

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Why Not? (6.)

"WHY NO MINISTERS?"

DEACONS

(The following extracts are from the writings of David King).

THE WORD DEACON is found in the New Testament only in Philippians 1 and 1 Tim. 3: five occurrences in all. It comes from the Greek *diakonos*, an attendant, servant or minister. The verb *diakoneo* signifies to wait upon, to serve. A deacon, then, is *one who serves, a servant*.

Though in the English N.T. we have deacon only five times, there are some thirty occurrences of *diakonos* in the original. There is no good reason for rendering the few texts in question differently from the larger number. The term is applied—1. To the Saviour Himself (Rom. 15:8; Gal. 2:17); 2. To the apostles (Matt. 20:26; 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3: 6: 6:4); 3. To evangelists (Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:6); 4. To any faithful servant of the Lord (John 12:26); 5. To magistrates (Rom. 13:4); 6. To servants at feasts, etc. (Matt. 21:13; John 2:5, 9).

In its generic sense, then, it represents a "servant" without regard to rank or quality of service. Jesus, Paul and Phoebe are designated by the one term which applies alike to preachers, magistrates and waiters.

But in addition...it is most certainly used in an appropriated and more limited sense, and thus designates a particular class of ministrants appertaining to the Church of Christ. This is clear from the following texts: Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6. From the first of these three passages we learn that the deacons of the Philippian church were distinguished from the members in general, and also from the bishops, and that, therefore, the word is not used in its wide or generic sense, but...certain persons to whom there had been committed some special service. The second passage shows that there was an office in the church filled by persons to whom this term, in its appropriated and limited sense, was applied, and for that said office certain qualifications and testing were imperatively demanded. The third cited portion indicates the duties they were required to engage in. They were to wait upon the secular affairs of the church. Nothing of preaching or teaching appertained to their office. They were not to be excluded from ministering in word and doctrine, nor did their office disqualify them from the eldership; but in preaching, teaching or ruling they would not act by virtue of their standing as deacons. We also see that they were specially elected for their work, and duly ordained to the same.

The apostles, as the first evangelists, planted the church in Jerusalem, and consequently had charge...which in due time they transferred to men chosen by the church. True, the term deacons or servants is not applied to the seven, but they were chosen to serve and were therefore servants of God and the brethren. The church was not called upon to commit this service to all...who possessed

the qualifications needed, but to look out a given number. The seven men elected by the church and ordained by the apostles were, then, the stewards of the church, to receive and disburse its bounty. For such stewards there remains, and will remain, full need. Refuse to call them deacons, if you please—call them ministers, servants or whatever you find authority for calling them; but as long as you have a table to furnish, funds to take care of, poor to help, expenses to meet, some must have charge: the whole church cannot act, and those who act for the church must not be self-chosen. It then remains that the church must look out men of wisdom, that they may be “set over this business”.... The order, then, is that brethren be chosen by the church to take charge of and appropriate its funds in regard to the particulars above specified, and that the brethren thus chosen be ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands, by those who have charge in that department at the time of election. The one clear example in Act 6 shows how the necessity was met, and how it should be provided for so long as it exists; and it will exist so long as we have money to contribute and poor to help.

Qualifications of Deacons

Paul, having done the work of an evangelist in planting churches in Ephesus and Crete, left them before they were fully set in order, and therefore he provided for the election of deacons, and the ordination of both deacons and elders by transferring, provisionally, his evangelistic oversight—in Ephesus to Timothy and in Crete to Titus. This circumstance is providentially used in providing for us a statement of the qualifications required by those who are ordained to the deacons' office.

Note particularly that before entering upon the office they are to be proved. Hence, generally, deacons cannot be ordained till some time after the planting of a church. They must be known as men of **gravity, sobriety and unselfishness**, noted for their understanding of, and firm adherence to, the faith. How needful these traits to those who are called to minister to the sick and needy of the flock! A double-tongued man may not enter upon this office. How important that one who has to be acquainted with delicate family and social affairs should have a tongue that can be depended upon! Not given to wine, frugal, not greedy of gain, liberal and yet prudent. How needful in those who minister the bounty of the church! A man with an unruly family, or with a wife who is not sober and faithful, or who is a slanderer, may not be ordained a deacon. We conclude, too, that an unmarried man is ineligible.... Other circumstances being equal, the superior fitness arising from experience in family relations is so apparent, that we cannot but urge that deacons should be “husbands of one wife.”

That women filled this honourable office is apparent. Paul wrote “I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant (deaconess) of the church which is at Cenchrea. That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatever business she hath need of you...”

