

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE THRONE OF GRACE

A few weeks ago the United States Walker Cup team clashed with the British golfers at Muirfield not far from here. The match was televised and at one particular point showed two of the American players in dead trouble in a bunker. After two unsuccessful attempts to get out of the bunker one of the young men, obviously a Roman Catholic, 'crossed himself' before having another swipe at the ball. As the commentator remarked, "he was calling on outside aid". However, after another two hacks at the ball it remained firmly in the bunker. "You can't depend on anybody nowadays" quipped the commentator. Apart from the witty remarks of the man doing the commentary the incident must have made some viewers, at least, wonder what God can legitimately be expected to do. Occasionally boxers 'cross themselves' before the first round and then get themselves flattened before the second round. If both boxers 'cross' themselves then surely that puts God in a difficult position indeed — what a dilemma. It's rather like the British and German clergymen, during the last war, praying for ultimate victory.

Quite apart from this mis-use and misunderstanding of prayer and what can be legitimately prayed for, it is wonderful to consider the most marvellous invitations God extends, in His word, to sinful men to cast all their cares upon Him. Consider for instance the words of the writer to the Hebrews Chap. 4:16, where he says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Perhaps this is the most encouraging and uplifting verse in the whole Bible. God cares. Sometimes we have the feeling that God is too remote to be communicated with and that there is such a vast gulf between sinful men and a pure God. Some men have the impression that God operates the world by remote-control rather like the engineer who sets up a lathe and after putting it in motion walks away to attend to something else. God has certainly ordained natural laws in a revolving world, and has rarely suspended such laws, but He has not walked away to attend to something else. Apparently God cares and encourages those who have accepted Him to come before His throne of grace in times of need, but not just in times of need. We should "Pray without ceasing" (1st Thess. 5:17) and give thanks to God always, but we shall find *grace to help* in time of need.

The 'Throne of Grace' is surely an expression of great beauty and might intrigue us sufficiently to ask what it might be, where it might be and what purpose it might serve. A throne, of course, is the seat of a king or sovereign. In this context it is clearly intended to represent a sovereign seated to dispense, mercy, pardon and grace. The writer to the Hebrews is continually drawing upon the rich sources of the Old Testament scriptures for the expressions he sometimes uses in the New. Many references and analogies in the book of Hebrews are clear,

ly derived from the Old Covenant Tabernacle and some would suggest that this quite beautiful term 'The Throne of Grace' has reference to the 'Mercy Seat' of the Ark of the Covenant. Hebrews Chap. 9:1-12 informs us that there were, even under the first covenant (the Mosaic) ordinances of divine service and a wordly sanctuary — for there was a tabernacle made (portable place of workshop). Mainly it was of two compartments, the first containing the table, candlestick — the second was the Holiest of all and behind the separating veil there was the golden censer and the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant was in fact a large chest, overlaid inside and out with gold, containing treasured and precious items. It contained two tablets on which were written God's law of the covenant and which gave the ark of the covenant its name: the golden pot of manna (which did not decay) and Aaron's rod that budded. The lid of the ark was a sheet of pure gold which apparently had the dual purpose of not only being the lid of the chest but of being the 'Mercy Seat' or the trysting place of God with His people. On each side of this seat stood a golden cherubim (or angel) each with outstretched wings which virtually touched in the centre their faces looking towards one another and down at the mercy seat. It was here that God's presence (or Shekinah) was, for God had promised Moses that He would commune with His people above the mercy seat. This then is perhaps what the writer to the Hebrews had in mind when he spoke of 'The Throne of Grace!'

Continuing his theme in Chap. 9 Paul refers to the function of the priests in the tabernacle and the High Priest's annual ordeal of entering the Holy of Holies, "When these things were thus ordained the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people." This blood (the token of forfeited life which is the penalty of sins and transgressions) was sprinkled upon and before the Mercy Seat by the finger of the High Priest seven times, to atone for his own sins and for the sins of the people. These things continued as 'a figure of the time then present ... until the time of reformation' i.e. until Christ should come. v11 "But Christ being come, a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (that is to say not of this building) neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." What bearing has this on 'The Throne of Grace'? Put simply, we in the New Covenant economy have also a great High Priest who has entered into the Holy of Holies, bearing not the blood of animal sacrifices, but bearing His own blood as an offering for sin and He has obtained eternal redemption for us. A throne is a seat although a seat is not always a throne. 'Mercy Seat' could be rendered 'Mercy Throne' just as 'Throne of Grace' could be rendered 'Seat of Grace'. In this context the 'seat' means 'source' just as a 'seat of learning' (University) is the source of learning. Thus the 'Throne of Grace' is the source of mercy and grace.

