

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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AUGUST, 1974

TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS

HAVE you noticed the number of 'churches' lying empty these days?

I don't know if Edinburgh is fairly representative of Britain as a whole in this respect but, if it is, there must be a great number of places of worship closing down or undergoing changes of use. As one who travels fairly extensively throughout Edinburgh I am saddened by the sight of 'churches' closing down altogether or being taken over for some other usage. It is not unusual to see garish signboards appear outside such establishments advertising the new use, such as furniture discount houses, building materials stores, grocery supermarkets and even bingo halls. The buildings I have in mind are of Victorian, (or before) architecture, constructed of carved stone and built to really last. Some of them are quite beautiful and were made by real craftsmen who took consummate care with every detail of the construction. The work and materials could probably not be repeated today. Internally the oak panelling and carving is very often a work of art and the great beams spanning the vast width of the church, forming intricate and scientifically designed rooftrussing, is a sight to behold. Sad then to see such dignified and stalwart edifices being used for some mundane purpose or trashy pursuit or pastime.

It is more than sad, however, to reflect that the change of use of such buildings is a reminder of the growing spiritual poverty of the people of this country. It is doubtless true that some of the closed churches have been caught up in some municipal redevelopment scheme and have been acquired by compulsory purchase powers, but by far the majority of them have been deserted to their fate by the falling membership of worshippers. Sometimes not enough members are available to finance even a small repair job to the coke boiler.

As I say it is a saddening sight to see these lovely buildings slowly beginning to decay and soon to crumble as forlorn as a smart ship stuck fast forever on a sandbank; as abandoned as a last-year's bird nest. It is deplorable to see any buildings going to waste but doubly so when, in the main, the cause is occasioned by the spiritual paucity of the nation. I do not hold any brief for the denominational bodies who owned these stone-carved structures with their lofty spires and stained-glass windows, I am merely expressing regret at the low spiritual temperature of the people of this land. One might even advocate these empty buildings as a cause for rejoicing in that less error is being taught now than before but surely the deterioration of a nation can never be a cause for any rejoicing.

As the stones crumble and the wood rots it is just possible that the religious world could learn a valuable lesson from it all, and that lesson is that the building *is not the church and the church is not a building*—not as far as the New Testament is concerned, anyway. One can argue about the meaning of the English word but the New Testament is quite emphatic in the matter. These buildings were built to last and seem actually to have outlasted the enthusiasm and zeal of the devotees. Present day costs indicate that such buildings can never be constructed again and so, in future, light buildings possibly prefabricated, will be quite common. The 'foundation stone' of the Victorian buildings usually had chiselled upon it an intimation that this 'church' had been '*erected to the glory of God*'. The idea prevailed, and still prevails, that *the building* was the church and explains why they were made as ornate and solid as money would allow. Like banks they intended to denote permanency. The people did not want to insult God by constructing a cheap and shabby building 'to His glory'. Now that such substantial and permanent buildings are a thing of the past people will surely find it more difficult to believe that a light and fairly flimsy erection has been nailed together to aspire to the glory of God. The laying of a lead lettered foundation stone would surely now appear a little incongruous if laid in a building of tongue-and-grooved weatherboarding walls and a bitumen felt roof. Such a time as this would be a good time for the country to learn that "*God dwelleth not in temples made with hands*" (Acts 7:48). "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" (Acts 7:49).

God dwelleth not in temples made with hands but it is surprising how firmly entrenched is the misconception that the church is a building. Clergymen, instead of trying to dispel the misconception, seem to be happy to promote its continuance and one can hear them on many occasions referring to their historical old churches.

The apostle Paul had no such erroneous notions, In writing to the disciples at Corinth he informs them that "Acquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16:19). The church met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila and surely if any verse is capable of convincing the doubtful that the church of Jesus Christ consists of people, of followers of the Master, this is it. Similarly in Philemon 2 we have, "To the church *in thy house*." Indeed when Peter does draw an analogy between the church and a literal building, with its foundation stone and corner stone, he makes it clear that the stones of which the church is composed are not literal sandstone *but people*. "Ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house; an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (1 Peter 2:5,6). Thus the chief corner stone and the other stones are people and this is understandable if we believe that the building is, in any case, a spiritual building. Again, we read in Acts 5:11 that *fear* came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things". Surely such a statement must violate any idea of the church being a literal building; as must the following reference (in Acts 8:3-4) which records the fact that "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women committed them to prison". How did Saul set about making havoc of the church? By arresting *people* (men and women) and throwing them into prison.

