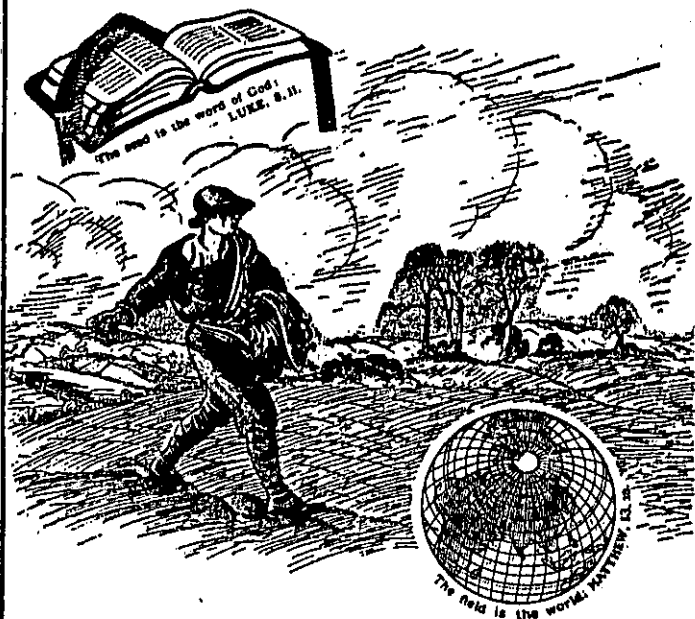


JAN. - FEB. 1950

# PRECIOUS SEED

EVANGELISTIC EXPOSITORY  
INFORMATIVE



He that goeth forth and soweth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.  
PSALM, 126: 6.

VOL. 3 NO. 2

# PRECIOUS SEED

A Magazine for Encouraging the Study of New Testament Church Principles and Stimulating Interest in Gospel Work in the British Isles.

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No charge is made for this Magazine—it is supported entirely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

The following is a list of receipts during the months of October and November, 1949.

£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
B/921 4 6	B/944 5 0	B/967 1 0 0	B/990 1 10 0
B/922 2 0 0	B/945 5 0	B/968 5 0	B/991 1 0 0
B/923 5 0	B/946 2 0 0	B/969 10 0	B/992 17 6
B/924 5 0	B/947 1 0 0	B/970 6 0	B/993 5 0
B/925 1 0 0	B/948 10 0	B/971 10 0	B/994 1 0 0
B/926 2 0 0	B/949 10 0	B/972 1 10 0	B/995 2 0 0
B/927 1 0 0	B/950 2 2 0	B/973 5 0	B/996 1 0 0
B/928 5 0 0	B/951 10 0	B/974 10 0	B/997 10 0
B/929 10 0 0	B/952 5 0	B/975 4 10 0	B/998 2 0 0
B/930 10 0	B/953 16 0	B/976 1 0 0	B/999 2 0 0
B/931 10 0	B/954 2 0 0	B/977 2 2 0	
B/932 3 0 0	B/955 2 0 0	B/978 15 0	E/60 10 0
B/933 1 0 0	B/956 1 11 6	B/979 1 0 0	E/61 1 0 0
B/934 1 0 0	B/957 12 6	B/980 5 0	E/62 10 0
B/935 2 6	B/958 16 0	B/981 6 0	E/63 2 2 0
B/936 1 0 0	B/959 1 1 0	B/982 1 0 0	
B/937 1 0 0	B/960 10 0	B/983 1 0 0	G/1 5 0
B/938 1 0 0	B/961 1 0 0	B/984 5 0	G/2 2 10 0
B/939 10 0	B/962 10 0	B/985 3 0 0	G/3 5 0 0
B/940 2 0 0	B/963 4 0	B/986 1 0 0	G/4 2 10 0
B/941 1 0 0	B/964 3 0 0	B/987 1 5 0	G/5 5 0
B/942 10 0	B/965 2 0 0	B/988 1 11 8	G/6 1 0 0
B/943 2 0	B/966 1 0 0	B/989 2 0 0	

The Committee receive no remuneration for their services.

Monies received are devoted entirely to the Magazine.

## PRECIOUS SEED

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST, 1949.

RECEIPTS				PAYMENTS					
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
To Balance at 31st Aug. 1948.					By Printing		434	9	10
brought forward :					" Packing and Dis-tribution Exp. :				
Cash at Bank	13	4	10	Postages and Packing	92	16	1		
Cash in Hand	4	2	2	Wages	64	0	0		
							156	16	1
			17	7	0				
" Gifts Received :					" Postages—Secretary, &c.		14	6	0
Assemblies	367	3	6	Stationery			21	1	0
Sundry	304	7	8	" Typing and Duplicating				1	1
				" Sundry Exp.			2	6	6
			671	11	2		630	0	11
NOTE : Sundry Creditors at 31st August, 1949, £78 6 8.					" By Balances at 31st August, 1949, carried forward :				
					Cash at Bank	40	6	6	
					Cash in Hand	18	10	9	
A. G. ANSTICE } Treasurers							58	17	3
C. H. DARCH }							688	18	2
			688	18	2				

I have examined the above Receipts and Payments Account, for the Year ended 31st August, 1949, with the Cash Book, Bank Pass Book, Receipts and Vouchers of the Treasurers of the "Precious Seed" Magazine, and certify such Account to be in accordance therewith.

28th November, 1949.  
21, Manchester Square,  
LONDON, W.1.

LESLIE W. MOSCROP,  
Chartered Accountant.

## STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st AUGUST, 1949

In presenting the annual account once more we must express our thankfulness to the Lord for enabling us to continue this service for yet another year.

As the lists published in each issue show, gifts, large and small, arrive in a continuous flow. The total sum received in this way is considerable (e.g. £671. 11s. 2d., last year) but it must be remembered that one of the results of keeping the venture

### QUITE FREE FROM COMMERCIALISM

is that the cost of production is relatively high. Nevertheless, we know that this policy meets with general approval, and we can assure our readers that every effort is made to keep expenses to a minimum. The committee

derive no financial benefit from the Magazine—on the contrary they contribute to the expense. Their desire is simply to help meet a widely-felt

#### NEED FOR REGULAR MINISTRY

relative to assembly life, and for more detailed reports of Gospel activities. It would not be difficult to publish in each issue, dozens of striking testimonies to the help received from this ministry.

As the Statement of Account deals with actual Receipts and Payments in the Financial Year, it should be noted that the cost of printing the last issue of the Magazine in the Financial Year is not shown. This item (£78 6s. 8d.) set against the Credit Balance (£58 17s. 3d.) shows a deficit of £19. 9s. 5d.

As this was the

#### FIRST TIME WE HAVE HAD A DEFICIT .

we felt bound to give serious thought to its implications. Nevertheless we received at that very time several unusually warm appreciations which assured us that the Magazine was continuing to fill a most useful role.

Remarkably enough the flow of gifts increased immediately the financial year was closed, and the

#### POSITION WAS ACTUALLY RECTIFIED

before the Accounts were audited.

It would seem that the pre-occupations of the holiday season accounted for the temporary drop in the receipts. We are, however, grateful for the healthy exercise it gave us.

It remains to acknowledge, once more, the kindness of Mr. Leslie Moscrop in arranging for the auditing of the Accounts. As most of our readers know, he has been very ill, and we bespeak their prayers on his behalf.

## THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

BY WILLIAM TREW, CARDIFF

### (8) David at the Threshing-floor

In this series of meditations on the Books of Samuel, we have been seeking to discover principles that could be applied in a practical way to the people of God to-day. We have traced the movements of the Ark, symbol of the Presence and active Rule of God amongst His people. We have seen it amongst the Philistines, type of the religious world, in the way of judgment. We have observed how it was disregarded completely in the days of Saul, and the people were enslaved to a principle of human rule. But with David acting as the vicegerent of God and true leader of His people, the Throne of God was restored to its rightful place at the heart of their corporate life. We have applied these principles in order to show that the only way of blessing, and of power against every enemy of the testimony, is to respond with willing heart to the rule of God amongst us.

This last article is one of solemn warning. If we take a general survey, and note the lack of spiritual power and dearth of spiritual result in spite of much labour; the deterioration in the character of ministry; the neglect of close Bible study and consequent immaturity; and the introduction of many innovations to serve as a substitute for the Presence and Power of God; one feels the need of such warnings as are contained in this last article. The remedy is shown; may we have grace from God to avail ourselves of it.

It is evident that this last section contains a number of appendices grouped together because of the moral features that are common to them, in order to illustrate the government of God and to show the Throne of God vindicating itself in the presence of evil. 2 Sam. 6 records David's violation of the Levitical law and the Hand of God upon him in judgment. Chap. 11. brings to light his breach of the moral law, and the chapters that follow show the working-out of the principles of God's government. In Chapter 21 we are told for the first time of the sin of Saul, and of how it was visited upon the people of God long after Saul was dead. And the book ends with a story of failure in leadership that involved, not only the shepherd, but the sheep also, in the bitterness of the sore discipline of God.

The first and last of these are connected with "threshing-floors", and since "threshing" suggests the thought of God's governmental dealings with His people, the idea seems to give character to the whole section. The word translated "thresh" is elsewhere variously rendered "to trample"—"break"—"tear"—"tread down"—"tread out." In chap. 24, it is associated with Araunah the Jebusite (Treader down). The Jebusites were "the ancient treaders down of God's royal city." But now it was God Who was treading down—yet not destroying ruthlessly; but, as threshing is accomplished under the feet of the patient ox, where, with all the roughness of the process, the precious grain is sought and secured. Even so, the stroke of judgment fell at the threshing-floor of Nachon (chap. 6), and judgment did not reach beyond the threshing-place of Araunah (chap. 24); and behind all was the infinitely-wise purpose of God serving the truest, highest blessing of His people.

#### THE NEW CART

"When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim" (5: 17-18). We have already seen that the Philistines represent the religious world in its opposition to the testimony of God in the hands of His people. Their power, on this occasion, was

concentrated in "the valley of Rephaim" (GIANTS), for man looms large in every 'Philistine' system. But "David inquired of the Lord, saying, 'Shall I . . . ? Wilt Thou . . . ?'" With a deep consciousness of his own insufficiency, David clings to God and seeks the guidance of His Word. That is ever the way of victory over all that the Philistines typify. Again the Philistines spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. The circumstances were exactly the same as before, and David might have reasoned that there was no need to seek further guidance. But he inquired again of the Lord, and was directed along a different road to victory. In chap. 5 David was in close fellowship with God, and the Hand of God was laid in judgment upon every Philistinian way. That fact makes his actions recorded in chap. 6 the more difficult to understand.

As king, appointed by God to be the shepherd of His people, David was required to write for himself "a copy of the law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites," to read therein all the days of his life. Deut. 17. 18/19. He must have known the Will of God that the Ark should be borne upon the shoulders of the Levites. No doubt David's intentions were good. If he was ignorant of the Will of God concerning this matter, it is a sad commentary upon the condition of the leaders of the people of God, that there was neither Priest, Levite nor Prophet to instruct the well-intentioned king. The people of God were united in their desire to enthrone God in their midst; and that was well. It was with great zeal and with much joy that they assembled to bring the Ark to Zion; and that also was well. But right motives cannot justify wrong acts; the end cannot justify the means; God's Will must be done in God's way. If God has given a pattern, that pattern must be observed; if the Word of God gives guidance to His people, that Word must be obeyed. We cannot improve upon God's ways, and any attempt to do so is rebellion against His revealed Will. David had no right to imitate the Philistines' way of doing things. God had spoken to make clear "the due order" (1 Chron. 15. 13), and blessing lies in the way of obedience.

It seems almost inevitable that those who adopt the ways of the religious world, will go further than those whose methods they imitate. The Philistines had reasoned that if it was indeed God who had disciplined them, He would control the kine and direct the path they would take. They knew no better, and God vindicated Himself. But David cannot move in faith in a path of disobedience to the revealed Will of God. Therefore Ahio leads the oxen, while Uzzah walks adongside to support that which, because it is an innovation of man, is always liable to break down. Uzzah means "strength," while Ahio means "His brother." These are two of a kind. Ahio is but a reproduction of his brother, for in every Philistinian way man looms large. Every human innovation imported into the

assembly, professedly the sphere of God's rule, has to be supported by self-willed men with stubborn determination. How much there is of this to-day! Let us take to heart the solemn lesson that this passage seems designed to teach us, for God cannot ignore departure on the part of His people from the pattern He Himself has given.

The procession did not move beyond the threshing-floor of Nachon (PREPARED), called in the account given in Chronicles, Chidon (CALAMITY). There "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; . . . and David was displeased . . . and he called the name of the place Perez-Uzzah (THE BREAKING OF STRENGTH) unto this day" (chap. 6: 7-8). There is much in the conditions that prevail at the present time to convince us that God is dealing with us in discipline, "threshing" in His government, that He might break the stubborn determination of our self-will, lead us to self-judgment and to humble confession, and to an adjustment of conditions in accord with "the due order." When chastisement has produced "the fruit of righteousness" in us, He will restore to us the power and blessing of His manifested Presence.

#### THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ARAUNAH

"Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and Satan (1 Chron. 21: 1) moved David against them to say, 'Go number Israel and Judah'" (chap. 24: 1). It was a military order, begotten of the pride of David's heart and the consciousness of his strength. The spirit that prompted the command was that of those who would "lord it over God's heritage," involving the denial of God's redemption rights over His people, and His claims upon their loyalty. David had strayed far from God when even such as Joab could recognize the evil to which he was apparently blind, and raise his voice in protest. The self-willed king, characterized by a supreme disregard of every warning, pursued with determination a course that brought both shepherd and sheep (v. 17) under the sore discipline of God. We have already seen the significance of the fact that judgment went not beyond the threshing-floor. How sweet it is to see that upon the threshing-floor itself, its solemn lesson learned at last, David builded an altar and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, the sweet fragrance of which ascended before God, so that His Heart was satisfied and the judgment of His Throne was arrested. "The plague was stayed from Israel;" and there the book suitably ends.

David failed on very many occasions; who has not? But he never rebelled against God's chastisement. Exercised before God, he was quick to confess his sin and to seek the restoring Grace of God. Discipline produced its peaceable fruit, and the "threshing" separated the chaff from the wheat in his character, and the precious grain was gathered, a joy to the Heart of God. So may it be with us all.

*It is not only a question of WHAT we do for God—we need to take heed HOW we do it, and there is only one Guide.*

## “STRANGE FIRE”

By JESSE WEBB, INDIA

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord which He had not commanded them.

