

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## A New Year's Wish.

'BELOVED, I wish (margin "pray") above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.' (3rd Epistle John, verse 2).

At this season we express our wishes for the welfare of our brethren and friends. The above passage tells of the beloved Apostle's wish, which he made a prayer, for his friend and brother in Christ, Gaius. He was evidently one of John's spiritual children, for concerning the reports of Gaius which had reached him, John wrote, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.' Gaius was one in whom the truth dwelt, and he translated it into his life and conduct: he walked in the truth. In a word, he was a real healthy Christian. Probably he was weak in body; and poor as regards earthly riches. But he was spiritually strong, rich in faith and good works. It was a splendid tribute to Gaius that John could wish and pray that his physical health and material prosperity might be in proportion to the state of his soul.

Some of the Lord's best servants have been weak in body, heavily afflicted, troubled with thorns in the flesh, feeling the outward man (the tent, tabernacle) continually perishing, while the inward man has been 'renewed day by day.' As physical life has ebbed away spiritual life has become stronger, they have become more than conquerors through Him who loved them, and have finished their course in triumph. Yet we are told by some that if we are sick or afflicted it is because we lack faith in God.

John names great temporal blessings, prosperity and health, but there are things of much higher value than these. Health is better than wealth. 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.' What use are riches to any when the message comes: 'This night is thy soul required of thee?' 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Dare we pray for ourselves as John prayed for Gaius? Dare we pray, 'Lord throughout the year 1949 grant me bodily health and temporal prosperity in proportion to the state of my soul?' Happy are we if we dare. Are there not many who profess to be the Lord's people of whom He might say, as He did of the Church at Sardis: 'I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.'

A preacher advertised as his subject, 'Where are the dead?' This drew many who desired to know of the state of those who have passed away. They got a surprise when the preacher said: 'Where are the dead? I'll tell you, Ninety per cent. of them are in the Christian Churches.'

They who 'live in pleasure,' wrote Paul, 'are dead while they live'; alive to things concerning the life that now is, but dead to the higher, spiritual, and eternal things. What an amount of time, attention, and money, is given to the body, seeking to gratify its desires and pleasures, and how comparatively little is spent on the soul. The body which will, if the Lord tarry, soon mingle with the dust, must have first care, while the soul with its hope of immortality is neglected, starved and lost. Most attention is given to the casket; the precious jewel within gets two little of our thought.

The questions which the Lord said were prominent in the Gentile world of His day, are still the questions of supreme importance with many: 'What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?'

### How can we keep our souls healthy and prosperous?

Jesus was not speaking of those who were physically dead, when He said, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' He came to give a life which cannot be possessed apart from Him. Out of Christ men are 'dead in trespasses and sins'; but they can be made alive in Him. Paul wrote: 'Have you forgotten that all of us, when we were baptised into fellowship with Christ, were baptised into fellowship with His death? With Him, therefore, we were buried by the baptism wherein we shared His death (when we sank beneath the waters); that even as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we likewise might walk in newness of life.' (Romans vi. 3, 4, Conybeare and Howson's translation).

Those who have shared the reality of that experience can say, with Paul: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

If we possess this life, there must be growth and expansion, otherwise we are dying spiritually. It is possible to maintain the form of godliness, while we are destitute of its power. The Lord who gives the life supplies all that is essential to its growth and development.

*We must feed on the truth.* John spoke of the truth which was in Gaius. 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Food for our natural life comes from the earth; food for our spiritual life comes down from heaven. The word of God is living, life-giving, and life-sustaining. John could say of young Christians of his day: 'Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' A healthy Christian is one whose 'delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night.'

*We need plenty of exercise.* Experts assure us that the death rate amongst those who 'toil not, neither do they spin,' is much higher than amongst the toiling masses. The spiritual death rate is heaviest amongst those who do nothing for the Lord Jesus. Work done for Him will keep our spiritual life healthy and vigorous. In seeking to help others we are helped and blessed ourselves. 'The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.' A real antidote for spiritual declension is to be 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

*We must not forsake 'the assembling of ourselves together.'* Spiritual temperature is low when there is wilful neglect of the Lord's memorial feast. It is a sign that we have left our first love. The Lord's Supper is His appointment for the strengthening and deepening of spiritual life.

'O what a feast ineffable is this,  
Thy table spread with more than angels' food—  
Angels the highest never taste the bliss,  
The dear communion of Thy flesh and blood.'

*Difficulty in breathing is bad both in physical and spiritual realms.* 'Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air.' By prayer we rise above the smoke and fog of this world into the rare, pure atmosphere of fellowship with God. 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary: and they shall walk and not faint.'

These are the divinely appointed means for soul health and spiritual prosperity. To attend to these things time must be taken from affairs of this life, its pleasures and vain pursuits. But it will pay to lose all these things, even to lose life itself, to save our souls. Attention to these things will prevent soul sickness and spiritual decline. To neglect these things will result in a starved, shrivelled, and eternally lost soul. 'How shall we escape if we neglect . . . ?'

Through the year 1949, and the years that may yet be, may all our readers enjoy soul prosperity in its fullest and most abundant sense. Shall we all say fervently: 'Thou, O Christ, art all I want, More than all in Thee I find.'

EDITOR.

## A Word to Unmarried Christians.

HOW to serve the Lord Jesus Christ should be the highest aim of every Christian. It is commendable to be earnest in labour, diligent in business, plodding in study, aspiring after education; but these and all other efforts will be subordinated by the thorough Christian to the serving of Christ. Every power of mind and body—every acquisition, mental, physical and material—will be employed to the honour of the King. To serve Him must be the paramount desire and aim. How can a Christian best serve his Lord? To serve Christ we must please Him. Service which does not please, lacks the main element of acceptance. To fail to please an employer in the service which we render, is a step towards being dismissed. Especially where love is expected, as in Christian service, to fail to please is to fail entirely. To satisfy the Master so as to secure His approval is indispensable. There are many things in which we may please ourselves. What trade we shall engage in is a matter of liking and choice. We know not that one kind of honest, sinless labour is more binding upon us or more acceptable to God than another. In like manner there is no restriction as to where we shall live. The Christian may live in town or country. God leaves him free to please himself. Any town in any country may be selected. There is in these and other such things a wide field in which man may exercise free choice and act as he pleases.

