledge of Jesus, in common with every form of learning comes as a slow growth, not as a sudden flash — not forced, but a natural development. In this (his only reference to his childhood) Paul suggests the gradual change from childhood to manhood, and the yet further growth in the understanding to which we may look forward.

After learning to pray at mother's knee what better place to be than in Sunday School? What better place can we learn to know and love the stories of the Bible? When I went to day school, I could repeat Psalm 1, Psalm 8, The "Lord's Prayer" and 1 Corinthians 13. When I started Sunday School I was taught what these passages and many others meant. This was made possible by the devotion and self-sacrifice of the Sunday School staff. I pay my tribute of praise to the brothers and sisters who have taught in the Bible Schools. We know that in helping children, they have themselves been blessed. This truly applies to classes of all ages and to all types of Bible teaching.

Two questions arise: (1) Is the Bible School Scriptural? (2) Is it worthwhile? Shall we look at these in order?

#### (1) Is the Bible School Scriptural?

Through the Bible there is a teaching ministry. In the Old Testament, as generation succeeded generation, there was a tendency to forget God's commands. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy

life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons". (Deuteronomy 4:9). "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (Deuteronomy 6:20-21). These duties seem to be the responsibility of parents, but are largely left to the church.

We read in Luke's gospel how Jesus, at the age of twelve, was taken some seventy miles to Jerusalem to share in the Passover feast. For Jewish boys, it was the responsibility of parents to teach and prepare them so that at this age they would be able to understand all that the feast meant. We think too of the learned Doctors of Law who listened to Jesus's questions and answers and yet could not refute Him.

### The Ministry of Teaching

Further, our study of the New Testament proves that there is a real place for a teaching ministry *within the church*: "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5:12).

In the ministry of the New Testament church Christ "gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). We may not be considered very high in that order of ministry, but we find that in the divine list teachers are included.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy, according to the proportion of faith; or ministry let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching" (Romans 12:6-7). Paul urges teachers to "wait on" or to be patient in teaching.

Whilst the commission given by Jesus in Mark 16:15 reads: "Go ye into all the world and *preach* the gospel to every creature", Matthew 28:19-20 reads, "Go ye therefore and *teach* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

You may rightly say, "Some of these references apply to teaching after conversion to build up the new convert in the faith." This is true. However, there are definite references to the teaching and upbringing of infants. "He who desires the office of bishop desires a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). One qualification is that his children be taught and that he be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3:4). Timothy is commended by the Apostle Paul in this way: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned" [gradual growth] (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

If for any reason parents fail to do this work entrusted to them, the only alternatives are to transfer it to others or to allow the children to remain untaught. The church tries to fulfil this mission. In educating the children of the Sunday School, there is one object in view — that upon reaching the age of understanding, they will accept Jesus as their Saviour.

Too often parents have no interest in Jesus or the church, yet will send their children to be taught and get them ready to go to Sunday School. We are grateful for this, but parents still have responsibilities.

Is the Sunday School scriptural? We read of the attitude of Jesus in an incident recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. (Matthew 19— little children; Mark 10 — young children; Luke 18— Infants) Jesus thus shows His love and concern for the children. They were brought for His blessing. Disciples rebuked those who brought them. We have a hymn — “When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus...” We were once told by one of our preachers that the Greek word for those who brought them was *masculine*. So from then on we sang — “When Fathers of Salem...”! Does it matter? They were brought and Jesus took them in His arms and blessed them. “Forbid them not,” He said, “for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:14). In this record of the ministry of Jesus there is an example to parents, a lesson for the disciples and more justification for our Bible School. “*Forbid them not.*”

The mission of the Church is to preach a message of redemption through the blood of Christ. We work, hoping for conversions, preaching the saving power that can bring the ungodly “into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” Another side of the effort is to educate. That education should start early in life that it may become the children’s share of a Saviour’s love for everyone. The work of our Bible School staff is to build up in the scholars’ minds and lives a love for Christ’s way; to form a bulwark against temptation; to sow the seed before the thorns and thistles have time to grow.