And there came forth fire from before the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”

(Leviticus 10. 1/3, R.V.)

The words which arrest attention in this passage and needing to be stressed are these :—

*“Which He had not commanded them.”*

Does this expression not imply that Israel were not only to follow closely the instructions which God had given them concerning their approach to Himself, and concerning their worship and service, but that they were positively forbidden to add or substitute anything of their own devising? There was to be no tampering whatever with the divine arrangements. “Strange fire” was not to be introduced and substituted for God’s own perfect orderings. If I mistake not, we have here a clearly-defined principle to guide us in all our worship and service for God, a principle that should save us from the many doubtful devices and practices so common in Christendom to-day and which we may well describe as “strange fire.”



The reasons given for the introduction of that which God has not commanded may sound very plausible, and may be supported by those who are earnest and truly zealous in their service for God, but the incident before us is a solemn beacon of warning which we shall do well to heed. The dangerous principle of allowing a practice because there is no Scriptural prohibition against it should be rejected. It is unworthy of a believer and servant of God who desires to stand approved of the Lord in that coming day of award (2 Tim. 2. 5; 1 Cor. 3. 12/18 and 9. 27). Warnings against going beyond that which is written in Scripture are numerous, and the wise will regard them.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Deut. 4. 2.

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." Deut. 12. 32.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Josh. 1. 7.

"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. 30. 5/6.

"I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him." Eccl. 3. 14.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of

this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Rev. 22. 18/19.

In a certain periodical the following pithy comment was made upon the passage in Leviticus we are here considering :-

"Note - there was no hint of any heathen origin of this 'strange fire' - the fact that it was not commanded was enough. Any departure from, or ignoring of the explicit word of the Lord is presumptuous sin; but most of all in the sacred service of the sanctuary, and still more when the sinners are among the foremost leaders of the sacred host. Now all this applies with peculiar directness to ministers of the Word. In so far as they, in deference to human opinions, or reliance on their own fancied wisdom, either detract from, or go beyond, Holy Scripture, they sin, but against clearer light than Aaron's sons ever enjoyed."

C. H. Mackintosh in commenting upon this passage in his notes on Leviticus remarks :-

"Here was their sin. They departed in their worship from the plain word of Jehovah, Who had fully and plainly instructed them as to the mode of their worship. We have already alluded to the Divine fulness and sufficiency of the Word of the Lord, in every branch of priestly service. There was no room left for man to introduce what he might deem desirable or expedient. 'This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded' was quite sufficient."

The question for us to consider is - Why should we desire liberty to do that for which we have no warrant from God in His Word? If we once admit that there is liberty to do God's work in a way that He has *not* appointed, where shall we stop? Will not this lead us into the many unscriptural methods and devices so common among those who do not

seek Divine warrant and precedent for all they do? The portion of Scripture we are now considering is a solemn warning indeed against all such opinions so fatal to the authority of the Word of God. The multitudinous sects into which Christendom is divided owe their origin to their unwillingness to make the Scriptures the sole authority in all things. In his book "The Divine Plan of Missions" Mr. W. E. Vine makes an important statement which deserves the attention of all who earnestly desire to see a Scriptural unity among the people of God :-

"Adherence to the revealed will of God in His Word makes for unity among God's people. Division and disintegration are the result of the overstepping of the limits marked out in Scripture and the adoption of humanly devised expedients and regulations."

This Old Testament incident of the offering of "strange fire" is recorded by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God for our learning and profit ("They were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come." 1 Cor. 10. 11. R.V.) and we cannot ignore it without loss to ourselves now and in the coming day of the Lord. The ministry of the holy things is a solemn trust and responsibility, and we cannot, dare not, trust our own judgment of what is most suitable for the most holy service of God. His instructions for our guidance are explicitly laid down in the Scriptures, and are complete and binding. (2 Tim. 3. 16/17 & Jude 3). From these God-breathed Scriptures we may learn how God would have us serve Him, and happy are all they who are satisfied to serve Him in the way that He has Himself appointed. Great will be their reward.

It should be remembered that all service, no matter what its nature, should be service rendered to God. Even in connection with the ministry of the Gospel the apostle Paul declared :-

"God is my witness, Whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of His Son." Rom. 1. 9.

Ministry in the church of God should also be ministry to the Lord :-

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; . . . As they ministered to the Lord and fasted" (Acts 13. 1/2, and see also Ex. 28. 1, 3, 4, 41; chap. 29. 1. "to minister unto me.")

The knowledge of this should make us the more concerned to render God such service or ministry as He has Himself appointed us. We need to exercise uncommon care lest we go beyond what is written in Scripture and offer that in our service and worship which appears to God very much as the "strange fire" which the sons of Aaron offered. It has been well said that :-

"The spirituality of a believer is not to be measured by his talking, nor is it to be reckoned by his outward activity, though this should be enthusiastic. Spirituality is the expression of communion with God and of the heart's willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit."

The prayer of the Psalmist - "Teach me to do thy will" (Psa. 143. 10) can never be inappropriate from the lips of a servant of God.

Nadab and Abihu served God in priestly nearness. Their privilege of service was great, so also was their responsibility. Their high and sacred office did not secure them from the possibility of failure in the discharge of their holy duties, neither did it preserve them from the righteous judgment of God when they failed. Was it of this the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was thinking when he penned the words :—

"Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12. 28/29.

Aaron's sons lacked reverence and godly fear, and suffered in consequence. This passage in Hebrews reminds us that we need grace, special grace, for the holy service and worship of God if it is to be acceptable to Him. This is given freely to all who will avail themselves of the Divine

provision, Heb. 4. 16, so that no servant of the Lord need fail through its lack. Heb. 12. 15.

The secret of acceptable and successful service and of spiritual prosperity communicated to Joshua, Moses' successor as leader of the people of God, applies equally to-day. What is that secret ?

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Josh. 1. 7/8.

Let us remember that there is a divine fulness and sufficiency in the Word of God, so that in the service of the Lord there is no need for mere human inventions and innovations. "Strange fire" and "new carts" may appeal to some minds, but human reasoning is a poor and unsafe guide, and a most unworthy substitute for the divine pattern and the Holy Spirit's gracious orderings. To be commended are the wise words of a much-used servant of God:—

"It becomes not servants to trifle with the smallest commands of a perfect Master. Grave errors have been suggested and nurtured by what appeared at first to be trifling departures from Scriptural rule, therefore we ought to give earnest heed even to minor precepts. Future ages may have to mourn over the defalcations of to-day, unless we are careful to do the building of the Lord's house with faithfulness."

Passing strange, is it not, that there were leaders of the people of God who preferred "strange fire" to God's fire (compare Lev. 9. 23/24 with 10. 1/2). How great the contrast! How solemn the judgment! How heart-searching the lesson! Let it speak to heart and conscience.

*How fatally easy it is to fall by imperceptible degrees into the snare of seeking to serve in the good of past experiences of God instead of in the power of living communion with Him. That path makes "old prophets" of God's servants —ineffectual themselves and a peril to others.*

## The Man of God out of Judah

BY E. W. ROGERS, WALLINGTON

### 1 KINGS, 13

The "Man of God out of Judah," whose name is not disclosed, was "sent on a journey" with a commission from God. He failed to fulfil it. In this respect he was akin to King Saul of earlier days, see 1. Sam. 15. 18. Although the precise commandment given to King Saul is known, we do not know the exact wording of the charge given to the Man of God. We are simply told he "came by the word of the Lord unto Bethel."

