

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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A JOINT ISSUE

The recent postal strike has seriously disorganised the production and circulation of the S.S. We are trying to catch up with lost time by issuing this double number for March and April, and hope in another month or two to have returned to our usual timetable.

We thank our contributors and readers for their patience and understanding during the crisis. We on our part are endeavouring to give you value for money by making up the amount of worthwhile reading matter.

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT

DAVID KING

AN infinitely wise Creator placed the world under law, but soon the divine government was set at naught, the prodigal wandered from the Father's control, and the bulk of mankind have been until now feeding upon husks, seldom if ever satisfied with their lawlessness, yet unwilling to return to parental guidance. Violence and wrong exist, not as exceptional, but as ever living manifestations, alike of the cottage and palace, the hamlet and city. The government and the governed seldom agree — a people satisfied with their rulers would be a world-wide wonder, and a people having cause for such satisfaction scarcely less so, while a population prepared for the liberty it claims, does not exist. There prevails a general expectation of a coming good time — a conviction that schools, printing presses, and railways will produce a legislature and laws, that will place the might with the right, and supply a government adapted to an enlightened and happy people. We, however, are certain that, if ever man gains such a condition, he must place himself under Divine direction. After trial under every diversity of circumstances, he has shown himself unable to frame a government suitable to his condition; he has erected empires before which the world has been prostrated, yet they have been dissolved from want of just government. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, have melted as nations are now doing from the same cause, proving that man in his best state is unable to govern himself, and leading us to expect a divine legislature, warning us to flee for safety to Him "of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end." The prophecies point to a kingdom of unsullied happiness, where the garments rolled in blood and every trophy of war shall become fuel for fire, and point to a governor designated "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age." This exalted Prince has been revealed, His government established, and the kingdoms of this earth, as "things which can be shaken," shall become the kingdom of our God and His Anointed. Jesus the Head of the new dispensation, developed through His apostles the principles of the divine government,

and having all authority in heaven and in earth given unto Him, the family of Adam are commanded to put themselves under His government.

The world may be divided into three classes; those under the government of Jesus — those only *professedly* so — and those *avowedly* not so. The two last are in a condition of *lawlessness*, dishonouring Him whose right it is to reign — the one *openly*, the other, under the title of friendship, making void His law by substituting human arrangements.

The great principles of the heavenly institution are, undivided love to God and love to our neighbour, even as to ourselves. Many laws and ordinances are enjoined relating to the naturalization of aliens, thereafter as citizens, etc.; but these all exist to beget, maintain, and enlarge the love of the subject to his Creator, and to his fellow; and, being the product of infinite wisdom, cannot be neglected without greatly preventing the progress of the divine life in those who announce themselves subject to this government.

In kingdoms of human origin, law is mutable; ever requiring revision — faulty in construction, and when otherwise, soon rendered unserviceable by the growth of society. Under the reign of heaven, the faith is given once for all — for all time, and for all persons. When God called nature into being, He fixed unchanging and perfect laws, and in regulating His greater work, perfection was stamped on every feature.

The establishment of a kingdom was the Redeemer's great design. Having presented Himself a sin-offering, and being raised from the dead by the power of the Father, and exalted to His throne, He left the ordering of the kingdom to a duly qualified band. The voice from the excellent glory had said, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him"; He had called, trained, and prepared, by His parables and general teaching, the heaven-selected Twelve; when, just before the traitor-led throng hurried Him away, He lifted up His voice to heaven and said, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." To Peter He had exclaimed, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." After His resurrection, He added, "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them"; the same of sins to be retained; also, "as My Father sent Me, even so send I you; he that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." Though personally taught of the Lord, they were required to remain at Jerusalem until endowed with power from on high. After the bestowment of the Spirit on Pentecost they were placed on their legislative seats, their apostleship being not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus the Christ and God the Father; they could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; speaking with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, not in the words that man's wisdom teaches, but in the words by the Holy Spirit, being enabled to say, "He that is of God heareth us — God bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts." Under the former dispensation the law was given in one short period, accompanied by manifestations of power. In the new and more glorious, only as much of the divine government was developed as the particular circumstances of the time rendered requisite. The laws of God delivered on the last named principle were, however, not the *less perfect* or *permanent*. Perhaps the *main*, or *only* difference is, that while the Jew would find his law compacted in few pages, the Christian regards not only the *commands* of the apostles, but their *approved example*. Happy would it be, were all who call themselves by the name of Jesus prepared to do this, then would "names and sects, and parties fall," for the apostles taught the *same* things and established the *same* order in *every* church. Paul, in directing the Corinthians, observes, "*and so ordain I in all the churches.*" (1 Cor. vii:17). Of Timothy he says, "who shall bring you in remembrance of my ways, as I teach everywhere in every church." The churches planted in Judea were model churches, as we have model houses; hence, to the Thessalonians, the same apostle writes, "For ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God, which, in Judea, are in Christ Jesus."

It may be said, that if the apostles legislated for the church as events called for instruction, why not continue to arrange and re-arrange, ever adapting the discipline

of the church to the circumstances of each generation? The answer is, that their acts were never reversed, they did *not* arrange and re-arrange. When, for instance, they were called upon to decide relative to the converts from the Gentiles, in regard to circumcision and eating of things strangled, and blood, they did so, *once for all*; what they made law *then* is law *now*, and *ever* will be. They continued with the church till the completion of its legislation, and thus provided for future requirements. They affirmed in relation to their acts, that it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to them. They have no successors — all subsequent claims to inspiration are worthless — they have finished their work; being dead, they yet continue to speak; as Moses continued to be heard in the synagogue after his earthly career had terminated, they are now heard in every uncorrupted church, as the only propounders of the divine law, and safe expositors of the divine word. The miraculous attestation of their truthfulness and accuracy was secured to the church during the entire legislative period. This attestation was no longer required when the introduction of *new* truth ceased; and, consequently, looking forward to a time when they should be removed — when they should know even as they were known — the apostles clearly announced the discontinuance of spiritual gifts. (Eph. iv: 10-13).

These miraculously endowed brethren were then given, until the church should reach *the unity or completeness* of the faith or *system*. The apostle also exhibits the evil to be prevented by thus perfecting the laws of the kingdom — that we should not be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine and freak of will-worship, which is precisely the condition of existing sects, consequent upon their unauthorized legislation. With such convictions upon his mind Paul could freely say —

“Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away” (1 Cor. xiii:8).

The importance of this position is only fully perceived by those who understand that, had it been duly regarded, the apostacy could not have taken place. Papal Rome could never have existed, the union of the Church with the State must have remained impossible, and sects and sectaries have been unknown. In foretelling the apostacy the apostle thus describes it —

“Let no one lead you into a mistake by any means, because the apostacy must appear, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, must be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself. . . . The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now hinders will hinder until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that *wicked* (lawlessness) be revealed.”

This personified lawlessness was to appear in the temple, or church of God, taking the government off the shoulders of Jesus, making void the laws of His kingdom, by substituting merely human enactments, professing to worship God — while teaching for commandments the traditions of men, changing the ordinances, and making void the everlasting covenant.

The Prophet Daniel revealed, that between the setting up of the kingdom and its final triumph, its progress would be arrested by the introduction of the apostacy already contemplated. After the division of the fourth empire (the Roman) into ten kingdoms represented by ten horns of his fourth beast, another horn or kingdom appears, unlike — diverse from — the first, and it was to subdue three kings. Papal Rome arose from the ruins of Pagan Rome, and the power thus established was unlike that of every former kingdom. The ecclesiastical and political united — the Church wedded to the world — the world Christianized in name, with its spirit unchanged — the throne of God usurped, and the legislative seats of the apostles filled by the erring ministers of lawlessness. Personifying this opposing kingdom the prophet wrote —

“He shall speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints, and shall think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hands for a time, a time, and the dividing of time.” (Dan. vii:25).

