

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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On Reading

"OF making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh," said the Preacher (Eccl. 12:12). That was in the days when every book had to be slowly copied by hand. If the Preacher's words were true then, much more are they today when by the printing press hundreds of thousands of books, newspapers and periodicals are produced in a few hours.

The output of literature is staggering in its enormous numbers. Annually, in this country alone, between 20,000 and 25,000 new titles are issued by the publishers, not to speak of pamphlets, magazines, etc. Even the largest public libraries cannot hope to purchase more than a fraction of these additions to the stream of books, and the storage of even that selection is a constant problem. Did not the apostle John write of the teaching and works of Jesus Christ that, if they should all be recorded "the world itself could not contain the books that would be written"?

The Necessity of Reading

No-one can hope to read anything like the total of books constantly issuing from the presses. I remember reading in the "Manchester Guardian" at the time of the death of T. E. Lawrence—"Lawrence of Arabia"—that the claim was made for him that he had read every book in Cambridge University Library. This claim was examined and shown to be ridiculous: it was stated that even to read through the "Encyclopedia Britannica" would take a man almost a lifetime.

Yet we must and should read, both as citizens and even more as Christians, if we are to play any worthwhile part in everyday life. This means that we are to discriminate in our reading, to select and reject what we wish or do not wish to read. True, this is not very easily done: we are given little guidance in such a matter. More and more literature is being produced, facilities for education are constantly increasing. Yet it remains true that, as G. M. Trevelyan wrote in the preface of his "English Social History," 1942: "Education has produced a vast population able to read, but unable to distinguish what is worth reading." Most of us have had the experience of reading part way through a book or article, then mentally questioning whether what we are reading is doing us any good, teaching us anything, or is interesting us. If we decide that it is not, we are wise to discard it and turn to other reading. Thus, reading can be a discipline, a training and practice in being able to choose or reject, as we think fit. Sometimes this discipline is exercised in, so to speak, forcing ourselves to read what may be uninteresting, or what we may question, in order to acquaint ourselves with a point of view against which we were prejudiced or which we regarded as to be rejected.

Yes, we **MUST** read if we are to enjoy anything like a full life. It has been said that to a librarian no reading is outside his province, nothing is foreign to him. Everything may possibly be of some use to him at some time or other. In a measure the same can be said of a Christian: it is good that he acquire by reading (for he is not often able to get it in any other way) a knowledge and intelligent grasp of what is taking place in the world, and be able to form his judgments accordingly. The philosopher Francis Bacon, wrote in his book "Of Studies": "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." If as Christians we do not read we inevitably become stagnant, as a pool with neither inflow nor outlet, and narrow in outlook and understanding. Especially with teachers in the church and preachers of the gospel these limitations are soon obvious, and the messages we give are consequently lacking in power and conviction.

It has been said that "reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." We all know it is necessary to breathe and feed and keep active if we are to enjoy

a healthy life. We are concerned when our children are not showing an appetite for food, are languid and inactive. We know there is something wrong and very soon have them to the doctor. But we do not show much apparent concern about our spiritual health, nor much diligence to rear and train younger Christians in the spiritual life and service.

We rather justify our lack of reading and desire for knowledge by instancing Christ's teaching of the people of His day. He taught them in simple little stories, parables, we say, and we cannot go wrong in doing the same. Any teaching or preaching that causes us to think, to reason out things for ourselves, we suspect as being "above the heads of the congregation." We should remember that Jesus taught people who had never had any education as we understand it, literally could neither read nor write. He had to teach these people about divine, eternal, spiritual things—"things which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the mind of man." Hence he perfected the method of teaching by parables, by analogy, comparing things on earth with things in heaven. We have not the same circumstances to deal with today.

It is alarming to hear it urged that we need only such simple messages today as Jesus gave to the multitudes. It all depends on who is being taught or preached to, and the purposes aimed at. Sometimes the "spiritual milk" is needed, at others the "strong meat." Spiritual babes in Christ need the food they can digest; those older in the faith need stronger fare. It is not a healthy state when Christians of many years standing are still needing the first principles of the gospel and Christianity. Rather than our urging such a state, we are warned against it. Hebrews 5:12 deplors that "though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's word." It is possible to glory in one's ignorance and make it seem a virtue: to boast that all we read is the Bible (although all too often the lack of knowledge of the Bible is apparent in such claimants!) Christians were never intended to be spiritual morons.

Purposes of Reading

First, to learn. The wise Dr. Samuel Johnson said, "Knowledge is of two kinds: we either know a thing or we know where to find information upon it." This has been put in another way: "True knowledge is to know everything about something and something about everything." An unattainable ideal, true, but one we should aim at.

Secondly, to interest or even amuse. There is something we can pick up, something to hold our attention, in most of the books we dip into. We shall read much that we do not understand: this applies to the reading of the Bible as to any other book. This should stimulate us, causing us to ponder upon what we read. "Do you understand what you are reading?" asked Philip the evangelist of the Ethiopian treasurer. Of course he did not, but he was deeply interested in what he read and wished to know more about it. That is a striking passage in the Prayer Book Collect that asks that "we may read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." Not what goes into the mouth alone builds up our bodies, but what is masticated and turned over, goes into the stomach and is digested. Even so, not the simple act of reading builds up the mind, but the thinking upon these things, the grasp of them in the understanding.

