

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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The Church's Primary Task

REASONS FOR THE CHURCH

MANY ponderous tomes have been written on the church. Theologians ever since the time of the New Testament have advanced their theses, dissertations, expositions, theories on what the church is and what it exists for. The church has been built up into a vast theological institution, its meaning and purpose understood only by the few, while the many who belong to it can never hope to have any deep understanding of what the church is. Such knowledge is limited to the select few professionals, whose business it is to dispense what they think it fitting that the non-professionals should know.

This is not the New Testament picture of the church. There we find that it is, not an institution nor a theological system, but a FELLOWSHIP—of those who are immersed into Jesus Christ. When Christians come together, they gather for fellowship “with those of like precious faith;” with those of kindred minds, with the same aspirations, objects, interests. Among such company, with the brethren in Christ, they are mutually strengthened by the teaching of the scriptures, united praise and prayer and worship. They are encouraged and inspired to do the will of God so far as lies in them. In sorrow they give comfort and hope to each other:

“We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathising tear.”

They sorrow and rejoice together: “If one suffers, all suffer; if one rejoices, all rejoice.”

They gather, too, to hold up, in their prayers and by their presence, the arms of the brother who is preaching the gospel. Though all too often very few who need the gospel of salvation are present when that gospel is preached, Christians regard it as their responsibility and privilege to set the example of being there whenever the word of salvation is preached.

Something else remains

But to meet together is not the be-all-and-end-all of our service to God. We must not judge the faithfulness of a Christian simply upon the regularity of attendance at meetings, Lord's Day or mid-week. All too often our best testimony to a brother or sister is that he or she was faithful in attendance at the Lord's table, and made great efforts and sacrifices to be with the brethren. Very good: so should we all do. But the church exists not merely in order to meet together: these meetings have manifold objects—to worship God, to give to Him the glory due to His name; to remember Jesus Christ at His table, as He commanded; to receive that strength from God's Holy Spirit to live the life and do the work that Christians must in the world. In other words, a meeting of Christians as a church is both an end in itself and a means to an end. Too often we are satisfied with the first: we have rendered our service to God and obeyed Christ in gathering together. Many term these meetings “Services” and are content with that as their service. Surely service also consists in what we are and do in the world, among those who are not Christians and who do not acknowledge any devotion due to God. For Christians to be content with meeting together has been compared with soldiers constantly gathering for talks on military strategy in the field of battle, yet never going into that field to fight. The Christian's service is a spiritual warfare: he is not performing that service if he never faces the enemy where he is strongest—in everyday life in the world.

Campbell Morgan in one of his books brings out very forcibly the meaning of the great passage in 1 Peter 2:9. There Christians are designated as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. God's own people." Glorious indeed, and now we should rejoice in these truths! But not only that: these glories of the Christian are not an end in themselves, but for a purpose—"You are . . . that you may . . ." We are all that God has made us in order to be what God purposes through us,—"that we may declare the wonderful deeds of Him . . ." These "wonderful deeds" are recounted especially in the gospel. We have, therefore, these glorious privileges so that we may make them known to others. The church's primary task, then, is to proclaim the gospel, not only as the body of Christ assembled together, but as individual men and women who have each experienced the joys of Christ's salvation.

Paul's commendation

In our Lord's Day meetings we have recently read of Paul's sufferings in mind and body at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). He was physically ill-treated, persecuted by fellow-Jews and depressed in mind. Yet, in spite of these things (or perhaps because of them) a loving and working church was established in the city. This is shown in Paul's warm and commendatory first letter to the Thessalonians. And what commendation he gives them! Among other things he writes: "Not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything." (1 Thes. 1:8). From that church, formed in such persecution and suffering, the gospel had been spread throughout the whole country, and their purity of life was apparent to all. "So that," Paul says, "we need not say anything." These Christians were themselves preaching the gospel to all around, and their lives spoke of the reality and truth of what they preached. Even Paul need not preach there! Without any "full-time" evangelist or special missions, this church's daily concern and whole life was to make known the good news of salvation.

What need we have for such churches, such Christians, today! If we realise our responsibilities and rise to our privileges, we can go far towards restoring that "New Testament Christianity." We are not to congratulate ourselves in being able to raise a good meeting, or a good number around the Lord's table, who otherwise are of little service in the church. Rather we should encourage and train young brethren to be out and about preaching the gospel, in their assemblies and anywhere else where there is the need. Rather than bemoaning the fact that several are absent serving in this way, and thus depleting our own congregation, we should be grateful and rejoice in that from the church is sounding the word of the Lord in other parts.

