

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

'The Best is Yet to Be.'



An English poet wrote, 'Grow

old along
with me, the best
is yet to be.' So
at the beginning
of another year we
pray that for the
nation, Church

and individual this may be true;

I. THE NATION.

We are witnessing an awful fulfilment of the Lord's prediction of 'distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth'; and yet it was of this time our Master said, 'When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.' So even in these dark and dreadful days the Christian can be optimistic. We are all much concerned about the future of the British Empire; are we as much concerned about the Empire

of King Jesus? An old man who spent a good part of his life studying prophecy, worked out an elaborate theory about the winged lions in the book of Ezekiel. The lion represented the British nation, the wings were the navy; and he held that the navy would some day be sunk, and then the lion would wear the face of a man.

It would be a real blessing if something happened to change the lion-like attitude of nations toward each other, to make them more human, or still better, to make them partakers of the divine nature.

Even Rudyard Kipling in his hymn, which Bro. John Scouller described as a piece of political bombast, prayed:

'For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard . . .
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!'

The triumph of our Lord is certain. All anti-Christian powers, including the great Papal system, and governments which have shielded it, will be finally and forever overthrown.

What a glorious paradox is presented in the Divine assurance: 'The *Lamb shall overcome them*, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings;

and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

II. THE CHURCH.

At this gathering, we think specially of the Churches in the Slamannan District, some of which are nearing their centenary. Bro. James Anderson began his truly marvellous thirty-five years' labours as district evangelist in 1875. Who can estimate what has resulted therefrom? A countless host have passed through the Churches; many faithful, even unto death, have passed on to their reward; many others are doing loyal service in other Churches in Britain and other lands.

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, Brighton, America, Australia, and many other places are indebted to this district for earnest workers and faithful work. In all human experience it is true, 'One soweth, and another reapeth . . . other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.' Robert and James Haldane thought that their self-sacrificing labours to disseminate the principles of New Testament Christianity had failed. But from them a young man, Alexander Campbell, imbibed these principles, carried the seed to America, where in a freer soil it yielded an abundant and glorious harvest.

'Shall we be missed, though by others succeeded,
Keeping the fields we in spring-time have sown?
Yes, but the sowers must pass from their labours,
Ever remembered by what they have done.'

If the best is yet to be for the Churches, we must resolve to do our best. We can do better in 1941 than in the past, if we try. Jesus deserves our best, and nothing less should ever be offered to Him.

III. THE INDIVIDUAL.

As pilgrims we are treading an unknown path, but we have an infallible Guide. 'The Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' As the Lord went before Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire, so He who is

the Light of the world bids us follow Him, and has given us His word for our chart and compass. The Israelites 'journeyed . . . in the wilderness . . . toward the sunrising' We too are journeying to the land where the sun shall never go down, where there is no night, and where we shall never grow old. At the beginning of this year let us each determine to 'press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 'The best is yet to be.'

'The King there in His beauty without a veil is seen;

It were a well-spent journey, though seven deaths lay between:

The Lamb with His fair army doth on Mount Zion stand,

And glory, glory dwelleth, in Immanuel's land.'

EDITOR'S ADDRESS DURING FEBRUARY:
c/o 37 Dean Park, Newtongrange,
Midlothian.

-----*--

Beside Still Waters.

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

BESIDE still waters, Lord,
Guide Thou my steps I pray;
Lest, drawn aside from Thine own Word
My feat should go astray.

Beside still waters, near
Where greener pastures lie,
Restore my soul, oh Shepherd dear,
Lift me to things on high.

Beside still waters, where—
Drawn from all storm and strife
Under the shelter of Thy care—
I find new strength for life.

Beside still waters, here
My soul be filled with peace;
In Thy blest presence, Saviour, dear,
Bid all my conflicts cease.

Beside still waters, Lord,
Oh, draw me nearer Thee;
That in the glory of Thy Word
These eyes Thy face may see.

Beside still waters clear,
Here I have found my all;
My Saviour drawn more nearly near
My Sovereign Lord of all.

ALLEN MURRAY

Ordination of Elders and Deacons.

MY remarks deal with the manner of ordaining the office-bearers in the Church. This may be termed a negative paper, as it opposes what is usually said in support of the laying-on of hands. It is agreed that Elders, after being elected or chosen, should be ordained, but it is questioned that any particular manner of appointing is recorded or is made binding. The words used in the Acts and Titus to intimate appointment do not indicate any manner, and there is not in the Scriptures an instance as to how an ordinary office-bearer, Elder, Deacon or Evangelist was appointed in a Church. Around this point the dispute exists. It is thought that the brother goes too far, who contends that ordination only really takes place where it is *by* the laying-on of hands. There is no necessary connection between ordination and the laying-on of hands, as the one can take place without the other.