According to this statement, the main features of this apostacy are persecution

and changing the laws established by the apostles. Rome and other sects have been condemned for introducing bad laws in place of those appointed by the apostles, but to have introduced even the harmless, could such have been framed; to have added to the *already* perfect and inspired, would have been presumptuous sin.

It is, then, our duty to hear the apostles, to regard their laws, to use their words, and thereby be enabled to say — “He that is of God heareth us.” It is ours to reject all ordinances, bonds of union, creeds, and attempts to legislate for the church since the apostles fell asleep in Jesus, that it may be said of us, “I know Thy works, and Thy labour, and Thy patience, and how Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and Thou hast tried them who say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.” (Rev, ii:2).

Reader! Are you subject to the government of Jesus? Remember that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Of the peace of His government there shall be no end — a peace which passeth understanding, such as the world can neither give nor take away. O that men were aware of the world's great need — that they knew the blessedness of Jehovah's government. Let us commend it to you as

A Righteous Government.

Truly God has a right to rule our every action — the right is His as CREATOR, for to Him we owe our being. It is His as PRESERVER, for by Him we live and move; and He is the SAVIOUR of all men — from death in many ways — by the fulness of His temporal blessing, even to the rebellious, for He maketh the sun to shine upon the just and unjust, and His long suffering is for salvation. It is His as REDEEMER, for He so loved the world, as to give the Son of His love, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is a *righteous government*, because, from everyone is required according to what he has, and not according to that he has not. Where little is given, little is expected; but that little must be rendered — the one talent must not be concealed in the earth, because at the coming judgment, the intents of every heart will be manifest, each one will receive according to the deeds done in the body; and all, both of the saved and the lost, will acknowledge the perfect justice of the divine rule. As

A Peaceful Government,

it stands pre-eminent, for *it is peace*. The individuals subject to it are at peace even with their enemies — at peace in themselves; when persecuted they can sing the songs of peace, even with their feet fast in the stocks, and their backs sore from chastisement. The Christian family is the abode of peace, even in cases where disorder and violence were formerly predominant. A Christian nation we know not; but just in proportion as the influences of God's government are brought to bear upon nations, so are they virtuous and peaceful. The entrance of His word giveth light and peace.

Under losses, pains, and in death, the Christian has peace; he can exclaim with the Prophet, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be upon the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” (Hab. iii:17, 18). He will affirm with Job, “Though Thou slay me, still will I trust Thee.” And with the Apostle, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor. v:1). Lastly it is

A Progressive and Eternal Government.

In order to its consummation, all past things have existed, and the present do exist. The Dispensations are preparatory. A people are being gathered to His name. Righteousness will cover the earth, as the waters the channels of the great deep. The subjects are being gathered by the gospel — the ranks of the saved enlarge, and anon, the heavenly city will descend, and the multitude whom no man can number, crowned with immortality, will enjoy its eternally progressive peace. Come, then, and drink of the waters of Life freely!

THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

Burney Johnson. II: From Moses to Joshua

MOSES led the Israelites to Mount Horeb in Sinai, where God gave him the ten-commandment law and all the many ordinances that went with it, and promised Moses that, if the children of Israel would keep that law, they would be "a peculiar treasure unto Him, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." For Christ also was to give a law to the saints in Christ, His church, and Peter calls them a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

According to Moses' law, there was to be a tabernacle composed of two rooms or compartments—the tabernacle of the congregation (sometimes called "the holy place," in which were the table, lamp and incense altar); and the holy place (sometimes called the "most holy" or "Holiest of all," in which were placed the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat and the cherubims). The tabernacle of the congregation represented the church, for in it the priests carried out the ordinances of worship, offering up carnal, material sacrifices to God. Paul says that the church offers up spiritual sacrifices, "the fruit of our lips." For Christ's will describes a worship composed of singing, praying, teaching, communing, and laying by in store. But into the holy place (which represented heaven) went Aaron, the high priest, alone once a year with the blood of animals to atone for the people's sins. Paul reasons that Christ, the high priest of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, has entered once into the holy place, into heaven itself, with His own blood to atone for the sins of the people.

Under the Leadership of Moses

Under Moses' law, the offering of animal sacrifices cleansed the people to the purifying of the flesh, so that the people were allowed to live temporarily, being blessed abundantly with material blessings if they kept the law. The writer to the Hebrews says that those animal sacrifices could never take away sin, but only cleansed the flesh. But he says that Christ's blood cleanses the conscience from dead works so that one may serve the living God, being blessed spiritually. Moses' law continued the practice of circumcision which began with Abraham and which served as an outward sign that those people were the children of Abraham after the flesh. Paul says that the saints are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him by baptism. He therefore reasons that one is baptized into Christ and thereby becomes Abraham's seed and an heir according to the promise—the promise that God would bless all nations through Abraham and his seed. Moses' law also called for the keeping of the sabbath, for God had created the earth in six days and had rested on the seventh. Paul reasons that there remains a rest for the people of God, and that they must labour to enter into that rest.

In the law of Moses, there were ordinances concerning feasts, meat offerings, drink offerings, new moons, sabbaths, clean and unclean beasts, and divers washings. But almost everything in that law served as a figure or shadow of things in Christ's will so that, after showing that Christ nailed the law to the cross and took it out of the way, Paul says, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come." Moses' law did, however, contain moral statutes which are always binding on mankind and are therefore included in Christ's will as given by the apostles. For all of the ten commandments, except the keeping of the sabbath, always involve recognizing God as the only true God and loving one's neighbour as himself ("I am the Lord thy God . . . Thou shalt have none other gods before me . . . Thou shalt not make thee any graven image . . . Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . . Honour thy father and mother . . . Thou shalt not kill . . . Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . Thou shalt not steal . . . Thou shalt not bear false witness . . . Thou shalt not covet . . ."), so that Jesus could say that the first commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and that the

second is like unto it, namely, to "love thy neighbour as thyself." Therefore, Paul says that all the law is fulfilled in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He also says, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Therefore, since the apostles (the ministers of the new testament, Christ's ambassadors) included these very same commandments in Christ's new testament, these are perpetually binding statutes and are not merely shadows or figures.

After receiving the ten-commandment law and binding it on the "church in the wilderness," Moses led his people through hostile territory toward the promised land. Forty years they journeyed, observing the ordinances of worship given through Moses, eating the manna which God rained from heaven, fighting against Gentile armies, always gaining the victory as long as they honoured and trusted in God by keeping His commandments, always suffering defeat when they disobeyed. And many were the times when they disobeyed. But Paul says that they are examples to the church, "to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolators," nor commit fornication, nor murmur, nor tempt Christ as they did. For Christ gave certain ordinances of worship to His own people, after declaring Himself to be the true bread which came down from heaven which, if a man eat, he will never die. And as His people journey toward a promised land; they are continually engaged in spiritual warfare, fighting against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Moreover, the saints in Christ are fully armed, having their loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, having the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Promised Land

Nevertheless, though the strong arm of the Lord continually manifested itself before the children of Israel, not all those that had come out from bondage entered into the promised land. For because of their unbelief, God caused them to wander forty years in the wilderness until all the males who were twenty years old and upward at the time of the crossing of the Red Sea were dead, that is, all except Joshua and Caleb. Only these two crossed the River Jordan with the women and children of those whose "carcasses fell in the wilderness." But the writer to the Hebrews, in referring to these examples, exhorts Christ's people to beware, "lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." For Christ had said before that many would be called, but few chosen. But after those who transgressed had fallen in the wilderness, and after Moses by the word of God had transferred the leadership to Joshua and had died in Mount Pisgah, God brought Israel to the east side of Jordan where He caused the waters to divide and led the whole remaining congregation safely across into the promised land of Canaan, which was to become their inheritance and everlasting possession. This, of course, foreshadowed how Christ would, in the end of the world, lead His congregation across the river of death into an inheritance eternal in the heavens prepared for the saints from the foundation of the world.