She was, then, in this work of succouring, the servant of one church—that of Cenchrea. The East, owing to the more secluded life of females, would absolutely require that sisters be thus engaged. With us, though not so absolutely necessary, may cases occur which can only be investigated and relieved by female agency; and therefore, deaconesses should be ordained wherever practicable.

Of the things said concerning deacons.... this is the sum:—

1. That it is a standing ordinance in the church, that there be persons specially appointed to take charge of and minister the funds of the church, especially in regard to providing for the needy.
2. That the persons filling this office must possess the qualifications enumerated.... that the office should not be filled till persons are proved thus qualified.
3. That the church elects; while those who have previous charge in this department of labour ordain the elected by prayer and the laying on of hands.
4. Deaconesses should be ordained in every church as soon as practicable.

Some differences of view

(Editor's Comments: We have presented what Bro. King wrote, although we regard some of his statements as controversial, and as giving room for varieties of understanding. We do not think a convincing case is made for the appointment of deaconesses: in only one passage of scripture is such an "office" mentioned (Rom. 16:1), and even then almost incidentally. Phoebe might well have been a servant in the church as all Christians are: as Bro King points out, a deacon (and presumably a deaconess) is not always or primarily one holding a certain office in the church.

There is room for difference of view also as to whether the seven in Acts 6 were deacons in what Bro. King terms "an appropriated and more limited sense . . . a particular class of ministrants appertaining to the Church of Christ." They are not termed "deacons" here or anywhere else in the N.T. Philip, one of them, is in Acts 21:8 designated "Philip the evangelist, one of the seven." The qualifications of deacons set out in 1 Tim. 3 are much more definite than those set out by the apostles for the appointment of the seven. Of course in the sense of being servants the seven were deacons; but in that sense so also was Christ Himself, and the apostles. We may speak of a general sense, in which all are servants in the church; and of a specific sense, applied only to those appointed according to 1 Tim. 3, very much as we speak of all Christians being evangelists, while at the same time agreeing that certain brethren are set apart to the full-time work of preaching the gospel and establishing and setting churches in order).

Was the Apostle Peter Ever in Rome?

"POPE PIUS XII told 6,000 students that the burial place of the Apostle Peter is, and was, under the cupola of St. Peter's Church."

"The Associated Press correspondent says it had been anticipated that the Pope, sooner or later, would affirm the truth of the tradition that St. Peter, martyred in Rome, was buried on the site of the world's largest Christian church."

We propose to make comments on the above statements, and earnestly solicit the attention of our Roman Catholic readers.

The title at the head of this article is a vital question. How important it is may be seen from a consideration of a few statements from recognised Catholic authorities. We shall also invite your consideration to statements made in the New Testament Scriptures by the recognised authorities—the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Papal Claims

"If anyone should deny that it is by the institution of Christ, the Lord, or by Divine Right, that blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the primacy over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter in the Primacy, let him be anathema!" (Decree of Vatican Council, 1870). "I acknowledge the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, for the Mother and mistress of all Churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome—successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ. I do at this present freely profess, and sincerely hold, this true Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved." (Creed of Pope Pius IV, 1564). "After the death of St. Peter, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, has always been taken as the visible head of Christ's Church, because St. Peter established his See at Rome and consecrated it with his blood." (Fam. Ex. Cath. Doctrine, page 3, 1888. Imprimatur: Cardinal Gibbons).

"The pontificate of St. Peter lasted thirty-three years, of which twenty-five were passed in Rome." (Darras, "Church History," volume 1, page 42, Imprimatur: Pope Pius IX).

These statements show that Roman Catholics claim that Peter was in Rome twenty-five years; that he was the first Bishop of Rome; and that he established a

"perpetual line of successors." If Catholics could prove that Peter spent twenty-five years in Rome, that would not prove that he was Bishop of Rome, visible head of the Church, and that he established a "perpetual line of successors."

