

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 15. No. 3.

MARCH, 1949.

'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.'

IN our last issue we wrote of the Bible as the one divine, authoritative and reliable standard. Most religious bodies claim to believe that of the grand old Book. Protestants have shouted the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is our religion. Article VI of the Church of England reads: 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' It is amazing that some who subscribe to the above statements are squeamish about the watchword of the Restoration Movement: 'Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.' Yet Protestants, while professing to believe in the all-sufficiency of the Bible as a standard, are divided into innumerable sects and parties; and so long as sectarianism lasts, scepticism will flourish.

George Jacob Holyoake, one of the best of sceptics, said: 'Where so many incompetent sects, in narrow knowledge and distracted voices—affluent in imputation and bitter in tone—each claims to have discovered God and to know His will, it is humility to hesitate, and reverence to doubt . . . that [Book] cannot be the signature of heaven which is so enigmatical that hundred sects read it differently.' (*Trial of Theism*).

Failure to 'rightly divide the word of truth,' — to read it aright — accounts for much confusion and division.

How Readest Thou ?

That was the question put by Jesus to a Jewish religious teacher. It is a question of supreme importance. Many say they cannot understand the Bible, yet, when pressed, they admit they have never seriously read it.

In our early days, the Bible was a household book, and was read daily. Now there are many homes without a Bible; and in some homes where there is a Bible, as C. H. Spurgeon said, 'You can write damnation in the dust on the covers of it.'

Robert Burns, in the finest piece he wrote, 'The Cottar's Saturday Night,' describes the simple worship in that humble home;

The priest-like father reads the sacred page
 Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays
 From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs.

There would be more hope for Britain's future if there was more Bible reading, and less crowding to cinemas, dances, and football matches.

The Bible is a Divine Library

It consists of sixty-six books, written by many and varied writers; yet it is one with one definite message. It tells how sin entered all the world, and death by sin; and how to get sin out of the world. All the prophecies, types, shadows, and ceremonies of the Old Testament point to the Christ, the Saviour of the world. The one message of the Bible is salvation. Its opening pages tell of Paradise lost, its succeeding pages unfold the divine plan of salvation, its closing pages tell of Paradise restored: 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

Where in all the literature of the world is there anything to equal that? Of the Bible, Christopher Harvey wrote:

It is the Book of God. What if I should say, God of Books?
 Let him that looks angry at that expression as too bold,
 His thoughts in silence smother till he find such another.

Two Main Divisions

It should be obvious to all who handle a Bible that there are two divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. In other words, the Scriptures belonging to the old Covenant, and those belonging to the new.

After the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt's bondage, God said: 'Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.' (Exodus xix. 5-6).

They failed to keep their part of this covenant (agreement); and God said: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people: And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' (Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34).

This is a prophecy and promise of a new and entirely different covenant; on points of contrast we hope to write later. The inspired writer to the Hebrews, commenting on the above passage, says: 'In that he saith, a

new covenant, he hath made the first old [obsolete]. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.'

Although the teaching of the New Testament is so plain and emphatic on this point, there are thousands of Christians, and preachers, who know not how to rightly divide the word of truth. They mix up the two covenants, the law and the gospel, and their religion is a hodge-podge of Judaism and Christianity. Paul had to fight those who would mix up the two systems, and his letters abound with clear statements such as: 'Ye are not under the law, but under grace.' (Romans vi. 14).

The Epistle to the Hebrews, and the one to the Galatians, contrast the two covenants; the old is the shadow of which we have the substance in the new. We have 'a better covenant which was established upon better promises.' In Christ, we are free from the law, and are exhorted to 'stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' (Gal. vi. 1).

A conference to consider the relation of Christians to the Mosaic law was held at Jerusalem, and is reported in Acts xv. The decision of the apostles and elders at that conference was that Christians are under no obligation to observe any part of the law of Moses. As Paul shows, in his letter to the Galatians, if we observe any part of that law we put ourselves under obligation to keep it all. We cannot pick and choose and say we will keep one or two of its precepts and neglect the rest.

We know some will be horrified at such teaching; and will insist that we must keep the decalogue (the ten commandments). If not, they say, then we can commit all the things it forbids. Unless any part of the old covenant law is re-enacted in the new, we are free from it. Well, you will find nine of those commandments in the New Testament, but you will fail to find the fourth, about which some have so much to say. (On this, more later, D.V.).

The purpose of the old law is clearly stated: it 'was our schoolmaster [tutor-slave] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.' (Gal. iii. 24-25).

The old covenant Scriptures are mainly the record of how God prepared for Christianity. Thank God, that in spite of all the teaching of so-called scholars, many of us still believe that 'the types and shadows of the word unite in Christ, the Man, the Lord, the Saviour just and true.' The risen Lord Himself, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.' (Luke xxiv. 27).

'Hear Ye Him'

When Jesus was transfigured, and there appeared Moses and Elijah, representing the old covenant dispensation, God's voice rang out: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'

So it is written: 'God, having of old time [the old covenant] spoken unto the fathers [of the Jewish nation] in the prophets . . . hath at the end of these days [the new covenant] spoken unto us in his Son.' When will all Christians learn that we are under law to Jesus only? 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'

Here we must leave off until our next issue,

EDITOR.

Expedients in Christian Service.

IN 1 Cor. vi. 12 and x. 23, Paul says, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.' Here the apostle uses the word with reference to the eating of meats. However, it is evident that he was stating a general principle, because it does not only apply to the eating of meats.