Where is the 'Throne of Grace'? It is where our eternal High Priest is, i.e. in heaven. "For Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. 9:24. From this passage we not only learn of the location of our High Priest but His present function is described to us — He intercedes on our behalf. Heb. 8:1 tells us a little bit more and incorporates the term 'throne' — "Now of the things of which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such a High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty of the heavens." Paul adds his considerable weight in Rom. 8:34 " ... It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Jesus is our advocate with the Father, not at the bar of justice, but at the seat of mercy.

It would seem therefore that this beautiful expression 'Throne of Grace' is terminology based upon an allusion to the tabernacle and the worship of God at that time and that God is represented as being seated in the most Holy place (on the Mercy Seat). The High Priest approaches that throne (or seat) with the blood of atonement to make intercession for the people and to plead for pardon. That scene is emblematic of heaven. God is presently seated in heaven on the throne of mercy and the great High Priest, having shed His own blood to make expiation, is represented as approaching God to seek the pardon of men. By virtue of the merits of the blood of our High Priest, God is ready and very willing to pardon the sins of all those who approach Him through the High Priest and so men may now, with boldness, approach this mercy seat or 'Throne of Grace.' Being situated in heaven our only approach to it is by way

of prayer and through prayer we have a direct line of communication with God. Politicians have a 'hot line' with other politicians but they could have a much better link with God and would get a much better response. The lines of mercy are open with God at the present and men should use them, for the time is coming when God will not sit upon a 'Throne of Grace' but will commission Christ to sit upon a throne of judgement at the Great Assize. Whether we understand aright or not the precise definition of the term 'Throne of Grace' is not important — the wonderful fact is that it is there. A place where God will dispense, not justice, but mercy and give grace to help in times of crisis. I would not ask Him to get golf balls out of bunkers but I rejoice that He cares and that we can cast all our cares upon Him for He careth for us (1st Peter 5:7).

EDITOR.

THE GLEANINGS

"Let her glean among the sheaves" Ruth 2:15

OUR THEME: WHAT IS SPIRITUAL LIFE, AND HOW TO DEEPEN IT?

THE first temptation that presents itself to one's mind is to study all the forms of life, the various terms by which these forms or modes of life are designated, and the definitions and explanations of the school-men, and so reach an answer to the first part of this complicated question. Second thoughts, however, send the mind on another, and, I believe, safer track. I might define Zoe, Psuche, Bios, Pneuma, and all their variations; and after that labourious process had been gone through, we should be very little, if any nearer what we are in search of. I have gone through concordance and dictionary with but small reward: first, in order to find a passage where "Spiritual Life" as a phrase is to be discovered; and, second, to get accurate definitions of the words Spiritual and Life. I have not found the phrase; nor have I been enlightened by dictionary definitions. I have come to the conclusion that the Bible was not written to explain phrases; nor was the dictionary compiled by any person inspired by the same spirit as that which move the writers of the New Testament. The Bible is the history of his creation, defection, and restoration, and mutual relations between his Creator and himself. It does not lend itself to theories on any subject, nor to any kind of phrase-mongering. It is a book of facts and truths; of promises, prophecies, parables, and types relating directly or remotely to the great subject of the redemption of man from the fall. The fall was into a state of death. The redemption was, and is, a redemption back into life. If we can discover how, when, where, and by whom that redemption has been accomplished, we shall find what we want to know so far as a theory of "Spiritual Life" is concerned. Our own experience of it in actual realisation — its peace and power — must settle what it is in itself. The genesis, and the enjoyment of what for convenience sake you have called "Spiritual Life", will supply a complete answer to the question, "What is Spiritual Life?" What it is to have that life deepened, or in abundance, must be arrived at (so it appears to me) by the same process of simple discovery, and of personal experience.

As the life we are inquiring about is a possession enjoyed under the New Covenant of Grace, we need not extend our investigations beyond the sayings and writings of Christ and His Apostles. Even within those limits we may confine ourselves within an inner circle, which relates only to the matter in hand. It would be interesting to go outside that circle, and enquire as to "The Spiritual Life", the source and perennial reservoir in God Himself as Spirit, or The Spirit, and work from the proposition that the life of God is "Spiritual Life." Perhaps some minds would expect such a treatment of the subject as that. There would be room for some display of theological disquisition, or forensic skill, in tracing that stream from its source to its dissemination. A study of "Spiritual Life" in the abstract would lead in that direction I daresay. But then, awkward questions arise, such as, "Is not Satanic life spiritual?" Is not the beautiful life of angels spiritual? Is not the life of fallen man, as well as fallen angels spiritual? So, as I said before, every sound reason guides our minds away from the mere definitional and abstract, to the historical and simple grounds.