Living, as we do, amid ecclesiastical assemblies and courts, where clergy and those with clerical ambitions are numerous, we meet those who give ordination great prominence, and who feel that there must be one recognised method of appointment, and they seek to bind all others to the method they support. They forget, it may be, that as the Saviour, in the healing of the sick, used different forms, so in ordination to office, the method may be an incidental, and differ according to the circumstances existing and the parties taking part. The oriental practice of laying-on hands is not the only way that is becoming and orderly in the instalment of a brother to office.

We can only be bound to one and the same method if Christ has commanded it, or if there is, under the Apostles, a clear example of how an Elder or Deacon was ordained by a brother not an Apostle. The laying-on of hands by an Apostle or a

brother with gifts would not seem a presumptuous empty form as it may do with ordinary brethren in our Western world, where habits and sentiments are different from those in the East.

There are many things incidental to baptism and the Lord's Supper, where we feel free from uniformity and yet free from disorder. The how, when, and where are only limited by what is enjoined by word or example. However, when ecclesiasticism grows the insistence for formalism gains strength. Ordinary men are not shocked at the idea of the Lord doing the same thing in so many different ways. The Apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers, were steadfastly attended to, but in what order or manner is not revealed, and so we are free to attend to them in any becoming manner.

Let us look at Acts vi., the strongest of the passages which are quoted in support of the laying-on of hands. Whether the seven were appointed only to relieve the Apostles in their duties, or only to perform special specific work for the Church, seems doubtful, and the Scriptures are silent as to whether or not the seven were looked on as being Deacons, so here we scarcely feel we are faced with an ordinary appointment to office in the Church.

The appointment was by the Apostles, the number appointed was seven, and the elected were all men, and we accept each of these things as incidentals and not as a model for all time and all occasions. The laying-on of hands has no more right than any of the foregoing to a place in our faith. The importance of the method of appointment may be magnified far beyond what its nature warrants or above the place given to it in the Scriptures. Consider the many duties in the Church which in their nature are of more importance

and yet are not observed in a uniform manner.

It would be unusual that God should leave a positive law to be inferred from a mere historical allusion concerning a very exceptional occasion. That might confirm but could not establish a divine law.

For example, we are told the Church met on the first day of the week, but the how, when, and where are not considered as binding examples. The upper room, unleavened bread, and other things done circumstantially according to the local Jewish and Eastern habits are always looked on as incidentals and not binding examples.

Elders were ordained we know, but how is not recorded, and if it had been made known, there is nothing that would necessarily make this detail binding for all time.

In Acts xiii. 3, we find the laying-on of hands, but it is not in connection with the appointment to office. It was the Holy Spirit that called Paul and Barnabas to the work which God had before allotted to them. All the Church was asked to do was to separate or relieve them from their present local duties. The Church might separate and commend to God, but in this case to induct was above and beyond that required of them. The commission of Paul and Barnabas was from God. Paul had been an Apostle for years before. The Lord appointed him. (Acts xxvi. 15-20 **R.v.**; Gal. i. 1). Even the prophets and teachers at Antioch could not lower the great Apostle of the Gentiles to the position of an evangelist and appoint him thereto. The idea is against commonsense and falsifies all the facts of Paul's history from the day the Lord called him to the end of his wonderful life.

To talk of Barnabas not being an evangelist till hands were laid on him at Antioch is also out of harmony with all the facts of his case.

Paul and Barnabas had been located for a time at Antioch, and so the Holy Spirit, no doubt, did not wish to

abruptly take them away, but courteously approached the Church and said separate Paul and Barnabas, relieve them and let them depart. They were to be relieved from their meantime local duties in order that they might take up the world-wide duties to which God had called them.

Why then was there fasting, prayer and laying-on of hands. Acts xiv. 26, shows this had been their way of holding a farewell gathering with those they esteemed. It was their manner of wishing them God-speed in the work to which God had called them. From Acts xv. 40, we learn that Paul with Silas, at the beginning of the second journey, were again recommended to God by this Church. It was not so much a commendation to any specific office or work as to God, for the work He had for them. The word translated in these two passages as 'recommended' is the usual word for 'give over' or 'deliver.'

Then there is Acts xiv. 23. Here we have ordination, but no mention of the laying-on of hands. There are three things stated in this verse

1. They ordained (appointed **R.v.**) them Elders in every Church.
2. They prayed with fasting.
3. They commended them to the Lord on whom they believed.

McGarvey in a note to this verse says, 'the word here translated appointed means primarily to stretch out the hand; secondly, to appoint by a show of the hand: and thirdly, to appoint or elect without regard to the method.' No scholar that I have consulted builds a case for laying-on of hands on this word. Its only other use in the New Testament, in 2 Cor. viii. 19, where it is translated chosen, shows it is used in the sense of electing. Young in his concordance gives the meaning 'to extend the hand (in voting)'.

