

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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FAITH AND THE WORD OF GOD

PART I

FOR our suggested New Testament readings for Lord's Days we are at present reading Paul's Letter to the Romans. We were impressed when at the opening of chapter 4 Paul in a seemingly abrupt manner introduces Abraham. On a casual reading it would seem that the mention of Abraham is quite out of context and has nothing to do with what Paul has written so far in his letter. But there is a vital connection, as is shown by Paul's asking "What then shall we say about Abraham . . . ?" It is the word "then" that is significant, for it means in this connection "therefore" as though Paul is saying "In view of what we have written, what about Abraham—where does he fit in?"

The connection is seen if we read more carefully the previous three chapters. In chapter 1 Paul depicts the sins of the *Gentiles* in words as terrible as any that have been written, comparing vividly with the awful denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees uttered by Jesus (Matt. 23). No doubt Paul's fellow-Jews would say "Amen" or, as we should put it, "Hear, hear!" to Paul's fearful condemnation. But in the second chapter the apostle writes of the sins of the *Jews*, showing that theirs are against the light and revelation of Jehovah. They are, like the *Gentiles*, "without excuse" (1:20; 2:1). After demonstrating that all are guilty before God, Paul sums up in chapter 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," that, according to the Old Covenant scriptures, "None is righteous, no, not one," quoting Psalms 14 & 53.

Man has no excuse, no "justification" for his sins. How then can he live in the presence of God, who is absolutely holy, and in whose presence nothing sinful can abide? Only through righteousness. But Paul has demonstrated that we have no righteousness of our own, neither the Jews by their law, nor the *Gentiles* by whatever they know of God (1:18-23). **THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THAT THROUGH FAITH (BELIEF) IN THE ABSOLUTE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF MAN.** This righteousness is in God alone, and has been clearly given and demonstrated to the world in Jesus Christ. In another setting Paul speaks of "not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil. 3:9).

Justification by Faith

This is the theme of the whole letter to the Romans—righteousness through faith—and is summed up in one verse (1:17): "He who is righteous by faith shall live." Nor is this a new doctrine, for Paul quotes from the Old Covenant scriptures, from Habakkuk 2:4. The great truth is quoted also in Heb. 10:35.

In chapter 4 of Romans Paul writes as though he were reasoning with a Jewish rabbi or doctor of the law, who is opposing this doctrine of "salvation by faith." "What

shall we say then about Abraham?" There is no sudden transition from what has gone before to what now follows. Not only does the Jew have Abraham in mind to confute Paul's teaching, but Paul now affirms and proves from the Jewish scriptures that the example and experiences of Abraham were a living proof all along that it is God's purpose to justify and to save those who have faith in what God has said, in God's promises: indeed, who by God are made righteous through this faith. Paul quotes Gen. 15:6—"Abraham believed the Lord, and he reckoned it [Abraham's belief, his faith] to him for righteousness." In further illustration of Abraham's righteousness by faith (not by works of the law) Paul points out that this righteousness of Abraham's was apart altogether from his being a Jew through circumcision. For Abraham's righteousness was before God made the covenant of circumcision: this rite follows *after* God's acceptance of Abraham's faith. Abraham's righteousness is declared in Gen. 15; circumcision is ordained by God later, in Gen. 17:9-14.

Moreover, Abraham's being made righteous was apart altogether from the law given through Moses. In Gal. 3:17 Paul states what no Jew could contradict—that the law was given 430 years *after* God's promises were given to Abraham: believing those promises, Abraham was accounted righteous. Further, in Rom. 4:13 Paul writes, "The promise to Abraham and his descendants that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith."

What was Abraham's Faith ?

What did Abraham believe? We are told in Gen. 15:1-6. Please read these promises of God for yourself. Simply the facts are stated in the Genesis account, but in Rom. 4:19-22 Paul stresses what this faith of Abraham was: "He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. **THAT IS WHY HIS FAITH WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" The whole argument is masterly and irrefutable. Paul as a Jewish teacher meets the Jewish teachers on their own ground (the O.T. scriptures) and shows to them that what he is teaching and preaching in the gospel is to be found foreshadowed in their sacred writings.

Paul is showing in the clearest language that Abraham's faith was his believing what God said, even though fulfilment seemed impossible, **SIMPLY BECAUSE GOD HAD SAID IT.** The truth of God would be accomplished against everything that would seem to prevent it. Abraham believed that, so surely as God had *said*, so surely would it be *done*. It was not *going to be*, but *was*. With God it was not in the future, but *is now*. So Paul states in Rom. 4:17: "I *have made* you [not "will make you"] the father of many nations, when, so far as scripture records, Abraham was the father of none, not even of Ishmael!