In all matters relating to our Christian faith and life we, as a people, acknowledge no authority save that of Jesus and His sent ones. In that we are essentially wise. If we cannot find

sure footing there, it will be futile to search in any other direction. All other grounds of faith and life, are like the shifting sandbanks of Robin-rigg in the Firth of Solway — mere traps in which faith and life sink down till the sands overwhelm them, and they become lost; as many an argosy of the sea has been. I am anxious to emphasise these simple axiomatic truths in relation to the testimony of Jesus and His Apostles; because of a vast amount of silly scholarship which finds its way into current literature regarding spiritual life in man, and how it stands related to God, and Christ, and His word. These teachers speak of the testimony of the Apostles as a letter, in contra-distinction to the Spirit. They say "you must not introduce anything between the Spirit of God, and the responsive, receptive, Spirit of man, or you rob God of His glory, and man of his dignity. The Divine Spirit (say they) does not need men who are long since dead, to speak to the living generations." "The Spirit of God is ever revealing new truths to the choice and chosen ones of each generation: so that spiritual life may be a growing quantity and an improving quality." Hence, according to this teaching, the spiritual life of primitive times was a stunted, an embryotic thing as compared with what is, and may be enjoyed by this generation. And so, my brethren, we may for all practical ends burn Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Peter and James and Paul. When we have done away with all that they have left us, we can open our mouths and close our eyes, and see what the colleges send us. The ordinances also may be packed up and sent after the letters; so that the rays from the Eternal Spirit alone may erradiate the mind and heart of man through the medium of a personal Christ. A Christ by the way whom having never seen, they would never have known, but for the writings of these same men whom they affect to bow out, as having no place now in these parts. Once upon a time, when the human race was a happy pair, rejoicing in the simplicity of faith in God's testimony, a distinguished foreigner whispered into the ear of one of the simple couple and said, "You shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." The tempting bait was taken, and sad have been the consequences. The human family, and even the redeemed human family is a numerous host now; and I hope there are a great many who will turn on these foreigners, who sneak in where they have no business; and say to them, "tell these things to the marines, but not to us, the Christ you pretend so greatly to extol, said of His Apostles, "Whoso hears you, hears me . . . Whoso despises you, despises me," There, gentlemen, is the gap you came in by, just clear out by the same road, and we will have it walled up again."

To be continued (DV) next month

The GLEANINGS this month are taken from a Conference paper given by GEORGE COLLIN at Bristol in the year 1894.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

THE MEAL OFFERING

PART 2

Now we come to Section 2 which again is divided into three. This part of the meal offering, not being an animal sacrifice, cannot therefore represent the death of Jesus, although it anticipates it. It would teach us then, not so much of the death, but rather the sufferings of Christ as presented to us in the oven, the pan and the frying pan. Does not the New Testament elaborate upon the sufferings as well as the death of Jesus? Every chapter in Peter's first epistle mentions it. Ch. 1, 'the Spirit testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ'; Ch. 2 'when He suffered, He threatened not'; Ch. 3 'Christ suffered for sins'; Ch. 4 'Christ hath suffered for us' and Ch. 5, Peter himself a 'witness of the sufferings of Christ.' Jesus, after He had risen, said to the two on the way to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" and showed them from the scriptures, saying "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead."

We shall never be able to enter into what it must have cost Him in human suffering upon the Cross. And this is suggested in three ways by the oven, the pan and the frying pan. We have seen in every way that Jesus was perfectly human. He had body, soul and spirit and He suffered in each of these departments of His Being. He suffered mentally, emotionally and physically. The Oven then, would remind us of the inner sufferings of Christ, the mental agony, the anguish of His spirit, which wrung from His heart the cry, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The oven, enclosed, unseen by human eye and only that which was seen by

God, the depth to which He had to go, which is beyond us, 'for none of the ransomed shall ever know, how deep were the waters crossed'. Again in Psalms 'all Thy waves and billows are gone over Me, I sink in deep mire where there is no standing'.

And the pan, an open pan, with some depth, something we can draw near to and look into and appreciate the emotional or soul-trouble of the Blessed Lord. How His emotions were affected by suffering. "Now is My soul troubled" He could say in John Ch. 12 and in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" and again in the Psalms, "Reproach hath broken My heart". This is something which we as believers can readily understand and appreciate, especially when we know it was for us.

Then the frying pan, that which was open and visible to all, the physical sufferings of Jesus. That which even the world can understand, for pain is common to all mankind. His lacerated back, the crown of thorns, the nails thro' hands and feet and as the cross and its victim were lifted upright and dropped into its socket in the ground, He could cry out "all My bones are out of joint". We shall never be able to measure the physical pain of the Lord Jesus and His death was but the great climax of it all.

