

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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For 1967

"The testimony of the Lord is sure" (Psalm 19: 7).

"Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22: 12-13).

"Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10: 35).

THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRIUMPH OF GOD

AS we look forward into 1967 things seem anything but promising and hopeful for the cause of God. Everything appears to be against Christ and His church, whether in the realms of science, politics, education, morals, business, or even religion. Materialism, worldliness, unbelief, doubt, indifference, selfishness—wherever we look the enemies of purity, holiness, truth and love seem to be ruthlessly cleaving their way. The things that Christians witness to seem to be less and less relevant amid the strident voices clamouring to silence the "still, small voice" of God in the Bible, in the preaching of the gospel, in the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and in the quiet testimony of God's people to the things that are "true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, gracious" (Phil. 4: 8).

Looking at things as they are we should despair, were it not for the fact that Jesus Christ continually prepared His disciples for this kind of situation. The world is dark and the outlook gloomy and threatening. But it was always thus for the people of God, and Christ never told His followers that things would be any easier. It is no new situation we face. In New Testament times it was so, when to be a Christian might cost a man his life. In the Dark Ages in Europe it seemed that the light of the gospel had been smothered, and spiritual darkness ruled. When the Reformation shed light and liberty over Europe it was like a resurrection from the darkness and corruption of the grave. And again when the religious world was rent by divisions and strange and false doctrines, the movement for the restoration of New Testament Christianity uncovered again the light and simplicity of the word of God for all to understand for themselves, without the constructions of men.

It is the same today. Look where we may events and movements and tendencies are heavy with threat and foreboding. We think it fitting and applicable to quote from what we wrote in the "S.S." at the opening of 1965, pertaining to the times of Habakkuk the prophet, and comparing them with our own experiences:

"Another great passage appears in Hab. 3: 17-18. As the prophet looked upon the world situation in his time he saw that everything was failing. Not only politically and nationally was this so, but life itself was threatened by the ever-recurring danger by failure of crops, famine. We must remember that then, as now, everything depended upon mankind being able to sustain himself in food. Nothing else was of any importance in comparison with the solution of that problem.

"How like our own times! The problem of feeding the rapidly growing world population today is one that overrides every other problem. This is literally a matter of life or death, for if there be insufficient food to sustain these growing populations nothing can follow but certain and miserable death. This vast problem is not being faced as it should be; rather the attitude is 'Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.' With all his materialism, the wisdom and skill of man are showing themselves as almost hopelessly unable to deal with the coming situation.

"What is the attitude of this man of God, Habakkuk? Read again those glorious verses in chapter 3:17-18. The prophet does not deny the reality of the threat: he is a realist. He does not close his eyes not deafen his ears to what is apparent all around him. Even though he cannot see any solution in man's ability to deal with things, he is not in despair. As he has uttered in his great statement—'the righteous shall live by his faith'—so he displays its great meaning in his own immovable, unswerving faith in the living God. In effect Habakkuk says that, although everything may seem to fail and disaster threatens, God will bring His purposes to pass: 'He abides faithful.'

"If such a faith is seen under the old Covenant, how much more under the new. And, indeed, that great man of God, Paul, has shown the meaning of Habakkuk's faith and message for the people of God in these days. The passage quoted at the head of this article bears exactly the same meaning as Habakkuk's—although everything pertaining to this life fail, everything that is material and physical be found wanting, yet it is not to these things we look for what is real and abiding and worthwhile. It is to the unseen, the spiritual, the faithfulness of God we are to look and to know that because things are in His hands, He will bring His will to pass. And we know that His will is perfect blessing and joy for His children."

Watch the sea when the tide is coming in. Each wave is washed up on the sand or beats against the rock, only to exhaust itself and be repulsed. But gradually as you look you see that bit by bit each wave is sweeping higher and covering a little more ground. Until at the full tide the sands and the rocks are covered. "The wave may be defeated, but the tide is sure to win." God's word cannot be broken, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. His cause cannot be defeated. Engaged in that cause we are certain to triumph, for "If God is for us, who can stand against us?"

EDITOR

"THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE"

(John 17:21)

IT is not the purpose of this article to discuss who is right or who is wrong in those matters which have caused division within the Restoration Movement. Our purpose is to try to suggest a way whereby we can be more like the church for which Christ suffered and died — the one so plainly described in Ephesians 5:27: "A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Christ tells us how to enter into this church (or kingdom) in John 3:3-7: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Unity through purity

A major point of emphasis among the people of the Restoration Movement (churches of Christ) is *unity* of all believers of Christ. And truly, a plea for Christian Unity is much needed in our present religious world, which is so shamefully divided. Jesus himself prayed that all His followers might be one (John 17:20, 21). Also, we have learned by experience that division is a great hindrance to the cause of Christ. The Restoration Movement has been a great and mighty effort for the cause of Scriptural unity and for a restoration of simple New Testament Christianity free from all the humanly devised ecclesiastical systems. These efforts should by all means continue. However, there is another point in that prayer of Christ shortly before He was taken to be crucified, that has not been given nearly enough emphasis: namely, He also prayed that His followers be "sanctifier in truth" (to live holy) and "to be kept from the evils of the world." This part of His prayer is equally as important as the portion concerning unity.