(Next month: THE APPLICATION OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH TO US)

EDITOR

"SON OF MAN"

I DO NOT possess a television set. When I watch I watch on other people's sets. Such an occasion was on Wednesday evening, April 16th, when I saw "The Wednesday Play: SON OF MAN," by Dennis Potter.

I suppose that we all have our own conception of Jesus Christ. We have our own mental picture of His appearance and His voice. Even although conditioned by what we read in the gospel records our conception can be largely imaginary or even prejudiced and fixed, so that we can look at an artist's painting or a sculpture and be pleased—"I think that's just like what Jesus would look like"; or shocked—"I don't think it looks a bit like Him"—when none of us has the least idea *what* Jesus looked like.

The Modern View of Christ

I suppose, too, that we are at liberty to form our own views of what Jesus looked like. In this age of "debunking" many of the great figures of the past, in all walks of life, are examined and shown to be, after all, quite ordinary people, but the halo of antiquity or history has surrounded them with a glory they never really were worth. Thus we have revolts against "traditional" art: the "great" painters of the past could not paint; the "great" musicians could not compose; the "great" literary figures could not write: they were stereotyped, conventional, traditional. Now we have broken away from these traditional standards and are exercising our liberty without restrictions.

This "debunking" has no reverence, no manners. Even God and Jesus Christ are examined and spoken of as merely persons like ourselves, whom we can contradict or ignore. In some respects we claim to be above and superior to God. John Lennon of the Beatles claimed that he was wider known and of more importance than Jesus Christ. Truly, we ignore the divine revelation that "man is made in the image of God": we have even reversed that truth in our making God in the image of man (Rom. 1:19-23). But those terrible words were written of those who had never known the revelation God has made in His Son, Jesus Christ, as written in the scriptures. *They* were "without excuse": how much more are *we* "without excuse," who have God's fullest revelation?

A Human and a Divine Picture

This play "Son of Man" will be welcomed by many as breaking from tradition, refreshing, uninhibited, presenting a flesh-and-blood, down-to-earth picture of Christ. But, in spite of our having no description in scripture of the appearance of Jesus, I cannot conceive of his looking like a drunken tramp, which was my impression from this play; or as a gibbering idiot, as he appears before Pontius Pilate.

But far worse than the physical depiction was the scant regard paid to what, after all, is the only eye-witness testimony to Jesus and His mission and teaching contained in the New Testament. The evangelists portray Jesus as one having authority, assured, absolutely without doubt of His mission and relationship to God, Son of Man and *Son of God*. This play presents him as uncertain, full of doubts, a declaimer, a victim of circumstances, a martyr to his beliefs. No picture is presented of one willingly laying down His life, of the power being in His own hands of being able "to lay it down and to take it up again." Before Caiaphas and Pilate He appears a pitiable figure. In the gospels we see Him as one who has complete control over all that is taking place, as being not the judged but the Judge. And when, facing the prisoner, Pilate says to him, "I am sorry" the scene borders on farce: it is solemn nonsense.

As a further illustration of the liberties taken with the gospel records—the only authentic ones—we have an incident in which Judas Iscariot, the rich young ruler and the lawyer who asked Jesus "Who is my neighbour?" are mixed up together. Perhaps they are meant to be, to suggest that Judas, the ruler and the lawyer were one and the same person!

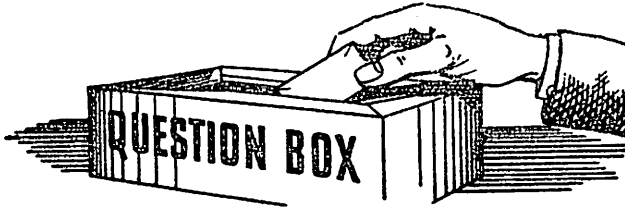
Another ludicrous episode is the healing of a girl possessed by demons. Jesus takes her into his arms, talks to her, nurses her until her hysterics cease, then gently lulls her as one would a frightened child. The intent is to show Jesus as a psychological healer.

This is not realism setting right tradition! To such thinking the gospels are not sufficient: they are simply the records of those who saw and heard. We, 1900 years after the events, can show with deeper meaning and greater significance the meaning of Christ.