Now when we come to the end of the second section we have a sort of an interpolation in which other three things are mentioned, 2 must nots and 1 must; NO leaven, NO honey but salt, yes. The leaven must not take the place of the unleavened, although, as in the Peace Offering, it could be offered with it, for a very special reason, but it had not to be burned upon the altar. It was forbidden and could not be accepted on the altar because of what it represents. Leaven speaks of that principle of corruption which works subtly. This is taught in the parable of the leaven which the woman hid in 3 measures of meal, in Matt. 13, one of the three references to it in the New Testament. Leaven represents evil in two ways, either doctrinal or moral. In Matt. 16 the Lord Jesus speaks of the first one, "Beware" He said, "of the leaven of the Pharisees and Saducees". This spake He of their doctrine, verse 12; for these two sects had distorted the Law of God, substituting the Word of God with the traditions of men, making it burdensome to others while they hid under a cloak of hypocrisy, for which Jesus denounced them. Let us take heed then to the warning of Rev. 22 about adding to or taking away from the Word of God. Beware of this leaven! The second is moral evil and this is described as leaven in the church at Corinth in 1 Cor. 5. Gross moral evil was being allowed and condoned in that church which brought the scathing judgement of the great apostle 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven. Put away from you that wicked person'. And this was the leaven that was corrupting the church and destroying her testimony for God in the world. Beware, then, of the leaven of these two evils.

It is difficult to know what is meant by the honey as it is sometimes used in a good sense but like the leaven, is subject to fermentation. And we want nothing that foment the carnal, however sweet it may appear to be, in the assembly of God's people. Perhaps we have a clue in Proverbs 25 verse 27, where it says, 'As it is not good to eat much honey, so for men to seek their own glory, is not glory'. So perhaps this is it. Men seeking their own glory in the church and not giving Glory to God. We need not elaborate on this only to point you to a typical example in John's third epistle, of Diotrephes, who loved the pre-eminence.

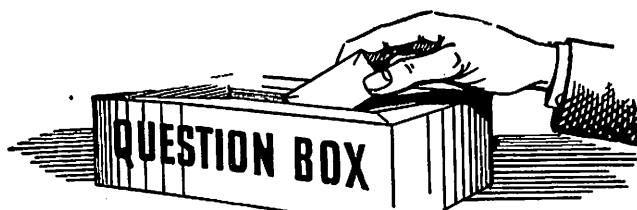
Salt, then, has the opposite effect as it preserves from corruption. 'Thou shalt not suffer the salt of the Covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt'. The salt of the covenant of thy God! It speaks of the faithfulness and immutability of our covenant keeping God! Even the sure mercies of David; He keepeth His promise for ever! This is explained by the apostle in Acts 13, vs. 32-37, basing His promise of forgiveness and blessing, on the risen Christ, preserved by God, Who never saw corruption and quoting from Psalm 16 David's own words, "Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption". The incorruptible Christ! The Salt of the Covenant! The changelessness of the immutable God! We have seen something of the Incomprehensible Christ and of the Incomparable Christ, but now the Incorruptible Christ, alive for evermore!

We come now to the last section that speaks of the risen Christ, the firstfruits of 1 Cor. 15; the firstborn of Rom. 8 and the firstbegotten of Rev. 1. Christ the firstfruits of the corn harvest, consistent with the meal offering. Again, three things are mentioned, the green ears of corn, the oil and the frankincense, the last two of which we are already familiar. The green ears had to be full and beaten and parched by the fire. The green ears reminding us of the youthfulness

of Christ. The green, fruitful tender years of His young life. He was a comparatively young man when He died, cut off out of the land of the living, and if they do these things in the 'green' tree, what shall be done in the dry? The full ears speak of the fulness and fruitfulness of Christ, nothing lacking in Him. He packed a lifetime of service into the 3½ years of His ministry, so that John could say that the whole world could not contain the books which could be written. Such was the fulness of His Life in His healing and teaching ministry. And yet it had to end so tragically. Beaten and dried by the fire, bruised and parched; wounded, lacerated and disfigured by men and they sent Him back to God in that condition. The story is told in 2nd. Samuel of King David sending emissaries to a neighbouring king on a mission of mercy and peace. And this king misinterpreted their errand and abused and insulted them, shaving off half of their beards, tearing their garments down to the buttocks and sent them back in shame and disgrace. And this happened to our blessed Lord Jesus. They insulted God by dishonouring His Son and God has borne it with longsuffering and patience that men might repent and seek salvation. So He is there in His Father's Presence, bearing the marks of Calvary in His risen body, the bruising and the parching. And we are graven on the palms of His hands with those indelible marks that even eternity shall never erase, a constant reminder to us of the sufferings which He endured. He is still and always will be 'the Lamb as it had been slain'.

So in this offering God receives His portion first plus all the frankincense and what remains is ours as priests in the sanctuary. Therefore it is holy, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord, as we share together with Him and with each other, the Father's thoughts of His dear Son.

John D. Hartburn, Durham.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"Luke 6:40 contains the statement, "everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher." Could you please explain the phrase "fully taught" and do you believe this perfecting process extends to the relationship between Christ and his disciples?"

