

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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RUNNING INTO TROUBLE

In the years immediately following the Second World War various movements were set afoot to reconstruct those parts of civilisation which had been completely or almost completely destroyed in the War. Many remember the plans drawn up to rebuild our own shattered cities, or to reconstruct towns which, while having received very little bomb damage, needed redeveloping. Elaborate portfolios of plans were issued, hardly any of which were acted upon. These portfolios, handsome as they are, now simply fill up shelf space in surveyors' offices and reference libraries. The first enthusiasm has died: it has been realised that the money could not be provided to finance these ambitious schemes, or that too much was being attempted too quickly, or that the schemes had not been worked out in the detail and with the accuracy that were necessary. Even today, 23 years after the end of the War, we have to be satisfied with a gradual and piecemeal redevelopment of only the centres of our cities and towns.

Christian Unity

The same feverish activity shown in that phase of reconstruction was also apparent in religious circles. It was felt that, after the slaughter and destruction wreaked by nations upon nations, these men and nations should learn to live together. If this were to come about the Christian Churches must set the example by co-operating, by bringing about unity in mission and purpose in their service of a common Lord, and even set themselves the aim of union between the denominations, so that there should be not many Churches but One Church. In 1948 this Ecumenical (Worldwide) Movement was translated into concrete action in the formation at Amsterdam of the World Council of Churches (the W.C.C.). This was greeted with great enthusiasm and optimism. A term very much used was "the Coming Great Church."

In the 20 years since then there has been intense activity in spreading the cause of Christian Unity. Vast amounts of money have been poured out; great distances travelled; countless meetings and conferences held; libraries of books written; determined resolutions made; eloquent sermons preached; inter-church activities engaged in; and even to some extent inter-denominational communion allowed, all with the object of advancing the cause of ecumenicity. In a few cases high-sounding documents have been drawn up of Terms of Union between two or more Churches, for example the Anglican-Methodist and the Presbyterian-Congregationalist bodies.

In its first enthusiasm it was easy to recognise others as Christians, even though not of one's own religious affiliation. "Our separated brethren" is a term expressing concern that, though we have one Lord we are not of the same community. That

being so, Christian Unity must entail the ignoring or letting go of non-essentials, however dearly these traditions might be held. Thus Dr. Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, expresses this in statements reported in the "Guardian," January 22nd, 1968:

Dr. Ramsey Praises Methodist Unity Move

It was not right to bring into new areas of population—housing estates and industrial areas—a Christian mission divided into denominational structures, often competing in their activities, the Archbishop of Canterbury said yesterday.

Dr. Ramsey, who was preaching in Hinde Street Methodist Church, Westminster, during the week of Prayer for Christian Unity, said the missionary situation made the Christian conscience cry out against this division.

There was an urgent practical need in Britain to recover the New Testament principle of one Church. "For my part, I would rejoice in the changes which the Methodists would bring, as we welcomed one another in humility," he said.

These sentiments are very fine when expressed in generalisations. But they savour too much of "everything in general and nothing in particular." It is when we come to the particulars, the details, that the depth of the differences between the Churches raises difficulties. Judging by the present ecumenical position the more we proceed the less progress is made. The situation is very much like that in "Alice in Wonderland"—"It takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place."

Differences and Difficulties

One does not need to be opposed to the Ecumenical Movement to perceive that it is running into difficulties. Its friends, closely identified and deeply involved in it, admit the same. There is impatience and restlessness with the meagre and superficial results achieved compared with the glowing prophecies made when the Movement came into being. Now that doctrinal and traditional differences are being examined the human and proud element is insisting that these will not be given up for what is being offered. Many members of the denominations (among them some of the best Biblical and evangelical scholars) are crying out for bread and being given a stone.

Thus, constituent members of the W.C.C.—Anglicans high and low, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists, are expressing disquiet at what is taking place. The report on "Conversations between the Methodists and the Church of England" was examined in two successive issues of the "S.S." in 1963. The report aroused a good deal of opposition in both Churches, and this opposition has crystallised, until today it is more solid than ever. Fear is expressed that the episcopal system of the Church of England is going to be imposed upon and meekly accepted by the Methodists, as though that were an honour. Now a later statement disclaims this and waters down the acceptance by designating bishops (in the Anglican sense) as presbyters. The term is scriptural, but the office and work, as set out in the statement, are not. To give a thing a New Testament name does not make it a N.T. practice.