The word used is defined by Liddell and Scott as meaning, among other things, 'to be useful, to conduce to one's advantage, to be profitable, to be expedient.' It appears in the New Testament seventeen times. Three times it is translated, 'profitable' (Matt. v. 29-30 and Acts xx. 20); once, 'better' (Matt. xviii. 6); once, 'good' (Matt. xix. 10); seven times 'expedient' (John xi. 50, xvi. 7, xviii. 14, 1 Cor. vi. 12, x. 33, 2 Cor. viii. 10, xii. 1), and four times 'profit' (1 Cor. vii. 35, x. 33, xii. 7; Heb. xii. 10). One other time it appears in Acts xix. 19, where it is transitive and is translated, 'brought together.' (I have omitted the prepositions to avoid confusion).

From a consideration of the passages cited above, we learn: (1) of God's great expedient—the death of Christ (John xi. 47-53 and xviii. 14); (2) that the Saviour's departure from the world was an expedient (John xvi. 6-7); (3) that the grace of true liberality is expedient for all Christians (2 Cor. viii. 10); (4) that Paul laid down the general principle in 1 Cor. vi. 12 and x. 23. Thus: it must be lawful, *i.e.*, it must violate no stated New Testament law; it must be profitable (the root idea of the word); it must be unto edification, *i.e.*, it must tend to the building up, and not to the breaking down of the Body of Christ.

To this scribe, it seems that meetinghouses, Sunday schools, gospel meeting arrangements, and even the present set-up of the work of our evangelists, along with the conference and the committee, all fall into this class. Those are expedients which promote the welfare of the Churches, and violate the clear teaching of no passage of Scripture. Do not let us be afraid of the word, simply because innovations have been justified thereby, for no true expedient can be an innovation. Nor can things be called expedients which have ceased to be profitable in the work of the Lord.

ANDREW GARDINER, Jnr.

Did Paul Mean what He Said.

'BUT I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.' (2 Cor. xi. 3).

Denominationalism has turned its worship of the God of heaven into a gaudy, man-made, idolatry. In few Churches can be found the sincere simplicity of the gospel. God's way has been cast aside for man's way.

Dissatisfaction with the Bible has caused man to seek a 'better way.' The way that will please man instead of God. The way that will permit his doctrine or his philosophy to be accepted as a practical teaching for modern life. On every hand, man has made changes to suit his own desires, and the vanities of the membership of the modern Churches.

The Lord's people to-day find themselves faced with the same problem. In many places, men have taken into their own hands the task of altering the worship of the Church to make it more pleasing for the leisure-minded of the congregations.

Instrumental music was an invention of man, which came as a move to make spiritual Israel more like the people about them. It also came as a move to satisfy those who said the organ would make the worship in song better. There were brethren who opposed this innovation, and thus the Church retained its purity in that score. The same was true of 'societies,' and other devices of men's hands.

To-day we find congregations faced with another alteration from the original Christian system. Many Churches of Christ have adopted a full-time preacher and given him the title of 'Minister.' This, too, is a move to make the services of the Church more educational, and, in general, a 'better way.'

The New Testament teaches the work of Elders and Deacons. It also teaches the labour of the Evangelist. In no place do we find that the local congregations employed a minister. It is as foreign to the original Christian system as instrumental music.

The Lord's Day worship of the infant Church was not an evangelistic meeting, or an entertainment for the brethren. To the contrary, it was a time of sacred and sincere worship. Each individual felt the need of worshipping God from the heart, and edifying his brethren in Christ. To remove the mutual service in the worship or general work of the Church, is to alter the plan adhered to by the Church of Christ in century one.

Bible colleges and progressive-minded brethren have lulled congregation after congregation into a 'minister system,' which takes away the opportunity for individual brethren in the congregation to deliver an exhortation to their brethren in Christ.

To-day, as never before, do we need the support of brethren who are not willing to compromise or change the Lord's original plan. Paul called it simplicity. Regardless of man's feeling, God wants the simplicity of mutual service. May we seek to retain this simplicity of the gospel.

WILLIAM J. HENSLEY, Evangelist, U.S.A.

An Impregnable Rock.

WE STAND ON THE BOOK and must get its teaching before the public. We have the truth and must preach it. We stand on the only position all the world acknowledges to be safe and invulnerable. All denominations admit we are saved and safe. Not a thing we preach is called in question or is in debate. All controversy is over what others have eliminated or substituted. Our position is right and cannot be wrong, all the religious world being judge. We preach the Book in the very words of the Book. Nothing else is worth the time it takes to tell it. We have no unkind feeling against any individual or denomination. We are endeavouring simply to persuade all to lay aside 'precepts and commandments of men' and come to the Book. In no other way can any man claim the promise of salvation, here or hereafter.—*American Christian Review*, December, 1948.

Book Review.

A Clean Church, by W. Carl Ketcherside. The sub-title of this book: 'Studies in Discipline for Soldiers in the Army of the Lord,' explains its purpose. On the book wrapper it is stated that 'many Churches to-day are in a sad condition. Worldliness, indifference, insubordination, hinder the progress of God's people. How can the Church be cleansed, purged of sin, and become as white as snow? It cannot be made pure by whitewashing, but only by washing white in the blood of the Lamb.'

In this book the author shows how the stream of God's Word should flow through the Church, and cleanse all who are members of it. The author maintains that 'the strength of the Church is the purity of the lives of those who compose it.' To all these statements, and indeed to the whole book, the reviewer utters a heartfelt, Amen!