### Is marriage one of those matters in which we are left to please ourselves?

A simple yea or nay, in reply to this question, might be misunderstood. A few sentences may be more serviceable. It may be answered that within certain limits we are at liberty in the matter of marriage. Paul gives the liberty and names the restriction in one verse—'She is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.' (1 Cor. vii. 39). *To whom she will*, speaks of freedom, choice, selection. *Only in the Lord*, is a restriction, a limitation. Those in the Lord may choose for life-partners any of those who are in the Lord; but they are not at liberty to select beyond the circle covered by the words *in the Lord*. Only in the Lord: what does it mean? What persons are so described? It will generally be conceded that Christians are in view. A Christian should only marry a Christian. A Christian marrying one who is not a Christian is a violation of Paul's

teaching already quoted from 1 Cor. vii. The whole chapter should be read. It deals with little else than the subject of marriage. One part specially deserves notice.

**'Let not the wife depart from her husband'; and 'Let not the husband put away his wife'**

There is here a case of the wife being likely to leave her husband, and there is a case of the husband being likely to put away his wife (verses 10-13); and Paul is prohibiting the separation. Why should such a prohibition have been required? Why should there have been a thought of departure or of putting away? For the simple reason that the Christian law of marriage was becoming clearly understood, viz., that believers and unbelievers should not be united in marriage. The apostolic law was explicit that a believer ought not to marry an unbeliever. But what must be done where after marriage one becomes a Christian and the other remains an unbeliever? Should they not then part? was the natural question with those who saw that it was wrong for a believer and an unbeliever to be united in marriage. It was to solve that difficulty that this part of the chapter was written. The marriage contract, when once made, must not be annulled by one of the parties becoming a Christian. Marriage must be held sacred. But the very raising of the question of separation, implies how utterly wrong it was judged for a believer to form an alliance with an unbeliever. Christians should only enter into matrimony with Christians.

To the same effect speak the following Scriptures: Believers were not to enter into an unequal yoke such as is involved in being united with unbelievers. (2 Cor. vi. 14-18). Why speak of husband and wife as being heirs together unless that both are thought of as Christians? And why speak of their prayers, unless on the supposition that both prayed? (1 Peter iii. 7). Again, in relation to family duty, children are to be trained in the fear of the Lord, which cannot be if the Lord's law of marriage is disregarded. (Eph. vi. 4).

The expressed will of the Lord by his authorised apostle, should be an end of all dispute. Nay, it will be an end both of gainsaying and wrongdoing with all who strive more to please the Saviour than to please themselves. But when to the will of the Lord can be added the experience of man, the wisdom of the law becomes vividly apparent.

**Intermarriage has always been mischievous**

The servants of God marrying those who were not His servants, has always entailed unhappy consequences. Take some examples.

The sons of God and the daughters of men. Read Gen. vi. 1-5. The sons of God are understood to be worshippers of God; and the daughters of men, worldly women. Further, the context is understood to imply that because of these intermarriages, wickedness gained the mastery and the flood ensued.

God's law to the Jews prohibiting marriage with idolaters, was couched in plain unambiguous terms (Ex. xxxiv. 12-16; Deut. vii. 3-4). The reason or design of the prohibitory statute is also clearly announced. It was to prevent the worshippers of the true God being enticed away from His worship to that of their partners.

Nor was the caution unnecessary. Where it was unheeded, fatal consequences ensued. Ezra ix. 1-2 and Neh. xiii. 23-27, give samples of the dire mischief which followed disobedience. Solomon with all his wisdom became an abject fool among his idolatrous women. The Israelitish nation became saturated with idolatrous practices through intermarriage with surrounding nations.

A similar bitter experience is being realised to-day by many Christians who, through ignorance or self-pleasing, have disobeyed the divine instructions. A Christian may be in little danger of marrying an avowed idolater. But the one distinction formerly insisted on in God's enactments anent marriage still holds good; that is, the distinction between worshippers and non-worshippers, between believers and unbelievers. They who practically ignore this distinction by marrying an unbeliever cannot escape the miserable consequences of their unauthorised union. Scores known to the writer are reaping the misery of being unequally yoked, to say nothing of the disapprobation of the Lord hanging over them.

The wise reader will let the teaching of God and the warnings from the sad experience of mankind have weight in choosing a partner for life. The thoughtful Christian will avoid collision with God, avoiding at the same time the tremendous risk of an unhappy life.

One point still remains somewhat indefinite. Christian is often employed in a general, vague, undefined way. Indeed almost every one is talked of nowadays as Christian. That last use of Christian poorly corresponds to being 'in the Lord.' It may, therefore, be useful further to ask

### Who are in the Lord?

Giving another quotation from Paul will elucidate this question. 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. iii. 26-27). By learning *how* and *when* a man puts on Christ, we are able to say who are in the Lord. The man who has put on Christ must be in Christ the Lord. These verses point out two things to which man attends—faith and baptism. All who are God's children are so by faith. All who are baptised, in their baptism put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The baptism spoken of is the baptism of a believer. The believer who intelligently submits to be baptised into the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thereby at once assumes the name and the yoke of the Lord Jesus, places himself completely under the teaching, guidance and control of the Redeemer. He is *in the Lord* in the Scripture sense of that phrase. It therefore follows that immersed believers should only marry immersed believers.