Conditions in his days were exceedingly bad. Solomon had passed and Jeroboam had snatched the major part of the Kingdom from his son Rehoboam. By his later actions he earned for himself the frequently-iterated epigram "Jeroboam who made Israel to sin."

He established a political religion through fear. The people's compliance with the Levitical law at Jerusalem would, he thought, result in the ten tribes rejoining the two. He feared they might revert to a Judaic monarch. Jeroboam by all means wished to avoid this. Having learned the ways of Egypt during his sojourn there, he set up two calves, one at Dan and the other at Bethel, (a place of historic interest), using words on that occasion which were an unmistakable echo of those used by Aaron when he, too, set up the golden calf in the wilderness. He gave no heed to the sequel of that apostacy. He pleaded expediency as his excuse: he was solicitous of the people's welfare: to avoid the physical fa-

tigue involved in the journey up to Jerusalem was his reason. He disowned the house of the Lord and erected others. God's centre of meeting he refused to acknowledge. He substituted the Levitical priesthood by one from the lowest of the people, not of the tribe of Levi. He disowned the Feasts of the Lord and in their place introduced others. God's times he rejected and elected the eighth month for his innovations, a month devised out of his own heart. He ousted Jehovah and usurped His place as host at the feasts.

It is not difficult to see in modern Christendom a similar thing. Its consecrated buildings, its ordained priesthood, its feast days, and its sensuous worship are things devised out of man's heart. It is a mixture of obsolete Judaism and corrupt paganism: it is the establishment of a counterfeit religion displacing the spiritual principles introduced by Christ.

Against these evils the man of God (i.e. God's man) out of Judah was impressed 'by the word of the Lord' to protest. God's word was his rule of conduct and he felt he must protest against anything which openly and blatantly set that aside. He took his journey and went to Bethel. Jeroboam was officiating at the altar at the opening functions of the new system. This was an aggravation of his already too many sins. God never at any time sanctioned a monarch to act as priest. The union of church and state was reserved exclusively for Christ.

The man of God utters ominous words. He spoke as a prophet and the hall-mark of a prophet was with him. He ignores the King and addresses the altar. His words came to pass, part at once and part later. The altar was there and then overthrown by divine judgment. Judah's king was not yet born. Josiah's birth and actions were not to be accomplished till many years had rolled by, but come he did. Men of God can see both what is near and what is far off: they enter into God's thoughts concerning current evil, and know that His judgment must and will fall.

The indignation of the king was aroused and his arm was outstretched to lay hold of the prophet. God, however, protected His servant and, to express it as another has done,

it seemed as if the blood in his arm became frozen: he was not able to withdraw it. However, in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. The King instinctively knew this prophet was in touch with God's power and he implored him to pray for him. He knows not God himself, and could not pray to Him. But he spoke of God as "Jehovah *thy* God" for the man of God knew Him. The Lord is very pitiful and full of compassion and repenteth Him of the evil: He was intreated of the man of God and the arm was restored.

But peril lay just round the corner. The grateful king desirous of acknowledging in a practical way the prophet's kindness (it should have been called the kindness of God) invited him to the palace and promised a reward. The prophet declined. He had received directions from God not to eat or drink in that idolatrous place: nor indeed was he to go back on his tracks. He was to return another way, thus making a complete journey and rounding off one mission. God never sanctions His people retracing their steps, unless such steps have been in a wrong direction. Truly in vain was this net set in the sight of the man of God: he was not ensnared.

But the devil has many devices, and if he fails in one attempt he will try another. If the offer of the king is declined he will get another to make a similar offer with added subtleties.

There was in Bethel an old prophet, perhaps not old in years as much as one who has been a prophet, though now no longer was useful to God. This suggests a number of questions. Why was he in Bethel at all? Why was he settling down there? How came his sons to be in the false temple witnessing what transpired at the altar? Had they been trained to join in the false ceremonies? Had the father lost control of his family? Or, was the father's example so bad that the sons, when above the age of responsibility, nevertheless imitated their father? Why did not the old prophet make *his* protest against the outrages of Jeroboam?

Having been informed of what had transpired and of the departure of the man of God, he decided to pursue him. It may well have been that former days had been brought



back to his mind when God spake to him. It may have been that jealousy or envy had sprung up in his breast, and he could not bear that God should use another and set him on one side. Or he may have wanted to gain kudos by having under his roof a successful servant of God. Had the man of God continued his journey and got out of the place as quickly as Lot should have left Sodom, he would not have fallen victim to this second snare laid for his feet.

He was found sitting under an oak and dwelling in that place. It is always dangerous when prophets sit down. Jonah sat under a gourd; Elijah sat under a juniper tree. All three were sick in soul and ready prey for the adversary. He was not merely weak physically but morally. "I will not" of v.8 becomes "I may not" of v.16. "The Lord charged me" of v.9 is weakened to "It was said to me" of v.17. The old prophet was not slow to make capital of this vacillation.

He claimed also to be a prophet. "I also am a prophet." He ought to have said "I was a prophet." He cannot claim now that God speaks to him. He alleges that an angel spake to him by the word of the Lord. It was a lie but it succeeded and, although the man of God was not "to turn again by the way" he came, the record states that "he went back", the old prophet "brought him back"; thou "camest back"; and he is spoken of as "the prophet whom he brought back". He is sitting down, eating and drinking in the very place of which he had spoken such severe words of judgment. He should have known that God never contradicts Himself nor says to one what is contrary to what he has said to another. The word the man of God had received direct from the Lord could never have been cancelled out by any allegation of a word given from the Lord, through an angel, to another prophet, and then transmitted to him.

Not that God never speaks to those to whom in former times He had spoken. It is, however, one thing to speak *to* such and quite another to speak *through* such. The Lord spake to the old prophet, bringing home to his conscience his grievous wrong. He is given the terrible task of admitting to the man of God that he had become the instrument

of putting an end to his usefulness, testimony and his life. All was over for him: God could use him no longer. God's word should have been binding on him. Disobedient himself, how could he expect Jeroboam the King of Israel to become obedient to the word of the Lord spoken through him? God's word is binding on all, speaker and hearers alike.

The apostate sons had saddled the old prophet an ass and he took his journey to the man of God under the oak. Now the old prophet himself saddles the ass for the man of God and he sends him on that fateful journey. The devil had got the man of God. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Not attacking the ass, the lion tears the prophet. How unusual! What must the old prophet who "dwelt" in the city have now thought when he heard the report of the disaster? The message of God's man out of Judah to Jeroboam had not even made the old prophet consider leaving Bethel: he still "dwelt" in the city.

Again the ass is saddled and the old prophet goes to where the lion and ass and carcass are. The devil, however, does not trouble about "old prophets". He is nevertheless very concerned with "men of God". The lion did not touch the old prophet, nor the ass. The prophet takes up the carcass and, still not abandoning the city, he returns to it with the carcass to mourn and bury him.

"Alas my brother", "Alas my brother". Both were in a like position in this respect, that both had failed, both had become useless to God. The service of each had ended, but God in His inscrutable wisdom had taken away the one: the other He left to go his own way with a conscience impervious to the sensibilities created by God's word. "Lay my bones with his bones" he says: he knew they were both in a like case: two derelict servants of God.