If they cannot prove that he was ever in Rome, all these claims fail. They are invalid and worthless. The burden of proof that Peter was ever in Rome rests on the Roman Church. You may ask here: What are the Scriptural evidences that Peter was ever at any time in Rome? Simply none. The evidence of Scripture rather shows that Peter was never in the imperial city of Rome. The Scripture informs us that Jerusalem was the residence of Peter. When Stephen was stoned to death "there was, at that time, a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles." (See Acts 8:1). A.D. 34. Then in verse 11 we read of the Apostles sending Peter and John down to Samaria, and verse 25 tells us that they returned to Jerusalem after preaching the Word of the Lord. In chapter 9 Peter's visit to Lydda and Joppa is narrated. In chapter 10 at Caesarea, he preaches to the household of Cornelius. As you read these Scriptures you perceive that the Pope is not like the Apostle Peter. They are very dissimilar in work and character. Peter as an Apostle was sent to preach; first by his Lord, then by his fellow Apostles. No evidence of primacy here, but a fellow-labourer in the gospel of a common Saviour. Peter never accepted the obeisance of any man (Acts 10:25-26). Contrariwise, the Pope always accepts it. It is evident that Peter returned to Jerusalem after his preaching journeys, which appear to have been contiguous to that city (see Acts 6:2).

When Paul and Barnabas came up to Jerusalem to see the Apostles (A.D. 52), about the question of circumcision Peter was still there (see Acts 15:7). We see from this that Peter was not at Rome when the council sat in Jerusalem (A.D. 52).

In Gal. 1:18, we read that Paul went to Jerusalem to see Peter three years after his conversion (A.D. 38) and found him there. Fourteen years after (Gal. 2:1), he goes again to Jerusalem, and there meets Peter. If, according to Pope Pius IX, and the Roman Church, Peter was then in Rome, why did not Paul seek him there? According to their statement, Peter would have been there six to eight years. This, we see, the Scriptures plainly contradict.

Further, if Peter spent 25 years in Rome as Bishop of Rome and visible head of the Church, it is strange that he makes no allusion to the matter in either of his two epistles. Paul wrote an epistle to the Church in Rome wherein he sends greetings to many Roman friends; but he does not mention the "Pontiff." Also Paul was resident in Rome for a considerable time; from there he sent epistles to churches:—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians; also to Timothy and Philemon. In each letter he makes mention of many disciples; but not once does he mention Peter as being in Rome. The other writers in the New Testament, Peter's inspired companions—Luke, James, Jude and John, are silent regarding "Pope Peter."

The last named writer, John, lived to a great age and outlived Peter by many years, yet he never mentions anything about this subject.

The Apostle Peter, in writing his second epistle, was anxious that we should "always be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter 3:2). He says that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

Traditional fables have no place in the conversation of true Christians. The sure word of prophecy and testimony of the Apostles gives certain knowledge of the things that pertain to God and Jesus Christ and holy living. Let us then be exhorted by Peter to "take heed thereto" and we shall do well.

There is no historic evidence that Peter ever was in Rome, nor the first Bishop of Rome. The Papal claims are invalid and worthless.

Geared

PARISH Magazine Quotation: "It has been decided to gear our Sunday Schools and Bible Classes to meet the changing pattern of present day living. Sunday mornings seem to be more convenient for most boys and girls, and many churches up and down the country are meeting the situation by making this change."

A grieved parishioner sent us a copy of this notice and we have received a number of letters from friends likewise deploring similar changes in their churches. Similarly, one of the most frequent questions which we are asked as we travel from meeting to meeting concerns the same question. What are our views on the changing of the time of Sunday School from afternoon to morning?

Readers will know that the Editor is not ashamed to give his opinion quite frankly on any matter concerning the Lord's Day whether all are likely to agree or not! So with this difficult matter. Difficult? Yes, it is difficult and we feel for ministers, Sunday School workers and Bible Class Leaders in this problem. They want to reach as many boys and girls as they can; it is obvious that Sunday afternoon is the popular time for the family car-outing, and Sunday morning is the time when perhaps the children can best be missed in the home whilst the Sunday dinner is cooking! And, after all, there is nothing in the Fourth Commandment stating that Sunday afternoon is the only time for Sunday School! Right then, what better course than to get geared to present-day living?

All this may seem good reasoning, but let us not forget that the Church is still looked upon as an example and let us therefore act circumspectly, not rushing into some change of gear without weighing carefully the consequences. Sunday School in the morning? There is nothing whatever wrong with that—it is a very good thing indeed and we wish there were more morning schools. Close down the afternoon school and substitute a morning one for it? We see everything wrong with that. By all means open a morning school to catch the children who will not be allowed to come in the afternoon—but keep the afternoon school too! The closing of the afternoon school implies that the church sanctions Sunday afternoon excursions and games if the morning is devoted to worship; it is a nice drug for otherwise guilty consciences, similar to pep pills.

