

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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To all our Readers. May the blessing of the
Lord that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow be
yours in abundant measure.

A RESOLVE FOR THE NEW YEAR

'THOU shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory' (Psalm 73: 24).

As we look back over past years we can see how often we have failed to do our best. Dissatisfaction, especially in spiritual matters, is a healthy sign. Nothing can be done for those who think they have attained perfection. Knowledge that you have a disease is the first step to a cure.

Doubtless, on this the threshold of a new year, we have made good resolutions. All true Christians desire to make more progress in the new life, into which they were born again; and to see the prosperity of the Lord's Church. We desire this to be—

'Another year of service, of witness for Thy love;
Another year of training for holier work above.'

We suggest as one of the best resolutions for this, and future years, that of the Psalmist quoted above.

He had been considering the problem that has often puzzled the godly; and been a point of attack from the infidel camp; the goodness of God; the afflictions of the righteous; and the prosperity of the wicked. How often it seems that those who disregard God and His word prosper in this world; while the child of God striving to do God's will, and act right towards his fellows, has a hard struggle to get the bare necessities of life. This has caused the steps of many to slip. Many have asked, 'What's the good of trying to be good; and to follow and serve the Lord?'

When the Psalmist went into 'the sanctuary of God,' he saw these things more clearly. With our physical eyes we see only a small part of God's plan; 'we see through a glass darkly,' and are puzzled. But with the spiritual eye, when 'we walk by faith, not by sight,' we see that the prosperity of

the wicked is only transient. As was said to the rich man in the Lord's story: 'Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

We are confident that 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

Evil and error may for a time seem to triumph but the final word is with God.

'Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.'

Having weighed these matters in the balances of the sanctuary, the Psalmist made the emphatic resolve: 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.'

This suggests that we are travellers, and need a guide.

Our life is a journey. Very often in the Scriptures life is spoken of as a way, and people as pilgrims. With David, we can say: 'We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.' Peter wrote his first epistle to the 'sojourners of the dispersion' (R.V.), and exhorted them 'as sojourners and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly desires, which war against the soul.' We are travelling an unknown path. We 'have not passed this way heretofore.' What we shall meet with we cannot say. We 'know not what shall be on the morrow.' We do know that each night brings us a day's march nearer the end.

We need a guide. One whom we can trust, one who knows all the way. Of God, Job said: 'He knoweth the way that I take.' To Joshua, who was to lead the Israelites into the promised land, Moses said: 'The Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not neither be dismayed.'

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, 'callesth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.' David, in his best known psalm, said: 'He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake : yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.'

Our Guide has trod the whole path before us. He has faced and overcome all the difficulties and temptations that beset our way. He bids us be of good cheer, for he has overcome the world.

'We feel that though we journey on
By stony paths and rugged ways;
His blessed feet have gone before,
And strength is given for weary days.'

We are like a child walking on a dark road by its father's side. The child says, 'Oh father, it's so dark, I cannot see the way. I'm afraid.' The father says, 'Do not fear, my child, I know every step of the way.' The child grips his father's hand, and walks bravely on. So we grip the hand of the all-seeing, all-wise Guide.

'So on I go, not knowing I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him than go alone by sight.'

We have an infallible guide book, provided by our Heavenly Guide. Under the Old Covenant, David could say, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Paul tells us that we are under a covenant which far surpasses in glory the old one. To them of old God spoke in the prophets; to us, He has spoken in His Son. To His apostles, He said, when the Holy Spirit was come upon them He would 'teach them all things,' and 'guide them unto all the truth.' That complete revelation is contained in the New Testament Scriptures. There is found teaching for all needs and all circumstances. Therein is contained 'all the counsel of God.' Of that sacred book we can say what Kirke White said of the 'Star of Bethlehem':

'It was my guide, my light, my all, it bade my wayward wandering cease,
And through the storm and danger's thrall, it led me to the port of peace.'

That book reveals a path that 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' It leads to the glory land where we shall see the Lord, and be transfigured into the same image, for when we see Him 'we shall be like Him.' That should make us resolve to be guided by His counsel, and His alone.

EDITOR.

'RED SKY AT MORNING'

THE title is not my own. It headed the 'Editorial' in the *Daily Mail* of October 16th last. The article was called forth by a very significant event in Australia. It concerned

The Bomb.

It began like this: 'The sky was red yesterday morning. It was not the blush of dawn or the incarnadined sunrise. It was the red of fire, destruction, and damnation. It was the red of hell on earth. Britain's first atomic weapon on land was exploded at Woomera, and the rumble of it was heard over the radio at millions of British breakfast-tables. Then came the flash, blast, mushroom, and cloud. We heard rapt accounts of the gold, green, and brown effects. . . . But for ourselves we had no stomach for the polychromatic feast. Behind the awful beauty, we remembered, lay death.'

Rarely do our 'big dailies' write soberly and realistically about the arms race and the threat of war. Articles like this, in a paper like the *Mail*, are very significant. They are symptomatic of a growing apprehension felt by all who look the facts in the face. With a world war still recent history, international relations are as chaotic as ever. The pressing problem of world peace is no nearer solution than it was before the last war started.

The article in question asked: 'What is the use of having 5,000 H-bombs if one is enough to destroy Moscow, New York, or London?' Thinking people cannot help feeling uneasy. There is a growing conviction that governments are utterly unable to provide a lasting solution to the problem. The ever-growing stockpiles (on both sides of the 'Iron Curtain') represent the 'big stick' to be used 'in the last resort.' But ordinary folk cannot feel that all this potential horror is any guarantee of peace. After all, bombs do not talk the language of love and brotherhood—their voice is that of destruction, desolation, and death.

Outstanding in the editorial was also the question of

The Cost.