We hear much these days of priorities. Are we sure we have got our priorities right in the church? Is it not of the first importance, the church's primary task, that she be sending out brethren with the message of salvation? Most churches are able to maintain their meetings, to "feed the flock," to work in their own neighbourhood, under the supervision of their elders, or other responsible brethren. We are too reliant upon others ministering to us, rather than realising that we are ministers to do God's service. This is God's way, and cannot be wrong. It is the divine method of accomplishing God's purposes through His church. With congregations under scriptural oversight, and at the same time spreading the gospel in other assemblies and, through individuals, in the immediate neighbourhood, the home, at work, among friends; while also releasing those who can to preach the word elsewhere: we shall go a good way towards resolving the difficulties we face, and bringing new spiritual life and hope into the service to which we have been called through the gospel.

EDITOR.

"WATCH THEREFORE"

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Matt. 25, 5.

When this body is laid to rest, I shall be absent from the body and present with the Lord; or if He comes again before I die, I shall meet Him, caught up in the air. The most important thing is what happens between the moment we meet Him in conversion and the moment when we go forth to meet Him face to face. "Watch therefore."

'Jehovah Witnesses' and the Deity of Christ

(Concluded)

TO SUM UP the teaching of that grand passage, John 1:1-14, let us observe that there are three great assertions made concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. That in the beginning, before anything was created, He existed.
2. That in that existence He was *pros* God; that is, in closest harmony and fellowship with Deity.
3. That in this association and fellowship there was no hint of inferiority on His part. The Word "was God"; that is the possessor of the divine nature.

Verse 11 indicates quite clearly to whom all things belong, because John writes, "He came to His own (things) and His own (people) received Him not." Or, it could be rendered: "He came to that which was His, and they which were His did not receive Him."

Finally, verse 14 declares that the One who existed in the beginning with God and who shared the divine nature, "became flesh." The word "became" points us, not to the beginning of an existence, but to the beginning of a new form of existence: a new manifestation of One who has always existed. This is also implied in the expression, "He dwelt among us." It has been written: He "pitched his tent among us." He came to live here for a while. Look again at verse 14 and leave out for a moment the part in brackets, which is really an inspired comment, and this is what we read: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

"The Firstborn"

One further "Watchtower" argument ought to be dealt with, namely the argument which says that Christ was the first being to be created by God. The "Witnesses" think that they have a basis for this idea in such passages as Colossians 1:15 and Revelation 3:14, for in them the expressions, "firstborn of all creation" and "beginning of the creation of God" are found.

In Rev. 3:14 the word rendered "beginning" is the word *arche*, which may be translated "origin." In fact, the "Watchtower" translation, "The New World Translation," renders it in this sense in John 1:1. Thus, Rev. 3:14 states that Christ is the origin of God's creation. He is the one by whom all things were made. "All things have been created through Him" (Col. 1:16)—a truth borne out by too many passages to adduce here. Notice that the new English New Testament renders it, "the prime source of all God's creation."

But in what sense must we understand Colossians 1:15, "the firstborn of all creation"? That word "firstborn" is used several times with reference to the Lord. Note, for instance, Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29 and Heb. 1:6, and the word *prototokes* does not, in any instance, imply that Christ was a created being. The word refers to rank and position, and not to precedence in time. Col. 1:18 states, for instance, that Christ is also the "firstborn from the dead," but no one will take this to mean that Christ was the first to be raised from the dead, because we know that this is not true. Here, then, "firstborn" clearly has to do with rank and importance.

In Romans 8:29, where Christ is said to be the "firstborn among many brethren," Paul does not mean that Christ was born or created, but that Christ is pre-eminent; He ranks highest. He is the one with authority and distinction. Once again, the New English New Testament brings out quite clearly the meaning of the passage under discussion: "His is the primacy over all created things." Christ was not the first being to be created by God! And this cannot possibly be what Paul had in mind when he wrote, because he continues "for in Him were all things created . . . and he is before all things, and in him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

It is my belief that the teaching of the "Watchtower" on the subject of the nature and work of Christ subverts the entire Christian faith. Not only is it in conflict with the plain teaching of the New Testament; it is blasphemous and insulting to Christ Himself, and will surely cause those who accept it to be lost eternally. The bearers of such pernicious teaching are spoken of in 2nd John 9 to 11. They are to be avoided.

F. WORGAN.

'Strange Fire'

"Strange Fire" on the Lord's Table (Leviticus 10:1, 2)

"AND Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."

Nadab and Abihu were two leaders among the children of Israel, and they must have known the will of the Lord concerning the office which they were performing before Him.

It is not stated in the above text what was the strange fire. To ascertain this, we must turn to other scriptures.

Leviticus chapter 6, verses 12 and 13 teach, that the fire upon the altar was ever burning. God had commanded this. It was therefore always available when required.

According to Leviticus chapter 16 and verse 12, it was this fire that the priests should have put in the censers when offering incense. Any other fire than that which was on the altar constituted strange fire. From this we judge that to offer to God anything not commanded by God is forbidden.

Later on we find it simply stated that Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense." This reference from Numbers 16, verse 46 shows that the fire for the censer was to be taken from off the altar.