Bro. Ketcherside sees that the crying need of the Church is purification within its own members. He shows the cause of lack of progress of the Israelites in the wilderness to be 'sin in the camp,' and that until that sin was purged Israel could not have the full blessing of God.

The question: 'What is Discipline?' is next dealt with, and the author shows that it is not merely, as is so often thought, withdrawal from the ungodly, but 'training, education, subjection to control, regulation, chastisement.' Thus, all in the Church should be ready, not only to be disciplined by the Church, but to exercise voluntary discipline on themselves.

Then Bro. Ketcherside deals with personal offences, going to law, restoration of offenders, effect of discipline, walking disorderly, discipline in the Corinthian Church, congregational autonomy, procedure in discipline, objections to discipline, and how to avoid public discipline. In each chapter, the Scriptural case is quoted and enlarged upon, sometimes with examples given. Throughout, the subject is treated in a firm yet reverent and loving manner. The author never gives the impression of being 'after scalps,' and one is reminded of Paul's saying that 'love rejoiceth not in iniquity.'

Bro. Ketcherside is convincing in his treatment of those cases of discipline expressly specified in the New Testament, such as in 1 Cor. v. Of the necessity for withdrawal in such cases there can be no doubt. The Church cannot please herself: she must carry out the Lord's command. But the author is no less convincing in dealing with cases of discipline sometimes regarded as matters of opinion. For instance, in the case of absenteeism from the Lord's Table without adequate reason, he asks: 'Have we been ordered by the tradition received from the apostles to meet together in memory of our Lord? If so, is one who repeatedly is guilty of absenteeism, without reason, walking according to orders? If not according to orders, is such course disorderly?' Without doubt, to disobey orders is to walk disorderly, and to merit the Church's withdrawal. Too often we think that infidelity means atheism or opposition to the gospel. Actually it means unfaithfulness. There are many infidels (unfaithful members) in the Church of Christ.

The book is full of sound wisdom, because the wisdom is of God's Word on these matters. One could quote many strikingly true and relevant statements, but space forbids. It is written in a simple and clear style and in a spirit of love and humility. I echo the desire of the editor of this magazine in noticing the book in the February issue that it be in the hands of all Church members, and especially leaders.

Only when the Churches of Christ are led by scripturally qualified elders, under the rule of Christ, will discipline, such as outlined in this book, lead to 'a clean Church,' for which we all yearn.

The price of the book is 8s. 10d. in English money. Rather expensive, but, as Bro. Ketcherside points out, due to the high cost of materials and printing in the United States.

C. MELLING.

Meditations. No. 3.

WE would here like to consider Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?'

This letter was written to those Jews who had accepted Jesus as their Messiah. They had lived under an institution, of which Moses was leader and guide, and had now voluntarily placed themselves under one, of which Jesus was the administrator. The writer is herein laying side by side the merits of the two institutions, because they were slow to loose hold of one and to grasp firmly of the other (v. 12). The superiority of the new institution governed by Jesus over that of Moses is demonstrated by the writer to give confidence and encouragement to those saints, to prevent their drifting away from Christ: 'Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away.' (ii. 1, R.V.).

In the first chapter, the superiority of Jesus is affirmed, and comparison made. As it is institutions that are being considered, all must be understood in harmony with this. Thus, the term 'angels' in this chapter is not to be accepted in the modern use of the word, that is, celestial beings, as they had no official standing in connection with the institution. We are guided in this by the writer himself in verse 14, for he affirms they are all 'ministering spirits.'

Peter, in his first Epistle (i. 10-12), states that prophets of old, in their testimony concerning Christ and the glory that would follow, were ministering to the saints under Christ's institution. This is also confirmed by Stephen (Acts iii. 24), 'Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of those days'; and by Paul (Acts x. 43), 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' Furthermore, Stephen, in his defence (Acts vii. 37), quotes an express declaration by Moses concerning Jesus, and in verse 53 affirms they had received the law at the disposition of angels.

Now it is to these prophets of old, as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, etc., in their official standing in connection with that institution, to whom, under the term 'angel' (that is messenger or 'ministering spirit'), the writer to the Hebrews contrasts Jesus. It was not on these that their eternal destiny

rested, but on Christ. They were indeed faithful servants of the House (iii. 12), but Christ is the Son of His own House (iii. 6).

These worthy old prophets of God with their testimony, are the 'ministering spirits' of verse 14 and further reference is made to them in xii. 23: 'But ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' In this passage, the term 'spirits of just men' is by metonymy put for prophets. What the writer is here affirming is that, in the Church, the testimony of the prophets is perfected. This truth is confirmed by Peter in 1 Peter i. 10-12 by an angel to John (Rev. xix. 10), and by Paul in 2 Tim. iii. 15.

A. JACKSON.

Microbes.

THE early Christians were not aware that among the manifold objects of God's creation and providential care, there was a countless host of the little bugs that now pass under the name of microbes. This fact was left, like destructive criticism, to be discovered in our own scientific age. Now the microbes are as well known as gnats and mosquitoes. It is known, too, that they are widespread and are exceedingly dangerous; for they float in the air, they swim in the water, and we drink them in with our mother's milk. When they once get in us they begin to eat our vitals, and they bring on all diseases. If we could only keep them out, we might live forever, unless somebody kills us. The doctors have warned us not to spit on the sidewalks, lest our microbes, swarming up from the spittle, be swallowed by some passer-by to the utter ruin of his constitution; and they object to horses and other animals being allowed on the streets, unless we sweep up after them with great care.