No wonder Paul feared lest he, too, should "become a castaway", useless to God, a wreck on the sea of service, liable either to be taken away in disciplinary judgment that the spirit might be saved in the day of Jesus Christ, or liable to be left to drift fruitlessly and aimlessly through time.

## SENIORS' PAGES

CONDUCTED BY T. J. LAWSON, B.A. AND H. E. POPE, M.A.

### PROBLEMS (19)

#### CHRIST AND THE BIBLE

BY D. W. BREALEY

(Mr. Brealey has been for thirty years Honorary Superintendent of the Blackdown Mission. His experience in studying the Bible for himself and teaching it to others makes what he has to say, in this and a later article, worthy of close attention.)

##### I. CHRIST'S TESTIMONY TO THE SCRIPTURES

The attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Bible is a matter of first importance, for, seeing that He is our Exemplar, our attitude should be precisely His.

(1) It is one of confidence in its inspired pages. In support of this consider some of His own utterances.

(a) *To God* — "I have given them Thy word . . . Thy word is Truth" (John 17. 14-17). His ministry on earth completed — part of which, and the power of which, lay in giving His hearers the word of God — He lifts up His heart in prayer to His Father with satisfaction of a mission fulfilled: "I have given them Thy word," and with the assurance of its worthwhileness, "Thy word is Truth." There is confidence in this.

(b) *To Man* — "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35). We must remember that the Bible of the Lord Jesus Christ was the Old Testament, described on one of its pages as "The Scripture of Truth" (Daniel 10. 21). Such confidence had He in "the Scripture of truth" that He roundly asserts that it cannot be broken. But it is also well to remember that all the utterances of our Lord Jesus Christ, necessary for our enlightenment, and further to be unfolded by His apostles, have been incorporated in the New Testament, and concerning these He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24. 35).

Thus His attitude to both the Old Testament and the New Testament was one of the uttermost confidence; and we need not be surprised, therefore, at its logical outcome.

(2) His confirmation of its reliability. The logical outcome of Christ's confidence in the Bible as being the Truth was that, to Him, the characters of the Old Testament were real, not mythical; its stories were history, not allegory; its laws were binding, not optional; its prophecies were reliable, not fanciful; and the whole was of deep moral and spiritual value.

(a) *He believed in the actual existence of the Old*

*Testament characters.* His references to them, and the way He referred to them, rule out any other conclusion, as for example: Abel, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Isaiah, etc.; and to make assurance doubly sure, He not only believed that they lived once, but that they live now (see Matthew 22. 32, quoting Exodus 3. 6).

(b) *He believed in the historical accuracy of the Old Testament records.* Consider two examples. He believed in *the Flood*—"For as in days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of Man to be" (Matthew 24. 38, 39).

He believed in the story of *Jonah*—" . . . Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly (Matthew 12. 40).

(c) *He believed that the laws of God were binding.* "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5. 17, 18).

(d) *He believed in the certain fulfilment of prophecy.* Unlike many intellectuals of the present day, He appears to have had not the slightest difficulty about the book of Daniel; He did not try to discredit it, but actually quoted it in support of His own words—"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whose readeth let him understand) . . ." (Matthew 24. 15). And again, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24. 44).

There may be difficulties which at the moment we are unable to explain; but we may draw vast comfort from Christ's own confidence in, and confirmation of, the Scriptures; and, without fear for the Book, quietly await the day when all difficulties will be cleared up and the Bible will be finally vindicated, as to-day, it is being vindicated, as "the Scripture of truth."

PART II. "CHRIST'S USE OF THE SCRIPTURES" will appear in the March-April issue.

## CHILDREN'S PAGES

Conducted by H. E. POPE, M.A. and T. J. LAWSON, B.A.

### HIDDEN COMMANDMENTS (No. 3)

Tom and Betty were sitting at the table with Mother and Father, and had just finished dinner when Mother said, "Now I want you to come straight home from school this afternoon, as Auntie Mary is coming to tea." "Hurrah, I love Aunt Mary," said Betty, but Tom did not seem quite so pleased, for he jumped up from the table and made a nasty face behind his Father's back. But Father had turned round very quickly and had seen poor Tom's face. "Now what was that queer face for?" said Father: "I am sure you will be pleased when you see Aunt Mary, and I know she will be proud of her big nephew. Now then, off you go to school, and don't be late home to tea" said Mother, as they slid down over the bannisters.

The afternoon passed slowly, but at last lessons are over for the day, and Betty picks up her bag and runs down the road as fast as she can go—to see Aunt Mary. But for Tom, lessons have not gone well; instead of paying attention to his sums he has been thinking about the game of football he wanted to play after tea. Of course, all his answers were wrong, so he was told to stay in after school until he could get them right. When he did get out he found it was tea-time already, and he thought of what Mother had said. "Oh bother, I'm not going home now," said Tom, and off he went to play football. When he did go home it was getting dark, but he could see Mother's face at the window, and there was Father standing by the front door. I'll leave you to guess what happened, but I will say that Tom did not like it a bit!

Next morning, when Tom came down to breakfast, Betty was playing with a lovely new doll that Aunt Mary had given her. "What did Aunt Mary bring for me?" asked Tom. "A lovely new football," said Mother, "but of course as you were not here she took it away again."

"Oh dear!" said Tom, with tears running down his cheeks, "I do wish I had done what Mother and Father told me."

UNCLE DOUGLAS

Now turn again to Exodus 20, and see if you can decide which commandment Tom had broken, before looking at the answer on Page 54.

## NOVEMBER COMPETITION RESULT

### "THE FIRST CHRISTMAS"

There was a good response to this competition, especially from those under twelve years. Some of the fourteen entries did not give quite what was asked for; always follow the instructions carefully. The Senior Prize has been given to Aileen Hodge (Aylesbury, 12½ years) for her story of "A Wise Man"; other good entries were those of Beryl Morgan (13½ years; "An Angel") and Lilian Jones (15 years; "A Shepherd").

The Junior Prize was won by Rosalind Chamings, (Rubery; 11¾ years; "The Innkeeper's Wife"). Two good stories of "A Shepherd" were sent by Jean Hughes (11) and Paul Wraight (6).

## JANUARY COMPETITION

In the Old Testament, God is often spoken of as if He possessed, or as revealing Himself in human form. In the chapters given below, see how many parts of the human body you can find attributed to God. Make a list of these as neatly as possible, giving the exact verse in which each is mentioned (some are mentioned more than once), and writing out that part of the verse which describes God in that way. Of course, God Himself is not really like that, but only speaks of Himself or shows Himself in that way to help us to understand Him; so the last two references are for verses which remind us of that: see if you can find them, and add them to your list. Then send your answer to Mr. T. J. Lawson, 148, Greenway Road, Taunton, Somerset, by February 8th, 1950. Prizes will be given for the best answers from those under and over twelve—so give your age, as well as your name and address. Here are the chapters: Genesis 3; Exodus 15, 24, 31, 33; II Chronicles 16; Psalm 91; Isaiah 30, 38, 49, 58, 59; John 1, 4. (Some of them contain more than one answer).

