

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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This Needed Saying.

THE "Rev." W. D. Jackson, of Loughton, Essex, said in his presidential address to the Assembly of the Baptist Union in London, yesterday that Britain is suffering from the "initiative of evil." He said he was angry about young people, but not with them. "By and large they are a better lot than we were."

"My wrath is with the unscrupulous men who are playing the smutty game of defiling them," he said. In spite of the peril of malignant growth some tobacco concerns, by their advertisements, were out to catch the teenager, seeking fresh lungs to canker. "The liquor louts lie in wait at every hoarding to trap the young drinker, in a shameless take-over bid for the profitable and easily formed habits of unwary youth."

Although the sex impulse developed far earlier in boys and girls now than ever in his generation, it was rashly and ruinously stimulated by pornography in film and play, in magazine and advertisement.

Mr. Jackson said that the moral fall-out of our times bothered him more than the fall-out from nuclear tests. "Some folks who sit down on pavements to protest about the latter would do well to sit in sackcloth and ashes and repent about the former."

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IMPASSABLE BARRIERS

Mr. Jackson expressed opposition to possible reunion with the Church of England, and said that along that road there were impassable barriers. "We could not go back into a State Church," he said. "We are unable to accept the so-called historic episcopacy and apostolic succession." Still less could they go back, as some Anglo-Catholics hoped, and some Baptists seemed to fear, into the Church of Rome. "Lord Fisher's remark that the Roman Catholic Church is now our friend finds few among us to favour it," he said, and added:

"While we cherish the friendship of individual Catholics, we regard the Roman Church as the enemy of truth. She talks freedom in England, but suppression in Spain. Her financial methods are unworthy of the name of Christ. She has almost canonised bingo. She sprinkles her infants in holy water and dips her parish funds in the unholy water of football pools. In short, we are not going back."

—"Guardian," May 1st, 1962.

[What Mr. Jackson says needed saying. He spoke what is known to be true, without fear or favour. All too rarely today do we hear such voices raised. In our preaching there is little of the righteous indignation of the prophets of the Old Testament, of the denunciations by Christ of hypocrisy, or of the clear and fearless teachings of the epistles. Whenever such statements as that quoted above are made we have an outcry "deploring the uncharitableness" they show towards "brethren of other religious persuasions."

Mr. Jackson has been, of course, taken to task. On the wireless programme "Any Questions" he was denounced by men who know little of the matter, and who were not qualified to criticise him. They thought to make up for their lack of knowledge with insipid, milk-and-water homilies about "Christian Unity," which meant exactly nothing.

The letter which follows is another example of such criticism. It comes, sad to say, from one who, rather than opposing Mr. Jackson, should be speaking with equally clear and courageous voice. The letter is also from the "Guardian," of May 5th]:

BAPTISTS AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

Sir,—Your report of the address given by the President of the Baptist Union will make sad reading for those who are striving to bring unity to divided Christendom. If it is God's will that we should seek unity, no barriers are impassable. The way to unity is hard and painful, but so was the way of redemption followed by Jesus Christ.

In seeking unity, our aim is not simply to bring together separated Christians *as they are now*. This would involve a violation of sincere convictions, such as those expressed by Mr. Jackson. The point of unity lies beyond the present situation, and is one towards which all Christian bodies, without exception, must move. The ecumenical movement demands growth and development from all who are engaged in it, and this should be axiomatic if we believe that the Holy Spirit is leading the Church into truth. Those who believe in "apostolic succession" would be the first to admit that the term itself can bear a variety of meanings, and that it must be studied not merely as a "theory of the Ministry" but with a genuine desire to know God's will for the Church. The same can be said no doubt of all such phrases in Christian vocabulary.

For those who wish to work and pray for unity, one of the earliest lessons is that of learning how to approach our separated brethren. Our Lord points the way: "I give you a new commandment: love one another." The approach must be one of love. We must seek to know and appreciate the beliefs of others, above all at points of disagreement; we must be honest in the assessment of our own beliefs, and courageously follow where they lead. Truth may lead us to condemn, but never to give even the appearance of mockery.

Some Christians are moved by conscience to change their religious allegiance; but that is a different problem. We do not call upon Baptists to become Roman Catholics unless conscience moves them to such a change. What we do ask is that Christians shall, to their utmost, seek the truth in their own traditions, learn to love and appreciate the truth to be found in those of other Christians, and with them move towards that unity which God wills, and which will be given as and when He wills.—Yours, etc.,

F. P. COLEMAN (Secretary, the Church Union).

[If today we do not have men of the calibre of the O.T. prophets, we have certainly those who, as in Isaiah's day, cry fearfully, "Prophecy not to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel."]

In Mr. Coleman's letter there is much about God's guidance by His Holy Spirit of those who are seeking the unity of the churches. Yet not once is the source of that unity pointed out—the written word of God. How can God guide by His Spirit when His revelation in the Scriptures is ignored? What other possible way can there be? Apart from the Bible how can we know that our guidance is to be followed or that it is right? Do men look for further revelation than what God has already given? Is God the author of confusion? Or is the Scripture way too obvious and too simple to be followed?

It is plain that to follow that way would be the rejection or relinquishment of many cherished traditions and distinguishing practices of which we are proud, yet which have no Divine authority. Prayer Books, Confessions of Faith, Missals, Articles of Religion, Creeds must all be renounced, and "the Bible and the Bible alone" be allowed its unique place. Then unity will inevitably follow.—Editor.]