Let us notice some other New Testament passages related to the subject of Christian purity, moral sanctity and holiness. Romans 12:1-2 teaches that a Christian must present his body "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." 1 Corinthians 3:17 and 6:19 tell us that the body is the temple of God (the place wherein God's Spirit dwells), and we are commanded not to defile that temple. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 we hear Paul warning the Lord's people to "abstain from all appearance of evil." Christ tells us in Matthew 5:48 to "be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Again Christ says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). That word is nothing other than the will of Christ as laid down for us in the New Testament.

New Testament Holiness

Here are some passages of Scripture which every Christian should seriously and prayerfully consider: Romans 6:4-5—"We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." In verse 12 Paul continues, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." In 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18 we are commanded to "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be unto you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord." The apostle Peter lovingly warns, "Dearly beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11). In speaking to the elders at Ephesus Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the church over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Men possessed of the tobacco habit cannot possibly set a holy example for others to follow. Positions of leadership in the Lord's church deserve the purest and holiest examples of life. Men who are addicted to the tobacco habit are themselves being misled by those members of the church who elect them to positions of leadership in the congregation. Such men are saying to the world by their example that the Restoration Movement condones the use of such unholy, degrading, and injurious practices. The kind of example which a smoking addict sets is most inconsistent with the type of influence that a leader of God's people should exert on the world in general and on youth in particular. If elders, deacons, preachers, and other leaders in the church do not feel it important to set an example of purity in Christian living, then how can we ever hope to restore the Lord's beautiful church as described in Ephesians 5:27—"A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"?

It seems that some leaders of the Restoration Movement have woven into their plea for "Christian Unity" a personal liberty clause without the realisation that when Christ's word speaks their personal liberty ceases. If you are engaged in the Restoration Movement, and if your life presents a stumbling-block to some weak member or to a child, then you should rid yourself of all offensive habits (such as smoking) and read what Jesus says to you in Matthew 18:6. Although you may have been baptised for the remission of sins as we are commanded in Acts 2:38, and you may be following the example of the New Testament church recorded in Acts 20:7 as they came together upon the first day of the week around the Lord's table in memory of our Lord's suffering and death upon the cross; yet, if you have not repented of your sins and turned away from them in an effort to follow the example of Christ in your daily life, you may be one who falls under the condemnation of 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 — "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Furthermore, you may obey the command to "lay by in store upon the first day of the week as God has prospered you," yet if you have not repented with an abhorrence of sin and a turning away from it, you life is a reproach to the righteous cause of Christ. Worldly lusts will destroy one's spiritual relationship with Christ. "If any man love the world, the love of God is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15,16). In principle, that Scripture condemns smoking, card-playing, drinking, dancing, and all other worldly lusts and practices.

Purity in dress

Another glaring violation of the principles of Christian purity is the appearance of mothers and daughters on the streets as nearly nude as the law will allow. Let us notice one passage which is especially plain on this matter—1 Timothy 2:8-10:

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel . . ."

The first part of this passage doesn't sound as though Paul included cigarette-poisoned stained hands as "holy hands." His introduction treats Christian purity as a matter of spiritual importance, and we do well not to trifle with it or take it lightly. Then his statement on the proper kind of adornment — "modest apparel" — forbids women doing those things which attract undesirable attention. The very appearance of Christian women should suggest that they are "women professing godliness with good works." In Deuteronomy 22:5 we find that it is sinful for women to wear clothing "which pertaineth unto a man, for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord." Overalls, slacks, slim jims, shorts and such like would fall under this condemnation. All these things — prayer, holy hands, meekness, faith, adornment in modest apparel — are every one important. If one can be dispensed with, then so can all the others.

Paul wrote these things before our present-day debauch of immodesty in dress of which the modern bathing suit would have scandalised the theatre business, and knee-length dresses at religious meetings would have been shocking, with their utter disrespect for the command to "adorn in modest apparel, as women professing godliness." There is little reason to doubt but that the lack of respect by women for 1 Timothy 2:8-10 may have produced more immorality to more people than any of the other vicious customs of today because when people are robbed of their modesty, they do not have much left upon which to create spiritual adornment, and such women show no more respect for 1 Timothy 2:8-10 than does a church yard full of cigarette fiends show for 1 Corinthians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 1 Peter 2:11, and all the other Scriptures on holy living. God's word tells us to "study to show ourselves approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15). We can now choose to obey it or reject it, but at the last day in judgment we will have no choice and we will be judged by God's word, not by what we think or what someone else may think. Jesus tells us that His word shall judge us all in the last day (John 12:48).

