

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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WHAT ABOUT THE "MUTUAL MINISTRY" ?

A REPLY : I

UNDER the above title Bro. Fred Melton wrote an article which appeared in the September issue of the S.S. Bro. Melton wrote on the understanding that what he said would call for a reply. This is the reply.

First, we wish to say that there will be no attempt in this reply to "score points" over our brother or anyone else. The little we know of Bro. M. endears us to him and convinces us that he is a brother who is genuinely concerned to establish the authority and truth of scripture and of the church depicted therein. What he has written has been said in love and not in unhelpful criticism. With much that he writes we agree as being justified. We are not so concerned to defend our conception of "mutual ministry" as to find how the practice of teaching and preaching by many brethren can be best used in the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the church.

Growth of the New Testament Church

First, we think that to point out the progress of the gospel in the twenty-five years after the Pentecost when the church was established is not an apt comparison with circumstances today. Circumstances are different. Apart from the evidence of miracles performed through the power of the Holy Spirit, the following chapters in Acts show the rapid numerical growth of the church in those first days: 3000 at Pentecost (2:41); increased in number (6:1); multiplied greatly (6:7) and a great many priests; a great number (11:21); increased in number daily (16:5); 5000 in Jerusalem (4:4); and that the Christians had turned the world upside down (17:6). Does Bro. M. believe that our not seeing the same results today is because we have many different brethren preaching the gospel who do not make this their whole-time calling, and that if more full-time evangelists were supported we should experience similar growth of the church?

Circumstances are different. In New Testament times people were either heathen, Jewish or Christian. There were no gradations or "forms" of Christianity. A person was either a follower of Jesus or he was not; either a "believer" or an "unbeliever."

Historical Reasons

This is not to say that under our circumstances we are doing all we should and can in the cause of Christ. None of us would make such a claim. Bro. Melton points out our weaknesses, of which we are aware. We are critical of ourselves. But there

are historical reasons for our weaknesses in spreading the gospel, of which Bro. M. is not perhaps sufficiently aware. Between the years 1870 and 1880 Timothy Coop exerted himself greatly and spent his money lavishly in order to give new drive and vigour to evangelisation of this country by evangelists from the Disciples of Christ in the United States. They were brought over through his misguided generosity and his obsession with the belief that to bring them over would accomplish the same spectacular results here as in America. To him they were experts, professionals, efficient, finer preachers, able to sway the crowds. To say that the outcome did not justify these expectations is an understatement. It is true to say that results were calamitous and did injury to the churches of Christ in this country from which we are still suffering. Departure from scriptural teaching and example; a theological Training College at Overdale, Birmingham, advancing modernism and infidelity in its attitude towards the word of God; the production and sending out of preachers with half a Bible; worldliness; compromise with denominationalism — all these made shipwreck of the noble cause of New Testament Christianity. These are clear historical facts. One result was that such evangelists were held in suspicion and were unwanted by many churches, The churches had to turn more and more to their own brethren, without training in Bible or Theological Colleges, to teach and preach the Bible. It was never that "one-man preachers" as such were rejected. In Timothy Coop's time the work of the few home evangelists and the many "local preachers" brought about, even numerically, greater results than the efforts of those introduced from the United States. In Timothy Coop's early years in Wigan there was constantly the appeal before the churches to do more in evangelism by setting apart men whose whole time would be devoted to the ministry of the word of God and who would be fully supported by the churches. There was always the urge for wider evangelisation. Lack of money was the chief cause of action being so seemingly slow and inadequate. We are trying to establish the fact that full-time evangelism was always realised as necessary in this country as in others, but that it is better to proclaim the gospel and to build up the churches through brethren whom we know to be sound in the faith than to make them responsible for the preaching and teaching simply because they are "professionals".