The price of 'preparedness' is staggering. The amounts of money involved are so great that the mind cannot comprehend them. The expenditure poured out is so great that it threatens to involve the nations

concerned in economic collapse. I quote: 'It would seem, indeed, that the more bombs a nation piles up, the more its security will be threatened by impoverishment.' How ironical! On the one hand we are assured that we must—for security's sake—join in the armaments race. On the other hand, we are assured that, doing so, we practically ensure ultimate economic ruin. Notice what is said about the cost of all this: 'We used to gasp when a battleship cost £8,000,000. Today the U.S. is building an 'atomic' carrier, the first of a new class, at a cost of nearly £80,000,000. How big a fleet must you have to go bankrupt?' That is a very pertinent question.

Huge though the present expenditure is, it will be far, far greater still if war comes. We are told that just one hydrogen bomb would obliterate the world's biggest city. Two nations are supposed to have thousands of these bombs piled up—and with feverish haste they are increasing their piles. Considering the unspeakable possibilities of all this calls to mind some lines written by the late G. A. Studdert Kennedy:

'Waste of muscle, waste of brain,
Waste of patience, waste of pain,
Waste of manhood, waste of health,
Waste of beauty, waste of wealth,
Waste of blood, and waste of tears,
Waste of youth's most precious years,
Waste of ways the saints have trod,
Waste of glory, waste of God—War !'

The Cause.

Inherent in the article concerned was the unspoken admission that this piling up of weapons is itself one of the main causes of war. I quote again: 'What, in any case, is to be the end of the atomic race? Will the nations stop at some point and keep what they have? It seems unlikely, so long as one has the "edge" over another.' Clearly, the 'race' is creating a situation in which the outbreak of war becomes increasingly more likely. If the nations do not stop—if suspicion, fear, and uncertainty, drive them on to build more and more stockpiles—to develop new and more terrifying weapons—what will the end be? With the best will in the world, those who have (or imagine they have) an overwhelming preponderance in bombs are bound to be influenced by it. Behind all diplomacy today is a big shadow—mushroom shaped. I quote again: 'It sometimes seems that they (the nations) have exhausted their resources of diplomacy and rely only on the final arbiter—the bomb itself.' The other fellow is not likely to love me the more if he knows I am keeping a bludgeon behind my back—to clinch matters, if my other 'arguments' fail. It is less likely to settle matters if the chap in question also has a bludgeon—at least as big as mine.

A final word about

The Cure.

It is not good enough to talk as if world statesmen want war. No one but a madman could really want it. Statesmen know well enough that a conflict in which the new bombs were used would unleash horror beyond description upon the whole world. Scientists, quite soberly, tell us that our 'civilisation' could not survive atomic warfare. Ordinary folk in every land long for the day when 'man to man the world o'er shall brothers be.' There may be exceptions to this, but if so they are people blinded by greed, stupidity, or criminal intent. The mass of men, of all nations, genuinely desires peace.

What then is the solution? How can fear, mistrust, suspicion be uprooted? Certainly the answer does not lie with the politicians, some of whom too often put personal and party considerations first. Nor does it lie with statesmen who see the root of all evil in a 'clash of idealogies.'

Certainly there are political isms that deny fundamental human liberties. But there is more to it than that. Peace—real, abiding peace—is essentially a personal matter. It starts on the inside of a man—it cannot be imposed upon him by some outer arbitrary force. And such peace depends upon a man's right relationship with God.

The story is told of a father who gave his young son a jig saw puzzle depicting the world. In a remarkably short time the lad fitted all the pieces together. Surprised, his father asked him how he had done it. 'Well,' said the boy, 'on the other side there's the picture of a man, so I did it from that side. It was easier that way. I put the man right, and that put the world right!' We long to see the world right, too. Then let us go forth among men, bearing everywhere the glad evangel of salvation, '**preaching peace by Jesus Christ**—he is Lord of all.'

'Surely there are stronger weapons
 Than great guns that roar—
 Surely there is something greater
 For this world than war!
 Surely thoughts and prayers shall live
 When guns and slaughter cease;
 And surely thoughts and prayers
 May yet prove strong enough for peace.'

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

AMBASSADORS OF PEACE

'NOBODY can calculate the effect on the life of the world, if every minister of Christ were to know himself charged with full authority as an ambassador of peace, and were to make it a definite part of his mission to plead the cause of brotherhood with all other peoples. No government could resist such concerted appeal. . . . Unless the Church brings this era of militarism to a close, and exorcises the demons of hatred, suspicion and aggression, there is no power that can.'

C. SILVESTER HORNE.

CHRISTIANS AWAKE !

THE following resolution was passed by the Church at Blackburn, Lancashire, on Lord's Day, October 11th, and has been sent to local members of Parliament, the Minister for War, and the Government. It is hoped that all Churches will do likewise, and help throw off from the youth of the nation the shackles of this modern slavery.

'We sincerely protest against the present conscription laws, and any further continuance of them; and call upon Her Majesty's Government to do all in its power to end them; believing them to be detrimental to the youth of our country, both mentally and spiritually. We believe that the conscription acts of all countries jeopardise the peace of the world; and that to outlaw conscription will go farthest in preventing war.'

H. WILSON, Secretary.

ISN'T IT ODD?

That every champion of liberty in Italy, like Mazzini, Garibaldi, Count Cavour, Massimo d'Azeglio, and even King Victor Emmanuel II, has been excommunicated by the Pope of Rome? According to *The Nation* for September

10, 1949: 'It appears that the only prominent Italian statesman in the past hundred years not excommunicated was Benito Mussolini.' Is it any wonder that Italians take 'his holiness' excommunication of Communists rather lightly?

—*The Way Out of the Dark.*

CONCERNING THE COMING OF THE LORD

IT is now well over nineteen centuries since the Lord founded His Church, and having promised to return again to take His people unto Himself, departed into heaven; and still the company of called-out ones are waiting for His appearing, the promised return which has exercised the hearts and minds of Christians since Paul wrote his letters to the early churches.

