

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 30. No. 2.

FEBRUARY, 1963

The Christian's Trade

IN each of his parables Jesus aimed to teach at least one specific lesson. In Mark 12:12 we read, "and they tried to arrest him, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them." The "they" and "them" are "the chief priests, scribes and elders" referred to in chapter 11, verse 27. To them Jesus told the parable of "The Wicked Husbandmen," for the purpose of showing these religious leaders that they were rejecting their Messiah and Lord.

Luke especially gives us the reasons for many of Christ's parables. In his 15th chapter, verses 1 and 2, he tells us that "the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable." Again in 12:13-16: "One of the multitude said to him, 'Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?' And he said to them, 'Take heed, and beware of all covetousness . . .' And he told them a parable . . ."—the parable of "The Rich Fool." The same writer records in 10:25-29 how a lawyer put Jesus to the test by asking him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied that, among other things, a man should love his neighbour as himself. "But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'But who is my neighbour?' To show the man who his neighbour was, Jesus told the parable of "The Good Samaritan." Finally, Luke writes (18:1) "And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart . . ."

The details of the parable do not matter so much as this central lesson. Put the parable in its setting and circumstances, and find out to whom Jesus was addressing it, and we can the better learn this lesson. So with the "Parable of the Pounds," recorded by Luke (19:11-27). We read that "As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell them a parable." What were "these things" and who were "them"? Put this parable in its setting and we shall find out.

Earlier in the chapter we are told that a great crowd in Jericho was desirous of seeing Jesus. Among them was a tax gatherer, Zacchaeus, who could not see Jesus, "because he was small of stature." So he climbed a tree and there was able to see Christ. Jesus also saw him, called him down, and went into his house for a talk with Zacchaeus. Back among the crowd Jesus said, "Today has salvation come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

The crowd had been murmuring that Jesus had gone to be guest to "a sinner." So to the crowd Jesus told the parable of "The Pounds." I want to stress this, that it was to the crowd (verse 3). There are many similarities between this parable and that of "The Talents" (Matt. 25:14-30), so much so that some commentators regard them as one, with different details. But there are so many differences of people and circumstances that we think they are two distinct parables. One of these differences is that the parable of the talents was given to Christ's apostles, among other great discourses to them in that last week in Jerusalem. It was to the apostles that the talents were given. The talents were of enormous value—great and responsible gifts and authority were committed to them, gifts and authority to which we have no claim. But in this parable we are studying, the pounds were

given to "the crowd," the multitude, "the common people," you and I. Pounds are not nearly so valuable as talents; to us are committed wealth and treasure and responsibility much less than to the apostles.

And this is in the wisdom of God. He has given us just what we can handle, so to speak, just what we can deal with. Thus, none of us can truthfully say that God expects from us more than we are able to do. Those who received the pounds were not called upon to bring such rich results to their lord as those who had been given the far more valuable talents. A basic tenet of the Communist doctrine, propounded by Karl Marx in the mid-19th century, was "From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs." But Jesus Christ taught this idealist tenet when he said, "to each according to his ability" (Matt. 25: 15), and "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand more." (Luke 12: 48).

God rightly expects from us that which we have the power to do. If God calls us to any task, we can depend upon it that He equips us for that task. He demands no more from us than we are able to give.

Some years ago I was impressed in reading a pamphlet "The Prayer of Faith" by J. O. Fraser, a former missionary in China. The author tells how, in that vast country of Canada, where there is land and to spare, the Government makes free grants of land to anyone willing to work it, providing also the loan of all necessary machinery etc. No doubt some claimants would ask for hundreds of square miles, thinking to make enormous profits for their labour. But such an expanse would be beyond their ability to cultivate, so the Government stipulates 160 acres as the maximum area for which a man can be responsible. A hundred and sixty square miles could easily be given, but that would be beyond the man's capacity to sow and reap, and more would be expected from him than he could return. Enough is given for him to be responsible for, and only according to his gift is it expected that he produce results.