History Of Our Time

Some twenty-five years ago, just when it seemed that the churches in Britain were adopting or resuming a more vigorous and responsible attitude towards disseminating New Testament Christianity, further division and confusion came among us because some of our brethren greeted too readily the influx of American evangelists, not from the Disciples, but from those who had withdrawn themselves from the Disciples — the churches of Christ. We make no charges, we apportion no blame. but we simply state what is fact, in that from that time more and more of our brethren who until then had worked wholeheartedly with and among us, came to the view that they could do more aggressive gospel work through co-operation with and support by American churches and individuals. In that sense "they went out from us", knowing that their brethren in this country were unable and unwilling to go with them. Consequently we lost some splendid workers and preachers, and we have not replaced them. The vacuum left must be filled through what is mistakenly termed "mutual ministry", in the training, although inadequately, of our brethren in local congregations to serve the churches. The fact is that to this day we have not the men whom we could ask, or who would offer themselves as full-time ministers of the word of God. While for about 130 years there has been a strong belief in this country in the need for whole-time evangelists, there has at the same time been firm reliance upon the services of the many to teach and evangelise. The situation today is that we are simply compelled to use those means we have for making the gospel known. It is not our choice; it is our necessity.

Space forbids writing more now, but we hope to examine other aspects in the future of this vital and interesting subject "WHAT ABOUT THE MUTUAL MINISTRY?" In this contribution we have tried to relate our practice of "mutual ministry" to its historical setting in the churches in Britain. In our next we shall examine the pros and cons of the practice, especially in the light of the New Testament.

EDITOR.

XI: JUDGEMENT

WE all take part from day to day in exercising our "judgement". Situations arise and confront us continually, and we are required to make a judgement. Sometimes we are not given much time and we have to make "snap" judgements. The stockbroker must be able to read the market and his client's bankbook depends upon his professional judgement. The farmer exercises his long acquired judgement in knowing just when to sow the seed. The carpenter must judge as to the quantity of timber he will cut for his next assignment. The housewife must judge correctly the length of time to boil the potatoes or bake the scones. We all appreciate the use of the word in the general context — that of bringing to bear on the incidents of life our natural prudence, skill and wisdom. We form judgements all the time and for the most part we are unaware of it — we do it automatically. We could say that we do it without thinking — and that would; alas, be very true: many of our judgements are made without thinking.

The word at the head of this article "Judgement" has of course a much broader application than that of merely coming to decisions on everyday matters. It has several shades of meaning, especially in the scriptures.

It can refer to *the actual decision or sentence* announced by a legally appointed judge. In 1st Kings 3:28 we read "And all Israel heard of the judgement which the king had judged: and they feared the king; for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do Judgement". This was in reference to the "judgement" made by Solomon in regard to the claiming of the same child by two women. Solomon of course had asked God for this very thing — the ability to judge causes amongst men: "For", said he, "who is able to judge this thy so great a people" (1st Kings 3:9).

"Judgement" can also refer to the *righteous statutes and commandments* of God (Ps. 119:7;20; Deut. 4:5; Ezek. 11:12).

It can refer to *justice and equity*. Isaiah recommends such to Israel when he says, "Learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:17). In similar vein Jesus said to the Pharisees "But woe unto you Pharisees! For ye tithe the mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over *judgement* and the love of God..." Very often of course, we are in the same rut and spend our time arguing over trifles while the world languishes in sin and longs for the love of God.

"Judgement" can also refer to God's decrees and purposes concerning nations, or persons. Paul says, "O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his *judgements* and his ways past finding out." Some brethren believe that God takes no part now in the actions and destiny of nations nor of individuals. God has set the world going (like someone starting a machine or engine) and has left it until He decides to stop it. If this be so why should God solicit our prayers and petitions — if He intends to take no action or make no interventions? Plagues and famines were God's judgements on some nations.

Then again, "Judgement" in the scriptures sometimes refers to the actual courts of judgement (Matt. 5:21) and is often described as the "Judgement Hall" with its 'Judgement Seat'.

Perhaps the best known and most easily recognisable use of the word is in reference to the "Final Judgement" or the "Great Assize" at the last day. All other judgements find their true expression in that great and terrible day of the Lord. All our day-to-day judgements will have their grand culmination in the last assize. At the beginning it was said that we make judgements often in the course of a day. It is almost impossible to fail to make judgements. Perhaps in our daily business we meet people we have never seen before, and immediately we make judgements — judgements which later demonstrate how imperfect they were. Our judgements are at best beset with imperfection. We thank God that at the final and great assize we shall be "judged in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31).