Of course, the Lord's return is not for the specific benefit of believers, although very often it would appear that that seems to be our idea. Only too often, we appear to consider His approaching return as something which centres around ourselves—it is for *our* comfort, *our* glorification, *our* blessing. Whereas, actually, the return of the Lord will be to administer judgment upon the world, and His appearing will mark the commencement of the Day of the Lord, elsewhere called in scripture, the Wrath of God.

This judgment, moreover, is to begin at the house of God, and we have it on good authority that even the righteous are to be saved but scarcely. At the first judgment of the world, the destruction was by water, at the second it is to be by fire, in which even the elements themselves are to dissolve with fervent heat, and the very mountains are to be moved.

A study of the language of scripture in regard to the day of the Lord clearly shews two things: There is to be the direct intervention of God, probably through a cosmic catastrophe, and the punishments are to be largely brought about by man himself (the atom-bomb and the anti-God Communist hordes?). The question of how far each is to operate and in what connection, is extremely debatable, and equally unprofitable. It is sufficient to know the outline as given in scripture.

It is at this point that we notice a striking fact. Whereas the Church is exhorted to watch for the signs of His appearing, 'and the more so as ye see the day approaching,' we are expressly told that it will come as a surprise to the rest of the world. The Church is obviously expected to be able to *see* the day approaching and to prepare herself, but they that dwell upon the earth are to be taken unaware.

It is now about a hundred years since the attention of the body of believers was turned towards the coming of the Lord, and during that time many predictions have been made, and dates given, with the inevitable result that, in consequence, many of the Lord's people look askance at the study of the Scriptures towards this end, and even secretly doubt whether the day is actually at hand. On the other hand, the persistent consensus of opinion amongst God's people during these hundred years simply indicates that the Spirit has been stirring up His Church to a very good purpose, and that we are now so much nearer the time.

There are many signs around us today that indicate quite clearly that the end is actually in sight, that the great event for which the ages have waited will soon be fulfilled; but amongst them all, there is none that stands out with such unmistakable finality as the return of Israel to the Land. That was the one and only sign given by the Lord Himself as immediately preceding the darkening of the sun and moon (Luke 21 and parallel gospels). For her sin of rejection of her Messiah, Jewry had to be scattered, and Jerusalem lies desolate and under the heel of the Gentile until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and then

With the ceasing of the dominion of the Gentiles over Israel, and the restoration of the ancient people to the Land, the scene is set for the last act. It is here that we connect the last week of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks: he says that during the first week, the city and temple had

to be rebuilt after the return from Babylon, and this was duly fulfilled exactly; then after the second period of sixty-two weeks the Messiah was to be cut off and the city should lie desolate until the end, which also has been fulfilled exactly; and then he speaks of the events of the last week, obviously dating from the time when the desolation of the second period ceases.

If the writer may here make a personal note; it was *before* the re-establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 that he, in conversation with the editor of this paper, gave 1948 as the date for that event, a date which the writer had known and been waiting for since 1933. In actual fact, the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, and the fighting which ensued continued until 1951 before the opposing forces were compelled to make a truce, and accept, most unwillingly, the presence of Israel in her old home. It is not generally realised how very important that event is. It is the focal point of the prophecies, and the key to the understanding of the time of the end. The present lining-up of the nations into the two camps, the increasing importance of the Near and Middle East, the value of the vast reservoir of untapped oil in and around Bible lands, the unrest so manifest upon the earth, all speak of one thing only, and find their common denominator in the prophetic restoration of Judah.

This is the end of this age, and we shall soon witness the commencement of the next, when the Kingdom of God shall be established upon the earth, and Christ shall reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. During 1954, much will happen that will give us a clearer picture of what is to follow, and Palestine will become increasingly prominent in world affairs—affairs that are to culminate in the final scene; but before that happens we may expect to see increased political and military activity in Palestine.

As for the Church, it is not the will of God that she should pass through the judgment, although it is to begin with her. It is promised that 'ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man,' but only if we take heed to the previous two verses (Luke 21 : 34-36). The rapture of the church, as foretold in Luke 17 and 21 with the parallel passages, is the same as the one described in 1 Thess., and will mark the commencement of the Day of the Lord or the Wrath of God.

It is not much use our knowing these things, nor even knowing the day of the Coming of the Lord (if such be possible), unless we put that knowledge to practical use, and seek to prepare ourselves for the Lord from heaven, and strive to turn the careless to better things. This is the purpose of the Church on earth, to be a witness to Him who shall soon rule the nations with a rod of iron, and to bear perpetual testimony of the saving grace of the Messiah of Israel.

H. ARDRON.

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The return of our Lord is a matter of vital importance. If it had been given more prominence the spiritual state of the churches would have been much higher than at present. About dates, we are very wary, in view of the Lord's statements: 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man'; and, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power' (Matt. 24 : 36; Acts 1 : 7).

As to the Jews and Palestine, the promises made to Abraham were amply fulfilled centuries ago (see Josh. 21 : 43-45; Psalm 105 : 42-45; Neh. 9 : 7-8). After their return under Ezra and Nehemiah, we know not of any passage of Scripture even hinting at any further return to Palestine.

There is grave danger of making the same mistake as the Jews did; of thinking of an earthly material kingdom instead of the spiritual and heavenly.

EDITOR.

REASON AND REVELATION

THESE terms are most important and comprehensive. They signify gifts given to mankind by an all-wise God and loving Father. Without the former the latter could not be appropriated and valued. They are, in a sense, related to each other, although their values may be different. The flower is something more beautiful than the bud, but without the bud we would be without the flower.

Reason is an attribute of mind possessed by all creatures. In its lowest degree it is seen in some animals we designate sagacious. In man it is seen in a strikingly grand sense and attains perfection in the Godhead.