Unity — With Whom ?

What possible unity or union worth the name can there be with a Church whose Primate, the Archbishop of Canterbury, talks to Methodists as Dr. Ramsey does in the

Divine Judgment

We were living at a time when the forces towards unity were strong, and the old self-consciousness had largely disappeared. We were under divine judgment if we did not stir ourselves to use the new opportunities in the field of unity.

The aim for Anglicans and Methodists was one Church in which they would be organically united. "Let it also be clear that we do not think that uniformity in Christian customs is necessary, nor what some people call a monolithic structure. None the less, Christians should, on New Testament principles, be one in organised fellowship as well as in belief and sacrament."

quotation above, and on the other hand visits the Pope and speaks as he (Dr. R.) did at the joint R.C.—C. of E. service in Westminster (R.C.) Cathedral on January 23rd, according to the "Guardian" report of the 24th.

Dr. Ramsey Says Christ Would Welcome Unity

Dr. Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, toyed with some of the central beliefs dividing Roman Catholics from Anglicans when he preached in Westminster Cathedral last night as part of the Christian Unity octave of prayer. His words included no firm commitment to those beliefs.

Speaking for the first time at the headquarters of Roman Catholicism in England, Dr. Ramsey said that the charity engendered by the moves towards united Christendom would secure a welcome from Christ for those who took part.

"Think how Christ welcomed you in your baptism and your confirmation. Think how he welcomes you in the blessed sacrament with the scarcely believable intimacy of his real presence. Think how he welcomes you in absolution when he washes your sins from you just as he washed the feet of the apostles in the upper room. It is an intimacy so awful, so humbling. And for all our sins and failings he welcomes us already into fellowship with Blessed Mary and the saints in heaven."

Cardinal Heenan welcomed Dr. Ramsey to the Cathedral soon after he finished celebrating mass. He said the historic visit was "like the fulfilment of prophecy."

When he was enthroned Archbishop of Westminster in 1963 he said: "A bishop is a pontifex—a builder of bridges. I propose to build bridges and one of these will span the Thames from Westminster to

Lambeth, where a dear friend resides." Dr. Ramsey's "courtesy and charity" in crossing the Thames had resulted in the bridge-building being more than an idle gesture.

Bond of Baptism

Dr. Ramsey began his sermon by recalling his visit to Rome two years ago, and his welcome by the Pope.

"It is in that spirit that we are worshipping together tonight. We know that there are big differences between us. We do not pretend to have solved these.

"We know that we sometimes upset one another by things we do and say. We know that a long ecumenical journey lies ahead of us. Yet already we find ourselves in a new situation, and nothing has helped that new situation more than the great emphasis which the Vatican Council place upon holy baptism. Through holy baptism we share already in a brotherhood in Christ."

Using the bond of baptism, members of both Roman Catholic and Anglican communions were now able, with full ecclesiastical authority, "to act together, not as rivals but as allies in serving God and serving humanity in its many distresses."

This putting together of the broken parts of Christendom would involve bringing the teachings of Christ more into the affairs of the world, Dr. Ramsey said.

Have we not here a perfect case of words without meaning? Words exactly calculated to please and soothe those to whom they were spoken? Truly the prophet Isaiah's words find fulfilment afresh (Isa. 30:10): "For they . . . will not hear the instruction of the Lord; who say to the seers, 'See not'; and to the prophets, 'Prophecy to us: not what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions,'" except that Isaiah uttered God's word and the people rejected it, whereas today the "prophets," the hierarchy are preaching the "smooth things." This is just the language which the Church of Rome delights in and on which she flourishes. So long as "our separated brethren" talk in this way, Rome's purpose not to act towards "unity" is perfectly attained. She has no disquiet about divided Christendom, for all must come her way.