Jesus so recognised the tendency (and often necessity) for man to form judgements that on one occasion He issued some advice on the subject, especially when we are making judgements on people. He said, "Judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous judgement?" (John 7:24). Appearances can be deceptive. On another occasion He warned that if we want to avoid God's judgement upon us we should be reluctant to pronounce judgement upon others. He said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). And if we must judge we should remember that the standard we require of others will be required of us by God: "For with what judgement ye judge shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. 7:2,3). This is a sobering pronouncement upon others, especially upon our brethren. We should thus be slow to judge our brethren for their faults and incompetences. Judgement goes hand in hand with justice and should be tempered with compassion and mercy.

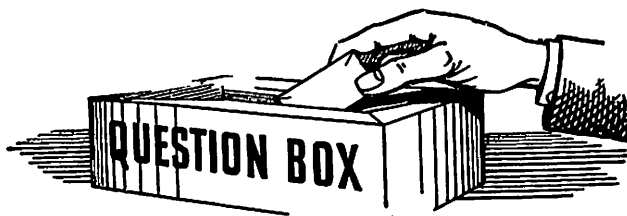
Sometimes official judgement must be made in the church on internal matters. God expects us to be able to cope with such judgements and not to resort to outside agencies. Paul says, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge Angels? how much more the things that pertain to this life..... I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers?" (1st Cor. 6:1-6). It seems to be expected that when one in the church has a matter against another we should have enough wisdom to solve it. The judgement of wise brethren should suffice and on no account should we resort to the courts of the land.

With this proviso, basically our function is certainly not that of judges. According to the epistle of James there is one Lawgiver. We are intended to be only doers of the law. This is enough to keep us gainfully occupied. He that judges his brother becomes a judge, not a doer of the law. That is not God's intention. James says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:12). He is referring to the personal judgements concerning our brethren which we glibly make from time to time. The prerogative of judgement belongs solely to God. Vengeance which often follows hard on the heels of human judgements belongs also only to God: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12:19).

And so final judgement and any vengeance will be meted out by our Lord on the Great Day of Judgement, and we ought to be content with that — indeed we ought to be concerned with that and be striving to the end that we ourselves might pass the examination of that day and be considered fit for the kingdom of heaven.

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brothers' way" (Rom. 14:13).

JAMES R. GARDINER



Conducted by
James Gardiner

PLEASE comment on the statement in Matthew 22:14 "For many are called but few are chosen". We read elsewhere that the church are the "called" of God. Does Matt. 22:14 mean therefore that few in the church will be "chosen" for life eternal?

I think that to understand the above verse we must give due regard, as always to the context and setting of the statement. The words, "For many are called, but few are chosen" come at the end of the well known parable of the marriage of the Kings Son.

The Parable : To The Jews

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." We must keep before us the fact that the parable is designed to describe some aspect of the "Kingdom of heaven". The parable relates that the king sent his servants to call those who were invited to come to the wedding feast. but they refused. Some of them made light of (or just ignored) the invitation. Others of them were hostile and assaulted and killed the king's servants. When the king heard about this he was exceedingly angry and sent his armies against those who had been invited to the wedding and had assaulted his servants. His armies destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

To my mind, so far in the parable Jesus has clearly been referring to the Jews. Their response to God's overtures to them had been to stone His prophets and slay His Son. By and large they rejected Christ and His invitation to them into the Kingdom of Heaven. Did not our Lord say so much in Matt. 23:37 as He looked down upon the doomed city of Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

Thus, in the parable the king said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went into the highways and gathered together all as many as they could find, both bad and good : and the wedding was furnished with guests."

...and to the Gentiles

Clearly this is where the invitation is extended to the Gentiles. The Jews had proved themselves unworthy of the king's invitation and so the other nations (the Gentiles) are given an opportunity of coming to the wedding feast. We are in the happy position of having hindsight in most New Testament matters: we can look back into the Acts and epistles and see that in fact these things did come to pass. For instance Paul is described as a chosen vessel of God's to bear His name before the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Indeed in Acts 13:46 Paul and Barnabus implement the action indicated by the parable: "Then Paul and Barnabus waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been preached to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee

to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Truly the gospel is God's power unto salvation to the Jews first and also to the Greek (Gentiles: Rom. 1:16; see also Acts 3:26; 28:27-28).