Some church officials seem to have overlooked the fact that there are children who can only attend Sunday School in the afternoons. These may or may not be fewer in number than those who attend in the morning, but they should be catered for. One of our friends sends us a quaint little story of a small child who suddenly exclaimed: "Mummy, isn't it awful to see the doors of our Sunday School closed now? Does God have a sleep on Sunday afternoons?" Child-like, but what impression is likely to have been made upon his little mind? Surely a wrong and dangerous impression. The truth of the matter in some cases is that the teachers have a sleep on Sunday afternoons and, even worse, are on the beach or out in the car themselves. We know that to be a fact in some places.

Young people have been known to say, "We do not know what to do on Sunday afternoons now." What are some doing? An example was the disgraceful scene in May at the lovely home of the Marquess of Bath—Longleat, Wiltshire—when 7,500 teenagers rioted and screamed as a pop show was given on a Sunday afternoon. There were injuries and scenes which should have shamed his lordship whose only response seems to have been to promise more of such degrading performances. We need not be surprised at this and worse if the Church packs up on Sunday afternoon and encourages the idea of do-what-you-like.

American Geared

We are often told that this idea of switching over church activities to Sunday mornings is following the American pattern ("and a very high percentage attend church in the States"—so state our wishful informants). It is good here to quote from the magazine of our friend The Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.A., "Christians,

who for many years have been used to the observance of the Lord's Day as a sacred day, are asking the question: 'What is happening on Sunday?' They see stores opening for business as usual on Sunday, their friends doing more or less what they please on the Lord's Day, and even churches, in some areas, using the Day for activities not in keeping with the Christian Sabbath. It was reported in one denominational paper that a group of young married couples went to church in their work clothes—dungarees and cover-alls. Following the service they were served lunch at the church and after lunch they painted one of the rooms in the church building. Other churches, though few in number, have picnics and other activities after the Sunday morning service. Before we appear unduly pessimistic, however, it would be well to suggest that the fate of the Lord's Day is no different from the fate of practically all of our traditional American ideas." (We could substitute the word "British" here). "The Church itself is suffering. Morning services are well attended but other activities of the Church are practically ignored by its membership. Most churches have given up the struggle to maintain the Sunday evening congregation. Large men's brotherhoods and large young people's activities have become things of the past."

The Clock

"Clock-watchers" is the term of justifiable disparagement of a certain type of so-called "worker." It might also be applied with equal disgrace to a certain type of "worshipper." We borrow again from "The Lord's Day Leader" of U.S.A. "It is well established by this time that the vast majority of people going to church attend the morning worship service. This is a service that has been tailored to one hour in length. In fact, it is more important in some churches to have the service completed in an hour than it is to have the presence of the Spirit. Not many worshippers take their Bibles to church on Sunday morning but many of them take their watches along." (We go better in some English churches—we have a huge dial of a clock staring the preacher in the face—we sometimes wonder the deacons don't instal a cuckoo, timed to announce the end of the sermon as decreed by the 'oversight')! "They seem more interested in their timepieces than they are in the Word of God. To many of them it is more important to meet their friends outside the church at noon than it is to meet the Lord inside during the church service. While we are not arguing for longer church services or longer sermons we do feel that those who attend church for worship should not attend it by the clock, but by the Spirit of Christ. It is extremely difficult for the minister to touch the heart of a person with the warmth of the Gospel message when his mind is busy counting off the seconds." That is the sort of thing they have come to in the States, and that is what we are coming to here with our concentration upon Sunday morning and slick services and sermons.

"JOY & LIGHT," July, 1964.

THE STAMP

A MESSAGE from God is always meant to be passed on. His word to me must always be my word for Him to others. Of what use is it spending time alone with God, hearing Him speak, if we are not prepared to pass on His message to our fellowmen who have had no such blessed experience.

For good ye are, and bad, and like the
coins,
Some true, some light, but everyone
of you
Stamped with the image of the King.

We should remember the wrongs done
us—only, that we may forgive them.

PRAYER is the giving out of love, in communion with the love of God, towards those for whom we pray. But if there is no love in us for those for whom we are saying prayers, there will be no true prayer. Yet, where there is very little love, prayer can increase it, and by expressing in our prayer the very little love, we shall come to feel more love.

To have too much forethought is the
part of a wretch; to have too little is
the part of a fool.

A fool can no more see his own folly
than he can see his ears

Do not talk about disgrace from a
thing being known, when the disgrace is
that the thing should exist.

What Nebuchadnezzar Said

In a letter, Bro. Breakell expressed his concern for "our young people," as to what they are being taught, a concern which is right and proper. It is one we all should have and I believe we all should credit each other with possessing. Concern for the truth is a reason for being of this magazine, and it is concern which makes necessary a reply to what our brother wrote in its latest issue.