On Reading the Bible

First and foremost of the reading of Christians should be the Bible: not simply books or other writings about the Bible, but the Bible itself. The lawyer when applying the law reads not only commentaries and expositions, but above all the law itself, the Acts of Parliament. He wants to know what the law says. So should we in our seeking after knowledge and understanding: first read the word itself: "To the teaching and to the testimony" exhorts Isaiah (8:20).

We have heard the term "People of the Book." Whatever it means and to whomever the term applied, it should be that Christians are the "People of the Book." Why should we be bound and guided by this Book? Is it not a mistake thus to limit ourselves to the teaching of scripture? Is this book worthy of the reverence with which we treat it and the devotion with which we regard it? Is it of greater authority than any other so-called sacred books of various religions? It may contain the word of God, but then equally so do other writings, so men tell us. What is of unique or peculiar authority in this book? Do we not read and see the power of God in nature, in His creation? Is not His revelation contained there?

The complete answer to these objections is given in 2 Corinthians 4: 6: "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Yes, God is revealed in some measure in nature, creation, the writings of men. But His fullest revelation is made in Jesus Christ. But what has that to with the Bible? Everything, in that this revelation is recorded for us in that book. In other

words, this most glorious and complete revelation of God to mankind is contained in writing, in words to be read. We cannot separate Christ from the scriptures, nor the scriptures from Christ.

The book of Nehemiah tells of the restoration of Jerusalem after the captivity in Babylonia: how when the worship of God was restored in the temple under Ezra, the city itself was rebuilt. In those joyous times Nehemiah gathered the Jews together, opened the roll of the scriptures and "read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading." Those words of what today we know as the Old Covenant scriptures were written to be understood. How much more are the words of the fuller, more glorious New Covenant scriptures.

EDITOR.

The Second Coming and the Judgment

AMONG all of the events which are yet to occur while this earth remains, the second coming of our Lord and the judgment are the most far-reaching and significant. At his coming, the consummation of all matters will occur, and the day of accounts for all men will be at hand. The Judge is Christ (Acts 17:31); the place is his judgment throne, and before him all the nations of the earth must appear. (Matt. 25, 32). The basis on which judgment will rest are the "things done in" the body (2 Cor. 5:10), and the sources from which the evidence is to be taken are "the books." "And I saw the dead, the great and small, stand before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20:12). It is observed that there are two classes of books indicated here: (1) the books (record of our lives), and "the book," the Bible which is the infallible standard of conduct.

Extent of guilt and consequent measure of punishment will be ascertained from the opportunities the individual enjoyed here on the earth: "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke 12:47). Many stripes to those who know and do not; fewer stripes to those who know not and do not. But, stripes for all who die in disobedience! The stripes figuratively designate the punishment which the non-obedient shall receive.

For some it will be more "tolerable" in judgment than for others: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom, which were done in thee it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matt. 11:23).

The second coming, which shall precede the general judgment, is a subject of the most frequent New Testament mention. More than three hundred times the sacred writers referred thereto; about one verse in twenty-five alludes to it either directly or indirectly. Believers throughout this dispensation are to "watch" for it, live in expectation of it, and be prepared for it. "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight or at the cockcrow, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:34-37).

It is far from correct to say, as some do today, that the apostles and other inspired men believed that they would be living when the Lord returned; they knew no more about the time of that event than we do. Because they did not know when he would come, they instructed people to live as if he could come at any moment. References to the coming of the Lord such as that found in James 5:7 do not mean that the writer erroneously thought that the Lord would come in his day; or, that the world would end before he died. On the contrary, Peter, in the second Epistle which bears his name, indicated that he would die before these events: "Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is in you. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yet, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance." (2 Peter 1:12-15).

It should be particularly noted that Peter, in this statement, penned on the eve of his death, desired and expected the brethren to call to remembrance what he had written after his "decease," thus indicating that they would outlive him, that they would need the instruction he was giving them, and hence time would not terminate with his passing. That the early disciples hoped for the coming of the Lord, prayed for it, and lived in daily expectation of it, we do not doubt (2 Peter 3:9ff.); such should, and must be characteristic of us if we are to live in the fashion which God approves; but, this is far from saying that from any intimation of the Lord or statement from the Holy Spirit a conclusion may be drawn that he would come at any specific time. It is because we do not know when he is coming that the event is ever nigh and for which we must always be in complete readiness. The allegation that the inspired writers predicted the coming of the Lord to occur in their day, is to convict them of error. That some Bible expositors imply or affirm such indicates what low and unworthy views such entertain of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures.