We notice that when the King's servants were sent into the highways and byways to invite all and sundry to the feast their invitation was extended to "as many as they found, both bad and good". The "highways" mean, of course, the world in general, and "both bad and good" refers to the fact that even in the world at large there are differences in men socially and morally — some are worse than others. No man is so bad, however, that the gospel cannot purify and redeem him, and no man is so good that he can be regarded as being without need of the saving power of the gospel of Christ. The fulfilment of this part of the parable is easily recognised and took place when Jesus said to His apostles, just prior to His ascension, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "Go into all the world and preach to every creature." Previously Christ's instructions (to the twelve and the seventy) had been to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel — not to the Gentiles nor even to any of the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5,6).

And thus the wedding was furnished with guests.

The Wedding Garment

The next part of the parable deals with what transpired when the king came in to take a look at the guests. It has a direct bearing on the 'phrase introduced by our questioner, "Many are called but few are chosen".

In eastern countries it was, and in some places still is, a custom for visitors to the king to be provided with robes of honour so that they may be suitably attired when they present themselves before him. Marcus Dods in The Parables as recorded by Matthew, tells of ambassadors being invited to the table of a Persian king and given "splendid vests" sent from the king to be worn over the ambassadors' dresses prior to their appearance in the king's presence. The ambassadors at first refused to wear the vests, but the officer urged them most earnestly to comply with the request, for refusal would have greatly displeased the king. The ambassadors had probably taken a great deal of trouble in dressing for the occasion and were dismayed that their best finery was to be covered. I suppose in the same way today many in the highways on hearing the invitation (the gospel) resent being told that they must comply with the king's request to adorn themselves with humility and obey the terms of entry into the Kingdom of heavens — remember, this is a parable about the Kingdom of heaven. Upon inspection of his guests the king noticed a man who had not a wedding garment. "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen."

To my mind the significance of the wedding garment is, in the analogy of the parable, that in being called in from the highways and byways we all come (the good and the bad) in various states of dress and undress — dress being equated with what we are morally. To be fit for presentation to the king we must cover our own dress (or rags) with the garment provided by the king. No matter how well dressed we already think we are we still have to cover ourselves with the covering provided. "All our righteousness is as filthy rags." We must stand before God clothed not in our own righteousness but in the white robes of Christ's righteousness.

The man without the garment, who had been ejected from the wedding feast, had apparently refused to avail himself of the wedding garment, had defiantly pushed past the attendants and taken his place at the table disregarding the wishes of the king, thinking perhaps that his own dress was too good to cover. No matter how good

we are (or how evil we are) we must enter the kingdom of heaven in the prescribed manner, figuratively wearing the proper covering. Some, as we know, are too proud to humiliate themselves by being baptised for the remission of sins. Some want to come in by the back door or to come in some other more suitable way. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). Thus, putting on the garment could very well be likened unto "putting on Christ". Paul said, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Abbot on this passage says, "The garments we put on are when we put on the Lord Jesus by faith in baptism. (Rom.13:14; Gal. 3:26,27).... To be without the wedding garments, offered freely to him, implies that the man thinks his own attire is good enough." The man in the parable, therefore, represents those who, while professing to be for Christ, think that they can find their own way into the kingdom of heaven. When discovered, the man is speechless, self-condemned. He is not reasoned with, for God will not reason with men on Judgement Day. Now is the only time we can "reason together" with God. And so the man is cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth — truly "many are called but few are chosen."

The Call

The "many called" included, according to the parable, virtually all men. The Jews received the call (or invitation into the kingdom of God). Some quietly ignored it and carried on with their farming and merchandising and some violently opposed it (both attitudes being equally bad). The Gentiles (both the good and the bad) also received the call. Of the many called or invited only a few responded favourably to the invitation. The same obtains today. Jesus in Matt. 7:13,14 said that it would be so: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." God has not predestined that some will be called and some will not. The call is made available to all and whosoever will may come. But from the vast armies which hear the call God chooses to give His blessings only to those who love, serve and obey Him. We must place ourselves in a position whereby God can bless us. If we learn that Jesus said that we must be born again and choose either to ignore it or even to challenge it, then we can't expect God to make us His choice. If we choose Christ then God chooses us. Peter said to those who had chosen to follow Christ "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (see also Eph. 1:1-14).