On Daniel 3:25 he wrote these words: "I believe what this scripture says: that God revealed His power in allowing His Son to appear with these brave and faithful boys, and even allowed Nebuchadnezzar to see Him, as a witness to truth."

Our reply to that is abrupt and direct. It is, that that scripture teaches nothing of the kind. God, not then having a Son—as the O.T. negatively teaches and the N.T. positively affirms—God could not have allowed His Son to appear, as He is said to have done, for the Son was non-existent.

While this reply was in the making, a well-known brother wrote to us about some printing he proposed to have done, and in his letter—by one of those strange coincidences which, I suppose, all of us experience from time to time—he quoted words which I have borrowed because of their apposition to this dispute. They are taken from "Christian Ministry" by J. B. Rotherham, who wrote that "an enlarged view of 'ministers' is needed." He named scribes, copyists, critics, translators, editors and printers, and then says: "but for the conscientious painstaking, monotonous, persevering, and largely unremunerated labours of 'scribes,' our Bible would have been full of transcriptional errors, instead of being, as it is, the best preserved, and well-nigh the most faithfully translated book in the world . . . Let us not be so thoughtless and ungrateful as to forget the copyists, the custodians, the discoverers, the collators, the editors, the translators, the printers and printers' correctors who have toiled in this ministry—a mighty host."

Our brother either forgets the heritage this "mighty host" won for us, or he ignores it. He brushes on one side the R.V. (published 80 years ago) and Rotherham's version (60 years ago) as too modern for his taste, and goes back to—and is concerned that the young people should be taught—an obviously mistaken rendering 350 years old.

Expecting that Bro. Breakell's statement would take this course, an enquiry was sent to the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Pointing out the differences there were between the A.V. and R.V., also Rotherham's, and mentioning that the one word for God in the scriptures stood for both singular and plural, also that no further explanation could be given as to the purpose of the enquiry, because it was desired not to prejudice any answer that might be given. This question was put: "What were the words actually used by Nebuchadnezzar as recorded in Daniel 3:25?"

The answer to that request (abbreviated of unessential remarks) reads thus: "The word *elohin* in this verse occurs in exactly the same form in chapter 2:47, and is used seven times in the form *elaha* in verses 27-47). It is quite clear, when comparing the two forms in their contexts, that the form *elohin* is the plural noun. One might therefore translate 2:47: "Your God is the god of the gods," and 3:25: "the fourth is like a son of the gods."

The really interesting thing about that letter is the bringing together by its writer of the two remarks made by Nebuchadnezzar. Writing in the May issue of the second of the two passages, it was said that they were "just the sort of words that a man like Nebuchadnezzar would be expected to use." That letter confirms that remark. It means that not only are the R.V., Rotherham and the Bodleian in agreement as against the A.V., but Nebuchadnezzar himself joins in approving the more modern reading, by the similar way he expresses himself on two separate occasions.

Bro. Breakell is at fault in his understanding of inspiration, as can be seen in his handling of this story. He writes: "As the book of Daniel . . . states that a fourth person was seen in the furnace, who are we to question it?"

Nebuchadnezzar, who spoke the words referred to, also said, concerning the God whom Daniel worshipped, "Your God is the god of all the gods," thus placing the living God within the same category of divinity—though greatest—with all the gods of the heathen. Daniel truly records that saying, but he—though a prophet—did not thereby make it true, for the true God cannot be so described, and we may—and do—rightly call that description in question. So we can—and rightly, I believe—call in question whether there was indeed a fourth person in the furnace, though Daniel, a prophet of God describes Nebuchadnezzar as having said there were. The words are not in dispute as having been said, but the distinctive way in which they are recorded does indeed create doubt: "I see four men. . . ." There is not the slightest evidence of any other person than the king having seen that fourth man. The question we asked when writing about this at the first still stands, though admittedly it is a question to which there can be no answer. Scripture records were written for our learning. We may sometimes learn from them what is right by reading what is there seen to be wrong.

Learned men are now telling us that the word God is meaningless. So it is. We learn about God from His attributes: what is attributed to Him. God—if there is a God—must have life, eternal life—without beginning or ending. Such a God must think, and thought implies words. Thus we have God's Word—who, personified, is the second Person of the Trinity. God must be Spirit, for only a spiritual being could contain such a universe as this is known to be. Thus there is the Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity. Three Persons in one Trinity. That being so, there can be no place in that relationship—not then—for the Son. As it was at the beginning so it remained until Christ was born. John confirms that in explicit terms. Note that the Word is named first; even before God. (N.E.V.) "When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was . . . So the **Word became flesh**, and we saw his glory, such glory as befits the Father's only Son."