We cannot too highly estimate the influence of early impressions. Just over ten years ago, a sidewalk was installed near my home. There was a guarantee of ten year’s wear and that length of time to pay for the safety path. Before one section was set firmly, a child trod and walked, leaving his footprints. They are still impressed after this long time. Teachers, you cannot tell: in God’s time *your* talks will remain, impressions will last and bear fruit.

Is it worth while? “Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit” (Matthew 12:33). Man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. (Psalm 1:3). How much easier it is to protect, to train, to shape, to move a tree when it is young. Solomon, the wise man of the Old Testament, said, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Standing in a beautiful garden in the summer season, surrounded by trees, shrubs and flowers, on a lovely lawn, and walking down to the Credit River in Canada, I admired the beauty of it all. The owner said, “It wasn’t like this when we came thirty years ago.” It took the planting of trees, shrubs, bushes, bulbs and grass seed and a great deal of hard work, but it was worth while.

Many Christians look back to their Sunday School days, and many a preacher. Many a mother tells her own children of Sunday School days; many active church workers started in the Sunday School. Thousands of men and women whose names are unknown, whose praises are not sung by men, yet whose names are written in the Book of Life, first learned of Jesus in a Bible Class. Many Church members were products of the Sunday School.

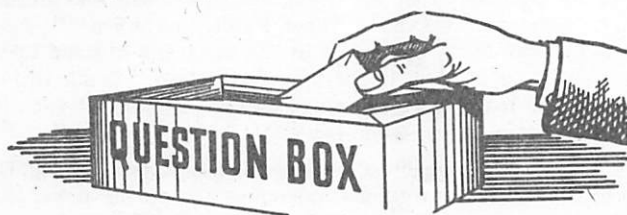
A few years ago a church minister in England, on his way to the service, noticed a piece of bread thrown away. In his message that day he referred to it as waste. But returning home, he saw a bunch of hungry sparrows feasting upon and enjoying the bread. The bread of life, the Word of God, can be given in such a simple way that the children may enjoy and assimilate just enough for their needs. We cannot tell how much or how little has been understood. We sometimes count the short time in the class as unfruitful but that is not necessarily so. Sometimes a portion of the lesson is pondered over by the student and a question is asked at home or of the teacher.

The church, leaders and other members, must stand behind the workers among the young. They need patience, understanding of the stages of growth, wisdom, love

and the prayers of the whole congregation that their work for Jesus may be not only successful but also enjoyable and blessed.

A young boy was lost on a moor, a wide stretch of open country with few trees. The search for him was unsuccessful. But at last, when the searchers joined hands he was found and saved.

F. R. W. KIMBERLEY




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Conducted by  
James Gardiner

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**"I shall be glad to read your comments on Acts 13:48, which reads, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."**

The questioner is alluding of course to the doctrine of predestination over which so much controversy has raged over many centuries. The verse as it stands appears to support the predestinarian idea — that God has predetermined who will be saved and who will be condemned — thus, as "*many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*" Does the verse support the doctrine of predestination?

#### What is meant by Predestination?

First of all perhaps a little introduction about the doctrine might be in order. It is a common misconception that John Calvin was the originator of the doctrine and predestination is almost always referred to as Calvinistic. It is certainly true that Calvin wrote more about predestination than perhaps anyone else did. It is also probably correct to say that Calvin was the man who offered to the world the most complete and exhaustive body of doctrine on the subject. However, long prior to Calvin's birth in 1509 others had given expression to the same ideas, not least of whom was a monk called Gottschalk who in the year 830 wrote much on the subject and had various debates on the issue. Gottschalk had been influenced by the writings of St. Augustine (354-430) who himself was a strong advocate of extreme predestination. There were others before St. Augustine. Thus we see that the idea of divine predestination (or pre-election, or foreordination) is almost as old as the New Testament, and is not some new or novel departure from established teaching.

It is true to say that no subject has caused more controversy down the centuries than has predestination, and each exponent on the matter has been confronted with equally able opposition. Indeed it was because of the *opposition* to Calvin's extreme views on predestination that he spent so many years writing in defence of his subject and why he wrote so much upon it. Critics have said that Calvin had a kind of one-track mind on predestination, but this is quite unjustified in view of his voluminous writings on other Bible themes. The truth is that he wrote more about predestination because it was most hotly opposed. In like manner *we* are often accused of saying too much about baptism — the reason being, of course, that other preachers are saying too little about it.