Under these circumstances, it ought not to surprise anybody that some among us, who think that religion ought to keep pace with scientific discoveries, have become dreadfully alarmed over some of our ancient religious customs which originated before the discovery of microbes. For example, the custom of passing the same cup of wine to a large number of persons when observing the Lord's Supper. We have always been a little squeamish about drinking out of the same cup with certain persons that we could name, and now, seeing that by doing so there is a risk of our swallowing some of their microbes, the practice has become intolerable. It is true that our Lord appointed it this way; but then He may have forgotten, just at the moment, that He had made all these microbes, and that they were such awful things; or else He thought that, as in the case of our new criticism, the age in which He lived was not prepared for a revelation on the subject, and so He left matters as He found them. Perhaps He reflected that the many millions who were destined to premature graves by swallowing these microbes at the Lord's Supper, would die in a good cause, and He therefore left them to their fate until an enlightened age would correct the evil. We have now reached that enlightened age, for the Spirit is still

leading us into new truth; and we propose to stop that needless waste of human life by having individual cups from which to drink the wine. If any man cries out against it as being unscriptural, exclusive or finicky, or anything of that sort, we will call him a legalist, a literalist, a Pharisee, a back number, a last year's almanac, and a whole lot of things that we use to silence croakers with.

This is not all. Revolutions, we have learned, never go backward. When the wheels of progress once get up steam behind them, they are going to roll on, and the man who gets in the way will be run over. Upon further reflection about these microbes, we have been forced to observe that there is just as much danger of swallowing other people's microbes when we pinch a piece from the same bread from which they have pinched, as when we drink from the same cup. Microbes come from the tips of the fingers when they are a little soiled or a little sweaty, and we are not going to run the risk of eating any of these. We have not yet completed our plans for avoiding this imminent peril to our lives; but, as we have already secured the manufacture of tiny little individual cups, we shall probably have the bread cut up into nice little cubes, which will be dropped into the little cups, so that we can swallow both at once. This device will charmingly harmonise with the time-saving device, which some of us who hate long services have already adopted, of passing bread and wine both at once.

Don't be alarmed and cry out 'innovation,' 'wolf in sheep's clothing,' 'heretic,' or anything of that nature, till you hear us a little further. It is a fact, a very alarming fact, strangely overlooked hitherto, that there is a great deal more danger of these microbes when we were baptised in the same water with other people; and we are bound, in all honour and consistency, as well as by a supreme regard to life and health, to put a stop to that.

Here we shall encounter some difficulties; but difficulties are made to be overcome, and we must meet them courageously. At first thought some one may propose, as a remedy, to dispense with baptisteries, and go to outdoor pools and streams; but it only requires a moment's consideration to be reminded that dead dogs, dead cats, and other things are constantly thrown into these outdoor waters, and that the very worst of microbes emanate from these. Moreover, frogs, tadpoles and snakes frequent these waters, while horses, cows and hogs go there to drink, and we might get some microbes if we are baptised in such places. The remedy seems to be, to retain the baptistery, but to have it washed, rinsed and scoured and fumigated after every individual baptism. This can be done very easily in some of our Churches, especially where the preacher is a scientific critic whose cases of baptism, like angels' visits, are few and far between.

There is another imminent peril to which Church people are exposed, and for which science, in God's own good time, has furnished a remedy. It is the peril consequent on a large number of persons being shut up together for an hour or two in the same room and breathing the same air. On such occasions a swarm of these mischievous microbes keeps rushing out of every man's mouth with every breath he exhales, and the air gets so full of

them that sometimes we can smell them. This is far more perilous than drinking of the same cup, breaking pieces from the same loaf of bread, or being baptised in the same water. This must be remedied; and the heaven-sent remedy to which I have made reference is the telephone. We will supply every family with one of these instruments, so that they can assemble in their own parlours at the appointed hour and listen while the preacher, alone in his parlour—for we shall need no meeting-house then—stands in the middle of the floor and talks into the other end of these instruments.

There may be some defects in this scheme as yet; for all schemes, even those invented by inspired men and by Christ Himself, are found by experience to need improvement as men become more enlightened; but progress is the law of religion as well as of nature, and we can not doubt that in the progress of religious evolution all defects will finally be removed and the fittest will survive.

Good-bye to the old conceit of restoring primitive Christianity!

JAMES McGARVEY.

IMPORTANT NOTICE CONFERENCE

THE April conference will be held (D.V.) under the auspices of the Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs., Church of Christ.

DATE: Saturday, April 16th, 1949.

MEETING PLACE: All Saints' School-room, Bolton Road, Blackburn, Lancs., which place will be open for reception of visitors from 9 a.m.

ROUTE: Take Boundary tram from Station Boulevard to All Saints' School. Fare 1d.

SESSIONS: There will be two sessions. Afternoon session from 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., and evening session from 5.30 p.m. Evening speakers: Bren. A. Gardiner, Junior, and D. Dougall.

TEA: In order that provision may be made for tea, which will be served from 4.30 to 5.30 p.m., will brethren and Churches please notify Bro. H. Wilson of their intention of being present?

ENQUIRIES: Address all enquiries other than hospitality to Bro. H. Wilson, 2 Hollin Bridge Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

HOSPITALITY: Address hospitality enquiries to Sister Mrs. Alec Allan, Hospitality Secretary, 18 Herbert Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew vii. to ix. 8

Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

CHAPTER vii. presents us with warnings against fault-finding, exposing holy things to the ignorant, the broad way, false teachers, and finally to being hearers and not doers.

