

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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SHADOW AND REALITIES

"But since the law has a shadow of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities, it can never by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near." (Hebrews 10:1)

THIS is a very striking verse when carefully read. In short it means that the law of the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, was a shadow which forecast the New, and that, not the Old but the New, was the reality. We can best realise how remarkable the passage is by reading what is written a few verses before in the epistle: chapter 9:1-5 says: "Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship, and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat."

From that passage alone we should at once say that if anything was real substance it was the worship of God under the Old Covenant. There was a real tent (the tabernacle), furnished with real furniture made of real materials, a real lampstand, a real table, a real altar, real incense, real bread, real curtains; and inside the Holy of Holies were a real box (the ark of the covenant) covered by a real lid (the mercy seat); the priests were real men, clothed in gorgeous real vestments, offering real blood of real animals in the sacrifices. Everything in the worship could be seen, tasted, touched, heard or smelled—could be known to be real by the physical senses. Elaborate instructions are given by God in the Old Covenant books of Exodus and Leviticus regulating everything pertaining to the worship and service of God. Surely *that*, the Old Covenant, was the real, the tangible, the actual, and the New Covenant is the shadow, the unreal. Yet the writer says that quite the reverse is true: it is the seen, the actual which are unsubstantial, and the invisible, the spiritual which are the substance, the realities.

God's Ideas and Men's

This is a complete reversal of the accepted order. The system under which we live is worldly, materialist. Things are judged by the evidence of the senses. Men pride themselves that they are concerned with actual things; they boast of themselves as "realists." Prosperity and wealth are assessed by the standard of money, profits, sales. These are the standards of success. Balances of payment, gold or dollar reserves, value

of money decide most transactions between men and nations, not moral or spiritual issues. Ruthlessness, hardheadedness, these are the means by which alone success can be gained; "Every man for himself, and devil take the hindmost." Our civilisation does not and cannot work along lines of what is right or wrong. A politician once said in the House of Commons that "You cannot run a country by the Sermon on the Mount." Well, men don't make a very good job of running the world *without* the Sermon on the Mount, do they? The statement was once made to an old monk: "Isn't everything in the world in a terrible mess?" "No" he replied, "everything that God makes and rules is in perfect order: it's only men's work that makes a mess of things."

Charles Dickens's novel, "Hard Times," is written around the conditions prevailing in the time of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. One of its leading characters, Thomas Gradgrind, says in the opening words of the book: "Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle upon which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir."

In a novel this is regarded as satirical or as humorous. But it sums up in a paragraph the philosophy of the world. Most people would laugh at the idea that the words could refer to them, yet their whole manner of life, and, moreover, the political, educational, scientific and technological worlds are measured by the same standard. Facts, Facts, Facts; realities; one's feet firmly planted on the earth; the only things that matter are the things of this life; we're not concerned about "pie in the sky by and by." Two of the world's greatest thinkers were the Greek philosopher, Plato, and his pupil, Aristotle, the scientist. In my boyhood days I bought myself, by much scraping together of my pennies, a set of the "Children's Encyclopaedia." I remember in a section entitled "Ideas" a picture being reproduced: I do not know the name of the painter, nor have I been able to trace the picture in the 50 or so years since that time. But I recall the subject clearly: it showed the great thinkers of every age, and in the centre two of the greatest—Plato and Aristotle. Plato is pointing with his finger upward, and Aristotle downward, denoting that the former's philosophy was concerned with higher things, while the latter's was of the earth — the seen and the unseen.

Old Covenant and New

In all this we are not by any means suggesting that the Old Covenant was a worldly, materialistic system; it was perfect for its purpose, for it was from God. *For its purpose*, for there were things it was not designed to do, and, therefore, that it *could not* do. It could show only how sinful sin was; it could remind the Jews of their sins, but it could not cleanse them. That is a glorious statement in Heb. 9:15. It is often asked how the sins are cleansed of those who lived before Christ's death, seeing that "the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin." The perfect answer is in this verse, and it is this: "Therefore he (Christ) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant." "FROM THE TRANSGRESSIONS UNDER THE FIRST COVENANT."