This quotation is evidently from one of the translations more modern than the King James Version, so let's state it as it is in that version, "The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect will be as his master." The Revised Standard Version reads more like the question before us, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher."

This is an important question because it indicates an achievable level of attainment by the disciple relative to the full knowledge of the teacher. If we accept that Jesus is the teacher, and that any individual christian is the disciple, then we can understand how fundamentally important it is for the disciple to be "fully taught", whatever the implications of that phrase may be. We shall need to put the statement into its context so that we can get a clearer picture of what Jesus was teaching on this occasion. It seems to me that christians have grossly underestimated what the true relationship with Christ should be; perhaps an explanation of this question will help us to clarify our thoughts on this important subject.

THE CONTEXT

The statement we are discussing is sandwiched between two seemingly ludicrous illustrations; one dealing with blind people attempting to lead other blind people, and the other dealing with a person who has a plank of wood in his eye trying to remove a tiny speck out of someone else's eye. Each of these illustrations, together with verse 40, poses the fundamental

question: how can a person point the way ahead to someone else,

- a) if he himself is blind to the way
- b) if his knowledge of the way is limited, and
- c) if his vision is seriously impaired?

A person who is spiritually blind can be compared with someone who is continually handling potentially dangerous substances; the effects are not noticed until it is too late to take remedial action. Jesus is using the metaphor of blindness to illustrate that degree of spiritual imperception which was so evident in the so-called Jewish leaders who were purporting to be the guides of others. Paul in his Roman letter scathingly condemns those who rest in the law and hold circumcision to be a sign of the true child of God, and goes on, "And art confident that thou thyself are a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness" (Rom. 2:19 Read all the chapter to get the true sense). What in effect Jesus is saying in Luke 6:39 is, "Can one blind man be guide to another"? The answer, of course, would seem to be an unqualified no.

The other illustration of seemingly impaired vision concerns the mote and the beam. The mote could be a tiny speck of sawdust or a bit of wool, whereas the beam would be the great piece of wood which runs from wall to wall and supports the roof. Jesus is again speaking metaphorically, of course, and seems to be saying that the man with great faults in his life cannot see clearly to attempt to remove the minor fault in another's life. What he should be doing is to remove that which is greatly impairing his vision so that he can point others to the right way. A salutary lesson, if I may say so, for each one of us.

Sandwiched between these two illustrations is the passage under consideration. This concerns the disciple and his teacher. A disciple is a learner, and the word indicates thought accompanied by endeavour. In other words, a disciple is not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence he is spoken of as *imitating* the teacher. In John 8:31 we read, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Again he said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8). So in these two scriptures we have the true picture of the disciple; he must listen to the words of the teacher, and he must imitate in action what the teacher himself would do. When Jesus required something different than this he usually specified it. On one occasion he said, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All things whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2,3).

So what is Jesus teaching his disciples? He seems to be saying that by following him the disciples are implying that he knows the way; he is no blind guide. He can point out to the disciple the true path of progress until the disciple comes to *his* true destiny, to become as his teacher is. Matthew records that when the chief priests and scribes heard the people crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David' they said unto Jesus, "Hearest thou what these say?" And Jesus saith unto them, "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. 21:15,16). We can say then, that perfecting the knowledge of the disciples would be like saying that they were "fully taught" concerning the truth, and when they were fully taught they would be as their master (teacher) in expressing that truth and living their lives in accordance with it. So what does it mean to be 'fully taught'? I suspect it has something to do with the 'new and living way.'

THE NEW AND LIVING WAY

John presents us with the statement of the Lord, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). As if to consolidate this, the writer to the Hebrews says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ... (Heb. 10:19,20). It is no coincidence that the first christians were referred to as those of 'that way', indeed, Paul's brief as he journeyed to Damascus was to apprehend any of 'that way' and bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Well, how did the people hear about 'that way'? Why, through the apostles, of course. And who sent the apostles out with the message? Why, Jesus did, of course. And what was the message? Well, it was the message of sins forgiven through the gospel; of justification by faith in, and obedience to, Jesus, the Saviour; of fellowship, worship, and work in the Church; of a

life perfected through holy living, and an eternal home in heaven. This, I believe, was the teaching of the master teacher; this was the way pointed out; this was the message and work of the master teacher himself, and when he had passed this on to his disciples, he expected that when they had been taught all, they would imitate him by taking the word and work to others. In this sense, the disciple would be as his master (teacher).