It may be, then, that the gradual disappearance of these solid old buildings shall create a situation where it may be easier for men to learn that the building means little or nothing. To any who may raise the objection that it is a fairly harmless misapprehension to believe that the literal building is the church let it be said that any misapprehension concerning the will of God cannot be a good

thing or ever entirely harmless. Such a misconception leads to too much reverence being bestowed on a building when no reverence should be given to it at all. A false conception of the church such as this forms the basis for all manner of other misconceptions. If we take the misapprehension to its n'th degree we have the kind of situation which exists in Italy, and Latin countries generally, where ornate church buildings are surrounded by squalid hovels. Inside 'the churches' are art treasures of priceless dimensions while outside barefooted boys wrestle in the dust for a crust or coin from a passing tourist. The riches and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church are incapable of calculation and yet the poverty of thousands of its members is truly pitiable — and all its wealth is in real-estate. There is truly a danger in thinking that the church is buildings.

If it be true that the empty church buildings reflects the trends of a modern society, bent on a policy of self-indulgence and premissiveness, trying to turn its back on God, then we have the grand assurance from the Word of God that although the world may forsake God, God *will not forsake* those who seek to obey Him.

The apostle Paul expresses this grand assurance in 2 Cor. 4:8,9 when he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted *but not forsaken*; cast down but not destroyed;..." The Lord will never forsake us; let us see to it that we don't forsake him. EDITOR

MESSAGES FROM THE PAST — 1854

Selections from an article in the *British Millennial Harbinger*

Editor — J.B. Rotherham

Prepared by Leonard Morgan

THE OLD IS BETTER

NOT always, it is true. Aged men are not always wise; neither are old things always the best. Yet there is a wide religious sphere in which our motto may be forcibly applied. When the new is human, and the old divine, then is the old infinitely superior to the new.

No greater evil has befallen the Christian religion, than that men has attempted to mend it — one after this manner, and another after that. In trying to mend, he has marred. What else could have been expected? 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?' In the Christian Scriptures we have the latest divine revelations, institutions, precepts, and promises. Whatever, therefore, in the Christian religion, is not as old as the New Testament, is human, inferior, sinful, and worthy of immediate and universal rejection. Since the Scriptures were completed, many new things have been introduced, claiming the faith and obedience of Christians, but without exception — the old is better.

1 The old CREED was the Bible, and the Bible alone. The primitive "form of sound words" was "the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ". But, not satisfied with this, men have invented new creeds without number. The Nicene, Athanasian, Trent, Dort, Westminster, the Thirty-nine Articles, John Wesley's Sermons and Notes, and a host of others have been constructed. Yet who can deny that for authority, wisdom, plainness, and union — "the old is better?"

2 The old GOSPEL was the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ. It was short, and therefore soon told; simple, and therefore easily understood; well-sustained, and therefore exceedingly convincing. But the single truth of Jesus' Messiahship

and Divinity, and the simple facts of his death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 1/4), though God's power to save all believers (Rom. 1:16), have not gratified man's philosophic vanity. Hence he has invented new gospels, about everything as much as Christ and salvation, to which a miserable sinner may listen for a long time without really understanding how he must be saved! If such be the new gospels, surely "the old is better!"

3 The old BAPTISM was the immersion of a believer in water, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins. Because it was an immersion in water, it could be performed by a disciple, (Mat. 28:19) and constituted a burial with Christ (Rom. vi. 4 Col. 2:12). Because its subject was a believer (Mark 16:16) who was thus introduced into (Greek *eis*, 'into' not *en* "in") the names of the Sacred Three, (Mat. 28:19) it was the consummating or completing act of discipling a sinner to Christ (John 6:1) and formed an introduction into the heavenly family or kingdom (Gal. 3:26-27), John 3:5). And because it was —with the repentance and faith it expressed — @for the remission of sins", (Acts 2:38) the immersed believer might well "go on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39) and ever after remember that he had been "purged from his old sins" (Acts 22:16, 2 Peter 1:9)... Are we not warranted in saying, that the new baptisms of this age are visionary, or grovelling; useless, or deceptive; desolating, or divisive; and that, consequently, beyond all calculation, "the old is better?"

