

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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as it was in the beginning.*

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Talks on the Tabernacle.

No. 4. The Priesthood

'NOW these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services' (Hebrews 9:6 R.V.). Previous to the setting up of the tabernacle, under the patriarchal dispensation, the father, as head of the family, officiated at the altar. Now, men are chosen and set apart for this service.

Under the Mosaic dispensation the priesthood was in the hands of Aaron, and the tribe of Levi. They were 'appointed for men in things pertaining to God' to 'offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins' (Hebrews 5:1). The prophet spoke from God to man: the priest spoke from man to God.

Their Consecration

Only those physically perfect, without blemish or deformity, could be appointed priests.

A sin-offering and a burnt-offering were provided. The sin-offering spoke eloquently of the need of atonement for sin; the burnt-offering, consumed on the altar, spoke of a life wholly devoted, consumed in God's service.

Those to be appointed priests were washed in water, and clothed in linen garments. A 'ram of consecration' was slain, and its blood applied to 'the right ear . . . upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot' (Exodus 29:20). This suggests consecrated ears to hear God's word; consecrated hands to serve him; and consecrated feet to walk in His ways.

The New Covenant Priesthood

Under the new and better covenant all believers are priests. Strictly speaking, Christianity has not a priesthood; it is a priesthood. It has no class of priests, and needs none, neither of the Roman, Greek, or Anglican order.

Bishop Lightfoot (Church of England) said: 'The only priests in the New Testament, designated as such, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood.' Writing to believers scattered abroad, passing through a fiery trial of persecution, Peter said: 'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ . . . Ye are an elect-race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness

into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 1:5-9). John wrote: 'Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood, and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father.' 'Thou wast slain, and did purchase unto God, with thy blood, men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth' (Rev. 1:5; 5:9-10 R.V.).

New Covenant Consecration

We too, have a sin-offering and burnt-offering, of which those offered under the old covenant were types and shadows. Paul wrote: 'Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour' (Eph. 5:2).

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ was wholly devoted to God. He was a true burnt-offering, consumed in God's service, and in all things well-pleasing to God. He was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,' 'in him was no sin'; yet God 'made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. 5:21). The prophetic word was fulfilled: 'He was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Isaiah 53:12).

New Covenant Priests are washed and clothed

As the altar typified the Cross, so baptism is the anti-type of the laver. The Lord's plan has not been cancelled nor altered by Him. It still stands as the only way of salvation, and of becoming priests unto God. The Lord Jesus said: 'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28:18-20 R.V.).

How faithfully that commission was carried out is seen in the Acts of Apostles. There were no exceptions or exemptions then; there should be none now.

There is a clear and close connection between the blood of Jesus and the water of baptism. Jesus said: 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins' (Matt. 26:28 R.V.). To those anxious enquirers on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said: 'Repent ye, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). Here repentance and baptism are stated to be for the same purpose that the Lord's blood was shed for: *i.e.*, remission of sins. A passage already referred to, reads in Authorised Version: 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood' (Rev. 1:5). But to the penitent persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, a heaven-sent messenger said: 'And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord' (Acts 22:16). In the one passage sins are said to be washed away in His blood, and in the other in baptism. Do these passages contradict each other? By no means.

Paul wrote: 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death' (Rom. 6:3). When was that precious, soul-cleansing blood shed? When Jesus died on Calvary; and baptism is the Lord's appointed means of bringing a believer into contact with His death. 'Into Jesus Christ . . . into his death.'

Surely all agree that there is no remission of sins, no salvation apart from the Lord and His death. Some say they cannot see this. Yet they talk and sing of garments being washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Alexander Campbell explained the matter thus: 'God has

transferred, in some way, the whitening efficacy or cleansing power of water to blood, and the absolving or pardoning power of blood to water' (*Christian System*, p 228). In that well-known hymn, 'Rock of Ages,' Toplady states the simple truth:

'Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.'

It is not a matter for sight, but for faith in the Lord, His word and promises.

'Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."'

As the Jewish priests, after being washed, were clothed in white linen garments, typical of righteousness, so the New Covenant priests are clothed in robes of righteousness. It is written: 'As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. 3:27). Having no righteousness of our own we accept from the Lord Jesus the wedding garment of His righteousness, and we are clothed, covered, accepted in Him. We put on Christ, and He is our righteousness.

Sacrifices demanded from us

1. 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. 12:1-3).
2. 'Through him, then, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name' (Heb. 13:15).
3. 'But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased' (Heb. 13:16).

Nothing is worthy of being called a sacrifice unless it costs, hurts, pains.

It has been well said: "There's a red stain in the word sacrifice."

In short, God demands our all. Under the Old Covenant the sacrifices were presented dead, under the New Covenant a living body with all its faculties and powers must be given up to the Lord to be used, consumed in His service.

The true New Covenant priest says, and shows by deeds that he means it:

'Take my life, and let it be,
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee!'

EDITOR.

The American Scene--2.

LAST month, I reminded readers of a fact often overlooked: that there are radical differences in the way our 'common language' is spoken on either side of the Atlantic Ocean. Words familiar to both countries may have quite different meanings in each. Simple examples spring to mind as I write. Rarely do people talk about 'cars,' but frequently about 'automobiles,' and sometimes about 'machines.' Incidentally, there is an almost unbelievable amount of traffic on the highways over there. It is a fact that just about everyone has a car, and insists on driving it on the wrong side of the road! The automobile doesn't use 'petrol' either: it burns 'gas.' When travelling, we never 'registered out luggage'—we always 'checked

our baggage.' If you talk about the 'wireless' nobody knows what you mean—but every home has at least one 'radio.'