T. J. L.

By the time these Notes appear, the news of the "home-call" of our esteemed contributor will have brought a sense of loss to many thousands of the Lord's people in all parts of the world. His unremitting labours in the cause of the Gospel world-wide, and his varied services to the saints are so well known as to make any mention of them in these pages almost superfluous. We, in common with many others, were made to feel that we could always count on his ready help, and we have often wondered how he was able to undertake so much. With characteristic thoughtfulness his valuable papers on Timothy have always been in our hands well in advance, with the happy result that we shall be able to continue with them for the time being. In view of the importance of the theme we hope we shall be able to find a writer to take up the task where our brother laid it down.

## NOTES FOR STUDENTS

By the late W. E. VINE, M.A.

### PART 4. (1 TIM. 1. 12-15)

#### THE APOSTLE'S CALLING

A Doxology giving thanks for the mercy of his Apostolic calling  
Introductory Note

The fact that the ministry of "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" was committed to his trust leads the Apostle immediately to burst out in praise to God, especially in view of his former antagonism to Christ and His saints. Both the intrinsic worth of the gospel and the grace bestowed upon him form the inspiration of this doxology.

While, however, he gives thanks to God for His goodness, he is still continuing to develop the subject he has before him, and this fresh section is still a reminder to Timothy of the value of the ministry which devolves upon him and the responsibility attaching to it.

*Verse 12. I thank Him that enabled me.*—The opening "And" in the A.V. lacks authentic ms. authority. Moreover, it weakens the forceful abruptness of the Apostle's expression of gratitude, an abruptness which by no means indicates a lack of connection with what has preceded. Cp. the significant parallel in Eph. 3. 8.

The verb "I thank" translates a phrase in the original, lit., "I have thanks," that is to say, "I hold and I express gratitude." It indicates a habitual feeling of gratitude. The word *charis*, "thanks," firstly means grace, favour, and then that which is the effect of grace, whether the spiritual condition resulting, Rom. 5. 2, 7, or some special gift, e.g. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 13 and many other passages, or thanks for a favour or benefit received, as in

the present instance. For other occasions of this particular phrase see Luke 17. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 3; Heb. 12. 28.

**Him that enabled me,**—The past tense looks back to the special time when he first received inward strength for his ministry; but not merely so, it carries with it the recognition of the abiding effects thereof. The verb *endunamoō*, the lit. equivalent of which in English is "empower," is used only by the Apostle Paul, with the exception of Acts 9. 22. See Rom. 4. 20; Eph. 6. 10; Phil. 4. 13; 2 Tim. 2. 1; 4. 17; Heb. 11. 34; it consists of the single verb *dunamoō* (corresponding to *dunamis*, power), prefixed by *en*, in, Cp. Luke 24. 49; Acts 1. 8. In Phil 4. 13, the Apostle uses the same word with reference to his present experiences of Divine power.

**even Christ Jesus our Lord,**—For notes on these titles and their order see verse 2.

**for that He counted me faithful, appointing me to His service;**—*Hēgeomai* signifies to consider, account, think, see Phil. 3. 7, 8, e.g. See also 1 Tim. 6. 1. God, who knows the end from the beginning, saw that the Apostle would be characterized by steadfastness and fidelity, and made him His chosen vessel to bear His Name.

The verb *tithēmi*, rendered "appointing," ordinarily means "to put." The past tense (the aorist or point tense), suggests the decisiveness of the act.

*Diakonia* is a general term for service. It is derived from *diakō*, to pursue. The A.V. "the ministry," which suggests an ecclesiastical function, is not what is indicated here; there is no article before the word in the original; it is to be taken, therefore, in its primary and general sense of service, though the Apostle has especially in view his service in the gospel. Cp. Rom. 11. 13; 2 Cor. 5. 18; 6. 3; Col. 1. 23. In Acts 1. 17, 25, the word is applied to the service of the Apostles in general.

**Verse 13. though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious:**—The Apostle's gratitude to the Lord was the deeper because of his previous antagonism. The threefold description he now gives forms the main feature of his career as "a Pharisee of the Pharisees," a keen and brilliant exponent of Judaism.

The word "blasphemy" is probably derived from *blaptō*, to injure, and *phēmi*, to say. The word in the original is really an adjective, and is so translated in Acts 6. 11, 13. It is translated "railers" in 2 Tim. 3. 2, and "railing" in 2 Pet. 2. 11. The corresponding verb is used (a) in a general way, of reviling, railing at, as of those who railed at Christ on the Cross, Matt. 27. 39, (b) of those who speak contemptuously of God or of sacred things, e.g. Matt. 9. 3; Rom. 2. 24; 1 Tim. 1. 20 and 6. 1.

The word *diōktēs*, a persecutor, corresponds to the verb



*diökö*, to pursue earnestly, either for a good purpose (see Phil. 3. 12, 14; 1 Thess. 5. 15), or an evil (as in Gal. 1. 13; Phil 3. 6). The blasphemer shows his enmity in words, the persecutor in deeds.

The term *hubristēs*, here translated "injurious," is a noun signifying an insolent man or doer of outrage, one who may act, not out of revenge, but simply with the motive of inflicting injury. The word is found elsewhere in the N.T. only in Rom. 1. 30, (Despiteful A.V., Insolent R.V.)

**Howbeit I obtained mercy,**—This, with what follows, is stated, not in order to minimize his unworthiness, but to vindicate the grace of the Lord. It sets in contrast the mercy of God and the Apostle's want of it. The single verb translated "I obtained mercy" is in the Passive Voice and might be translated "I was shown mercy." He did not, as believers do, approach God in order to obtain mercy; he was the undeserving object of the Divine compassion which exhibited it.

**because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;**—His actions were the outcome of blind prejudice. He was among the number of those addressed by Peter in Acts 3. 17, as having crucified Christ in their ignorance. Cp. the Lord's prayer for His executioners, Luke 23. 34. Ignorance is sinful and is the outcome of sin; its sinfulness is not extenuated as such by the Apostle. There are, however, degrees of guilt, and there is an ignorance which modifies the guiltiness of the sinner; see Matt. 12. 31, 32. Accordingly, there will be differences in regard to the sentences passed upon the guilty. See Luke 12. 48. Where light is given it is to be accepted by faith and this was the case with the Apostle. Persistence in unbelief enhances its sinfulness.

**Verse 14. and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly**  
—For the word *charis*, grace, see note above on the word "thank" (verse 12).

The verb *hyperpleonazō*, to be exceedingly abundant, is found here only in the N.T. It consists of the verb *pleonazō*, to abound, with the prefix *hyper*, "over." For instances of the simple verb see Rom. 5. 20; 6. 1; 2 Cor. 4. 15; Phil. 4. 17; 1 Thess. 3. 12, where it is translated "make to increase;" 2 Thess. 1. 3, and 2 Pet. 1. 8. It will be noted that, as with the longer verb, the word is used specially of grace.

The Apostle is not using this expression to indicate that the grace manifested towards him was greater than the mercy or even than his sin. He is using it to show the more aptly how he had obtained mercy. This is confirmed by the connecting "and," which is simply confirmatory.

The verb "abounded exceedingly" stands in the position of emphasis, in order to show the manner in which grace was

bestowed upon him. Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 10, where the stress is upon the word "grace."

The simple title "our Lord" is used by the Apostle Paul only here and in 2 Tim. 1. 8. See also Heb. 7. 14.