(To be continued)

THE FAULTY EXCUSE

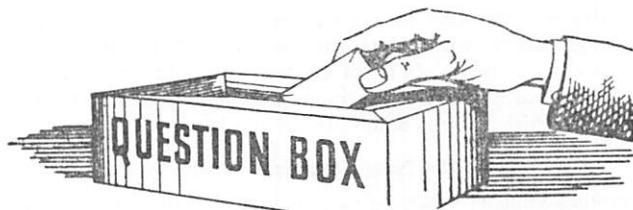
The man who says he is kept away from the church by hypocrites is not influenced by them anywhere else. Business is full of them, but if he sees a chance to make money he doesn't stop for that reason. Society is crowded with hypocrites, but he never thinks of becoming a hermit. Married life is full of them, but that doesn't make him remain a bachelor. Hell

is full of them, yet he isn't doing a thing to keep from going there.

He wants you to think he is avoiding hypocrites, yet he takes not a step toward the only place where no hypocrites go.

* * * *

Knowledge tends to give one the big head; love builds up. — *paraphase Paul* (1 Cor. 8:1).



Conducted by
James Gardiner

“The churches of Christ in Great Britain have always followed a policy of ‘mutual ministry.’ It has been suggested in recent years that this practice has no scriptural authority, and that ‘mutual ministry’ is not a scriptural term. Further, the practice of ‘mutual ministry’ has been responsible for the spiritual and numerical decline of the churches in Britain. Can you comment on why the churches of Christ, who claim to want to restore New Testament simplicity, should follow what is clearly a retrograde and unscriptural method of ministry?”

Not Enough Mutual Ministry

At the outset I would like to say that if the churches of Christ in Britain have declined spiritually and numerically it is because they *have not* practised “mutual ministry” and *do not* practise it. If *all* the members of each congregation played their *full part* in the ministry of each congregation then *no* congregation would decline spiritually or numerically.

The trouble in the churches in Great Britain is that we do not *practise* “mutual ministry.” We *advocate* mutual ministry, we *believe* it is the *best* practice because it is the *scriptural* practice, but unfortunately in most congregations *it is not practised*. A few members in each congregation are pleased to put their hands to the work and ministry, and the rest of the members are pleased to let them. If the system has failed in Britain it is not because the system is bad or unscriptural; it is because church members have not been making the ministry as mutual as they should. I remember the late brother Crosthwaite saying that we have brethren in the church who would hotly debate with all and sundry that the bread of the Lord must be broken *each* first day of the week and at the same time absent themselves from the Lord’s table the following Sunday for no real reason. Brother Crosthwaite also said that, in the same way, we have brethren in the church who would hotly defend the practice of mutuality of the ministry and at the same time dodge any duties likely to be given them. This, I humbly suggest is the trouble — we do not *practise* mutual ministry, we merely *preach* it. Some congregations may be exceptional, but I believe the criticism to be generally true. I suggest also that if every individual church member, brother and sister, were to throw all of their talent, energy and enthusiasm into the work of the Lord we would see progress, almost overnight, which would exceed our wildest dreams. Think how demoralising it is to ask a very capable brother to perform even a little task and be met with downcast eyes and a flow of excuses. Many churches are firing only on two cylinders — membership is in the order of sixty members: those actively doing the work number perhaps four.

No, the fault lies not in the system but in the fact that the system is not practised as it ought to be. Thus in answer to the allegation in the question that “mutual ministry” has resulted in the decline of the churches in Great Britain, we might answer that in fact the reverse is true — it is the *non-practice* of mutual ministry which causes a decline in congregations.

Mutual Ministry Unscriptural?

Criticism of the practice of mutual ministry has come from across the Atlantic, significantly from preachers who constitute “the one-man ministry” of the congregations by whom they are engaged. One wonders how such brethren can say that they cannot find scriptural authority for the practice of mutual ministry and yet presumably they

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

can find scriptural authority for one man in a congregation doing all the preaching and teaching (often in congregations with elders and deacons). Sometimes, it seems, we choke on gnats and swallow camels. It is, of course, by no means true that all American brethren are anti-mutual ministry and pro-one-man ministry — and there are several debates on the matter which set out both sides of the issue.

Ministry in the New Testament

The charge that “mutual ministry” has no scriptural authority is a most serious and, in my view, ill-informed assertion. Even the most casual reader of the New Testament cannot fail to notice that mutuality of the ministry is the *only* kind of ministry ordained by God. The New Testament has much to say about ministers, ministering and ministry and about their mutuality.

A “minister” is anyone who renders God a service: it means “a servant,” *i.e.* a servant of God. The term does not refer to any “officer” in the church, and indeed can refer to people *outside the church* — *e.g.* in courts of law and governments. Paul says, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers . . . for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.” (Rom. 13:1-6). Heb. 1:14 says that *angels* “are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.” And so God has ministers in and out of the church; and thus ministers are simply servants of God. Every child of God has been called to service — we have been saved to serve. As servants of Christ we are obligated to serve — *each one of us*. We are not members of the Lord’s body to be served, but to serve. “Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. . .” (Matt. 20:28). Ministering to the Lord is a mutual obligation which *each* disciple of Christ has. We all share a mutual faith — we all have mutual duties thereby. Paul wrote (Rom. 1:12), “That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” Our faith is mutually held — “mutual” meaning something held jointly, combined interests, and having reference to “you and me” together. The apostle Peter mentions mutual ministry in 1 Peter 4:10 when he says: “As every man hath received the gift even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” In this verse Peter places the responsibility of service upon “*every man*,” to the extent that he has been gifted, and says that God will reckon them “good stewards” if they minister that ability (ministry) “*one to another*” (mutually). This is only one verse, of many, which renders foolish any allegation that mutual ministry has no scriptural authority.

Let us look at some others. (Eph. 4:15-16), “The head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” The analogy here is quite clear, and strongly supports all members ministering according to their ability. Notice that far from causing a spiritual and numerical decline in a congregation it will “*make increase of the body*” (if every part is effectually working). So, Paul the apostle says that, if every church member works effectually (and supplies that which every joint of a human body supplies) the body of Christ will prosper and increase itself, “edifying itself in love.”

We cannot worship by proxy; neither can we *serve* God by proxy (by paying someone to minister for us). This term “one another” shows us plainly that our service is just as mutual as our faith, our aims, our anxieties, and our hopes. This phrase occurs again and again. Here are a few further samples:

Gal. 5:13 “. . . but by love *serve one another*”;

Rom. 14:19 “*edify one another*”;

1st Peter 4:9 “Use hospitality *one to another* without grudging”;

Rom. 15:14 “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, *able also to admonish one another*”;

Gal. 6:2 “*Bear ye one another's burdens* and so fulfil the law of Christ”;

1st Thess. 1:18 "Wherefore comfort one another with these words";

1st Thess. 6:11 "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do";

Heb. 10:24-25 "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

More than Preaching and Teaching

These quotations should be sufficient to show the mutuality of the ministry and that, one with the other, we should all exhort and admonish one another. A glance in a concordance will reveal many more. It is said that the church would be monstrous if it were all mouth. It would be as much a monster if it were all ear. *Each member*, in accordance with their ability, should be preaching, teaching, exhorting, edifying, admonishing, comforting, using hospitality, visiting the sick, serving one another and so on. There is more to ministry than preaching and exhorting, but even in this field it is not enough to opt out of our responsibility by paying someone to do it all for us. I feel that it is a significant point that when a congregation, employing one man to do the preaching and teaching, loses that man to another congregation, they don't seem to be able to cope, but when the one man goes he must immediately be replaced by another one. Surely our Lord never intended that such dire dependence be upon "the preacher" or in some case "the minister," and surely in such congregations there must be a great wealth of latent talent which is left untapped and undeveloped.