Moses, that mighty leader of the children of Israel, when arranging the order of things for the tabernacle in the wilderness, was commanded by God, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40).

The pattern was given to these men and they failed to observe all things shown to them. They had the censer and the incense right, but they did not have the right fire. They did not take the fire from off the altar to burn the incense. The strange fire was not shown in the pattern on the mount. So we observe again that it was forbidden. God had commanded it not. The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapter 15, verse 4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

The same Apostle, this time writing to the Hebrews (Hebrews 13:9, 10) says, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace . . . We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Is not this altar the Lord's table? If under the old covenant the pattern given on the mount to Moses was to be observed in every respect, have we not also to observe the all things Jesus commanded His Apostles (Matt. 28:20)?

Nadab and Abihu in offering incense to the Lord had the correct censer and incense, but they substituted for the fire from the altar (which God commanded) "strange fire." That is, something which the Lord commanded them not.

We read that at the institution of the Lord's feast, with reference to the cup, "And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink ye all of it." (Matt. 26:27).

In varying this commandment in any particular, we are doing something which the Lord has commanded us not. To use anything or do anything that the Lord has not commanded, is to do something which the Lord has forbidden. Anything that the Lord has not commanded is forbidden. Therefore the putting of "individual cups" on the Lord's table is doing something that the Lord has not commanded. This is tantamount to offering "strange fire" before the Lord.

Hear then, brethren, the Apostle Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you . . . For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." (1 Corinthians 11, verses 1, 2 and 23).

S. WILSON.

Controlling our Thinking

WHY should we be concerned about how our thoughts are allowed to develop? Primarily because their growth and ultimate shape are determined by the conditions to which they are subjected. Thought precedes every action, whether word or deed. This being the case, we only conform to reason by placing first things first. This is no new theory just brought to light. We read in Isaiah 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

While we cannot think higher than the extent of our powers, this should in no way deter us from seeking to train our thoughts in the true direction of Him whose we are. Does not Paul so direct us in 1 Corinthians 10:4-5? — "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." What an ambition is defined in that last sentence! Can we dismiss it lightly? Most certainly not: the more especially as we consider the context of succeeding verses, dealing with the outstanding sin of disobedience, which is to be eradicated by bringing under control every thought unto the obedience of Christ Jesus. So plain, but not easy.

Jeroboam's thinking was wrong, as Abijah told him (2 Chron. 13:8): "And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David, and ye be a great multitude and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods" (17): "And Abijah slew them with a great slaughter;" "Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah—the Lord struck him and he died," but Abijah waxed mighty, different thinking, different results.

The Psalmist realised the need for his own thoughts to be tried or proved, as he says in Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Solomon has instruction for us on the tempo in which we should think (Prov. 21:5): "The thoughts of the diligent, tend only to plenteousness, but the thoughts of every one that is hasty are only to want." What can we deduce from these words, but a direct lesson on how we must think patiently? How very different our conclusions would be if we accorded patience her rightful place in arriving at them.

Example and Precept

In Luke 10:36 we read how Jesus told the lawyer to go and do as the Samaritan had done, when his thoughts were right, in showing himself neighbour to the victim by the wayside. This sequence of right thinking being followed by right doing, is exemplary for all. Like the unchangeability of God, there is no change in this rule, even though ages and eras differ, as we observe in both old and new testaments.

James 2:1-4 makes a fine analogy concerning evil thoughts and partiality among brethren. We do well if we consider this, being the children of an impartial Father (God is no respecter of persons). We should have no part with the evil of partiality, but rather keep our thoughts God-like. Paul gives instruction on thinking (Romans 12:3): "For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man and the measure of faith." Here Paul is stressing the need for humbleness in our very thinking. Then again in 1 Cor. 4:6 he warns against thinking preferentially one against another, seeing that we possess nothing of ourselves, but only that which God has given to any one of us, therefore any distinction is owed to God, not to man.

Paul, writing in Philippians 4:8 tells us the kind of thinking we should have. "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Here Paul portrays no half measures, only the thoroughly praiseworthy is acceptable. Should we confine our thinking solely to these things, there would be neither time nor room for any of the baser things, against which we have been so consistently warned. If we would be wise, let us listen to the wisdom of Solomon (Prov. 23:7): "As a man thinketh in his heart, so

is that man in himself." Not in speech or appearance, for he may say and seem one thing to the face, yet be so different in his heart, which alone portrays the true self.

Paul instructs the Corinthians to examine themselves, proving whether they be in the faith.

We need to take stock of our thinking, proving its merit. Let us try to comprehend what our minds would be like, free from evil thought. Just as the Yoga devotee concentrates his undivided efforts on the mastery of mental over physical (which things are but temporary) are we not more justified than Yogi when we are dealing with eternal issues? Christians need to employ wholly their ardent and earnest aspirations on those things, which Paul describes—"Whatsoever things are true . . ."