Hebrews 10:1 demonstrates that those things which are not seen are spiritual and eternal. They are the real things. Under the New Covenant we do not see holy buildings, furniture, vessels, sacrifices of animals, a special class of priests, symbolic and gorgeous vestments, glorious architecture and craftsmanship, the work of men's hands, to depict the spiritual and real. For the New Covenant is reality itself, and the Old Covenant, the seemingly real, is the shadow. Other parts of scripture stress this great truth: Paul writes in 1 Cor. 2:9 "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." The same apostle writes in 2 Cor. 4:18, ". . . we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen

are eternal." The secret of the patience and determination of Moses among seemingly intolerable provocations was that "he endured as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). To reckon upon the "immortal, invisible God" as the most real fact and Being is not the most utter foolishness, but the profoundest wisdom. "He who comes to God must believe that he is" (Heb. 11:6). Not the astronauts ascending into space show the reality of the living God, even though Khrushchev declared that his Russian space travellers had shown there is no God by going into orbit round the earth without seeing Him! "Must believe" that He is from the testimony set forth in the Bible, the evidence accepted by faith, not by sight.

EDITOR

LOYALTY TO CHRIST

IN this age this word loyalty has lost a great deal of its appeal, at least insofar as demonstrating it is concerned. In Chambers' "20th Century Dictionary" the meaning of the word "Loyal" is given as: "Faithful; true as a lover; firm in allegiance, personally devoted to a sovereign or would-be sovereign." While it is to be regretted that, in our secular world, loyalty is no longer as prevalent as it formerly was, it is tragic that among the followers of the Lord Jesus the same seems to be the case. While the words "Loyal" and "Loyalty" themselves are never found in the word of God, their meaning is constantly to the fore, and "personal devotion to Christ our King" more so than all else. Like salvation, devotion to Christ is always a personal matter; but it is nevertheless true that many brethren can be influenced by those who are looked upon as the capable and learned brethren among them. While this is natural, we must heed the warning of Paul in Acts 20:30: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." It is hard to realize that such dispositions are to be found among those professing to follow Christ. But history past and present proves this to be the case. Yes, even today it still exists. Many are the causes which bring about this situation, not the least of which are the following:—

Love of Money

The first betrayal of Christ was caused by this desire for money. On that occasion it was thirty pieces of silver, but betrayal of Christ is much more ludicrous now. "Love of money," the word of God tells us, "is the root of all evil [R.V. "kinds of evil"]": which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Just how true this is all honest men know. Not far behind love of money comes,

Love of Popularity

This is a thing which many men are very susceptible to, but it is tragic when it reaches the stage that they are prepared to betray Christ to achieve a pedestal. They become like the chief rulers condemned by Christ when (Jn. 12:43) he says of them, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

These are two of the reasons men will betray Christ, and there are more. Space does not allow a look at them, but loyalty to Christ is demonstrated by

Strict Obedience to His Commands

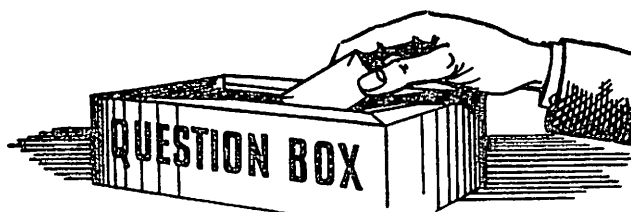
Before leaving earth for heaven, Christ commanded, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). Upon each of us God places the responsibility of preaching the gospel, and we fail Christ greatly in this matter. Instead of being delighted to tell our friends and neighbours what Christ has done for us and the joy and happiness to be found in him, I think too often we are afraid of their possible scoffing at our beliefs. But only by obeying Christ's commands can we show our loyalty to him. In verse 20 of Matt. 28 Christ went on, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The keeping of this verse is every bit as important as the obeying

of the previous one, because there is no use being saved from our sins only to be condemned for our failure to continue in the faith. Not least is the obligation given us by the apostle Paul at 1 Cor. 11:2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." No ordinance has been interfered with more than the Lord's supper, and this in spite of Paul's warning. But be assured of this: when men seek to change what has been delivered, then they betray the Lord who bought them, and do so to their eternal peril.

Let us who would be loyal to Christ make sure that we do only those things which are well-pleasing in the sight of God, that the words of the hymn-writer be fulfilled.