By some this teaching is contemptuously thrust aside. But to those who deem the words of an apostle as authoritative as the words of the Master, there is no choice save between faithful obedience on the one hand and on the other hand an ignoring of the Lord's dominion over them. If we are to please Him, we must adopt His teaching as given by His accredited apostles. The Lord claims a complete following. No half-way doing is acceptable to Him. He brooks no rival. He will have no compromise. Immersed believers marrying the unimmersed is tending to obliterate the Lord's own ordinance. Especially among the Baptists, their intermarriages with those who do not practise immersion as taught in Scripture has the effect of putting it in the background. The special inconsistency of leading men marrying those who are disobedient, can scarcely be too strongly reprobated. The results are *culpable silence on plain Scripture teaching, open communion*, a practical shelving of the ordinance, and sometimes even a helping hand given to the anti-scriptural practice of sprinkling infants.

Reader, is your attitude in this matter such as you can vindicate in the light of Scripture and in prospect of the judgment seat of Christ before which we must appear to give an account of our conduct?

A. BROWN.

## Meditations.

WE learn from Luke in Acts xviii. 11 that Paul dwelt at Corinth 'a year and six months,' teaching the word of God to the Corinthian converts. His journeyings take him to Ephesus. During his stay there he learns that, among other things, fornication has crept into the Church at Corinth. He deals with the matter by letter as recorded in 1 Cor. v. As we are dealing with the use of a word we will omit details. In verse three, he writes, 'absent in body but present in spirit.' According to James, and everybody else, the body without the spirit is dead. But Paul is very much alive, though far removed, so does not mean his 'spirit' in that sense. What, then, was present with these Corinthian saints that was of Paul, though he was in distant Ephesus?

Let us look at verse four, and note the three items of procedure: 'gathering together'; 'and my spirit'; 'power of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The first we understand as the Church assembled and the third as the authority or endorsement of Jesus. We are led to ask, What is the standard of judgment in the case? Evidently, the teaching which he had delivered to them during his stay among them, was the standard of judgment, according to verse three, and was of equal authority as though he were personally present to judge.

He argues in verse two that the Church should have acted in the matter but had failed to do so. Therefore 'and my spirit,' along with 'present in spirit' stands for Paul's teaching delivered.

So, then, we understand thus: The Church comes together, Paul's teaching is the standard applied and he, being an Apostle, this would have the endorsement of Jesus.

We must refer to another passage of similar construction, namely Col. ii. 5, 'For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit.' What we have said above applies here with this notable difference: Paul had taught the Corinthians in person but these saints at Colosse had not seen him. From verse seven of chapter one and verse twelve of chapter four, we learn that Epaphras was their teacher. It was a joy to the Apostle to learn of their steadfast faith.

What we think is most outstanding and of paramount importance to us in this day and generation from these two passages (1 Cor. v. 4 and Col. ii. 5) is that as the Apostle's teaching was authoritative where he had taught in person, it was equally authoritative where he had not, but had been delivered through the medium of another. Hence his teaching is legally binding upon all disciples of Christ down the ages until He comes. It matters not whether relating to fornication, women covering the head in the assembly or even women preachers and only woe can rest upon those who set his teaching aside. Paul's teaching and testimony are present with us in the New Testament, though he is now removed from this scene of action, and it can still be said that he is 'present in the spirit, though absent in the flesh.' He being dead yet speaketh.

A. JACKSON.

### REVIVAL

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## Saved by Grace.

THESE three words are simple as a statement, but comprehensive and significant as related to God and man. Grace is a divine attribute, salvation a glorious provision for sinners who are helpless and hopeless without the grace of God. It is the only way of reconciling man to God. 'The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' The importance of what God has done to save sinners should arouse universal interest in such a glorious scheme. The apostle Peter says, 'of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you'—and he adds, 'which things the angels desire to look into.' Thus heaven and earth have been and are concerned regarding what God has done for man. That fact should stir up every one to inquire into the things revealed in God's Word that we may be saved.

The word grace means 'favour,' the undeserved mercy of God, but what it signifies is more fully given in describing what has been accomplished by it. 'The grace of God have appeared, bringing salvation to all men.' (RV. Titus ii. 11). Paul says of the saints at Corinth: 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.' (2 Cor. viii. 9). When was Jesus rich? During the life of Christ in the flesh He was poor. Born in a manger and brought up in Nazareth, He lived a humble life. He could say, when He was engaged doing His Father's will, 'the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' In His prayer to His Father, He said 'O Father, glorify thou me with the glory I had with thee before the world was.' (John xvii. 5). Paul says of Him, 'who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation and took upon him

the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' (Phil. ii. 6-8). What abounding grace is seen in the humiliation and death of Christ that we might be saved! On the divine side all has been completed for the salvation of men.

A description of the sinners' sad condition is given in Eph. ii. They were 'dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' They 'were by nature children of wrath, even as others,' without Christ, hopeless, and Godless.

Sin is like a terrible disease, beyond the power of man to cure; and no one can claim to be free from its baneful influence, 'for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' (Rom. iii. 23). The Gospel is glad tidings, for it is the power of God to save sinners. It offers deliverance from sin to every one, for 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' The remedy is adequate and all-sufficient, but needs to be applied.

The Word of God is like a looking glass in which we can see ourselves as God sees us. We may be deceived, for the deceitfulness of sin does not appear such to the carnal mind. The character of man in his natural state is according to truth as revealed in the Word of God. His grace, mercy and love, are manifested in the Gospel to induce us to turn from wickedness, and flee from the wrath to come. 'Jesus is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.' (1 John ii. 2). God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering are designed to lead to repentance. God did not withhold His well beloved Son but gave Him

to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Without the shedding of blood, there could not be forgiveness. When we think of all that God has done for man,

'Then our grateful hearts agree,  
What a debt we owe to Thee.'