Do we see the spiritual lesson in this? God gives each of us the means to extend His Kingdom, and the strength to work in His vineyard. Only according to that committed to us and the opportunities we have does God demand the returns of our "trading" in his service. I am responsible for "my own small corner," you for yours. I am not to long for opportunities for wider service, when opportunities are already continually afforded me to serve in word and deed and example. It is told that a Sunday school teacher was once lamenting to the Baptist preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, about the smallness of her class. Spurgeon asked her how many scholars she had. "Six" was the reply. "My dear," Spurgeon replied, "Enough for you to be responsible for in the day of judgment." So, we must not long for opportunities to do spectacular, sensational or "big" things, when we allow the everyday humble avenues of daily service to pass without using them.

This applies in our individual lives, and in our service in our local small assemblies. We want to get this lesson home especially to the churches in their various localities. We are such small, struggling bodies, often isolated, that we are impatient to be doing things in a bigger way. We feel we are not reaching "the masses," that we are not making impression around us as we should be. We think that we cannot attain our desires in spreading the gospel if we remain as insignificant and weak assemblies, and that we must co-operate with other congregations for this purpose. What we few cannot do, we can do by "united meetings." And, indeed, we should so co-operate.

But the responsibility still lies with the individual, whether individual Christian or individual assembly. As regards the separate churches, we are placed in neighbourhoods where the needs of and response to the gospel vary. But each church is responsible for the people of the area in which the assembly meets. God rightly expects of us that we undertake this responsibility of making known the gospel in that neighbourhood. If we can realise that we are placed by God to give these people the gospel, we shall be more earnest in doing that. We may not see the longed-for results in "many being added to the Lord," but we have discharged our task, and have given people the word of salvation. The responsibility is then upon them.

We affirm that the true strength of the church lies in its local assemblies. If we look for new hope and new zeal as the outcome of "united meetings," conferences or other large gatherings, we are due to be disappointed. We find that after the most inspiring meetings of this nature, when we go back to our individual congregations the enthusiasm soon proves to be only passing, the memory of these great meetings fades, and we are back again in our hum-drum, unspectacular, steady way of doing "the Lord's work." This so often brings about a disinterest and an indifference which are the greatest enemies to the cause of Christ.

Yet, there, in that limited circle, our true work lies. To the small congregation they serve, the elders are first responsible. To that congregation their responsibilities lie. The members of the body of Christ in that assembly are to be fed and nourished and strengthened with the spiritual milk and strong meat of the word of God. These elders have no authority in any other assembly, but their concern is with the church "in which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers." Paul speaks of his having "the care of all the churches." He was an apostle. Sufficient is the care of one church to conscientious, spiritually-minded elders. God expects that they be faithful in that. And the responsibility is full enough.

Many churches are strong enough, or should be, to serve the area around them with the gospel. More local churches should be conducting gospel campaigns among themselves, without the need of beseeching the help of other Christians, near and far, to this end. There is no reason why even two or three churches within a few miles distance of each other, should not separately and at the same time concentrate on gospel missions on their own. Yet, for some extraordinary reason, if such happens, we term it "lack of co-operation" or "clashing" with each other's arrangements. Surely, if several meetings are being held at the same time in various localities, that is better than a joint meeting in one place. It is a surer evidence of strength to be able to work "on our own" than to need the support of other brethren before we can adequately, as we think, preach the gospel. It seems very like asking other assemblies not to witness for Christ in their part, because we intend to do so in our district!

The preaching of the gospel and the carrying out of our mission are not luxuries, to be indulged in only occasionally. They are our constant work and responsibility. We shall more surely be judged, not on how we "supported" the preaching of the gospel in other parts, but on how we have preached and lived it ourselves, in our own surroundings.