"Loyalty unto Christ, O what a mighty power,
Were the hosts of God united in his name,
Then would angels greet us, Christ himself would meet us,
And the host of God sing praises to his name."

JAMES GRANT



Conducted by
James Gardiner

"With reference to gospel meetings it has been said that such are unnecessary in these days. We have the scriptures in full and people can read the word of God for themselves and find the truth, if they have a mind to. How would you answer such a point of view?"

It is true that man has five senses through which to receive information, and some would insist that man has a sixth. The five senses are of course seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, and as far as receiving the word of God is concerned only the first two concern us here *i.e.*, seeing and hearing. We cannot now see the Saviour or His miracles, but we can see the written testimony and can read of Christ and his wonderful words and actions in the pages of the New Testament. We can also with the ear listen to the preaching and teaching of those who are knowledgeable in the writings of inspired writers of God. To my mind *both methods* of communicating a message are equally valid and have merits particular to each. Each day we receive information through both media—sometimes we receive instructions or information by word of mouth, and sometimes we receive written messages. Obviously a man would not send instructions to his wife by letter if she was residing with him; he would communicate with her verbally. If she was residing, perhaps temporarily, some distance away he would have to communicate with her by the written word.

Our Responsibility

Those who are Christ's disciples, and recognise an obligation placed upon them by the Lord to "preach the gospel to every creature," will obviously convey the message by word of mouth to those accessible to the sound of their voice. Those who are inaccessible to the preacher's voice would have to be informed of the message by some other method, *i.e.* by the written page (probably by having a tract posted to them or pushed through the letter-box). We should therefore preach (verbally or orally) to those with whom we come in contact, and preach (by the written word) to those to whom we cannot speak because of distance or other cause of inaccessibility. Paul and the rest of the apostles preached by both methods as we know. When Paul, for instance, was

present in a city or hamlet he preached with *his voice* (gospel meetings) and when he had left those cities or hamlets he later resorted to teaching them by *the pen*. For posterity, of course, Paul's writings were fulfilling God's purpose, but Paul certainly preferred the personal confrontations and seemed to consider he achieved more by being present and teaching orally (2 Cor. 13:1-2).

I know of course that the point of the question is that some say that oral preaching was necessary before the "living oracles" had been committed to paper; but now that they have, all that is necessary is that men should read the writings. I suppose it is true that if a man were shipwrecked and washed up alone on to a small island, and found amongst the flotsam a copy of the bible, he could by studying the bible alone find the way of salvation. However this is a case of the individual *fortuitously stumbling across* God's message. But God's intention is surely that His message should be *taken to the individual*. We would perhaps wait a long time if we were waiting for the individual to come to the message: must not the message be *taken to the individual* (by oral preaching, not necessarily from a platform)? Not many I would say, in the world today "search the scriptures diligently" like the noble Bereans, and so God's purpose or intention is surely not one of waiting until everybody gets around to reading his copy of the New Testament (if he has one). Of course it might be objected that that is precisely what we are doing in our gospel meetings—waiting for the individual to come to the message—and I would have to agree that that is largely true. In James Anderson's day, however (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries), it was quite a common thing for the people to come to the message, and he preached to large crowds at open-air gospel meetings. But times have changed somewhat, and although gospel meetings in halls are still most valuable, perhaps gospel meetings in homes and cottages would prove more fruitful nowadays. Some modern religious sects, I think, have proved it. In Acts 8:29-31 we have the incident where the Ethiopian bible student was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet, when Philip drew close to him and asked him if he understood what he was reading. He replied "How can I, except some man should guide me?" I know, of course, that this passage is much used these days by the religious group who sell their books and "helps" to help us understand the New Testament; but quite apart from the abuse of such a statement, it does show that preachers of the gospel can quickly help readers of the New Testament to receive the good tidings intended for them.