Facing Realities

But, as already pointed out, now that facts have to be faced, that can be dealt with not with words but with deeds, profound disquiet is being expressed among the

Nonconformist denominations. The Baptists are making vigorous protests against the Ecumenical Movement's treatment of baptism—its unquestioning acceptance of infant sprinkling and pouring, as well as believers' immersion, as valid forms. Two long articles in "The Christian" of January 5th and 12th demonstrate that they are deeply disturbed and are determined to stand for what they regard as scripture truth concerning baptism. Much correspondence is found, too, in "The Christian" (an undenominational, interdenominational and evangelical paper) exhorting readers not to be identified with the aims of the World Council of Churches. That champion of ecumenism, the "British Weekly," which advances the cause at every opportunity, is now publishing articles and letters expressing scepticism and disillusionment at the way things are going and the lack of meaningful action towards "unity."

What possible unity can there be except it be agreed on what standard and basis? True, scripture is accepted as that standard—*accepted* but is it *recognised*? Lip-service is paid and appeal made to the New Testament. But test teaching and practice of constituent members of the W.C.C. and how much of it do we find in the N.T.? Are baptism and the Lord's table stressed as fundamentals? Even if they are, in many cases their observance is far removed from what we find in the N.T. The same applies to methods of church government: the intense conflict as to episcopacy, the presbytery, the congregation is sure evidence that the simple pattern of elders and deacons set out in the N.T. is not taken seriously nor put into operation. Then we have in these constituent bodies members of Churches, those who are far from being Christians in the N.T. sense (surely the *only* sense?)

We have tried to set out the position as to "Christian Unity" with fairness, restraint and humility. For we in the churches of Christ cannot wash our hands of this cause, doing nothing to show that only in Christ can "they all be one," as the Saviour prayed. The unity of those "in Christ" is already there, brought about by the Holy Spirit in baptism. We cannot achieve or *attain* that oneness; we can only *maintain* it. To maintain it we must examine not only the position of professing Christians around us, but ourselves, in the light of God's word. We must not adopt any attitude of "We have restored the N.T. church. We are *there*." God in His word has given us ample guidance, in teaching and practice, as churches and as individuals, to demonstrate that Christ's church is that which sets itself to adhere to that word, and in that adherence only can be the power which is able to reject cherished opinions and traditions, to follow the way God shows us, and to realise the inevitable and perfect outcome—"that they may all be one."

EDITOR

FAITH

HOW OFTEN one hears faith summarily referred to by reciting the first verse of Heb. 11, while paying little or no attention to the second sentence of that verse—"the proving of things not seen." Let us take a deeper look into this verse: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

What Faith Is and Does

First and foremost, if we care to analyse this, faith is substantive in those things which appear to be abstract. By this we have hope turned or changed into reality, our aspirations appreciated and fulfilled to the satisfying of our desires, amounting to actual possession in our very minds. Doesn't Jesus say (Mark 11:24) "All things, whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe ye have received them and ye shall have them." The third verse in Heb. 11 claims this to be so: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God: so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This evidence or proving is carried a stage further in the fourth verse: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying

of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." By faith Noah amidst great derision built the ark, the abstract overriding the apparent concrete to men. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Reading on to the end of the chapter we become acquainted with what faith is and did in so many ways and forms, relative to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets and martyrs. Commencing to read the 12th chapter verse 2 says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." The importance of our faith being and remaining strong is the writer's deep concern. The fifth verse is ever timely.

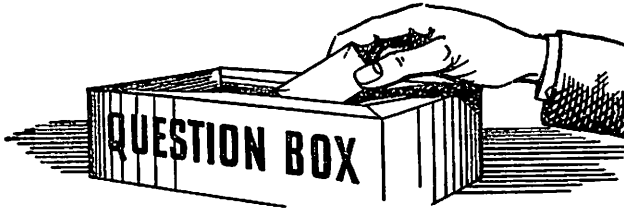
Let us continue to read to the 17th verse, that we may realise the benefits of chastisement, so far removed from the belief of those who think that the life of a faithful child of God can or should be one of calm repose and unassailability. This is not true, as this portion of scripture adequately proves. Rather the opposite is the true position of a child of God. The sixth verse says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son he receiveth." The 14th verse outlines for us how needful to our faith and godliness is fatherly chastisement and exhortations that we "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Obedience of Faith