The Origins of Apostasy.

THE DENOMINATIONS TESTED BY SCRIPTURE

It has been suggested that a series of articles on the religious denominations around us will be helpful and interesting to those seeking to spread the faith of the New Testament. Bro. Frank Worgan has agreed to write this series, and we are grateful to him. The first of these articles appears below, as introductory to the series.

No man who knows his New Testament can possibly look at the more than four hundred denominations, of which so-called "Christendom" consists, and persuade himself that this is what the Lord Jesus Christ had in mind when He used the expression, "my church."

That there has been a departure from the faith of the first Christians is plain for all to see. That the scriptures themselves foretold the occurrence of this

apostasy is equally plain. And it certainly cannot be denied that the effect of it all has been that the cause of Christ has been greatly hindered.

Since it is our hope to present a series of articles on the denominations, as seen in the light of scripture teaching, it should prove interesting, first, to see what the Word of God has to say about this apostasy. Such a study should help us to identify some of its causes, and, armed with this knowledge, we shall be able to guard against further departures from the faith.

We must never forget that apostasy is not a "thing of the past." It is not merely a matter of history. It is an ever-present danger. If the principles and influences which produced the original apostasy are allowed to work unchecked, their effects may prove to be equally disastrous even today. We should be very vain indeed if we supposed ourselves to be immune from the danger of apostasy in this age. Just as the seed of truth, given the right condition, is always capable of producing good fruit, so there is about evil a fearful vitality against which the Church must always be on her guard.

There is another characteristic of apostasy which makes it extremely dangerous, namely its insidiousness. No great changes occur instantaneously. Whether they be social, political or religious, they come gradually. Sometimes the move from one position to another is so imperceptible that one does not realise it is taking place until it is all over. This applies to the present state of religion around us. This did not develop overnight. On the contrary, the departure from primitive simplicity and unity occurred step by step.

Paul's concern

In 2nd Corinthians 11:1-3, Paul writes about this "primitive simplicity." He makes it plain that there is about the Christian faith an intentional simplicity, and declares that he watched over those believers at Corinth with a "godly jealousy," concerned lest their thoughts should be corrupted from the "simplicity and purity that is towards Christ." Now, this divinely arranged simplicity and purity is an essential characteristic of the faith, which worldly-minded men can neither understand nor tolerate. It conflicts with natural pride of the human heart. This being so, whenever worldly men have infiltrated into the ranks of the believers and, as worldly men often do, have obtained any measure of influence, they have never been able to resist an attempt to improve upon the God-given system.

1.—Love of Pre-eminence—a source of apostasy

It was such men as these that Paul had in mind when bidding farewell to the elders of the Ephesian Church, he uttered a clear prophecy concerning the coming apostasy (Acts 20:28-30).

In those verses he plainly outlines the character and aim of the apostates:

Their origin: "from among your own selves"; indicating that apostasy was to commence in the leadership of the church.

Their character: "grievous wolves"; false and hypocritical men.

Their attitude: "not sparing the flock"; implacable and merciless in the pursuit of their own ends.

Their methods: "speaking perverse things"; distorting the truth and teaching false doctrine.

Their motive: "to draw away the disciples after them"; men who seek the satisfaction of their own lust for power and position, even at the expense of the unity and purity of the church.

Without a doubt, this love of pre-eminence has always, from the earliest times, been a prolific source of apostasy.

The apostle John, reputed to have outlived the other apostles, lived long enough to have to contend with this same evil. Diotrephes had succeeded in placing himself in such a position of authority in a certain assembly that he dared to forbid the brethren to receive the apostle, or those who were sent by him (3rd John 9-10).

2.—Undue respect for men—a source

If all congregations had followed the example of the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:2) in exposing and expelling these power-seeking men, all would have been well. Unfortunately, many Christians worked themselves into the hands of such men, by manifesting a foolish readiness to elevate men to positions higher than God had intended. Paul was dismayed to learn that the Christians at Corinth were guilty of this folly. They were showing undue respect for men and professing attachment to the various servants of Christ who had laboured at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1). Such attachments to personalities in a congregation will inevitably produce division, unless they are speedily corrected, for these preferences are schismatic in their very nature.

It may be of interest here to point out that the word "schism," in its Greek form, is found eight times in the New Testament. Significantly enough, it is never used in connection with doctrinal differences but relates to differences about

persons. Hence we find Paul deploring that *schismata* had occurred at Corinth. It is a word which indicates that something has occurred to fracture the basic, inward unity of the church. As yet, there has been no formal or visible break in her fellowship, but the spirit of unity and peace, so essential to the health and growth of the church, no longer exists, and if this is allowed to continue it will issue in the formation of distinct parties. The word "schism" then, suggests the "party-spirit" which leads, eventually, to "parties."

In 1st Corinthians 11:18-19, we have the suggestion that it is this party-spirit which leads to the formation of "sects" or "heresies." The word with which we have to do this time is *hairesis*, occurring nine times in the New Testament and which, very strictly, means "a choosing." In the Revised Version of the book of Acts, on the six occasions that it is used, it is translated "sect." Later, in the epistles, it is translated "heresies" three times, on one occasion giving the character of such heresy as "damnable."