The fact of the Lord's return is, to Bible believers, beyond controversy; the time of it is hidden in the inscrutable counsel of the divine will. Of the certainty of it we need entertain no doubt whatsoever; because we do not know the time we must live in a state of readiness. The certainty of his coming, and the uncertainty of the time thereof taken together operate to keep our faith, our hope and our patience ever alive and alert.

We can only deplore the disposition which prompts some among us to speak of "the delay" of the return of Christ, which is to imply that the event is off schedule, postponed, not in keeping with the original arrangement and plan. But, inasmuch as we are without any information whatsoever regarding any "original arrangement," how do we know that the Lord has delayed his coming? We may be sure that it is exactly on schedule, and in complete harmony with his original purpose and plan. We must carefully avoid the disposition often characteristic of some writers and speakers today to assign to acts of deity the limitations which ever attend the efforts of men. It is because of this error that some argue that the clause, "the coming of the Lord is at hand," means that it was then imminent. That such was not its significance, is clear from the fact that nearly two thousand years have elapsed since these words were penned, and the Lord has not yet come. We must not overlook the fact that with God, who inhabits eternity, matters may be "at hand," in his view which are greatly distant in our imperfect human concept. (See Isaiah 13:6).

There were those in Peter's day who alleged that, because things continued in regular fashion and with apparent uniformity to the imperfect gaze of men, such must ever be. He asserts that such people wilfully forget the lessons of sacred history. (2 Peter 3:3-7). We may, therefore be certain that the Lord will come; he will come on schedule, and he will come unexpectedly, "as a thief in the night." (2 Peter 3:10-13). How vastly important it is, in the light of these facts, that we give diligence to be "found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight." (2 Peter 3:14).

GUY N. WOODS.

'The First Resurrection'

I HAVE read Bro. J. D. Bales's article in the December issue, "The First Resurrection is not Literal," and Bro. Kendrick's article in the January issue, "The First Resurrection." Bro. Kendrick asks for a better understanding of what the first resurrection is.

Seems to me if we consider Rev. 20:4-6 with John 11:25-26 together, it is much plainer. First of all, I believe there is only one literal resurrection and it occurs at the second coming of Christ when both the wicked and righteous are raised and judged.

In Rev. 20:4-6 John sees the souls (not bodies) of saints who were beheaded for Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. To my mind this thousand years refers to the bright period of the Reformation that followed the 1,260 years of the Dark Ages. These Christians had such a hard time in the Dark Ages and did not "worship the beast" and they were killed; so they deserve a "special mention" or "honourable mention." Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (verse 6). Whom does the second death not hurt? Those who have a part in the first resurrection. Who is the resurrection? Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life." Who has a part in Jesus? Christians. Who is not hurt of the second death? Christians.

Rev. 20:6 says: "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection." In John 11:24 Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life." Putting Rev. 20:6 and John 11:24 together we have "Blessed is he that hath a part in Christ." We are baptised into him and become a member of his body. He is the resurrection and the life. Thus, I believe the first resurrection for the saints of Rev. 20:5-6 and for all saints, occurs when we are risen in Christ from the waters of baptism (Col. 3:1).

Suppose John 11:25-26 had said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and abideth in me shall not be hurt in the second death"; and Rev. 20:5-6 had said: "He that hath a part in the first resurrection is in Jesus and if he abides there he shall never die" would the meaning or teaching be changed? I think not.

Brotherly,

V. M. FOLTZ (Hale, Missouri).

Evangelism

SIR,—I should imagine that every heresiarch from Marcion onwards has sought to justify his teaching in the interests of evangelism. Every generation has had its "modern man" who could be challenged to decision if only some particular aspect of the Christian Message could be discarded or demythologised.

I presume that it is still true that the final battle for the souls of men and women is fought on the level of the local congregation and not in the rarified atmosphere of the university lecture hall, else why the present plethora of books on the place and purpose of the ministry?

As a very ordinary minister, I would be failing in the most elementary of my ordination vows if I was not deeply concerned with the problems of communication. I am "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad that they may be saved through Christ for ever." This means, to steal a wonderful phrase from James Denney, that "I haven't the faintest interest in any theology that doesn't help us to evangelise."

With all humility this is where our theologians are failing those of us who are engaged in the parochial ministry. Their theologies are simply not helping us to evangelise. Our first and prime necessity is for a fruitful two-way communication to be established between professional theologians and the pastors of real live flesh and blood congregations.

Far too often the "modern man" for whom our academics frantically de-religionise and demythologise is simply not recognisable at parish level. As a reminder of this, an exceedingly intelligent non-believing academic told a member of my staff recently in the staff room of a northern technical college of high repute, "Traditional Christianity is far more intelligible to me than John Robinson's 'Honest to God!' "

I believe there is more to evangelism than adjusting our message to see how much we can persuade Jones to swallow no matter how existentially "with it" the resulting religionless pill may be. At any rate it works far less effectively than what we used to preach in pre-Bultmann days.

(REV.) TONY CLEMENS, —"British Weekly"



Times are not hidden from the Almighty. Job. 24, 1.