4 The old churches were congregations of immersed believers (Matt. 28:19-20, Rom. 6:3-4)—individually, leading orderly and godly lives: and collectively, assembling on every first day of the week, being the Lord's day to "continue steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, (teaching) and fellowship, (contribution and distribution) and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42) they were guided and ruled by a plurality of overseers (Greek *episcopoi*) elders (Greek *presbuteroi*), or shepherds (Greek *poimeues*)—(Acts 14:23 and 20:17, Phil. 1:1, Titus 1:5-7). They were served by a plurality of ministers or servants (Greek *diaconoi*) who honoured themselves by honouring others (Acts 6:3, Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 3:13). Of these Christian congregations there was but one in any city, town, or village, as the history of the first churches abundantly shows. The churches in any given district might associate together for co-operation, but none of them, in any sense, or in any way, formed themselves into rival parties. Their union and oneness was not so exclusively spiritual and invisible as many suppose. The unity of the Spirit, which He has marked out for us, and which we are bound to "preserve in the bond of peace", embraced the following seven capital items:— "One Body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, BAPTISM! God and Father!" (See Eph. 4:3-6).

The new churches — oh! how the heart sickens when counting their varieties and marking their excrescences, deficiencies and deformities!....

When thus contrasting the old churches with the new, the conclusion is forced upon us, that just in proportion to the superiority of Divine wisdom, authority, order, and unity over human folly, assumption, anarchy, and division — the old is better. I have said "the old is better!" But this implies comparison; strictly speaking, it supposes that the new is good. Whereas, in reality there is no comparison between that which is divine and that which is human, when the latter supplants the former... Reader! Do you believe on the Son of God? Does your bosom heave with love to his person, and your eye kindle with loyalty to his government? And are you a well-wisher of your species? Then choose this day, I affectionately and earnestly entreat you, whether you will henceforth support the inventions of man; or, uphold, by precept and example, the word, gospel, institutions, and glory of God!

THE ENDLESS FLOW

OIL, being one of the most precious commodities of this age is in constant and increasing demand.

It has many uses beneficial to mankind, from the preparation of food to its use in the preparation of medicines. In the days of the Old Testament it was used in the cleansing of lepers, for the anointing of the dead, and even to make the face shine. The Psalmist could say, "Thou anointest my head with oil."

We all realise that as oil comes from wells in the ground they can dry up at any moment but it is not so with the Divine well. The oil well of God will never run dry nor will the supply ever diminish. If there is a shortage it is because of our failure to draw upon the supply.

In 2 Kings 4:1-9 we have a wonderful illustration of God's miraculous power. We read there that the husband of a woman died. He was a good man; one that feared God and one that left an excellent testimony behind him, but he also left his wife in poverty. She had nothing with which to pay her debts; no land or cattle — only her two sons which her creditor was prepared to take and sell. In her difficulties the woman cried unto Elisha and the reply of the man of God was, "What hast thou in the house?". She did not have much and replied, "Nothing, save a pot of oil". A pot of oil. Elisha commanded her to go out and borrow all the vessels she could find (not a few but as many as possible). Verse 4 explains that she was then to shut herself, and her two sons, in the house. Notice the "being shut in" before God performed the miracle. Shut in with God alone not just for prayer or praise but to be Spirit filled — this is the thought which the incident brings before us. The narrative goes on to say that the woman and her sons were then commanded by Elisha to pour from her pot of oil into all the vessels and it was only when there were no more vessels to be filled that the pouring stopped. Had there been more vessels the woman could have filled them, and it is only when there are no more souls to be saved that the Lord will withhold His offer of salvation. Elisha then said, "Go pay thy debts". There had been co-operation in the matter between the woman, her two sons, Elisha and God.

Often times we underestimate the power of God. At Pentecost twelve men working together with the power of God, produced the church. Did you notice that the woman in the incident was instructed to bring in the empty pots and nothing else? God wants us but not our innovations, inventions or 'improvements' into His church. God can only fill empty vessels. The power of God is sufficient for all possible needs. God's presence can fill any building and although we depend upon Him He does not have to depend upon us, or indeed upon any one man. The woman depended upon her husband entirely and was destitute when he died. Sometimes the props of life are knocked from under us to make us more dependent upon God. The divine intervention of the man of God saved the woman, and her two sons from bondage. The Lord Jesus Christ also paid our debts and set us free from bondage. As Christians we are free, yet like Paul's expression we are slaves for the sake of the gospel.