Most of us reject the extreme form of the doctrine of predestination, and perhaps believe that it borders on being blasphemous, or worse; but I feel that we should all try to learn as much about it as we can. It is too much to say that we should *respect* it, but we should try to *understand* it. Most of the Reformers were men who accepted and taught predestination. Calvin was a humble and scrupulously honest man and his writings on foreordination were not motivated by a desire to bolster the "tradition of his church", but an honest expression of his own findings after years of studying God's word. It should also be mentioned that there were, and are, different brands

of predestinarianism, some severe, some not so severe. Calvin was in the severe class; Luther in the mild class. It goes without saying that *opposition to the doctrine* also takes severe and not so severe forms. It should be appreciated that the issue is a very difficult one and not in any way clear-cut. Great minds have applied themselves to both sides of the question and strongly disagreed — which illustrates that the matter is not easily resolved. (I haven't forgotten that I am supposed to be dealing with Acts 13:48 but I feel that we can't plunge into an answer on this verse without a few background germane remarks. After all, there are many other verses in the New Testament more predestinarian than this one.)

### The Bible and Predestination

I suppose most of us could go a long way with the teachings of Calvin and the others on predestination. Surely the Bible is a book about the predestination of God. Most of the important things in world history have happened at the behest of God. God has foreordained all the important things. In the Old Testament God is represented as completely sovereign. His name is "I am" and beside Him "there is none other". His sovereign will, and only His will ordains what is and what shall be. He created the earth to its last detail and maintains it. He ordains the rising of the sun each day and maintains all nature (see Psalm 104). Man lives in the hollow of God's hand, and if God takes no part in the events of men's lives each day why does God advocate prayers to be made to Him?

Israel and its chequered history was ordained by God. Was Christ's lineage through David by mere chance? nay; but by the hand of God. The destiny and sacrifice of Jesus "was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1st Peter 1:20). As the Lord's destiny was foreordained so was the disciples': "I have manifested Thy name", said Jesus, "to the men thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me... Thou hast given Thy Son power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." These last words come from John 17, where John Knox, the reformer, says he "cast his first anchor" of predestination. And finally the end to which all the processes of nature and grace are moving — the final consummation — is hidden in the determinate foreknowledge of God and predestined by God. The means of salvation is foreordained by God — the gospel. The gospel was not some last-minute measure of desperation to save man, or an afterthought of the Almighty, but, as with Christ, was conceived before the world began. Readers will doubtless think of many other instances of God's foreordination but these main ones may suffice to show that the Bible is a book all about predestination.

However, when Calvin and the others, say that not only was *the means* of salvation (Christ and the gospel) foreordained by God but that *the individuals* to be saved by God had been predestined as well, then we must take issue with them on the matter. It was Calvin's understanding of the scriptures that at the outset of time God decided which men would be saved and which would be condemned — not a question of *foreknowledge* of who would be saved, but a definite decision of *whom He would save*. Calvin realised of course the consequences of such an assertion and the many difficulties one would incur with other passages of scripture. It is to his credit, as an honest man, that he did not try to do violence to other scripture to fit his teaching on predestination, but rather attributed the difficulties to the mysterious side of the nature of God. His greatest difficulty of course was to reconcile predestination with the free will and the free agency of man. He apparently found no difficulty here and quoted Christ as an example of one who did what God had ordained Him to do and yet all the time exercised complete freedom of will and agency. Christ was *obedient to God* even to the cross (He could have refused) and yet Christ did what God not only *foreknew* but had actually *predestined* it. So Calvin had no trouble with predestination versus free will. He had no trouble, either, in transferring the principle that mankind has free will respecting the gospel and yet obeys it because God by pre-election had decided he should.

### "Ordained to Eternal Life"

Obviously much more requires to be said on this subject but reference must now be made to Acts 13:48. Does this verse support the idea that God has ordained some to eternal life and condemned others?