All this is inevitable when man sets himself to improve scripture, to fill up what is lacking in God's revelation. Nevertheless, long after this play has had its run, the records of Christ's sublime life, that life itself and the authenticity of the scripture writers will stand, clearly telling their message of Him who is Son of Man and Son of God.

It seems significant that the play "Son of Man" ends with the cross: there is nothing afterwards, no resurrection. But meaning to Christ's life, work and teaching is given by the resurrection—"declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

C. MELLING



Conducted by
James Gardiner

“Does the literal cup represent the New Testament?” (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).

Perhaps I should point out straight away that this question comes from a reader in the U.S.A.

Hebrews chapter 9 tells us quite a lot about both the old and new testaments. I understand that the only two words in the English language which are completely synonymous are “testament” and “will”—God’s new testament or will for mankind. Heb. 9:14 tells us that Christ is the mediator of the new testament and v. 16 says that “where a testament is there must also be the death of the testator” and that “a will or testament is of no force whatever until the decease of the testator.”

Verse 18 continues by informing us that the first, or old, testament was dedicated or ratified by blood and goes on to recall the occasion (v. 19): “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.”

Likewise, the blood of Jesus Christ has been shed and dedicates or ratifies God’s new or second covenant with man—a better covenant and dedicated by better and nobler blood. This then is what is referred to by, “This cup is the new testament in my blood,” in Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25.

The Cup

The question asks, “Does the literal cup represent the New Testament?”

My view is that the literal cup does *not* represent the new testament but the representation is truly contained in the fruit of the vine. However, having said this, some qualification is necessary. Before the fruit of the vine can represent the new testament dedication it must be contained in *a cup*, for when one talks of the “cup of the Lord” one of necessity envisages a cup just as one envisages a table when one talks of the “table of the Lord.” Without the cup and the table such terms are a nonsense. When the fruit of the vine is in the grape on the bush or vine it cannot be described as the “cup of the Lord.” When it is crushed and put into a thirty-gallon barrel it still can’t be described as the “cup of the Lord.” Likewise when it is in a bottle in transit to the church secretary. In fact it cannot be so described until it is in a cup and on the Lord’s table, and thereafter dispensed—only then is it the “cup of the Lord.” 1 Cor. 10:21 says “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and the table of devils,” and therefore I am safe in concluding that “the cup of the Lord” and “the table of the Lord” are scriptural terms. The literal cup does not therefore represent the new testament, as the question asks, but the fruit of the vine, contained in a cup, is the new testament in His blood. As has been said many times before, the figurative (by metonymy) *depends upon* the literal. The phrase “the kettle is boiling” depends upon the existence of a kettle, and if several kettles are envisaged the phrase would require to be “the kettles are boiling.” Similarly one could not accurately say “the kettle is boiling” if the water being boiled was in a clothes boiler. We could not talk of “the cross of Christ” without an actual cross having been employed.

Such phrases, for their very existence, depend upon *one* table, *one* cross, *one* kettle and *one* cup. I make no apology for labouring this seemingly obvious point, nor do I make apology for saying that a plurality of cups at the Lord’s table does an injustice

to and is a travesty of the term "the cup of the Lord." One has as much right to talk of "individual tables" as "individual cups," because the oneness of "the table of the Lord" is as much a single unit as the "cup of the Lord." If we all had individual tables and individual cups, presumably we could all stay at home and worship in isolation ?

What Jesus Did

I believe that Jesus knew as much about metonymy as we do, and perhaps a little more; and He, with a cup and contents in His hand said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood"; and I believe if we do likewise we shall do well, whether or not we, in our human wisdom, can see any significance in the implementation of a cup. God chose the vessel, just as in the old covenant God chose the vessels of the sanctuary; and who would have dared, under the old covenant, to meddle with or set aside that arrangement. Personally I would prefer the Lord's arrangement to that of a latter-day Presbyterian "minister."