What connection, if any, the three things mentioned in this verse had with each other we cannot say, it is possible the items were at different times, and had no connection, but it may be remarked that prayer and

fasting are generally preparatory and it is natural to connect them with what follows rather than with what precedes. If we follow Acts xiii. 3, we will say that the prayer and fasting goes with the farewell commending by the Church to the Lord. It cannot be said that it is necessarily connected with the ordaining of the Elders.

I fear those who believe we should copy the early Church in details must give up having their farewells in the form of tea gatherings. The Church at Antioch prayed and fasted when they bade farewell to Paul and Barnabas, and Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted it seems when they gave their benediction to different Churches in Asia.

So far as we have gone we have found that Elders were ordained. We can be one on that point. Those with an open mind as to the form will be prepared to leave each person free as to the manner of appointing. The trouble arises when matters which God has left free are surrounded by man's assumptions, and, without a clear passage, brethren seek to press their deductions on others. If laying-on of hands was God's will He would have made it clear enough for an honest man to see.

Timothy received a gift by the laying-on of the hands of the Apostle Paul with those of the Elders, but there is nothing stated to suggest ordination.

I Timothy v. 22, says 'lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins.' This follows instructions how to deal with those who sin, and general teaching as to discipline, and verses 24 and 25 seem to support the idea that 'lay hands on' refers to the bringing to strict account those whose behaviour, appeared suspicious or questionable. To presume that 'lay hands on' refers to ordination, we must first presume that Paul deputed Timothy with power to veto brethren elected by the Church. Neither side can afford to be dogmatic about this passage. It

is easy to believe what we wish to believe, but it requires more than probability to impose a custom on a Church.

Heb. vi. 2, refers to the laying-on of hands as being amongst foundation principles. This epistle was written to the Jews and deals with the New Covenant being a development and fulfilment of the principles foreshadowed in the Old Covenant. Therefore the words of MacKnight are reasonable when he writes 'of the laying-on of hands on the sacrifices, as an acknowledgement that the offerer deserved death for his sins.' Looked at in this light we have no difficulty in recognising the laying-on of hands and the baptisms of symbolic, washings of the Mosaic Law as first principles and as being quite in keeping with the other foundation doctrines mentioned. In any case there is nothing to indicate that ordination is in view.

To conclude, I can only repeat that I fail to find any law or example as to the manner of ordinary ordination. And, we may say, we do not remember of there being a law as to the exact form of any detail in connection with the ordinances of our Church life. Acts vi. refers to very exceptional circumstances concerned with Apostles and by Apostles. There is no reason why it should be viewed as a standing example as to the laying on of hands, when other details, just as important, are passed over as incidentals.

Elders were ordained we know and so we ordain as under the general instruction, 'let all things be done decently and in order.'

JOHN ANDERSON.

P.S. from W. M. Kempster.

January 8th. Received letter with Nottingham - postmark, ending 'Yours sincerely,' but without signature. I take this opportunity of gratefully thanking contributor for £1.—W.M.K.

I have to express my grateful thanks to an anonymous contributor, 'A Friend, Glasgow, io/-,' dated December 20th, 1940.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

RECENTLY, a leading member of the Churches of Christ alluded to the book of Daniel in rather reprobate language: 'The book appeared about the third century before Christ. It was ranked with other apocalyptic literature as being seditious.' The writer had no hesitation in saying 'that it is impossible to understand Daniel without some attempt at the study of this literature as a whole. The curious language which they employed was purposely to hide their true meaning, which was aimed at the ruling power, *i.e.*, in the third century B.C. This was the reason for their use of strange and bizarre figures, and this is why it has been the happy hunting ground of millennialists in all ages.'

So writes the learned brother who is now the editor of the official organ of the Churches of Christ. It is a point of view to which we cannot subscribe. It neither does honour to Daniel, nor to the greatest leaders of the Restoration Movement of nobler days, who taught otherwise. Our present leaders seem desirous of undermining what they taught: Daniel is not prophecy, and John's Revelation is concerned with Jewry, and Jerusalem's destruction in the year 70 A.D., and with imperial Rome, and, of course, has nothing to do with the Papacy, Mahomet, or modern European history.

Well, I have staked my humble reputation as an interpreter of these things on one crucial point. In May of last year, I wrote in the *S.S.* that I believed this great war to be the fulfilment of Rev. xvi. 17-21, and that it will culminate in the destruction of the city of Rome. 'For in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.' (Rev. xviii. 8). If the city to be destroyed had not

been built on seven hills I might, by now, have suspected that London was the object of doom.

Sufficient then, in our dealing with Daniel, that Jesus Himself confirmed its truth and inspiration by quoting it. 'And when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.' As He did with so many other disputed matters, all of which, at some time or another, have been questioned by a spurious kind of intellectual criticism, which largely had its origin in Germany, and which may have had much to do with the shaping of their national character the last one hundred years or so. However that may be, it is to be noted that Jesus confirmed the prophetic character of Daniel, and more, that he foretold Jerusalem's destruction in the year 70 A.D., all of which does away with the contention that Daniel spoke of past and present (Daniel's author's days) empires, and goes no further.