Having noted in the 10th, 11th and 12th chapters what faith achieves, it is further to our benefit to examine the excellence of our faith through Jesus Christ, as shown in chapters 1 to 9 of this epistle. This comparison enables us to embrace this appreciation somewhat, which is so vital if we are to obtain a true glimpse of that faith as set forth by our Lord and Master. At the beginning of the epistle we are shown the great excellence and favour used by God in sending His Son to reveal God's self to us. When we have tried to grasp the excellence and dignity of our great High Priest, who, being so faithful to God, even obedient unto death for our sins, we can the more easily obtain a clearer vision of the faith presented by Jesus, who is the "Author and finisher of our faith." Chapter 4 reveals the power of the word of our faith, the need of our holding fast that profession, that we may find grace in the time of need. Chapter 5 tells how by His suffering He learned obedience: "And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him." If obedience was so essential that by suffering Jesus learned His obedience, how needful that we hear His word obediently. We have here placed so extensively and inclusively the necessity of obedience in all who are in the faith of our Lord Jesus. Chapter 6 shows how steadfastness in the faith does not permit stagnation: we are to press on to perfection, leaving behind the beginnings and foundation, not slothful, but diligent followers of our great High Priest. Chapter 7 further points out the superiority of the new covenant over that legal one which was ineffectual, while the new one, when fully considered, enables us to know somewhat more, what faith is and does for all the faithful in Christ Jesus.

J. A. GREGORY

(To be continued)



Conducted by
James Gardiner

“Could you please account for the fact that in the recording of Paul’s conversion it is said (in Acts 9:7) that his companions who journeyed with him ‘stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no man.’ But in Acts 22:9 it is said that they ‘heard not the voice of him that spake’; and in Acts 26:14 Paul says ‘And when we were all fallen to the earth.’ In the first case his companions were *standing and heard*, and in the latter case his companions *heard not and were fallen to the earth.*”

FIRST it should perhaps be explained to any who are unfamiliar with the above quotations that in Acts 9 the writer of the Acts, Luke, is giving us a general narrative of the incidents surrounding Paul’s eventful journey to Damascus, a journey on which he saw the light in more senses than one. Acts 22 records Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, and his speech to the people from the stairs of the castle prison in which speech he gives his own account of what transpired on the way to Damascus. In Acts 26, Paul makes his “defence” speech before king Agrippa, in which he recounts his life history and refers to the events which occurred on the way to Damascus. It is often alleged that as these three accounts differ and appear even to contradict there can be no evidence that any of them is true. And if some part of the bible is untrue how do we decide which parts are true ?

Hearing and not Hearing

With reference to the “heard and heard not” part of the question I think the context reflects the fact that Saul’s companions did not see Christ, but Saul did: they heard the voice of Christ speaking with Saul but they did not hear what was said. The following analogies are comparable with the situation in the question: a visitor to Hyde Park “Speakers’ Corner” finds himself on the edge of a huge crowd and is keen to hear the speaker addressing this crowd. He is too far away however to hear what the speaker is saying. We have a situation therefore where the visitor can “hear” the speaker but cannot get close enough to “hear” the speaker’s words. Saul’s companions similarly could hear the voice of Christ and yet could not hear His words. We have probably all had the annoying experience of a telephone conversation on a “bad” line. We can “hear” the person on the other end of the line but we yell, “Speak up please; I can’t *hear* you.” How do we know someone is speaking to us at the other end of the line? because we can “hear” them talking to us. Why do we get infuriated? because we cannot “hear” them. It is not a question of being able to *understand* them (after all they are speaking in English) but a question of not being able to “hear” them (although “hear” in many instances means “to understand”). Saul’s companions would have *understood* what Christ was saying to Saul if they had been able to “hear” him, because we know that Jesus spoke to Saul in Hebrew. Saul had no trouble in understanding Jesus because, unlike his companions, he could hear what Jesus was saying. Even in a busy restaurant we might be able truthfully to say that we can “hear” everybody talking, yet are unable to say that we can “hear” what any of them are saying.