I suggest again that perhaps 'mutual ministry' is not practised in this country in the full sense of the term, and that if it were and every member of the church harnessed in the Lord's service, a wonderful transformation in the churches, for the better, would result. Like the House of Stephanus, we should be "addicted to the ministry" — but are we?

"As every man hath received the gift so let him minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

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

WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION?

(Bible Answers to Bible Questions)

QUESTION:

"Does the word 'children' in Titus 1:6 mean that an elder must have a plurality of children to qualify? How does the N.T. use the word children?"

REPLY by J. P. Needham.

THIS is an age-old question, and I realize that my answer will not satisfy everyone. However, I am convinced that the scriptures do not demand that an elder have a plurality of faithful children. There are three sources of information which have created this conviction:

(1) The Rules of Greek Grammar:

(a) *Winer*: "... the Plural ... is used although the predicate refers primarily to one individual, when the writer wishes to keep the thought somewhat vague" (*WINER'S GREEK GRAMMAR*, p. 175). It is my conviction that Tit. 1:6 is such a case. The Holy Spirit was making provisions for the qualification of an individual with one or more children, hence the wisdom of leaving it indefinite.

(b) *Hadley and Allen*: "Even in concrete words, the poets sometimes use the plural for the singular, to give the expression a more general turn (generalizing plural) . . ."

(HADLEY AND ALLEN, *GREEK GRAMMAR*, p. 211). It is obvious that Titus 1:6 is a case of this "generalizing plural" which would not be violated by the singular.

(c) *Robert Funk*: "In a generalization, the plural can stand for one person: Matt. 2:20 . . ." (*A GREEK GRAMMAR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*, p. 77).

(d) *Friederick Blass*: "The plural is used with reference to a single person by a generalizing mode of expression in Matt. 2:20 . . ." (*GRAMMAR OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK*, p. 83).

The reference to Matt. 2:20 is quite interesting. It says, ". . . take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for *they* are dead which sought the young child's life." We know that Herod (singular) is the antecedent of "they" (plural). It is Herod that sought the life of the infant Jesus, yet he is referred to as "they."

(2) The Use of the Word Child and Children in the Bible :

(a) Gen. 21:7, ". . . who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given CHILDREN suck? for I have borne him a SON in his old age." This passage has reference to Isaac, the only child Abraham and Sarah ever had, but even if they had others, it is obvious that this passage refers to only one because it refers to the "SON" she bore Abraham in her old age. Here is a concrete case where the plural "children" definitely is used to refer to the singular.

(b) Gen. 11:30, "But Sarai was barren, she had no CHILD." But in referring to the same thing the Holy Spirit said in Gen. 16:1, "Now Sarai Abraham's wife bare him no CHILDREN . . ." Hence, the singular "CHILD" and the plural "CHILDREN" are used interchangeably in these two passages.

(c) Matt. 22:24, ". . . Moses said, If a man die, having no CHILDREN, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother." If we demand that the plural CHILDREN excludes the singular CHILD, then this verse says that if this individual had only one child, he had no seed—he must have had more than one child to have seed. But Gal. 3:16 says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to SEEDS, as of many; but as of one, and to thy SEED, which is CHRIST." Hence, one child constituted seed, yet the plural CHILDREN is used in Matt. 22:24.

(d) 1 Tim. 5. Verse 4 says, "But if any widow have CHILDREN or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents . . ." Does this mean that the widow must have a plurality of children before there is an obligation for them "to requite their parents?" If she had only one child, he would have no such obligation? Remember, the plural CHILDREN is used, and if it excludes the singular, then this conclusion is logical and undeniable.

In verse 10, Paul gives the qualifications of the widow that was to be "taken into the number." One such is that she must have "brought up children." Does this mean she could not be taken into the number if she had brought up only one?

(e) 1 Thess. 2:7, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." Does this mean that a nurse could not cherish a single child?

(f) 1 Thess. 2:11, "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." Does this mean that a father could not exhort, comfort and charge just one child?

Conclusion :

A number of seemingly plausible arguments are made favouring an elder's having a plurality of faithful children, such as, "A plurality of faithful children shows an elder's ability to rule over different kinds of people since no two children are alike, and elders have to rule over so many different kinds of people in the church." But this is a conclusion based upon two major assumptions: (1) that the scriptures require a plurality of faithful children which we have shown is not the case, and (2) that the reason for the requirement of a plurality of faithful children is to show his ability

to rule over different kinds of people. The scriptures nowhere say this. The conclusion sounds good, but it is not found in the Bible. The elder is to have demonstrated his ability to rule his own house well (1 Tim. 3:4, 5), and he can do this with one child or many.

We need to realize that if the Holy Spirit had said that an elder must have a faithful child, someone would argue that "it says 'child' not 'children' and those having more than one faithful child do not qualify." To avoid this, He used the generalizing plural.

I plead with brethren of a differing view to consider this material in an objective manner. No question can be settled on the basis of what we have always believed or been taught. There is also nothing to be gained from the age-old expression, "I just take the Bible for what it says because it says what it means and means what it says." We all claim to do that. This is a good expression and absolutely true once we determine what the Bible says. The danger is that we will assume that it says something it does not say. I once took the "plurality position" but found myself unable to defend it in the light of such material as I have here presented. I have no objection to appointing men with a plurality of faithful children, if they are available, yet on the other hand, I cannot conscientiously prevent a church from being scripturally organized because men who are otherwise qualified do not have a plurality of faithful children.

Truth Magazine

SOME RULES FOR BIBLE STUDY

"WHEN the plain sense of the Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of its related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise."—The late Dr. David L. Cooper's rule for Bible study.

Ernesti says, "The system of deducing the sense of words from the matter, is altogether fallacious: the matter ought rather to be deduced from the words and from their sense rightly investigated."

Melancthon says, "Scripture cannot be understood theologically, unless it be understood first grammatically."

Luther says, "We must not make God's word mean what we wish: we must not bend it, but allow it to bend us . . . The knowledge of the sense can be derived from nothing but the knowledge of the words."

Bullinger says, "A figure is simply a word or sentence thrown into a *peculiar form*, different from its original or simplest meaning or use."

Knoch says, "The literal meaning of a term should never be deduced from its figurative usage. *The figurative force depends on its literal definition.* This must be fixed first."

Again, Bullinger says, "Whenever and wherever it is possible, the words of Scripture are to be understood literally." Otherwise, he says, "we must reasonably expect that some figure is employed." He continues: "All that art can do is to ascertain the laws to which nature has subjected them. There is no room for private opinion, neither can speculation concerning them have any authority."

"It is not open to any one to say of this or that word or sentence, 'This is a figure,' according to his own fancy, or to suit his own purpose. We are dealing with a science whose laws and their workings are known. If a word or words be a figure, then *that figure can be named and described.*"

The Truth, May 1970

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH 1971

7—2 Chr. 24:1-3 & 15-25	Acts 7:30-60
14—2 Kings 17:21-34	Acts 8:1-25
21—Isaiah 52:13-53;12	Acts 8:26-40
28—1 Samuel 16:1-13	Acts 9:1-22

CONVERSIONS

SOME of us have become so familiar with the passages we are reading that to talk of "New Testament Conversions" seems superfluous. The Acts of Apostles being the "Book of Conversions" should be well known by those who seek to be used for this purpose of God. However, in view of the world-wide perversions of this essential experience, we cannot be too careful or emphatic in drawing attention to the original and genuine conversion. On one hand we have the false and misleading idea that "you simply sit where you are, and think and feel you are saved" by believing the preacher's message, and on the other the really astonishing doctrine that water sprinkled on an infant by an accredited clergyman makes it "a child of God."