THE PLACE OF SAFETY

Yes, whatever our times are, they are in God's hands. The same strong hands that uphold the universe, the same tender and loving hands that made the tiniest flower—the smallest creature; the same hands that "healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."

HUMILITY

Be clothed with humility for, God . . . giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5, 5.

Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is for me to have no trouble; never to be fretted or vexed or sore or irritated or disappointed. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed "home" in the Lord where I am at peace as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around is trouble.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

APRIL 1965

4—Judges 13	Luke 1:39-56
11—1 Samuel 1:1-20	Luke 1:57-80
18—1 Samuel 1:21 to 2:11	Luke 2:1-21
25—1 Samuel 2:12-21	Luke 2:22-40

THE LOWLY BEGINNINGS

THE brothers of Jesus said "No man works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." Though not believing in their brother, and sometimes thinking him beside himself, his wonderful works had impressed them and they thought he should use his power in a mighty public demonstration—please read in this connection John 7:3-5 and Mark 3:21 and 31. The prophecy of his lowliness and quietness was fulfilled at times in his public ministry (Matt. 12:19 and 20), but on the other hand "he taught them as one who had authority" (Matt. 7:29). Power and authority as well as meekness characterised both the prophetic picture and the actual life. He was indeed a KING among men.

Our readings, however show the working of God's spirit among the lowly ordinary folk, who perhaps were not ordinary in their attitude of mind and heart towards God, and therefore He chose them for the fulfilment of His great purposes. Who for instance was Zacharias? He was one of 20,000 priests who ministered in the Temple in the days of Jesus. Each one held proof of descent from Aaron and each took his turn perhaps once in a lifetime to perform the offering of incense on the altar of incense immediately outside and in front of the veil which concealed the Holy of Holies. This offering was made at the same time as or immediately after the offering of the lamb, morning and evening on the altar of burnt offering in the Court of Israel. The entry of the priest into the Holy Place with the incense would be a matter of seconds to allow for the incense to be thrown upon the fire of the altar and the sweet smelling smoke to rise upwards while the people in the court stood in silent prayer.

What distinguished Zacharias and Elizabeth was their character. They took

their religion seriously and therefore their behaviour was exemplary. "Walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless" is certainly something the Lord's people today should aspire to; it would transfigure the church. They had a sorrow, regarded almost as a disgrace, because a child had not been granted to them. This sorrow obviously had not soured their lives, or the former statement about them could not have been made; and it seems that they had taken "it to the Lord in prayer." Resignation made acceptance of the divine message difficult but the place and nature of the messenger, and knowledge of the Old Testament facts, made unbelief blameworthy. These were indeed humble folk, and it is little wonder that Zacharias broke out in holy song, and Elizabeth hid herself for a time. Their deepest spiritual feelings must have been roused as they contemplated the honour bestowed upon them—Zacharias for so long a time in silence.

Our readings begin this month with the meeting of the two highly honoured women. Elizabeth's greeting indicates that either the news had been conveyed to her or the Lord revealed the truth about the Messiah to her at that moment of exultation. It may indeed be that the thought of her husband's deprivation on account of unbelief was there when she said "Blessed is she who believed"—and was it not something harder still to believe that Mary accepted with becoming humility? Being used by the Lord should always develop an abiding joy in us, as so beautifully expressed in what is called "The Magnificat," a good name for it indeed when we understand it means "My soul doth magnify the Lord"; and we proceed with the further thought (not just a duplication) "and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD, MY SAVIOUR." Farrar well writes here: "The soul is the natural life with all its affections and emotions; the spirit is the diviner and loftier region of our being (1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Cor. 2:10)." Her whole being welled up with love and respect for God.

Of Joseph the carpenter we have the same estimate of character, not from its being specifically stated but because of his behaviour. Being just, he might have taken a very strict line according to the Law, but he had tender and better feelings and accordingly God gave him the necessary instruction, and he was able to share, with what deep and loving joy and

concern we may only imagine, the wonderful truth that he was the legal father of the Holy One of God. The honour must have been almost terrifying, and certainly awesome. If we will endeavour to grasp the full significance of the divine visitation of this world, we shall be saying in the poet's words "Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love and praise."

We return to our opening thoughts. It has pleased God, the Almighty, the Eternal One, to reveal Himself to the lowly and through the lowly to the lofty—but how seldom have the lofty accepted Him! Jesus said "Yea, Father, for such was Thy gracious will" (Matt. 11:26), and "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23). "Many that are first shall be last. . . ." (Luke 13:30). And we have almost forgotten in this connection to mention the "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). Were Herod, Augustus Cæsar, Quirinius and Pontius Pilate unworthy of the attention?

R. B. SCOTT.

IMPORTANCE OF ASKING

PAUL deprived no one of the help he could send. He engaged the heavenly powers for the earthly tasks of men and women. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father . . . that He would grant you." His intensity forced him to his knees, and heaven opens to the man who comes that way.