It is always helpful to spend a little time on analysis, which need only be brief, as there are but two categories: we are either gathering or scattering, the answer is yes or no.

To the younger brethren—of whom I am proudly jealous—I beg that they give this their intimate attention. They will reap much that many of us, by neglect, have hitherto lost.

J. A. GREGORY.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

MARCH, 1965.

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|------------------------|--------------------|
| 7—Jonah 1 | Acts 27:27 to 28:6 |
| 14—Jonah 3 and 4 | Acts 28:7-31 |
| 21—Genesis 21:1-21 | Luke 1:1-25 |
| 23—Exodus 1:15 to 2:10 | Luke 1:26-38 |

CONCLUSION OF "ACTS"

THIS book ends somewhat abruptly, and leaves us with a longing to know more of the apostle Paul's closing days. There seems little doubt that the epistles to Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians were written during the two years mentioned by Luke, and what we have read of the self-effacing Luke makes us think he stayed with Paul. While Paul had a degree of liberty, he would always be chained to a soldier, and the limitation must have been hard to bear. No doubt at times he just longed to get about among his beloved fellow-Christians. We are assured that he had "learnt, in whatsoever state he was, to be content" (Phil. 4:11).

The fact, too, that he had many visitors, with liberty to preach and teach Christ, kept him busy and often encouraged him. His view of this is expressed in Phil. 1:12-18. We know also that his imprisonment was made, by the letters he was enabled to write, a means of untold blessing to the Lord's people in all periods. It is thus by the circumstances of life that the Holy Spirit has completed the Scriptures—"holy men of God spake (wrote) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," so that "the man of God may be complete" (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

Testimony of early Christian writers leads us to assume that Paul was ac-

quitted at his first trial and thereafter had opportunity to travel for a time, and to fulfil his earnest desire to preach the gospel as far as Spain (Rom. 15:24). Information we gather from the letters to Timothy and Titus seems to confirm this as we read of Ephesus and Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3), Crete (Tit. 1:5), Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12) and Rome (2 Tim. 1:16 and 17). The second letter to Timothy was evidently written from Rome (1:16 and 17), and we read the closing paragraphs with deep emotion as we picture the aged preacher writing the urgent call to his "beloved son in the faith" to come quickly. He wants Mark too, and in his heart he bears up his other helpers, scattered around the world but doing the Lord's work, including Aquila and Priscilla, who had offered their lives for his (Rom. 15:4).

He must have sorrowed deeply for Demas and the desertion of some (4:16), but what a wealth of Christian fellowship and fortitude is hidden in the other names! A new kind of life was being spread through that dark and wicked age. Love and good fellowship were replacing selfishness and greed, and all that is good was being developed in human relationships (Phil. 4:8), and replacing the degrading sins of heathendom. The cost of this was the offering of living sacrifices, concluding in Paul's case, and so many others about the same time, on the altar of martyrdom. The sufferings under the fearful cruelties of Nero hardly bear reading, but these heroes of faith triumphed over death.

Faithful Doctor Luke was there, doubtless to the very end (2 Tim. 4:11), having concluded the wonderful story of the beginnings of the "greater works" (John 14:12). We now move into a reading and study of his "former treatise" (Acts: 1:1).

Luke's Gospel

Matthew and Mark tell us nothing of their personal reasons for writing the life of the Saviour, but Luke briefly introduces himself and gives the how and the why of his writing; and John, of course, states his purpose (21:30 and 31). These four accounts are the sole authentic sources of our knowledge of Jesus, and the proof of this is their unique character.

It is interesting to consider when and how this remarkable narrative was drawn up. We dare to guess—we dare not dogmatise—that Luke came into close touch with those “who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” while the apostle Paul was kept prisoner at Caesarea. We do not throw any doubt upon the possibility of direct divine inspiration, but God has worked through human instrumentality and Luke tells us himself that he gleaned his information. The early chapters of this work are touchingly and beautifully written, and display a tenderness and sympathy which we would suppose to be characteristic of the man. It would have been possible for him to be in Jerusalem for a time, learning the facts from those women who knew all about the early years of Jesus, possibly Mary, His mother, herself. This is in harmony with his statement, “traced the course of all things accurately from the first.” A careful writer, such as he undoubtedly was, would rejoice in every opportunity of gathering correct information. He could also have had close contact with the apostles, and with Mark, whose mother's house had been a rendezvous for Christians (Acts 12:12).

Signs of careful examination of evidence are specially shown in historical references, in the early chapters of the work. Read 1:5; 2:1 and 3:1 and 2 for these, and compare also 1:24 and 26; but note the frank yet reverent language used to describe the incidents in the first chapter.

R. B. SCOTT.

Evangelist

THE word evangelist occurs more than once in the New Testament. Philip is called an evangelist (Acts 21.8). The evangelists are said to be among the foundation workers of the Church (Ephesians 4.11). Timothy is told to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4.5).