Surely a simple understanding of how people became Christians when the gospel was first preached (and so obviously has the divine approval) will tell us the what, the how and the why of the life-changing experience through which the history of the world has been changed.

What Conversion Is

It is well to know, first, that the term "convert" in the Authorised Version has in all cases been changed in the Revised Version to the positive "turn." In the case of James (5:19 & 20) the thought is of one person bringing about conversion in others. The "conversion of the Gentiles" of course refers to the fact of their turning "from darkness to light" through the preaching of the gospel. We are *acted upon* by the Spirit of God through the gospel message, and *we act* upon our acceptance of it.

We look at our present readings with this in mind, and recognise that the gospel was preached by Stephen to his former

associates in the synagogue of the Freedmen. The truths revealed and presented with miraculous backing by the Holy Spirit in the thoughts, words and actions of Stephen acted upon the minds and hearts of his opponents — *but they did not turn*; they were not converted. They rejected and bitterly opposed the truth. The power of God in the gospel was exercised but men rejected, refused to accept it.

The scattering of the Christians by the persecution which arose in Jerusalem spread abroad the power of God through their testimony and the effect of the gospel on their lives. God's power was manifested in changed hearts and minds, making them new creatures through the new birth and the new life. We read first of this taking place in Samaria. The change in the hearts of the persecuted Christian Jews brought the message of the love of God to those whom they had previously hated and despised. We do not know to what extent this change was prepared for by the preaching of Jesus and his disciples (See John 4 and Luke 9:52). We do know the result of Philip's preaching. Many hearing the Word, believed and were baptised. In this case also his word was backed up by miraculous power, entirely unmistakable and unlimited by belief, unbelief or circumstances. Philip had this power; but even more wonderful signs were given through the laying on of the apostle's hands after prayerful preparation. Their intervention enabled other converts to work miracles, as we learn by comparison with Acts 10:44 where a direct visible influence of the Holy Spirit "fell" — in that case of course for the very special purpose of convincing Peter.

Two Examples of Conversion

Our readings now provide two cases of individual conversions. The eunuch and Saul had the same background of faith in Moses and the Word of God. The simple and natural reaction of a soul already godly and righteous is pictured beautifully in the eunuch. He had travelled a long, long way at much expense in order to offer sacrifice and worship at the place where Jehovah had placed His Name. He had found satisfaction in thus giving obedience to His ordinances, and con-

tinued this activity in reading the sacred word. He was fortunate in having the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which we assume was part of his home library (unless it had been borrowed from the Rabbis). We are ourselves puzzled at times for interpretation of some of the prophecies, so it does not surprise us that he needed help with the passage he was reading. Philip's providential appearance with news previously unheard threw the vivid light of truth upon it. Thereupon with enlightened and willing faith and repentance towards God, the eunuch sought that obedience which is part of "preaching Jesus" (8:35). The water came into sight, and a new joy came into life with glad obedience.

Saul's case is very different. Ignorantly and in unbelief (1 Tim. 1:13) he resisted and rejected the gospel. Thinking he was resisting a wicked perversion and opposition to the Law of God, he put all his energy into persecution of the followers of Jesus, in particular the teaching and work of Stephen. He failed to perceive the force of Stephen's contention or to be moved by his cruel death. However we believe this sight must have remained in his mind. Surely there was a misgiving indicated by the words of Jesus: "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (26:14). It is obvious that God had special plans for His use of Paul as an apostle. Direct intervention brought him to his knees in abject submission and repentance.

"He was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink." The process of conversion must have been a shattering experience, and these three days an essential part of it. We try to realise the depth of remorse and regret, and the complete humiliation involved. There surely was a divine purpose in requiring what we may call the normal procedure of hearing the Lord's instruction through another human being — Ananias. To Saul, who had come determined to convict of error or even to destroy, Ananias came with the message of love: "Brother Saul." It was necessary too that, though spoken to from heaven, Saul must "fulfil all righteousness" in the obedience of baptism as a condition of forgiveness. To him what a small requirement for such a wonderful assurance!

R. B. SCOTT

APRIL 1971

4—2 Kings 4:8-37	Acts 9:23-43
11—Numbers 27:12-23	Galatians 1
18—Leviticus 11:1-24	Acts 10:1-23
25—Isaiah 49:1-13	Acts 10:24-48

PETER'S ENLIGHTENMENT

IT is obvious that the fundamental change in Peter's life had taken place at Pentecost. The crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension and the divine inspiration had settled his life into a WAY — the narrow way which led to eternal life through self-denial and the gates of death. The decision had been taken initially when Jesus had said on the seashore, "Follow me" (Mark 1:17). In a letter Peter gives us his farewell thought and encouragement: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). This is every Christian's programme; and does it not fit his own case from the day when Andrew found him, saying, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41)?

Peter's Preparation

There should be a process of growth in all our lives from the day we first come into contact with Jesus. This can be in very different ways: sometimes by the reading of the Word; sometimes by the preaching; sometimes by the life and words of a brother. The seed sown by the Spirit of God germinates and blossoms into life. It can be a long painful process, a sudden awakening or just a gradual opening out, so to speak, of the flower.

The circumstances of our childhood and early life mould our characters through the varied influences, and our reaction (itself conditioned by those influences). It was so with Peter, and it is his development as follower and apostle of Christ which we view in the conversion of Cornelius. We see it so clearly in his response to the voice from heaven: "Not so, Lord: for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (10:14). A command even from heaven did not persuade him that it could be right to break the restrictions of the Law: only the thrice-repeated insistence impressed the thought.

But "unclean" gentiles were at the gate, and the Spirit "insisted" on his

going with them, "nothing doubting." We wonder whether at this point Peter recollected the commission given when the Saviour was with them: "Go into all the world" (Mark 16:15), or "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It would appear so from the fact that he so promptly acknowledged the truth taught by the vision — "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation . . ." (10:34 & 35).

Conversion of Cornelius

The picture of Cornelius is a very happy one. It shows us a man of exemplary character — such as we might well think had no need of repentance and baptism. He had not apparently become a proselyte, but must have been very near to doing so, judging by his godliness. Had he not been praying for enlightenment? It seems strange that we meet in the New Testament centurions who show goodness and consideration rather than the brutality which must have characterised most of them. They represented the combination of force of arms modified perhaps by enlightened administration, but finally dependent upon unscrupulous imposition of obedience. Cornelius however exercised himself and his household in prayer to the one God and openhanded generosity. He used his position to spread love and goodwill.

We observe several points of special interest. God definitely answered prayer miraculously. Normally this does not happen today; but we dare not say He never does so, and we are sure He has the same power as ever. No direct revelation was granted. He referred the suppliant to a man — Peter. Obviously there was a double purpose in this. Cornelius was brought to know the Lord Jesus. Peter was brought to understand the universality of the gospel. For Cornelius a new life began and for Peter his mind was broadened to accept the unacceptable.

We suppose that Luke gives us the substance of Peter's speech and that it was extended and enlarged somewhat. The facts of the ministry of Jesus must have been well known even in Caesarea, for the whole nation of the Jews was stirred by His work and words. The attempt to suppress could not possibly have pre-

vented a wider publicity. It was not necessary to detail the story of love and sacrifice. The power of Peter's testimony was enough to convince minds anxious to know "all things which have been commanded thee of the Lord" (verse 33).