THE INDWELLING GOD

IN the Old Testament it was God *for* His people. That was wonderful. In the Gospels, it was Emmanuel, God *with* His people. But in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles it is best of all, God *for* His people; the Son *with* His people; and the Holy Spirit *in* His people. What an amazing truth!

Prayer is not a device to get God to see your point of view; it is rather a humble promise, to try to be what God wants you to be.

Character is the result of two things: mental attitude, and the way we spend our time.

End of Churches False Divisions urged

THE De Montfort Hall, Leicester, was filled recently to hear Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, minister of Westminster Chapel, London, and former Harley Street specialist, speak on the subject of Church unity.

He said the very size of the gathering testified to the great interest in the subject. The New Testament exhortation was that Christians should be one, and that they should "maintain the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace." False divisions in the Church were condemned by the New Testament writers.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones said we were living in difficult, and tragic days. It was scandalous that so many differing things were being said to the public in the name of Christianity.

"How can we get across the Gospel message that alone holds out any hope?" he asked. "How to arrest the moral decline, the breakdown in the sanctities of life, the great increase in crime?

At one time some thought education could do it. Educate the people and they would stop sinning, educate the nations and they would stop warring."

But we had had two great wars and were heading for another. And a divided Church was necessarily ineffective.

Adjustment

"Today the popular view is that everything must start with unity, every person and everything that calls itself Christian must be regarded as Christian." The problem was one of adjustment and organisation, so the majority thought.

One had to bear in mind that throughout the ages there was a constant tendency to change from the original. There was no greater fallacy, he declared, than to assume that everything that called itself Christian today was, in fact, Christian.

One saw outside some churches notices of whist drives, bingo, dancing, and the man in the street was puzzled. Was that New Testament Christianity?

The most important question today, he averred, and the most honest thing to do, was to ask: "What is the Christian Church, what is a Christian?"

Following up his point that the Church must get back to the original concept, Dr. Lloyd-Jones read Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2.

Peter preached repentance. "Then

baptised, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship."

Dr. Lloyd-Jones continued: "The Bible teaches that man was created in the image of God, that he fell, and that God so loved the world that He gave His son on the Cross to die for man's redemption.

"This is the teaching that brought the Church into being. People who have been convicted of sin, and who have become the children of God by receiving new life in Christ, participating in a common salvation—that was the Christian Church in the beginning, and that alone is the Christian Church today."

"Leicester Mercury," March 11th, 1965.

[We thank Bro. F. Pearce of Leicester for sending the item which appears above.]

'Love your enemies; pray for those who spitefully use you'

[Editor's note: we have just been handed the following story, to make any use of that we think fit.]

IN our work for the Master let us remember it is not we who are doing His work, but He who is working through us. We are saved to serve. No one is beyond the reach of divine love: the power of divine love is infinite.

In the days of the American War of Independence there lived a Baptist minister, Peter Miller, who enjoyed the friendship of General (afterwards President) George Washington. There also dwelt in the same town one Michael Wittman, an evil-minded man who did all in his power to oppose and abuse the minister.

Later, Wittman was involved in treason, arrested, tried and sentenced to death. The old preacher started out on foot and walked the whole seventy miles to Philadelphia, that he might plead before Washington for Wittman's life. Miller was admitted into Washington's presence and begged the General to spare the life of the traitor. "No, Peter," said Washington, "I cannot grant you the life of your friend." "My friend?" exclaimed the preacher, "He is my bitterest enemy." "What?" cried Washington, "You have walked seventy miles to save an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I will grant the pardon."

Peter Miller took Michael Wittman from the shadow of death no longer as an enemy but as a friend.

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Romans 5:10).

CORRESPONDENCE

"WHITHER NOW?"

Dear Brother Editor,—I thank Brother Slate for his letter to the "S.S." and for his letter to me personally. I think most brethren would agree that the correspondence in the "S.S." of 1960 did not clear anything up.

In paragraph one Brother Slate seems to be suggesting that those who follow simply the example of our Lord Jesus Christ with reference to the partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine of the Lord's table, and who therefore use one cup, are tying themselves to "principles of interpretation which inevitably work themselves into a cultism characteristic of the Exclusive Brethren." I doubt if following a New Testament example can be fraught with any such danger. When we use one cup at the Lord's table we are surely not making any interpretation, we are merely following the example given by Christ and reiterated by the apostle Paul, under inspiration, in 1 Cor. 11:23. Besides, the first appearance of individual containers was very recently—1894—and the practice is barely 70 years old.

For virtually 2,000 years therefore, brethren have been using one cup—have brethren for 2,000 years been tied to principles of interpretation which inevitably worked them into any cultism? "One cup" brethren are advocating no new innovation but a practice stretching back in time to Christ himself and the early church. I respectfully suggest that it is the brethren contending for individual containers who have to produce interpretations and reason the containers into existence. Yes, I agree that it was true of the Restoration Movement that solid attention was given to correct principles of interpretation.

Is it not also strangely true that not one of them was led to this concept of individual containers, which today is so apparently essential? I don't think, for instance, that Alexander Campbell or David King or any of the other restorers conjectured the idea, and I have a shrewd impression as to what their reaction would have been to the suggestion. Their plea was to get back to the simplicity of the N.T.—to be rid of innovations, not to introduce others in their place.