In speaking through His servant Ezekiel, God sets forth a divine principle which will hold good for us today—"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:17-21). Paul gives a similar warning in 2 Thes-salonians 1:7-9. (Read).

"Judgment begins in the House of God"

Dare we think that God will be any better pleased with the Restoration Movement as it condones sin in the leading place of too many of its churches than He was when He said these things to Ezekiel? In this Movement we have emphasised a system of first principles by which we will stand condemned unless we live and teach the many other equally important truths of God's word. In other words, there is a whole lot which must follow faith, repentance, confession, and baptism in the gospel system of truth as revealed in the New Testament. These first principles are only the beginning point.

For many years we have boasted, "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent," but can that statement be proven by the word of God? Christ suffered and died to bring Christian purity and Christian unity into this world with its consequent love, joy and peace. Instead of man fulfilling Christ's plans, see-what we have in our world—hundreds of religious denominations (or sects), hate, greed, injustice, war, and all manner of sin. Even yet, if every professed follower of Christ will turn and live as God's word teaches, Christ's prayer in John 17 can be answered and His Church of Ephesians 5:27 can be restored. We know that the fault does not lie in God's plans but in many's failure to comply with His holy and divine standard of truth and right. Let us each try harder to live as God has commanded so that His prayer may be answered and the world may be won for Christ.

—Maria Montford Ritter, 615 Elm Avenue, Yukon, Oklahoma.

Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

(Matt. 28:20.)

—Most of us know the difficulty of facing bravely an entirely new situation which carries us into unknown paths. If, at such a moment, someone whom we love comes to us and says, "Have no fear, for I will go with thee every step of the way," at once the weight of anxiety is lifted. Even so, Christ's presence will go with us on our untried life's journey.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: ITS ORGANISATION

WHILE the word "organisation" is not in the Bible, there are passages which set forth the idea expressed by that word. Webster's Dictionary defines the word as:

"1. The act of organising; the act or process of arranging and getting into proper working order; as, the organisation of an expedition. 2. The state of being organised; that which is organised; an organised body. 3. Organic structure; the disposition or arrangement of the organs for the performance of vital functions. 4. The arrangement of the parts of an aggregate or body for work or action; systematic preparation for action."

I maintain that the New Testament authorises the arrangement of the parts of the body for work or action. Paul left Titus in Crete to "set in order the things that are wanting" (Titus 1:5). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). The word "order" of this passage denotes suitable arrangement or order. God has given the church work to do. It is to preach the gospel to the lost, edify the saved and relieve its needy (Eph. 4:12). Not only did God ordain that this work be done, but he has also ordained the arrangement of the parts of the body for its accomplishment.

The church revealed in the New Testament is neither a democracy nor a republic, but a monarchy. The governmental feature of the church is indicated in the figure of a kingdom, ruled by a king and regulated by the law of that king.

Unscriptural Church Organisations

The term "church" is used in the New Testament to denote (1) all the saved of earth (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25); (2) the saved in a certain locality (1 Cor. 1:2); hence a local arrangement or organisation; and (3) several congregations in a given area such as "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2). A study of the New Testament reveals that there is no functional unit appointed by God through which the universal church operates. Nor is there any arrangement of the parts of several congregations in an area through which kingdom business may be done. The New Testament is clear in pointing out that the arrangement of parts within the church for the discharge of divine work is on the local level. Divine wisdom made no other organisation in this field. For this reason organisations larger or smaller than the local church are without authority.

1. Denominational organisations. Roman Catholicism has a hierarchy consisting of a pope, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and priests. This structure is designed for the universal church, hence is without divine approval. The organisation of the Greek Catholic Church is under patriarchs of four cities. This is an arrangement larger than one local assembly. The Church of England is governed by three orders of ecclesiastics: bishops, priests and deacons. The Methodist Church has a General Conference which in this country meets every year, and issues legislation which concerns every congregation. Other churches have "general assemblies," "synods," "conventions" and other forms of government larger than the function of a local assembly of members. Missionary societies formed for the purpose of creating central agencies through which many churches function in a given work are wrong for the same reason that other organisations larger than the local church are wrong.

2. Unscriptural congregational organisations. Any congregation having qualified men for the office of elders and deacons but which refuses to appoint these men, is unscriptural. A congregation with unqualified elders or deacons serving is an unscriptural organisation. Congregations which operate through committee systems, under "leaders," or upon the principle of majority vote are also unscripturally organised. This is not the arrangement of the parts which God ordained. The creation of ladies' aid societies, guilds, youth leagues, and Bible classes organised with elected officers and a treasury to spend on various projects constitutes organisations smaller than the local church and they are just as unscriptural as those larger than the local church.