**with faith and love (which is in Christ Jesus).**—Faith and love are the effects of grace. They are the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit. They are to one another as cause and effect. Faith expresses itself in love, love to God, 1 Cor. 8. 3, and to man, 1 Thess. 4. 9; see also Gal. 5. 6, and for further examples of the association of faith with love see Eph. 6. 23; Col. 3. 4; 1 Thess. 3. 6; 5. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 5; 4. 12; 2 Tim. 2. 22; Titus 2. 2; Rev. 2. 19. In Paul's case his persistent unbelief (verse 13) had yielded place to faith, his erstwhile intense hatred had yielded place to love to the Lord and His people.

These qualities of faith and love are "in Christ Jesus"; while exercised by the believer they find their centre in Him, and their exercise is possible only through union with Him. They are here so closely associated that the definite article is used immediately after them by way of specifying the Personal Source from whence they spring and the Centre in whom they are found. Literally the phrase would be "with faith and love, that, namely, in Christ Jesus." The specifying definite article, translated "that namely," though it is in the singular number, refers to both the preceding nouns. Faith is the inward, and love the outward, expression of the bestowment of grace and its realization. The same complete phrase is used in exactly the same way in 2 Tim. 1. 13. For the order of the titles "Christ Jesus" see note on 1. 2.

**Verse 15. Faithful is the saying.**—This phrase is characteristic of the pastoral Epistles and is found in them only. Here and in 4. 9, it is followed by "and worthy of all acceptance;" in 3. 1; 2 Tim. 2. 11; Tit. 3. 8, the simpler phrase is used. See note later at 3. 1. "Faithful" signifies trustworthy, as in verse 12. It suggests that the statement referred to is one upon which the believer may rest with entire confidence.

**and worthy of all acceptance.**—The noun *apadochē*, acceptance, is used elsewhere in the N.T. only at 4. 9. Corresponding to it is the verb *apodechomai*, to accept what is offered, to receive with joy. See Luke 8. 40; 9. 11; Acts 2. 41; 15. 4; 18. 27; 21. 17; 24. 3; 28. 30. This verb is used by Luke only. The phrase "all acceptance" signifies not simply acceptance by everyone, but complete, whole-hearted acceptance. Some would translate it "approbation," a meaning which it had in later Greek. "Acceptation," however, gives the best sense.

**that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; —** This statement itself bears witness to the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus, and the order of the titles, pointing to the exalted

One Who emptied Himself, is appropriate to the fact that His coming into the world refers to His birth. He left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 16. 28; 17. 5). Christ's coming into the world is a fact especially stressed in this way by the Apostle John. See Jn. 1. 9; 12. 46; 16. 28; 1 John 4. 9. His coming into the world was necessary for the accomplishment of the salvation of sinners.

The word for "sinners" is *hamartoloi*, which literally signifies those who miss the mark or miss the way, though it stands for those who are guilty of certain definite vices or crimes, as, for example, the tax-gatherers, Luke 15. 2; 18. 13; 19. 7; see also *e.g.* Jas. 4. 8. The synonymous word *parabatēs* denotes one who oversteps a prescribed limit, and is therefore a transgressor, as in Rom. 2. 25, 27; Gal. 2. 18; Jas. 2. 9, 11. The former word here describes all mankind, for all have sinned (*hamartanō*, the corresponding verb), Rom. 3. 23.

of whom I am chief: —Though the word *prōtos*, first, sometimes applies to time, here it applies to degree. There was no mock modesty with the Apostle in making this statement, nor was he making a comparison between himself and his unbelieving fellow-nationals; nor, again, was he indulging in mere rhetoric. The contemplation of his sins and the extent to which, before his conversion, he had missed the true purpose of his being, leads him to make this statement in all sincerity and humility. Paul was a man of high ideals, and the higher the ideal a man sets before him, the more deeply will he feel the extent of his failure to attain to it. There is always a gulf between the character of Christ Himself and that of His most devoted followers. So fully did the Apostle appreciate this, that he does not say "of whom I was chief," but uses the present tense. Noticeable in this respect is the special stress upon the personal pronoun "I"; both its very insertion as well as its position, last in the sentence, make it peculiarly emphatic; cp. 1 Cor. 15. 9 and Eph. 3. 8.

*To be Continued*

HIDDEN COMMANDMENTS No. 3 (see Page 49)

*Answer* : "Honour thy father and thy mother." Ex. 20. 12.

## Reports of Gospel Work

"The assembly Gospel meeting has had its day."

Have you heard this?

Do you believe it?

Readers of the Reports on these pages will know that it is not true everywhere, but from far too many quarters comes the lament that people cannot be induced to attend.

Do we accept this situation as inevitable?

Are we sure that we have rightly diagnosed the cause?

How do you tackle the problem in your assembly?

If you have a method which has been honoured of God, it will doubtless help others who are faced with the same difficulty; so why not use these pages to tell them about it? Our Correspondent for your area will be delighted to hear from you.

### LONDON and HOME COUNTIES

(London and the Counties of Middlesex, Hertford, Essex, Kent, Sussex and Surrey). **Stanley H. Sayers**, 33, Crieff Road, Wandsworth, S.W. 18.

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**PERSONAL  
INVITATIONS  
AT PURLEY**

When Montpelier Hall, Purley was visited by **Harold Wildish** for a special Gospel effort, there was a sustained interest with very large week-end meetings. There were two Saturday meetings with lantern addresses, and these made a deep impression on the young people attending them. The evangelist also spoke on "Parents' Sunday" and addressed the Boys' and Girls' Classes and the Women's Meeting. The evening meetings were characterized by the steady attendance of quite a number of unsaved folk, many of whom came to the Hall for the first time, and who, in the majority of cases, came as a result of personal invitation by someone in the assembly. A number confessed Christ as a result of the campaign and many more showed an interest in spiritual matters. Further, the assembly itself was stirred to desire blessing on the Gospel.

**Harold Wildish** conducted an Evangelistic Campaign at Woodcroft

**PRAYER CHANGES  
THINGS**

Hall, Burnt Oak, early in October. For nearly six months prior to the campaign, special prayer-meetings were regularly held, but the whole of the publicity was concentrated into the last two weeks. By careful organization and enterprise, various methods of propaganda were successfully used, including a personal invitation to more than four thousand homes. The meetings were well-attended, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, when the Hall was packed to capacity. It was very encouraging to see many strangers, some being brought in off

the streets, and others accompanying their Christian friends. The messages were given with great earnestness and conviction. Many were visibly affected, and afterwards spoke of their appreciation. During the course of the campaign, nearly sixty inquirers were interviewed, a large proportion professing faith in Christ. All these have since been contacted, with encouraging results. The campaign undoubtedly made an impression on the neighbourhood, and has stirred the assembly to greater interest in Gospel activity.

### QUESTIONS AT SYDENHAM

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Mayow Road Hall, Sydenham, London, a ten days' Evangelistic Campaign was arranged, and was conducted by S. Jardine. The meetings were preceded by much earnest prayer and were widely advertised by handbills, posters, public-address and visiting. Numbers were disappointing, but unsaved—both old and young—were present, and the messages were clear and convincing. One evening was set aside for men only, fathers of Sunday School children being specially invited, public-houses were visited and other means of reaching men with invitations were used. The meeting was of an informal character and, following the message, a cup of tea and cake were provided. Opportunity was then given for questions, which were readily forthcoming.