THE DISCIPLE/TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

There is a sense, of course, in which the disciple can never be as Jesus was and is. Jesus is, by his divine nature, part of the Godhead and the true Son of God. The disciple, by *his* nature, is a sinner saved by grace; through his obedience to the gospel he has become a child of God by adoption. Nevertheless, he is a joint-heir with Christ of all the heavenly glories, and has been elevated to a position of considerable eminence, being a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

However, there is a sense in which the disciple, the pupil, *can* be as Christ, the teacher; that is, by absorbing the teaching, becoming fully taught, and expressing the fundamental details of that teaching in his personal life. When that happens, the disciple will not be expressing *himself*, but Christ, the teacher, will always be held up before people because of the willingness of the disciple to let Christ be seen in him. This is the only way by which the purity of the message can be maintained.

I believe that this desirable state of affairs can be brought about by applying three fundamental christian principles:

- i) By total commitment to the teacher and that which is taught. The world may need more christians, but what the Church certainly needs is more *committed* christians.
- ii) By being in a state of readiness to take the teaching out to people. When God said, "Whom shall we send, and who will go for us", Isaiah responded at once, "here am I, Lord; send me." The state of readiness should be maintained at all times.
- iii) By being suitable. The christian is sanctified, set apart for the Master's use. He is an earthen vessel in which is contained, if he is fully taught, the revealed will of God as expressed by Christ. The disciple should never be satisfied with sustained mediocrity; he should always be striving to achieve that spiritual maturity which will ensure his effective witness for the Lord.

Yes, I believe that when the discipole is fully taught in the essentials of the message then he will be as his teacher, in the sense in which we have said. I also believe that this will have a profound bearing on his relationship with the teacher. (All questions etc....)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

AUGUST 1979

5	Isajah 62	Acts 11
12	Daniel 6, 1-23	Acts 12
19	Psaalm 36	Acts 13, 1-15
26	2 Samuel 7, 18-29	Acts 13, 16-41

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE OVERCOME

A FEW years after Jesus had visited Sychar, Philip began the removal of centuries old prejudice and hatred in Samaria. A greater work of the same kind was begun when Peter preached to Gentiles. The Samaritans at least were circumcised and venerated Moses. Peter himself had to be given a commandment from heaven to learn what the "great commission" really meant, and divinely ordered circumstances to lead his mind and heart.

His change had to be communicated and enforced to and upon all the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. We note however it is "they that were of the circumcision" who contended with him. This appears to mean that it was the extremely "Jewish" members who were deeply concerned, not perhaps those who had experience in foreign lands, or even the rest of the apostles in whom the spirit of Christ was already taking over. The rehearsal by Peter of his experience was sufficient to convince the main body of believers. The Judaising element was undeveloped, but there was the element of surprise in the verdict "Then hath God granted repentance unto life ALSO TO THE GENTILES". It is important that Peter recognised what happened at Caesarea as of the same authority as the apostles' experience at Pentecost in Jerusalem. Obviously this was to give him absolute assurance of the qualification of believing Gentiles for

baptism in water and forgiveness as a consequence. In the meantime the spread of the gospel into foreign cities in the restricted sense as for Jews only, could not be limited in that way because its effect on the Jews domiciled there was to fill their hearts with love for all as regardless of restriction as our own attitudes — "Do good unto ALL men" (Gal.6,10). Some men of Cyprus and Cyrene were in advance of their fellow-christians in this way, and turning to the Lord was as effective among Gentiles in changing their lives. Some may have been shocked and reported to Jerusalem, but Barnabas, the son of encouragement, was sent, and such progress was made that the new kind of people had to have a name to distinguish them from everybody else — CHRISTIAN, meaning obviously "devoted to Christ". They must have spoken much of Him and practised accordingly.

APOSTLES IN PERIL

They must have often thought of their Master's words, and were realising thus early the blessedness of suffering for Jesus' sake (Matt.5,11). James was the first of them to suffer death, experiencing fellowship with Jesus in the last moments of his life (Matt.10,22 & 23). A cruel and unscrupulous king moved by desire to please, rather than any other motive, thought to do more against the church. It was natural he should seize Peter in such a scheme. The expectation of death did not prevent Peter sleeping in prison. Surely he must have committed himself to his Saviour, and was resigned to follow James to his heavenly home. God had much more for him to do however and a more horrifying death to die! We could not exaggerate the importance of Peter to the infant church, and as the news of his arrest spread among the disciples more and more fervent prayers assailed the mercy seat for his release. This was so seemingly impossible and his death so certain that we are not surprised at the amazement of the gathering in Mary's house, finding it hard to believe that Peter stood at the door. Nor was Peter less surprised but realised at once that he must depart and go to another place, having been so wonderfully set at liberty. We are reminded that "God hath set forth the apostles last, as it were appointed to death" (1 Cor.4,9), and this for our sakes upon whom the last times are coming. Peter from being for a time so much sought after (Acts 5,15) now

becomes a fugitive. We need at times to recall the fearful sufferings of the martyrs in the early days of the church. We ought also to remember those who are now in bonds and under equally daunting conditions in the countries where God is denied and contemned. They are not released like Peter, and suffer in proportion to their faithfulness. To us it may be money and ease are more dangerous to spiritual life. It seems certain that all the apostles suffered violent deaths except John, and he was banished.