A further example in the religious realm is the word 'meeting.' To us it means a single service or gathering, to them not so. Should a Church request a preacher to 'hold us a meeting,' it is asking him to conduct a series of services, a special mission. Thus 'all day meeting' refers to a series of meetings on one day, 'three day meeting' to three days of special services, and so on.

We can never over-emphasise these fundamental differences in our mutual use of words. In honestly seeking to understand the situation on the American continent, we must first be sure that we rightly understand what the brethren there mean in what they say and write. Too often we have jumped to conclusions—and wrong ones at that—through mistakenly assuming that the same word or phrase necessarily means to them what it means to us.

1.—The Lord's Supper

It cannot be denied that differences do exist in the practice of Churches in the two countries, and in their attitude toward the Table of the Lord. It is also true that considerable misunderstanding has arisen, due in no small measure to the use of unscriptural phrases. This became apparent in the numerous discussions I had with the brethren on what they were wont to call 'the communion question.'

Close Communion

Again and again, during conversations with individuals, and also in 'open forum' sessions, I was asked if the Churches in Britain believed in 'close communion.' I was glad to answer in the affirmative, but found it necessary on every occasion to explain both what the phrase does, and does not mean.

Some Misconceptions

It was apparent that the very idea of 'close communion' inspired many brethren with horror. It seemed that they regarded it with as much distaste as they would instrumental music in worship, salvation by faith alone, or the false doctrine of a second chance after death. But it was soon clear that this aversion to close communion sprang from a failure to understand what we mean by the term.

As generally used over there, 'close communion' does not mean what it does to us. To some, the phrase was taken to mean that we held the same views on the Breaking of Bread as those maintained by certain sects in the United States. These people teach that a man may only 'break the bread' in the assembly where he is baptised, and not in any other assembly of that particular denomination! These religious groups call their unscriptural practice 'close communion.' Being familiar with this usage, many brethren naturally assumed that we too held this erroneous conviction. I never spoke on the subject without emphasising that the Churches in Britain do not believe in nor practise this—and have never done so.

Others had taken it for granted that we did not allow any save Christians (immersed believers) to be present at the Breaking of Bread service. I met those who seriously believed that should a non-member come to one of our Sunday morning services he would be refused admittance to the meeting-house! This misunderstanding may be related to the difference in our procedure here and there. We most often urge the unsaved to attend our Sunday night (gospel) service. They invite non-

members to the morning service—which is invariably larger than the evening meeting. I think I visited only one congregation where the Sunday night attendance was usually as big as that in the morning meeting. Otherwise largest attendances were always at the service where the Supper was observed. Be that as it may, I frequently had to point out that there was no restriction whatever on the unimmersed attending our Sunday morning service. We bar no-one from the meeting, but the unimmersed are welcome only as observers of our mode of worship—not as participators in the feast.

Also there were those who had the idea that there was some real division between sections of the congregation when we met to break bread. Whence this idea originated I know not, but many asked me if we had our meeting-house so arranged that the baptised would sit in one part of the building and the unbaptised in another. 'Sheep on the right hand, and goats on the left.' That seemed to be the picture in their minds. It was necessary to point out that any-one may sit anywhere in our assemblies when the saints meet to remember Jesus.

What saith the Scriptures?

Having shown that faithful Churches of Christ in this country did not give assent to any of the unscriptural notions described, it was necessary to state clearly what we do believe as to who may scripturally participate Supper is on the Lord's Day, in the Lord's House (the Church), for the when the brethren assemble to obey the Saviour's injunction: 'Remember me.' I never met anyone who opposed our contention: that the Lord's Lord's people alone; the Lord's people consisting of those who after faith, repentance, and confession, had been baptised into Christ. Our discussion usually centred around Acts 2, and repeatedly I outlined the Divine order there indicated. 'They' that gladly received Peter's word were baptised, and 'they' (those obedient in baptism after believing and repenting) continued steadfastly '... in the breaking of the bread.' This was always admitted. The real problem was never who had a Scriptural right to the Supper, but whether or not the Church herself should restrict it to Christians only, and if so, by what means. More of this next month.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Conference Report.

SATURDAY, April 8th, will stand out as a memorable milestone in the movement to restore the Church of the New Testament in Great Britain. On that date, about one hundred and fifty brethren, from many parts of the country, made their way to Blackpool for the Spring Conference, which was held in the Chapel Street Methodist Chapel. A 1.30 p.m., Bro. G. H. Hudson took the chair, and the Conference was opened by the singing of the hymn, 'Join all the glorious names.' Bro. W. Crosthwaite led in prayer. The Conference unanimously appointed Bro. Carlton Melling to be recording secretary.

In a few choice words, Bro. H. Winter gave a warm welcome to the Conference on behalf of the Blackpool Church.

After reading Rom. 15:1-13, Bro. G. H. Hudson laid special stress on the great need for unity in the Church to-day. Setting before the Conference the example of the Saviour, who pleased not Himself, but came to do the will of God, he appealed to all the brethren to let personal feelings and desires be laid aside that the Body of Christ might stand forth in all its beauty. Applying this principle to instrumental music in worship and

one-man ministry, he said that our opposition to these did not arise from any personal feelings or likes, but to the fact that all things that are out of keeping with the Will of God, as revealed by Christ, must be laid aside, in order to obtain that unity which is an expression of the spirit of Christ. He concluded with an earnest appeal for a greater measure of unity, that we might press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Bro. Hood read the minutes of the last Conference, which were adopted.