Now, although this word *hairesis* has been translated "sect" on six occasions, we must remember that originally that word "sect" did not have the unpleasant significance that it undoubtedly has today. When we read in Acts of the "sect of the Sadducees" nothing more is implied than the "party" of the Sadducees. That is why Paul could say with perfect candour and without apology, that he had lived "according to the strictest 'sect' of our religion."

But when we find the word being used in the epistles, we see that it is used in a manner very plainly expressing disapproval. "Heresies" are to be avoided and condemned. And if the question is asked, "Why should sects be harmless under the Jewish system and so dangerous in the Christian economy?" the answer lies in the difference in the nature of the two religions. Since the unity of Israel was basically a unity founded upon a fleshly relationship, the members of the various "sects," whether Pharisees, Sadducees or Herodians, could all worship at the same altar, in the same Temple. Their "choosing" did not effect the national unity. But with the Christian system this is quite different. The unity of the faith is a spiritual unity, and the appearance of "choices, sects or heresies" inevitably terminates in the formation of different parties, which are destructive of the unity of the one Body.

Putting together these two words, then, "schisms" and "heresies," we may say that the one word suggests the *cause*, namely undue attachment to personalities and the other suggests the *effect*, which is the formation of distinct groups, or parties.

3.—Lack of respect for the Word of God—a source

Turning to 1st Corinthians 4:6, we find Paul warning against going "beyond the things which are written." This lack of respect for the scriptures is revealed in various ways. Instead of accepting the Word of God as sufficient to furnish the man of God to every good work and as containing all things necessary to life and godliness (2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3), men have considered the scriptures to be inadequate.

Some have argued the need of—and professed to receive—later and fuller revelations. Others, particularly the Roman Church, have claimed that tradition must be regarded as authoritative and taken into consideration in determining the faith and practice of believers. Yet again, creeds and confessions of faith have been compiled by uninspired men and elevated to a position of at least equal authority with the Bible. But no matter in what form this attitude has manifested itself, it is one of disrespect for the Word of God. It reveals quite clearly that those who do such things regard the Word to be both inadequate and obscure. And when this attitude is manifested, apostasy is at hand.

4.—Ignorance of the Scriptures—a source

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures. . ." (Matt. 22:29). These were the words of Jesus to the Sadducees, on the subject of the resurrection. They *could* have known the truth. That they did not, was due to their ignorance of the scriptures. Ignorance of the Word leaves men open to all kinds of error. They accept, without question, doctrine which is nowhere taught in the scriptures. In this, they follow false teachers, who find them an easy prey. This is, undeniably, the position which millions of religious people occupy today.

Divided into a multitude of denominations, they are actually unable to explain what considerations led them there. They cannot turn to the Word of God to give a reasoned defence of their position. Nor can they explain why they should separate themselves from the many other professed followers of Christ, or what the things are which make fellowship between them impossible. They are ignorant of the scriptures. This is not the place for a discussion of the extent of their culpability in this ignorance, for there are, without doubt, varying degrees of blameworthiness. Sufficient to say that whatever the reason for ignorance of the teaching of the Word of God, the results of that ignorance are always the same; departure from the faith.

And finally—

5—Laxity on the part of Christians—a source

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1st John 4:1). Earlier, in chapter 2:26, John had implied that the methods used by these false teachers would be subtle and apparently harmless. "These things have I written concerning them that seduce you." Notice the word "seduced." Error is very often seductive. It does not come in a repulsive form. It is presented as "just another point of view," or perhaps as "merely another way of saying the same thing," and its implications are not always immediately appreciated. There lies the danger.

If we, in this late age, are ever led into further apostasy, it will not be because a doctrine has been propagated among us which is startlingly revolutionary and which has swept us, like a tidal wave, from the position which we, as churches of Christ, have so long occupied. It will be because we have become lax and careless and have stood by whilst false teachers have dropped a hint here and a suggestion there, so that the faith of many has been subverted. The price of safety is constant vigilance and the example of the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:2) is again commended. We ought, as Christians, constantly to review our doctrine and practice and re-emphasise the fundamentals of our faith. It is possible that we take too much for granted.

Thinking we are secure we may awake to discover that the enemy has crept in unawares. Those who do not love the truth and value truth more than anything else will be sent a strong delusion so that they believe a lie. (2nd Thess. 2:10-11). Those whose pride makes them desire some new thing, having itching ears, will be turned from the truth to pay heed to fables (2nd Tim. 4:4).

We must "search the scriptures daily, to see whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11).

FRANK WORGAN.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit.

THE first point Bro. Barker mentions in his latest article in the April issue of the "S.S." is a claim that God excluded the Gentiles from the promise contained in Acts 2:38. I say again that the following verse is inconsistent with such an interpretation. The fact that there was some delay in the fulfilling of the promise in the case of the Gentiles is no valid argument against the Gentiles being included in the promise. The order in verse 39 may well be significant; "unto you and your children"—Jews, "to all that are afar off"—Gentiles.

It is claimed that my statement that those who have received Christ have also received His Spirit is "a direct denial" of Acts 8:15, where we read of the converts in Samaria. We read that the Holy Spirit "was fallen upon none of them." There is no difficulty at all in this case if we examine what is meant by the words I have just quoted. It is evident that these words refer to the receiving of special gifts of the Spirit. Receiving the Holy Spirit can mean one of two things. It can mean either the blessing common to all Christians or receiving some special gift. In any particular case the meaning is determined from the context.