The Divine Arrangement of the Parts

Local churches were established throughout the Roman Empire in New Testament times. These bodies were self-sufficient and self-governing under the authority of Christ. The spoken and written word of the apostles constituted a pattern of action for these local churches. Paul gave "order unto the churches of Galatia" and said the church in Corinth was to obey the same order (1 Cor. 16: 1-3). "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9). What the apostles taught was

the will of God bound in heaven, and there was no higher appeal than that (Mt. 16:19). "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). Divine wisdom made provision for everything the church needed. This verse comprehends the foundation work, the extension, and the edifying of the church.

Under inspired instruction two classes of functionaries were appointed in each congregation. These were elders and deacons. Consider these passages:

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church . . ." (Acts 14:23).

"And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders . . ." (Acts 15:4).

"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17).

". . . to all saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Tit. 1:5).

(1) Elders are also called shepherds, bishops, pastors and overseers. An elder is an older, experienced and matured brother. He must be a man of good report both in and out of the church, one who has shown his ability to guide by properly directing his own family. He is not to be a new convert, and is to have to a high and recognisable degree the traits which belong to Christians. He must be able to teach and to defend the truth against false teachers (1 Tim. 3: 1-7; Titus 1:5-11). The eldership is a work (1 Tim. 3:1). Elders are charged to "feed the flock of God" (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). They have rule over the flock (Heb. 13:17). Their rule is not an arbitrary lording over the flock (1 Pet. 5:3), but is rule carried out under the authority of Christ in directing the flock in the work God intends the flock to do. When brethren look out among them for qualified men who are then ordained (appointed, set apart) to the work, they are made elders by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). This is the only way they are made.

(2) Deacons are special servants of the church. They must be men of special qualities, though these are not as stringent for them as for the elders (1 Tim. 3:8-13). The implication of the qualifications is that the deacons may be younger men. For example, one of the qualifications for elders is that they have "believing children," which means children who are Christians. Of deacons it is only said that they must "rule their children and their houses well" (1 Tim. 3:12). The seven men chosen in Acts 6:1-6 were special functionaries for the church in Jerusalem. They were to administer the needs of the Grecian widows. This passage gives us the only insight we have as to the selection of men for special obligations in the church. They were to "look out seven men" full of the Spirit and of good report. The apostles did not choose them. The congregation did. Then the apostles appointed them to the business for which they were selected.

(3) Evangelists have specific work to do in the kingdom. God did not place them over congregations. Their work is to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2), put the brethren "in remembrance" of their duties (1 Tim. 4:6), study the word of God to know what to preach (1 Tim. 4:13-15) and to be an example of the believers" (1 Tim. 4:12, 16). They should teach publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20).

(4) Other members of the church have responsibilities also. All are required to assemble (Heb. 10:25) where we may worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Some may be effective teachers of the word. All Christians are to visit the sick, help the distressed, and know how to answer every man concerning our hope. Members are to be subject to the elders in everything that is right (Heb. 13:17). All are to work together in love for the building up of the body of Christ. We are to edify and admonish each other.

This is the simple, but God-given organisation of the church. It is too simple for those who "despise the day of small things." Any man who thinks he can provide a better arrangement for the parts than the Lord did needs to study what humility means.

Limitations in Church Organisation

Elders are instructed to "tend the flock of God among you" (1 Pet. 5:2). This is the only flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them bishops (Acts 20:28). Elders of one local flock cannot exercise oversight over another without violating the limitations placed upon their work. Elders of a flock oversee the worship arrangements, the discipline of members, and the work and the expenditure of the Lord's treasury.

"These churches, whenever formed, became separate and independent bodies, competent to appoint their own officers, and to administer their own government

without reference to subordination to any central authority or foreign power. No fact connected with the history of these primitive churches is more fully established or more generally conceded, so that the discussion of it need not be renewed at this place." (Ancient Christianity Exemplified, Lyman Coleman, page 95.)

"All the churches, in those primitive times were independent bodies; none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the apostles themselves frequently had the honour shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, it is as clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality. Nor does there appear in this first century any vestige of that which gave rise to ecclesiastical councils, and to metropolitans." (Ecclesiastical History, Mosheim, Vol. 1, page 72).

When God's order for the functional parts of the church is respected, then everything that may be done scripturally can be carried out. Any religious society which loses confidence in God's organisation and seeks to supplant it with another, or change the form of the one he gave, must of necessity forfeit any claim to being the New Testament church.