The financial report was given by Bro. R. McDonald. This showed that while the contributions had risen to the total of £908 7s., expenses had also risen, and totalled £815 8s. 4d., and left a balance of £261 2s. 5d. Bro. McDonald mentioned the fact that the Committee had agreed to pay the National Insurance contributions for the evangelists, and that this had accounted for £46 5s. He also said that the effort among the fisher brethren at Yarmouth, in the months of October and November, 1949, had incurred some expense to Committee, but all who were associated with it felt it to have been worth while. Another point mentioned by Bro. McDonald was that Bro. Crosthwaite had listed on his allowance being reduced. He paid a high tribute to the work done by Bro. Crosthwaite, and commended his self-sacrificing spirit to the brethren. The report was adopted.

Bro. Hood then presented the Committee's report. Three meetings have been held during the year. The Committee have three evangelists, Bren. A. Allan, D. Dougall and A. Gardiner. Bro. Allan had spent the months of May, June and July in training under Bro. W. Crosthwaite, at Ulverston. August had been spent with the Church at Blackburn. The period September to December was spent with the Summer Lane Church, Birmingham. Bedminster was served during January, and then Bro. Allan went to Ulverston for a further period, where he will remain till the end of June. Arrangements have been made for a return visit to Bedminster for the months of August, September, and October.

Bro. Dougall had given May, June, and July to the Church in Dunfermline, after which he went to work in the Slamannan District till the end of March. He is now serving the East Kirkby Church for the period April to June. Bro. Gardiner continued to serve the Church at Bedminster until the middle of August, then travelled north and spent six weeks in the Slamannan District. October and November were spent with the fisher Brethren in Yarmouth, from where he went to Peterhead at the beginning of December, and has remained with the Church there since that time. Special consideration has been given to the possibilities of furthering the preaching of the Gospel among the fisherfolk, and to the question of having some-one moving from port to port with the fishing fleet.

In the discussion that followed, Bren. McDonald and Hudson paid special tribute to the work of Bro. Hood, as secretary, who had found his task very exacting in view of the fact that he had to remove his home from Liverpool to West Hartlepool during his term of office. The report was adopted.

Bro. W. Steele next presented the report of the Nyasaland mission. This showed that there were three funds. The fund for the support of the evangelistic work showed a balance of £97 4s. 2d., which was a decrease of about £25 on last year's balance. The fund providing Bibles and Scripture Standards showed an adverse balance of £5 17s. 2d. on the year's working, after £84 had been spent. The distress fund showed that £55 had been sent to Nyasaland for the relief of the suffering caused through the famine in Africa, leaving a balance of £1 19s. 7½d.

Bro. Steele offered a word of explanation for the existence of three funds. When brethren sent money to him they usually said that it was

to be put to a certain usage. Where this was done the money was used for that purpose only. For years he had received subscriptions for the evangelist fund. Later brethren began to send money for the purchase of Bibles for use in Africa. Recently he had learned of the suffering caused in Africa by the famine, and when he reported this to the brethren through the pages of the 'S.S.' many sent him contributions to help relieve some of the suffering caused by the famine. The brethren in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, were specially mentioned in this connection. In answer to a question about the possibility of some-one being sent to Africa either as a missionary or as a visitor, Bro. Steele said that this had been discussed before, but that so far neither the man to send, nor the money to send him, had been forthcoming. He mentioned, however, that one of the American brethren working in N. Rhodesia had been able to visit the brethren in Nyasaland, and that his report had allayed any fears that might have existed as to whether the money of the brethren was being misused. The report was approved by the Conference.

Bro. Frith, in presenting the report of the *Scripture Standard*, said that he could only present a balance sheet up till October 31st, 1949. This showed that at that time the balance in the fund was £101 5s. 4½d. Explaining why he was unable to present a balance sheet for the past six-month period, he said that it had been the most difficult of his experience, since he took over as treasurer. This was due partly to the confusion existing over devaluation, and also to some confusion about certain copies to be sent to U.S.A., which had been practically cleared up. He assured the Conference that there was over £200 balance in the fund, partly due to the fact that they had received a legacy from Sis. Nicholson, of Cleethorpes. In reply to questions, Bro. Frith stated that there was a small loss on each issue of the magazine at the price of 3d. per copy, which was offset by gifts received from brethren. Bro. Frith mentioned that one brother in Canada, who had been receiving the *Apostolic Messenger*, the *Bible Advocate*, and the *Scripture Standard* for forty years, had not missed a copy, which reflected well on the British and Canadian postal arrangements. Several brethren, including Bro. Crosthwaite, commended Bro. Frith for the able way in which he had handled the business side of the magazine.

A resolution from Bro. Frith, which aimed at widening the representation of the Churches on the Committee, was considered. After some discussion, it was withdrawn. According to rota, Bren. Hardy and Hood retired from the Committee at this Conference, and both were re-elected.

It was decided that the convention be held at Bristol on September 9th, in response to the invitation of the Bedminster Church.

It was also announced that the Dunfermline Church had invited the Conference to be held there in March, 1951.

The singing of two verses of 'Zion stands with hills surrounded,' concluded this session.