Many Ways of Preaching

We enjoy a high degree of literacy in this country but what about those who have not much schooling, or, in some countries, none at all? Are they expected to read and understand, or would they benefit greatly from hearing the message from some preacher of the gospel? Surely they would! Surely it would be *essential* that the message be conveyed to them orally. It would seem that the implication of the question before us would be to suggest that preachers of the gospel should be going around mutely handing out copies of the New Testament. Surely this is not what was meant by the commission to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . ." By all means let us supply copies of the New Testament to those who don't have any, but let us also use every possible avenue of making known to all *the contents* of the book. By public preaching at gospel meetings; by private conversations at cottage meetings and at places of employment; by distributing tracts and gospel literature, let us broadcast the gospel message and not be too content to wait until all the people of the world begin to read and study the New Testament. I am sure we have yet to fully comprehend the strength of the word "Go" in the great commission.

(All questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. — I could use a few more questions, please)

When it comes to regular attendance at meetings many Christians are Seven-Day Absentists.

GOD'S WORD FOR A TIME OF FEAR

HE who can in our day look into the future without heavy forebodings for the world and for our own fair country does not know the situation and the condition of affairs. Those who do know are filled with a sense of perplexity. Forces which long have been bound but which have been gathering power through the years are everywhere breaking loose and getting beyond control. Whither is our civilization carrying us? What is brewing in Europe? In Asia? Which way is our nation heading? It is easy to see that we are being carried along more and more swiftly—somewhere, but where? The thoughtful observer sees rapid and significant developments taking place almost daily. Everything is tending toward a mighty issue, a crisis such as the world has never yet seen.

With a new interest the believer turns to his Bible. The old Book never disappoints. It meets every exigency, every situation and need. It seems that it was written for just such a time as this. It throws its beams ahead and lights up the future—the very future we see taking shape before our eyes; and it illuminates the path I must walk in, in view of the future. It has a message of caution, of warning, of instruction, of comfort and assurance, for the days ahead.

What does it tell me? When the cloud looks as though it were breaking, give heed to the Word.

When Fears Rush In

1. *Do not get panic-stricken.* Though the world may faint for fear—"fear not their fear, neither be troubled: but sanctify in your heart Christ as Lord . . ." (1 Peter 3).

2. *Do not try to run away.* "In returning and in rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). If by God's leading and in wisdom it is needful to make a move (as in Lk. 21:21) let it not be in the frenzy of terror, but in calm trust.

3. *Trust in God.* "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear though the earth do change; though the mountains thereof be shaken into the heart of the seas" (Psalm 46).

4. *Get rid of hoarded money.* That day falls most heavily on all that is high and lifted up, the rich and the great, and on everything that is lofty and pretentious (Isa 2; Jas. 5). The day is swiftly coming when men shall cast their gold and silver in the streets, in vain endeavour to escape its curse (Ezek. 7:19). Do not be caught with it.

5. *Use your money now*—to relieve the afflicted, to send forth God's word, to do good in Jesus' name. It is a good time to make ourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, if any of us have any. We shall not have it long in any case. The night cometh when no man can work.

6. *Get right with God* before we try to do good works or to serve Him. God regards the humble and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17). "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him . . . Woe to the wicked: it shall be ill with him" (Isa. 3:10, 11). "Seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger" (Zeph. 2:3).

7. *Be content to live very simply and humbly.* It is a day of distress. Those who, forgetful of the suffering around them indulge themselves in luxuries and live sumptuously will feel the keen edge of the coming wrath. "Ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." Do it not. Get along on a minimum and use what you save in the name of the Lord (Lk. 21:34-46).

8. *Study the ways of God in deliverance from evil.* See on what principle Noah escaped the crisis of the Flood (Gen. 6; Heb. 11:7); how and why Lot was saved out of Sodom (Gen. 18, 19); why Rahab was saved out of the destruction of Jericho (Josh. 2; Heb. 11:31); why Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, was spared in the flood of wrath that swept away Jerusalem (Jer. 38:1-13; 39:15-18). And study specially 1 Thes. 5:1-11 and Lk. 21:28.

9. *Finally—do not be deceived*, though the sky seems for a while to clear again. It is in this way that the hearts of people are hardened. For it will be at a time when they shall say "Peace and safety," that the great Trouble will break in upon the world, unexpected and inevitable, as "travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape . . ." But we were not appointed unto wrath but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him (1 Thes. 5:3, 9). So let us commit ourselves, our interests, our loved ones, to His faithful care.