Fault-finding (vii. 1-5).—Read a portion of Romans xiv. and 2 Cor. x. 1. We see from Col. iii. 5 that the grosser sins are utterly incompatible with Christianity, but there must be much further development, and the new life, like a new garment. In our passage the censorious spirit is forbidden. We can more easily see the faults of others than our own. Until we have considered our own sinfulness, we can hardly hope to help others to fight theirs. Besides, we need to remember that 'God looketh on the heart'—and has perfect sight. There is a sense in which we must always be 'judging'—but not 'condemning' others, which is here in view. It is instructive to look also at the amplification in Luke vi. 37-38.

Discretion in Conversation (vii. 6).—The figures for the ignorant and intractable appear harsh, but the warning is

against unnecessarily exposing deep spiritual truths to ridicule. Perhaps like introducing unbelieving, unrepentant sinners to the Lord's Table. If the figures shock us somewhat, we can at least see that 'pearls' are of no value to 'swine.'

Encouragement to Prayer (vii. 7-11).—

Those who desire to follow the Lord will feel their weakness much, and therefore realise their need of divine help. Hence this encouragement is given. Comparison with Luke xi. 13 would indicate that spiritual good things are what we must 'ask,' 'seek,' and 'knock' for. These would be that kindly forbearance, and wise discrimination required for right application of the Saviour's teachings.

The Golden Rule (vii. 12).—Our practice to be right must be based upon right conceptions of what is good for us. We should not be justified for instance in letting evil practices by a brother pass without rebuke—but the rebuke would have to be gentle and based upon true love. And it would not have to be just 'fault-finding.' This rule would certainly stop all cruelty and deception.

The Two Paths (vii. 13, 14).—This is a very plain parable, indicating unmistakably that the way of life is not the popular way.

Warning against False Prophets (vii. 15-23).—If among the elders at Ephesus there were those who would become 'wolves,' and many teachers, even in the times of the Apostles, went astray, how careful still we need to be (to watch our own steps) of close adherence to divine commandments! Professed worship and allegiance to the Lord are not a guarantee of soundness, but the prophet's dictum remains true: 'If they speak not according to this word, there is no truth in them.' 'He that doeth the will' is approved. Even 'mighty works' do not necessarily qualify.

The Parable of the Houses (vii. 24-27).—The same truth is further enforced. It must have been wonderful to have heard the voice of Jesus and seen His form, but to take His teaching into the heart, this is the only assurance of stability. Obedience must follow. To make a practical point (without an unkind thought, however), how will it be

with those who call Jesus 'Lord,' and refuse obedience in baptism? Or with those who have obeyed in that respect, and regard others with contempt?

Effect of the Teaching on the Crowds (vii. 28, 29).—The astonishment could be equally due to matter and manner of the address. It constituted an attack upon established authority in religion, the setting forth of a new way of life, and a giving of a law, not the expounding of one previously given.

Matthew has given us above the summary of one address, also partially given by Luke. The rest of the month's reading gives us six miracles in some detail.

Healing a Leper (viii. 1-4).—Mark (i. 40-45) and Luke (v. 12-16) give this miracle in rather more details. We note: (1) the leper worshipped, calling Him Lord, and was not rebuked; (2) Jesus became ceremonially unclean in touching him, but the result would clear him from an accusation of disregard of the law, even in the eyes of the most censorious scribe; (3) the cure was immediate; (4) obedience to Moses' Law was commanded; (5) The cured man was subsequently disobedient (see Mark and Luke), perhaps with good motives, and so hindered Christ's work (Mark i. 45 'could no more openly . . .').

The Centurion's Servant (viii. 5-13).—This miracle is given by Luke (vii. 1-10) in greater detail, from which it appears the centurion did not come in person, having a sense of his own unworthiness, going naturally with a very vivid appreciation of the Saviour's power. Matthew gives more detail of the Saviour's comments upon this strong faith, which turned His thoughts to the inclusion of all nations in the kingdom of heaven. The centurion was an enlightened man—'he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue'—his slave was 'dear unto him.'

Peter's Mother-in-law (viii. 14, 15).—See Mark i. 29-34 and Luke iv. 38-41. The house is spoken of as 'Simon's.' The fever was serious, the cure immediate, at a touch of the hand. Who would not rejoice to be released from sickness to minister to the gracious heavenly guest? Upon conditions He is our guest. (John xiv. 23; Rev. iii. 20).

'At even, ere the sun was set' (viii, 16, 17).—The scene pictured in these two verses surely has no counterpart in history. If indeed such crowds came together, it could still not be said 'He laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.' (Luke iv. 40.) The devils also were subject to His word, knowing Him. The narratives of Mark and Luke indicate that this and the previous miracle took place on the Sabbath, and it may be the crowds waited until the sun was setting (and the Sabbath Day therefore ended) to bring their sick. Matthew's citation of prophecy is natural, in view of his writing for Jews primarily. The work of Jesus was done as a sign of and because of His supreme love for sinful humanity. Thus He would be suffering with the sufferers as He realised their pains—and healed them.

Offers of Allegiance (viii. 18-22).—It argues a great inward struggle for a scribe to follow Jesus, and we are not told whether or not the Master's warning words deflected him from his decision. There were 120 in that Upper Room at Pentecost. Doubtless the warning was given to meet the exact needs of the man—'He knew what was in man.' Likewise the man who wished to delay his allegiance, perhaps just needed the immediate and urgent call to prevent his missing the so great opportunity of following then and there.