The brethren appointed to go into the matter of publishing a new Hymn Book now took their places on the platform. They are: Bren. C. Melling (Wigan), F. C. Day (Birmingham) and A. L. Frith (Fleetwood). Bro. Melling presented the second report of the brethren. Since the first report five meetings had been held, making a total of eight in all. After the last report, a preliminary list of the selected hymns was published in the 'S.S.' This had aroused considerable interest, and there had been quite a lot of criticism of the Committee's selections. Bro. Melling indicated that all criticism had been constructive. All the letters had been carefully gone over and, at present, 429 hymns had been selected. It was found to be impossible to include all the hymns that different brethren wanted. In some hymns small alterations were made and in others the

alterations were more substantial. The work of selection was now almost complete. This had required that the 1908 edition of *Hymns for Churches of Christ* be reviewed four times, the *Christian Hymnary* twice, and that the 1904 and 1933 editions of the *Methodist Hymnal*, the Congregational hymn book, the Torrey Alexander hymn book, two books published by David King, one by Jas. Wallis, and an American book entitled *Great Songs of the Church*; be carefully gone through. Although the work of selection was almost complete, there remained a great deal of work to be done, including the final revision of the selection, investigation of copyrights, and securing of permission to alter the wording of certain hymns, division of the book into sections, submission of the final selection to the brethren, the choice of paper and binding, the printing of the book, and its purchase and use by the Churches. All this would take time. Bro. Day then presented a report on the selection of hymns. Dividing his report into three sections, he dealt with minor alterations to hymns, more substantial alterations, and hymns left out. Altogether he reviewed about 27 hymns and gave reasons why the Committee thought that some words should be altered, while other hymns should be left out altogether. He expressed gratitude to the Fleetwood Church for having so kindly offered to meet all the expenses of the brethren in the work of compiling the book. Bro. Frith was asked to report on the financial arrangements for publishing of the hymn book. However, he felt that they were not sufficiently advanced to warrant a report at this Conference. He placed before the Conference the suggestion that additional members be added to the Committee to assist in the work of final revision of the hymns and in other work that would be entailed.

In the discussion that followed, it was evident that the work of the brethren had been followed with much interest, and the reports were frankly yet kindly criticised. It was resolved that four brethren be added to the number of the Committee. Those appointed were Bren. D. Dougall (evangelist), G. H. Hudson (Birmingham), C. Limb (Eastwood), and W. Steele (Tranent). The afternoon session was brought to a close by the singing of two verses of the hymn, 'Fill Thou my life' and prayer.

At the evening meeting, Bro. A. L. Frith ably presided over an enthusiastic gathering, which listened with delight to able addresses delivered by Bren. A. Allan (Blackburn), W. Steele (Tranent) and W. Crosthwaite. In these we were urged to get rid of the rubbish that collects in the Church and in our lives, and realising that 'Christ is all and in all,' push on with the 'King's Business,' which requires haste.

Throughout the Conference, a fine spirit prevailed, and the memory of the hearty singing of the songs of Zion, and the happy fellowship, will be with us as we seek to spread the Kingdom of Christ. The brethren at Blackpool are to be commended for the way in which they tackled the huge task of entertaining the Conference, and to them, with the two chairman, and the speakers at the evening session; indeed, to all who helped to make the Conference what it was, we say: 'Thank you!'

ANDREW GARDINER, JR.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

April to September (inclusive).—A. E. Winstanley, c/o G. E. Bullock, 72 Station Road, Ilkeston, Derbs.

Secretary of Conference Committee.—A. Hood, 8 Torquay Avenue, Owton Manor, West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

COMING EVENT

The Church of Christ, Priestley Road, Birmingham, gives a warm welcome to all who can come and join them at their twenty-first anniversary on May 13th. Tea will be served at 5 o'clock, and a meeting will be held at 6.30 p.m. The speaker will be Bro. W. B. Ainsworth.

WHILE Jesus realised how He must suffer on the Cross to save us, yet in humbleness of spirit He said to His Father, 'Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt' (Mark 14:36). Then are we Christians and followers of Jesus who would refuse to suffer and die to please God? 'He that loses his life shall save it' (Matt. 10:39). 'For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps' (1 Peter 2:21). 'No if any man have not the (or this) spirit of Christ he is none of his' (Rom. 8:9). 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's' (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

Jesus buys only those who sit down and count the cost, and then decides that he is willing to sell himself and all that he hath, together with earthly pleasure, to escape hell and enjoy heaven. Being willing to give up himself, he says, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And the Lord answers (in Acts 2:38): 'Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Thus coming to Jesus and obeying Him makes us children of God, having been thus 'born of water and of the Spirit' by baptism. In this plain easy way, we are 'baptised into Jesus Christ' or into His 'church which is his body.' (See Eph. 1:22, 23. Col. 1:18, 24.)

In this way, God adds us not to any denomination, but to the Church Jesus built. And not until we get into His Church in God's way, can we be pardoned. For only in Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiven of sins' (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7).

According to this we can get our sins forgiven only when we are 'baptised into Jesus Christ' Do not deceive yourself, and 'Let no man deceive you by any means,' by telling you otherwise. Jesus warns us, 'Beware of false teachers.' 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were (also) baptised into His death?' As Jesus willingly carried His own cross and allowed himself to be crucified for us, so we must willingly take up our cross and follow Him, and crucify the sins and pleasures we love, 'that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should not serve sin, for he that is dead (to lust and worldly amusements) is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with Him.' This gives the Christian lasting joy and peace of mind for time and eternity and makes him happier than would all the pleasures of earth. Therefore, the mark of a true Christian is the one who 'loves not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world' the love of the Father is not in him' (I John 2:15). By this test we will be tried in judgment, when 'every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God' (Rom. 14:11).