The Gospel makes tender appeals to man to turn to God and accept the great salvation so freely offered to all. Man has a will and is, therefore, responsible for accepting or rejecting the gift of God. If he had not the power to choose, he could not be blamed. The example of conversions recorded, indicates freedom of choice; for when people were convicted of sin they asked the question, 'What shall we do?' The answer given by those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, was 'repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' (Acts ii. 38). Those who heard the Gospel, believed and complied with the primary condition of salvation. The conditions following were repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; that was something they had to do, and they did it. Their faith was not a dead faith but active, and was perfected by their obedience, for 'they that gladly received the message, were

baptised: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers.' Thus they were saved 'by grace' for only in that way can salvation be obtained.

There is nothing we can do to merit forgiveness, but God desires that we should love Him because He has first loved us. In Titus iii. 5, we read: 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.' The two factors in the new birth are water and Spirit; and what has been quoted agrees with the words of Jesus as being necessary to enter the Kingdom of God. Thus being born again, 'we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' (Rom. vi 2). As God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, may we who believe in Him, manifest our love by faithfully following in His steps and copying His perfect example.

Love in loving finds employ,  
In obedience all her joy;  
Ever new that joy will be,  
Loving Him who first loved me.

JAMES WARDROP.

## Faith.

I. *Faith has to do with unseen things.* The sense of touch deals with things that are near and can be felt; vision takes within its compass things seen; faith is exercised with 'things not seen' (Heb. xi. 1). All seen things are shut out of the region of faith; or, rather, faith enters into another and wider region, beyond the things of sight and sense. Faith needs not to aid us to understand that our friends are present with us: we are aware of their presence by our eyesight. Faith is not called into service to convince me that I am sitting in my own room; my organs of sense certify it. But it is with me a matter of faith that there is such a place as Australia. My eyes have not seen, my feet havenot trod, Australian soil. By faith, however, I understand that Australia is.

The unseen and remote things which faith lays hold of may belong to the far past, the invisible present, or the distant future. Faith deals with the far past when, by its agency, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; faith is busy with the invisible present when we believe that God exists, and that He is a rewarder of the diligent



searcher; and faith enters into the unexplored future when we believe that this mortal shall put on immortality. In any and every instance faith is operative with the invisible. We have not seen a fragment of the Divinely-planned ship in which Noah safely sailed from 'the world that then was' to the earth which now is; but by faith we traverse the far past, and become acquainted with the movements of the 'preacher of righteousness.' Our eyes have not beheld Jesus, and we have not been honoured with the affectionate grasp of His tender hand; but by faith we know that He lived a life of affectionate regard for others. We have not been favoured, like Stephen, to 'see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God'; but when touch and vision alike fail, faith comes to the rescue, and we *believe* that Jesus is at God's right hand. The future is impenetrable to human optics and mental scrutiny; but by faith we enter even that wide, enchanting land, and penetrate far into the illimitable. Such *unseen* verities, far distant in time or at present existing, it is the province of faith to bring near to us. Let the reader carefully eliminate every *seen* thing from the arena of faith, and exultingly adore God, that by faith we can roam in the boundless invisible.

It is needful, however, to distinguish between things seen and unseen things connected therewith. We see the earth, and thereby *know* of its existence; but we do not see *how* it came into its present habitable state. It is by faith we understand that God exercised the formative power which operated upon the chaotic mass. The organ of sight may, therefore, be the medium of instruction to a limited extent, and faith supplement what sight cannot discern.

II. *What faith is.* 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (Heb. xi. 1). 'Now, faith is the confidence of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen' (Campbell). 'But faith is, of things hoped for, a confidence—of facts, a conviction, when they are not seen' (Rotherham). A certain thing is expected—looked forward to with joy—hoped for; confidence that it shall come is faith. The workman looks forward to pay-day for his wages; he joyously expects the desired sum; he has confidence that his wages will, in due time, be put in his possession;—such confidence is faith. But faith is not always engaged with things hoped for. That Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again for our justification, are not events to which we look forward and for which we hope. Already they are facts, and our faith in such is a conviction that they have transpired. When, therefore, faith connects us with joyful things to which we expectantly look forward, it is confidence in their certain occurrence; and when faith is linking us with other unseen transactions, whether they be past, present, or future, it is a conviction of the reality of the things believed.

III. *How faith is produced.* Than this perhaps few problems more perplex the anxious inquirer after the way of salvation. He discerns the importance and necessity of faith; he sees the awful consequences accruing from unbelief; and, in many instances, the supreme desirability of faith only adds perplexity and alarm. Not unfrequently, too, there is a misconception as to the manner in which God gives faith; and the inquirer, entirely bewildered, is tempted to yield to despair. Even where the perplexity is less felt, there is sometimes an unsatisfactory prevalence of uncertainty. Anxious inquirers, many who do not disclose themselves as anxious, and professed Christians, are often in suspense in a way completely incompatible with confidence. And yet how simple and explicit the inspired instruction is: 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom. xi. 17). God speaks; man hears, and thereby gathers confidence, becomes assured, obtains faith. What man cannot see and never could explore, God has revealed. Anterior to Christianity God spoke to the Jews at different times and in different ways. In these last days He has spoken to

the world in His beloved Son. As the Father sent the Son into the world, so the Son sent the elect apostles to speak Heaven's good news to every creature. In like manner the Spirit of truth taught, testified, and spoke (John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13). God has spoken through prophets, through His Son, through the apostles of the Son, and by the Spirit. He has, moreover, corroborated their testimony by irrefutable miracles; and all this to make us assured—to give us faith. God's word is the means by which all may acquire faith.