Meaning Explained by Scripture

This, of course, is because of the different shades of meaning attached to the word “hear.” The original Greek word is always “akouo,” but the context governs the meaning we are attaching to the word in each case. The three main shades of meaning are (1) to have the capacity or faculty to hear; (2) to understand or perceive the sense

or purport of what we hear; and (3) to give earnest heed. We have a verse in Matt. 13:13 which uses these three senses of the word, where Jesus says "Therefore I speak to them in parables because seeing they see not, and *hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*" We know ourselves from experience that it is possible that while we hear the word of God read, we at the same time hear it not, neither do we understand.

Sometimes the translators of the King James version have translated "akouo" as "understand" where they have considered it necessary by the context. With reference to speaking in tongues 1 Cor. 14:2 says, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto me but unto God: for no man understandeth (margin: "heareth") him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." The word "understand" therefore is really our old friend "heareth" and if the translators had left it as "heareth" the verse would have read, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God: for no man *heareth* him . . ." The congregation would "hear" him speak in an unknown tongue but God alone would hear (understand) what he said. This is the identical position to that in the question in the Acts of the apostles.

The translators doubtless used the word "understand" in 1 Cor. 14:2 because of the fact that, although the hearers of one speaking in tongues could hear each word clearly enunciated, they still could not understand the meaning of the words without an interpreter. In the case of Saul's companions, however, they could merely hear Christ speaking but could not hear what he was saying, albeit he spoke not in an unknown tongue, but in Hebrew. We have a fairly similar situation in John 12:28 which describes the reaction of some of the people after Jesus had prayed "Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by and heard it said that it thundered: others said an angel spake to him." Like Saul's companions they "heard" the voice from heaven but they did not "hear" what was said. They heard not the articulate words.

No Discrepancy or Contradiction

With reference to the second portion of the question—one statement in Acts 26:14 saying that Saul's companions had all *fallen to the earth* and another, in Acts 9:7 that they *stood* speechless.

Obviously the men had to be standing before they could fall down, and we can be sure that they did not remain prostrate on the ground but eventually got up. I think a close examination of the two accounts leads us to suppose that, although they *all* initially fell to the earth, the companions of Saul arose of their own accord and stood speechless watching Saul as he remained there prostrate on the ground. This is surely borne out by the two accounts: Acts 26:14 says that it was *after* they had all fallen to the earth that the conversation took place between Jesus and Saul. Acts 9:7 says that it was *after the conversation was over* that "the men which journeyed with him stood speechless." The time interval, therefore, is very important between the two statements and of such duration as to disallow any claim being made that a discrepancy or contradiction exists here.

There are no real contradictions in God's word, although there are many apparent contradictions. *i.e.* things which on the surface and at first glance appear certainly to be out of harmony but, as the morning mists melt with the rising of the sun, so usually do these apparent discrepancies fade when further light and closer examination and scrutiny are brought to bear upon them.

THE SPIRIT FORBIDS

“What no . . . heart of man conceived . . . God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

Often misused to describe a future home rather than a present gift, this passage refers to a revelation rather than a habitation. In his fifth appeal for Christian unity (1 Cor. 2:6-13), Paul uses this passage as a pivot to contrast a human teacher's limitations with the Holy Spirit's infinitude. Only the perfect (not *sinless* but *mature*) recognize the depth of God's revealed wisdom.

He Reveals God's Wisdom (vv. 6-10)

The mystery, God's eternal plan for man's salvation, is neither new nor difficult; it is simply recent. Before, it was hidden; now, it is revealed (see also Ephesians 3:9-12).

Things pertaining to his salvation were so far beyond man that they didn't even enter his imagination until the Holy Spirit revealed them (see also 2 Peter 1:20, 21). Inspired men were but instruments of the Spirit to give God's revelation to man.

He Understands God's Thoughts (vv. 11, 12)

Only the truly wise receive the Spirit of God rather than the spirit of the world. By this Spirit they preach Christ crucified

No man penetrates God's designs except first the Holy Spirit reveals them. In fact, no man knows another man's plans save one communicates with the other. Much less, then, could man know God's plan for salvation apart from His revelation. How futile, how foolish, to try “to measure God's arm with man's finger.”

He Teaches God's Plan (v. 13)

The Holy Spirit is an infinite teacher. What man could possibly match His wisdom?