Daniel's book is a most wonderful part of our Bible, and it fulfils a predominant need. It not only fills the gap between the last book of the O.T., Malachi, and the birth of Jesus, but its wonderful rays reach down to the days in which we live, telling 'of a time of trouble such as was not since men were upon the earth,' and beyond, for 'Go thy way, Daniel, till the end be, for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.' (Dan. xii. 13). No wonder the angel said, 'Blessed is he that waiteth, and Cometh to the thousand, three hundred and thirty-five days.'

We cannot, in the space of this article, deal extensively with all Daniel's prophecies, but must content ourselves with a brief review, emphasising the principal lessons here and there.

Passing by chapter one, which is more or less introductory, we **come**

to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter two. It is an amazing prophecy, and as Gentile king and Hebrew prophet play the principal role, it has a message of transcendent importance to both peoples.

The historical background must be seen for the vision to be understood. The king, now master of the known world, controlling the destinies of millions of human creatures, conscious of his position and power, mused on these things, and, like all controllers of great empires, on what should be in the latter days. With these things on his mind he sought sleep; but this priceless boon was denied him. Instead, a horrid vision passed through his mind, which brake his sleep and sapped his vitality. A dream, such as men are not in the habit of dreaming, occupied his thoughts, and when he arose in the morning, suffering from the ordeal, its effects were there, but the vision had gone, and try as he would, it could not be recalled. Its paramount importance had impressed itself on his mind, and every measure which could be employed to discover its nature and meaning was adopted, but without avail. It was then that Daniel was told of the king's position and perplexity. His own life was involved in the king's decree, and he set about to save, both himself and the others. It was then that he prayed to his God that the dream might be revealed to him.

It is strange how God finds the man for the hour. It was so in this case. It was a time of great crisis in human affairs. God's people, whom He had redeemed from political and social bondage many centuries before, in virtue of His greater redemptive purpose affecting all nations, had now placed them in the keeping of this mighty ruler; and the young prophet became therepresentative of his people and of their God. To them, it was a starless night, unrelieved by any hope. Daniel pointed the way to nobler things. He stood in the breach. His dauntless courage and steadfast

faith made him a fitting agent, through whom God could accomplish His benign purposes and unfold His plans; and so, to him was revealed the great mystery which troubled the king, his counsellors, and retinue.

And what is the chief lesson which was imparted to all concerned, but one which we in these latter days have conspicuously failed to comprehend, namely: 'Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are his; and he changeth the times and the seasons. He removeth kings and setteth up kings. He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things. He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.' And when brought into the presence of his august master, Daniel declared: 'The secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians nor soothsayers shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known unto the king what shall be in the latter days.'

Later, when, after having related to the awe-stricken monarch what he had dreamed, and Daniel was about to reveal its secret meaning, he said, most significantly, 'Thou, O king, art a king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory, and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all.'

I wonder how many really believe these great truths to-day? Think of its implications in view of present day experiences; and can we concur in Daniel's faith? Does God still remove kings, and set up kings? Paul said so. 'Let every soul be subject to the powers that be.' 'Why? For the powers that be are ordained of God.' What! a Nero? Yes! a Nero! a Stalin! a Chamberlain! a Churchill! a Roosevelt! a Mussolini!

and (dare I include another?) a Hitler! But then, we voted for Chamberlain and Roosevelt. God surely didn't ordain them. Why not?

'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' (Dan. xii. 4). What a blessing that men only learned to run to and fro in these latter days, and all the knowledge we have to-day was sealed till the time of the end. If planes and cars, oil and petrol, had been known in apostolic days? If all the mechanical devices of modern life had been discovered thousands of years ago, I wonder what would have happened by now. Would we be meditating the glories of Divine revelation at this late day? It is doubtful.

The king had seen a great metallic image of human form; truly symbolic of human greatness, strength, wisdom, and knowledge were there displayed. There is a terrible majesty in human achievement. Man is a noble creature. Look out on all he has accomplished, and is it not truly marvellous?

The image was divided into four main parts; a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron, with the feet part of iron and part of clay. The king saw a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, and it smote the image upon the feet and broke them in pieces. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, and there was found no place for them. And the stone became a great mountain which filled the whole earth, (vv. 32-35.)

Daniel explained that these four parts of the image represented four great human powers which would exercise rule among men, and that the one over which Nebuchadnezzar presided, was the first. 'Thou art the head of gold.' It was not, however, destined to continue for ever, but it would be superceded by a second,

and a third, and finally, a fourth. Further, that in the days of the fourth, the God of heaven would interpose to set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty be left to another, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.'