It is said that I find it "too difficult" to answer the argument "As Joel's promise contained miracle . . . so also the fulfilment offered by Peter must also have included miracle." To answer an argument that is plainly illogical nothing more need be said than that it is illogical. It just does not follow that since the Holy Spirit came to the apostles with special signs and power, therefore these signs and special gifts are involved in the promise Peter made in Acts 2:38. Peter promised that the Holy Spirit would be given to those who responded to his call. Since this promise did not specify miraculous powers we are not entitled to assume they are involved. The unique occasion at Pentecost is marked in a special way and to argue that these special signs and powers are promised generally does not accord with what is said nor with the needs more generally.

We are next given some quotations from Alexander Brown and David King to support Bro. Barker's interpretation. I would suggest that to say that the same signs and powers were given to the 3,000 is a good example of "importing something that is not recorded." The account of what happened after Peter's address gives no support to this view. The 3,000 were promised the Holy Spirit and since the manifestations of the Holy Spirit vary we are not entitled to assume that they received the same as the apostles.

Our brother did not mention that the view I take is well represented in writings that have an honoured place amongst us.

In his commentary on Acts, J. W. McGarvey writes, "The second blessing promised on condition of repentance and baptism, is the 'gift of the Holy Spirit.'

By this is not meant that miraculous gift which had just been bestowed upon the apostles; for we know from the subsequent history that this gift was not bestowed on all who repented and were baptised, but on only a few brethren of prominence in the several congregations. The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift; and the reference is to that indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ."

In his "Scheme of Redemption," R. Milligan writes, "By the gift of the Holy Spirit in this passage (Acts 2:38) we are not to understand the miraculous powers of the Spirit bestowed on the Apostles and many other primitive Christians, but the Holy Spirit itself. This is evident from several considerations." At this point the writer goes on to give his reasons but his treatment occupies several pages and cannot be fully quoted here. (See pp. 278-281).

In his "Christian System," A. Campbell says that the meaning of the gift of the Holy Spirit is the same as "that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come" and "you may have righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy spirit." (See p. 208).

What I have so far written and quoted refers to the specific point Bro. Barker first raised. I have read carefully what he has written on other matters and I see little point in re-stating what I said in the March issue of the "S.S."

I have valued the opportunity of discussing the important matter of the gift of the Holy Spirit. My only regret is that our brother has made unworthy references to what I have written as when he states that a statement of mine is "a little lacking in honesty." This kind of thing I deplore.

ERIC McDONALD.

THE EDITOR, sending us copy for the "S.S.," wrote at the foot of Bro. McDonald's article, printed in this issue: "You have the right of reply to the above." Bro. McDonald having inserted matter not before mentioned, and to sum up, I take advantage of the "right" to reply with what follows.

The articles in the "S.S." written by myself and our brother, came into being because a tract intended for free distribution was sent to us to be printed. It was put in type and a proof sent, which ultimately came back to us for the work to be completed. After some hesitation, however, I wrote to the brother who sent us the order, explaining that I could not undertake to pass it for printing unless words to which strong objection was taken were removed from it.

From childhood, I have lived all my days more or less directly under the influence of Churches of Christ. The axiom, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent," was learned very early. What I learned in those early days, I have continued to believe, my own studies confirming that faith. Thus it was, that when confronted with so bold a statement as that made by our brother in his tract, that "God grants at baptism the Holy Spirit . . ." and that statement coming from a member of a Church of Christ—yet so different from what had been learned—I was set with a problem as to what should be done about it. We were asked to print what I was sure was not true, yet was intended for free distribution to 10,000 or more people, a responsibility that could not be accepted. To return the copy with an explanation was the only course open, and that is what was done.

Had Bro. McDonald been alone in the view he took, it could have been left there, but I know quite well that others believe as he did, and it seemed, if not actually necessary, advisable that reasons for my action should be made known. Hence, my first article and those which followed, as a result.

Drawn on by the Editor's comment on what I first wrote, a second article was written, widening the scope of my remarks, and, consequently, difficulty was found in getting back to the purpose of calling in question our brother's right to make so wide and unqualified a statement as that to which his attention had been called. I believe I judge rightly in saying that he should either prove his words or withdraw them. No man should state that God grants gifts to men, in these days, unless he can clearly show, without the possibility of doubt, when and why and where and how such gifts are made. By way of challenge, to draw an answer from him, or from others, I have insistently stated that he can answer none of these, nor can anyone else. So far as can be seen, no one has tried. The words remain unproved yet not withdrawn. I maintain that this idea of a gift of the Spirit at baptism—which is the gift of life—is a contradiction of what is clearly and positively taught, that spiritual life comes by—and only by—generation, through the Word. To teach it as being given at baptism is as foolish as to say that natural life begins at birth.

Bro. McDonald, instead of acknowledging the situation in which these truths place him, fastens on a mistake he supposes me to have made (which has little or nothing to do with the subject at issue), and discusses that in each of his articles. The words used in his tract he never again mentions, after stating in his first article the "source" of his authority for them, and when doing that made no

attempt to "prove" them by scriptural reference. He has carefully evaded everything written against his position throughout this exchange of articles.