These ominous and heavy times are bringing such passages as these to fresh notice. And how good it is to be true Christians now, and to know that we are

· "Heirs of salvation, purchased of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood !"

R. H. BOLL in *The Truth*

THE CHURCH

THE COMMUNITY OF SALVATION

"Congregation," "Community," "Church" are not mutually exclusive terms, but should be seen as interconnected: the undeniable fact that the New Testament itself always uses the same word "ekklesia" where we should say "congregation," "community" or "Church" should warn us against trying to invent contrasts here. The three words are not in competition but complement one another in translating the very rich and many-faceted "ekklesia." "Congregation" expresses the fact that the ekklesia is never merely a static institution but one that exists through the repeated event of a concrete coming together. "Community" emphasises that the ekklesia is never merely an abstract and distant super-organization of functionaries set above the concretely congregated community but is a fellowship of people who meet regularly at a given place and a given time for a given purpose. "Church" makes it plain that the ekklesia is never merely a disconnected jumble of isolated and self-sufficient religious groups, but the members, united through their individual service, of an all-embracing fellowship . . .

Each individual ekklesia (each individual congregation, community or Church) is not the ekklesia (the whole Church, community or congregation) but none the less fully represents it; this means two things. Firstly, the local ekklesia is not a "section" or a "province" of the whole ekklesia. It is in no way to be seen as a sub-division of the real "Church" . . . No, the local church does not merely *belong* to the Church, the local church *is* the Church. The whole Church can only be understood in the light of the local Church . . . The local Church is not a small cell of the whole, which does not represent the whole and which has no purpose in itself. It is the real Church, to which in its own local situation everything is given and promised which it needs for the salvation of man . . . the preaching of the Gospel, baptism, the Lord's Supper, different charisms and ministries. Secondly, the "whole ekklesia" is not a "collection" or "association" of local Churches. In the New Testament the word ekklesia is used to describe the various communities in their different localities, and both singular and plural forms are variously used. At the same time, both in Acts and in Paul's writings, especially in Ephesians, the word ekklesia is used in a supra-local sense . . .

. . . All individual communities receive one and the same Gospel, . . . the same mission, . . . the same promise. All are subject to one and the same Father, have one and the same Lord, are inspired by one and the same Holy Spirit . . . They believe one and the same faith, are sanctified by one and the same baptism, and refreshed by one and the same meal. Through all these things . . . they are not just linked together externally, but internally united; they form not just an ecclesiastical organization, but

one Church. The Church is not a limited company or organization of individual communities; the ekklesia is not made by adding together the local Churches, nor can it be broken down into them. Rather, *the ekklesia* of God exists in each place. There is not a Corinthian ekklesia, or an ekklesia of the Corinthians, or an ekklesia of Corinth, but: "The ekklesia of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1). Each ekklesia, each congregation, community, Church, however small, however poor, however insignificant, is a full and perfect manifestation of the ekklesia, the congregation, the community, the Church of God . . . The church is not composed by the free association of individuals; it is more than the sum of its members. Naturally it cannot exist without the decision and faith of individuals; but these are preceded by God's call. This is what creates the Church and makes the response of faith possible . . . Man has no control over the divine summons. The ekklesia is . . . the fellowship of believers. It is also . . . the foundation and the creation of the God who calls: the *congregatio fidelium* [congregation of the faithful] only exists as *convocatio Dei* [convocation of God], the *communio sanctorum* [holy community] only exists as *institutio Dei* [institution of God].

(From THE CHURCH, by Hans Küng. Burns & Oates 1967. The author is a German Roman Catholic theologian, of the more "liberal" R.C. persuasion. Although modernist in adopting the Higher Critical position regarding text and exposition of scripture, we make the above extracts on the church because we regard them as being beautifully in harmony with scripture teaching.—Ed.).

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE FOR THE 'S.S.'

THE "S.S." belongs to its readers. This can be said of very few papers. It belongs to its readers in the sense that your subscriptions and gifts form almost the entire support financially. The publication of each issue depends upon what you contribute. We live "from hand to mouth" so to speak. We have no monetary reserves or guarantees to fall back upon. It is the readers' paper.