THE DEATH OF A KING

Herod Agrippa I was appointed king by Rome over part of the territory of Herod the Great. He was related to the Maccabees by descent and cultivated the favour of the Jews. It was his son, Agrippa II before whom Paul made his defence (Acts 26). Josephus records this sudden and tragic death also, and the same disease ended the lives of Antiochus Epiphames, who wickedly persecuted the Jews, and of Herod the Great who murdered some of his own children — truly wicked men. This Herod made his oration and accepted the blasphemous praise — to be stricken at once by death. The word of God in the lives of His humble followers "grew and multiplied".

AN ACTIVE CHURCH — ANTIOCH

The members had to be given a new name because of the influence they exercised in the community. Capable men with hearts aflame for Jesus maintained His worship together and were busy teaching the truths of the gospel — the love of God and the sacrifices of Christ. Barnabas from Jerusalem fetched Saul from Tarsus and this holy partnership further sustained and enlivened the church. They had the gifts of the Holy Spirit among them, and when prophets came from Jerusalem describing poverty among the brethren in that area, the partners were chosen to take the generosity of the church to the elders there. Returning to Antioch they found some outstanding men working together. We may safely assume their minds were set upon spreading further the good news which had brought them happiness, assurance of pardon and peace with God. They were men of vision, and God through His prophets gave them instruction for the outreach by Saul and Barnabas. We remember they had only the Old Testament scriptures, and the oral gospel through divine

inspiration though some christians might already be writing "things most surely believed among us" (Luke 1,1). Seeking the will of God the church received the command, fasted, prayed and laid hands upon these two. There would be a form of dedicatory service for this purpose doubtless, and we wonder whether money was provided for the journey to Seleucia, the voyage to Cyprus, and again from Paphos to Perga. Certainly they had divine guidance and exercised faith and commonsense. The work in Cyprus formed a natural beginning for Barnabas (Acts 4,36), and we observe their first attention to the synagogues, as also when they reached Antioch in Pisidia which must have been a considerable town. It is well to consider the pioneering nature of their journeying. We do not know how long they spent in Cyprus. The miraculous defeat of Elymas and their contact with Sergius Paulus indicates a measure of success. The name Saul disappears from the records at this point, and Paul takes leadership — "Paul and his company" (13,13). We understand the regions entered upon at Perga were noted for dangers of all kinds. We glimpse some of them from II Cor. 11,26, and have some sympathy with John Mark facing the unknown with comparatively untested faith. In the offer of free speech in the synagogue we glimpse the welcome of Jews to Jews in a foreign city. Paul's wise and yet frank declaration of the gospel indicates the approach made to Jews wherever opportunity offered — as it did so often. The time and opportunity were of divine appointment.

R. B. SCOTT.

QUOTES — on the Bible

Many things in the Bible I cannot understand; many things in the Bible I only think I understand; but there are many things in the Bible that I cannot misunderstand.

Anonymous

There are ten men who will fight for the Bible to one who will read it.

L. R. Akers

To the Bible men will return, and why? Because they cannot do without it.

Matthew Arnold

The reason some people are down on the Bible is that they are not up on the Bible.

William Ward Ayer

The Bible has always been regarded as part

of the common law of England.

Sir William Blackstone

Do you know a book you are willing to put under your head for a pillow when you are dying? Very well; that is the book you ought to study when you are living. There is only one such book in the world.

Joseph Cook

Time can take nothing from the Bible. It is the living monitor. Like the sun it is the same in its light and influence to man today as it was years ago. It can meet every present enquiry and console every present loss.

Richard Cecil

No lawyer can afford to be ignorant of the Bible.

Rufus Choate

And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves, and gain the
world's assent.

The worst is Scripture warp'd from its intent.

William Cowper

CANDLE DIPPING

A candle's but a simple thing,
It starts with just a bit of string,
Yet dipped and dipped with patient hand,
It gathers wax upon the strand,
Until complete and snowy white,
It gives at last a lovely light.

Life seems so like that bit of string,
Each deed we do a simple thing,
Yet day by day if on life's strand,
We work with patient heart and hand,
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright,
And gives at last a lovely light.

JESUS SAVES

(Matt. 1: 21).

I.—From what does Jesus save?

1. Not from temptations (James 1:2).
2. Not from difficulties (2 Tim. 3:12).
3. Not from temporary death (Heb. 9:27).
4. He saves from sin (Eph. 1:7).

II.—What kind of salvation does he offer?