Then will not all have to confess to God that ball games, picture shows, beauty parlours, rouge, lipsticks, jewellery, prize fights, card parties, dancing, racing, etc., etc., are all of the world? Yet many who profess to love God, love these worldly things. But God, through John says: 'the love of the Father is not in them.' Then how can those be saved who love these pleasures? God said to Adam and Eve, 'Ye shall not eat of it (the forbidden fruit), neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die' (Gen. 3:1-4). But the Devil said, 'ye shall not surely die,' thus making God a liar. And to-day the Devil's agents are telling the people they can love these worldly pleasures and love God also, thus, like their 'father the devil,' are making

God a liar. 'God forbid: yea, let God be true, but [if it makes] every man a liar' (Rom. 3:4). Amen! and Amen!

Deceiving Ourselves

When we think we can love and enjoy the pleasures of the world and at the same time be Christians, we deceive ourselves and also others by our influence. Jesus says, 'No man can serve two masters.' But 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind' (Luke 10:27). Therefore those who give any part of their heart, soul, strength or mind to please themselves are trying to serve two masters, which Jesus says cannot be done. And therefore, we must serve Jesus only and go to heaven and be happy through all eternity; or have our pleasures here on earth and go to hell and be tormented for ever and ever. Each one is allowed to choose for himself, after counting the cost (see Luke 14:26-35).

'If I seek to please men [which includes myself] I should not be the servant of Christ' (Gal. 1:10). 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world' (Rom. 12:1, 2).

In this way only can we be followers of Jesus, '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,' where we may sit with Him if we gladly suffer the giving up of worldly pleasures and endure the jeers and derision of the world, and live for Him in trying to save others. The life work of Jesus was all to save the lost. And if we do not make it our life work to try to save the lost sinner, are we not deceived or hypocrites to claim we are his followers? God holds us responsible for the lost souls. 'When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way of life: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thy hand.' Study 2nd and 3rd chapter of Ezekiel again and again. Paul realised this responsibility and so should every disciple of Jesus (see Acts 18:6; 20:26, 27). Will God say to us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' if we use our time and money for earthly things to please ourselves, in stead of working to save souls? No! No! brethren and sisters, a thousand times No! And we would better realise this, before it is eternally too late, and love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. It will pay us eternally.

If professed Christians would spend their time in reading and talking the Bible, which they spend in reading and talking of worldly pride and pleasures to no profit, they could tell sinners of the love of Jesus and teach them how to come to Jesus and be saved. And if they would spend their money to feed and clothe the poor, and to preach the pure gospel to warn the wicked of his sin, then if they were lost, their blood would not be on them. Therefore, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory' (Col. 3:1-4). And will not that be better than 'to enjoy the pleasures for a season,' and then suffer the torments of hell for ever and ever? 'Submit yourselves, therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners: and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up' (Jas. 4:7-10).

And 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him' (Col. 3:16, 17).

When we do these things, we will have joy, happiness, peace and contentment of mind, which none, nor all the pleasures of earth can give us. And we will know for ourselves that it is not right to waste our time, talent, and money, at the card table, dance hall, prize fights, beauty parlours, ball games, horse races, etc., neither any immoral act for the gratification of the lusts of the flesh.

'No man can serve two master.' Therefore 'choose you this day whom you will serve.' 'For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever' (1 John 2:16,17).

'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time' (1 Peter 5:6).

J. C. WILKES.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

May 7th—Acts 10:34-38; Malachi 1:1-11.

May 14th—Acts 11:1-18; Isaiah 65:1-16.

May 21st—Acts 11: 19-30; Ephesians 3.

May 28th—Acts 12; 1-23; Psalm 34.

The First Gospel Address to Gentiles.

Peter's eyes had been opened to a truth which is perfectly obvious to us without need of special revelation—but let us not overlook a common mistake of that Jewish kind which did necessitate a divine visitation to the apostle. National prejudice blinds the eyes of many—may I add, especially British people. God made of one blood all nations. He did make choice of the Jews to be entrusted with His oracles. This puffed them up. It should have humbled them, but now their privilege is to be extended to all. God respects all who respect Him, and act accordingly.

From verse 27 we assume Peter had learnt that his audience had knowledge of the life and work of Christ. Indeed, it must have been very well known in all the land. The main point of the address is thus the Resurrection and the resulting good tidings of God's salvation. We note judgment is made a prominent point, and the terms of salvation are summarised, "Whosoever believeth in Him." Some would quote this as favouring the false doctrine of "faith only," but that would make one Scripture contradict others.

Holy Spirit Baptism.—We make a distinction between the receipt of the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit and the administration of this baptism.

Miraculous manifestations are common to both. In this case we have divinely given instruction. Peter states (11, 15 and 16) that the manifestation was in fact on a par with that of Pentecost. There is no other occasion of this recorded in Scripture. Moreover, no such authority was conferred upon Cornelius as was given to the apostles, so far as we are informed.

This administration by God was obviously given to remove finally and beyond question the gulf between Jew and Gentile, in other words, the Jewish prejudice; and the restrictions of the Mosaic law, divinely appointed to keep God's people separate under the Old Covenant, but now abrogated in the New. Nothing at that stage would have enabled the Church to fulfil its universal function except a direct divine demonstration. We must, at the risk of repetition, emphasise that even such a demonstration did not change the one way of salvation. Water as well as spirit was in the plan—or we might add fittingly that even Holy Spirit baptism did not give assurance without obedience in water baptism. Holy Spirit baptism is not essential; water baptism certainly is.

I am glad they prayed Peter to stay, and have no doubt he gladly did so.

The Church Enquiry.—We just cannot realise the degree of astonishment of the Jewish Christians or the consternation of 'the apostles and brethren.' God forbade the Jews to mix with Gentiles. Only one thing could make a Gentile fit for Jewish company—his complete acceptance of the Law of Moses and his obedience to its provisions. This was right and proper, and it is true of the New Covenant and the Church in the proper sense of fellowship—and with the provision indicated in 1 Cor. 5:10.