In the article in this issue, to which this is a reply, Bro. McDonald introduces words written by brethren of repute whose writings have a high place in the literature of the churches. Let those extracts be read, but let it be noted that though they refer to the promise made by Peter at Pentecost, **they make no attempt to examine the words which Peter actually used.** What they each offer is their "private interpretation" of the promise, and private interpretations of scripture are forbidden. This was made clear in the "S.S." for May, and we ought indeed to thank Bro. Stephenson for bringing those words of Peter to our notice, for they have proved useful in this discussion. Peter could very well have had in mind his own experience at Pentecost when writing what he did, for his words show the importance of the language used to the proper understanding of what is being stated. Peter undoubtedly spoke under the stress of a divine impulse, and his words were not his own, but chosen for him. Therefore, any private interpretation of them—that is, the reading into them a meaning other than that which they actually contain—is forbidden.

Exposition is better than interpretation. It is exposition that David King uses. He does not proffer his own opinion as to what the scripture teaches, but by analysis of what Peter said, he draws out from the words what they prove. He shows indisputably and irrefutably that what was promised at Pentecost was the gift of miracle, and concludes—as though he had before him our brother and his words "Let . . . those who teach believers to look for a reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism, remember that the inspired word offers no such promise."

Bro. McDonald's treatment of David King's exposition is to pass it by with a somewhat scoffing allusion to miracle being offered to so many with no evidence that it was granted. As a reply to that, it is suggested that perhaps nothing is more characteristic of the fickleness of the human mind than its tendency to believe only that to which it is inclined. I do not doubt that our brother accepts, without demur, the record that 3,000 were immersed on that day, though Scripture provides no actual evidence of their baptism. There is no mention of the water in which the converts were immersed, nor how or where the immersions took place. The objection he raises against miracle is an old one cherished by some who deny immersion, but is now borrowed here to use against miracle. Despite his disinclination to believe it, I assure him that there is better evidence of the granting of miracle at this period than there is of the immersion of the 3,000, as we may see.

Let us now look at what took place on this great day. Gathered together were men drawn from every nation under heaven, a cosmopolitan crowd, speaking a variety of tongues. Out of their number stood up one man, who under the subjective power of the Holy Spirit began to speak, and that crowd listened and heard. The language spoken was that of Galilee, but the language which reached every ear was one that was known and could be understood by all. The great barrier which has divided men almost from the beginning of time was broken through for that day, and when the clear-sounding voice of the apostle began to speak to them of their guilt as a nation and as men, in that they had destroyed Him who had been sent to redeem them, they were pierced to the innermost part of their being, and as with one voice they cried, "what shall we do?" This was an effect beyond all human power to achieve. It was miracle.

Peter, in the course of his remarks, spoke of Christ being exalted to the right hand of God, from whence the promise of the Father to grant the Holy Spirit came, and as evidence of the nature and purpose of the gift, he used these words: He, the Father, "hath shed forth this which ye see and hear." Let us take those words literally, and ask ourselves what it was that could be "seen and heard" at that moment, as Peter spoke them, which could be called a manifestation of the Spirit. It was not the power to heal the sick, or to give sight to the physically blind, or to restore deaf ears, or anything of that kind. That which could be perceived "seen and heard," was the unification into one body by the power of the Holy Spirit of that which had been a gathering of diverse parts, speaking a diversity of tongues—a unity of the spirit which led to a unity of decision, and the acceptance of the terms of salvation which Peter offered, on the part of many who were in that great crowd.

With those who turned away we are not further concerned, but we are still interested in those that remained. They had been immersed, but naturally they were still the same kind of people, faced with the same problem of language and situation as they were on that day, and the gift that came to them from the Father of what could be seen and heard was as necessary to them now as it was then. This God had foreseen and provided for. If they were to be of one mind, as indeed they actually became, they must be of one speech, and the power to realise that was in the promise given to them.

The story of what happened at Samaria is instructive, showing how scripture may interpret itself. Is it supposable that Peter and John would have been delegated by the twelve to travel to Samaria, that they might bestow the gift of the Spirit

on the converts there, if that course had not been carried out in Jerusalem with the 3,000 and others who were being added daily to the Church? It would appear from Acts that, at conversion, the laying on of hands to bestow the Spirit was the general practice, and is proof of the fulfilment of the words spoken by Peter at Pentecost. Can we not truly say that it was a necessity placed on God to minister this gift if His work was to prosper? A chief hindrance to its progress was the differences of language between man and man. By this wonderful gift, that difficulty was overcome. It can be said that all that God had done through the ages to bring about that which happened at that Passover and at that Pentecost would have been largely nullified by this hindrance to communications caused by differences of speech. The power was there and granted by the exercise of miracle, as revealed at Pentecost and carried on until the time came for miracle to cease. As that time came long, long years ago, to preach it as offered today is a mistake that should cease to be made.

W. BARKER.

[It may be that the articles on the meaning of Acts 2:38 have been regarded by some readers as rather lengthy and tedious. But we must agree that the matter discussed is vital, and therefore full scope has been given to the expression of views. The discussion is now ended in the pages of the "S.S."—Ed.]

SCRIPTURE READINGS

3—Psalm 35:1-18.	John 15:18-16:11.
10— " 50.	" 16:12-22.
17— " 132 and 133.	" 17.
24—Isaiah 50.	" 18:1-24.