C. W. ADAMS.

THE 'SCRIPTURE STANDARD' IN OTHER LANDS

IT is gratifying to note the rising interest in and demand for the "S.S." in other other countries, both among those in sympathy with what we stand for and those who do not accept our views upon restoration of New Testament Christianity. Our hearts have been warmed and we have been encouraged by receiving letters from readers in various and far-distant countries expressing appreciation of the contents of the "S.S." Perhaps an article, or an item in the correspondence pages has driven these brethren to write Bro. Paul Jones or myself, expressing agreement or disagreement with what has been printed. We welcome both, for they are evidence that the "S.S." is at least circulated and read throughout the world.

Effort and time involved in reply to and sending appreciation of such letters is well worthwhile, for it results in a fellowship strengthened by the work of the "S.S." These correspondents vary in years from young Bible College students to octogenarians (one dear sister who writes regularly is aged 83, and has an article "That they may all be one" in this number of the "S.S.>"). Some of these correspondents send not only their subscriptions (and considerably more) but articles for publication, if accepted, in the paper.

Among these good friends and supporters are editors of or contributors to American magazines. Occasionally in these publications the "S.S." receives notice, and subscriptions are invited. This has resulted in quite a good number being added to our mailing list overseas, and we express our deep gratitude to those brethren who are thus drawing attention to the cause that the "S.S." endeavours to serve.

"As others see us"

Bro. James Orten from Nashville, Tennessee visited Britain in July, 1966. He called upon several churches and brethren in that visit. Some of the impressions he gained have been published in a little paper named "Restoration Thoughts." This is published monthly by Bro. J. E. Waters, of Midland, Texas. On occasions Bro Waters invited certain brethren to be responsible for a monthly issue as "guest editor." Bro Orten undertook this responsibility for the November, 1966 issue of "Restoration Thoughts," and he has used the opportunity to make it largely a number devoted to writing impressions of the churches in this country which he visited. The whole publication is most interesting, and we recommend brethren to obtain and spread it. We think we could obtain copies for distribution if you would care to send us one shilling for each copy required.

But what is relevant to this article is what Bro. Orten writes concerning the "S.S." Here it is:

The "Scripture Standard"

"The title above is the name of a monthly magazine issued for the churches in Britain. Its circulation, while perhaps not large, is world wide. On the front of each issue there appears a caption explaining the purpose for its issuance: "Pleading for a complete return to Christianity as it was in the beginning." Publication

was begun in 1934 with this purpose in mind. At that time many brethren protested against the modernism, worldliness and denominationalism of what was then known as the "Co-operation of Churches of Christ," as well as the teaching issuing from the theological college at Overdale, near Birmingham. But these brethren could not make their views known in the official publication of that co-operation, so the "S.S." was born. At about the same time a number of churches pulled out of the Co-operation, re-established congregational autonomy and taught a stricter interpretation of the Bible. The Christians in these churches are principally the readers and writers of the "Scripture Standard" today.

"This paper carries an open correspondence column in which topics of burning interest are often threshed out. A good example is the animated discussion of the cup question which has just concluded. Bro. Carlton Melling took over the editorship from Walter Crosthwaite, a late and beloved scholar and preacher. The printing is done by Bro. Walter Barker, who though he is bordering on 90, still takes a lively interest in the paper. Like most religious journals it has no source of income save subscriptions, and so the constant struggle for existence which is so familiar to religious papers here is well-known to its publishers. It has not, however, missed an issue since its beginning in 1934. Bro. Melling has told me the circulation has suffered since the "S.S." has taken a strong stand in opposition to individual cups. It seems a shame to allow this paper to struggle for existence when Christian homes here have no abundance of good reading material. Why not subscribe? The rate for American readers is \$1.80 per year—less than most of our papers need. Send your subscription to the treasurer: Paul Jones, "Harmony," Wade Close, Hill Rdware, Rugeley, Staffordshire, England. Or, if you had rather, put two dollars in an envelope and send them to me at 232 Willow Lane, Nashville, Tennessee."

—JAMES ORTEN.

This November "Restoration Thoughts" also contains articles on personalities Bro Orten met in this country; "Worship in spirit—a British example"; "The churches in Britain"; "Philosophy and the Christian religion", by J. L. Cutter; "Contemplation on God's word" by J. A. Gregory and "Conversion of the world."

We give below another impression of the "Scripture Standard."

From across the Atlantic comes a neat, well-written monthly journal called "The Scripture Standard," giving news and views from churches of Christ in Great Britain. British brethren have a spiritual depth and way of expressing themselves which is rarely equalled in American Christian journalism. After all, their language is pure English and ours is not.

If becoming acquainted with Church of Christ in Britain appeals to you, I shall gladly take your one dollar and 80 cents and forward it to our brother in the Lord, Paul Jones, "Harmony," Wade Close, Hill Rdware, Rugeley, Staffs., England, who is treasurer. Make checks payable to me and I shall send a single check to England. It is easier this way.