It is the readers' paper in another sense too. As we have no financial guarantees, so we have no guarantees of contributions of another necessary kind—the contents. True, we have contributors of two or three regular features: Bro. R. B. Scott in his Notes on the Scripture Readings, and Bro. J. Gardiner in his Question Box, with Bro. Harold Baines with his series contributed from time to time of helpful articles. Even Question Box depends upon queries sent in by readers. So, very largely, both as regards finance and articles, the "S.S." depends upon you who are readers.

This time we are asking for many more contributions of written matter from readers. Please do not say "I can't write; I have thoughts at times and I'd like to put them into writing, but it's beyond my abilities." Some of you are preachers or teachers. Very often that sermon or exhortation you have given (or have even written out and read) is worth giving to a wider circle than the congregation which heard it. From time to time such messages have been published in the "S.S.," sometimes enlarged upon, sometimes condensed. At least, such a message could be submitted to the editor, and if worthwhile it would be published. If not, do not be discouraged: the editor will be ready to help as to how your contribution may be improved and made worthy of publication.

Or some event, or something you heard or read may have brought a thought to you which you feel could be worked up into an article, long or short. It cannot be too

short! And if too long it will be either cut to size or broken into portions to be printed in later issues of the "S.S."

It may be that you are right in your judgement that you "can't write." But do not let even that deter you. Often we receive newspaper or magazine cuttings from readers, or brief extracts from books, sent in the hope that, as they have helped the reader, they may also help other readers. Or a poem, or a thought, or a brief saying will fill a little space in the paper, or even fill a need in someone else's life. You may have a worthwhile thought to develop upon some passage of scripture, possibly a fresh aspect of some more or less familiar text. Or some reminiscence of a brother or sister in the church, or of some other personality. Send them along. Do not think you can have no part in the making up of the magazine. You can, and we invite and welcome you to do so.

We are sure that many passages of scripture puzzle you, possibly in the public readings we have on Lord's Days. Send your queries to Bro. J. Gardiner to answer in Question Box. Your having presented the question may mean that it is answered for others who, like you, would appreciate guidance and teaching. Things in the teaching and practices of the church that perhaps you do not understand will be dealt with if forwarded to the brethren responsible on the "S.S."

You may feel unable to write an article or to propose a question. You may, however, possess some poetic ability and be able to compose a poem or to write a hymn. The churches of Christ have had a fair share of brothers and sisters with this gift, and surely still have. On recent occasions such contributions have found a place in the "S.S.," and there is need and room for more.

This appeal can have no better response than that we be overwhelmed with your writings in various forms. We want these to be so many and so continuous that "there shall not be room enough to contain it." If that be so, we ask you to be patient if your contribution is not printed in the next issue of the "S.S." It may find a place several months ahead! Far better to have too much copy for immediate use than too little.

Do act upon this invitation.

EDITOR

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOVEMBER 1969

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 2—Proverbs 3:1-18 | Hebrews 12:1-17 |
| 9—Exodus 19:9-25 | Hebrews 12:18-29 |
| 16—Psalm 118:1-17 | Hebrews 13 |
| 23—Psalm 90 | James 1 |
| 30—Genesis 22:1-19 | James 2 |

VERY IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS

OUR November readings conclude the letter to the Hebrews. Whether Paul or another man of God wrote it, it provides much that is embodied in our other sacred writings, with some very striking emphasis. From beginning to end the Saviour is the "warp and woof" of it. His pre-eminence pervades it, authorises

it, empowers it. The heroes of faith are significant insofar as they look towards their Author and Perfecter. Without Him their work is incomplete. Their trust and obedience provides us with the encouragement we need to take the heavenward, Godward, road, which may lead to suffering and death here, but holds the glorious promise of eternal life hereafter in the fulness of divine bliss. The path they took is eclipsed by the utter self-abnegation of Him Who was God Himself manifest in the flesh. It was when He had made purification for sins that He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high; and that was necessary in order that the forerunners should be accorded the same regard. It is the city whose builder and maker is God to which we are bound: not an earthly material place, but a spiritual entity, hardly conceivable even to His own people (1 Cor. 2:9). "The things which God has prepared for those

who love Him" are beyond conception. They are so wonderful.