But the astonishing and finally decisive action was the demonstration by the Lord Himself of His complete approval of Cornelius as a repentant sinner, to be saved by faith and obedience, in the same way that the gospel message provided for repentant Jews. Peter was completely convinced: "Can any man forbid the water?" In this way he was divinely guided into opening the door of the community of Christ to the Gentiles, as he had already opened it to Jews on the day of Pentecost by means of faith, repentance and obedience. These two occasions are the unique *direct* outpourings of the Holy Spirit with miraculous demonstration.

R. B. SCOTT

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

A correspondence in a New Zealand newspaper between a Preacher of "THE BRETHREN" and BRO. SAM WILSON, formerly of Dennyloanhead, Scotland.

"THE BRETHREN" SAY

THE Word of God records the conversion of the repentant thief (Luke 23:39-43) to teach us that salvation is the free gift of God to all who put their trust in Christ alone as their Sin-bearer and Saviour.

Salvation Not By Works

Works have nothing to do with the obtaining of salvation. The repentant thief had no works of his own to plead. He was an evil-doer till the last hours of his life. The language of his awakened soul was:

"NOTHING in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

The Word of God declares: "NOT BY WORKS of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). And again: TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteous-

ness" (Romans 4:5).

"Dead Works" and "Good Works"

When, however, a man has received the free gift of everlasting life he will show the gratitude of his heart by a life of devotion to his Lord and Saviour.

The "dead works" of a sinner can never earn salvation. The "good works" of a believer spring from the reality of his faith.

Salvation Not By Baptism

Baptism has nothing to do with the obtaining of salvation. Nowhere in the Bible is God set forth as a great Magician who works some mysterious and mighty change in an infant or an adult when someone sprinkles him with water and recites the words "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The testimony of a Salvation Army broadcast service or open-air meeting will demonstrate to any honest seeker the fact that, apart from baptism, lives are transformed, sins are pardoned and guilty consciences find peace.

The same wonderful evidence is forthcoming in every evangelical church and in the life and witness of innumerable individual Christians.

Salvation By Blood, Not By Water

The Epistle to the Hebrews sums up the message of the Old Testament sacrifices in the following words: "Unless blood is shed there can be no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22, Ronald Knox Translation). There is no shedding of blood in baptism. There is therefore no salvation in baptism.

Note: Next month's article will show why baptism normally follows salvation.

THE SCRIPTURES SAY

"Baptism Doth Also Now Save Us"

(1 Peter 3:21)

"EXCEPT a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Here the Lord associates being born of water (baptism) and the Spirit (the Word of the Lord) with entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature. "He that believeth (born of the Spirit) and is baptised (born of water) shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). These two statements of Jesus agree.

After the commission of Jesus we have never read in the New Testament of an unbeliever being baptised, nor have we read of a believer unbaptised. We must settle in our hearts and minds whether baptism is of men or of heaven. If it is of men it is a vain thing; and if it is of God, to neglect it is to dishonour God.

When Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved," it is surely a clear and plain statement and is easily understood by a good and honest heart. To say "He that believeth and is NOT baptised shall be saved" savours of addition to the word of the Lord and contradicts Jesus Who died for us.

From the Day of Pentecost onwards we never read in the New Testament anywhere that any believer ever inquired whether baptism is necessary or essential to salvation. To anyone who believes the Lord Jesus and His Apostles there is always a glad readiness to obey. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptised, and THE SAME DAY there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Philip went down to Samaria and preached CHRIST. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God they were baptised, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Notice: BELIEVED AND WERE BAPTIZED.

The same preacher, commanded by an angel, went to Gaza and he preached unto the eunuch—JESUS. Upon the eunuch confessing his faith in Jesus as the Son of God Philip immediately baptised him . . . (Acts 8:38-40).

In the case of the Apostle Paul's conversion he was commanded, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

Notice: Baptism is before the washing away of sins.

When Cornelius sent to Joppa for Peter, it was to "hear words whereby he and his

house should be saved" (Acts 11:14). After Cornelius and his friends received the Holy Spirit, Peter commanded them to be baptised in water (Acts 10:47, 48).

When the Lord gave the Commission He put baptism before salvation.

LEO

Alvin C. Rose, Jr.

THERE was a man in the land of the South whose name was Leo; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil. And while his material possessions were few, his spiritual accomplishments were many. He regularly visited the patients in his small-town hospital; he belonged to a local civic group, active in community charitable work; he daily dropped in to see an aged widow with no family, and to do her heavy household work; he served as preacher for a small church and worked harmoniously with other churches in his area; he spent hours daily in devotional Bible study and personal prayer.

Now it came to pass one day that Satan presented himself to God. And God said to Satan, "Where have you been?" Then Satan answered God and said, "Oh, here and yonder." And God said to Satan, "Have you ever thought about My servant Leo? There is no one like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fears Me, and turns away from evil." Then Satan answered God, "Does Leo fear You for nothing? Have you not built an invisible shield around him, and all that he has, on all sides, top, and bottom? But let me have him for a while, and he will renounce You to Your face." And God said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not harm his physical body." So Satan went forth from the presence of God.

And it fell on a day that there came the postman to Leo, giving him a letter that was from a large church in Absernash, a major Southern city, offering him the position of minister. In return for his services, the church would give him a substantial salary, the use of a new, three-bedroom, brick parsonage with all utilities paid (except for long distance calls), and

a new big car every two years. At his evening meal Leo was badgered by his wife to take the position. "But who will serve the Podunk church?" he asked his wife. "Oh, they'll find someone," she answered, "didn't they find you?" "But my civic club . . ." "There'll be another one where we're going." "The hospital patients . . ." "Their relatives will come to see them." "The widow across the street has no relatives." "Look, Leo, are you gonna let some old useless lady keep you from advancing yourself? She'll be dead before long anyhow." "What'll I tell the church?" "Tell them you've decided to make a change and go where you can serve the Lord more effectively."

And so Leo, his wife, sons and daughters, moved to Absernash, leaving Podunk and its needy citizens behind. Westland Pike was a well-established church of several hundred white, middle-class worshippers. Leo had never been in such comfortable surroundings, and while his members were not spiritually active, they were friendly.

Absernash was the home of Daniel Livingston College, named for that saint who a century earlier had saved the brotherhood from total digression over the stained-glass issue. Livingston invited Leo to speak at a chapel service after he began working with Westland Pike. The administration was pleased with the soundness of his chapel talk, and he was invited to be one of the speakers at the annual March Lecture series, held at Livingston. Leo accepted and was quite impressed when many small-town preachers taped his message and came afterwards with their hearty congratulations for a job well done in defending the Truth.

The editor of the *Gullible Answers*, also located in Absernash, asked Leo to write a series of articles for his journal on "Why I Am a Member of the One-and-Only, Honest-to-Goodness True Church." Leo eagerly responded, and the loyal brotherhood saw his name and read his words.

Leaders of churches throughout the brotherhood asked Leo to conduct Gospel Missions for them, and his summers were spent away from Absernash, as he filled many pulpits, keeping a detailed account of the visible responses to his preaching and writing accounts of them in the news section of the *Gullible Answers*. Leo was

soon asked to become assistant editor of that sound brotherhood publication, and all knew that he was being groomed for the editor's position as the old editor would soon be retiring.

The first public debate for Leo came a few years later when he confronted a well-known preacher of another segment of the brotherhood on the issue of whether or not it was in harmony with the teachings of the Bible to have a radio and television programme like the "Call of (the) Last Days" (C.O.L.D.), which received support from congregations and individual members of the True Church throughout the nation. Leo then went across the country on a combination speaking and debating tour on behalf of the COLD. Even after he gloriously returned in triumph to Absernash and the Westland Pike Church, he continued to "ring the rafters" as he spoke against those who would oppose the COLD.