W. BARKER.

CORRESPONDENCE

LONG-DRAWN-OUT ADDRESSES

The church at ——— has been perturbed and distressed for a long time with brethren speaking at too great length—35, 40 or 50 minutes. We at ——— are losing members and friends from our gospel meetings many times over. This is a deterrent to good meetings, and we hope that all our well-meaning speaking brethren will consider their congregations a little more. Many members come with a lively and devoted Christian spirit, even though they may be ill in body; others have their pressing duties or leave their sick at home. Some have buses to catch; while yet others have unbelieving husbands, wives or other members of the family to contend with. It is hard on our old members especially, and takes

the interest and pleasure out of what could prove an enjoyable and profitable message. If brethren would condense or make two addresses of the matter they wish to put over a good twenty-five minutes address might be enjoyed better than a long-drawn-out address not enjoyed.

I do hope that our well-meaning speaking brethren will accept this in good faith and act upon it. Our desire is to be constructive and not for criticism. Again, I say, brethren, give us good, fitting, short addresses and hearers will come again.

Let us have well-chosen, popular, gospel hymns that all can join in heartily singing.

[Editor: (name and address given). The writer wishes to remain anonymous, not that he is afraid of what he says, but to save personal embarrassment to speaking brethren.]

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST, 1964

2—Proverbs 20	1 Cor. 1:26 to 2:16
9—Malachi 3:13 to 4:6	1 Cor 3
16—Psalm 10	1 Cor. 4
23—Psalm 1	1 Cor. 5
30—Genesis 2	1 Cor. 6

"OUR GUIDE TODAY"

This first letter to the Corinthian church was written from Ephesus before the riot took place there (16:8 & 9). Paul was very busy and expected to be busier still in spite of the "many adversaries"—or perhaps because of them. We should read Acts 19 through, and the first three verses of 20 to get Paul's programme in mind, connected with the collection (16:1 ff and 2 Cor. 8 & 9; Acts 24:17). The date would be probably 57 A.D., nearly 30 years after the resurrection (15:6).

It is said of certain teachings in this letter that they apply only to the Corinthians. One professing Christian woman, holding an official position in teaching work at the time, actually said "What does it matter to me what Paul wrote to the Corinthian sisters in 57 A.D.?" However honest this might be, it shows a disrespect for divine inspiration, denying or defying it. We know of course that primarily the letter was for that local assembly, and relates to current happenings; but how often the divine instructions have come to us in that way, and the principles on which the local problems are settled are of universal application. Does not Paul say of himself and the other apostles, "But we have the mind of Christ?" (2:16). This is either true or blasphemous.

The introduction to the letter makes its application universal: "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:2). This could not apply to the introduction only. In any case there can be no doubt about the bulk of the teaching. Objections and doubts are introduced when the commands run counter to individual tastes, difficulty in rendering obedience or popular habits. However the Christian cannot bow to fashion or worldly tastes. "Friendship with the world is enmity against God" (James 4:4).

First after the greeting comes the thanksgiving. This is a primary duty of Christians, and it is a most obvious and reasonable one. It should be springing up like an ever-flowing stream in their hearts. The reason stated in this case—and it is so like the writer's habitual attitude—is not something received by the writer but something received by the readers. The spirit of Christ so works in the hearts of His followers that instead of seeking, grasping and holding tight to something they have, the greatest desire becomes the blessing of others. The grace of God through Christ brings this supreme enlightenment of unselfishness into every life it really enters. Thus Paul rejoices and offers thanks to the Giver for the enrichment of the Corinthian lives. Two main points in mind are 1: utterance or speech; 2: knowledge. In what way does the grace of God bring enrichment of speech?

We cannot be purified in heart, by the holy influence of the gospel ("the testimony of Christ"—1:6), without our speech being affected. We observe for instance that in dealing with the question of murder (Matt. 5:21 & 22) the Saviour deals with anger and speech. Abusive speech brings danger of judgment. He also forbids swearing and expletives (Matt. 5:33-37). How did Paul's converts speak before they knew the grace of Christ? They had Paul's example and the behaviour of his helpers, and "came behind in no gift," having inspired prophets among them. So their characters were undergoing progressive change towards higher, nobler and better behaviour. The topics of their conversation would be on a higher plane—"whatsoever things are lovely . . ." and the way they spoke of them would accord with Christian love and courtesy. They would speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." They would learn to "let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Cor. 4:6). Thanksgiving would replace "jesting" (Eph. 5:4), and thoughtful, earnest speech would teach their neighbours the truths of the gospel. Noble thoughts, kind words out of purified hearts—this is real wealth. "So let your lives shine."