Animals are incapable of abstract thinking. We don't take a dog to a picture gallery to appreciate a work of art, neither do we teach a monkey mathematics. Abstract reasoning is a faculty of the soul of man. Our Heavenly Father says to the erring sons of men, 'Come, let us reason together.' Reason is defined as 'that faculty of the mind by which we draw conclusions and determine what is right and wrong'; also 'to deduce inferences from premises.'

Logic is the art of reasoning, but as many volumes have been written by learned authors, these may be consulted and studied by those who desire to become proficient in that art. Our object is rather to consider the province of reason and her limitations. 'Metaphysicians now generally agree in dividing all mental phenomena into three general classes—knowing, feeling, willing.'

In the early period of our lives reason does not assert itself, for the child accepts with implicit trust whatever it is told. Santa Claus, to the child, is a real person until reason relegates him to the limbo of imaginary objects.

Reason has to do with the knowledge of things we derive through the avenue of our senses. The facts and phenomena in the world around us with which the mind becomes cognisant, is the circle within which man's reason can operate. The data thus provided supplies the material or ideas that form the basis of our reasoning powers. Certain things have to be admitted as true before we can reason. If the premises are true, then reason is assured that the inferences deduced must be right. We say, for example, that matter is inert. Electricity overcomes the inertia of matter, therefore electricity is a power of force.

While the Book of Nature provides ample scope for rational activity, we cannot create an idea. We may abstract, combine, and imagine things fantastic, but all the material has come to us through our five senses. A. Campbell said we cannot imagine a sixth sense which is conclusive that we are unable to create an idea. We reason that an effect must have a cause and that cause is the effect of some other cause and so on *ad infinitum*. That agrees with our observations of nature and our mental constitution, but does not give the idea of a first cause, itself uncaused, which we term God. That idea is not created by reason, but is revealed to mankind. A. Campbell stated that 'it is a fact that the term peculiarly expressive of God is not to be found among any people antecedent to their being possessed of oral or written revelation.' 'Not one of the idolatrous nations pretend to have derived their religion from reason.'

'No man, by all the senses and powers of reason which he possesses, with all the data before him which the material universe affords, can originate or beget in his own mind the idea of a God in the true sense of that word.' That position has been tested in the crucible of debate, and

has survived the closest scrutiny. Rationalists, therefore, who contemptuously reject religion, make a god of reason and worship it. The folly of such a position was fully demonstrated in the French Revolution. Therefore, without a revelation from a source higher than man we could know nothing of God, spirit, immortality, and a state beyond death.

When we get the idea of God as revealed to us, everything in us and around us bears testimony to the truth of the Supreme Existence. It becomes so reasonable to believe that God should communicate His will to man for his enlightenment and guidance. The psalmist reasoned thus: 'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?' And in like manner we conclude, He that made us that we can speak, shall He not speak to us? We know that speech is not intuitive in man; if it were all would have the same form of speech. We hear, and therefore speak; and the source and origin of speech is revealed in the Bible. Revelation is 'the revealing of divine truth: that which is revealed by God to man' (see Eph. iii. 1-6; Col. i. 25, 26). God has spoken to man; He has revealed His mind to mankind through human instrumentality. The Bible contains that revelation. In the Scriptures there are many things recorded that cannot, strictly speaking, come under the term revelation; but God, by His Spirit, guided those who recorded such events to select such incidents, and they were inspired to record them correctly.

Paul claims to speak the wisdom of God (1 Cor. ii. 7). He also declares that none of the princes of this world know those things now made manifest by inspired men. It has not entered into the heart of man the things which God had prepared for them that love Him; but God had revealed them to men by His Spirit. How forcibly does Paul reason: "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' The *natural* or *uninspired* man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. These are outside that circle of knowledge attained by man's unaided powers. Spiritual things are discerned by those who have superhuman knowledge. Such is above man's judgment. He is capable of judging others, and what he reveals of the mind of God is a standard for us. Paul had the mind of Christ, and spoke not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, and so he could say, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.'

The fullest revelation God has given to man is in Christ Jesus. 'God has spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' The unfolding of the wonderful plan of salvation and its glorious consummation is the grand object of revelation. That we must, in all reason, accept, as it manifests a wisdom far above that of man, and so we exclaim with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out? Or who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things to whom be glory for ever, Amen.'

The conviction made upon us becomes stronger that such a revelation as God has given is perfect. It bears the impression of its Divine origin, and of wisdom that cannot err. The deepest need of the human soul and its highest aspirations, are adequately provided for by its sacred truths.

Its light streams forth from Him in whom 'there is no darkness at all.' Man may hold up his 'farthing candle to the sun,' but our best and safest attitude is implicit acceptance and obedience to all it requires of us. How dare we, with our limited knowledge, call in question or criticise the Word of God? Jesus said, 'Thy word is truth.' Those were blessed who 'trembled at his word.' We thank God for such a revelation.

'It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands,
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.'

The late J. WARDROP,
A brother much esteemed for his worth and work.

FAMILY CIRCLE

conducted by Harold Baines.

A Page for Men — By Men — About Men

IN this new series of our 'Family Circle' I am seeking to introduce some of the ideas and suggestions so kindly passed on to me by our readers.

You will see that every member of the 'Family' has a section of its own. Men, women, teenagers and children; even the 'tiny tots' won't be forgotten.

In the men's section, we are running a series of essays on hymns and their writers. Various brethren have kindly offered to assist. The first is by Brother Arthur Daniells of the Bedminster Church, Bristol.

A PRINCE AMONG HYMN-WRITERS

It has been asserted by a well-known politician that in the ultimate it is the poets who govern a country.

This is not very kind to the poets perhaps, but if it was intended to mean that poets strongly influence us all, then we can very heartily agree.