The Chelsea Road (Bristol) assembly entered wholeheartedly into the

### A HARVEST AT BRISTOL

serious business of getting the unconverted under the sound of the Gospel during a three weeks' mission conducted by Harry Bedford, of Crediton. This effort, coupled with continued and earnest prayer, resulted in about twenty professions of conversion.

### YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM

If you happen to be in Wolseley Road, Plymouth, on a Wednesday evening at about six o'clock, you will see boys and girls forming queues outside a building which will not open its doors for another twenty minutes! The building is not a cinema but the Wolseley Gospel Hall, and the children are some of the three hundred who attend the weekly Children's Meeting. This is the second season of this encouraging work, and attendances have increased since the introduction of "star cards," prizes being given to those who attend regularly, behave well, and keep their cards in good condition. The leader is assisted by keen and able helpers. The assembly has a fine Sunday School, but by means of the Children's Meeting they reach those who attend other Sunday Schools—or none. Occasional use is made of the optical lantern, which still attracts in spite of the popularity of the cinemas; and on other evenings carefully selected speakers give short and

pointed talks. Chorus-singing forms an important part of the work. E.C.

The Town Hall was hired for meetings conducted by **H. E. Bentall** at Blandford. At a series of meetings arranged for men only, at least one was converted. These meetings are being continued. The children's meetings were well-attended and a number professed faith in Christ.

### THE GOSPEL IN A TOWN HALL

When **David Clifford** visited Gosport, over 200 young persons attended a "teen-agers" rally.

### INITIATIVE IN THE MIDLANDS

Reports have been received from the Midlands of three forms of service which have the same end in

view.

The **Birmingham Inter-Hospital Prayer Union** seeks to promote prayer fellowship in the various hospitals in the area, and to encourage Christian life and witness. The work has its joys and sorrows, but it is evidently being honoured of God.

The **Small Heath Gospel Tract Team**, recording their activities, write of the experiences of one of their members—a baker's roundsman—who speaks of the "Bread of Life" as he delivers the daily bread.

The **Derbyshire Evangelistic Work** was helped by the splendid weather during last summer. Open-air Gospel testimony, tent meetings, slum work and hospital visitation are among the activities recorded, and some people have received the Saviour. The report of R.C. opposition in the county strikes an ominous note. In one market town, 5,000 people bowed before a wooden cross. Elsewhere the priests threatened parents who allowed their children to attend the Gospel meetings. For years the county has been neglected, and much prayer and hard work will be needed if the tide is to be turned.

**David Hyslop** and co-workers have completed a ten weeks' tour of Cumberland with the Gospel Van, covering over 500 miles. They report: "Seventeen people made definite profession of faith in Christ, and many other interesting contacts were made. It was encouraging to watch the faces of the children as they listened to the Gospel message. In one village, six girls, who had heard the Gospel since infancy, decided for Christ. At Sillith, a thirteen-year-old R.C. lad told us he had accepted the Saviour after listening to the messages. In the village of Glasson, a fisherman over seventy years old, who had all his life trusted in his own good works, found rest in what Christ had done for him. In this same village we had what we called the 'Preaching

### WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME

Yard, where opportunity was given to preach the Gospel to visiting farmers. Our oldest listener was a woman of 92, who put on her clogs and came to the van to hear the Gospel. Many hundreds of Gospel tracts were distributed during the tour."

#### ADDITIONS TO THE ASSEMBLY

**Lancashire Gospel Tent.** Throughout the eight weeks of this effort a splendid interest was maintained, with increasing congregations. It was our privilege to point a number to the Lord and to help many of the Lord's people, some of whom have since been baptized and added to the local assembly. Darwen, the scene of the final month's labour, again brought much encouragement; increasing local interest proving that the characteristic indifference of the town was slowly, but certainly, yielding before aggressive evangelism. Souls were saved, including young people and a man of 80 years. Meetings convened for children were particularly fruitful, many of the older ones confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus.

An interesting and encouraging report has been received of the work of the

#### INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

**Gospel Van in Scotland** during the summer season, extracts of which are as follows. "At Hawick one man confessed Christ as his Saviour to the joy of all. He had been brought to the meeting by a young sister from Newcastle. In Academy Street Hall, Aberdeen, we had the joy of leading a young married woman to Christ. Her parents wanted her to have instruction for the R.C. church, but she had declined. At Cullen, we spoke for half an hour to many old people who were having a day out. Many had been drinking and did not want to listen. Some were over 70 and careless of their souls' destiny. At Strathlone we had an excellent hearing during one-and-a-half hours with a crowd of over 300. After a meeting at Avoch, an appeal was made, and, in response, a godly grandmother had the joy of seeing four of her grandchildren and a young girl friend trust Christ as Saviour. We visited Kingussie and Dalwinnie on our way to Pitlochry, where we spent some time with the hydro-electrical workers at their camp. One man seemed deeply impressed. We had a lively time in the open air on the Saturday night. Many of the workers were in the town and, under the influence of drink, asked many questions. Sunday night was very quiet. No questions were asked and all listened with keen interest." (A. Dookerty and W. Greiff)

#### PREACHING IN THE PAVILION

The Fforestfach district of Swansea has a well-situated park, in which is a covered pavilion furnished with folding chairs, and with one side open to the grassy slopes. The assembly has permission to use this



pavilion for Gospel testimony on Sunday evenings during the summer. The fine weather of the past season brought many to the park, and week-by-week good companies listened to the messages. The Sunday School is an encouraging feature of the work here, it having been found necessary to hold two sessions in order to accommodate the children. The weekly Children's Meeting is also well-attended. Special Gospel meetings were conducted by **W. A. Norris** during November.

The commodious Evangelistic Hall, Llanely, was often far too small to accommodate the people during the well-attended meetings conducted by **Harold Paisley** (Belfast) during October. The very outspoken Gospel messages were much blessed to sinner and sinner, and it was a joy to see the Lord's hand in some being brought to Himself.

**W. Trew** visited Tredegar during October. The Lord's people were encouraged and some strangers were brought under the sound of the Gospel.

#### BAPTISMS AT CARDIFF

During October, special meetings were held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of Ebenezer Gospel Hall, Cardiff. Several young people were baptized on the Lord's Day, when **J. Hodson** preached the Gospel. On the following Tuesday evening a children's meeting was held, and on the Wednesday, 170 old-age pensioners were invited to a tea which was followed by a Gospel message. Former scholars of the Sunday School had a reunion, at which an optical lantern was used to show photographs of the teachers who had taught them years before, and they heard again the "old, old story" that they had first learnt in childhood days.

What happens to the Scriptures which find their way into so many Irish R.C.

homes? Many have been burnt to comply with the wishes of the priests. Others are passed from hand to hand, and the colporteur sometimes meets with them again in a home many miles from the place where he sold them. Many have found their way to England and the north of Ireland in the pockets of work-people who took them "just for something to read on the journey." The vast majority, one would venture to say, are at this very moment lying (as does many a Protestant Bible) on the top of the kitchen dressers, covered with dust. An old lady recently made reference to "all the books in the house" and produced a little heap of dusty, torn booklets. Inspection revealed that only one or two were orthodox R.C. publications, the remainder having been purchased from colporteurs from time to time. Despite the difficulty and discouragement, it is a joy to know that God's Word can be found in so many Irish homes. May it be used to the salvation of many precious souls.

FILLED TO  
OVERFLOWING

#### THE LIFE STORY OF A TESTAMENT