It thus appears that the means by which we obtain faith in God's revealed realities is precisely the same as that by which we obtain information and assurance of ordinary events that transpire beyond our sight. A gold field is discovered in some of our colonies. Immediately we become well informed all about it, and can speak as confidently as if we had examined it with our own eyes. Or, civil and national disturbances are plentiful in foreign parts. Although we see neither the agents nor the actions, we know the general procedure, and are assured of the events as they transpire. How come we to be so confident respecting the unseen gold fields and the distant strifes? Confidence is begotten by the newspaper reports, and confidence grows as our knowledge of the reports increase. So with the golden street of the new Jerusalem, and the past and future mortal strifes of the human family among themselves and between them and their God. God's reporters have done their work. Prophets and Son, apostles and Spirit, have all contributed inestimable information. The veracity of their separate and conjoined reports, the fidelity with which they have accomplished their work, and the benign nature of that work, are demonstrated by accompanying, unmistakeable miracles of unsurpassed philanthropy. God's incomparable anxiety for the irrefragable ratification and world-wide dissemination of what they spoke and wrote shines out in that He bore witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Heb. ii. 4). Shall we, then, be wise in our generation, well informed, and able to speak with confidence respecting home and foreign prosperity and vicissitudes, and yet remain badly informed and doubtful about those events of which God has given infallible evidence? 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater' (1 John v. 9). God has given us assurance—faith—in that He has given so abundant, varied, and incontrovertible information and evidence. Central and prominent amid the extraordinary records of Scripture is the great work of Jesus. Reader, do you desire to obtain faith in Him, or to increase the faith you have? Search the Scriptures. Otherwise than by God's word faith does not come. That word speaks of Jesus. Read God's statements. Ponder them. As God's word is received within, unbelief is expelled.

IV. *Faith a fruitful source of action.* Heb. xi. teems with illustrations of the active fruit-bearing nature of faith. It was by faith that Abel offered, Noah built, and Abraham obeyed and sojourned. The faith of one and all of those ancients gushed forth in action. What was true of those named was not less true of an innumerable company that time failed to have inserted in the catalogue. Who sees not that faith wrought with works, and by works was faith made perfect? (James ii. 22). Faith is perfected only as it unfolds itself in works. Faith alone is dead, unprofitable, useless (James ii. 14-17). Only when it blossoms into confession, and ripens into obedience, can we reasonably expect righteousness to be imputed for faith.

The varied actions done by the ancients of good report harmonised with the things believed. Abel believed God in the matter of sacrifice, and acted accordingly in offering an animal. Noah believed God respecting the coming flood and his way of escape, and in harmony therewith he built his ship. Abraham believed God respecting the promised land; his action in leaving his fatherland was in keeping therewith. Various and separately God gave special instruction to special persons. The teaching, Divinely

evidenced, begat the faith, and the speech and actions flowing therefrom were in full accord with the things believed. Uniformity we have in believing God's utterances and acting thereon, notwithstanding the immense variety of the divine messages and the actions required.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in like manner, requires to be perfected by implicit obedience. Nor are faith and works enough. They must be *His* works. Faith in Him blended with submission to the Confession of Faith, or the Prayer Book, is not the right sort of union. Nor will trust in Him and obedience to Moses serve any better. Have faith in Christ, and be under law to *Him*. 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you' (John xv. 14).

Nor can it reasonably be pretended that we have faith in Jesus unless we carry out the instructions He gives. If we have confidence in our medical adviser we attend to his prescriptions. Not less carefully will the truly confiding one attend to the prescriptions of Jesus. Dear reader, let your faith, begotten and nourished by God's word, be developed into unqualified submission to every command. From faith in the Messiah, as your able and willing Saviour, be baptised into Him, and thence learn to *observe* all things He has commanded.

A. BROWN.

## G. Campbell Morgan on Baptism.

PROCEEDING we come to the next words of our Lord, 'Baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Here I propose to say a few words concerning the rite of baptism, and more especially concerning the value of the rite. I have no desire to enter upon a controversial subject. I admit the controversy. I admit the difficulty. Here, however, speaking in my own pulpit, I may do so with all freedom, for I take it that it is generally known what my attitude is toward the question, so far as it is a question dividing the Christian Church. However, I will come back to that, if you will let me follow my Bible a moment or two quite simply, while you hear me with as little prejudice as you can. The first thing I have to say is there is no question at all, that baptism in those days meant immersion. This is not open to question. It may be said the form matters nothing, that it may be that of sprinkling water upon the person, or, in the fashion of the Greek Church, pouring water upon the person, or that of immersion. If we think we are wiser than those first Christians, I do not object. I affirm unhesitatingly that the original

word means immersion. I affirm that in order to point out that the symbol which Jesus commanded was a symbol suggesting death unto life. In the whelming beneath the waters, we have the symbol of death. In the emergence from the waters we have the symbol of life beyond death, the resurrection life.

The spiritual significance of the rite is revealed in the very words that our Lord made use of here, 'into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Baptism was the symbol of the passage from death into life, and the life was of a peculiar nature. It was the life of fellowship with God; fellowship with the Father, a return to God's original purpose for men; fellowship with the Father through the Son; fellowship based upon the mediatorial work of the Son; fellowship with the Father through the Son, by the comradeship and indwelling of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit being the administrator of the life wherein men have fellowship with the Father through the Son. These things were not produced by baptism in water: neither was it ever suggested that they could be; but, by baptism, this

spiritual change in the life of the soul was confessed.

Baptism into the name involves deliverance out of all that is in opposition. The soul comes from the distances into the place of fellowship with God: from the place of bondage to sin, where such fellowship is impossible, into the realm of ransom through the work of the Son: from the ignorance of the mind and deadness of the will into the illumination that comes by the Spirit's interpretation and the energising of the will that comes by the Spirit's indwelling. All this was symbolised by baptism.

There are no finer words descriptive of the real suggestiveness and value of baptism than these, which will be familiar to all, 'Baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.'

In the early days after our Lord's resurrection, the early days of the Apostolic Church, and for a long time after, baptism was a public break with the past, an outward and definite confession on the part of the men who became disciples of Jesus Christ. Therein was its supreme value: therein to-day is its supreme value; and therein those of us who have neglected it have lost very much. Our Lord charged His disciples to practise that simple and sublime rite: He commanded that those coming to Him, and submitting to Him, and trusting Him entering into the fellowship of His own, should publicly and definitely confess that they have broken with the past, and that in this simple and sacred symbol.