The poets with which we are concerned here are those who compose our hymns. Some hymns have been preserved through the centuries and others have been added since. The depth of thought expressed in some of our lovely hymns is only understood as we, too, pass through the same periods of joy, sorrow or anguish which in many cases inspired the words. Some hymns are sad; some most certainly are not. Others are cheerful, most are instructive, raising us up to the mountain tops.

Who were these writers who have given us such delight and expressed rich thoughts in such inspiring terms?

One whose poems are widely used is John Newton. Can anyone sing those words—so beautifully expressed—and not feel uplifted?

'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear,
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.'

John Newton was at one time in his life the skipper of a slave trader sailing with his wretched cargo between Africa and the West Indies. How he was converted we do not know, but when he saw Christ he also saw the frightfulness of his profession, and left his old life in disgust. He later became the Vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire. Some indication of the energy which he put into his work is revealed when he successfully ran

prayer meetings in the village, said to commence at five a.m. on weekdays and on Sundays at six a.m.!

It was at these meetings that he introduced the new hymns which he was writing, and these no doubt contributed to the great success of these gatherings.

He was greatly helped in this work by the gentle poet Cowper, who also wrote hymns which were first heard at these prayer meetings.

Because of the growing interest the meeting room was not large enough, and a larger one was built. It was at the opening meeting in the new hall that Cowper introduced that gem of poems:

'Jesus, where'ere Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy seat,
Where'ere they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.'

This account gives a new meaning to the fifth verse, which says:

'Behold at Thy commanding word,
We stretch the curtain and the cord,
Come Thou and fill this wider space,
And bless us with a large increase.'

SALVATION INDIVIDUAL

The world is to be redeemed one man at a time. Men cannot be made Christian in masses. It was in the days of Constantine that men first came into the Church in crowds. The cause of Christ has been retarded because, eager to make haste, men were received by tribes and baptised by battalions.

—Charles E. Jefferson.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

READINGS FOR JANUARY, 1954.

- Jan. 3.—Isaiah 13:19 to 14:10.
Revelation 18.
.. 10.—Psalm 2. Revelation 19.
.. 17.—Daniel 7:1-14. Revelation 20.
.. 24.—Leviticus 26:1-13.
Revelation 21:1-14.
.. 31.—Isaiah 54. Revelation 21:15-27.

Vision of Babylon (17:1-6).—We have in chapters 17:1 to 19:10 detailed information about Babylon and her fall. Summarily this is mentioned in 14:8 and 16:17-21, but these would be anticipatory. The visions of heavenly victory and final triumph break out in the picture of persecution and suffering and divine judgments, so that the temporal is not as it were allowed to submerge the realities. Accomplishment of divine purpose is so certain that the prophet speaks of it as already completed. As already noticed fornication is a figure for unfaithfulness to God' (page 187). Thus the great whore represents false Christianity, straddled across the seas, taking money and power from earthly powers, bewitching them by false ideas. Thus the names of blas-

phemy (taking the name of God in vain) are written on her, earthly power and riches are in her hands, the blood of the saints is on her hands. This is indeed something to wonder at, yet how true to history.

Explanation of the vision (17:7-18).—The beast bearing the whore existed before she rode him, passed for a time, returned and then finally disappeared—the old heathen Roman power had its vicissitudes and then passed away. Allied to the false religion secular powers warred against the truth. All who were faithful unto death had victory through the blood of the Lamb. The very powers that upheld her turned against her at times, but for centuries were completely under her power.

Picture of the final destruction of Babylon (18).—It will be seen that the description of the fall of the spiritual city is like the physical counterpart of ancient Babylon in Isaiah 13, 14 and 17, Jeremiah 50 and 51. The desolation of that city is a fit picture of the fate of all that is false in so-called Christendom. The call to God's own people is to get out and keep out of it. The simplicity of true Christianity is in tremendous contrast to the pretensions of the false, and we need all to be warned lest we drift there and share its fate, which of course is separation from God. Notice it is right to rejoice over the destruction of such a power as 'Babylon' (verse 20).

Songs of victory (19:1-10).—Here is a fourfold 'Alleluia' (meaning 'Praise ye the Lord'). The redeemed and the heavenly creation join together to thank God for His victory and to praise Him. The marriage supper is so wonderful a thought that John falls down to worship the angel who gives him the news. The refusal to accept reads thus: 'You and I are fellow servants; for the same spiritual teaching which enables me to unfold these things, enables you to bear witness to our common Lord' (Dr. Scribner). In line with the thought of verse 5 'both small and great.'

Victory of the Word of God over earthly powers (19:11-21).—There is wonderful picture here of the Christ leading the spotless armies of heaven in triumphant war. All the enemies are overcome and destroyed. It is true now that all who have set themselves against God have failed and destruction has come upon them—'Sceptre and crown must tumble down, and in the earth be equal made with the poor crooked scythe and spade.' Earthly powers have passed and will, mighty as they may appear—empires and dictators take notice! This would appear to be a sweeping away of systems of domination.

The Millenium (20:1-6).—This word is of course 'thousand years,' and that there has been, is, or will be such a period we cannot doubt and still believe the faithful word. There are so many different interpretations and so much controversy, one feels reluctant to add any opinion. The language being so largely figurative we think quite an indefinite period may be indicated, but it is a period when the souls of those who have been faithful will be (have been or are) in Christ's very presence sharing his reign and they will be in the condition of blessedness awaiting the delivering up of the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24 and 28). We note that the beast and the false prophet have gone for ever at this time, but the dragon is under imprisonment only. It is clear that the Devil is subject to limitation else how would we survive at all—God alone can keep us, and that as we trust in His power. Limitation is indicated in the story of Job very clearly, but the period under notice indicates something more than the normal limitation—God never suffers us to be tempted more than we are able to bear.