Leo had little time for prayer and devotional Bible reading. His study periods were spent in finding proof texts to use in his sermons and debates, especially for the cause of COLD. And he had heard that some liberal members were practising foot-washing in their homes: this heresy must be stopped lest it spread into the worship services. Once again Leo would save the brotherhood from doctrinal error with his voice in the pulpit and with his pen in the *Gullible Answers*.

Meanwhile, the Podunk church never found another preacher, except for Sunday "fill-ins," as the Podunk church had no parsonage and offered no large salary. Local hospital patients in Podunk were no longer guaranteed a weekly visit. A local civic club had lost a valuable and active member. An old widow became depressed and soon died.

And it came to pass on another day that Satan presented himself before God. And God said, "Where have you been?" And Satan answered God and said, "Oh, here and yonder," And God said, "Well, you've won another of My servants." "Yes, I suppose I have. You know, it really isn't challenging any longer. When I took men's material goods, their families, their health, and their reputations away from them, I had a terrible time. I'll

never forget that disappointing experience with that Uz fellow, Job. But I've learned. If I'll multiply their material goods and their reputations, I'll get them every time. Now I'll have Leo. He never visits the sick, clothes the naked, feeds the hungry, or takes in the stranger. Even when he converts someone to You, he does it to put another 'notch on his gun.' Now Leo wins debates, not souls. He is concerned about foot-washing, not salvation. Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha . . ."

Mission Messenger

TWO BOOKS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

During the postal strike, having no correspondence to receive or send out and unable to carry out work on the S.S. I have had the opportunity to do a little more reading than usual. In the past two months I have read two outstanding books on the New Testament, both rather expensive it is true, nevertheless very good value for the money in these days.

I want to draw attention to these books, particularly because, as a people who claim the New Testament as the authority and guide of the church, we need to learn as much as we can about that portion of scripture and the twenty-seven books comprising it — their background, authorship and meaning. There is no book like the Bible for explaining *itself* — in this, as in other things, "God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain." But there are certain details which are not always set out in the Bible itself. For this background we have to look to other sources. And when we learn from those sources the history, geography, biography, social customs, religious history and practices, etc. we often find that understanding comes to us with even deeper meaning than before. "Do you understand what you read?" Philip asked the Ethiopian. "How can I except someone guides me?" (Acts 8:30-31). The incident is repeated often.

Even then the question arises, "What shall I read to give me this understanding of the Bible and especially of the New Testament?" That is why I am bringing to notice these two works which have

interested, impressed and, I hope, benefited me in my own recent reading. The first book is :

A Survey of the New Testament, by Robert H. Gundry. Paternoster Press. 1970. 400pp. £2.50.

The author is Assoc. Prof. of Biblical Studies, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California, and is a Baptist. One has therefore to guard against certain "pre-millennialist" teachings brought forward as to the "last days" and the earthly Kingdom of God. But these theories are not prominent in the book.

The ground the book covers is shown by its contents :— I : Political; II : The Critical Event: Jesus' Career; III: The Triumphant Aftermath: Jerusalem to Rome; IV : The Explanation & Implications: Epistles & Apocalypse, followed by indexes. About 90 illustrations, 10 maps and charts are included.

The book is perfectly simple and interestingly written. The author wears his learning lightly and sets out the N.T. background in fascinating manner. Far from its taking the place of the N.T. the reader goes to those scriptures with fresh relish and understanding. The work is recommended to all; but to the young especially, who desire not only to better their own knowledge but to be able to open up the word of God in teaching the church and preaching the gospel.

My second book is :

New Testament History, by F. F. Bruce. Nelson. 1969. 448pp. £5.25.

The author is Rylands Prof. of Biblical Exegesis & Criticism in the University of Manchester, and author also of a great number of other books and articles on Biblical subjects and theology. The seemingly high price of the work is doubtless due to the immense research which has produced it. As a result both the scholarship and accuracy of the author are apparent. Yet Dr. Bruce treats his subject with clarity and simplicity so that any N.T. student can understand.

First, the antecedents of N.T. history are sketched from the last days of the ancient Persian Empire to the Emperor Augustus of Rome, in whose reign Jesus

was born. We are then introduced to the world in which Christ lived, as the author depicts the historical, geographical, political, philosophical and religious situation in the time of the N.T. Coming to scripture itself, N.T. history is dealt with in chapters on the Christ and His ministry, the church and the mission of Paul.

Dr. Bruce is "conservative" in his views, although on a few points we would regard him as leaning towards the "higher Critical" theories. Nevertheless, the value of his book is not adversely affected. Certainly it will do great good in giving an intelligent grasp of N.T. history and teaching as a whole.

If older brethren could see their way to present copies of either or both of these books to those younger in the faith, they would be taking part in investment which would enrich many for years to come, please God. In their turn younger brethren could not spend their money to much better effect than in purchasing copies for themselves. It would be no selfish investment, for the blessing shared would far outweigh the expense incurred.

C. MELLING

* * * *

"BEGINNING IN JERUSALEM"

A German girl prayed for many years that she might be sent to a foreign field as a missionary. One morning it seemed as if new thoughts ran through her mind, like this:

"Where were you born?" "In Germany."

"Where are you now?" "In America."

"Who lives in the room next to yours?"

"A Swedish girl."

"Is she a Christian?" "No."

"Who lives in the flat above?" "A Jewish family."

"Christians?" "No."

"Who lives next door?" "Italians."

"Christians." "No."

"Have you ever done any missionary work in your neighbourhood?" And she was obliged, with shame, to answer "No."

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD BALANCE SHEET.

Year Ending 31st December, 1970.

INCOME			EXPENDITURE			
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cash in Hand						
at 1/1/70 ...	86	4	9	Printing of 13		
Bank Balance at				Issues	604	1 0
1/1/70	99	12	0	Reading Cards 1970	9	7 0
	<hr/>			Reading Cards 1971	11	10 0
			185 16 9	Bound Volumes ...	25	2 6
Subscriptions					<hr/>	
in 1970	461	10	7	Printers' Postage ...	25	1 4
Gifts in 1970 ...	566	9	8	Distribution Postage	32	4 10
	<hr/>			Bro. Scott's Postage	5	0 0
			1028 0 3	Treasurer's Postage	10	0 0
					<hr/>	
						72 6 2
				Cheque Book ...		5 0
				Loss on Dollar		
				Cheque		4 6
					<hr/>	
				Total Expenditure ..		722 16 2
				Cash in Hand ...	68	6 0
				Bank Balance ...	422	14 10
					<hr/>	
						491 0 10
Grand Total	<hr/>			Grand Total	<hr/>	
	£1213	17	0		£1213	17 0
	<hr/>				<hr/>	
	(£1213.85)				(£1213.85)	
	<hr/>				<hr/>	

PAUL JONES
(Treasurer)

A. SCOBIE
(Auditor)

25th January, 1971.

MODERN DISBELIEF AND MATERIALISM

Modernism and materialism must bear their responsibility for the present-day moral and spiritual "letdown." By the negative process of saying "We do not believe this" and "We do not accept that" they have helped to undermine and destroy the faith of this generation. When you rob men of their faith in God and the Bible moral decay sets in, human passions are not restricted and human life is cheap.

—*American Christian Review*

* * * *

To find fault is easy; to do better may be difficult.—*Plutarch*.

* * * *

THE GOSPEL AND ATHEISM

Charles Bradlaugh, the atheist, challenged Hugh Price Hughes to debate with him on the truth of the Christian faith. The challenge was accepted, in these words: "Courts in rendering verdicts do not rely solely on arguments of lawyers. They carefully scrutinize those who have first-hand knowledge of facts. I will bring with me to the debate one hundred men who have been saved from sin by the gospel of Christ. They will give evidence and you will be allowed to cross-examine them. I ask that you bring one hundred men and women who have been similarly helped by the gospel of infidelity."