The word in Greek is *euaggelistes*, and it literally means a bringer of good news. This is to say that both the individual Christian and the Church are to be characteristically bringers of good news.

Is this the case? The question was raised in my mind by reading Bruce Kenrick's “Come out the Wilderness,” which is the record of an experiment in East Harlem, in a district where the Church was stone dead, and where it has

been wonderfully revived in the most difficult circumstances. The ordinary, average, conventional Church had nothing to say to that district. Why?

One reason is that the ordinary Church tends to be critical of those whom it believes to be observing a lower moral standard than itself, and therefore, its tendency is to preach criticism and judgment. So Bruce Kenrick tells of Charlie the thief. Charlie had gone to Church once in his life. He had gone, as he said, “to hear about Christ,” but instead he heard about judgment. He had gone seeking Christ but finding the Law, he departed for good without Christ. . . .

There is a truth here. The average Church atmosphere has a tendency to be disapproving, and it has more than a tendency to identify religion with morality.

I quote Bruce Kenrick again. He records the words of one of the Harlem group about the fact that so much of the work looks like failure and seems to leave so little impression: “There are guys that you have got to love because Christ loves them, whom you've got to help because they need you, with whom you've got to stick around because Christ “sticks around” with them in the street and the candy store and the unlocked car at night; and they won't understand and they won't be changed, but they will see a glimmer of hope from a guy who loved them for Christ's sake.” The whole atmosphere is not criticism, not judgment, but love.

Almost the whole Christian gospel is contained in justification by faith. In Greek the word to justify does not mean to make just or to make good; it means to treat or reckon or account some one good and just, even if he is not. The tremendous truth of the Gospel is that God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4.5)—God treats the sinner as if he had been a good man.

If this is so, the Christian message is far more the message of the outreach of love than it is of the threat of judgment, and the Christian atmosphere should be that of loving care for every man and not of criticism of every man.

We might well get further, if we preached the grace of the good news of the Gospel rather than the morality of respectability.—“British Weekly,” 14-1-65.

TURNING TO CHRIST

WHEN man takes his place as a sinner, God can, in the exercise of grace, take His place as a Saviour, and then every question is settled, for the cross having answered all the claims of divine justice, mercy's copious streams can flow unhindered.—C. H. Mackintosh.



(Conducted by
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Talking to the Little Ones

JOSEPH IN PRISON

DO you remember what the Midianites did with Joseph when they took him to Egypt? Yes, they sold him as a slave—to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. But still God blessed him. "His master saw that God was with him, and that God prospered everything he took in hand." Why did God bless him? Because he was a **righteous** person—he tried always to please God.

A Wicked Woman

One of the lessons we must learn if we follow Jesus is this: that even though we try our best to please God some people will try hard to hurt and annoy us. Jesus once told his friends not to be surprised if the world hated them. He said, "If the world hates you, remember it hated me first. It is because you do not belong to the world . . . that the world hates you" (John 15:18-20). Jesus was altogether righteous. He always did the right, never did wrong; but the world hated him, and killed him.

Well, Joseph soon found himself in serious trouble. Potiphar's wife told a dreadful lie about him. Her husband listened to her and "put him in prison where the royal prisoners were bound."

Joseph in Prison

But God never fails his faithful people. Listen to this: "God was with Joseph and was kind to him, making him popular with the gaoler, who put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners in the gaol, holding him responsible for anything they did . . . and whatever he did God made it to prosper" (Genesis 39:21-23).

This reminds us of another great man in prison—the apostle Paul. During his last imprisonment, and not long before he was put to death, he wrote a letter to a Christian named Timothy. He told how many of his friends had let him down, and said: "The first time I had to defend myself, I had no supporters; everyone deserted me . . . but the Lord supported me and gave me strength. . . ." (2 Timothy 4:16-17).

Let's never forget this. If we have to suffer because we follow Jesus, He will

help us. In any trouble or difficulty at all, "Ask the Saviour to help you, comfort, strengthen and keep you. He is willing to aid you, he will carry you through."

The Chief Cupbearer and Head Baker

Later Pharaoh imprisoned his chief cupbearer and head baker, and it was Joseph's job to look after them. One morning when he went into their cell he found them both very sad. Each had had a dream, and felt it had a special meaning, but neither knew what the meaning was. Joseph said, "Do not interpretations (that's 'explanations') belong to God? But pray, tell me the dream."

First the chief cupbearer told what he had dreamed. Joseph told him in three days he would be released from prison and allowed to do his work as cupbearer. Then he said, "But remember me when all goes well with you; do me the kindness of mentioning my name to Pharaoh and get me out of here."

Then the head baker told his dream and Joseph explained that in three days he too would be taken out of prison—but Pharaoh would have him put to death.