Paul was in Antioch in Pisidia, preaching in the synagogue. Some Gentiles had asked him to preach again the following sabbath, which he did. Almost the whole city came to listen, and when the Jews saw the huge crowds they became so jealous that they refuted Paul's preaching and blasphemed. Paul rebuked them and said "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles". Verse 48 goes on to say, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed". This verse, like the whole question of predestination, has been the subject of much controversy. The dispute has impinged upon the phrase "were ordained". Apparently this phrase is capable of more than one translation. I am no Greek scholar, but my Young's Analytical Concordance certainly bears out the fact that the English word "ordain" in the New Testament can be derived from various words. This is quite unlike the word predestinate which occurs only four times in the New Testament and is always translated from the same Greek word. The translators of the King James Version translated "ordained" from no fewer than twenty different Greek words, and so we can see that there is room for investigation into the propriety of the use of "ordain" in some cases. Acts 13:48 is apparently one such case, and it is suggested that "*disposed to*" is preferable to "*ordained to*" in this verse (see McGarvey's Commentary on Acts). This would render the verse thus: "And as many as *were disposed to eternal life believed*".

Alford says, "'As many as were disposed to eternal life'. The meaning of the word disposed must be determined by the context. The Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life: the Gentiles, 'as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed'".

Plumptre says of this verse that a better translation would be "as many as were disposed for..."

Jacobson in the *Speaker's Commentary* says, "Rather, were set in order to for, i.e. were disposed for eternal life".

Dean Farrar renders it, "All who, by the grace of God, desired to range themselves in the ranks of those who desired eternal life accepted the faith". (*Life of Paul*)

*The Interpreter's Bible* says of 'ordain': "The word might mean little more than *disposed* with reference merely to human choice. But it is more likely that God's predestination is in view and it seems indeed that this actual phrase is not uncommon in Rabbinical literature."

It would appear therefore that there are strong grounds for saying that the verse could be translated in a way which would describe the Gentiles' *disposition to be saved* rather than their *foreordination*. This certainly would be more in accord with rest of the scriptures concerning God's grace and salvation. The Jews not God judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.

I do not want the questioner to think that I have conveniently swept the difficulties of predestination and foreordination under the carpet, together with Acts 13:48, for I know that other verses still confront us on the matter. I, therefore propose, God willing, to refer to some of those in the next "Question Box".

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland).



# SCRIPTURE READINGS

FEBRUARY 1972

6—Malachi 1	Eph. 3
13—Deuteronomy 6:1-15	Eph. 4:1-16
20—Micah 6	Eph. 4:17-32
27—Proverbs 24:13-34	Eph. 5:1-14

## MESSAGES TO EPHESUS

WE share the view that the letter we are reading was intended for circulation in several churches, perhaps all those seven to whom the Lord later sent messages through John. We see this as more than a possibility in view of Col. 4:16. The local and temporary designs of the "God-breathed" (Greek for "inspired of God" 2 Tim. 3:16 R.V.) writings have almost been forgotten. A local circulation has become a circulation beyond calculation. The divine intention immeasurably surpassed the human intentions, and has thus provided in this "accidental" way "THE WORD OF GOD" for this dispensation. Twenty-seven different writings by about eight writers form that wonderful and all-sufficient volume containing "all things necessary for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). The Ephesian letter has been called "the Queen of the Epistles" on account of its transcendent teaching (excuse the word transcendent but my dictionary gives the meaning as "going beyond the bounds of human knowledge"). It bears an obvious relationship to the Colossian letter, which is shorter.

There are three messages specifically addressed to the church at Ephesus. We read first Paul's words to the bishops in Acts 20. Secondly there is this letter we are reading; and finally the Lord's letter recorded by John in Revelation chapter 2. These together form a most interesting study of the beginning, the development and the history of the church.

### Paul's labours at Ephesus

Some part of the credit for the beginning of the church must rest with Aquila and Priscilla. We cannot imagine those saints remaining inactive, but it is understandable that only a programme of

"personal work" would be practical for them in the big city. Paul's effort with the Jews would need special follow-up work (Acts 18:18-21). After his contact with Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos would be suitable for such work, and he had apparently already stimulated an isolated group which Paul discovered on his second visit (Acts 19:1-7). Special powers were given to them, and Paul's further work bore much fruit. It is pleasing to note the enlightened reception originally given to Paul by the Ephesian Jews (18:20 & 21). The striking success of the cause in a centre of heathen worship and superstition naturally produced opposition through its effect on trade, and while Paul's heart must have been gladdened by the success, he must have regretted having to leave the city because of his personal danger.