As we approach the Lord's table on Sunday next shall we try to let the hymn-writers' words fill our minds and souls and let our hearts be truly Spirit filled:—

"From all the bliss that earth imparts

We turn, unfilled, to thee again.

Bro. T.H. Blackmore, Weston-super-mare

(I thank our brother for kindly responding to my appeal to the brethren to share their thoughts with the readers of the "S.S." and I hope that other brethren will follow this good example).

THE BIBLE - GOD'S WORD

WHAT a blessing to the world if the Bible is what it purports to be the word of God! No other source of information in the world could compare, for this would be the mind of God revealed to man — the mind of the infinite, omnific God! It would also mean that herein is the answer to the question of man's origin, purpose and destiny, and the key to happiness here and heaven hereafter.

The claim of the Bible is that it is the word of God, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit", and "all scripture is given by inspiration of God". (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). The Bible must therefore either be the word of God or else a colossal hoax and fraud.

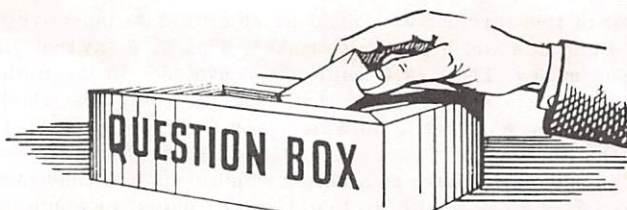
The unity and harmony of its content is at once suggestive of divine authorship, for its sixty-six books were penned by about forty different men during a period of some fifteen hundred years, and its writers are in perfect agreement on every subject (including God, the nature of man, religion and history). Is the reader able to think of even two men who agree in all they have said and written on the above subjects? "It's not human," is it?

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the arguments the Bible makes for itself. There is no accounting, apart from inspiration, for the unerring voice of the prophet that spoke history before it happened. Consider Moses speaking of Israel and the Jewish people (Deut. 28), or Isaiah's utterances about Babylon (Isa. 13). or Ezekiel on Tyre (Ezek. 26) and Jesus on Jerusalem (Matt. 24). History in advance! Check it for yourself; account for it!

Scientific foreknowledge abounds, though it is incidental in the text rather than a laboured objection. Some of our relatively recent "discoveries" were casually affirmed as fact long ago in the Bible (e.g. that light existed before the sun, Gen. 1:3,16, and all races of men share common blood, Acts 17:26). It knew of the paths of the sea and the rotundity of the earth ere man 'scientifically' dreamed of such things.

Archaeology, the study of antiquity, further certifies the accuracy and vindicates the integrity of the Bible. Skeptics once scoffed that writing was unknown in Moses' day and he could not therefore have written the books ascribed to him), that there were no such people as Hittites, and that the account of Jericho was purely a fabrication. But archaeologists discovered the Code of Hammurabi at the turn of the century and, lo, find this contemporary of Abraham (some 400 years before Moses) writing quite well and verifying the Biblical account of history. Remains of the Hittites have been found, and the Garstang expedition excavated old Jericho and reported fallen walls without evidence of a physical cause. The Bible, on all counts, true!

The Bible is truly the word of God, and is a treasure to be learned and obeyed.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"In 1 Tim. 6:10 Paul speaks about the danger associated with riches. Are we to understand that there is no evil unconnected with the love of money?"

HERE the questioner quite precisely equates riches with money and infers that the dangers, whatever they may be, spring from a compulsive love of money. This is a very important question, especially in these days, and demands a somewhat detailed answer if the teaching of Paul is to have its full impact.

What is being said?

It is always advantageous to try to understand precisely what we are asking or saying and what God through His word is saying to us. When we speak about money we are speaking about current coin or promissory documents representing it. Consequently in Acts 3:6 Peter is speaking about Gold and silver coin. In Matt. 26:15 the chief priests covenanted with Judas to give him thirty pieces of silver coin, i.e., a sum of money. Paul states that people can love money and he expresses this by the word PHILARGURIA, from PHILEO, to love, and ARGUROS, silver, and he means that they covet money in an avaricious sense.