Satan's last fling (20:7-10).—When such a time of release from Satan shall have been upon earth, the nations should be in a position to defy him unless they are indeed willing allies of his, as it appears they will be. In those days there will be a great effort to stamp out the church altogether, when at last the final judgment will come.

Vision of the judgment (20:11-15).—No demonstration of worldly weapons or numbers heralds the power of God. His glory is enough to remove earth and heaven—atom bombs notwithstanding—and every individual will stand completely revealed before the eyes of Him with whom we have to deal. It is good to exercise our minds with this thought so that we may be saved from secret sins which might even be concealed from our own sight—not only that of our closest friends. 'His kind but searching glance can scan the very wounds which shame would hide.' Have we ever tried to imagine the mind of God beholding at one and the same moment the minds and hearts of earth's millions. Remember 'He loved ME and gave Himself for ME.'

The vision of the New Jerusalem (21).—The prophets of old sang of the glories of an earth in which the things which cause strife and trouble are removed. Here we have a clearer vision in which all the physically beautiful things are called in to picture spiritual holiness and beauty. The bride prepares for the bridegroom by adorning herself in beautiful garments to look her very best. This earthly effort is effective but Christ's bride, the church, is pictured as prepared for Him by God Himself (verse 2). The herald of the heavenly city declares that God will in future be in the very midst of His people, and every evil will be banished for ever. The conditions of arrival in safety in that home are plainly set out and the contrast also drawn (verse 8). Note the points—worship without a temple, brightness without the sun, day without a night, righteousness of its citizens, freedom from all defilement. We observe that the measurements would make the city four hundred miles long, broad and high, indicating we think its unlimited room. The picture shows twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, each guarded by an angel, and twelve foundations to the walls, the twelve apostles of Christ. The old and new covenants are culminated together depending upon the same God and the same Sacrifice.

Oh, say, shall we be there?

R. B. SCOTT.

[December Notes (paragraph two). — Please insert dash between 'false' and 'fornication' to get correct sense.]

SEAWORTHY.

All the water in the world,
However hard it tried,
Could never, never sink a ship,
Unless it got inside.

All the evil in the world,
The wickedness and sin,
Can never sink your soul's fair craft,
Unless you let it in.

DO YOU SMOKE ?

A certain preacher, we'll call him Brother Sutton, was an occasional smoker it seems, and one day one of the mothers of the congregation approached him. This mother had a twelve-year-old son and she said, 'Brother Sutton, if you have time I would like to talk to you about a problem I have with my little boy. The other day he wanted to start smoking. I told him all the bad points of it and the bad habit it was.' The preacher, of course, agreed with her, but then she said, 'And Brother Sutton, do you know what he told me?' As Brother Sutton shook his head she continued, "'Well, Brother Sutton smokes.'" Brother Sutton, asked the woman, 'what am I going to tell him?' He sat and thought a long minute and then slowly and firmly said, 'Go home and tell him, "Brother Sutton has quit smoking." We MUST be concerned with the results of our actions on others.

—*Half Pone News.*

THE DIARY OF A BIBLE.

'The Word of the Lord was precious in those days' (1 Sam. 3:1). What is it to you?

January 15th. — Been resting quietly for a week. The first few nights at the beginning of this year, my owner met me regularly, but he seems to have forgotten me once more.

February 2nd.—Clean up. I was dusted with other things and put back in my place.

February 8th.—Owner used me for a short time after dinner, looking up a few references. Seemed to be in a great hurry. Went to Sunday School.

March 7th.—Clean up. Dusted and in my old place again. Have been down in the front hall since my trip to Sunday School.

April 2nd.—Busy day. Owner led meeting and had to look up references. He had an awful time finding one, though it was there in its right place all the time.

June 5th.—In grandma's lap all afternoon. She has come here for a time. She let a teardrop fall on Col. 2: 5-7.

June 7th, 8th, 9th.—In grandma's lap every afternoon now. It's a comfortable spot. Sometimes she reads me and sometimes she talks to me.

June 10th.—Grandma's gone—I don't think she felt very much at home here. I seemed to be her chief friend. Am back in the old place now.

July 3rd. — Packed in a trunk with clothes and other things. Some talk about 'vacation,' whatever that means.

July 10th. — Still in trunk; though nearly everything else has been taken out.

Sept. 29th.—Home again. Rather stuffy and hot. Have two magazines, a novel and an old hat on top of me. Wish they would take them off.

October 5th.—Used by Mary a few moments to-day. She was writing a letter to a friend whose brother had died, and wanted an appropriate verse.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

East Kirkby, Beulah Road.—The twenty-ninth Anniversary of the commencement of the Church here was celebrated on Saturday and Lord's Day, November 21st and 22nd.

On Saturday, an excellent gathering of brethren and sisters from some nine or ten Churches, some travelling from as far as Birmingham, came to join us in our celebrations. The proceedings commenced with the usual social cup of tea, and a homely chat with each other concerning things of our pilgrimage. Later in the evening, our Meeting House was taxed to its fullest capacity (additional seats having to be requisitioned) to hear two excellent addresses delivered by Bren. Carlton Melling and Geoffrey Lodge. The meeting was presided over by Bro. W. Longden, and a brief report of twelve months' witness, and the present standing of the Church was given by the secretary. Excellent congregational singing (thanks to our able precentor) characterised the meeting. Altogether it was a helpful and inspiring gathering. The messages and presence of so many brethren and sisters did our hearts good, and gave us a new impetus to press forward in the good way.

On Lord's Day, Bro. Lodge continued his ministry to the Church with an address in the morning, spoke to the school in the afternoon, and proclaimed the Gospel in the evening. Our best thanks are due, and gladly given, to our Brother for his able ministry in God's Word, when our souls were richly fed thereby.

W. JEPSON.

Hindley.—It is with grateful hearts to God our Father that we record two more additions to the Church of the Lord.