To us is committed the gospel of redeeming grace, to each of us. "This treasure we have in earthen vessels." We perhaps understand more clearly the meaning of this statement since the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These precious documents, some of them perhaps 2,000 years old, had been placed in rough earthenware jars, and hidden away in caves at Qumran, by the Dead Sea. They were kept safe in their containers. But only now that they have been found and taken out of their "earthen vessels" are we able to know and appreciate what they have to teach.

We are not given the gospel to be able to treasure it and preserve it. The gospel is to be spread. As the servants received the pounds and traded with them for their master, so we have received the gospel and are to trade with that. The servant who preserved his master's money was of no use: he was condemned. Only they who were willing to take risks, to speculate, were commended. For they brought an increase.

In the Rev. Stand. Versn. of Prov. 11: 24, that passage reads: "One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."

EDITOR.

Origins and Growth of Denominationalism

VIII — PRESBYTERIANISM

IN our last article, we commented on the work of Luther, the German reformer. Whilst Luther was concerning himself with the corrupt doctrine of Romanism, it was other reformers, in other lands who—having recoiled from the oppressive Roman system of priestcraft—were searching the Scriptures to find the New Testament form of Church Government.

Although they conducted their quest quite independently of each other, they arrived at the same conclusions. They rejected the Roman ecclesiastical system and embraced the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Further, they saw that, whilst the Word of God places the government of the local congregation of believers in the hands of elders, or presbyters, these men—unlike the priests of Rome—were not to be "lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock."

These discoveries will always be associated in a special way with the name of John Calvin, for it was he who brought the findings of the reformers together in a system of church government and theology, which he placed before the world in a work now famous as his "Institutions." Originally, this work was quite small and little more than a Catechism, but Calvin himself re-issued it in enlarged form at

regular intervals during a period of 23 years, until it became a volume of considerable size. It earned for him the title of "the Aristotle of the Protestants" and became the most authoritative work published by the reformers. Since that time, it has been repeatedly re-issued, and has been translated into every European language, even into Japanese and Arabic!

However, whilst the Presbyterian Church holds those doctrines which are characteristic of that system of theology we know as "Calvinism"—(for example: the doctrines of predestination, of total depravity, the final perseverance of the saints, etc.)—it is not for her theology that she is unique, since other religious groups have also adopted more or less of Calvin's theology. Her mark of distinction is her form of government and it is this which we particularly wish to emphasise in this article.

That the New Testament teaches that the church should be governed by men possessing the qualifications laid down by the Holy Spirit and wearing such names as elders, presbyters or bishops, is indisputable. In this sense, the New Testament Church is Presbyterian: that is, governed by presbyters. But we must not make the mistake of thinking that because she uses a scriptural term to describe her form of government, the Presbyterian Church is scriptural in government. Whilst she may have begun in the Spirit, she ended in the flesh.

In theory all elders in the Presbyterian Church are equals. In practice it is not so. She divides the elders into two classes, known as "teaching elders" and "ruling elders." In each Presbyterian assembly, the "minister" is the "teaching elder." This gives him the sole authority to teach and to administer the "sacraments," as well as to preside at all church councils. On the other hand, the "ruling elders," being laymen, possess no such rights. Their function is to assist their "pastor" in the exercise of discipline. Hence their title, "ruling elders." Very clearly, then, this is a far cry from the idea of eldership as revealed in the Scriptures.

Furthermore, whilst the New Testament gives guidance as to the government of the church on what we shall call the local level, she knows nothing of any organisation wider or more powerful than this. Yet in Presbyterianism there are several church-courts of varying degrees of authority.

(1) First there is the "Session." This is the name given to the local council of the church, which consists of the minister and his ruling elders. The unscriptural authority of this minister is seen in that without his presence, or the presence of his appointed deputy, there can be no valid meeting of the Session.

(2) Then comes the "Presbytery," which consists of ministers and elders from churches within a prescribed area and which supervises the work in that area, including the appointment of ministers.

(3) Higher still there is the provincial council called the "Synod," consisting, in its turn, of the representatives of a specified number of Presbyteries.