His talk with the bishops at Miletus provides most helpful information about his work. It shows how energetic and self-sacrificing labours bring results. It gives a picture of his deep emotions as he pleads for Christ and the souls of men. We know that the seed of the gospel was watered with his tears, that he was in constant danger, which he faced without thought for his own skin, and his theme was Christ and Him crucified. We need to read carefully the appeal he made to those men, whom he had appointed for the grave responsibility of tending the flock, to follow his example. They would be family men with homes to keep and would earn their bread in various ways, so that their influence among the people would be widespread. Paul had set the example of supporting himself by labour in "secular employment", so that he supported also those who laboured with him in the gospel. The bishops were to do this too so that they would be able to help others in the same way — support the weak and have the Lord's blessing through giving.

### Letters to Ephesus

The probable date of Paul's departure from Ephesus would be 57 A.D. and his letter was written about 63 A.D. from his prison in Rome. Developments had taken place: the church had grown and the letter was needed for instruction, for correction

and for providing the brethren with written help in understanding the "mysteries" of the gospel — which were no longer such but were plain revealed truth, while the heathen "mysteries" remained dark and doubtful around the temple of Diana and the magical arts, giving the devotees no help.

The letter sets forth in unmistakable terms the glory and the supreme power and authority of Christ. It is plain that there are two main divisions of it. There is the strikingly beautiful doctrinal demonstration of the facts of God's great plan of redemption. This includes the expression of Paul's longings for the spiritual strengthening of the church, which in itself is vital encouragement to holiness of life. But as in all Paul's writing, we come down to the very practical instructions for the individual's personal behaviour towards his brethren, and his attitude and action in relation to normal human duties.

We must conclude with a reference to the letter in Revelation. Here is a picture of a vigorous church, passing through times of difficulty and meeting them with patience and perseverance. Apparently the Judaizers had been busy and were rejected. The church was sound in faith, but she had a serious failing — the first love had gone. We wonder whether the struggle against the false apostles and the false doctrine had worn down this most essential factor in church life. We are reminded of the Saviour's words to the Pharisees: "These ye ought to have done and not have left the other undone" (Matt. 23:23). While we are insisting upon obedience to some commands, our human weakness makes us all the more liable to miss others just as important or, as in this case, more important. Our aim by God's grace must be a full-orbed Christian life.

R. B. SCOTT

### We Died in Baptism

GREETINGS, folks in the "motherland", In response to the article "We Died in Baptism" in the October *Standard*. Where this actually to happen in water we should be drowned. Instead, we are dead *before* being buried: we are crucified

first, then dead, then buried, and risen from the grave a new person in Christ (Rom. 6). And the whole New Testament confers that we are to be "freed from sin", and no longer in bondage to Satan, having been given victory over him and all his demons.

Jesus tells us (Matt. 16:25) that we must lose our life in order to save it. In Romans we are enjoined to give ourselves as a living sacrifice (12:1,2). (Rom. 6:3, 5,6; 8:17) tells us we must be crucified. The people on the day of Pentecost were "pricked in the heart" (crucified). Paul was crucified when he asked "Lord, what will you have me to do?" He was blinded (Acts 9; see also John 9:39-41) and had no desire to eat until the moment of his baptism, when he both received his sight and asked for food. We are to suffer the loss of our old life (Rom. 8:17) thus partaking of the death of Christ" (Phil. 3:10; 2 Tim. 2:11,12) following in the steps of Jesus in so doing (1 Peter 2:21,24; 4:1,13). In Rom. 6 we have the whole plan of salvation: crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection from the watery grave.

When Adam was created he was but a corpse until God breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), and we have no life in us until we are given the new breath of life — the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11; Acts 2:38; John 6:63; Eph. 2:1,2,5; Col. 2:3; Rom. 8:9).