We are often referred to Luke 22:17, which says "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves . . ." and the quotation is intended to show that as Jesus was not intending His disciples to break the cup into little pieces then He was reckoning the cup as of no consequence at all. Surely this verse is to be approached in exactly the same way as we would read Mark 14:3, concerning the woman with the alabaster box of ointment of spikenard ". . . and she brake the box, and poured it on his head." Obviously similar phraseology indicating that it was the *contents* of the box she poured on his head, not the box. In like manner the disciples were to share the contents of the cup thus indicating that *one cup* held the contents. It would have been pointless for Jesus to have said, 'divide it among yourselves' if it had already been divided into numerous vessels. For a commentary on what Jesus meant by "divide it among ourselves" we have a parallel passage in Matt. 26:27 which quotes Jesus as saying, "Drink ye all of it." It is possible to divide something without drinking it, but in drinking it they thus divided it. It is important to note that Paul was not present with the disciples at the institution of the feast but gives us an account of it in 1 Cor. 11:23 onwards which is virtually the gospels *verbatim*, indicating that Jesus told him in fine detail exactly what had taken place, and also indicating most strongly that Jesus wanted Paul and all disciples to follow faithfully that procedure demonstrated by Him at the institution of the feast. Men meddle with this at their peril.

Why One Cup ?

In one final point I would like to comment briefly on the criticism often heard that one cup limits the size of a congregation. It is suggested that this is a drawback and a flaw in the wisdom of God. The one cup most surely limits the size of the congregation, and surely we recognise this as an evidence of the great wisdom of God. It does not limit the size of the *church*, only the size of the *local congregation*. In this way the congregation is kept to a hundred-and-fifty or so, to a size which is workable and manageable where each member can know all the others and be in a position "to bear one another's burdens." I recall a recent occasion when a sister came from U.S.A. to England for a holiday and met another American sister. During their conversation the astounding fact emerged that they were both members of the same congregation back home. Surely some congregations must be far too large numerically, and I would suggest that as soon as a church is too big to be catered for by the cup *it is just too big*, and some members should hive off and witness for the Master in some other part of the town or area.

When one considers the beautiful and artless *simplicity* of the feast, as instituted by our Lord at His table, one can but stand amazed and appalled that this same holy ordinance of God, albeit simplicity personified, should have become a stone of stumbling amongst the professed disciples of Christ, resulting to our shame in the dividing asunder of churches and in the destruction of that very communion it was intended to promote and create.

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

A MISSIONARY EFFORT

N.W. 21st St. Church of Christ,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

18th February, 1969

Dear Brother(s) in Christ,

The church on N.W. 21st Street in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U.S., has been sponsoring a mission programme in Malawi, Africa, with the help of sister churches in the United States for several years. We have asked the James Grant family of the Wallacestone congregation in Scotland to go to Malawi where Bro. Grant will work as a missionary among the African churches. This letter is an appeal to you for help with Bro. Grant's travelling expenses.

Perhaps you wonder why we are appealing to you for help. The congregations here which believe as we do are closer in faith and practice to most of the British churches than to the other churches of Christ in America. This is especially true in such matters as opposing individual cups, one-man ministry, going to war and other things. In comparison with the other churches of Christ here, our membership is small. We are asking for help in this work simply because we need it.

We asked Bro. Grant to go to Africa (rather than one of ourselves) for several reasons. One is economic. Bro. Grant lives about half the distance from Africa that we do. More importantly, there are compelling historical reasons. Malawi was explored and developed by Scottish people. (Blantyre, Malawi, was named after Blantyre, Scotland). An English family and a Scottish sister, Mary Bannister, helped to plant the gospel in Malawi over half a century ago. Sister Bannister was from the Slamannan district. The Wallacestone church, as well as others in Britain, has for some time helped the Malawi Christians with bibles, tracts, clothes and in other ways. Because of the interest we share with them in the gospel in this area, it seemed very reasonable for us to send Bro. Grant. The church here is in substantial agreement with Bro. Grant doctrinally. We do not believe he is violating his principles in accepting support from us, and we feel free to ask your help.

If you are able to help in this work send a contribution to brethren John Baird and Tom Read, c/o Seaview Cottage, Wallacestone, Falkirk, Stirlingshire; they will place it in a special fund to help to pay Bro. Grant's fare to Malawi. The church at Wallacestone fully endorses and gives its blessing to this venture and appeal. The Grant family will leave for Africa, God willing, as soon as all prudent arrangements can be made, perhaps by summer. We have asked them to stay in Africa for approximately three years.

May God bless you all in His service.

Sincerely in Him, JAMES ORTEN

(for 21st Street Church of Christ)

[EDITOR'S COMMENT: We have been asked to bring the above letter to the notice of the British churches through the "S.S." and to add a word of endorsement. We are happy to do both. Several brethren in England and Scotland clearly remember Bro. Orten's visit in 1966, when he met and had fellowship in the gospel with several congregations and individuals. We learned to love and esteem him for his grasp and understanding of the views of his brethren here concerning New Testament Christianity. In his turn Bro. Orten encouraged us in helping us to realise that there are still in the United States many brethren who strive closely to adhere to this noble cause.