In paragraph three our brother rightly stresses the need for a fuller discussion of this question. In the meantime I am sure many brethren in this country would like to be enlightened as to the reasons for this dilemma, to know the

reasons behind this strong desire for individual containers even at the cost of disunity amongst the brethren. Our brother in a letter to me tells me that **hygiene** is not a reason involved. At the same time **size of congregation** does not necessitate individual containers since three containers would no doubt cater for a congregation of two or three hundred.

Why the insistence then on individual containers which, in essence, is every church member desiring strongly his or her own personal container at the Lord's table. The reasons must of course be important and almost vital when we consider the defence of the practice is so strong. I know Brother Slate cannot speak on behalf of others, but would he be so kind as to tell us why he, as an individual, desires to have his own personal container around the Lord's table?

In paragraph four it is stated that those who accept plural containers are prepared to discuss or debate, publicly or privately this issue. It would be surprising if this were not so, but, as this is a question of personal preference (an expedient which may not really be necessary) on the part of those having individual containers, would it not be possible, in view of Rom. 14, for an attitude of conciliation to be adopted? If I have a preference which is injuring the churches around me, should I not rather, in brotherly love, set my personal desire aside in the effort to unite my brethren again? Am I wrong in thinking this would be in keeping with the Spirit of Christ, Brother Slate? I have the impression that the desire for this practice is stronger than the desire for unity amongst the brotherhood, and that this "preference" is held in some quarters as if it was "faith" indeed.

In the final paragraph of our brother's welcome letter he solicits suggestions from those requesting information on the other side; in a letter to me our brother says: "I am not in favour of adopting the use of one container as a mere concession to the brethren who feel it imperative that we do so." In this climate it is difficult to know what to suggest, or to envisage the value of proposed discussions, but I would like to suggest that the adoption of one container would not be by any stretch of the imagination a mere concession but would be a **vast stride forward** in the quest for harmony and unity and would be of inestimable value. Surely it cannot be regarded as a "mere concession"—it is the crux and heart of the matter.

I thank Brother Slate for noticing my letter and for taking time out to reply. I, and no doubt others, look forward to hearing from him again and hope that he will comment upon the matters raised and questions asked.

JAMES R. GARDINER.

"WHITHER NOW?"

IT was with deep sorrow that I observed signs of controversy among my English brethren over the use of individual communion cups. I know what heartache this issue can bring to those who love the church of our Lord. You see, I grew up in the heart of the battlefield this matter created. The preacher who claims to have introduced the practice into the church of Christ was born in my home town. Both the first and second congregations ever to use them were only a few miles away. My parents remember those days distinctly.

In my small library there is a book written by Brother G. C. Brewer. On page 12 he writes: "I think I was the first preacher to advocate the use of the individual communion cup; and the first church in the State of Tennessee that adopted it was the church for which I was preaching. My next work was with the church at Columbia, Tennessee, and after a long struggle, I got the individual communion service into that congregation. . . . I was fought both privately and publicly and several brethren took me to task in religious papers and called me digressive. In the year 1915 Brother David Lipscomb wrote a short paragraph in the 'Gospel Advocate' saying he had changed his view in reference to the communion cup and that he did not believe it was a corruption of the service to use as many cups as might be demanded by the occasion. This brought the controversy to an end and from then on churches began using the individual communion cup everywhere."

Some of the most vivid memories of my childhood are the debates and heated arguments which took place over this issue. As Brother Brewer said, many brethren opposed it at the time. With the passing years, as often is the case, the fervour of those who defended the ancient practice seemed to die. At this date the great preponderance of congregations in the U.S. have adopted their use. It is seldom discussed any more and many of our younger Christians do not know how the practice came about.

You English brethren have been a source of encouragement to those of us here who hold to the ancient practice. We are so small (by comparison) and are frequently looked on as backward and ignorant because we do not go along with "progress." But we feel that neither time nor popular acceptance alters God's attitude toward a change in His divine arrangement. If there was ever a time when Christians of all nations need to draw closer to God and each other it seems now. Instead of adopting practices which originated in Tennessee we should all join hands and try to complete our spiritual pilgrimage back to

Jerusalem. Changes in the practices of the church should be made only to draw closer to the pattern of the early Christians. This is all the more true if the changes cause strife among God's people and offend the consciences of faithful brethren. The words of Philip Melancton, Martin Luther's closest associate, are still timely. "If such unhappiness comes from disunity—as we see indeed with great sorrow that it does—the fault lies with those who sowed errors in the first place and who now defend them."

JAMES ORTEN.

West Monroe, La.

"WHITHER NOW?"

Dear Brother Melling.—May I commend brethren C. P. Slate and James Gardner for the reasonable tone of their letters on the "cups question"? We all know that far too often discussion of this issue—and others—has been conducted on a level unworthy of Christians.