So, as we look back upon those whose faith remained strong unto death, who "endured as seeing Him Who is invisible," we have to put aside with determination anything which hinders us. It may even be the things we most prize. We sing sometimes "All the vain things which charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood." What do we *mean*? The picture (12:1) is of a race, with the competitors stripped of all but the slightest covering. Bunyan in "The shepherd boy sings in the valley of humiliation" has the thought "Here little, and hereafter bliss, is best for such as go on pilgrimage." Phil. 2:6: It is a heart-searching conclusion based upon this same passage and so much in line with "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself." Are we heeding our conclusion, or has the world got a hold upon us with the weight and the sin "which clings" (12:1)? Jesus faced and practised the much greater self-denial.

The Application To Us

Have we really got so much easier a fight today than those to whom the word of God came—"In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" (12:4)? Or is it that we have not realised the distance we are from being true followers of the Saviour or the heroes of faith? We have read of the saints in the Iron Curtain countries who have resisted unto blood and unto torture and death. It has been recently said of them "These people are fabulous Christians"—and it is because they are suffering on account of their faith. Perhaps it is more difficult to be a true Christian in a welfare state! This is a counterfeit of the real thing because it is material benefit arising from the application of Christ's teaching without Christ. It cannot bring real happiness because it is material and only meets worldly needs. The Lord's people need chastening to keep them faithful. The possession of money and material prosperity are Satan's best allies.

The Christians addressed in this letter had been faithful under persecution and had had practical sympathy with the suffering ones (10:32-34). Now they are

getting downhearted. They were falling back from their endurance when they first accepted the gospel (10:32-34). They had not made the progress they should (5:11-14). The writer expresses the confidence that they would in fact do better (6:9-12) but underlying the whole letter is the "nagging" fear that there was a danger of apostasy. Having wisely set forth the stories of those who had endured "as seeing Him Who is invisible," but had not received their reward in this life, he makes a plea for taking up a new lease of vigorous life (12:12-17). The consequences of failure to heed the warnings could scarcely be more rudely stated. The transcendent reward must not be lost, and the danger is so urgent that the most terrifying language and illustration have to be employed. We look first at the terrors of Sinai in contrast with the gracious and kindly privileges made available in Jesus. Then the divine and supreme offer of the heavenly eternal kingdom, refusal or rejection of which must bring destruction (12:29).

The practical personal application of the instructions and warnings are reserved for the last chapter. With all the concentration on spiritual realities (and in line with it) there is a deep concern for doing good in this present world. The love and gratitude we feel for the supreme grace and offer of the transcendent future blessings must work out in "brotherly love," "hospitality," "remembrance of those in prison," the highest moral purity, and freedom from covetousness. Willingness to be ill-treated and the offering of sacrifices of praise, giving and sharing, are just part of the life in Christ, and are to be continued without stint even if they do put us "outside the camp."

R. B. SCOTT

Praying to the Saints

"When you pray say 'Our Father'," not Peter, John or Mary. Our Lord told of a certain rich man who, when he died and went to Hades, addressed a prayer to a saint—Abraham. Will Houghton, of Moody Bible Institute, made this keen comment: "Concerning the rich man's prayer to Abraham, this is the only prayer in the Bible to a saint—and God's answer was NO."

Roman Catholicism & Liberty of Thought

It was said of the Romans, as Tacitus relates, that "in subduing the nations they made a desolation and called it peace." In like manner the Papal power, in endeavouring to extirpate its opposers as heretics, in denying to the people all liberty of thought, and in obliterating every landmark of the mind's own possessions, created that fatal and mortuary peace that springs from moral and spiritual desolation. In this respect Catholicism has, indeed, ever been truly ROMAN.

(Robt. Richardson in "Memoirs of Alex. Campbell")

GIVING

God gives us joy that we may give;
He gives us joy that we may share;
Sometimes He gives us loads to lift
That we may learn to bear.

For life is gladder when we give,
And love is sweeter when we share,
And heavy loads rest lightly too
When we have learned to bear.

Author unknown

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Ilkeston.—We are pleased to report the addition of two young sisters into the Church: Patricia, wife of Bro. Kenneth Trusswell, and Elizabeth Booth, who has been attending our gospel meetings for some time, were both immersed on Lord's Day, September 7th. May the Lord bless and keep our young sisters faithful unto the end.