The wise man dare not use improper language to describe God's rich spiritual gifts. He fears oratory, which lets in more delight than light; he shuns obscure ways of saying things; He questions attempts to glean mysterious meanings from plain passages; he avoids loading his words with worldly affectations. His only safe course lies in using the Spirit's words to teach spiritual things in spiritual terms which spiritual people recognize (see 1 Peter 4:11).

Paul seems to argue that by elevating the instrument (men: Paul, Peter, Apollos) rather than the message (Christ crucified) the Corinthians caused divisions. Had they been spiritual enough to discern the gospel's depths there would have been no wrangling over the teachers' knowledge or personality or method. The infinite Spirit completely obscures any human teacher.

L. E. TESTER in “Communion Quester”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH 1968

3—1 Kings 3:4-15	Matt. 6:19-34
10—Proverbs 9	Matt. 7:1-14
17—Deuteronomy 13:1-11	Matt. 7:15-29
24—Leviticus 14:1-20	Matt. 8:1-17
31—Exodus 14:15-31	Matt. 8:18-34

“THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT”

I AM so glad that I was made to learn off by heart Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 when I was at school. Matthew's orderly and systematic report of the Saviour's teaching on this particular occasion is searching and impressive. It is quite certain that Jesus must have said many of these things over and over again in different settings during His more than three years of close contact with men and women. They enshrine principles by which He lived and died, and by which

if we are to be real Christians we must also live and die. We have an instinctive dislike for the word "sermon," because of its association with robes, pulpits and the formalities of what is largely a false impression or show divorced from down-to-earth Christianity. Jesus, the greatest of all "Rabbis," was never an official one. His authority was the plain authority of truth, spoken so clearly that "the common people heard Him gladly." His qualification was not a certificate granted by the Schools but a knowledge of the Word of God—and remember this was the Old Testament as we now have it—acquired by application of wisdom and the grace of God (Luke 2:40 and 52) and growth through experience and attainment of maturity. Finally, upon His submission to baptism He was endowed with the Spirit of God without measure (John 3:34 & 35).

Our readings have already covered the character, privileges and responsibility of the subjects of the kingdom of heaven (5:3-16). Then we have the relationship and contrast with the law and Pharisaic interpretations of it (5:17-46). The March readings first continue the warnings against mere show and its limitation of reward by comments on fasting. Neither giving, prayer, nor fasting is wrong, but we fail if we do them "to be seen of men." They must be heart exercises, and God will then have respect to them. Do not we all need these warnings? Our observances which others see can become formal so easily, especially those we practice frequently. It is easy to see and to criticise the Pharisees, but we must remember many of them were good and thoroughly respectable people; however, their outward forms had become the substance of their religion instead of the shadow of their heart-affection for God. Our observances must be the result of our innermost motives.

This utterly honest principle has to be applied to every part of life, and the rest of chapter six is devoted to the attitude to material necessities. Saving up for saving-up's sake must be abandoned, lest we place our faith in material possessions and they dominate our lives. It is true that most of us must earn our living by working with brain or hand, and this

takes up a lot of time; but it is necessary to sustain, not to amass wealth. The love of amassing wealth has been characteristic of the Jews of all ages. Our possessions can absorb attention which should be applied to service of God and neighbour. That is when they enslave us.

Anxiety is one of the enemies of mankind. It poisons the body and saps initiative. It can be quite as harmful as trouble and misfortune themselves. Real trust in God is the antidote. Jesus teaches us that we must not allow circumstances of life to turn us away from our primary interests—His church and His right-doing.

It would appear that others besides the actual disciples of the Saviour were listening to Him (see 7:28) but primarily His words are for their guidance. We turn then from attitudes towards God and the Kingdom to mutual relations. First the critical spirit must be checked. It is hypocritical and dangerous to find fault with others when we have faults ourselves perhaps just as serious. So our eyes must first be turned inward, and correction humbly endeavoured there. This will certainly modify our criticism.

The disciples of Christ have the most precious and very highest truths to communicate, and we must learn when not to expose them to ridicule unnecessarily. There is no virtue in presenting the most sacred truths where they will only meet mockery and insult. Some of us have heard blasphemous parodies of sacred poetry and of the Word itself. We cannot prevent this but must avoid exciting it. No doubt the apostles as their work developed remembered this warning.