In this one verse we are told that God has called us out of darkness, and because we responded to His call we are His chosen generation. But of the many called few are chosen, because few sincerely respond to His call.

Thus then, the man found without the wedding garment represents those who, on Judgement Day, will be found in the church without suitable character. The few chosen are those who will be found at their posts clothed in the garments of righteousness.

(Questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland).

THE difference between a conviction and a prejudice is that you can explain a conviction without getting angry. THE surest way to make a devil of a man is to treat him like a god. A Greek philosopher

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOVEMBER 1973

- 4—Psalm 84 1 Timothy 4
 11—Lev. 18:23-37 1 Timothy 5:1-16
 18—Prov. 23:19-35 1 Timothy 5:17 to 6:10
 25—Prov. 15:1-18 1 Timothy 6:11-21

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

TURNING from the writings of the aged apostle John to those of Paul we are impressed by the differences in language and expression. We are also impressed by the remarkable unity in sentiment, which characterises all scripture. We must bear in mind the very different objects of the writers, and the different circumstances. These make no difference to the divine inspiration which designed their appearance together in the "canon of scripture". Unity is there in diversity.

It seems certain that the apostle John wrote in his extreme old age. The lovely expression "Little children"; the insistence upon behaviour matching profession; the solemn warnings against lightly accepting the words, and failing to act in accordance with them; and the consciousness of danger from false teaching replacing what was heard in the beginning: these all point to development in the world of the community of Christians.

A probable date for John's letters is about 90 A.D. whereas Paul's first letter to Timothy was probably written about 66 A.D. Reliable tradition dates Paul's martyrdom 67 A.D. — quite shortly after he wrote his second letter to Timothy. How fitting it is that the last survivor of the apostolic band should be responsible for the final words of warning and encouragement for us all to profit by — the two personal letters of instruction leaving a picture of a faithful woman and man maintaining New Testament Christianity.

The letters to Timothy and Titus, after all, do give in essence the same instructions, enshrining the same strong personal

affection with the urgency due to the consciousness that the writer must pass on what he had received directly from God. The urgency is emphasised by the knowledge of the coming and even then present apostasy. We have the word "expressly". (1 Tim. 4:1) indicating a specific message, a direct communication consciously received — that apostasy is on the way. In John's letter (4:1-6) the false prophets are already present. Their error is indicated by unbelief of the incarnation, perhaps answering to the modern heresy which objects to the idea of salvation through blood, and substituting salvation by good behaviour only. By that time the false prophets had already led away some from the "faith once for all delivered".

The signs of the apostasy are clearly to be manifested, at least in part. "Seducing spirits" will evidently have a strong attraction ("delusion", 2 Thess. 2:11), an appearance of good, leading those not strongly faithful to the truth of the gospel to think alterations can be made with advantage. They will become "Satan's messengers" (2 Cor. 11:15); "anti-christs" (1 John 2:18); "through them evil spiritual powers find expression" (Westcott). The subtle deception will develop so as to dominate conscience and will and thus many will be led away "through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies" (1 Tim. 4:2, R.V.). Two specific results will be "forbidding to marry" and "commanding to abstain from meats". Doubtless these are not the only signs of apostasy, but they point to a type of "Christianity" which makes it a matter of observance and formality, rather than a whole new way of life. It is too easy to fall into this error. We observe that two glaring aspects of early apostasy as indicated in Peter's second letter and Jude's particularly — the drift into love of money and lust of the flesh — professionalism and loose moral standards.

The letters we are now reading emphasise the essential of holding fast to true teaching, and the maintenance of a holy life on the part of leaders. We look

at these points this month in chapter 6:3 to 10 and 11 to 16. Whereas the detailed instructions relating to widows, elders and slaves apply certainly to the conditions of that time, the principles must be applied now, and every brother and sister should be conscious that here she has a ministry in the church. The fashion to refer enquiries to "our minister" is a mistake. Every Christian is a minister — or he is not a Christian. Peter did not write his letter to any one, or any class of persons in the church, but told us all—

"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 2:9). No one of us can shelve our responsibilities on to some one else. The Lord have mercy upon us for our lack of appreciation of this, and supply His grace for future effort. R.B.SCOTT

The building itself is a quiet and modest yet dignified structure, and contains much better facilities for working the church and Bible school in their spiritual and social aspects.