How were the Corinthians enriched in knowledge? To ask this question is to answer it, for the heathen would lay in

the darkness of ignorance and superstition; and the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, had dawned upon them (2 Cor. 4:4). The preaching of the Cross had brought new light into their lives. But knowledge of Christ is what enriches the mind. The apostle's testimony and the miraculous powers he used and passed on were designed to increase the knowledge of God and every good thing. Just so with us: continuous study of the word of God increases our mental capacity in every way, and enables us to live more fully. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). But do not let us make the mistake of living for this life only. If we do that we are of all men most to be pitied. The Corinthians were "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:7). The grace of God prepares us for the life to come, while it also immeasurably enriches the present life.

R. B. SCOTT.

You Can Do Personal Work

May your conscience never let you rest until you have done your best to bring your friends and neighbours to the light of Christ.

The Christian is one who cares. He cares for his fellow man. He is concerned so much that he prays for him, loves him and seeks to share Christ with him. He realises that Christianity is not primarily institutional, but personal and individual.

When the early Church in Jerusalem was scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word. First century Christianity was characterised by individual zeal. The early believers were so excited by the good news of God's salvation in Christ, they could not be silenced even by persecution.

Yet today there are tens of thousands of members of the Church who never won a single person to Christ. They go week after week, month after month, year after year, in stolid indifference to the dying men and women around them who are out of Christ. It has been said that the gates of heaven open not to one alone. We must bring others with us. We are won to win. We are saved to save. We are caught by the gospel, to catch men alive for Christ.—Selected.

Cameroon Evangelistic Fund

July, 1964.

SINCE my last report on the above fund, I have had a letter from Brother Elangue, in which he intimates that he and the brethren with him feel that it would be very advantageous in the circumstances now to publish a regular Christian paper which they intend to call "As the Oracles of God." They feel that this monthly publication would be more profitable in the preaching of the gospel than, say, one lone evangelist in the field, especially as looked at from the long term point of view.

A further advantage in having their own paper would be that the subject matter could be presented in the manner best suited to the local people and particular problems, peculiar to the native people, could be dealt with by native preachers. It is the intention of the brethren that this magazine will consist of sixteen pages, will preach the gospel, exhort the brethren, provide news of coming events, etc, and, like the British "Scripture Standard," will be a means of strengthening the brethren already there, and of co-ordinating their efforts.

The maiden copy of this publication has been printed for the month of June and Brother Elangue has sent me a few copies—one of which I have sent to the editor of the "S.S." Ultimately the brethren want to have their own printing press and produce their own magazine and gospel literature. They also want the press to be self-supporting by printing other matter when the press is available. They therefore wish, in place of the fund to support a preacher, to initiate a fund for the provision of a modest printing machine—say around £300. Gifts and donations towards this printing press should, as before, be sent to me at the address below. Interested parties may write to me for copies of the magazine "As the Oracles of God" or order them directly from Brother Elangue.

Rates: Nigeria 5/- for one year; Other Countries 6/- for one year. All Postal Orders made payable to, the Editor, "As the Oracles of God," P.O. Box 35, Abak, E. Nigeria.

Why not help our Nigerian brethren, by sending a subscription now? A local

printer is doing the work for them until they have a machine of their own.—James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

[We have read the first issue of "As the Oracles of God," referred to by Bro. Gardiner. It is well printed, clearly written, and simple to understand. It is full of scripture and presents the teaching of the Bible concerning the gospel and the church in a way particularly suited to the needs of the unsaved to whom the paper is addressed. We support Bro. Gardiner's appeal to help its circulation by financial support.—ED.]

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hereford 72 Whitehorse Street.—Lord's Day: Breaking of Bread 3.30. Gospel 6.30. We are happy to report that Francesca Sharples, the youngest daughter of David and Glory Sharples, has obeyed the gospel call by being baptised into Christ. We pray that she may be ever faithful.

We would like to take this opportunity of reminding brethren and sisters that we should be very pleased to welcome them to the table of the Lord, to tea, and to the gospel meeting following, if their holiday plans bring them to this district.

Sis. A. Sprake.