'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' announced the Baptist on the banks of Jordan, but there are some who would have us understand that 'at hand' meant some two thousand years later. This is a serious mistake, and has been the fruitful cause of no little mischief during that period. The people did not understand John in that manner. They came flocking to his baptism, until He came, whose shoes John was not worthy to unloose. He too, went about, preaching, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' In his discourses, he spoke of this kingdom, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' He taught His disciples to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.' Later, on that day when Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Saviour replied, 'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' and more significantly still, declared, 'There be some standing here who shall not taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

Jesus went to the Cross, conquered sin and death, and Satan, and, after having given to His disciples many infallible proofs that He had risen from the dead, He ascended to Heaven to take His place at the Father's right hand, to reign 'until all his enemies are the footstool of his feet.' His first act in subjugating the world was to announce His mercy to all mankind. This He did through His Disciples at Pentecost, when, to the city which had rejected and crucified Him only seven weeks before' He published the terms of pardon: 'Repent and be baptised [immersed] everyone of you, in the name of

Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.' Three thousand gladly obeyed, and the Church was established. Thus the reign of God's grace commenced. The Kingdom of Heaven began exactly as Daniel had predicted.

In the meantime, the changes in the fortunes of earthly empires had taken place according to the vision. Nearly seventy years after the time of the king's dream, the Babylonian Empire passed away. Daniel had the joy of witnessing it and the advent of the second, that of Medo-Persia. The Grecian followed two centuries later, and when Jesus was born, the last, strongest, and most extensive of all, the Roman, controlled the world.

There is one item which remains to be fulfilled. 'The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.' Because this has not yet taken place, many argue that the Kingdom spoken of by the prophet has not commenced. It is not our view. We gladly acknowledge the sovereignty

of Jesus Christ, here and now. All other kings are glittering shows. All other governments vain imitations. When He comes, He will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. And, we are persuaded that day is not far distant. The kingdom of grace will be swallowed up in the kingdom of glory. It will not be another kingdom, but the glorious consummation of that which commenced nearly two thousand years ago. Of course, it will involve the final destruction of all opponents, sin and suffering, and death. It will involve the resurrection of the saints, and the transformation of the living people of God, when Jesus returns. It will involve a new heaven and a new earth, for the former ones will have passed away. All things will have become new. It will involve all those glorious blessings depicted in Revelation xxi. and xxii. Surely, we can repeat: 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

J.B. KENDRICK.

Was Paul Deceived or a Deceiver?

THOSE who read the first article in this series will remember that we tried to prove that the Apostle Paul was not an impostor, and that the great weight of evidence shows that what he himself says concerning his conversion must be true. There is no shade of falsehood, either in Acts of Apostles or in any of the Epistles. Had there been, the logical and critical mind of Lord Lyttleton would undoubtedly have detected it. On the other hand the search for and examination of the evidence led to the conversion of the critic. Neither wealth, power, nor reputation, can account for the turning of Saul of Tarsus from an arch-persecutor to the valiant defender of the faith he eventually became. Proceeding with our investigation,

let us examine the second proposition: 'Was Paul an enthusiast who imposed upon himself?'

People with strong imagination often appear to believe true what has never really occurred. In all normal children, imagination plays a prominent part. 'Make believe' is quite common. How often have most of us, in childhood's days, said to our playmates, 'Let's pretend!'

Even some grown-ups exhibit this trait in a marked degree. Was Paul a man of this temperament? Is there the least trace of fiction about him? Was he a 'make believe'?

The study of his life and character certainly shows him to be a man of intense fervour and zeal; and yet he was, as all evidence proves, always governed by reason and discretion.

Paul was a man of tact and self-control, Whether before Agrippa, Festus, Felix, or his own countrymen, he was calm, prudent, dignified; master of his emotions. There is no trace, either in his speech or in his writings of an over imagination

Hence, the suggestion that some have put forward, that Paul imagined that he saw and heard what he said occurred at the time of his conversion can be put aside as worthless.

Let us put this further to the test, for we are endeavouring to establish vital truth in our minds. Many imaginative, persons have fits of depression. 'Melancholia' is the term for this state. They often impose penance upon themselves, even inflicting pain.

Nothing resembling this can be traced to Paul, although sorrow for the part taken in his ignorant persecution of the disciples there certainly is. Again, he expresses a desire to depart and be with Christ, but there is nothing morbid about that desire.

It was rather based upon the revelation of the reward which awaited him. There was no gloom about Paul. He had 'learned to be content in whatsoever state he found himself.' To the Philippians he declared: 'I have all things and abound.'

Moreover, he had such deep experience of the joy of the Christian life, that he was able to glory in his many afflictions and sufferings.

Again, we often find that the intense enthusiast is most ignorant in things that really matter. Can this charge be laid against Paul? Surely not. He was brought up at the feet of the great Gamaliel. He himself was a master of Greek and Roman learning. He was a man of vast intellect. No ignorant person could find a seat on the Jewish Council. As Saul of Tarsus, however, the subject of our examination had a high standing amongst his countrymen. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; a Pharisee of the Pharisees. 'He could have risen to the most prominent position amongst his contemporaries, AH this

was set aside when he became a disciple of Jesus Christ and a messenger of the Evangel.