Stilling the Storm (viii. 23-27).—It would seem that the strain imposed by the thronging of the multitudes at this time in the Saviour's ministry caused Him great physical weariness (see verse 17 also and comment). His falling asleep in the ship and remaining so while the storm rose high, would prove this. What would the scribe and the disciple who would have delayed, think of this situation? We read almost a spirit of petulance in the 'Carest thou not . . .' (Mark iv. 38) of the disciples. But they forgot their peril when they realised their Master's power over wind and wave.

Stilling the Demoniacs (viii. 28-34).—They were to see an even greater wonder (from some points of view) when they reached the other side of the sea. Both Mark and Luke gave considerably more detail of this miracle, while mentioning only one of the men. (See Mark v. 1-21 and Luke viii. 26-40.) Some have made

ingenious suggestions respecting this miracle, even managing to explain away several points, but it does befit us rather to accept the obvious surface meanings of words, and recognise many lessons. God imposes limits upon evil, yet allows it. (See also Job i.) Devils are stronger than men once they are allowed possession. That men are not to be compared with swine for value. That the safe place for sanity of mind and body is 'at the feet of Jesus.' That men often value swine above men. That the Gergesenes made the greatest mistake of all—requested Jesus to depart.

Healing the Sick of the Palsy (ix. 1-8).—Again Mark (ii. 1-12) and Luke (v. 17-26) give rather more detail. Behind Matthew's few words is the struggle of the man and his friends to get near to the popular teacher in the house. It was probably the faith of the bearers which commended the case, rather than that of the sick man himself. It is safe to assume that the man's greater need was forgiveness. The need of the onlookers to recognise the divine power of the Teacher would fit in with his need, too. Laid aside by paralysis, whether the direct result of sin or not, the sick man would ponder upon his condition. It was the common thing to attribute all sickness and misfortune to sin. Thus his deeper need was met first, and it is always our deeper need, too. It is so much more important to be healthy in soul than in body.

The crowd immediately surrounding Jesus on this occasion was a collection of Pharisees and doctors of the law, and of course they would be ready to find fault. We might even excuse them in the earliest days of the Ministry for wanting proof of the claims of Jesus. But they were so soon bereft of all excuse. No impostor could have maintained the perfect poise, the unremitting labour among the people and the 'words of grace.' So the forgiveness was confirmed before all by the acting of healing a hopeless case, and the evidence accumulated day after day, until there was just no excuse for unbelief. And there is none now.

R. B. SCOTT.

WANTED.—Copy 'For His Name's Sake.' Record of conscientious objectors during war of 1914-1918. Prices, etc., to Editor 'S.S.'

'STOPPING THE PAPER'

A STORY of Horace Greeley relates that an acquaintance, offended at one of his articles in 'The Tribune,' went to his office and put an end to his subscription. Later in the day he met the editor, and said: 'Mister Greeley, I've stopped your paper.'

'Have you?' queried Horace, adding: 'Well, that's too bad,' and the old white hat went its way.

Next morning, Greeley encountered his former subscriber again and accosted him with: 'I thought you stopped "The Tribune"?'

'So I did.'

'Then there must be some mistake,' replied Horace, 'for I just came from the office, and when I left the presses were running as usual, clerks as busy as ever, compositors hard at work, and business was going on same as yesterday and the day before.'

'Oh!' ejaculated the old subscriber, 'I didn't mean I had stopped the paper. I stopped only my copy of it, because I didn't like one of your editorials.'

'Pshaw!' retorted Mr. Greeley, 'It wasn't worth taking up my time to tell me such a trifle. My dear sir, if you expect to control utterance of "The Tribune" by purchase of one copy a day, or if you think to find a newspaper worth reading which will never express convictions at right angles with your own, you are doomed to disappointment. "The Tribune" would not be deserving of respect if it could be coerced by threat of the loss of one subscriber, or a hundred, or ten thousand, or every one it has, to refrain from telling truth as it sees it. My friend, this is free country, and the man who does not give freedom of opinion to others does not deserve it himself. Good-bye.'

A 'CHRISTIAN NATION'!

WE popularly speak of our nation as being a 'Christian nation.' This is a very careless and inaccurate use of the term 'Christian.' There are about one hundred million people in this country who have no religious affiliation whatever. Of the remaining forty-odd million, scarcely one million can be thought of as Christians only.

The following statistics, given by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, should

open the eyes of all to the alarming social and moral conditions which prevail in our own land:

1. Fifteen million sex magazines read monthly by one-third of our nation.

2. The nation has more girls serving liquor than attending college.

3. Three times as many criminals as college students.

4. One million girls infected with social disease.

5. One hundred thousand girls enter white slavery each year.

6. One million illegitimate children born annually.

7. One out of every four marriages end in divorce.

8. Sixty suicides every day, and one murder every forty minutes.

9. One major crime every twenty-two seconds.

10. One hundred thousand unapprehended murderers are walking the streets.

11. Seventeen-year-olds represent the largest criminal group.

Remember, these facts were not compiled by some old-fashioned preacher, but by an agency of the Federal Government. These figures are furnished us that we do all we can to help remedy this shocking condition. Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, head of this agency, states: 'The Bible school, Church attendance, and Christian influence an environment are the only real cure for all this.'

—'Gospel Advocate,' U.S.A.

BUSYBODIES

SOME people keep themselves concerned with other people's cares when they would be much better off to mind their own affairs. They worry over everything their neighbours do or say, and whether everyone is taught to live the proper way. They do not want the world to grow and merely get along, but they would set up all the rules for what is right and wrong. In their opinion they are just as wise as they can be, and no one could compare with them or walk so righteously. Their bigoted philosophy could stand a few repairs, and they would be much better off to mind their own affairs.