Hatred (John 15:18:27)

Consideration of the attitude the apostles are to take towards one another when left with the work of continuing the service of Jesus to mankind, brought to mind the other question of their attitude to the world—and the world's attitude towards them. So Jesus warns them that they would have to face the same hatred which was being manifested towards Himself, culminating in the cross. It was indeed vital, and remains so with all Christians today, that they should love one another, but it is just as important that they should face up to being regarded and treated in the same way as their Master. How the early Christians, including in particular the apostles themselves, did this is a matter of history. Their faithfulness in face of trial was the means of preserving the gospel, and changing history. The human race owes what is good in present times to that.

The world hated Jesus. It hated His followers. Every effort was made to destroy the church, and the Bible upon which it depends. The occasion we are writing of is the last on which Jesus gave warning to the apostles. He had obviously on many earlier occasions spoken both of His own death and the persecution which they must expect to undergo. For example, refer to Matthew 10:16-33 and 16:21. Now the time is close upon them. This is the night on which He was betrayed. They are just going to walk out to the garden of Gethsemane. They are going to feel

the hatred of the world to the Holy One of God, and to think for a short time that it had won the victory over the loving Son of Man. However, their weeping and lamenting would soon turn to joy (16:20), and they would then know that love was triumphant, and would go out and practice it in Jerusalem, Judæa, Samaria and the uttermost parts.

Our dictionary tells us that hatred is extreme or intense dislike, detestation, enmity. It is the opposite of love. Nearly every crime of violence, and many others, are due to hatred. We look back to the first crime, the murder of Abel the righteous, and recognise that hatred, engendered by jealousy in the heart of Cain, was the cause of it. Just so, jealousy in the heart of the enemies of Jesus culminated in hatred, and then murder. Hatred towards a person, cherished in the heart, is murder in the sight of God.

John expresses this very clearly in his first letter (3:15). Nothing is clearer in the teaching and practice of Jesus than that His followers are on no account to hate. Unkind feelings are so easily roused in most of us that we need to keep a constant guard against them. Let those who think they stand in this matter take heed lest they fall. It is possible for the most trivial things to begin an evil disposition. If we keep brim full of love, of course hatred will never get in. It was the love of Christians for one another that made the heathen world take notice of them. While the contrast might not be so great today on account of the leavening influence of the gospel, there should still be an outstanding difference. It remains true that we cannot serve God and Mammon, and real Christianity is not reconcilable with worldliness. In fact we are required not to be in the fashion (Rom. 12:2), not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17), and are assured (not by man but by the Holy Spirit) that friendship with the world is enmity against God (James 4:4).

Hatred is a characteristic of evil men. We have the thought in John 3:20, which echoes in our present passage, that the revelation of God in the person of Jesus excites evildoers to hatred, and Christians showing holiness—as all of us should in all holy living and godliness—have the same effect. We must accept this as an opportunity to return good for evil, kindness for harm. In Romans 1:30 we read the fearful list of sins and sinners, among them “haters of God”—how shocking a character, yet a true picture of so many who are that without realising it. Before we believed,

repented and obeyed the Saviour could we not be described as hateful and hating one another as in Titus 3:3, even though we were taught so much better by our parents? In some guise or other in the councils of men, hatred lurks, else why should the design to murder men of other nations, with the refinements of scientific weapons, be such a prominent feature of modern life, and squander so much money? But there is a hatred which is right, and is consistent with love—the hatred of sin.

R. B. SCOTT.



(Conducted by
A. E. Winstanley,
43a Church Road,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent).

THE FIRST SIN

GOD planted a garden in a place called Eden, and there He put the first man, to dress and keep it. He told him: “You may eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. On the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

The Test

Adam and Eve were living in innocence. Sin was unknown. God was their Friend. But there was a test before them. Would they obey God by not taking of the forbidden fruit—or would they take it and sin? This reminds us that there is nothing praiseworthy in doing right when we have no choice. It is when we have right and wrong before us and *choose the right* that we please God. He wants us to love Him enough to *make right choice*; choosing right instead of wrong.

The Tempter

Though man did not know it then, he had a terrible enemy—Satan, the Tempter. The serpent spoke to Eve and said, “Has God said that you are not to eat of any tree of the garden?” She told him that they could eat of any tree except the one in the centre of the garden—“God has said, You must not eat of it, or touch it, lest you die.”

Satan told a lie. He said, “You will not die. God knows that on the day that you eat of that tree you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Eve should have refused to listen to the Devil, but she made the mistake of talking to him. Satan is very clever. He knows that if he can make something that is wrong look attractive, and get us thinking about it, he will lead us

astray. So it was with Eve. She looked at the forbidden fruit and thought (a) that it looked very good to eat; (b) that it was lovely in appearance; (c) that it would bring her some wonderful knowledge (so Satan said).

The First Sin

So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to Adam, and he ate it too. Right away they felt guilty. They knew they had done wrong—they had disobeyed God. Up to this time they had felt no shame at their nakedness; but now they felt shame. They stitched some fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons. Even worse than that, they felt afraid of God. Until now they had spoken to Him without fear. Now they were frightened. They heard Him coming and tried to hide among the trees of the garden. God called to Adam, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid . . . and I hid myself.” Then the sad story was told. Adam told the Lord how Eve had given him the fruit. Eve told how the Tempter had led her astray: “The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.” Notice the word *beguiled*. It means “cheated” or “deceived.” Never forget this: Satan is a cheat, a deceiver. Jesus warned us about him in these words: “He is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:48).