Bro. John Dodsley (evangelist) served us at our week-night services during the month of May, 1969. His theme, "The Faith of Abraham," was greatly appreciated, and we asked him to serve us for the month of August, which he did, and dealt with the subject "The History of the Church."

We would like to express our grateful thanks to Bro. Dodsley for his earnest and faithful preaching of God's word. May God continue to bless his labours for the Master. F. Gregory

Kentish Town.—We warmly appreciated the presence with us at our 98th anniversary of brethren from other churches. We feel that the fellowship, the report, the discussion and our Brother Breakell's big share in these made the meetings helpful and stimulating. We shall enjoy his further efforts, and pray for results in increased activity, and more useful contacts in the neighbourhood.

Wigan (Scholes).—From Saturday, October 4th, to Saturday the 11th, Bro. Leonard Morgan, from the church in Hindley, conducted a gospel mission covering six nights—Saturdays, Lord's Day the 5th, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the 7th to the 9th October. The meetings were exceptionally well attended, both by members and non-members of the church. It was particularly gratifying to welcome so many friends from religious bodies—Anglicans, Pentecostals, Methodists and Elim Four-Square Gospel adherents. Some attended every night of the mission, and in some cases said that they had been given "something to think about" as regards their salvation. We pray and hope that they may be not only almost, but altogether persuaded to become Christians.

Hundreds of invitations had been distributed through the post and personally, and it was estimated that some 50 friends responded to these invitations. The spirit of revival was apparent in the chorus and hymn-singing before and during the meetings. The messages given by our preaching brother were earnest, simple and alive with gospel truth.

We again experienced "how hardly souls are wooed and won," for there were no responses to the gospel in lives being yielded to Christ. But we continue to work and pray in hope that God will give the increase.

Our deep and sincere thanks are expressed to Bro. Morgan, to the brethren at Hindley for the wholehearted support they gave in attendance, to those brethren from other congregations who encouraged us by their presence, and to all who, in many ways material and spiritual, contributed by their service to make these few days an evangelistic mission long to be remembered. Thanks to you all, brethren and friends. And may the glory be God's.

COMING EVENTS

Blackburn (New Wellington Street). — Meetings are being arranged, with Bro. J. Dodsley (Kirkby-in-Ashfield) as preacher, as follows: Saturday, November 22nd, at 7.30 p.m.; Lord's Day (23rd) at 6 p.m.; Tuesday (25th); Wednesday (26th); Thursday (27th) and Saturday (29th), all at 7.30 p.m.; Lord's Day (30th) 6 p.m. The presence and prayers of brethren and friends will be greatly appreciated by the church.
R. Renshaw

CHANGE OF TIMES OF MEETINGS

Blackburn (New Wellington Street). — Commencing November 2nd, 1969, times of meetings will be changed as follows:

Breaking of Bread ... 10.30 a.m.

Lord's Day School ... 2.15 p.m.

The gospel meeting time will remain at 6.0 p.m.
R. Renshaw

THANKS

The church at Ulverston thanks all those who supported the September conference. A wonderful fellowship was enjoyed by all concerned.

The church also wishes to acknowledge the services of Bro. John Dodsley, who completed a week's mission prior to the conference.
John Thistlethwaite

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Devonport. — Boy Scouts' Hut, Blockhouse, Stoke, Devonport, Plymouth.

CHRIST ON MY DAILY ROUND

I pray each morn that I may not be blind
To Christ, Who moves that day among
my kind.

I dare not turn a hungry man away,
Lest I be leaving Him unfed to-day.

I dare not slight some tattered, unclothed
one,
Lest I should fail to warm and clothe
God's Son.

I cannot pass one languishing in bed,
Lest it be Jesus lying there instead.

Each weary burden-bearer on the road
Shall have my help, for it might be His
load.

And every lonely stranger that I see
I must greet kindly for it might be He.

I shall walk softly on the road to-day:
I could meet Christ down any travelled
way.

BIRTH

To Margaret and Douglas Melling,
October 19th, a son, Craig Douglas,
6 Ludlow Avenue, Hindley Green via
Wigan, Lancs. Thanks be to God.

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