J.J.M.

THE PROPOSED NEW HYMN-BOOK

THE brethren appointed to go into the question of the formation of a new hymn-book have met once, and by the time this appears in print a second meeting will have taken place (God willing). At the first meeting the ground was prepared and the foundation laid for the projected new book.

We should welcome the co-operation of as many brethren as possible in this necessary task. We invite original compositions of hymns by brethren to be submitted to us. These will be carefully examined as to their fitness for inclusion, though the submission of these hymns will not guarantee their inclusion in the new book.

Then, too, we ask brethren to recommend hymns which they would like to see included from such hymn-books as Sankey, Redemption, Alexander, etc. Many hymns in these books are unfit for the Church of Christ because not true to God's Word, but it is possible that the compilers can overlook many which could with benefit find a place.

Please send any recommendations to Carlton Melling, 10 Wynard Avenue, Wigan, Lancs.

BRO. A. GARDINER

HAVING completed the period of service arranged with the Hospital Street Church, I have moved on to Bristol, where (D.V.) I shall be working with the Bedminster Church until the end of May.

I am unable to report any visible progress in the work in Glasgow, but the seed sown will be watered by the brethren, and we trust that the time of reaping will come in due season.

The prospects here in Bristol seem very bright, and I would ask for the prayers of the brethren everywhere for a rich blessing on the work in this city.

Please note my new address: C/o 17 Tyning Road, Lower Knowle, Bristol 3.

ANDREW GARDINER, Junior.

AN AMERICAN QUARTERLY

'THE THINKING CHRISTIAN,' a quarterly journal dealing with the Bible and modern thought. Edited by J. D. Bales. Obtainable from the Editor, 707 East Race Street, Searcy, Arkansas, U.S.A., \$1.50 (7/6) per year.

This publication can be warmly recommended. It is scholarly and at the same time simple and absolutely true to the Scriptures. Its articles show how the Bible will bear the closest scrutiny of science and scholarship, and how its truth remains unshaken, and is even confirmed by such examination. The reading of the magazine will strengthen Christians in their belief in and loyalty to the written Word of God. It is just the publication needed to counteract the modernism and infidelity which are so rampant, both outside and inside the Church of the living God.

James D. Bales, the editor, is one of the ablest of our young brethren in America. He is a deep thinker and a prolific writer. He will be known to many brethren in this country by his articles in the 'Gospel Advocate,' so widely read here.

If any wish to subscribe to the 'Thinking Christian,' subscriptions (7/6 a year for the four issues) can be sent to Carlton Melling, 10 Wynard Avenue, Wigan, Lancs.

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To Bro. John Straiton
AN ACROSTIC

By John McCartney

JUST an acrostic do I send
On this card to you, my friend,
How swiftly do the years roll on
Now they're here and then they're gone.
Soon they'll all have run their course
To eternity their source,
Rest is ready, up above,
Awaiting all who truly love
Incarnate God, as seen in Jesus,
That from guilt and judgment frees us,
Old in years (94) in memory bright,
Not able now to read or write.

—'Firm Foundation,' U.S.A.

SPECIAL NOTICE

OFF the press shortly, booklet, entitled:
'Gathered Fragments from the Book of Psalms,' by Bro. Fred C. Day.

These 'Fragments' are substance of the lectures given by Bro. Day at the Hindley Bible school last year. Price per copy, 1/-; 12 copies, 10/-; 25 copies, 20/- All post free.

Order from: L. Morgan, 'Glen-Iris,' 44 Lord Street, Hindley

COMING EVENT

Ulverston, Ford Villa.—Special meetings on March 19th. That is the date on which the Church at Ulverston was started, by the late Bro. Joseph Crosthwaite. We are the true successors of the pioneers of those early days.

Afternoon meeting at 3 p.m. in Odd-fellows' Hall. Tea at 4.30 at Lakeland Cafe. Evening meeting at 6 p.m. Speakers: Bren. D. Dougall, A. L. Frith, and J. Melling.

Intending visitors please notify the undersigned early: W. Crosthwaite, Ford Villa, Hart Street, Ulverston, Lancs.

Hindley Bible School.—Book the dates. The school commences on Saturday, June 4th, to Thursday, June 9th, 1949.

The brethren are invited to make early application, stating the day or days they require accommodation. We are expecting larger numbers attending this year; the more, the merrier. Mountain-top experiences, happy fellowship, inspiring messages. Further particulars later.

Write: L. Morgan, 'Glen-Iris,' 44 Lord Street, Hindley.

 'REVIVAL'

WE have been asked for individual subscription rates for 'Revival.' These are (per year): 1 copy, 2/-; 2 copies, 2/6; 5 copies, 4/-; 10 copies, 7/-. All post free. Sample bundles sent on request.

Thousands are reading 'Revival.' Will you share in its distribution? If so, write: L. Morgan, 'Glen-Iris,' 44 Lord Street, Hindley.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

East Grinstead.— We held our annual party and prize-giving in connection with our Lord's Day school, on Saturday, January 15th. Visitors included Bro. L. Channing (Kentish Town) and Bro. and Sister Kemp, with a party of brethren and scholars from Silverdale Hall (Tunbridge Wells). With scholars and parents there were ninety-six present, and all agreed that they had had a very happy time.

Bro. Channing stayed over for the Lord's Day, and we greatly appreciated his services.