I say again, whether the form can be changed I will not discuss. I have no quarrel with those who think it may; but I do affirm that for myself I prefer to abide by the primitive rite in the old and simple form. Seeing that the Lord did leave with us who bear His name only two simple rites and ceremonies, that of His Table, and that of baptism, I prefer to follow His command, according to the earliest method, even though others may be perfectly justified in changing the

form. Do not let that discussion as to form hinder the sense of the importance of the supreme value of baptism. Our Lord charged His first disciples to follow the making of disciples by a rite that should mark a decision and a change and a break with the past.

*Westminster Pulpit, July 3, 1914.*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew's Gospel i to v.16.

**Introduction.**—We turn with a measure of regret from the readings in Luke's gospel. This is not because we regard Matthew's as in any sense inferior, but because we have enjoyed the progress through that portion of the Word, and do not like to interrupt it. The present arrangement will serve the same purpose by taking us through Matthew's gospel in the year, with perhaps the added interest and stimulation of relative Old Testament passages. It has not been possible to comment on our previous Old Testament readings. There is the same argument for taking that part of Holy Writ in a consistent order too.

Luke was a doctor. Matthew was originally a tax-gatherer. Luke wrote for Gentiles as an historian. Matthew wrote for Jews—primarily as an eye-witness.

**The Genealogy** (i. 1-17). It was the natural thing for Matthew to trace back to Abraham, rather than to Adam. We note that the line is traced through the kings of Judah from David to Jechoniah, and differs considerably from that given by Luke. To make the three divisions of fourteen generations it was necessary also to omit one or two. This need not cause us to stumble if we bear in mind the importance of the genealogy from a Jewish standpoint, and their habit of leaving out names for convenience. As Jesus was the son of David—many generations removed—so a name here and there can be omitted without any dishonesty or inaccuracy. Many of the families could be traced through different lines also, the relationships diverging and converging in the course of time. It is quite reasonable to suppose that both Mary and Joseph were of the seed royal. In Jewish eyes betrothal and marriage were the same from a legal standpoint, and the child Jesus would be Joseph's legal heir.

**The Birth of Jesus** (i 18-25).—It is delightful to consider how the accounts of Matthew and Luke intertwine in their

chaste and simple details. The picture of the dilemma of 'just' Joseph gives a happy insight into his character. How great would be his gratitude when all doubts were removed by the Lord's messenger. We suggest that Mary would have already told him her story, but we may be wrong here because the customs of the time did not allow much communication during the year of betrothal.

Joseph was given the name of the child, as was Mary, prior to the birth. Jesus means simply 'Saviour.' Note it was not the Romans He was to save them from, but a much worse enemy. We observe here the first quotation by Matthew of the Old Testament prophecy. Sceptics have tried to show how mistaken he was, but their view is the harder to believe.

**Visit of the Magi** (ii. 1-12).—Much has been made of, and added to, the brief account of Scripture. We do not know how many 'wise men' came, whether they were kings, nor where they came from (save from the east, of course). 'Magi' were eastern philosophers who studied the stars (besides other sciences), being astrologers as well as astronomers. In view of the over-ruling power of God, we may well believe that the constellations in the heavens heralded in some way not known to us, the coming of God's Messenger. It is clear that the appearance of the star to indicate the actual house in which the child Jesus was lying must have been a miraculous phenomenon, whatever the original sign which brought the Magi to Jerusalem. We must remember that the Jews had spread all over the earth, and taken with them the expectation of a Messiah, and the conception of Jerusalem as 'the city of the Great King.' It was to the law and to the testimony that the Magi went to get their final directions. How will the sceptics explain the instructions of the scribes? There is much instruction and warning in the differing attitudes of Herod, the Scribes and the Magi. Sad indeed it was that those most privileged in knowledge and opportunity rejected by unscrupulous hostility, and indifference, the Saviour of the world, while the wiser strangers made their humble obeisance and poured out their treasures. It was doubtless their generosity which helped to make possible the flight into Egypt.

**The Massacre of the Children** (ii. 13-18)—God saved His Son by the flight by night into Egypt—a hazardous and long journey. The tyrant filled up the measure of his murderous career in an act of calculated cruelty and wickedness. It was the same sentiment which moved the Scribes and Rulers when they crucified the Son of God.

After the final overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians those who were about to be carried captive, enslaved or

slain, were gathered at Ramah near to the tomb of Rachel, and this is the historical reference of the prophet. The prophecy of Hosea (xi. 1) has reference to history also. These are the primary meanings, and their further reference is typical.

**Nazareth** (ii. 19-23).—The divine leading brings Joseph and Mary and the child finally to their residence at Nazareth, a town despised as indicated by Nathanael (John i. 46). Matthew naturally connects this with the prophetic references to the reproach and derision of the Christ (Ps. xxii. 6; Isa. xlix. 7, etc.). How humble was the upbringing of the King!

**John the Baptist's ministry** (iii. 1-12).—John's character is austere and strikingly vigorous in denunciation of sin. It was indeed his function to call the people back to righteousness of life. His manner of life fitted his vocation, and enforced his message. Obviously he had great power of speech. He awakened the fear of God. Repentance is manifestly not only sorrow for sin, it is change of life. 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him' (Acts xix. 4). While it was popular, the Pharisees and Sadducees came and submitted to the ordinance, but we may be sure John's estimate was right. They were too self-righteous to be honest with themselves about it. The promise of the baptism in the Spirit is accompanied by a threat of baptism of punishment. The work of Jesus was to winnow out the wicked, as well as to call out into His service those prepared to accept Him.