All happened just as God had shown through Joseph. The head baker was killed. The cupbearer was given his former position. "But the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph; he forgot him."

Don't Forget!

Isn't that sad? The chief cupbearer forgot all about the Hebrew slave who had been such a help to him. I'm afraid we often forget the things we ought to remember—and remember things best forgotten. We ought to forget that unkind word somebody spoke to us; or the hurtful thing another did. But we ought always to remember kindness. Most of all, of course, we must always remember—never, never forget—that Jesus loved us enough to die for us. Do you know why Christians meet together every first day of the week for the Lord's Supper? I'm sure you do—it is to remember Jesus. He asks those who have given their lives to him to do this so that they may be helped never to forget. He said, "This do in remembrance of me."

A. E. Winstanley

Reverence

Today I came to worship. There was a burden on my heart, and I wanted to commune with God. I came early, so that I might meditate and concentrate upon Our Lord's goodness, His love and His sacrifice.

There was none there when first I came but there was the emblem of His body which was before me. I was glad to be alone with Him. "How much He loved," I thought, "How little He was understood while here on earth. How much He gave that I might have an insight into His infinite loving kindness. In the quietness of that moment I was overcome with a sense of relief. I heard His voice: "Come, ye that are weary and find rest."

But the sweetness of that moment was broken, for others were coming to worship. Blithely they entered: happy and carefree they appeared; nonchalantly they spoke of the events of the past week, and glibly of the anticipation of the morrow. I gazed at the table on which lay the emblem of His body, and silently prayed:—

"Lord, at Thy feet I have left my care,
And I have gleaned from this precious hour
Real worship, which in truth is rare.
And now, the prayer which I leave with Thee:
O Lord, may my worship ever be
From all earthly thoughts and pleasures free."—Selected.

THE THANKFUL HEART

If anyone should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them: but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how it would draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the greater power of attraction! The **unthankful heart**, like my fingers in the sand, discovers no mercies, but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings.—Selected.

WORSHIP

THERE is no activity of the angelic or the human spirit which is higher than that of worshipping God—being taken up with His "worthship," for that is what "worship" means; extolling different aspects of His worthship, with every faculty of body, mind and spirit—in words, in song, and in silence.

This is to Live

To be again one of a laughing throng,
To share a joke, or join in with the song,
To realise that once more you belong:—
This is to live.

To hear again the lovely birds that sing,
The tiny sounds the woodland voices bring:

The rustling leaves and insects on the wing:—
This is to live.

To hear an organ played by master hand:
Majestic orchestra or soft string band;
A well-trained choir singing as they stand:—
This is to live.

You who have never lost power to hear,
Or known the agony of loneliness and fear,
Of living in a silent world most drear:—
Thank God you live.

So spare a thought, and understanding too,
For those who live in silence; and when you
Meet them, with sympathy and patience do
Help them to live.

ERIC M. BLUNDELL.

Hereford.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Bro. Melling,—I feel that the article "Origin of Species" is worthy of a special word of thanks, as it seems that this "doctrine of devils" needs exposing to the full, that at the least, it may be debated, on the ground that it is "unproved theory" not "proved fact" as schools, colleges and universities and the like in this country teach to our children and young people.

Christian parents especially should be aware of this pernicious teaching given to their children, in order to combat it by showing the facts given by God, with proof, and with plain common sense.

Let all of us use every opportunity we have to correct this "ridiculous nonsense of so-called science."

Yours in Christ Jesus,

D. L. Daniell.

WHITHER NOW?

Brother Editor,—Two recent letters and a tract reprint in the "S.S." seem to indicate that the 1960 "Correspondence"

did not clear up many fundamental points on the "cup question." Because there is now a demand through the "S.S." for some response from those who can accept more than one container for the fruit of the vine, the following points are submitted:—

(1) The biggest issue involved in this controversy is neither the violation of custom nor the neglect of the authority of Christ. Rather, it is, in the long run, whether or not the church will tie itself to principles of interpretation which inevitably work themselves into a cultism characteristic of the Exclusive Brethren. Therefore, as has always been true of the restoration movement, solid attention must be given to correct principles of interpretation.

(2) Writing on this subject in the past four years indicates that brethren who are united against the "individual cups" are woefully divided on what they should use, as well as on church government and evangelism. Therefore, it is evident that proper attention has not been given to principles of interpretation.

(3) Although a brief article would suffice to explain the scriptural permissibility (authority) for more than one container, considerably more space is required to deal fairly with many cavils and honest objections which are frequently raised. For this reason, this writer is not willing to be restricted to a correspondence column on this or any other issue (e.g., baptism, instrumental music, etc.). Therefore, I suggest that some arrangements be made for fuller discussion of the issue, primarily by representative men on both sides.

(4) Many brethren who accept the plural-container position, including this writer, are willing and ready to discuss or debate, publicly or privately, orally or in writing, the container question. We do not crusade on this issue, but we want brethren to know of our willingness to defend or explain the scripturalness of what we do in this matter as in others.