The word 'riches' is a more comprehensive word. As applied to persons it means that they are wealthy, i.e., having an abundance or profusion of anything. If riches is related exclusively to money then it would mean that a person had an abundance, or large possessions of money. Hence, such a person would be similar to those mentioned by Jesus as recorded in Matt. 19:23. The reader should note here that Jesus does not say it is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but rather that a person who trusts in riches will find difficulty or opposition in entering the kingdom. I think we should also understand that not all types of riches have attendant dangers. The N.T. speaks about riches which it would be desirable for us to acquire, but we will return to this a little later.

The word 'evil' also needs some clarification in the context of what we are studying. In 1 Tim. 6:10 the word used is KAKOS which stands for whatever is evil in character; that which is base. The word PONEROS denotes that which is evil in influence and effect, malignant. When this word is used as a noun it refers to Satan, as in Matt. 13:19,38.

It seems to me that the word 'root' is also an important one to our understanding. If we relate root to a plant or tree it would seem to suggest that the root is the source of the plant or tree, but this is not true, is it? We have to put the plant, roots and all, into the soil and then the roots become channels along which the life-giving ingredients of the soil sustain the growth of the plant. Bagster's 'Englishman's Greek New Testament' renders 1 Tim. 6:10 thus "For a root of evils is the love of money". In other words what Paul is saying is that the love of money, and trust in riches associated with it, is a channel whereby all kinds of evil characteristics are exhibited. Satan is the source of all evil and malignity; he manifests himself along many avenues through people, and the covetous love of money is one channel along which all kinds of evil flow.

If we can now put all of this together we should be able to state objectively what Paul is teaching. I think it would be wrong to make 1 Tim. 6:10 say that all evil stems from the love of money. There is a multitude of evidence in the Bible that Satan is the source of all sin and evil, and that there are many sins which people commit which have nothing whatever to do with money. On the other hand, I believe it is right to say that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Those who have their hearts set on getting rich have an ambition which leads to temptations and snares; the desire to amass great wealth, to 'build greater barns' in which to lay up their treasures and thereby 'feed their souls' is a great risk. Such desires are temptations to commit other sins to gain their end: murder, theft, lying, etc. These sins cause men to sink into destruction and ruin. As Paul puts it, "they pierce themselves through with many sorrows" (literally, 'acute mental pains'), and they also "err from the faith" 1 Tim. 6:10.

The true riches

Having spoken about potentially destructive riches it would be most remiss of us not to look at the other side of the coin. We know that the Bible teaches that we should lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven and not on earth. I believe that these are the treasures in heaven that made Jesus rich as Paul said in his second letter to Corinth, 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich' 2 Cor. 8:9. We Christians know these riches to be expressed in salvation, for, 'there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' Rom. 10:12,13. We should strive individually, to appreciate 'the riches of God's glory', and 'to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man' Eph. 3:16 (read also to end of chapter). Wouldn't it be grand, also, if every community of Christians today could receive the words addressed to the church in Smyrna, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) Rev. 2:9. I believe these to be the moral and spiritual riches that all should be aiming for.

Conclusion

Many of our problems hinge on the use and misuse of money. We can be rich in money or we can be rich in the things that money can buy. If we try to amass to ourselves an abundance of material things then in the Christian sense there would seem to be something wrong with our living, for, "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth". In most of our lives the accumulation far outweighs the necessities, and the message of God is that having the necessities of life we shall be content. Anything further than this would seem to be a weight and a burden because we brought nothing into the world and we can certainly take nothing out. "There are no pockets in shrouds". Jesus taught, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things (food, clothing, shelter) will be added to you" Matt. 6:33 Throughout history in the Church some have looked upon Godliness as a source of material gain (a means of making profit), and Paul taught Timothy that from such he should withdraw himself. However, as always, he gave the positive teaching when he said, "But Godliness with contentment is great gain" 1 Tim. 6:5,6. Yes, brethren and friends, the immeasurable and imperishable riches of God are held out to us: it would be the bitterest gall if we have neglected these and sought our treasure here upon earth. I pray that this may not be so for us.

(All questions please to, Brother Alf Marsden, 66 Mitchell Street, Newtown, Wigan Lancs).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1974

- 4—Daniel 6:1-24 Luke 10:38 to 11:13
 11—Jonah 3 & 4 Luke 11:14-36
 18—2 Chron. 24:15-25 Luke 11:37-54
 25—Psalm 69:1-16 2 Corinthians 1:1-22

WE have planned readings in the gospels as a priority. We'll read in the assembly, the words and works of Jesus Himself. We are an essential for true worship. We always use them whether or not they are read, because the purpose of the meeting is to remember Jesus. However this does not mean that we value other scriptures less than the gospels, and we turn aside this month to the second letter to the Corinthians as it has not been planned for several years. This second love letter to a church with faults and strengths like all churches everywhere is perhaps the most revealing of all Paul's writings.