Ilkeston.—The 84th anniversary services were held on Saturday and Lord's Day, June 6th and 7th. On Saturday about seventy from churches near and far sat down to tea. The evening meeting at 6 p.m. was presided over by Bro. Wm. Britton. There was a fine gathering of members and friends to hear the gospel message preached by Bro. A. E. Winstanley.

On Lord's Day, June 7th, 52 members gathered for breaking of bread. Bro. Winstanley exhorted the church to faith and good works. In the afternoon we held a special children's service. This was well attended by parents and friends to hear the children sing and recite.

At the evening service about ninety gathered in the meeting-house to hear the gospel preached by Bro. Winstanley. Several items of song and recitation were given by the children at this service. The offerings at afternoon and evening ser-

VICES was given to "Oxfam Famine Relief" and realised the sum of fourteen pounds two shillings.

The children were trained for singing by Sis. Gwen Smith and Sis. Marjorie Brown. Sis. Ethel Wells trained the children for recitations. We thank God for another milestone passed and for the spiritual uplift we received.

F.G.

OBITUARY

Albert Street, Wigan.—The church records with sadness the passing after a short illness of Sister Mary Alice Gibson, aged 74, on Monday, June 22nd, 1964. Our sister had been a member for many years, both with the church at Rodney Street and Newtown. She lost her husband, who also was a member, early in life, and her only son in the Second World War, but remained a faithful and consistent follower of Jesus until the eventide of life, the greater part of which was spent in hostels and hospitals. In these places she set a good example by patient and persevering trust in the Lord. We commend all the relatives into the care of our heavenly Father. Our sister was interred on Thursday, June 25th, preceded by a service in the chapel. W. Smith.

Birmingham.—The church at Summer Lane have lost another of their elder brethren: Brother W. G. Griffin, passed away on 9th July, 1964. For many years he was a very able deacon in the church and continued steadfastly to support the work of our Lord, although he has been unable through failing health to attend as was his wish. We commend our sister and the family to the love and mercy of God our Father, knowing that He alone is able to comfort such deep sorrow. P.J.

THE final determination of man's history does not lie in the Kremlin, or in the White House, or at 10 Downing Street. The final determination of history lies in the nail-pierced hands of the Lord Jesus; the Prince of the rulers of the earth, and who one day is going to take His great power and reign.—Leith Samuel.

COMING EVENTS

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

Dewsbury. — Anniversary Meeting, Saturday, October 10th, during Mission with Bro. A. E. Winstanley, October 4th-11th. Full particulars later.

SUMMER LANE, BIRMINGHAM

A very warm invitation to our ninety-ninth anniversary, Saturday, 29th August, 1964. Speakers: Brother Leonard Morgan (of Hindley) and Brother Jack Francis (of Moseley Road, Birmingham). Tea will be served from 3.30 p.m. and the meeting to commence at 5.30. Brother Morgan will be preacher on the Lord's Day, morning at 10.30, and gospel meeting at 6.30 p.m.

Come and share an inspiring time with us.

AUTUMN RALLY

The Autumn Rally will be held at 2 p.m. 12th September, 1964, in the Friends Meeting House, St. Peter's Square, Deansgate, Manchester. (Near the Central Library). At this rally the relationship between the new "machinery for evangelisation based on Dewsbury" and the "conference committee machinery" will be discussed under resolution of the Eastwood conference of 28th March, 1964.

Accommodation, etc. It will be necessary for brethren to arrange their own accommodation. There are numerous cafes where luncheons and teas may be had. The Deansgate municipal car park is at easy walking distance.

It is to be hoped and prayed that the difficulties, which, for twenty years, have handicapped effective co-operative effort among us in the gospel, may be overcome, and that happier fraternal relations should characterise all our activities, so that the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, for ourselves and the world, may have fulfilment. "I pray . . . for those who are to believe in me through their [the apostles'] word, that they [ourselves] 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 hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me that they may become maturely one, so that the world may acknowledge that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me." (John 17. 20-23).

Surely it is necessary to have a well informed, deeply interested, consecrated, co-operating membership to make progress. For the committee: A. Hood, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Wigan.

BIRTH

East Kirkby (Beulah Road).—To David and Marian Wilson, a son, Dean David, on 14th June, 1964.

The only strength that is found in smoking is a strong breath.

An egotist will always speak of himself, either in praise or in censure; but a modest man shuns making himself the subject of his conversation.

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EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to **R. McDONALD**, who is also Secretary of Conference Committee, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, York.

NYASALAND Mission: Contributions to **W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.**

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: **FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley, Leeds, Yorkshire.** Tel. Morley 255.