**The Baptism of Christ** (iii. 13-17).—It is significant that John preached near the water (see John iii. 23). His humility makes him reluctant to baptize one whom he knew to be the promised Messiah. This was a recognition of the truth, and the baptism of the Christ was not a baptism unto repentance, but a sign of the willingness of the Saviour to be identified in every respect with sinful man—except that He was without sin. This is a striking point for those who regard it as unnecessary to give obedience to the command in the great commission. If the sinless One thought it good thus to fulfil all righteousness, how can we cavil at it—or refuse it? On three occasions, during the Lord's ministry the voice from Heaven testified—here, at the Transfiguration, and during the last week of the Saviour's earthly life (John xii. 28).

**The Temptation** (iv. 1-11).—No man witnessed this conflict. The account must have been one of those "all things whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26)—in the special sense of a per-

sonal revelation. We need to read the accounts in Luke and Mark to get the full picture. We might summarize, and say the temptations included the flesh (satisfaction of physical hunger), the world (glory from man through a display of power) and the devil (acknowledgment of his power and authority). We observe the weapon which Jesus used in this battle is also available to us, and it needs to be known to be used effectively. The long fast, the loneliness and the struggle for mastery with the Prince of this World, were ended by the ministers of God in His time.

**Jesus preaches in Galilee** (iv. 12-17).—The message is the same as that of the Baptist. The King has come but His kingdom is not yet set up, but His preaching is like the dawn, and fulfils the prophetic word once more.

**Jesus calls some to His service** (iv. 18-22).—We know from John's gospel that the call is not quite so sudden as it appears in this account. These men had a previous acquaintance with Jesus, if not a very close one. In Capernaum, He probably lived with Peter's family. They are now called from their daily work of fishing to follow the itinerant preacher in His ministry. We have read this so often that we do not realize what it means, but those who give up their occupations to preach Christ in a foreign land perhaps do so. Neither did those fishermen know how the divine hand would lead them.

**Jesus works among the people of Galilee** (iv. 23-25).—Here is no hypnotist, or professor of medicine. 'His fame went throughout all Syria,' and none who came were disappointed. His word was with power. Neither disease nor devil could stand against Him—yet the future showed that men's hearts were closed against Him.

**The Beatitudes** (v. 1-12).—It would seem that Jesus retired somewhat from the press which thronged from all parts to hear Him, in order the better to teach His immediate followers, but doubtless the crowds followed when they found where He had gone—but in reduced number of course. We get the title from the Latin 'beatus' (blessed), and here are the principles of true happiness with the contrast of false happiness—understood but not actually expressed. We might almost say that the worldling would substitute 'Cursed' for 'Blessed' in this passage and reflect his view of things. But have the people of the Lord yet half grasped the significance of the fundamentals here set forth? Do our thoughts yet reflect and harmonise with the Saviour's own? Here they are expressed in an unrivalled summary of concentrated wisdom.

**Functions of Christ's followers in figure** (v. 13-16).—Salt flavours and preserves. Light attracts, illumines and purifies. We should be overlooked as we do our work for God. He should be manifested 'before men.'

R. B. SCOTT.

## Anecdotes on Giving.

MAYBE you collect anecdotes even as I do. If so, here are a few that have been gathered from here and there on the subject of giving. They should serve to awaken us to our duty and to show us that when we do not give as we should we become the subject of many a joke.

L. L. Brigrance once told our class about the congregation that was trying to raise money for a new roof for the meeting-house. The men of the Church were meeting to see if the amount could be raised. One man said: 'I'll give two dollars.' Another said: 'I'll give three.' Then all eyes turned upon Brother T. Wad, who was very wealthy. 'I'll give a dollar,' he said. About that time a piece of plaster overhead, loosened by the leaking water, fell and hit the old brother on the head. He straightened up and said: 'I'll give ten dollars.' Then an old elder raised his eyes toward heaven and said: 'Lord, hit him again.'

Another anecdote, from where I do not know, concerns a little boy who asked his daddy if the heathens wear clothes. 'Surely,' answered the daddy; 'whatever makes you ask such a question?'

'I only wondered why you put a button in the collection plate today,' replied the youngster.

In the 'Sword Unsheathed,' by A. O. Rainy, one reads the following dialogue: 'I have nothing but praise for our new minister, nothing but praise,' said the pompous Brother Brown one fine Sunday morning.

'So I noticed!' replied the deacon who had passed the collection plate.

I think Brother Gardner was the first I ever heard tell the one about a little girl coming to the preacher for help when she had swallowed a nickel. The preacher said: 'You don't need me; you need a doctor.'

'No,' answered the little girl, 'mamma said that you could get money out of a man when all others fail.'

A Christian had persuaded his Jewish friend to attend church with him. The sermon was upon Paul's efforts to persuade King Agrippa to become a Christian. After the sermon, the collection plate was passed, and the Jew put in a tenth of his weekly income, as Jewish custom dictates, while the Christian put in a dime. After church the Jew whispered to his friend: 'Almost thou persuadedest me to become a Christian.'

I heard V. E. Howard tell about a Negro minister addressing his new flock for the first time. He said: 'Now, brethren and sistren, I'm goin' to make this church run.' And an old brother sitting in the amen corner said: 'Praise the Lord!' The minister continued: 'Brethren, I'm goin' to make this Church get up and fly.' Again the old brother said: 'Praise the Lord, Amen!' Finally the minister reached his real point: 'Brethren, it's goin' take money, lots of money, to make this church fly.' The old brother got up and said: 'Let's let her walk, brother; let's let her walk!' (Too many of my brethren feel the same way today).

I do not know from where this one came, but it is a good one. The family was just home from church, and daddy said he thought the sermon was too long; mother said she thought the preacher's messages were dryer than the dust out of her vacuum cleaner; big sister joined in by saying that the songs were pitched so high that a bull couldn't yodel the bass; and finally little sister piped up and said: 'Well, for a nickel I thought it was a pretty good show.'