The debate did not take place.

* * * *

The less one has to do the less time one finds to do it in.

* * * *

"TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY"

Be not too busy with thy work and care
To look to God, to clasp thy hand in
His:

Miss thou all else, but fail not thou in
this.

Thou needest not alone thy burden bear:
Listen and wait, obey and learn His will:
His love and service all thy life can fill.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

There is no such thing as a juvenile problem as a thing apart. Children and adolescents are not a factor, but a product; not the actors, but the acted-upon. Youth is a perfect community thermometer, or an organ upon which the community plays for harmony or discord; or a mirror which reflects the home, school, church and picture-show.

* * * *

No sermon can accomplish much without hitting somebody.

Some people think they are being frank when they are only unpleasant.

Nothing terrifies some men more than having to change a cherished opinion.

Never mind about doing extraordinary things: just do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Real courage is going right ahead when you are afraid.

All of us intend to do better tomorrow, and would do if only we started today.

Today is the tomorrow we intended to do so much in yesterday.

* * * *

Making a great sacrifice nowadays means doing without things our parents never had.

* * * *

CONSOLATION

If all my days were sunlit, could I say
"In that blest land He'll wipe all tears
away" ?

If all my nights were wrapped in slumber
deep

Meaningless words to me are—"he giveth
His beloved sleep."

Were this life heaven, what would it mean
to me

To say "Where I am, you may also be" ?
Were no grave mine, it were an empty
thing

To say to me "O Death, where is thy
sting" ?

But whether sunlit days or deepest night,
Thy presence makes the heaviest burden
light.

Edith M. Williams

“NOT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN”

There are no idle words where children are :
 Things spoken in their hearing carry far,
 Producing fruit of evil or of good
 To our great future human brotherhood.

The word dropped lightly from our careless lips
 Into the fertile child mind seeps and drips
 And intertwines with thought and impulses : so
 It may decide the path some soul shall go.

So speak not thoughtlessly when they are by :
 Your words fall not on sterile soil nor dry.
 Thoughts sown in plastic minds are carried far.
 There are no idle words where children are.

* * * * *

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Stretford—We are glad to report the baptism of Geoffrey Skillin at Stockport on Sunday, January 17th.

Geoffrey is a close friend of Paul Barratt whose baptism we reported last December. We pray the Lord will bless them in their new life.

Allan Ashurst

OBITUARY

Blackburn : (Hamilton Street).—With deep sorrow we record the passing of Brother Harold Webb, who died on February 4th, aged 61 years. Although he had never enjoyed good health, it came as rather a shock to all of us. Truly “in the midst of life we are in death.” He and his wife, Sister Violet, came to live here in Blackburn from Luton about fourteen years ago, but we had known and loved them many years more, having met them at conferences. Now “he rests from his labours,” and it can be said of him, “He fought a good fight; he has finished the course; he has kept the faith” and now with us awaits his crown of righteousness. Should any brethren or friends wish to contact Sister Violet her address is : 10 Cross Street, Lower Darwen, near Blackburn, Lancs.

Hindley—Sister Elsie Taberner passed away on Wednesday, January 13th 1971.

The Church has suffered a great loss, for she was a member of long standing and one who loved to meet with her brethren in fellowship with her Lord. The writer has had the joy over many years of the friendship of the family and can testify to her love for her Lord, the church, family and home. Time and again she encouraged the brethren who ministered the word.

She was a very good worker in the Sunday School; the children loved her dearly. This simple incident speaks volumes; one child who had been in her class, came to ask if she could sing a chorus because Mrs. Taberner had died. Our Sister has died in the Lord, and awaits with others the resurrection call to meet Him she loved.

We commend the family to our loving Heavenly Father, and pray that they may be sustained by His grace and love.

Bro. John Breakell conducted the service on Monday, January 18th 1971, the writer paying a tribute to her life.

L. Morgan

Wigan : (Scholes).—On Lord's Day, January 17th, Sister Kitty Boardman died, and was buried on the 21st. She was in her 83rd year, and was the oldest member of the Scholes congregation. She was baptised over 60 years ago, and for the whole of her life and service since her baptism was identified with the church in Scholes.

Sister Boardman remained unmarried until 1946, when she was joined to Moses Boardman, who was baptised in March 1947, when Bro. Carl Ketcherside was preaching at Scholes. Her husband died in 1952.

Sister Boardman's long life was marked by hard work and poverty. Yet these hardships did not prevent her from giving faithful and devoted service to Christ in His church. Many saints have now entered into their rest and reward whom she was the means of winning to the Saviour, in addition to members of her own family circle. Although some, to her great grief, fell away, she remained steadfast.

Her last twelve years or so were clouded with suffering and increasing weakness, first at home, then in Old

People's Homes, so that she had "the desire to depart and to be with Christ." Now she has "fallen asleep in Jesus" and to her are fulfilled the words: "Rest for the weary, wayworn feet; Rest from all labour now."

When visiting her, at home or in the Old Folks' Homes, she loved nothing better than to sing such hymns as, "The Lord's my Shepherd," "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah" and "Trust and obey," and to repeat such glorious scriptures as "The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." In her last remaining hours she repeated, almost inaudibly such words. Now she rests from her labours and her works do follow her.

Wigan : (Scholes).—Again the church has suffered severe loss and grief, at the death of Sister Ellen Ratcliffe, suddenly on February 10th, at the age of 62. She was the wife of Bro. Richard Ratcliffe, an elder in the church.

Baptised in 1927, in spite of many illnesses and much weakness Sister Ratcliffe was a faithful worker in the church and the Bible School. She rarely spoke of her afflictions and never complained of them. Rather she impressed by her courage and cheerfulness, even gaiety, and her smile was a benediction in itself. She was full of wise counsel to younger sisters in the church, "and looked well to the ways of her own household." In the loss of such a wife, mother and sister, we deeply sympathise with those who are left, but praise God that they do not grieve hopelessly, but are assured that, because Christ lives, we shall live also. Sister Ratcliffe was buried on February 15th.

At this time we recall how Sister Ratcliffe in 1934 took part in a song rendered at the funeral service of another saint in the church — Sister Gerrard. The song was, "They shall be comforted: Jesus said so," and the refrain:

"Never a heartache, never a fear,
Never a sorrow, never a tear:
They shall be comforted in that glad day
When God shall wipe every teardrop away."

We know that these words are true of our Sister Ellen Ratcliffe also.

COMING EVENTS

SPRING CONFERENCE

The brethren at Ince-in-Makerfield will entertain the Spring Conference, 1971, on Saturday, 10th April, with meetings as follows :

2.30 p.m. — Business Conference.

3.00 to 4.00 p.m. — Devotional Meeting.

Tea 4.30 p.m.

Evening Meeting 6.00 p.m.

All brethren are warmly invited to attend and share in discussion on subjects of concern to the Church.

Peterhead: The Church plans to have its Social in the *Rescue Hall*, Prince Street, on Saturday, 1st May, at 3 p.m. Speakers will be Bros. Bill Mair (Buckie) and Jack Nisbet (Haddington).

A warm welcome awaits you.

Wigan (Scholes).—Mission Saturday to Lord's Day, May 22nd to 30th, 1971.

Preacher: Bro. Paul Jones, Slamannan District Evangelist.

Meetings: Gospel Lord's Days.—May 23rd and 30th; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, May 25th to 27th; Saturdays, May 22nd and 29th. All at 7.30 p.m.

Children's Meeting, Monday, May 24th, 6.30 p.m.

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NOTICES. (Coming Events, Births, Engagements, Marriages, Thanks), 3 lines (minimum) 20p; each additional line 5p. Repeats (if notified when sending original notice) half price.

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