(4) Finally, there is the "General Assembly," representing the entire church in a particular country.

We insist that such an organisation is just as unscriptural as the Roman system against which the Reformers protested so vigorously.

Membership in a Presbyterian Church

The members of the Presbyterian Church are all those who have been enrolled as "communicants," along with their children. There are others known as "adherents." These are people who, whilst worshipping regularly with a Presbyterian Church, have not become "communicants." It is these—the communicants—who have the right to elect office-bearers and to "call" a particular man to be their "minister," but, as has been already suggested, the final decision on such an appointment rests with the Presbytery, which, having satisfied itself on his fitness, proceeds with his ordination and induction.

This then, is the distinctive organisation of Presbyterianism. We have it in both England and Scotland, although its lot in these countries has been very different. The first General Assembly of Scotland was held in 1560, with the famous John Knox as its leader. It was here that Knox and others presented the "Book of Discipline" for acceptance, outlining the principles of Presbyterianism. Four years later there came the "Book of Common Order," the book of church liturgy modelled on Calvin's own order of worship. In 1690, Presbyterianism became the recognised "State Church" of Scotland. We might comment at this point that Calvin and his co-workers regarded union of Church and State as a highly desirable thing, as stated in the last article. Today, among English-speaking Presbyterians at least, with the Church of Scotland as the exception, this union is becoming regarded as certainly "inexpedient" and probably contrary to sound presbyterian principles.

In England, however, Presbyterianism ran into trouble when it was introduced, because it was regarded as another non-conformist element. This brought it into conflict with the Church of England. True, Calvin made a bid to gain influence through Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, for when this man prepared the "Forty-Two Articles," of which the well-known "Thirty-Nine Articles" of the Church of England is a revision, he embodied many Calvinistic ideas. But for all this, when Cranmer was succeeded by Archbishop Laud, Calvin's influence suffered a setback from which it never really recovered. Laud was strongly Anglo-Catholic minded and he dealt so severely with the non-conformists that many of them fled to America to escape his hand. The Presbyterians had their revenge though, for when Cromwell was riding high, they had Laud imprisoned and eventually beheaded.

A summary of the Calvinistic doctrines held by Presbyterians in both England and Scotland may be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Many doctrines they have in common with the churches of Lutheran origin, referred to in the December issue and which we shall not repeat here. Doctrines which are particularly emphasised in Presbyterianism are:

- (1) Predestination: that God has foreordained some men and angels to eternal life and others to everlasting death, and this number is so definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. (See John 3:16, Matt. 28:19-20, 1 John 2:3-4).
- (2) The Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit: that no man can believe the Gospel, or know that he is of the elect, until the Holy Spirit works directly on his heart to give faith as a sign of his election. (See Rom. 10:17. Acts 4:4).
- (3) The Final Perseverance of the Saints. Or, "once saved, always saved." (Gal. 5:4, Heb. 10:26-31, etc.).
- (4) Salvation by faith alone. (James 2:14-26, John 3:36 R.V., 1 Thess. 1:7-9. Note "obeyeth not").

F. WORGAN.

The Bible and Science

"THE Testimony of the Ages" has suggested the following thoughts, in reference to the harmony between science and revelation, which alone are sufficient evidence of Biblical inspiration.

ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is true, alike, to the highest records of human history, the highest facts of human science, the highest instincts of human nature, and the highest aspirations of the human heart. It is the medium through which the voice from heaven speaks to us, in a dialect that can be understood by an accusing conscience, acknowledged by a sovereign will, and negotiated by a living faith.

Its jurisprudence underlies all true civilization, and its decalogue—though a thousand years older than Plato and Pericles—is yet the cornerstone of all true government.

Science is only now beginning to lisp, in whispered accents, some truths that it uttered in thunder four thousand years ago.

The facts, both in history and in science, agree in every instance with the truths of revelation, thus proving that the ancient saints who penned its words must have received their knowledge through inspiration, and from Him who knoweth all things from the beginning.