W. HILLMAN.

Glasgow, Hospital Street.—On Tuesday, December 28th, we held our Sunday school soiree, Bro. A. Morton was in the

chair. We welcomed about forty children and many parents and brethren. An enjoyable and profitable time was spent. Bro. A. Gardiner, evangelist, spoke first to the children and had them answering many Bible questions. Afterwards he spoke to the parents on the Gospel in all its fullness, and urged them to accept Jesus as their Saviour. The scholars carried out the rest of the programme to the enjoyment of all present. At the close all who were worthy through attendance or merit received a prize.

On Saturday, January 22nd, we held our annual Church social, and ninety were present, Bro. A. Gardiner, Junior, being in the chair. Bren. A. E. Winstanley and D. Dougall were our speakers. Bro. Winstanley spoke on Christians' responsibility, and pleaded for all to be up and doing to win souls for Jesus Christ. Bro. Dougall spoke on the causes of our ineffectiveness as Christians, and pleaded for all first to be right before God, and then active in worship and service. The programme was made up by brethren from the Churches represented. All did their part well and contributed to one of the best of socials.

We held a fare-ye-well social meeting to our Bro. Gardiner. Bro. E. Hendry was in the chair, and spoke a few well-chosen words and then presented Bro. Gardiner with a fountain pen. Bro. Gardiner spoke in reply, and said that, although he valued the pen highly, he valued more the spirit behind the giving. He also spoke many good things about the Church of Christ and the members and their responsibilities. We had also other five-minute speakers, and a programme that delighted all.

In all these socials the sisters of the Church played a very important part. We can never praise them too highly for their labour of love.

Bro. Gardiner now goes from us after five months' hard work and faithful service. He never spared himself, neither inside nor outside, and gave all the time of the very best. May he be long spared to carry on such needful and important work is our sincere prayer! Brethren, pray for us that the good seed sown by our brother may yield a great harvest of precious souls for the Saviour.

A. B. MORTON.

Morley.— The Young People's Guild, which meets every Thursday under the

capable leadership of Bro. E. Pickersgill, held their annual party on Saturday, January 22nd.

At 4.30 p.m. about sixty sat down to tea. An honoured guest was Bro. W. Wintersgill, of Ardsley, together with his daughter and son-in-law, Bro. and Sister E. Worth. It was the occasion of Bro. Wintersgill's seventy-ninth birthday, and Bro. Wintersgill, who is very popular with the children, was accorded a rousing reception at the tea tables. The children heartily singing, 'Happy birthday to you.'

The rest of the evening was spent in games, etc., and was a most enjoyable time, the rafters literally rang with the singing of both old and young. At the close we all sang the doxology feelingly, and Bro. Pickersgill closed with prayer.

On Lord's Day, Bro. Wintersgill addressed the Church both afternoon and evening, and as he also addressed the Tuesday night meeting the week before, brethren will gather that our brother is still active in the work despite his advancing years. The work here, we are happy to say, continues to prosper, and we thank God for such as our brother, who by their life and character are a source of inspiration and encouragement to us. The spirit of unity among Yorkshire Churches at present is very high and we desire to keep it so. The young people and their leaders express their thanks to all who helped to make this occasion such a success.

H. BAINES.

Tranent, East Lothian.—We rejoice to report another addition to our numbers. Sister King was baptised on January 31st, and welcomed to our fellowship on February 6th. We pray that she may be kept faithful until Jesus comes.

WALTER WILSON.

Tunbridge Wells, Silverdale Hall.—The Bible school held their annual party on Saturday, January 29th. The children entertained the parents and friends in the afternoon with songs and recitations. We sat down to a good tea at 4.30 p.m., over eighty being present. In the evening, we enjoyed the story of 'Mary Jones and her Bible,' on lantern slides. The brethren coming from the East Grinstead Church bringing a lantern enabled us to have this agreeable change, which the children greatly enjoyed. Bro. Kemp, who is labouring amongst us, ably read the story. At the close prizes were presented to the children, an additional gift being given to Margaret Smith, an elder scholar for four years' unbroken attendance. All praise and thanksgiving to our Father above for these happy times.

D. GILLETT.

OBITUARY

Hindley.—We report the passing to the higher life of one of our members, Sister Roughley, who died on Friday, January 21st, in the early hours of the morning. Our sister had been ill for many years, suffering the trials of the flesh with great patience and fortitude. Indeed, her example has astounded many of our brethren, for although she suffered much pain she lived seeking to serve her loved ones nearly to the last. Until she became bed-fast, she attended the Lord's Table regularly and enjoyed the fellowship of the brethren. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her husband (Bro. Roughley) and to her daughter Beatrice (Sister Partington). A service was held at the meeting-house, the writer officiating.

L. MORGAN.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home: One copy, 4s.; two copies, 7s.; three copies, 10s. 6d. Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Canada—one copy, 3s. 6d.; two copies, 6s. 6d.; three copies, 10s. U.S.A.—Approx. 85 cents per copy. All post free. Agents' parcels are all post free. All orders and payments to the Treasurer: A. L. FRITH, 12 Poulton Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire.

All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (News items, the 15th) to the Editor: W. CROSTHWAITE, Ford Villa, Hart Street, Ulverston, Lancs.

EVANGELIST FUND. Contributions to R. McDONALD, Lumley House, 4 Clark Street, Westboro, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 107 Thomas Lane, Liverpool 14.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is printed for the Publishers by Walter Barker, Langley Mill, Nottm.