1. Complete (1 Thes. 5:23).
2. It is present (2 Cor. 6:2).
3. It is eternal (Heb. 9:12).

III.—How does Christ save?

1. By his life (Rom. 5:10).
2. By his blood (1 Peter 1:19).
3. By his gospel (Eph. 1:13).

—Bible Briefs.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

CHANGE OF MEETINGPLACE

I enclose a notice of our move. We were given notice to leave our present hall after 9½ years on account of "maintenance problems". However, we had been sharing with some Pentecostals, and we think they may have been the cause of the trouble, as they left litter behind and were bad time-keepers. So the owners of the hall, not wishing to be accused of prejudice, closed on Sunday to everyone.

We have found quite a suitable new hall, but it is occupied on Saturdays by the "Worldwide Church of God", who must be 7th day people. This will be our 4th move, and we just cannot find a place not tenanted by some denomination besides ourselves, because of the pressure on halls here. There are only three members here, so we could not hope to buy our own.

Last year we had 30 people enquire for Bible correspondence courses. One lady is quite a hopeful contact, and she has remained interested for some 6 months, and is only waiting for her husband to come out of prison before asking an evangelist to call. She and her husband have enrolled about 4 other prisoners too. Unfortunately, she lives out in the country some miles from here.

We could supply a map showing our new place, if any visitors would like to write for one.

Yours in the Lord,
(Miss) R. M. Payne,
1 Kenilworth Avenue,
Reading.

Zambia: Our April report began with news of the new congregation at Zambezi, in the remote northwest bush-country, which now numbers 32 disciples. Also in April there was a two-week residential training course in Biblical Studies for 14 Copperbelt church leaders. Churches of Christ also broadcast daily on Radio Zambia in the African languages. Please contact us during our furlough by writing to us — c/o 1 Wyndley Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, England.

Regards, in Jesus,
Chester and Angela Woodhall.

SLAMANNAN DISTRICT

A goodly number of brethren met at Reddingmuirhead on Saturday 19th May for mutual benefit in discussing the subject "Our Position, Work and Responsibility".

The speakers were Bros. L. Purcell and H. Davidson of Motherwell and the chairman Bro. Joe Malcolm of Denyloanhead.

In the addresses given and in the discussions which followed many interesting points were raised and discussed and everyone enjoyed a rich time of fellowship.

Tea was provided by our Wallacestone brethren and we again thank them for their hospitality.

We shall next meet (DV) at Dalmellington on Saturday 8th September at 3.00 p.m. when the subject for discussion will be "Would a Modern Translation serve the Churches better than the authorised version?"

The speakers will be Bro. E. Jess Trant and Bro. J. McLuckie, Haddington and the chairman Bro. H. Davidson, Motherwell.

OBITUARY

WALLACESTONE

It is with a deep sense of loss that the church meeting at Wallacestone records the death of Bro. John Baird. After a short illness, he fell asleep in Jesus on Monday 9th April, and was laid to rest on Thursday 12th, Bro. Hugh Davidson, Motherwell officiating at both services.

Coming into the church in 1939, Bro. Baird's loss will be sadly felt, because he was always in his place and ready to do anything required of him. We commend his family to our heavenly father in the sure belief that he is safe with Jesus.

James Grant.

Dear brethren and friends, I would like to express my sincere thanks for all the help and messages of sympathy extended in my hour of great loss. They have been a great source of comfort and consolation to myself and my family.

Sis. Jessie Baird.

**APPEAL
CHURCH OF CHRIST
BURN'S STREET,
ILKESTON, DERBYS.**

A Christian appeal for financial assistance is respectfully requested from our Sister Churches.

We are faced with a deficit of over £1,500, being an amount due to the builder for church roof repairs.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, we are faced with this deficit, but even though we are only 8 in number, we are determined to continue worshipping and to keep the doors open to the public.

We are praying that God will bless our membership and are contemplating canvassing with a view to obtaining new members.

We earnestly and sincerely ask for your aid, any amount will be gratefully acknowledged and used in the Master's service.

Bretheren pray for us,
In Christian hope,

All contributions to be sent to:
Bro. D. E. Faulks, (Church Secretary)
129 Godfrey Drive,
Kirk Hallam,
Ilkeston,
Derbyshire DE7 4HR

A DISCIPLE IS

A Mind — through which Christ thinks,
A Heart — through which Christ loves,
A Voice — through which Christ speaks,
A Hand — through which Christ helps.

Change of address

Harold Baines,
Thorpe House,
Knightthorpe Road,
Loughborough,
Leics.

Brother W. Brown (late of Dunfermline) is now residing at:
23A Thomson Terrace,
Stonehaven,
Kincardineshire.
Tel. No. 0569-6477.

EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District churches of Christ require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary: Hugh Davidson, 21 Glen Lyon, St. Leonards, East Kilbride, Scotland G74 2JJ.

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