Since that visit close contacts have been maintained between us, both in letters and in publications.

So far as our personal knowledge goes, we warmly commend also our Bro. Grant as one eminently fitted by his deep spirituality, his zeal, his knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, and his level-headedness and commonsense for this noble and responsible task. And we wholeheartedly subscribe to the appeal for the necessary money to finance this undertaking. Let us give generously. Here is an opportunity to increase the very little we have done to send the gospel into all the world.]

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MAY 1969

4—Deuteronomy 6:1-15	Romans 8:1-17
11—Psalm 44:1 & 9-25	Romans 8:18-39
18—Genesis 21:1-13	Romans 9:1-18
25—Hosea 1 to 2:1	Romans 9:19-33

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE (Romans 8:2)

A LAW may be a command in so many words, as "Thou shalt not kill," or it may be a rule or fixed way of working, such as the "laws of nature." We think the two laws mentioned in this verse illustrate the latter. One law is contrasted with the other. One law brings release from the other, and supersedes it when accepted. Paul is referring to the law of Moses as "the law of sin and death." He understood that its provisions, even those relating to physical action, could never be completely kept. We know this well also, for who has obeyed the command "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart"—the principle at its base? In the Jewish nation at that time it had become a restrictive and formal performance. The sacrifices were offered, the Temple was revered, the law was recited, but only a small minority observed it from the heart. The outworking produced a nation of higher moral standards than the heathens, but a nation shot through with pride and hypocrisy, which stood condemned by its own law. But so has all mankind, always, whether the law be the law of Moses or of conscience.

"All have sinned" and are therefore doomed to die physically, and the old law, so to speak, leaves it at that, with only obscure hints of any future life. "The man who doeth those things shall live by them," writes Moses (Lev. 18:5). Thinking of Christ's words to the Sadducees (Matt. 22:32), there may be a hint of continued life. The new law assures us that, in following it, sin and death need occupy our minds no longer. Phillips translates our verse, interpreting it helpfully, "The new spiritual principle of life in Christ lifts me out of the vicious circle of sin and death." It is a vicious circle indeed with the one hope of release—salvation through Christ's sacrifice. It was

quite impossible for man to lift himself out of his sinful condition, as all history so plainly confirms. God therefore out of His free grace came to the rescue in human flesh, and broke the bands of enslavement to sin and death by resisting IN THE FLESH all temptations to disobedience, facing the ignominious death on the cross by living the perfect and selfless life.

It was a foregone conclusion that such a life should end in this way, not only because God so ordained it, but because human nature in spite of God's intervention through law and prophets, is antagonised by perfect holiness, purity and truth—more especially truth. Jesus thought, spoke and acted the truth (John 18:37). We may quote Paul: "Am I become your enemy because I tell you you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16), the answer being "Yes!" so far as the religious leaders were concerned with Christ. Only regenerated, instructed and developed human nature can bear the complete exhibition of righteousness and love without resentment. It shines a vivid light upon sin. The Jews who fulfilled the law, like Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6), or accepted divine intervention with the humility of Mary (Luke 1:38) could be regarded as persons regenerated by the standards of the prophets, and such persons were scarce.

The intolerable and incomprehensible agony of bearing the sins of the world had to be undertaken by our Saviour so that the just and holy Creator could forgive and take away sin. Had this been granted without condition God would have condoned sin and become unjust and unholy. He has provided a way out of condemnation not only by providing a sacrifice for sin, but by His new law, for eternal life. This is only possible through the "new spiritual principle" being applied to our mortal bodies as we come "into Christ" through faith, repentance and obedience (Rom. 6:3). This is indicated by the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Whether we apply or not the capital letter in our verse, the Holy Spirit is indeed the "spirit of life," and it is His law which every Christian is committed to obey. The Christian's weaknesses are provided for. His salvation does not depend upon any merit of his,

but upon the grace which has provided the sacrifice, and likewise provides the strength for the life-long conflict between flesh and spirit. We need to recognise that no supposedly meritorious work of ours can win our salvation, and while we must "work out our salvation" we do it humbly and we know "it is God Who worketh in us both to will and to do" (Phil. 2:13).