Daniel McEwan, a former Roman Catholic, was invited to a meeting held here, by a member from Albert Street, Newtown. He was so impressed that he came again and again, and was finally won over to the truth of the Scriptures as taught in the New Testament. For a long time he had been zealously seeking

light, and He that knoweth the hearts of all men, led him to hear the simple Gospel, which he received and obeyed. It was on Lord's Day, November 15th, during a meeting held by the Ince assembly, that he made his decision, and the same hour of the night obeyed his Divine Lord at Hindley.

Again our hearts were gladdened to hear of the decision of Patricia Atkinson, who has attended the meetings of the Hindley and Ince assemblies very regularly for some time. Once more, it was at Ince that the decision was made, and she was united with her Lord at Hindley on Lord's Day, December 6th, 1953.

These decisions were heartening to Bro. Len Channing, who has laboured faithfully and well at Ince for a few weeks; and to all the brethren here. May we be spurred on to greater activities, having the assurance that our 'labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

TOM KEMP.

Ince (Wigan).—During November (8th to 22nd) we held a mission with Bro. Len Channing as the preacher. The mission was extended a week because of those not far from the kingdom. We rejoice to report that two obeyed the Lord in baptism. Bro. Dan Macuwen was a Roman Catholic. When studying for the priesthood, he asked for the Church history. He found on record two and three Popes ruling at the same time. This put doubt into his mind. From then on he found it a hard struggle to learn the truth, once in despair, burning his Bible. We thank God for his efforts in search of the truth. Sister Patricia Atkinson was a Methodist. After a discussion with the minister and further talks she obeyed the Master.

A brother and sister were restored to fellowship.

We pray that these brethren be kept faithful, till the Lord comes. Some have sown, others have watered and God has given the increase. The Church has been strengthened spiritually. Bible studies were well attended on Tuesdays, Thursday and Lord's Days. To God be the glory, great things He hath done.

W. HURCOMBE.

Nelson, Southfield Street.—Thirty-five years ago the Church at Nelson was started. To mark the anniversary, special meetings, which cheered our hearts, were held on Saturday and Lord's Day, November 14th and 15th. On Saturday, we had visitors from Blackburn and East Ardsley, and after tea we gathered for the spiritual meal. Our speaker was Bro. R. McDonald, a staunch friend of the Church here, who travelled from Dewsbury, where he is doing a great work for the Lord, to serve us. He gave us inspiring thoughts on liberty. Stirring times were experienced on Lord's day with Bro. McDonald as our preacher. In the morning, he exhorted us from the book of Revelation. In the afternoon he

spoke to the children on 'Building' and the necessity for having a good foundation. In the evening, the 'Way of Salvation' was made very plain, and although no decision can be recorded, we feel that much good has been done. We thank God for another season of refreshing.

ALEX CARSON.

Peterhead.—On Sunday, 9th November, we had the joy of witnessing the baptism of Brother Andrew May. Brother John Geddis, Buckie, immersed Andrew into Him who is able to keep. Brother George Reid (Senr.), also of Buckie, gave an inspiring message which we believe will be fruitful in the future. We pray earnestly that many may follow in the path Andrew has chosen.

A. STRACHAN.

Scholes, Wigan.—The Church celebrated her seventy-first anniversary on Saturday, November 21st, and again we held a mission in connection with it, beginning on November 14th and continuing until November 23rd. We held meetings each night with the exception of the 18th and 20th. The attendances were wonderful, never less than seventy, and on the 21st 190 were present. We had an average of fifteen non-members present at each meeting. Bro. Fred Casmir, of Heppenheim, Germany, was the preacher, and titles of addresses were: 'Who are you?'; 'Christian and Christian'; 'I Believe'; 'The same God in a changing world'; 'Pentecost 33 A.D.'; 'Law and authority'; 'What the Church is and what it is not'; 'Jesus the Son of God.' He exhorted us on 'Go ye,' and the work of the Church.

The preaching was powerful, purposeful, amazingly clear and simple, exhibiting the truth of Hebrews 4:12. This faithful preaching brought three to decision. These confessed Jesus and were baptised into His Name. Others were much disturbed; and desired to know more of the things which seemed strange to them, although they had been connected with sectarian Churches.

We were very sorry Bro. Casmir had so soon to return, but we pray God that we shall be able to continue the work, by earnestly contending for the faith; and bring to decision those who are under conviction.

We are thankful for all that God has done for us: and in His strength we go forward, knowing that if He be for us none can be against us: and if we do His work in His way we shall never lack His reward.

H. DAVENPORT.

Tunbridge Wells, 5 Mount Ephraim Road.—The Church has been greatly encouraged by the presence and help of Bro. Frank Worgan for a month. The effort began with a rally on October 31st (reported last month) and concluded on Lord's Day, November 29th. During this period, Bro. Worgan preached the gospel

each Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday evening, and shared in teaching our home Bible studies—held Wednesdays and Mondays.

The effort had been widely advertised, and a tremendous amount of visiting and personal work was done. The value of this was seen in the large number of non-members attending the gospel services. Most of these had not visited our services before, and many returned again and again to hear more about the Lord's Church. So far one has been added to our number: Sis. Olivia Whitwell, previously baptised, was welcomed on Lord's Day, November 15th. We know that others are deeply interested, and we anticipate further additions.

Our brother's preaching was of a high order. The ancient order of things was set forth clearly and forcefully. We know that God always honours fidelity to His Word, and we hopefully expect future reaping as a result of this sowing of the good seed.

During the month, discussions were held with people of varying religious persuasions. On November 21st, at Lingfield, the Church of England 'vicar' undertook to justify the Anglican practice of baby sprinkling. He rashly asserted that the apostles baptised infants and received such into the fellowship of the Church. Bro. Worgan spoke for the Church of the Lord and clearly set forth the Bible teaching on this subject. A number of friends, from various religious bodies, were present, and we were thankful for the opportunity of presenting Christianity to them. The subject of Christian unity was also raised, and the plea for restoration of Christianity as originally delivered upon our friends.