As for this writer he will shun castigation and cryptic remarks in favour of some arrangement for fuller discussion. In the nature of the case he will wait for suggestions (particularly from those who are requesting information from the other side) of a way in which this may be done. Are there any responses in the interest of unity and edification?

C. PHILIP SLATE,

279 Woodcock Hill,
Kenton, Harrow, Middx.,
England.

"JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES"

Recently we duplicated, under the title Correspondence with a "Jehovah's Witness," a series of letters by a "J.W."

congregational leader and myself, concerning the possibility of a public discussion of differences. A free copy will be sent to anyone who requests it and sends a 2½d. stamp for postage. If I may be of service to brethren in any area by meeting the "J.W.s" in public discussion, please write to me about it: C. Philip Slate, Church of Christ, Barnhill Road, Wembley, Middlesex.

WILL YOU HELP?

The Church of Christ at Ince-In-Makerfield entered its new meeting-place in March, 1961. In addition to a tremendous amount of hours of manual labour, gifts and loans from the brethren made it possible for us to complete our building. Since entering our meeting-place, we have spent several hundreds of pounds on mission work, made a weekly contribution towards the support of a full-time worker, and also answered most appeals that have been made by other churches, as well as reducing the amount of our loans from £1,215 to just over £500.

Today, our greatest need is for the erection of a permanent fence around our building, and last November we decided to allocate £75 from our church fund, and £3 weekly from our contributions, for this purpose. The first phase of the work is due to begin within the next week or so, which is the front fence, including two gates, at a cost of about £150. We would very much like to complete the work, which will cost us approximately £400, but this is not possible unless you will help.

WILL YOU HELP?

All donations, however small, will be gratefully acknowledged by our treasurer: Bro. Brian Stevens, 2 Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancs.

THE "SCRIPTURE STANDARD"

MORE than thirty years ago, the late Bro. W. M. Kempster made it known that he was ceasing to publish the "Bible Advocate." A few brethren quickly got together and agreed that something should be done.

These brethren included W. Crosthwaite, R. McDonald, A. Murray and T. E. Entwistle. As a result the "Scripture Standard" came into being, with Bro. Crosthwaite as editor. Bro. John Scouler, of Scotland, was keenly interested and wrote, "Bro. Crosthwaite should be editor: he seems to remember everything he ever read." I was asked to be treasurer and distributing agent.

So, late in 1934, the editor and I sat down behind the scenes in my shop at Fleetwood and by tea time the first issue had taken shape and was published in January 1935; so there was no break in publication between the "B.A." and the "S.S."

Messages of goodwill were received from brethren John Anderson, C. Bailey, W. H. Clarke, T. E. Entwistle, J. Garnett, G. Hassell, J. Holmes and J. Wardrop.

Bro. Scouler was active from the start, writing notes on the Scripture readings and answering questions. He was a very able brother and his untimely death was a very great loss. I recall him singing a solo near Blackpool promenade one Lord's Day when he was serving the church in Gadsby Street.

All work on the magazine by editor, treasurer and distributing agents has always been done without any payment. Bro. Barker has done great service all along in printing and despatching parcels to agents, and is still doing so.

That the "S.S." has continued when papers of all kinds are ceasing publication, or being merged, is a cause for thankfulness, and we should be grateful for this medium and to those who do the work.

A. L. FRITH.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury.—We rejoice to report the obedience of another soul to the Lord. Norman Robson was baptised into Christ on Wednesday, January 27th. Brother Robson is a driving instructor and was first contacted by one of our brethren while taking driving lessons with him. May he find great blessing in a life of faithful service in the Lord.

Blackburn: Park Road.—The church is happy to announce that (God willing) it will meet in its newly-acquired premises on or about Lord's Day, March 14th, 1965. A great amount of progress has been made in furnishing the interior of the premises, but much more needs to be done before the work of renovating is completed. It is our hope, however, that on March 14th the assembly will meet to break bread there for the first time, and that at a date to be announced later, arrangements will be published for special meetings to be conducted by a visiting speaker. The new address is New Wellington Street, Blackburn, Lancs. We give God the praise. R.R.

Blackburn: Park Road.—We rejoice again in that another precious soul has been added to those who are being saved. On Tuesday, February 9th, Mrs. S. Walsh was immersed upon the confession of her faith in Jesus the Christ, and so became a member of His church. Our sister had heard the gospel message preached on a number of occasions. Once again our brethren at Jackson's Square, Scholes, assisted us with the baptismal arrangements. R.R.

OBITUARY

APPRECIATION

Sister Esther Wilson and family wish to thank all the brethren who visited Bro. Slater Wilson during his illness and for letters of sympathy received.

Also Bro. Leonard Morgan for his kind ministrations at the chapel and crematorium services. Christian wishes.