It would seem to those Jewish Christians as though the sacred ordinances of God were being defied, whereas the New Covenant was being developed in their very midst. How good it was that the bulk of the brethren, and especially the leaders among them, finally glorified God and concluded He had ordained the glorious extension of the Gospel.

Peter's recitation is careful, logical and persuasive. Yet it is just exactly truthful. There were some who were not persuaded as further history proves. Their prejudice was a continuous source of trouble in the Church, which perhaps was not removed until God removed the Temple and the City of Jerusalem. How wise a provision it was that six Jewish Christians went with Peter to the home of Cornelius and were thus enabled to confirm all that he said.

The Work at Antioch.—The Great Commission certainly made the worldwide application of the Gospel very clear but until Cornelius this did not seem to be grasped at all by the apostolic band. Nor apparently did others have the thought until certain foreign-born Jews got as far as Antioch. They had so far only preached to Jews with success, but in such Gentile surroundings the news of salvation could not be hidden, and with such a message of love for man, they could not ultimately refrain from at last preaching to Gentiles, too. And their new adventure was stamped with the divine approval by its results. The same message brought the same results—'believed,' 'turned.'

News must have reached Jerusalem about the time of the enquiry into Peter's 'innovation,' and Barnabas, a man of Cyprus, celebrated for his power to give encouragement was sent to help. Heathen converts to Christ would need much teaching, and much help to endure temptation and persecution. Thus the work was further increased, and, perhaps knowing somewhat of Saul's ability—latent and patent—Barnabas went and fetched him to get his help. Such a combination in a whole year of service in that Church brought much blessing and increase. Numbers and influence so worked in the community that a name was given—we believe God given and man given—the name in which we also rejoice.

It seems clear that the Church at Jerusalem took considerable interest in the growing work among the Gentiles. The prophets were needed for its growth and development. The spirit of Christ's love and unselfishness overcame human failings and prejudices and was gloriously shown in the glad effort by these Gentiles to help their Jewish

brethren in the time of famine. Often enough this manifestation is not sufficiently attended to. Mere attendance at meetings is not Christianity and is sometimes thought to be enough.

Persecution by Herod.—Apparently persecution of the Church had hitherto been carried on by the Jewish religious authorities, rather than by the official 'powers that be.' This Herod would be grandson to the Herod who slew the babes at Bethlehem. He was outwardly very loyal to the Jewish religion and would therefore be influenced much by its chief men. He conceived the idea therefore of oppressing the Church by putting its leaders to death. James (one of the 'sons of Thunder') was his first victim. The Saviour's words were fulfilled thus early in his career (Mark 10:38). He was the first apostle to die for His Lord.

Tasting the approval of his influential subjects, he is encouraged to go further. Peter's arrest is the result. We can only imagine his thoughts and prayers as he remains in custody. Humanly speaking, there is no possibility of escape, and the Almighty had not seen fit to interfere on behalf of the many who had died for Christ already. We believe he would pray for release subject to the divine approval. So also earnest prayers were ascending with the same purport on his behalf. The imprisonment might have lasted a whole seven days, and during the last night the angel came and released him. All the might of empires cannot delay or turn aside the purposes of God. The realisation of his release came after the angel left him to himself. He had resigned himself to death for Christ's sake. Now he knows he has other work for him to do.

He knew where there was a Christian home. Mary was Barnabas' sister, Mark's mother. Is your home or mine just such a place?

The Prayer Meeting.—Rhoda was delighted and could but believe her own eyes. The others were sceptical. They did not expect release of Peter, perhaps rather the strength to endure.

The 'James' would be the Lord's brother, who held a prominent place in the Church at Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19). Doubtless messengers would convey the news to various gatherings in the city quietly while Peter got away. Apparently, Herod's disappointment led to a cessation of the persecution. He executed the guards and retired to Cæsarea.

Herod's Terrible Fate.—Josephus records this in some detail and mentions in particular the glorious garments of

Herod, which were apparently the occasion of the flattery of the people. He who put an apostle of Christ to death to gratify a passing whim and to please his subjects would have murdered another, was himself stricken by a loathsome disease. This may indeed be a terrible thing but the worst thought is the final fate of the wicked. Better far to suffer with Christ than to live and die without Him.

R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

HOW FAR SHOULD WOMEN BE SILENT IN THE CHURCH?

DEAR EDITOR,—Brethren are writing to me privately instead of for publication in the 'S.S.' I suggest it would be better for views to be expressed here. Free discussion ought to be helpful. Surely there is nothing to be either ashamed or afraid of by such discussion.

A. L. FRITH.

DEAR BRO. EDITOR,—The serpent again raises his ugly head. Strike him down with the sword of Truth!

To the above question, I should like to ask: 'How far from the truth do we desire to depart?' Since when has singing a hymn (which is a form of fellowship and praise and not conveying any particular personal thought) been interpreted as speaking? Keep to the Word as His dear children.

J. A. GREGORY

UNBELIEVERS IN MEETINGS

DEAR BRO. EDITOR,—I have followed with interest recent references in the 'S.S.' regarding whether or not unbelievers should be present in Church meetings, and should be allowed to take part in the worship. To my mind it appears that while unbelievers should be admitted to the meetings, they should not be allowed to take any part in the worship itself.