There is a great contrast between the narrative of Luke — an orderly selection of vital teaching from the Saviour's own lips — and the impassioned letter of Paul to his beloved Corinthian brethren. They have been partially estranged from him by acceptance of false teachers and teaching designed to reduce respect for him. The Saviour is facing also false teachers and teaching designed to bring about the ruin of His reputation, and finally His death — nothing less will satisfy them.

"The Gloves Off"

We can be pardoned for using a fighting figure. Chapter 11 of Luke is like chapter 23 of Matthew. The religious leaders have from the beginning of His ministry opposed the Lord Jesus. They have been compelled in some measure to conceal their hatred because the people saw and heard wonders unexplainable to them except as a manifestation of divine power — which of course it was, too obviously for mistake.

So their attacks had been veiled under loyalty to the Law, standing by the customs or at its best, making innocent enquiries. The time has now passed when their opposition could just be ignored.

Two points are made — 1. He uses demonic power, and 2. He has not given a sign from heaven. Both are answered with the one rebuttal. Satan obviously would not fight himself, and the manifestation of a power greater than his, is a sign from heaven that the power of Satan is broken when the demons flee from or obey Jesus. When the demons go and the Saviour comes into the man, he is safe, but not otherwise. We wonder if this picture represents the enemies of Jesus who began with prejudice, and developed into murderers — which they were in thought and became in action. Our slightest ill-feeling need immediate attention and opposition. It seems too that so often we crave for some material evidence of divine power when it is already here with us in the Gospel — "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The hearers and see-ers of Jesus had before them all the necessary evidence.

There is no compromise on the Saviour's part. The multitudes who normally respected Scribes and Pharisees are now openly taught the truth about them and must realise the beloved teacher and healer is "under fire". He is warning them of coming punishment too, and claiming to be greater than Jonah and Solomon. This open attack upon their character must have enraged the leaders bitterly for they "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (See Matt. 23:1... John 12:43). Their image was being spoilt. Accordingly they pressed upon Him to entrap Him, not just to "spoil His image", but to get Him embroiled with the authorities.

In December — God permitting — we shall follow through the plotting and ultimately its outcome... "He gave His back to the smiters" (Isa. 50:6).

"The Urgent Letter"

Paul does expose his holy character to us in this letter. Well did he later write "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). For him there is one purpose in living. His heart was, so to speak, bound up with those whom he had been the means of bringing to Christ. Their concerns were his.

It is good to consider first the circumstances in which the letter was written. We turn to Acts 19 and find Paul in Ephesus (from which the first letter was written). His work there was so successful that "all they who dwell in Asia (the province) heard the word of the Lord" (verse 10). The tread of the idol-makers was affected and a riot ensued. He was in deadly peril, was persuaded not to take the ultimate risk (verses 30 & 31), and so escaped with his life. He did undoubtedly have conflict in Ephesus but whether actually in the arena we do not know (1 Cor. 15:32). His Roman citizenship should have prevented such a thing, and the reference may be to conflict with men like beasts. This he refers to in our chapter in verses 8-10.

Paul's first letter to Corinth contains rebuke, and it is evident he had doubts as to how it would be received. Hence he was anxious to meet Titus with news on the question. So anxious was he that he did not take advantage of "an open door" at Troas, but not meeting Titus there hurried on to meet him on his way through Macedonia. The letter we are now studying was then written and sent on with Titus in advance of his own visit. Read of his conflicting emotions in 7:4 & 5. Out of these experiences and the love in his heart came this letter.

R. B. SCOTT

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Easthouses, Midlothian: Brother Dennis Taylor and sister Moray Taylor have taken over the work of secretary in the above church and all communications for the church should be sent to them.

D. T. & M. T.

WHAT IS THANKFULNESS

It is Thanking God for the gift of life by living it triumphantly.

It is Thanking God for your talents and abilities by accepting them as obligations to be invested for the common good.

It is thanking God for all that men and women have done for you by doing things for others.

It is Thanking God for opportunities by accepting them as a challenge to achievement.

It is Thanking God for happiness by striving to make others happy.

It is Thanking God for beauty by helping to make the world more beautiful.