TED CLINE, Weatherford, Oklahoma, U.S.A.!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR JANUARY 1967

1—Genesis 35:9-26	Revelation 7
8—Exodus 9:22-35	Revelation 8
15—Joel 2:1-14	Revelation 9
22—Jeremiah 15:10-21	Revelation 10
29—Zechariah 4	Revelation 11

HEAVENLY GLORY FOR EARTHLY NIGHT

THE opening of the seals recorded in chapter six presents a gloomy picture apart from the first of the four horsemen. War, famine and pestilence precede the view of the "souls of those who had been slain" on account of their faithfulness to God. They are assured of the divine sympathy and justice but

their number is not complete: multitudes more are to suffer. Then follows the terrifying vision of earthly night and cataclysm, bringing the great ones of the earth "to their knees" with fright.

Through all this the servants of God are eternally safe. He knows each one personally. How this can be is beyond our finite thought yet assuredly true. Thus before the winds of destruction blow, a spiritual seal carrying God's own authority is stamped upon them. Those particularly marked in this way are either literally (which appears to me to be more likely) or spiritually Israelites taken from all the tribes in equal numbers as though all Israel share alike in the honour.

The Christians of the early days of the church consisted of a nucleus of Jewish believers who must have borne the initial persecution and hardship of faithful discipleship. Their commitment

to Christ added to the opprobrium of faith in the One True and Living God, (because they were Jews of course), the even fiercer enmity of their unbelieving brethren. The hardest thing for loving hearts to bear is the hatred of those they love most dearly and are closely associated with. That must have been the portion of so many at that time (read Romans 9:1-5 for this view). They surely needed most the divine protection lest the burden should prove too great. We are reminded of the blood upon the door-posts of Egypt, but the seal did not bring freedom from suffering and death. It must signify inward strengthening from trial.

From the sealing of servants of God on earth, the Seer is shown a view of heavenly glory. This is not confined to his own race but embraces the whole human race to whom the glorious gospel of eternal salvation was being proclaimed at the time of the revelation. An innumerable company is to be redeemed. Note the emphasis upon their universal origins—"nation, tribe, people and language." What a wider knowledge we now have of this than John! Even now some peoples are being discovered in a real sense. The Aucas of South America will share, are sharing, the joy, the triumph, the suffering, the tribulation involved in following the man of Nazareth, whose humiliation in this life resulted in the supreme exaltation of the next.

The vision we are now considering relates not only to that age of the church's history which is filled with the superhuman endurance of untold horrors inflicted by "the powers that be." A vain attempt was in progress to destroy the FAITH at its birth. Little wonder that Satan is pictured as the God of this world. He is indeed so now but his work must be in most places much more subtle. His work can be carried on, it is safe to say, just as successfully—if not more so—in a time of comparative ease and freedom. Sectarianism is a very serious perversion of true Christianity, so that men are able to say with truth, "It is all so confusing. What are we to believe? The Bible cannot be the Word of God because it has produced so many differing faiths." The force of the Saviour's prayer "that they may all be one" is brought home to us in this way, and we long for a unity which seems to evade us at every turn. We are frustrated, desiring humbly to bow to the requirements of the Word, and hardly able to come to a oneness of thought and practice by reason of all sorts of accumulated errors. Only a complete return to the original faith and practice can result in real unity, yet innovations continue and become impossible to remove.

However this is not new. John had Diotrephes to deal with, and Paul and Peter the Judaisers. Victory will come and the final scene will be this most wonderful reality "before the throne and before the Lamb" (7:9). Shall I, will you, be there? They have white robes, signifying purity, and pure by worldly standards we must all be to get there. But what is our purity in the sight of God and in comparison with our Saviour? It is His purity which avails for us, for the white robes must be washed in the blood of the Lamb: we accept the gift by grace. And the palm branches, signs of triumph or praise, to our credit? "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

The greatness of the trials through which the "multitude" have passed is the measure of the greatness of their heavenly portion. They were despised and rejected by men but their Shepherd will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. The picture fills us with longing, and sustains all the Lord's people in times of trial, and how very necessary and good was it for those to whom it was specifically written. If we are growing slack in our following of our Saviour, as human weakness and discouragement make us prone to do, may the view awake us to greater love issuing in greater activity.

R. B. SCOTT

WELL SAID

How easily one may justify self, when he stands with the majority.

How easily one may feel he could not prevent what happened, when he was too cowardly to try.

How easily the spiritually weak and spineless could stand hidden in the masses and cry with a loud voice, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

A doctrine is not false just because you never heard it before, or because it is contrary to what you have always understood, or because you are not willing to accept it.

Neither is it right because you can't disprove it, nor because a big-name preacher advocates it, nor because it is what the majority believe.

Some people who boast about being broadminded are really just too indifferent and ignorant to know just which side they should be on... that's nothing to boast about!