Moreover, the enthusiast is often credulous. He believes without or with little evidence. In everyday language, the mere enthusiast is often 'ready to swallow anything.' This cannot be true of Paul. The facts point in the other direction.

The Resurrection, Pentecost, the miracles of the Apostles, the death of Stephen, were all familiar to him. His mind, however, seemed to be closed absolutely to every proof. He refused to believe, and went headlong on his way of opposition and persecution.

He was a man who wanted demonstration: he would be satisfied with nothing less. Not until he had the irresistible evidence of his own senses, without the possibility of doubt, could his unbelief be overcome. Not until he had 'seen the Lord' could he accept the new religion. Paul was no credulous enthusiast.

Yet again, the enthusiast is often subject to vanity or self-conceit. He often likes to air his knowledge. Sometimes he is puffed up beyond measure, and flatters himself that he is a special favourite of Heaven, the recipient of God's special favour. We have met such people, and to suggest that they might be mistaken is to commit a grave offence.

Was Paul a man of this character? There is not a line in his writings, nor an episode in his career as a Christian, to suggest anything of the kind. The opposite is the truth.

Even when compelled to vindicate his apostleship he did it in the briefest way, and even with apologies. When

to the Corinthians he refers to one of the heavenly visions vouchsafed to him, he writes in the third person: 'I knew a man,' as if desirous of covering himself. In fact, he informs his readers that he had kept silence for fourteen years about this vision. A vain person would not have acted thus.

When he writes to the Corinthians who were guilty of using party names, he says, 'Neither is Paul that planted, nor Apollos that watereth, anything; but God that giveth the increase.'

Instead of vanity or self-conceit, we find that Paul often refers to himself in terms of self-abnegation. His attitude and spirit is suggested by the statement, 'not **I**, but the grace of God that was with me.'

Paul was exceedingly humble and modest, though he was the great apostle to the Gentiles, the accredited ambassador of the risen King of kings.

Were we to accept the verdict of those who say that Paul was a vain enthusiast, and that he was swept away with his imagination, that he dreamed the things which he said happened to him, we should be faced with dilemma. For instance, people of this character always see what they expect or want to see. Consider Paul's position, therefore, and his attitude before his conversion. At his own request, he sought authority from the chief priests to persecute the Christians. He was on his way for this very purpose. He looked upon the despised Nazarene as an impostor and blasphemer, who had justly been executed. He was inflamed with intense hatred against the disciples. In his own words, he 'was exceedingly mad against them, and persecuted them even unto foreign cities.' He was 'breathing out threatenings and slaughter' against the followers of the Lord. Can we conceive of stronger language than this?

One would expect, therefore, in these circumstances, that Saul of Tarsus would want to see a vision urging him to do exactly what he had so zealously set out to do. Nothing had happened to change his opinions, and so it is utterly impossible for any reasonable person to believe that Paul's imagination accounted for the complete revolution which is recorded in the New Testament. Everything is opposed to this idea. For example, how shall we account for the words

which be distinctly heard in the Hebrew tongue? Was that imagination? How shall we account for his going to a certain place in Damascus in strict obedience to instructions? How shall we account for the knowledge which Ananias received and which led him to seek-out Saul of Tarsus for the interview? How shall we account for the miracle whereby Saul received his sight? Was all this imagination? How shall we account for the succeeding mighty works wrought by Paul as an Apostle? How utterly foolish and childish to imagine, as a certain professor, a higher critic, imagined that 'Saul was the victim of an epileptic attack.' Why, Paul revolutionised the very history of the age in which he lived. His influence is still felt after nineteen hundred years, the world over.

If such is the result of epilepsy, it seems a pity that many religious leaders and professors cannot become its victims!

Certainly, one feels strongly that had leaders of religion in every country followed the lead of the Apostle Paul, the world would not be in its present parlous state.

We would ask our readers to consider carefully and, by the aid of the Scriptures of Truth, investigate for themselves the vast evidence which is placed before us, so that our faith may be confirmed in these days, when there is such deep need for an intelligent understanding of the foundations of our faith, which cannot be destroyed.

The remaining propositions will be considered (**D.V.**) in the next article. Meanwhile, may we say in words of a much-loved hymn:

' Though men should try to take our prize,
By guile or cruel might,
We'll suffer all that man can do,
And God defend the right.'

J. HOLVES.

BE at peace with all men, if possible, so far" as that depends on you.—*Paul*,



Young Folk's Corner.

CONDUCTED BY UNCLE BERT.

Month's Motto:

'PUT on the whole armour of God.'
(Ephesians vi. n).

What Can the Little Ones Do?

Dear Boys and Girls,

I was thinking about this question, 'What can the little ones do?'—when I read a true account of some little ones who did help to do something really brave and useful.