The law of sin and death is the one under which mankind now lives. What a man sows he reaps; warm air rises; water finds its own level. So sin brings death. The inevitable consequence of disobedience is unhappiness. Man was provided with the fruit of the tree of life (Gen. 2:9), but his disobedience to the one prohibition in that perfect garden of harmony and happiness cut him off from the source of life, because to live in disobedience could only mean eternal unhappiness. But now perfect obedience in the flesh has procured the opportunity of eternal life for all who put their faith in the sacrifice, and who walk in accordance with the law of the spirit of life. That rule of life is found in the teaching and example of Jesus Himself.

"O wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail."

R. B. SCOTT

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A Series for our Womenfolk

LESSONS FROM LIFE

No. 2: MILK

"The sincere milk of the word"

(1 Peter 2:2)

The story is told of a brother in the church who was addicted to long sermons, and whenever the opportunity presented itself, such as the non-arrival of the speaker for the day, would hasten to the rostrum and discourse at great length. On one such occasion he again made for the front and the congregation groaned inwardly at the painful prospect of still another boring session. When he announced as his subject the text at the head of this article—"The sincere milk of the word"—a voice from the body of the hall cried out feelingly, "Brother, can you make it condensed milk?"

We hope we won't be misunderstood, but that is our object—to deal in a condensed form with the subject of milk, the scriptural as well as the household variety.

Many Forms

Our first recollection of milk was in our childhood, of the local milkman carrying a huge pail from which he measured out pints and gills to his customers. We have advanced far from those rather unhygienic ways. Today we have an amazing variety of that essential farm product that would have surprised (and probably disgusted) our grandparents if they could return and see how things have changed. We have bottled milk, tinned milk, cartoned milk, condensed milk, skimmed milk, sweetened milk, pasteurised milk, sterilised milk, dried milk, "Unfit for Babies" milk, even "Instant" milk. In all these varieties the law of the land demands purity. In our text the real meaning of "sincere" i.e. "free from adulteration."

Food and Strength

Milk, in whatever form it is produced, is primarily intended for the feeding of the offspring of the producer: for instance, elephant's milk is far different in its constituents from say, cow's milk or goat's milk; and in these days of artificial foods no one has yet come up with a substitute for mother's milk, although there are some excellent products on the market. No, nature has decreed, and by nature we mean the God behind these laws of nature, that there can be no effective substitute for mother's milk; and nature has also presented mankind with a problem as to how the milk is produced. Examination of the milk-producing glands fails to offer an explanation as to how it is done or what decides the when and how, but the fact remains that immediately the birth of a child is accomplished invariably the milk is there—a child's first need met at the very beginning of its life.

The Apostle Peter isn't the only writer in scripture to refer to the "milk of the word." Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, calls them "babes" having to be fed with milk (1 Cor. 3:2). And in Heb. 5:12 & 13 the writer refers to those who need milk and not strong meat because they are babes, and "unskilled in the use of the word of righteousness."

The purpose of milk is to provide the most suitable food for the young in Christ, but we also use milk for the sick and the aged, and as a most important ingredient in many of our dishes—which goes to prove that the “sincere milk of the word” is suited to all walks and experiences of our life.

Purity

The great emphasis is on the pure unadulterated word. Just as we have a number of varieties of milk in its many manufactured forms, so we have many manufactured forms of the “spiritual milk” against which we do well to take heed. As we have said, the law takes strong action against anyone found guilty of adulterating our food, and rightly so. But there is no law against spiritual adulteration of the word, and the child of God needs to be constantly on guard against the many sterilised, pasteurised, modified and nullified imitations that abound in the religious world. Modern printing and many eminent scholars have contributed to producing the Bible in attractive and readable form, but like its natural counterpart, it needs to be pure and unadulterated.

As a last thought, milk goes sour if it isn't used. We would not suggest this applies to the word of God, for here the analogy breaks down, but it is possible for us to go sour, to become so self-righteousness as to render of no effect the very gospel we are trying to teach. One of the great facts purveyors of milk know is that the vessels used in its sale have of themselves to be scrupulously clean. How true of us; does not the Apostle Paul remind us in 2 Tim. 2:21 “If a man therefore purge himself of these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and fit for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work.”

We recall the story of a wartime evacuee who found himself for the first time in his life on a farm. One source of wonderment was seeing a cow being milked; but his wonderment turned to disgust when he saw the milk from the cow being put on the kitchen table. “I'm not having any milk from a dirty old cow,” he said, “I want it from a bottle like we have back home.” He took a lot of convincing that the milk he got back home had come

from a cow in the first place. However, he had the right idea, although at the time a little misplaced.