Modern philologists agree in dividing all the languages of earth into three distinct groups, which they have designated as the Aryan, Turanian and the Semitic. The Bible says that the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth were divided according to their families, and according to their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations (Gen. 10:32). A comparison between all the tongues of earth bears witness to the truth of this statement.

IN MEDICINE

Medical Science, in modern times, has turned its attention to the blood, and has discovered that, when sickness comes, the remedy must reach the blood in order to restore healthfulness to the body.

It has also been demonstrated that when the blood of a young animal is injected into the veins of an old one, it restores the vigour of youth so long as it lasts. But the Bible announced long ago that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen. 9:14; Lev. 17:11).

The human race was growing hoary with age, and many civilizations had risen and fallen, before the circulation of the blood was discovered. Yet, two hundred and fifty years before the birth of Homer or Hesiod, Solomon had said: "or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern." (Eccles. 12: 6).

These discoveries of science are no more than the windows in our Father's house, which occasionally open to our view the treasures of inspired wisdom.

IN PHYSICS

It was as yesterday that a devotee of Science discovered the fact that the air can be weighed, and that water is compounded of gases, combined by weight and measure. But it was four thousand years ago that the old patriarch of the land of Uz said, of God: "He looketh to the end of the earth and seeth under the heavens to make the weight of the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure (Job 28: 24, 25).

Modern chemists cannot read these words without wonder and amazement, for they embrace the sum total of scientific information on this point to the present day.

If a man is ignorant of scientific knowledge he will show his ignorance by his questions relative to it, and a man must be well informed of the principles of any given science before he can ask the questions in the inspired word, as recorded by Job.

IN ASTRONOMY

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who hath laid the cornerstone thereof?" (Job 38:4, 6). These questions, though asked four hundred years ago, cannot be answered by men today.

It was said of God in the days of old that to the ocean, He "set bars and doors, and said to it, thus far shall thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:8, 11). It is one of the more recent discoveries of science that the ocean is shut in by an exact adjustment of the forces of gravity, the earth's velocity, the weight of the atmosphere, and the influences of the moon's attraction.

The moon has been approaching the earth for ages, but astronomers have recently discovered that its orbit swings from an ellipse to a circle, and then in the slow march of countless ages back to an ellipse. It has a law and a limit, and this is one of the bars that hold the oceans in bounds.

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days and caused the dayspring to know his place?" (Job 38:12). This means that the sun always knows his place, and the time of coming, that he is never belated, never in a hurry. Six thousand years of history have proved it true.

The earth also revolves according to a fixed time and order, and by its centrifugal force piles up the ocean at the equator until it is far above its level at the poles. Should the motion cease, the water would sweep over the continents and deluge the world, and this is why the inspired one said: "To the ocean he has set bars and doors, and compassed the waters till the day and night shall come to an end" (Job 26:10; 38:10).

"Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?" (Job 38:18); that is, the distance from pole to pole. No man knows it, even to this day.

These questions are all filled with the truth of modern science. Yet they were written long before modern science had any existence, and argue that these ancient saints were inspired by the Author of Nature.

IN GEOLOGY

There is beautiful accord between geology and the Bible. The one account says: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). The other says the beginning was so remote that the mind cannot travel back to it.

One account says that after many ages of productive energy the Creator ceased from his labours; and the other says: "He rested on the seventh day." One affirms that there was an order, and a successive series of steps in the work of creation; and the other tells what that order and these steps were.

One says that light was countless ages in gathering into globules and orbs; and the other says: "God appointed the sun and moon to rule the day and the night," and this was the fourth day after the creation of light.

One teaches that a gradual cooling off formed the crust of the earth, and that inward heat threw up the mountain ranges; and the other says, "the dry land appeared." One affirms that the sea was filled with animals of a low order; and the other says: "Let the waters bring fourth abundantly."

One speaks of man as the last of the Creator's work; and the other affirms that the work was consummated in him.