The external works are not yet completed. When they are, as announced last month, within a few weeks of taking possession invitations will be sent to the churches to join with us in giving thanks to God and to ask His blessing upon the work which will go forth from this new house in coming years God willing. Announcement will be made also in the "Scripture Standard".

Inquiries : Secretary, C. Melling, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, via Wigan WN 2 4 XD. Lancs, Tel. Wigan 56301

Woodstock (South Africa): A series of meetings was held from 4th to 9th Sept., with attendances as follows:— 59, 122, 92, 84, 114, 104, and 97, thanks to support given by local congregations and visitors.

We express our deep appreciation to Bro. Leslie Williams for the thought-provoking and heart-searching messages he presented.

On the final evening Mrs Edith Schreuder was baptized. T.W.HARTLE

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Kentish Town: We are grateful indeed to all who joined us on the occasion of our 102nd anniversary. Over fifty sat down to tea, and paid heed to Brother Melton's teaching and exhortation to live up to our responsibility. His service is warmly appreciated. R.B.S.

Wigan, Scholes: Lord's Day, October 7th, was a particularly joyous one in the history of the church in Scholes, Wigan. The first gatherings in the new meeting-house (in Longshoot, Scholes) were held. It was grand to meet in our new home brethren old and young. In the morning gathering around the Lord's table the five oldest brothers, who can bear testimony to the faithfulness of God in the old and present days, all took part. Later in the day the Bible school and gospel meetings had increased attendances.

I HAVE NO TIME

I've no time to find fault with others—

I've too many faults of my own;

While I in myself may not know them,

I'm sure that to others they're known.

I've no time to talk idle gossip—

It may be it's nothing but lies;

Very soon they'll all be forgotten

If everyone passes them by.

I've no time to give to those people

Whose tongues deal in stirring up strife.

Far better to tell of good deeds done

To brighten the journey of life.

No time to be moody and lonely;

No time to be gloomy and sad.

Let me spend all my spare time in finding

How much I can make others glad.

SELECTED

TO LOVERS OF NATURE

SO many Christians are being led astray from God that I feel justified in warning of the dangers in worshipping Nature rather than the God who created it, Richard Jefferies, I suppose, was one of the greatest of naturalists. He wrote "One is nearer to God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth" which we, as Christians do not admit. Of course one admires God's handiwork. But Jeffries was an atheist and hated religion.

In the hour of deepest sorrow and need, how ridiculous it would be to sing

"I heard the voice of Nature say
 'Come unto Me and rest:
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon my breast.'
 I came to Nature as I was —
 Weary and worn and sad;
 I found in Her a resting place,
 And she has made me glad."

I think of the lovely hymn
 "Jesus wept; those tears are over,
 But His heart is still the same:
 Friend, High Priest and Sovereign Ruler
 Is His everlasting name.
 Saviour, who can love like thee,
 Weeping one of Calvary?"

Many friends I know would rather spend the Lord's Day in the park or by the sea, forgetting the exhortation "not to neglect the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." I understand that Dr. Greenfields read in the scripture that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." He said "Perchance there is hope for me yet."

"O, love of God, so strong and true,
 Eternal and yet ever new!"

Gertrude Hill

IF the world contains so much wickedness with religion what would it be without it?

THE prodigal robs his heir; the miser robs himself.

HE who learns and makes no use of his learning is a beast of burden with a load of books.

SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

C.S. LEWIS, a popular denominational writer famous for his Screwtape letters, reported that he once heard a preacher close a sermon by warning, "My dear friends, if you do not accept this truth, there may be grave eschatological consequences." Afterward Lewis asked what the preacher meant by the "grave eschatological consequences." Lewis asked if he meant "his hearers would be in danger of going to hell if they didn't believe." When the preacher answered "Yes", Lewis replied, "Then why didn't you say so?"

James Deforest Murch said, "Too many men act like mice in the pulpit. They mouth precise, cultured, popularly acceptable homilies. They play for headlines, tears and laughs, approval and adulation," (The Free Church, p.84) But men who will speak the whole truth plainly are what are needed so desperately now and evermore. Cecil Willis

LIFE

ABOUT the time you learn to make the most of your life, the most of it is gone.