It is encouraging indeed to know that there is a willingness to discuss such a matter frankly—but lovingly.

It seems to me that holding a series of debates on this issue is not likely to help towards the solution of the problem. Debates too often lead to a "lining up" of supporters, and sometimes force issues to open and serious division—the very thing we all want to avoid.

It appears that what might help more than anything else at this time would be for brethren from all over the country to come together first for fervent prayer and self-examination, then to engage in frank and brotherly discussion of this matter and the problems arising out of it. The object of such a gathering would be first, for all who have views to hear and understand what others believe and practice, then honestly to seek a common ground on which we can work together for the advance of the gospel and for the building up of the saints.

May I appeal for a church—preferably in an area making travel from north and south as easy as possible—to take the initiative in calling such a meeting? I know that many brethren in many churches feel that this is the time for this to be done. "We be brethren"—let us come together in love and mutual respect and seek a solution.

In service,

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

VISITING BROTHERS

Church of Christ, Buckie, Scotland.—The brethren of the above assembly wish to ask that brethren unknown to them visiting our area wishing to have fellowship, please bring a letter of commendation with them. Your brother in Christ, John Geddes (Sec.).

BOOK WANTED

I am trying to find a copy of a book long out of print. It is "The Scriptural Doctrine of Hades," comprising a critical examination of the state of the righteous and wicked dead, between death and the general judgment, by George Bartle, D.D., D.C.L. The book was published in 1873 by Longmans.

If any reader has a copy, and is willing to sell it, or knows of anyone with a copy to sell, I'd be glad to hear from him. I would also be interested to hear of any work dealing primarily with Hades.—A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hamilton Street, Blackburn.—During February the church held a series of weekend meetings the preaching being conducted by Brethren J. Kemp and W. H. Clarke, both of Hindley. Bro. Kemp spoke on the Saturday evenings and Bro. Clarke exhorted the church and preached the gospel on Lord's Days. The meetings were very well attended, several friends being present and if we cannot report any progress numerically, the church has benefited much as a result of the faithful preaching of our two brethren. We are very grateful to them and to those who supported us in our effort to further the cause of our Master.

J.P.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FROM Bro. and Sis. Matthews, late of Kentish Town: Christies Beach, South Australia: Wedding: Miss E. Rule, formerly of Cape Town, 12 years meeting at Kentish Town, to Mr. O. Oldfield, Marree, South Australia, on 7th November, 1964.

Baptisms: Alan J. Matthews and Wayne Grover, both 15 years old, on 23rd August, 1964.

CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

SINCE my report last month, I am delighted to say that the above fund has made a great stride forward and all of us concerned with the fund are very encouraged, not only by the gifts of money towards the fund but also by the letters expressing interest in the work being done in the Cameroons. Once again, our brethren in Australia have been active and our thanks for very substantial financial help must go to the church meeting at Merrylands, Sydney, Australia, and also to Sister A. E. Chaffer, of Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia. Thanks

and acknowledgements are also due to a brother in Kenilworth, Warwickshire; a brother and sister in Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, who have assisted us more than once; and to brethren from Glascoed, near Pontypool, Monmouthshire.

Our thanks go out to you all, brethren, and we are pleased to say that as a result of your efforts the fund total has risen from £57 4s. last month to no less than £108 2s. 8d. this month. This is, of course, most gratifying and we hope an encouragement to other brethren to send a little to the work. We still have a good way to go, of course, but each month brings us that little bit closer to our goal. Another two brethren sent subscriptions for the paper "As the Oracles of God." These have been sent off and we give them our thanks.

Contributions please, as before, to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian.

OBITUARY

Doncaster.—It is with very real sorrow we report the death of our esteemed Brother George Simpson, who passed away after a very short illness, on Friday, March 12th. Brother Simpson came to the Doncaster Church, along with other Bentley Church members, a few years ago, and had since proved to be a most acceptable and worthy member.

A man of very strong convictions and an earnest, and sincere Christian, he has sought to serve the Lord, and the Church, in every way he could.

His passing is a serious loss to the Church, and robs us of one of our most willing and devoted helpers. Our Christian love, and sympathy is extended to our Sister Simpson, in her great bereavement.

J. Garnett.

[We should like to add our tribute to our late Bro. Simpson. From 1951 to 1959 my family worshipped and served in the church at Doncaster. During those eight years we had close fellowship with Bro. Simpson, both in the church and in his home. He was, to use a common expression, "a diamond in the rough." The church was his deepest interest, and according to his abilities he served the Master he loved faithfully and cheerfully.

He was always desirous of doing more than he actually did, but found great joy in doing what he could. In the public reading of the scriptures, serving at the Lord's table, taking part in prayers and in reading our hymns he helped to carry out the church's worship and service. The more he was needed, the more he rose to the occasion, and the more he grew in the grace and knowledge of Jesus

Christ. During those eight years and since, the church at Doncaster has lost many devoted workers, and with the increased need for helpers, Bro. Simpson played a vital part.