Wisdom, faith and spiritual insight are required for carrying out the teaching here given, and the urgent request should be made where help is found—in God—with assurance that He is both willing and able. Earnest effort is essential, and we must not expect to be with the crowd if we are on the right road. Moreover there will be false teachers who will have the appearance of honesty but will be distinguishable by the results of their work, or by their characters, in due time. We bear in mind that this takes time, and only history will finally reveal how much of this false teaching there has been and is.

We have guidance as we have the will of God revealed in His word, and the test for those who call Jesus "Lord" is whether or not they line up with that. Mighty works they may do, but the profession of the Name must go hand in hand with obedience. We do indeed need to be watchful lest what we regard as a great work should be out of harmony with the Lord's will. Was it not when the church had apparently got the victory over the state that apostasy had set in, and the true faith gone underground?

There is a sense in which everything has been done for us: what we could not do at all God has accomplished for us; but the concluding words of the "Sermon" remind us that we must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling"; and now notice, "for God is at work in you," and this is connected with obedience (Phil. 2:12 & 13). Hearing the word will not avail at last unless every effort has been made by the grace of God to act upon it.

R. B. SCOTT

MIRACLE OF NEW HEART

From the southern tip of Africa came the news that broke on front pages around the world: a team of surgeons had given a new heart and an extension of life to a dying patient. It was another brilliant achievement of modern medicine, even though that first patient later died. At the moment of writing this, many of us are praying for the dentist who underwent the second operation, during these vital few days afterwards.

How remarkable it is that while the hope of new life proffered by modern science makes front-page news everywhere, God's standing offer of a new heart and new life in Christ is either ignored altogether or else banished to some obscure spot on page nineteen.

Somehow evangelical Christianity must capture for the good news of God's redemptive grace the world-wide interest routinely commanded by the wonders of medical science.

Not long after the first human heart transplant occurred in Cape Town, Associated Press carried a bulletin that said that hearts of chimpanzees may

soon be transplanted into humans. Dr. William Cleland, one of Britain's leading heart surgeons, reported that some animal parts, such as the valves of pigs and calves, are already used in surgery, and that soon whole organs may be transplanted.

There are many implications of this whole subject . . . We would merely suggest here that it would be ironical indeed if twentieth century man, offered a new heart by the Lord of Glory, should find the means to extend his years with the heart of a chimpanzee, while rejecting the life of the world to come.

"The Christian" — Jan. 12, '68

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

It was with pleasure and profit I read your article on the subject of "*Security in the Midst of Insecurity*" (January edition) and being deeply impressed by what I consider a true analysis of the instability and deplorable condition of the world I am constrained to express a deep appreciation of your heart-searching article and certainly would urge every reader to read it most carefully. It may be many of us fail to get our priorities and values right. In view of this, our impact on life appears to make little impression. We can so easily become involved in the practices of the world that almost unconsciously we retard the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, as committed Christians undoubtedly we should view with alarm the undesirable features on T.V. and use every legitimate means whereby such offensive programmes be removed from the sight of all viewers. We sometimes become confused between tradition and conviction. Meantime the great hope is in the fact that an increasing number of people are realising that the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing. The human spirit is restless until it finds its rest in God.

Sidney W. Collins

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Wigan (Scholes). — The church rejoices in the restoration to fellowship of Bro. James Parr. Some years ago the church regretfully withdrew from Bro. Parr for reasons set out in the New Testament, and this was announced to other congregations through the "S.S." Now we are glad to make it equally public that our brother has repented and turned from that way of life for which separation took place.