What chances can a man have to control his destiny when he cannot control himself?

GOOD SOLDIERS ?

Once upon a time a church was engaged in a campaign, a war, by a series of gospel meetings held each night to combat Satan and win souls for Christ. Naturally, in such a campaign all furloughs are cancelled and every soldier fit for battle is expected to be in the front lines, actively engaged in the fight, or backing up those fighting the actual battle. But some of the young soldiers who, when they obeyed the gospel, had dedicated their lives to fight Satan, went absent without leave.

Hearing about a "pop band" contest in a neighbouring city, they decided to visit it because it sounded pretty interesting. After all, weren't there other soldiers able to carry on the fight at the battle lines? Others had the same or similar ideas. Thus the supporting battalions were slain.

Satan was able to blunt the attack of the Christian forces. There were empty seats in the meetings. As a result those soldiers trying to carry the fight were discouraged by the absence of their fellow comrades. The preacher was heart-sore and could not deliver his best; the singing was not as good as expected; visitors wondered why some could absent themselves when a fierce battle was raging between right and wrong.

THE PRINCIPLE: Jesus said in Matt. 12-30, "He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." If YOU asked our young soldiers, if they were Christians they would say "YES." But on this particular night, "were they gathering for Jesus? NO." It's not enough to say one is neutral, and doing no harm to the cause of Christ. Jesus teaches in this scripture—unless I actively engage in His work; unless I am in my sector; if I run away and join other forces, I am in fact working against Him. When the battle call comes to me, and I run away to join other forces, can I be called a loyal soldier of Jesus Christ?

"Woodstock Bulletin."

towards the church; how they function; and the church's duties towards them. In these meetings the church was strengthened.

The gospel meetings were well attended, and we pray that the seed sown will in due time bring forth a fruitful harvest.

The Peterhead brethren were with us on the last Saturday of the mission, when Bro. Gardiner preached the gospel.

The presence and services of visiting brethren throughout the year is much appreciated, and we are encouraged to go forward into another year of service for the Master. John Geddes

Slamannan District.—A large number of brethren from the churches in the Slamannan District, together with brethren from Haddington and Kirkcaldy, met again for mutual benefit on Saturday, December 3rd, in the Town House, Haddington (the meeting-place of the church in Haddington), this time to discuss "Gambling—Why Not?"

The discussion was led by Bro. J. Moncrieff, Haddington, and Bro. M. Plain, Tranent, and the meeting was presided over by Bro. P. Strachan, Tranent.

The subject was well introduced by the speakers. Many questions were asked and opinions expressed, resulting in interesting discussion.

God willing, we hope to meet next in the Wallacestone Church Meeting-Place on Saturday, March 4th, 1967, to discuss "Prayer," led by Bro. J. Kneller, Tranent, and Bro. Tom Nisbet, Haddington; presided over by Bro. Wm. Hunter, Motherwell.

We thank the brethren at Haddington for inviting us and all who helped in the catering arrangements.

May God bless our efforts to walk more worthily. Hugh Davidson

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buchie.—The church had the services of Bro. Claude Parrish and Bro. Andrew Gardiner (from Edinburgh) during November. In our midweek and Saturday meetings they exhorted the church on the subject of the Elders: their duties

OBITUARY

Birmingham: Summer Lane.—On November 22nd, 1966, Sister Ada Gee passed to her rest. She reached her 89th birthday last June. Her passing marked the end of a saga of service. She was immersed at the age of 14 and while there is no-one at Summer Lane who can remember her early years there,

SLICES FROM THE BREAD OF LIFE

February

To start your day:—	For your evening's meditation:—
1—Exod. 15 & 16	Luke 20 & 21
2—Exod. 17 & 18	Luke 22 & 23
3—Exod. 19 & 20	Luke 24 & John 1
4—Exod. 21 & 22	John 2 & 3
5—Exod. 23 & 24	John 4 & 5
6—Exod. 25 & 26	John 6 & 7
7—Exod. 27 & 28	John 8 & 9
8—Exod. 29 & 30	John 10 & 11
9—Exod. 31 & 32	John 12 & 13
10—Exod. 33 & 34	John 14 & 15
11—Exod. 35 & 36	John 16 & 17
12—Exod. 37 & 38	John 18 & 19
13—Exod. 39 & 40	John 20 & 21
14—Levit. 1, 2, & 3	Acts 1 & 2
15—Levit. 4 & 5	Acts 3 & 4
16—Levit. 6 & 7	Acts 5 & 6
17—Levit. 8 & 9	Acts 7 & 8
18—Levit. 10, 11 & 12	Acts 9 & 10
19—Levit. 13 & 14	Acts 11 & 12
20—Levit. 15 & 16	Acts 13 & 14
21—Levit. 17 & 18	Acts 15 & 16
22—Levit. 19 & 20	Acts 17 & 18
23—Levit. 21 & 22	Acts 19 & 20
24—Levit. 23 & 24	Acts 21 & 22
25—Levit. 25 & 26	Acts 23 & 24
26—Levit. 27 & Numb. 1	Acts 25 & 26
27—Num. 2 & 3	Acts 27
28—Num. 4 & 5	Acts 28

many in and around the church recall the blessings received by her ministrations. None were too humble to be nursed by her and many illustrious persons were helped into this world by her, and many others left it comforted by her.