Margaret Wilson.

Blackburn: Hamilton Street.—Again the church has suffered loss by bereavement, in the passing of Brother Chris Knowles. For many months he had been very ill and confined to his home or in hospital, but had looked forward to the time when he would be able to meet again with his brethren on Lord's Days. However, this was not to be and we laid him to rest on February 1st. He leaves a wife, Sister Nancy, and we commend her and the relatives to Him who is both "able to keep" and "to supply all our needs in Christ Jesus." J.P.

Kentish Town.—Our aged sister Mrs. C. Cummins passed away on Thursday, 28th January. She had been in feeble health since our brother Cummins died in May last year, being almost blind, and largely bedridden. Her children and grand-children paid their last respects at the North London Crematorium on 1st February when the writer had the privilege of paying tribute to the life and character of a good and faithful woman. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." R. B. Scott.

THE HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP

AFTER making many enquiries about a suitable place for the Holiday Fellowship, no venue for 1965 has been found, although we have had information about a number of places which might be available to us in 1966.

I have therefore decided to make this announcement, so that all who are interested may know that there is not likely to be a Holiday Fellowship this year. God willing, we hope to announce arrangements for 1966 Holiday Fellowship in the "Standard" before the end of this year. A. E. Winstanley.

THE BOOKLET: "THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU"

This 28-page booklet has been out of print for some time, but I have had repeated requests for supplies, and a new and improved edition is now being printed by Brother Barker. It will soon be off the press and any who want supplies or information about prices should write to me.—A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England.

SPRING CONFERENCE

17th April, 1965

Meeting Room: Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs. Business session 2 to 3 p.m.

Two periods of study in the background of John 17 will each be introduced by three fifteen-minute addresses. It is not intended, today, to go into the pros and cons of suggested methods to achieve unity in a divided Christendom, but rather to learn from the Scriptures the nature and objective of the oneness for which Jesus prayed.

From 3 to 5 p.m. Leader: R. McDonald, W. Smith, E. Makin:—

The WORD: "... they have kept thy word."

The NAME: "... I have made known thy name."

The GLORY: "... the glory ... I have given to them."

From 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. Leader: J. Fitton, C. Melling, A. Hood.

The UNITY: "... that they all may be one as we are one."

The BELIEF: "... so that the world may believe."

The CONFESSION: "... that the world may acknowledge."

TEA will be served in the meeting-room, 5-6.30 p.m.

HOSPITALITY enquiries to the church secretary, James Pritt, 31 Goldhey Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

COMING EVENTS

Aylesbury, March 14th-21st: Gospel campaign. Preacher: Hans Nowak, Kaiserslautern, Germany. Meetings nightly: Lord's Day, 6.30 p.m.; Week-nights, 8 p.m.

April 17th-19th: Young People's Week-end. Saturday, April 17th: Panel discussion and other features of particular interest to young people. Monday, April

19th; fellowship and recreation. Hospitality provided by our young people. Full details will be sent to all churches.

June 20th-July 4th: Gospel campaign. Preacher: Virgil Trout, Sunset church, Lubbock, Texas. Theme: "Christian Evidences." Meetings nightly: Lord's Day, 6.30 p.m.; Weeknights, 8 p.m. Brethren are invited to join the personal work teams being organised by us to support this campaign.

July 25th-August 8th: Summer School. "Training for Service," classes to be held each day, Monday-Friday, and evenings, Tuesday-Friday, of each week. Full details, including subjects, lectures and enrolment forms will be sent to all churches.

Brethren are asked to make a note of these dates and are invited to have fellowship with us in any or all of these activities. Hospitality will be provided.

Ince-In-Makerfield (Wigan)

CAMPAIGN FOR CHRIST

(16th April to 2nd May, 1965, D.V.)

Daily devotional sessions, followed by door-to-door visitation with a view to arranging home Bible studies etc., as well as extending invitations to the evening gospel meetings.

Gospel meetings nightly (with the exception of 2nd and 3rd Friday nights) at 7.30 p.m. Gospel preacher: Bro. A. E. Winstanley.

Brothers or sisters who can give any, or all of the time during this period are asked to write NOW, giving details, to: Philip Partington, 636 Atherton Road, Hindley Green, Wigan, Lancs.

Accommodation will gladly be provided.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

T. McDonald, Norfolk House, 17 Northfield Place, Dewsbury, Yorks. Telephone: Dewsbury 3064.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 12/-; two copies 20/6; three copies 28/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 80 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

All correspondence, including articles, news items, coming events, etc., to be sent, before the 10th of the month to the Editor, C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

NOTICES. Scale of charges: 3/- for first 3 lines or less; 8d. each subsequent line. Repeats (if notified when sending copy) half original charge. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, who is also Secretary of Conference Committee, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, York.

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

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley, Leeds, Yorkshire. Tel. Morley 255.