We trust, readers, that as you go about your meal preparation that involves, as it so often does, the use of milk, you will think on that other milk which should likewise be in constant use—the “sincere milk of the word.”

We hope next month to talk about **Bread.**

Thought from the Kitchen:

Home should be a place to go to,
Not a prison to escape from.

H. BAINES

SLAMANNAN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATE IN MILITARY SERVICE ?

First Speaker: Bro. L. Purcell
(Motherwell)

THIS is a question which has divided the Christian world in the past and no doubt will continue until the end of time. This is really a question for each person's own conscience, as I can find no real command in the Bible that we should not go to war. There are many inferences concerning this vexed question, but no exact command.

War is mentioned by Jesus when he seeks to explain a parable (Luke 14:31). So could we accept this point that probably wars did exist just prior to the new dispensation, and that Jesus was aware of them? That God permitted war is evident from the beginning. His people were given a command “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:14)—I take it this refers to murder; and yet we have God telling the Israelites to go out and defeat their enemies. Could the same happen under the New Testament? We know that the Apostles carried swords. Was this for their protection? Is the Christian to-day allowed the same? Jesus said that there would be wars and rumours of wars, but his disciples were not to be troubled by this. Is it possible, if the country you live in is at war caused by an oppressor, to remain aloof from it all? If you mine coal or make steel or grow food, even anything you do must affect the war effort of your country, so really that you are participating in it whether you want to or not. You may

say "It is not my responsibility where my work effort goes, be it making shells or bombs for someone else to fire," but are we really any better than the man who fires them? War is wrong at all times: of that there is no doubt, and it should be the Christian's duty to pray earnestly that wars and rumours of wars may cease and that the Kingdom of Christ might be extended.

If invaders landed in this country and started attacking our women and children, would we be fulfilling our duty by standing meekly and letting them get on with it? I should say not. It is against human nature, and I am sure God would not ask us to do this. It might be said that this is pure supposition, but is it? It could happen. Would the Christian's military service come under "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's"? In Romans 13 we read "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation, for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God to thee for good." Does this give us a certain amount of licence? One thing is certain: no Christian wants war or military service at any time, but rather may we strive after "the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law."

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Buckie.—During March the church had the services of Bros. Bob Eckman and Albert Winstanley, Bro. Eckman the first part of the month, then Bro. Winstanley. Gospel meetings during the week were well attended. A teenagers' meeting was also started, and is being carried on by Bro. Hunter. Our brethren's preaching

was clear and forceful and we hope for future reaping as a result of this sowing of the good seed.

Buckie (later).—Our hearts were lifted up and our faith strengthened when, at our Saturday meeting, April 5th, Alison Reid, daughter of Sister Margaret Reid (Inverness) expressed her desire to become a Christian. Bro. George Reid took her confession, and Bro. Hunter baptized her.

Our sister is a student at Aberdeen University. We pray our new sister may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. John Geddes

Bristol (Bedminster).—Bernard Norman was baptized on Saturday, March 29th.

L. Daniell

Slamannan District.—On Saturday, March 22nd, 1969, the brethren met at Haddington to discuss the question, "Should a Christian participate in military service?" The discussion was led by Bro. Leslie Purcell, Motherwell, and Bro. Wm. Allan, Newtongrange, and was presided over by Bro. James Sinclair, Tranent. The following points were brought out:—

- (1) We have no right to obey man rather than God.
- (2) We must be subject to "powers that be" only if their desires are not in opposition to God's will.
- (3) God must always come first.
- (4) We are not worldly people but belong to Christ.
- (5) Military service—can we take part in this in time of peace?
- (6) To take part in military service we give ourselves over to the state and thus may be led away from the church.
- (7) Military service prepares one for war.
- (8) We cannot always meet to remember the Lord if we take part in such service, thereby disobeying God.
- (9) Military service is against the Christian way of life.
- (10) Christ said "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my disciples fight," but this referred to Christ's

statement that "I should not be delivered to the Jews."

The general views can be summed up thus:—

- (1) No Christian can fight with carnal weapons to extend or defend the kingdom of God.
- (2) No Christian can use carnal weapons to defend his faith.
- (3) But can a Christian use means of war to defend his own life, and the lives of his loved ones, which is the law of survival?

Some thought this was permissible in God's sight. Some thought not.

So no answer to this or a conclusion was reached.

War certainly was not to be engaged in under any circumstances for (1) or (2) above. This was unanimous.

However (3) above was debatable.