Life is a one way street, and you are not coming back.

The way of life is the way of death.

You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.

WHERE TO GO

IN the midst of the religious confusion of our day, where can the really sincere and honest person go?

Go to your Bible? Search the scriptures! Find the church that is in the Bible!

Forget about all the different things you have always heard about the church. Find out what the Bible says about it and you will have the truth! Too many people are reading the latest popular respected theologian or listening to what the local vicar has to say. You need to look for the church in the Bible and when you find it you can be sure you will find the Bible in the church!

OBITUARY

Blackburn, New Wellington Street: The church has suffered the loss of a dearly loved brother and elder in this congregation — Harry Davenport, at the age of 65 years. He lived the major part of his life in Wigan and was numbered with the saints at Scholes, after which he continued his ministry of the Word in Blackburn until he was called to his rest on Thursday, September 20th, 1973. Brother Harry D. (as he was affectionately known), was well spoken of by all who knew him, and was a source of inspiration to all with whom he came in contact. His vast knowledge of the scriptures resulted from much study over many years, and his determination to “know nothing but Christ and Him crucified” was evident to all, saint and sinner alike. His work as an elder was a model for all who would attain to the office of a bishop. The faithfulness of our dearly loved brother lives on, as we give the praise to our Heavenly Father for the example of faithful stewardship he has left us all. Bro. Davenport had, like the Apostle Paul, “fought a good fight, kept the faith and finished the course” and so we who remain take courage, believing that the same “crown of righteousness” awaits our brother and all saints everywhere who long for the Lord’s appearing.

We commend our dear Sister Dora and all who mourn the passing of our brother, to the “one true God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”, who will reward us all according to the deeds done in the body. We rejoice in the promise of a resurrection, believing that our brother will receive the welcome, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”.

R.R.

(We grieve deeply at the death of our beloved Bro. Davenport. We had known him since his baptism into Christ some forty-six years ago, and had worked in closest fellowship and co-operation with him in the church and the Bible School in Scholes, Wigan. He was a keen worker in the cause of Christ. He insisted that the church in its teaching and activities must always be guided by the plain teaching or the principles given in the New Testament. He was a keen student of scripture — indeed it was almost the only book which had influence or power in his life. He had an intelligent grasp of God’s word, and showed this in his opening up of the scriptures in preaching and teaching. He was an especially good and sound teacher, while he served churches near and far in his preaching of the gospel. And many are the souls whom he won to the Lord.

Removing from Wigan to Blackburn some twenty years ago, he first met and worked with the assembly in Hamilton Street, where he was elected an elder. Perhaps the best work of his lifetime was in the congregation now meeting in New Wellington Street. His many generous acts and services to those in need, and his willingness to put himself to considerable trouble in order to ease the burdens of others have given cause for many to “rise up and call him blessed”. Best of all, he trained a group of young brothers in the congregation to use and rightly apply the word of truth, brethren who are in their turn serving other congregations, and their own, faithfully in preaching and teaching.

Bro. Davenport had a quaint sense of humour. He could laugh at himself, and although often in pain could smile at his troubles without others knowing how he was suffering. He will be sorely missed by his own loved ones, by the congregation in New Wellington Street and by the churches generally.

“Blest be his memory, and blest his bright example be.” EDITOR)

CHURCH OF CHRIST, LONGSHOOT, SHOLES, WIGAN

We give an Invitation to ALL CHURCHES AND BRETHERN to join us in Praise and Thanksgiving for the OPENING OF OUR NEW MEETING-HOUSE on SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH 1973

BUFFET TEA 4.30 P.M.

EVENING MEETING 6.0 P.M.

CHAIRMAN CARLTON MELLING;

SPEAKERS Leonard MORGAN (Hindley); Alfred MARSDEN (Albert Street, Wigan)

LORD'S DAY NOVEMBER 11TH

MORNING 10.30 Breaking of Bread, Speaker A. MARSDEN;

AFTERNOON 2.30 BIBLE School;

EVENING 6.0 GOSPEL MEETING, Preacher L. MORGAN

It would be helpful if you could inform us of your intention to be present —
Carlton Melling, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Via Wigan WN2 4XD, Lancs. Wigan 56301.

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