We sorrow with his widow, and with the whole church, now left with only five brothers to maintain the cause of Christ there. Brethren, pray for them and let us do all we can to keep the light of New Testament Christianity still burning there. EDITOR.]

COMING EVENTS

Blackburn.—The church formerly meeting in Park Road met for the first time in its fresh premises in **New Wellington Street, Mill Hill, Blackburn**, on Lord's Day, March 14th.

The formal opening of the meeting-place will be on Saturday, May 1st.

5 p.m. Buffet Tea. 7.15 p.m. Meeting. Speaker, Bro. Leonard Morgan (Hindley). Bro. Morgan will also serve the church on Lord's Day, May 2nd: Bible School, 10 a.m. Breaking of Bread 11.15 a.m. Gospel Meeting 6 p.m.

Visitors take bus from Blackburn central bus station to Moorgate, book to New Wellington Street (stop is almost at door of meeting-place). A plan will be sent of the locality to visitors and preachers requesting one. Apply to Roy Renshaw, 123 Pilmuir Road, Blackburn.

Doncaster.—Tea and Meeting, Saturday, May 28th. Tea at 4.15 p.m. Meeting at 6 o'clock. Speaker: Bro. Frank Worgan.

Hindley.—A mission, Saturday, June 5th to Lord's Day, June 13th, each night at 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Bro. A. E. Winstanley.

BIRMINGHAM (Summer Lane) AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND (28th to 30th August, 1965)

Saturday 28th 100th ANNIVERSARY
Tea and Social Meeting (times later).

Lord's Day, 29th: Meetings as usual. Special Speaker, Brother A. E. Winstanley.

Monday 30th: Country ramble (weather permitting). During the remainder of that week, and the following weekend Brother Winstanley will be conducting a mission.

We extend a very cordial invitation to all who would like to come and rejoice with us at the Lord's blessings over a century. Requests for hospitality should be addressed to: Mr. H. Hardy, 67 Broomhill Road, Birmingham 23.

Any young people who are able to come and spend the week in Birmingham and help with the mission will be very welcome. Please let Brother Hardy know if you would like to come.

SPRING CONFERENCE

17th April, 1965

Meeting Room; Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs. Business session 2 to 3 p.m.

Two periods of study in the background of John 17 will each be introduced by three fifteen-minute addresses. It is not intended, today, to examine the pros and cons of suggested methods to achieve unity in a divided Christendom but rather to learn from the scriptures the nature and objective of the oneness for which Jesus prayed.

From 3 until 5 p.m. Subject: "Jesus said. . . ."

The WORD: ". . . they have kept thy word." R. McDonald.

The NAME: ". . . I have made known thy name." W. Smith.

The GLORY: ". . . the glory . . . I have given to them." E. Makin.

From 6.30 until 8.30 p.m.

The UNITY: ". . . that they all may be one as we are." J. Fitton.

The BELIEF: ". . . so that the world may believe." C. Melling.

The CONFESSION: ". . . that the world may acknowledge." A. Hood.

All enquiries for hospitality should be forwarded to: James Pritt, 31 Goldhey Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,—The church meeting at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, wishes to give a personal invitation to come and join with us in the above meetings. We would be pleased to see as many as possible gather, so that our working together may be strengthened and that the work may prosper. Yours in the Master's service, James Pritt (secretary).

WANTED

Kentish Town.—WANTED, willing and capable brother to work in London for a protracted period—minimum six months. Write in first care to R. B. Scott, 20 Midhurst Avenue, London, N.10.

COMING EVENTS

Aylesbury.

April 17th-19th: Young People's Week-end. Saturday, April 17th: Panel discussion and other features of particular interest to young people. Monday, April 19th; fellowship and recreation. Hospitality provided by our young people. Full details will be sent to all churches.

June 20th-July 4th: Gospel campaign. Preacher: Virgil Trout, Sunset church, Lubbock, Texas. Theme: "Christian Evidences." Meetings nightly: Lord's Day, 6.30 p.m.; Weeknights, 8 p.m. Brethren are invited to join the personal work teams being organised by us to support this campaign.

July 25th-August 8th: Summer School. "Training for Service," classes to be held each day, Monday-Friday, and evenings, Tuesday-Friday, of each week. Full details, including subjects, lectures and enrolment forms will be sent to all churches.

Brethren are asked to make a note of these dates and are invited to have fellowship with us in any or all of these activities. Hospitality will be provided.

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan)

CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST

(16th April to 2nd May, 1965, D.V.)

Daily devotional sessions, followed by door-to-door visitation with a view to arranging home Bible studies etc., as well as extending invitations to the evening gospel meetings.

Gospel meetings nightly (with the exception of 2nd and 3rd Friday nights) at 7.30 p.m. Gospel preacher: Bro. A. E. Winstanley.

Brothers or sisters who can give any, or all of the time during this period are asked to write NOW, giving details, to: Philip Partington, 636 Atherton Road, Hindley Green, Wigan, Lancs.

Accommodation will gladly be provided.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 12/-; two copies 20/6; three copies 28/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 80 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

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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.