The Lesson

The great lesson for us in this story (you can read it in Genesis, chapter three) is this: *sin brings suffering*. Satan tries to persuade us that we can benefit by doing wrong. But he is lying. It never pays to disobey God. We can only be truly happy by loving God and doing what He tells us to do.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUIZ

- 1—Balaam's ass. Numbers 22:28.
- 2—Aaron. Exodus 31:1-6.
- 3—Jesus. John 12:14, 15.
- 4—Moses. Numbers 21:9.
- 5—Lazarus. Luke 16:20, 21.
- 6—Samson.
- 7—Jesus. Revelation 5:5.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Who said this about a miracle: "This is the finger of God"?
2. Which king was advised to say: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins"?
3. What were "written with the finger of God"?
4. When did "the fingers of a man's hand" appear and write on a palace wall?
5. Who "stooped down and with his fingers wrote on the ground"?
6. Who asked that another might "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue"?
7. Who said, and to whom: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands"?

A MISTAKE

Some people make the mistake of thinking that they can push themselves forward by patting themselves on the back!

SOMETHING TO DO

TURN up Colossians chapter four and verse twenty, then read it aloud. Then make up your mind to obey Mummy or Daddy *the very first time* they ask you to do anything. You might even decide to do it for a week! At the end of that time it will be a habit—and what a lot of pleasure it will give to your parents! To you, too, because many wonderful joys can come to us only through learning to be obedient. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour to "all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

UNCLE ALBERT.

GOD IS LEFT OUT

NATIONS are puzzled, laden with fear. All seems just darkness, year after year. Planning and scheming don't seem to bring

Peace and contentment, joybells that ring.

Millions are asking, "What's it about?" There is an answer: **God is left out.**

Tempers are fraying, quarrels abound; Many are saying, solutions they've found,

Then like a bubble they burst in the air, Bringing depression, waves of despair. Courage is falling in hearts that were stout.

Here is the reason: **God is left out.**

Some lives are needing assurance and peace;

Hearts that are broken daily increase; Some there are straying deep into sin; For some there is fighting and striving within.

This is the answer, proclaim with a shout:

This is your trouble: **God is left out.**
R. Naylor.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).—From the 14th to 29th April, 1962, the church here was engaged in a gospel effort with Bro. Albert Winstanley doing the preaching. Personal visitation, distribution of material advertising the meetings, along with newspaper advertising, resulted in a good number of visitors attending the meetings. Christians from neighbouring congregations encouraged us by their support.

On Thursday, 26th April, our hearts were gladdened as Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Aspinall (both residents of Petticoat Lane, where our meeting-place is situated), expressed their desire to obey the gospel, which they did on Saturday, 28th April. Rejoice with us, brethren, and join with us in thanking our Father, who has given the increase. Pray for these new-born souls, and for those who are striving to teach them to observe all the commands of Christ.

Tunbridge Wells (5 Mount Ephraim Rd.) Brethren will rejoice with us to know that today (May 15th) work started on our building project. A bulldozer has been busy taking out the level on the site. We thank God and take courage. Our building fund to date is £5,176. We are confident that in the six months in which the builder will do his job we shall raise the remaining £824 that we need. We beseech you all, brethren, **pray for us.** If any church or disciple intends to send help, and has not yet done so, let me hear from you soon.—A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Ulverston Conference and Rally, April 21st, 1962. Some sixty brethren attended, under the able presidency in the afternoon of Bro. W. Smith (Newtown, Wigan). Bro. J. McF. Black (Ulverston) had great pleasure in welcoming the brethren to meet in Burlington Street Hall, Ulverston.

Union of God to man and of man to himself. Key verses: Heb. 1:1-4.

Bro. A. Marsden (Newtown, Wigan), after presenting a number of general Afternoon: Bible study on the revelations, dealt particularly with revelation before the giving of the Mosaic law. Bro. G. Gorton (Hindley) dealt

with the increasing revelation and consequent increasing responsibility of those to whom the Mosaic law was given. Bro. Amos Barlow (Morley) showed that the revelation of our heavenly Father was complete and final in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Man must acknowledge the God revealed in the sacred writings and accept the picture and predicament of himself as revealed therein.

Evening: Bro. W. H. Clarke was the chairman. Bro. Tom Nisbet presented the love of God to men as revealed in the giving of His well-beloved Son as the price of our redemption. He stressed that now is the accepted time to give heart, soul, mind and strength in the service of our Redeemer: "Behold, now is the day of salvation.

The good sisters of the Ulverston assembly gave of their best to meet all our needs. Their labour of love will not lose its reward. A. Hood."

Ulverston.—The church here experienced a profitable time in their two months' mission, March and April, with Bro. Tom Nisbet (Haddington). Our brother spoke and gave instruction to the Bible school, also showing films and speaking on a Thursday evening. The gospel meetings were well represented by non-members and older girls from the Sunday school, and our brother ably proclaimed the gospel message.