It is thanking God for inspiration by trying to be an inspiration to others.

It is Thanking God for health and strength by the care and reverence you show your body.

It is Thanking God for the creative ideas that enrich life by adding your own creative contributions to human progress.

It is Thanking God for each day by living it to the fullest.

It is Thanking God by giving hands, arms, legs and voice to your thankful spirit.

It is adding to your prayers of Thanks; giving acts of "Thanksgiving"

GOSSIP

Tattle: "She told me you told her what I told you not to tell her".

Tale: "Why, the mean thing! I told her not to tell you I told her".

Tattle: "Well, I promised her I would not tell you she told me, so don't you tell her I told you".

IT is too bad trouble will meet you more than half way, but you have "to seek peace and pursue it".

Preaching is one of the few commodities of which people complain when they get short measure.

A church-less religion is no better than a religion-less church.

STICKING TOGETHER

(Prov. 18:24)

An armful of snow, packed into a ball and rolled down a snowy hillside, soon grows so big you can't see over it or push it any more. Snowflakes are tiny fragile things by themselves, but look what they can amount to when they stick together! It is like that with Christians. The Lord wants us to stick together. He says, "No divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10). Here are five ways we can do it.

1. Value Our Fellowship (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

Our fellowship is precious because it cost the body and blood of Jesus! More is lost in a broken church than a broken home even. There is an artist who glues broken pieces of coloured glass one upon another to form beautiful murals worth thousands of dollars. The heap of glass fragments were of little value before they were stuck together. So the value is in the bond. God took us worthless, broken sinners and joined us together to form something beautiful in His eyes. Let us value the bond of peace between us. When our fellowship is broken, the loss is very great.

2. Be Selfless (Phil. 2:1-5).

If you do value unity and fellowship, you can help by having a selfless attitude like Jesus had. Namely, do nothing out of selfishness, but in humility look out for other's interests rather than your own personal interests. That is what love is. Love seeketh not her own.

3. Be Subject (1 Pet. 3:1-9,5:5).

If selfishness is hard, subjection is harder, because it means not only putting another's interests before yours, but submitting to his authority. The church will not split where the younger is subject to the older, the woman is subject to the man and the one is subject to the number.

4. Seek Sound Preaching (1 Tim. 1:3-7 Eph. 4:14-16).

Some people like to be teachers but have nothing to say. They love the sound of their own voices more than sound doctrine. If the shepherd leads his sheep in

the sands of the desert instead of in green pastures, will not the sheep die of hunger and thirst? The church must be fed with good food. Incompetent preaching cannot be tolerated if the church is to hold together.

5. Kill Worldliness (Col. 3:5-15).

When Christians will not give up the old self with its evil practices and continue in the habits of the world, they weaken the bond of unity. Purer people make a stronger church.

-Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love-

RON GRAHAM.

(The Visitor)

THE GREAT CONQUEROR

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mahomet, and Napoleon; without science and learning. He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools. He spoke words of life as never were spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line. He has set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and sweet songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. Born in a manger, and crucified as a malefactor, he now controls the destinies of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, and yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history produce no other example of such complete and astonishing success in spite of the absence of those material, social, literary, and artistic powers and influences which are indispensable to success for a mere man.

(The Light.)

COMING EVENTS

Blackburn. New Wellington Street:
The assembly at Mill Hill, B'burn plan,
God willing, to hold a short series of
meetings as follows:—

SATURDAY Oct 19th, 1974. Tea at 6p.m.
followed by meeting at 7.30p.m.-

LORD'S DAY Oct 20th:
Gospel meeting at 6 p.m.

TUESDAY Oct 22nd: **WEDNESDAY** 23rd:

THURSDAY 24th: and **SATURDAY** 26th;.
All meetings to begin at 7.30 p.m..

LORD'S DAY Oct 27th:
Gospel meeting at 6 p.m.

Bro Paul Jones (Scotland) will be the
speaker.

Brethren and friends everywhere are
invited to spend a rich time of fellowship
with the church here.

ARTICLES WANTED

Two brothers and one sister have
responded to my appeal for material for
the 'S.S.' I had hoped for more to have
participated but I am still optimistic. I
know you are all busy but spare a couple
of hours or so and help your magazine.
One article per year from twelve brethren
would meet our needs. Not much to ask
really, is it. Those contributing to the
regular features have to write one every
month.

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