Zambia Oct.-Dec. 31st, 1967

Dear Faithful Friends,

Greetings through the grace of God! "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). This is one of the comforting passages we have studied in BaGeoffrey's class on Monday evenings at Linda compound. Tuesday evening there is Bible study at Mukuni village, which is very inspiring. Various ones give the lessons. Usually 8 or 10 go out with me about 4 and visit the Christians and sick. One leprous mother (no hands and no toes) just lost her twin boys. She has one little girl about 6, so we made a dress for her—we'll take the hand sewing machine and finish the hem, and a quilt for her mother. BaStephen and the Christians have nearly finished plastering the church house at Mukuni and are trusting the Lord to supply the wood for the seats—BaStephen can make them. These Christians give their time and of their means to build the church. Surely God will inspire others to help them finish it before the rains come. Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings they meet to study God's word, besides ladies' Bible study in the afternoon. Wednesday and Friday, from 5 to 6, there is Bible class at Linda compound, then at 7.30 on Friday there is "New Converts' Class" at BaSikutes. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, from 3 to 4, is Bible study at the Old Folks' Home, besides Bible class and sewing at Sinde Thursday morning (unless there is

too much rain). Today we went to Mujala church with a clear sky, but before Douglas finished his lesson on Prayer the hard rains came for about 15 minutes, but God let it soak into the ground, and just miss the kabondo so we arrived safely in town just before the cloudburst and hail hit Livingstone. December 17th Douglas began services at the Old Folks' Home, so all the blind and crippled can attend. Last Sunday another of the women was baptized and today an erring Christian rededicated her life to God. During the past three months two more of the elderly men have been baptized; besides 4 baptized and 1 restored at Maramba; 2 baptized at Linda: "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

Mabel and Leonard Bailey are taking a much needed rest during January, so will be moving to Sinde in February. Today I took Esther to Sinde to stay with friends until I go there in February. God hears and answers prayers! Thanks to all who have prayed for and helped in saving souls—your love and fellowship help us to face each new day with thankfulness and zeal to serve God more diligently. Your letters are such a lift and encouragement. God bless you for sharing your time when you could be resting. Please keep praying that the word of the Lord may be glorified and bear much fruit.

"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all your ways. The Lord be with you all."

With christian love and hope,

Elaine Brittell

Cameroons Evangelisation Fund. — Further to the report in last month's "S.S." I have pleasure in informing the brethren that a further three immersions have taken place at Kumba.

Jas. R. Gardiner

* * *

Some people throw away a bushel of truth because it contains a grain of error; others swallow a bushel of error because it contains a grain of truth.

—Firm Foundation

TO THE CONTRIBUTORS

Will all who write for or to the "S.S.," whether articles, news-items or other matter for publication, please write (or better type) on ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY. This is a great advantage to compositors who set up the type.

Also will senders of items for Coming Events please state whether they wish such announcements repeated, and if so until what dates.

Thank you.

I will go in the strength of the Lord God. (Psalm 71, 16).

BY the grace of God I resolve to set out as it were anew in the Christian race; to strive to forget past failures or discouragements, so far as they would tend to relax my endeavours or to lessen my hopes; and yet so to remember them as to walk very humbly, watchfully, and circumspectly, before God — "loving much," as one to whom indeed "much has been forgiven."

If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you. (Matt. 17, 20).

FAITH is dead to doubts, dumb to discouragements, blind to impossibilities. Faith lifts its hands up through the threatening clouds, lays hold of Him who has all power in heaven and on earth. Faith. It makes the uplook good, the outlook bright, the inlook favourable and the future glorious.

Give us serenity to endure what we cannot change, strength to change what can and should be changed and wisdom to know the difference.

—*Belvedere Church Bulletin*

Let us love one another; for love is of God. (1 John 4, 7).

THROUGH faith the divine life flows in to us—through love it flows out to others. To abide in Christ is to live a life of constant faith Christ-ward, and constant love man-ward.

Every creature of God is good . . . if it be received with thanksgiving. (1 Tim. 4, 4).

GRATITUDE produces contentment in all conditions, and it places a bridle on all one's desires. It checks gloom, it destroys envy and it returns with blessings on the head. We taste the sweetness of a gift twice over when we are grateful for it.

MARRIAGE

Janet Margaret Reid to Anthony Latham, in the meeting place of the Church in Summer Lane, Birmingham, on Saturday, 3rd February, 1968. Paul Jones officiated. (Eph. 5:31; Numbers 6:24-26).

BIRTH

To Isabel (née Scott) and Edward Bennett, 58 St. George's Avenue, London, N.7, a daughter, Judith Ruth, on October 11th, 1967.

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