Speaking of a nickel, here is a nickel's soliloquy: 'I am a nickel, I am not on speaking terms with the candy man. I am too small to get in the movies. I am not large enough to buy a necktie. I am of small consideration in the purchase of gasoline. I am not fit for a tip. But, believe me, when I go to church I am some money.'

With this anecdote I close the subject and promise not to mention it again, even though there are many more good anecdotes circulating on the subject of giving. A little boy, who had been taught the necessity of giving, noticed that a rather stout lady sitting by him had no money in her hand to put in the collection plate that was being passed. He gently pressed his money into her hand and whispered: 'It will be easier for me to crawl under the seat than for you to.' That should make some of us feel like crawling under our seats.

#### 'GOSPEL ADVOCATE.'

'I HAVE never in my whole life met a man who really knew the Bible and rejected it. The difficulty has always been an unwillingness to give it an honest trial. Our Lord himself says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."' —Dr. Howard A. Kelly.

'LIFE is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard to realise this; for the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and griefs which we endure help us in our marching onward.'—Henry Ford.

#### 'A VIRTUOUS WOMAN, who can find?'

But the worldly woman you can find anywhere to-day. Her name is legion. The virtuous woman riseth while it is night to engage in her labours for the family, but the worldly woman riseth sometime before noon. The candle of the virtuous woman goeth not out by night, but the cigarette of the worldly woman goeth not out by day or night. She layeth her hand to the cards, and her hand holdeth the cocktail. Her husband searcheth for her at the picture shows. She openeth her mouth with folly, and on her tongue is the law of gossip.

But there is another kind of woman. Her influence abides from generation to generation, and her children rise up and call her blessed. The uplifting, preserving, warning, and comforting influence of a godly mother is one of the most powerful forces that work upon the soul of man. The Apostle Paul calls to remembrance this influence of the grandmother, Lois, and the mother, Eunice, upon the young evangelist Timothy.

*Selected*

'Let us seek out of the Book of the Lord and read! However sincere a man may be in creed or worship of his own invention, or of other men's invention, it will profit him nothing! The faithful witness pronounces such a creed and such a worship "vain." May God, by the mighty power of His truth, overturn all the altars to human authority erected in Christian Churches and Christian hearts; and in the implicit belief of Divine truth, because it is Divine—and in the cheerful observance of Divine Ordinances, because they are Divine, may the Lord alone be exalted. Of the Man of Sin it is said, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws."'—DR. J. BROWN.

'He claims to reign supreme in your hearts. Let His claims to our obedience be as cheerfully conceded as His claims to our faith; so that to our love of His glorious person and His saving worth we may be able to add, with David, "O how I love Thy law."'—DR. GUTHRIE.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

**Slamannan District.** The Annual Social gathering of the Churches of Christ in this district will be held (D.V.) on Saturday, 1st January, 1949, at 12 noon, in the Meeting House at Blackridge. Chairman: Bro. Thos. Nisbet, Tranent. Speakers: Bro. D. Dougall, Evangelist, and Bro. A. Gardiner, Jr., Evangelist.

**BREAKING OF BREAD**

LEAVING the things of time behind,  
In a world o'erwhelmed in sin,  
We meet together in Jesu's name  
Who bids us enter in.

To worship Him in truth and love,  
His memory to adore;  
Because He died that we might live  
To praise Him evermore.

To worldly minds, these things are void;  
They do not know their loss,  
But we who take the bread and wine  
Can view the Saviour's cross.

His blessing He will surely give,  
According to His grace,  
And pardon anything amiss  
Unworthy of our faith.  
W. FERGUSON (Kilbirnie)

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Bro. Ernest Cole.** Address to end of January, 19 Fairmile, Aylesbury, Bucks.

**Capetown, Woodstock.**—We are glad to report that Bro. W. L. Brown, his wife, and their two sons, arrived in Cape Town on 22nd September, 1948 from S. Rhodesia, on their way to the U.S.A. Since they are only able to obtain a passage on the 26th November, 1948 they are staying her with us in the meanwhile.

At present, Bro. Brown is conducting our Young People's Meeting, and is making it very interesting for the young people by having questions on the Bible. Thus, this meeting provoked the young people to a great zeal for the things of God. We therefore pray that they may determine to exercise their abilities to the glory of God and for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom.

We do, and have always, appreciated the presence of our Brother and Sister Brown among us, as they have always helped to make us happy in the faith. Bro. Brown is conducting our gospel services, and presenting addresses beneficial for brethren and visitors.

Furthermore, we are also glad to make it known that on Lord's Day afternoon, 31st October, 1948, we were able to rejoice and witness two young men and two young women confess the Lord Jesus and unite with Him in baptism. The service was conducted by Bro. Kanne-meyer, of the Woodstock Assembly, and a brief address as to the importance and necessity of baptism, regarding man's salvation was given by Bro. Brown.

The meeting was fairly well-attended by both visitors and brethren. We pray that these seasons of refreshing may provoke us to a more earnest desire to labour for the Master.  
T. HARTLE.

**Dunfermline, Priory Lane.** With joy we report four additions by baptism. This is indeed a great encouragement to the Church, and a sign of God's blessing on our year's work. Bro. David Dougall is labouring with us, and his work is much appreciated. We pray that he may be richly blessed in his future labours.

Please note change of secretary's address: W. Brown, 1 Camden Crescent, Rosyth, Fife.  
W. BROWN.

**Fauldhouse.** We desire to record appreciation of the faithful and loyal services of Bro. A. E. Winstanley, Evangelist, to the Church during October and November. The teaching and preaching was heart-searching, and calculated to inspire better service and attendance on things pertaining to the Kingdom. To the outsider, the way of the Lord was made plain. Much time was spent weekly, giving out invitations to meetings, distributing tracts and visiting the sick. We feel a time of rich blessing has been experienced and work well done for Christ and His Church. We pray that the seed sown may bear much fruit to the glory of God and that His blessing shall accompany our brother in his future labours for the Lord.  
DUNCAN M. STEWART.

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