There was a terrible storm one cold winter night, a few years ago, and a ship was wrecked just opposite a fishing village in the north. The crew manned a boat and rowed for the shore. They were not a dozen yards from the beach when their boat grounded on a sand-bar, and stuck fast. The fishermen ran down to help them, and the sailors flung them a rope, telling them to pull with all their might. The fisherman did so; but, though the men, and women too, strained every nerve, the boat did not move.

At last, the children asked if they could help too. Those who could took hold of the rope, and the rest took hold of their father's smocks or their mother's gowns. Then came the 'long pull and the strong pull, and the pull all together,' and the thing was done. The boat shot over the sand-bar, and the poor, ship-wrecked sailors were saved!

You see, the children's weight made all the difference to the pull. They were not big and strong like their fathers, and they could not have pulled a heavy load themselves, but the sailors were only rescued

when the little ones 'pulled their weight.'

Yes, the little ones can do a great deal. Naaman, the great Assyrian general, was cured of leprosy because a little girl told of the prophet of God in Samaria. When Jesus fed the five thousand in the wilderness, it was from 'a lad' that He took the five loaves and two small fishes.

So let us all, even the smallest of us, remember that every effort counts. Your own efforts to help others, to live for Jesus and to serve Him, may seem small in your own eyes, but if they are your very best, then they are precious in the sight of God. No effort is so small that He will overlook it. Nor can you do any kindness, however small, without receiving the Saviour's blessing. He only asks one thing from every one of us—that is, our very best. Shall we all strive to give it to Him?

Do you know?

(First things of the Bible).

1. What was the first command of God?
2. Who built the first city?
3. Who was the first shepherd mentioned in the Bible?
- 4* Who told the first lie recorded in Scripture?
5. Who was the first gardener?
6. Who was the first hunter mentioned in the Bible?
7. Who built the first ship?
8. Who used first saddle spoken of in the Bible?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUESTIONS.

1. 'Sons of Benjamin.' (Gen. xlvi. 21).
2. James and John, the sons of Zebedee. (Mark iii. 17).
3. Nathanael. (John i. 47).
4. Job. (Job xiii. 15).
5. Revelation ii. 1-7.
6. Abraham. (James ii. 23).
7. Moses. (Deut. xxxiv. 5-6).

Nyasaland.

THE conference at Ncheu District was attended by representatives of nineteen Churches of Christ, all in fellowship with each other. These Churches were Chikala, Chimrumrulu, Chiradzuro, Chisupe, Dowa, Kamrunguti, Kota-Kota, Likangala, Lilongwe, Malimba, Mikongoni, Mkhoma, Manje, Namiwawa, Ncheu, Nkhonjeni, Phalombe, Thondwe, Ulumba.

Bro. Ronald writes that, when he made his tour of the Churches in 'our' (British) autumn of 1939 in the Northern Province, every Church wanted to know why schools were not being opened in connection with the Churches. Bro. Ronald explained the reason was the financial one-lack of money. He urged the brethren to give the subject full consideration, and to come to the conference prepared to support their claims for schools.

Evidently, the brethren were determined to have schools, and at the Lilongwe meeting started a fund with a collection of £2 8s. 8d. This sum was given as a sign of their agreement to support schools.

Bro. Ronald says that the Churches by their little collections, more or less, by June, 1940, had contributed £18 14s. 4d. to the funds for the eagerly desired schools.

Our brethren in Nyasaland do not undervalue education. They desire their young people to be educated so that they can read the Word of God themselves. The Bible is their text-book.

Bro. Ronald pressed the men to bind themselves as men to start and continue these collections, so that he can run the schools as they wish. The brethren were evidently impressed with his appeal and urge, and I think they have done well so far.

W. M. KEMPSTER.

News.-

Blackpool. — In connection with our twenty-first anniversary, a tea and social meeting was held on Saturday, December 7th, which was attended by a pleasing number of members and friends. Bro. L. Ives presided, and carried out his duties admirably. He was supported by Bro. H. Winter, who has been treasurer since the Church was formed. Various items were rendered by Sunday School scholars. The meeting was addressed by Bro. A. L. Frith, of Fleetwood, who gave us words of help and encouragement for the future. Bro. Frith addressed the Church on Lord's Day morning, and preached the Gospel in the evening. It was a day well spent in the Master's service, all received a spiritual blessing, and enjoyed rich and profitable fellowship. We are encouraged to go forward in the path we decided to take in

1919, although the way becomes increasingly difficult, and obstacles become more numerous under present conditions, yet we are confident that He who is for us will guide and lead us along the path He trod. We owe thanks and appreciation to Bro. Frith for article in October issue of the *Scripture Standard* regarding early days of the Church meeting here. Until we secured our present premises in Gadsby Street, we were often unable to say from one week to another where our meetings would be held. The money paid for hire of rooms must have been more than double the cost of our present meeting-house. We are thankful that we can now worship under our own roof. The work here has always been hard and difficult, especially during summer months; it is more so now, as we are isolated owing to limited travelling facilities.