We must be begotten (1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18) by the Holy Spirit through the means of the word of God (John 3:5); then born of water (Tit. 3:5; 1 John 5:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 22:6; Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:21). The begetting is parallel to the crucifixion the planting (Rom. 6:5). The birth parallels the being raised to walk in the new life.

When we have been raised together with Jesus, we are new creations in Christ, all old things having passed away and all things becoming new (2 Cor. 5:17). The old interests are gone, the old ties are broken and the "world" forsaken. Denominations and sectarianism have to go, as these are "carnal", "of the flesh" (1 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 8:7; Gal. 5:19; Jude 19). (When we take a certain name and use it exclusively, ignoring all

others, then we have a denomination, and when we set up a certain, exclusive, doctrine, then we have a nice comfortable sect). And when we exclude all who disagree with us in our doctrine, then we have not love and do not even know God (1 John 4:20).

When we are new creatures in Christ, then are we dead to sin, no longer in bondage to Satan, and victors over him (Rom. 6:6,11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1,5; 4:23,24; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:21,22; 2 Tim. 2:21; 1 Pet. 1:15; 3:14; 1 John 1:7; 3:3, 6,9).

Then we have had, and continue to have, 'fellowship in Jesus' suffering (Php. 1:29; 3:10; 1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:17).

HARRY PRATT,  
Bird Island, Minn. U.S.A.

### WHAT IS PREJUDICE?

IT is the lock on the door of the closed mind. It is the ignorance we usually mistake for reason. It is the first enemy of information and progress. It is intellectual astigmatism. It is a perfect combination of conceit and ignorance. Prejudice never saved a soul nor settled any question in the light of truth and justice. It is the defence of the devil, shell of a petrified mind, and ceiling on understanding.

Prejudice is the adjunct of a weak cause. It is that which prevents a person from investigating the teachings of the word of God to see if what he has practised in religion is in God's Book. Prejudice is that which causes one to attack the person preaching when Scriptural arguments cannot be given in answer. In fact, when one manifests a prejudiced attitude he is admitting defeat in logical reasoning, but still refuses to pay heed to anything different from what he already holds.

It is that which will keep many persons from obedience to the gospel of Christ. We plead with you to lay aside all prejudice and study with us the Book of God. Then let us do Bible things in Bible ways; call Bible things by Bible names; and be content with a "thus saith the Lord". If we were all to use the Bible as our standard of religion, division would cease and unity prevail which is that which our Lord so fervently prayed for

(John 17:20-21). Lay aside your prejudice; study with an open mind.

Author Unknown

### YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD

You can fool the helpless public,  
You can be a subtle fraud,  
You can hide your little meanness,  
But you can't fool God.

You can advertise your virtues,  
You can self-achievement laud  
You can load yourself with riches,  
But you can't fool God.

You can criticize the Bible,  
You can be a selfish clod,  
You can lie, swear and gamble,  
But you can't fool God.

You can magnify your talent  
You can hear the world applaud,  
You can boast yourself somebody,  
But you can't fool God.

*Sentinel of Truth*

"WE concentrate on our failures, not our faith — on our problems, not our power."

### WANTED

"HECTOR AND THE DOCTORS"! Anyone having a copy please inform or post to: Tom Carson, 64 Buccleugh Road, Nelson Lancashire

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Mayfield, Midlothian:** It is with great pleasure that we announce the addition of three more souls to the Lord's church. The power of the gospel is indeed with us. On Tuesday 21st December 1971, two young men Kenneth Strachan and Ian Hardie put on their Lord in Baptism; likewise a young lady, Elizabeth Clark. The baptisms took place at the Newton-grange meeting-place with Bro. J. Morris officiating.

We indeed thank God for these blessings, and pray that the young brethren may grow in grace. A. P. SHARP

**Steenburg, South Africa:** On December 1st, 1971, Llewellyn Terry was immersed into Christ. T. W. HARTLE

**SCRIPTURE STANDARD BALANCE SHEET**  
**YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 1971**

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£578.75

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£9.29

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GRAND TOTAL £962.62

GRAND TOTAL £296.79  
 £962.62

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