God willing, we hope next to meet at Dalmellington on Saturday, 17th May, 1969, to discuss "Is it necessary for a Christian to break bread on the first day of the week?": led by Bro. A. Scobie (Dennyloanhead) and Bro. James Gardiner, (Haddington); presided over by Bro. John Baird (Wallacestone).

We thank the brethren at Haddington for their hospitality. Hugh Davidson

[Bro. Purcell's substance of presentation of the case is published on another page of this issue of the "S.S." The second contribution will, it is hoped, appear next month.—Ed.]

Wigan (Albert Street).—We give thanks to God for evidence of the power in the Gospel in our campaign for Christ held March 15th to 30th. Meetings were held each night except Mondays and Fridays. We had the services of Bro. Charles St. John of Coleraine, N. Ireland, who preached the gospel, exhorted the Church and taught in the Bible school. He set forth the claims and supreme glory of Christ clearly and forcefully, and with the help of Bro. Philip Partington did much visiting. The meetings were well attended, a number of non-members being present at each meeting. We feel that our efforts have been well worthwhile and that the seed sown will bring forth fruit for the Master. Two decided to follow Jesus

in baptism—Miss Elisebeth Ryding and Mr. John Leyland, and Bro. Vincent Jones was restored to fellowship. We trust they may be kept faithful and be useful in His service. The rich fellowship enjoyed will give encouragement to continue in the work of the Lord.

We give thanks to Bro. St. John and Bro. P. Partington and to Sis. St. John; and to the members of many churches near and far for their support, proving that we can co-operate together in the preaching of the gospel. And we give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the abundant blessings, and pray that we all may remain "steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord." W. Smith

Wigan (Scholes).—On Saturday, April 12th, a meeting of an "unusual" nature was held. Four young brethren dealt with three forms of what is essentially the same question asked in the book of Acts, concerning salvation.

Bro. Joseph Layland (Scholes) was chairman, and gave a brief introductory talk on scriptural aspects of Salvation.

Three ten-minute talks followed. Bro. Gordon Melling (Scholes) dealt with the question of the jailer at Philippi—"What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30); Bro. John Morgan (Hindley) spoke on the cry of the Jews at Pentecost—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"; followed by the question of Saul of Tarsus—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6), dealt with by Bro. Douglas Melling (Scholes). All these young brethren dealt with their subjects in clear, plain words, instructive to Christians and appealing to those not yet in the church.

The talks were interspersed with the fervent singing of some grand old gospel and consecration hymns, by a congregation of about 80, many of them from district churches. The whole meeting was one of rejoicing, a stimulus to faith, and an encouragement to us in these troublous times when the cause of Christ seems to make little appeal.

Deepest thanks are given to the four young brethren who gave the talks, and to brethren and friends who so wholeheartedly supported by their prayers and presence.

COMING EVENTS

Wigan (Scholes)—Mission (God willing) Saturday, 31st May to Lord's Day, June 8th Brother John Dodsley (Kirkby-in-Ashfield) preaching.

MEETINGS — Saturday, 31st May. Lord's Days, June 1st & 8th. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday, June 3rd to 7th: all 7.30 p.m., except Lord's Days, 6 p.m.

Your help will be appreciated.

RESTORATION BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons are intended for use as a correspondence course. They have been compiled by Bro. John Dodsley and Bro. Graham Gorton and (assisted by cash donations from Kirkby and Ince) there are some sample sets now available.

Interested brethren or churches are invited to send for a sample set at 8/- per set including postage.

A set contains 8 separate lessons, plus an introductory letter to the prospective student, attractively presented in Concordia programme covers. The lessons are designed to acquaint the student with the word of God and the way of salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

After seeing the sample, or before if desired, sets may be ordered from Bro. John Dodsley, 17 St. Thomas's Avenue, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. NG17 7DX.

Prices: Orders up to and including 10 sets 8/- per set (including postage in U.K.); orders over 10 sets 6/6 per set (including postage in U.K.).

[We have seen sample sets of these "Restoration Bible Lessons," and feel they are just what is needed to fill the vacuum in the churches in the training of younger brethren and to acquaint Christians generally with the Bible and its teaching.

We sincerely hope churches and individuals will subscribe to the course, for the benefits reaped in growth "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" will be abundant repayment of the financial outlay involved.—Ed.]

The sorrow of knowing that there is evil in the best of us is far out-balanced by the thought and joy of discovering that there is good in the worst of us.

—Belvedere Church Bulletin

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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