The influence of her teaching was great among the young, for she worked in the Bible School and the Band of Hope; but the young sisters and girls from the neighbourhood knew her best through the Christian Endeavour activities. We rejoice that our sister is now "Forever with the Lord." P.J.

Blackburn: Mill Hill.—The church has suffered a great loss in the passing of sister Louie Owens at the age of 70. She was greatly esteemed amongst us, being constant in her attendance at the Lord's Table and in all other meetings. To the end of her life, she was to be found worshipping her Saviour in His church, though she herself was suffering the ailments of the flesh. For her, "the strife is o'er, the battle done." We sorrow at her passing, but not as those without hope.

Bro. H. Davenport conducted the funeral services both in the meeting-house and at the graveside. R.R.

Kentish Town.—We record with sorrow the passing of our aged sister, Mrs. Sarah Adams. She came to London to make her home with her nephew and his friend Leo in December 1863. She

could not speak too highly of their care and kindness in the time of her declining physical strength. She evinced keen interest in the church and attended the Lord's Table with the same faithfulness she has maintained throughout her life of service to the Saviour.

She passed away in Willesden General Hospital after only a few days of extreme weakness at the ripe age of 88. The writer had the privilege of taking the service at the West London Crematorium on Monday, November 7th. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." R. B. Scott

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BOUND COPIES FOR 1964-66

Bound copies of "S.S." 1964-66, will be available at 18/- each. Order to R. Malden, 41 Comberton Park, Kidderminster, Worcs.

PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN

The existence of the "S.S." is always a precarious one, yet so far the paper has continued, without missing an issue, since 1934. This is something to be proud of in these times when it is almost impossible to keep newspapers and periodicals going, even with huge circulation and high income from advertising. The "S.S." has neither. But we have what is still more reliable—the goodwill, deep interest and practical help of many generous friends and supporters. It is this which has enabled the magazine to continue to be published. These supporters have contributed a little more than the fixed price, or have given outright, as individuals or as churches, to ensure that the "S.S." carries on its witness to New Testament Christianity.

In 1967 we are urgently appealing for your continued and even increased generosity. We feel that it would be unwise to increase again the cost of the magazine. That is why this appeal is all the more urgent, because only by in-

creased contributions and gifts can we continue to publish.

From January 1967 cost of printing is again rising. This is fair and right, for through the interest and help of the printer, Bro. Walter Barker, it has been possible on our low income to meet our printing bills, which would have been much higher if any other firm had printed the magazine. In short, the "S.S." is not a "paying proposition" to the printing firm of Walter Barker.

You, the readers, can help by paying promptly your subscription for your monthly copy. Agents in the churches can help by forwarding regularly to the treasurer the amount of subscriptions received. In some cases payment is outstanding from churches' agents for several months (in a few cases years!). If you are among these, do please send what you owe to the treasurer. It may make all the difference between the continuance or the death of the "Scripture Standard." Thank you all.—EDITOR.

BACK TO BANGOR!

I HAVE just been offered accommodation at George Hostel, Bangor, for July 22nd-August 5th, 1967, and have booked this period. Immediate booking was essential, as other parties were also interested in the same period. The following details are supplied by the college authorities:—

(1) Accommodation. Single bedrooms will be provided whenever possible. Some bedrooms have wash hand basins. (Note: facilities are much improved as a result of the huge re-building and modernisation programme).

(2) Meals. Breakfast 8.15 a.m. (9.00 a.m. Sundays); Mid-morning Coffee 10.30 a.m.; Lunch 1.00 p.m.; Tea 4.30 p.m.; Evening Meal 7.00 p.m.

(3) Terms. Charge for adults: 30/-

per head per day. Children of 14 years and under, half price. In view of the excellent catering etc., and also greatly improved facilities, these changes are extremely reasonable. All charges include gratuities.

We have made a provisional estimate of 50 in our party, and I am prepared to accept bookings immediately—especially as the college authorities would like a definite number as soon as possible. As in former years we shall make bookings on a "first come, first served basis." In addition to this notice in the "Standard," notices are being sent to all churches.

(4) Deposits. Bookings will only be accepted if deposit is sent. For adults, £2. For 14 years and under, £1.

A. E. Winstanley, 59 Frederick Street, Loughborough, Leics.

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