That unbelievers should be allowed in Church meetings is shown in 1 Corin. 14, v. 23. Yet surely unbelievers who attended the meetings in the early Church were only onlookers, and did not take part in the worship of the Church. Then as psalms, hymns and spiritual songs can only be offered acceptably by the saints, it hardly seems consistent to ask unbelievers to sing hymns they do not understand or mean. I submit that they should be silent in our meetings as far as worship is concerned.

It may be said that this would only discourage unbelievers from attending

Gospel meetings. Let us remember, however, that the early Church did not reach unbelievers by inviting them to attend their meetings—a method which we employ to-day. The method early disciples used to spread the Gospel, was not to invite unbelievers to their meetings, but rather to go out to them and preach the Word of Life. 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.'

If we follow the example of the early disciples in taking out to the masses the Word of Life, then I believe our methods will be more Scriptural and effective.

C. A. LEWINGTON.

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R. McDONALD (Treasurer).

'OLD AND IN THE WAY'

I SIT in the chimney corner and I hear
the young folks say:

'The world is weary of her—she is old
and in the way;

And a vacant chair were better—a soli-
tary place

Than the palsied, wrinkled hands of her
and the tear-wet furrowed face!

They do not know I'm walking where
their feet have never trod,

They do not know I'm seeing visions on
the hills of God.

They do not know that angels are where
my footsteps roam.

In the ways of the lights celestial, where
the morning stars sing 'Home.'

I nursed them at my bosom, ere life's
sun went down the west;

I sang love's sweetest music to them and
rocked their hearts to rest;

And now that sad time hastens, at the
closing of life's day,

I am a useless woman, I am old, and in
the way.

Thank God, it will soon be over, life's sun
is sinking fast,

My feet are in the valley, and I see my
home at last!

And I say, while angels beckon, 'Poor,
and old, and grey,

There is room for me in Heaven, where
I'll not be in the way.'

.....

'I have fought the good fight, I have
finished my course, henceforth, there
is laid up for me the crown of glory,
that fades not away.'

'He crowns you with loving kindness and
tender mercies.'

'THE MORNING COMETH'

There's a cloud on all creation,
There's a sound of coming storm,
There's perplexity amongst the nations
There is woe in every form;

There's a hoarding of great riches,
There's a lack of daily bread,
There's a disobeying of parents,
There's a lawlessness and dread;

There's apostasy appalling,
There's a joining hands with sin;
There's a valley of decision,
There are multitudes within,

'Tis the budding of the fig-tree,
'Tis the harbinger of day,
'Tis prophetic light appearing
Like a beacon in the sky,
'Tis the Day Stars swift approaching,
Heed the warning, Christ is nigh.

**NEWS FROM
THE CHURCHES**

Blackpool.—The recent Conference held here was indeed a time of real fellowship and spiritual uplift and we cannot but feel that much good will result from it. In spite of the boisterous weather, a good number of brethren from various Churches assembled in the afternoon for the business session, Bro. G. Hudson, of Summer Lane, Birmingham, being in the chair.

After tea, a well attended meeting was presided over by Bro. A. L. Frith, of Fleetwood, and fine addresses were delivered by Bren. A. Allan (Blackburn), W. Steele (Tranent), and W. Crosthwaite (Ulverston). These brethren did not hesitate to preach the Word in all its fullness.

The Church here desires to thank all who contributed to make the Conference a success, and to put on record their appreciation and thanks to the brethren and sisters from Blackburn who came along early to assist us in preparing food for our physical needs. May God reward them for their Christian love and labours.

The following Lord's Day morning Bro. David Dougall exhorted visitors and members and in the afternoon short addresses were given by Bren. Limb (Eastwood), Hardy (Morley), Hitchen (East Kirkby), and Jaynes (Loughborough).

In the evening an address long to be remembered was given by Bro. Dougall on "Saved by Grace," a fine climax to a day spent entirely in the Master's service.

Altogether, over the week-end, a fine spirit prevailed amongst us, the spirit of the Master, and we cannot help but feel

that the efforts put forth at all our meetings will not go fruitless.

The holiday season is now with us here in Blackpool and we appeal to all members who are coming for a holiday to visit us at the meeting room in Gadsby Street, off Nelson Road, where a warm welcome awaits them.

Gadsby Street lies between Wellington Road and Barton Avenue, both these roads leading directly off the Promenade going south from Manchester Square. The windmill on the Promenade is at Manchester Square.

Please give us encouragement and support by your attendance during the summer months, and your holiday will benefit you all, both spiritually and physically.

E. WINTER

Cape Town.—In these perilous days, when so many turn a deaf ear to the Gospel of Christ, we were glad to witness, on February 26th, the confession and baptism of a young man. This was due to the efforts of the Claremont Assembly. The service was conducted at Woodstock by Bro. H. Smith, of Claremont. Bro. Christians, of Claremont, spoke on Fellowship as set forth in John's epistles, which is conditioned on willing obedience. The speaking and bright singing caused us to rejoice, and to know that there was joy also in Heaven.

May we all be determined to make greater efforts for the salvation of souls. May we fight the good fight of faith being assured that the Captain of our salvation is surely coming.

T. HARTLE

Devonport.—Again it gives us great joy to report another precious soul has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. On March 22nd, a young man, Samuel Westcott, put on the Lord Jesus in His own appointed way, and was received into fellowship, Lord's Day, April 2nd. We pray that our young brother may prove to be a stalwart soldier of the Cross, and strive to win that crown of life which is laid up in Heaven for those that love His appearing.