Later the same day, Bro. Worgan and the writer engaged two representatives of the Christadelphian sect in discussion. The subject was: 'The pre-existence of the Word.' On other occasions, in Tunbridge Wells, discussions were held with a representative of the Russellite denomination. The latter discussions are continuing, and it seems likely that a man will be added to the Church as a result. We were confirmed in our faith by all these experiences, and ask for the prayers of all saints, that they may lead to the salvation of some.

On Saturday, November 28th, a final rally was held. Bro. Channing was unable to be present, due to 'times of refreshing' at Ince. Bro. Worgan spoke on 'The true Church,' a good number of brethren and friends being present. We were encouraged by the presence of brethren from Brighton.

We ask for the prayers of brethren everywhere, that the Church here may be greatly used for God's glory. We pray for all who labour loyally for the Lord and His Kingdom.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

'HE DIED FOR ME'

IN every stage of human life,
From childhood to the grave:
There are, and will be, daring saints,
Who try our souls to save;
Who point out dangers, pitfalls, snares
And even be the guide—
Past all the hindrances—to reach
That loving Saviour's side.

They shew you Christ upon the cross!
The sinner's perfect plea:
Rejoicing as they hear you say,
'Yes! Jesus died for me.'
For every saint who has confessed
That glorious kingly name,
And plainly sees Him crucified;
Whose heart is set aflame,

With pity love and loyalty,
That God's own Son must die
As ransom-money for our chance
To live eternally:
Rejoices still most earnestly,
To hear some wanderer say,
'Yes! I repent, and I believe,
That Jesus died for me.'

If God—the living God, could spare,
His well-beloved Son—
That One! the first! The great I am;
By whom all things were done,
To leave those realms of happiness
And dazzling purity:
And live among us, teaching us,
What we must do and be,

Shall we not prove our lessons learnt,
And let the Master see,
That we believe he died for us,
By our fidelity?
Lord, keep us steadfast to the end;
Encircle us with power:
With golden chords of brotherhood,
And service every hour.

Guide willing efforts to do good,
Give strength to every hand,
That reaches out, in pity,
To snatch the burning brand:
Dear Lord, thy love is powerful,
And all Thy saints agree,
In just and true acknowledgment:
'The Saviour died for me.'

So when at last, the labourers,
Assemble to be paid:
Where eyes are bright and smiling:
And every heart is glad:
Then when the crowns are given,
And white robes to clothe each one,
And all that hear those loving words:
'Come home, come home, well done.'

Will realise the wondrous love—
Better than words can tell—
And say, 'my Saviour died for me.'
He doeth all things well.

R. JONES.

[Bro. Jones is in his eightieth year, and has been a member of Summer Lane Church since Sunday School days.]

NEXT CONFERENCE.

Saturday, April 17th, 1954. Will any Church desirous of entertaining the Conference please communicate with the Conference Secretary, A. Hood.

THE OLD HYMNS.

There's lots of music in 'em—

The hymns of long ago,
And when some grey-haired brother
Sings the ones I used to know,
I sorter want to take a hand—
I think of days gone by—
'On Jordan's stormy banks
I stand and cast a wistful eye!'

There's lot of music in 'em—

Those dear, sweet hymns of old,
With visions bright of lands of light
And shining streets of gold;
And I hear 'em ringing—
Singing where Memory dreaming
stands,

'From Greenland's icy mountains
To India's coral strands.'

They seem to sing forever

Of holier, sweeter days,
When the lilies of the love of God
Bloomed white in all the ways;
And I want to hear their music
From the old-time meetin's rise
Till 'I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies.'

We never needed singin' books

In them old days—we knew
The words, the tunes of every one—
The dear old hymn book through.
We didn't have no trumpets then,
No organs built for show,
We only sang to praise the Lord,
'From whom all blessings flow.'

An' so I love the good old hymns,

And when my time shall come—
Before the light has left me,
And my singing lips are dumb—
If I can hear 'em sing 'em,
I'll pass without a sigh
To 'Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.'

—Frank L. Stanton.

THIS IS ABOUT A WEDDING

A very distinguished guest was at this wedding. Would you like Him at yours? He'll come if you invite Him. He holds Himself in readiness to respond to any such invitation if He knows it is really genuine and sincere. He delights to honour such an occasion with His presence and blessing. Do you know what He did at this particular wedding? He supplied wine which did not intoxicate when they had run out. It was said to be very good, in fact, the very best. Before it was 'wine,' it was 'water.' He can give you 'water' which you will discover as 'wine.' He calls it 'living water' springing up into 'everlasting life,' which is really 'wine' coming from Him who declares Himself to be 'The True Vine' from which this 'best wine' comes. It can come to you if you will become united to Him as a 'branch' and bear grapes from which comes this 'best wine.'

Now this means He invites you to become 'married' or 'united' to Him and He'll help you to live the lovely kind of life He lived in loving obedience to all the will of God. Then, His presence will go with you in all the affairs of your life, your wedding included. He will be unto you as 'living water' springing up into everlasting life, and you will bear the fruit of His perfect life in yours and it will be as 'wine'—the good wine—the best wine, unfermented by the evil and sin in the world because He will deliver you from all that. The servants at the above wedding were given some excellent advice—'Whatever he saith unto you, do it!' They obeyed His word and the best wine came in abundance. Will you obey the Lord Jesus Christ so that He will come into your life with the above results? You cannot entertain so great a Guest, so distinguished a Guest as Jesus!

Read your Bible. Verify what is written above. Learn how you may be united to Christ. See John 2:1-11, John 4:1-42, John 15:1-11, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:47, Romans 10:9-10.—SILAS.

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