We are deeply indebted to visiting speakers who have so generously served us in the past; and we earnestly pray that they will continue to do so in the future when visiting Blackpool.

E. WINTER.

Newtongrange, Midlothian.—The Church has been greatly favoured by the Slamannan District allowing Bro. Crosthwaite to labour with us for three months, November to January. We were in great need of help, and feel much indebted for this period of service.

The mission has been running for just over a month with satisfactory results; but we believe that more will be accomplished as it goes on. We have Gospel meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a discussion class on Wednesdays, besides the usual Lord's Day meetings. The meetings on Lord's Days have been very well attended. We were overjoyed this week by hearing three express their determination to follow the Lord in His appointed way; and we hope that this is but the beginning of great things for the Master here. We were fortunate also in having the services of Bro. L. Murphy who has been spending a period of study with Bro. Crosthwaite, and we hope the experience he has gained here may help him to do great things for Him whom he desires to serve.

On November 30th, the Church held its fiftieth anniversary social meeting. Between seventy and eighty partook of tea, after which we had a real inspiring meeting. Bro. H. Bell presided. Bro. L. Murphy exhorted us to present our bodies a living, sacrifice to the Lord. Bro. W. Wilson (Tranent), gave us much encouragement by his address on 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,' and Bro. Crosthwaite spoke on 'Criticism, Dogmatic Evangelism.'

We were favoured with ari\ brethren and sisters from Tranent\ Sisters Stevenson and Hunter, 4\ W. Morris and H. Winstanley V

recitation by Bro. T. Nisbet; all of which were greatly appreciated.

Bro. J. Guiney proposed a vote of thanks to all who had taken part, which was heartily responded to. The meeting closed with the singing of 'Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,' and prayer. This meeting will be long remembered, and we trust that much good will result from it.

w. H. ALLAN.

Newtongrange. — Sunday, January 19th, two baptisms and one decision. To the Lord be all the praise !

Bristol, Bedminster.—It is with joyous hearts we record the baptisms of Joyce Fernott and Phyllis Robinson, two of our older scholars in the Sunday School. The immersions took place on Saturday, December 14th, when Bro. Winstanley, who is working with us for a period of two months, delivered a stirring message on Baptism.

Owing to the serious air-raids we have experienced, we have been unable to hold week-night Gospel meetings in the hall, and are therefore holding a series of cottage meetings. These, we hope, will be fruitful of much good.

E. M. WILLIS.

Loughborough.—It is with great pleasure that we report another addition to our numbers. One of our senior scholars, Audrey Biddies, was baptised on Saturday, January nth. The service was conducted by Bro. S. Ward, assisted by three of our younger brethren. She was received into the Church the following day by Bro. E. Hill. We thank God for this wonderful start to a new year, and pray that our young sister may be richly blest in her new life.

s. WARD.

Obituary.

Ulverston.—We regret to report the death of one of our oldest members, Bro. David Martindale, who died on December nth, after an illness lasting over twelve months. He was very regular in attendance at all services, and although he never took a prominent part, he was at all times willing to do what he could to extend the cause of Christ. He was very interested in Sunday School work, and for many years' was

Superintendent. The funeral took place on Saturday, December 14th.' Bro. E. Wood officiating at the Chapel and the graveside.

A. COX.

Blackridge. The Church of Christ at Blackridge regrets to announce the death of one of its oldest members, Bro. Robert Steele, who died in his sixty-third year. Although not gifted as a preacher of the Gospel, he was always ready and willing to assist in whatever was required of him. He was a religious attender at all the Church meetings until his health made it impossible for him.

j. ROBERTSON.

The Church has lost another member, Bro. R. Steele, who departed this life on 30th December, at the age of sixty-three. Twenty-eight years ago he made the good confession and obeyed the Gospel. Since then he has been a faithful and earnest follower of Christ. He was of a kindly disposition, and sought the things that make for righteousness and peace. His love for his family was such that he made every sacrifice for their temporal and spiritual well-being. It was a joy to him that his family of two sons and two daughters became members of the Church. One of them, a daughter, has been in Canada for some years. He had much pleasure in speaking about the 'things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.' The sweet influences of the Gospel characterised his life, and as a consequence he had many friends. He was steadfast in the faith, and desired only to be guided by the infallible Word of God. Although suffering weakness and bodily pain he bore it bravely, and said near the end: 'They shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint.' The thought of leaving his wife and family was painful, but Christ, the hope of glory, was his hope, and now he has entered into his rest.

'Asleep in Jesus ! peaceful rest,
Whose waking is supremely blest!
No fear, no woe, shall dim the hour,
That manifests the Saviour's power.'

May the God of comfort and consolation bless the sorrowing wife and family in their bereavement. Brethren W. Crosthwaite and J. Wardrop conducted the services in the home and at the burial, j. WARDROP.

[One of his sons, Bro. William Steele, is well known to readers of the S.S.—
EDITOR.]