We are looking forward to him being with us in November. We appreciated his service and were much encouraged by his teaching and preaching, and pray that God will bless him in the work, that he may see fruit for his labour. James McF. Black.

deepened our mutual fellowship in the churches at East Ardsley and Doncaster. Bro. W. preached the word even after attaining the age of 90—a fitting consummation of his long life of faithful service. Faithfulness was his outstanding characteristic—to God's word, His church and His people. He shed the love of Christ abroad among all around, in the church and out. East Ardsley church needs out prayers and help in the loss of so great a soul and so diligent a worker in Christ's cause.—Ed.]

WILLIAM WINTERSGILL: AN APPRECIATION

The writer knew William Wintersgill (who fell asleep in Jesus on Friday, April 27th) for many years. We were acquainted long before the beginning of the Church of Christ at East Ardsley. We met very often when he worshipped with the church at Wakefield, where I often served in the gospel. When "we seven" met in my home around the Lord's Table for the first time, we began a closer and growing intimacy which endured during the years.

Having to remove to Goole, we had to say "good-bye" to the assembly, which had grown considerably, both in numbers and influence. For many years, however, Bro. Wintersgill paid us an annual visit to Goole, which we much appreciated, and which helped to lighten the regret experienced by the parting from the church we loved. Of course, during the intervening years, many "visits home" were made, for various reasons, and thus the close fellowship was renewed.

Bro. Wintersgill came from a good stock of New Testament Christians, who met for worship and service at Wortley, Leeds, and to the end of his life remained true and steadfast in faith and purpose. The young people, with whom he had a good influence, loved him. He had, too, a name for sincerity and goodness with people outside the community of saints.

The church at East Ardsley, and other assemblies which he served in the gospel, will miss him and will pay tribute to his faithfulness. His reward will be great. Surely the Master will say to our brother and friend at the great day: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." May we who remain copy his example, in those things which are true and steadfast. Some other pen will no doubt pay tribute to him and write of the service and messages given when the brethren met to say farewell to our brother, who is

"Asleep in Jesus—blessed sleep
From which none ever wakes to weep:
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes."

J. Holmes.

OBITUARY

East Ardsley.—We regret the passing of our beloved brother William Wintersgill, on April 27th, at the age of 92. Bro. Wintersgill had led a very active life, especially in his service for the Master. He had been a member of the Church of Christ for well over seventy years; a preacher of the gospel for over sixty years. He was one of the pioneers in the restoration of New Testament Christianity in East Ardsley; was ever ready to help and encourage young Christians both by teaching and by example.

In the village he was looked up to and respected by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed.

The funeral, conducted by Bro. J. Garnett, of Doncaster, took place on May 1st.

[We take this opportunity of adding our appreciation to Bro. Wintersgill, from personal knowledge and co-operation with him in the gospel. During the years 1951 to 1958 we

COMING EVENTS

HINDLEY BIBLE SCHOOL

Saturday to Monday (inclusive), June 9th to June 11th. For hospitality write to: Bro. T. Kemp, 52 Argyle St., Hindley, Wigan. Further particulars later.

Hindley Mission.—Saturday, June 9th, to Lord's Day, June 24th. Speaker: Bro. A. E. Winstanley. The Church would be glad of support for this effort to extend the Kingdom.

Pitldown. — We intend to hold a Rally at Pitldown, near Uckfield, Sussex, on Whit-Monday, June 11th, and we are hoping that many will come and join us.

The meeting place at Pitldown has been closed for worship for a few months. It was first opened on Whit-Monday in 1846, and we are hoping that this re-opening will mark a revival of the work in this part of God's vineyard. Your presence is needed to encourage the church and to show them that they are not forgotten.

The Rally will take this form:

Welcome meeting at 12.30 p.m. The afternoon will be given over to recreation (ramble, games for children, etc.).

Rally meeting at 5 p.m. The gospel will be preached at this meeting, so try to bring a friend. Speaker: Harold Baines.

Will you please let me know how many will be coming, so that provision can be made for tea? (Please make your own arrangements for lunch. Pitldown is a country place and there are no shops where food can be bought). Any further details from Ernest Cole, 67 Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton 6.

COMING EVENTS

Blackburn, Hamilton Street. — The church contemplates conducting a six weeks' mission, from June 2nd to July 9th inclusive (with the exception of Saturday, June 9th), with Bro. Tom Nisbet as missionary. Brethren in Wigan and district are invited to come over and join with us once more. Lord's days, Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, all commencing at 7.30 p.m. Light refreshments for all visitors. H.W.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield (Beulah Road). — The church here intend to hold their anniversary meeting this year on the weekend of July 15th and 16th. We have arranged for Bro. David Dougall to be the speaker and a tea will be held prior to the evening meeting. Tea 4.15, meeting 6 o'clock. Brethren are asked to make a note of this alteration from the usual date and are hereby invited to join with us on this occasion. More news next month's issue.

T. Woodhouse.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Loughborough: At the request of Bro. Edmund Hill and the Overseers of the church at Loughborough, Bro. Tom Stones has been appointed secretary to the church. Please address all future correspondence to Mr. T. Stones, 34 Holmfield Avenue, Loughborough, Leicestershire. Telephone (after 7 p.m.): Loughborough 4874.

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EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to **R. McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.**

Secretary of Conference Committee: **A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, nr. Wigan.**

NYASALAND Mission: Contributions to **W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.**

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