These parallels and coincidences are beyond human explanation, and argue that God is the Author of one and the other. Science comes at last to verify the truth of revelation, to condemn the sceptic and encourage the Christian.

IN METEOROLOGY

The currents of rain and the principle of evaporation have been made known by modern science, but it was long before the birth of modern science that Solomon said: "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return" (Eccl. 1: 7). To this day, the most improved science cannot better that statement.

Recent discoveries of physical geography affirm that currents of air continually travel to and fro between the equator and the pole, and that they are continually whirling round and never rest. But it was three thousand years ago when Solomon said: "The wind goeth towards the South, and turneth about unto the North. It whirlleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuit (Eccl. 1: 6).

OTHER VARIOUS REFERENCES

Job evinces a knowledge of mineralogy when he says (28: 1, 2) "There is a vein for the silver and a place for gold where they refine it. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of stones." Again he says, "under the earth is turned up, as it were, fire." (Job 28: 5).

Isaiah (40:22) speaks of the circular form of the earth when he says of God: He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Since the sciences were then unborn, it follows that Job and Isaiah must have obtained the information from God alone.

Joshua commanded the light of the sun and the moon to stand still, that he might have time to beat back his enemies; but at that time, and for many ages afterwards, no one else knew that the two bodies were in any way connected with each other or with the earth.

It has long been known that the solar system is in motion, but, of late, some astronomers have affirmed that it circles round one of the stars in the Pleiades. If this be true, it gives new meaning to the words of the inspired writer, when he says; "canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" (Job 38: 31).

Science and revelation are only two volumes of the same book which was written by our father, and reveals to us the extent of dominions and the hiding of His power.—"The "Biblical Educator," 1911).

[By "strange" incidence—as we so often think yet which frequently occurs—after reading recently, for a second time, the article as printed above, I immediately picked up a book borrowed from the free library, and beginning where I had left off, read the words here quoted: "If only writing had gone side by side with speaking through the pre-history of man! Then we should know how language first evolved, and we might even find the answer to the most tantalizing and tormenting question of all: 'How did it [language] begin?' If we knew that, we should know how beasts became men." (From "Your English Words," by John Moore). As the article from the "Biblical Educator" clearly shows there are, in the Bible, revelations of knowledge beyond human reach to produce. We are plainly shown the origin not of how beasts became man, but how man came to be made in the image of God, of whom it is written, "and God said" which is speech, language. Man, created in God's image, was bestowed with the powers of His creator, and so human language was born. That is the answer—the only answer—to that Author's tantalizing and tormenting question, an answer sufficient and satisfying, if only his mind was open to receive it.—W.B.]

[Note also Gen. 2:19: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." As then, so is it now!—W.B.]

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR FEBRUARY, 1963

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 3—Genesis 17:1-21 | Hebrews 11:1-22 |
| 10—Exodus 3:1-17 | Hebrews 11:23-40 |
| 17—Proverbs 3:1-18 | Hebrews 12:1-17 |
| 24—Exodus 19:16 to 20:20 | Hebrews 12:18-29 |

FAITH

(Hebrews 11)

THE word translated "faith" in this peerless passage is translated also "belief," "assurance" and "fidelity" in the A.V. It is a lesson in itself. It stands for that capacity of the human mind and heart to put trust in a thing, a person or a story. It stands also religiously for the system of belief in which men trust. Faith can be placed mistakenly through deceit or ignorance. It can end in frustration and disappointment. But the faith which saves the soul (Heb. 10:39) is in view here, and that is consummated in heaven itself. We must not lose the connection between chapters 10 and 11. The danger in which Hebrew Christians were involved was that they should lose their faith in the heavenly realities. Obviously they had been faithful in severe trials. Their love for the truth had made them suffer persecution and loss. They had borne these joyfully, but as time went on, they became discouraged. They had need of patience (10:36). So have we!