W. LAKEMAN

East Kirkby (Beulah Road).—A Gospel Campaign was opened on Saturday, 1st April, with a tea and meeting, when brethren from Loughborough, Eastwood, and Derby, came to encourage us, and to bid God speed to our special mission. The attendance was good, but doubtless affected by another opening meeting held the same day at Ilkeston, where Bro. A. E. Winstanley is labouring. The meeting was presided over by our young brother, T. Woodhouse. After a few words of welcome on behalf of the Church, by the writer, to Bro. David Dougall, who is to labour with us for four months, we were privileged to listen

to two very fine addresses by Bro. John Diggle (Eastwood), and Bro. Dougall.

Already much interest has been aroused, and the meetings have been well attended by our own brethren and sisters. It is felt that the interest will grow as the Campaign continues. The messages of our brother, who has already endeared himself to all our hearts, have been of a convincing, convicting character. We look forward to good results, and ask for the continued, and earnest prayers of all who wish to see the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ extended in this locality.

W. B. JEPSON.

Fleetwood.—The Church here experienced a season of blessing on April 9th. Brethren visiting the Conference the previous day had fellowship with us, some thirty-five breaking bread. One brother, visiting us for the first time, and after having climbed the stairs, remarked: "And he shall show you a large upper room furnished."

It was the Lord's Day (not a mention of 'Easter'), and we were in the spirit. Songs of praise resounded, it was good to be there.

Bro. Harold Baines (Morley), presided in the morning, and Bro. Will Steele in the evening. Bro. Crosthwaite moved us all deeply, speaking with power and feeling, drawing our attention to things which matter and which are surely believed among us. We said farewell to each other at the close of a day of blessing, one to be remembered. A. L. FRITH.

Glasgow, Hospital Street.—It gives us great pleasure to report another addition: Sis. H. Freckleton, who was a member of the Church of Christ at Standburn. We are sure she will feel at home amongst us, and will be a good worker in the Master's service.

Our brother, William Robertson, has reached the age of four-score years. We, his brethren, warmly congratulate him, and we hope he may yet be spared to visit and help us. Many years ago he was added to the Church at Armadale, and later he was in the Blackridge Church. In his later years, he has been consistent in attendance and doing what he could at Hospital Street, Glasgow. He is at present confined to his home, his eyesight fails him and his legs are powerless. His faith holds firm; and on open Bible is ever by his side. Many will join us in praying that this happy and hopeful state will continue until the end.

A. B. MORTON

Hindley.—On reading previous reports in 'S.S.' I find that the decision of Mrs. Annie Muirhead was not included in the last report. Our sister first came with us from Hindley to our meetings in Ince. The seed sown faithfully bore

fruit when she was immersed into Christ on February 12th. We thank God for the power of the Gospel. Ten have been added to the Church so far this year.

L. MORGAN

Ilkeston.—The Church here is rejoicing in a measure of spiritual revival right at the commencement of a six months' special mission with Bro. A. E. Winstanley. We rejoice already in the addition of four to our membership by immersion. To be fair, we should say these are the results of the sowing of the 'precious seed' elsewhere and we have had the joy of 'harvest.' Praise God! But apart from this, there has been a great improvement in the spiritual life of the Church during March, seen in an improved attendance and interest at our Lord's Day and mid-week services.

For this we must again praise the Lord for his manifest blessing on our co-operative efforts with Bro. Ralph Limb, of the Eastwood Church, who is now giving full-time service in the great work of soul-winning for our Lord and Master. He has been ministering to us quite frequently in teaching and exhortation and also in the proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore, in our spiritual advancement so far, we feel much credit must be given to Bro. Limb.

We rejoice together, because, once again our prospects are so hopeful. All this augurs very well for the success of our mission with Bro. Winstanley, who will also continue to have (D.V.) the very useful and able assistance of Bro. Limb. There is certainly an air of 'expectancy' that great things are going to happen, by the blessing from on High, upon the faithful, loyal and whole-hearted efforts of his people in a great soul-saving campaign. We say with all our heart: Amen.

S. JEPSON

Pennyvenie, Ayrshire.—Members of the Church of Christ, Pennyvenie, were delighted to welcome into their fellowship,

on Lord's Day mornings, March 26th and April 2nd. Bro. Mair from the Church in Portnockie, and were stimulated and encouraged by his exhortations to place our confidence in God.

We extend to all our brethren who may be in similar circumstances, whether following their occupation or spending a holiday, a welcome to join in our fellowship. Bus service from Ayr every half-hour (10 past and 20 minutes to the hour).

Breaking of bread, 12.30. The 11.10 a.m. bus leaving Ayr would be suitable, arriving in Dalmellington 12.10, where the Cumnock bus, at 12.25, goes on to Pennyvenie. Ask to get off at the School.

W. BLACK.

Ulverston.—Anniversary Meetings were held on Saturday and Lord's Day, 18th and 19th March. The Church in Ulverston was commenced on 19th March, 1876. We claim to be the true successors of those pioneers, who set out to build up a Church according to the New Testament pattern. We were pleased to have present at our anniversary members from Barrow, Blackburn, Blackpool, Fleetwood and Wigan.

On Saturday afternoon, Bro. A. Allan spoke on 'The unchanging Christ in a changing world.' Bro. W. Hurcombe spoke on 'Remove not the ancient landmarks.' Tea was served at the Lakeland Cafe.

At the evening meeting, Brethren D. Dougall and A. L. Frith showed that Christ is the only answer to the world's problems.

On Lord's Day afternoon, Bro. Dougall exhorted the Church to be 'Workers together with God,' and in the evening he very earnestly preached the Gospel to a large company.

We were greatly encouraged by these meetings, and feel deeply grateful to the four speakers for their inspiring messages.

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