So the stories of the faith and patience of others, especially those of their own race, brought to mind that their faith was not contrary to the fathers, but in line with it. It had already been shown that the Christian faith was superior in every respect to the Jewish, and solemn warnings against falling back had been given. Their unbelieving brethren might have the material temple and sacrifices, but they had the real substance: the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, not temporal but eternal. They also had the exceeding great and precious promises, not just promises of blessings in this world, temporal reward for their measure of righteousness now and for their children.

Translations differ somewhat in rendering the definition of faith, but Phillips interprets it like this: "Now faith means putting our confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see." Surely this is a fair representation. Taking the

A.V. and R.V. with marginal notes, we get "substance, ground or confidence, and assurance of things hoped for" and "evidence, proving, or test of things not seen." Faith makes the unseen things as real as if they are seen and touched, which, with material things, is ample proof of their existence. Some would belittle Christian faith, thinking there is not sufficient evidence to justify expectations. They are, of course, absolutely wrong, because the word of God has been abundantly proved to be true, if only by the fulfilment of prophecy, and yet more by its effects on the lives of those who accept it as their guide. Its emphasis on righteousness, its condemnation of evil doing, and, above all, the story of the Saviour's life, commend it as true and good.

The acceptance of God as the Almighty Creator is fundamental. No man can explain or recount the beginnings. He has been placed on the earth and all provision made for his sustenance. Tennyson has expressed his thought on the question thus, "Thou madest man, he knows not why, he thinks he was not made to die." The only source of genuine information is the Bible, and we cannot doubt that our Maker communicates His will through it. Thus the outstanding men of times past give us guidance for our own lives. It may be a hard lesson for us to learn that the promises of reward point to the future. They may not be realised here because here we are not fitted to receive them. However it remains true that Christians receive a large measure of blessing—"godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

We could not have a more direct statement of the case for faith than this: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Nor could anything be more obviously true, and the reason why is also plainly stated. His existence is something we can only believe (that is, have faith in) because we cannot prove it absolutely by our senses or even by logic, although the fact is reasonable, and appreciated by all reasonable folk. It is also obvious, though perhaps not so clearly so, that we would not approach Him unless we knew that He was just, a rewarder of the diligent seeker. How much we need to know that He is merciful towards sinners. That brings comfort to those who realise that He is altogether righteous, and the wisdom and power so wonderfully seen in nature make us recognise this as a necessity. The presence of sin in the world could be a stumbling-block, but we can see that a measure of freewill is what makes us human beings above the cattle and the inanimate creation.

Like the Hebrew Christians, we need to look back often to those who acted up to their faith in God, by obeying Him

quite regardless of apparent results. We may be in a very small minority, but if we are maintaining the truth as it has been delivered to us by the Holy Spirit of God, and rendering obedience to Him,

we shall never fail, and shall have the transcendent joy of meeting in God's own home those who did the same in all the ages that have passed.

R. B. SCOTT.



(Conducted by
A. E. Winstanley,
43a Church Road,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent).

THE FIRST MURDER

DO you remember the story of the offerings made by Cain and Abel to the Lord? Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice? Because he obeyed God—he offered what was commanded. Cain disobeyed the command and offered something else. When his sacrifice was not approved he was furious and downcast. "Why are you angry and downcast?" the Lord asked. "If you do do well, will you not be accepted . . . ?" If he had done as he had been told he would have been approved by God—just like Abel.

Sin Begets Sin

One wrong deed often leads to another. (Have you noticed that a second lie is easier than a first—and a third easier still? Sin is like that: doing wrong once makes it easier to do wrong twice.) That is what happened with Cain. He had done wrong—he had sinned. If he had been sorry for his wrong-doing and had asked God to forgive him, all would have been well. But instead he nursed his anger in his heart and this led to an awful deed. When the brothers were in open country "Cain attacked Abel and killed him." His first sin was like an evil seed. He didn't uproot it. He let it grow. And he went "from bad to worse." He became a murderer—the first man to kill another human being.

Satan's Children

The apostle John says that Cain "belonged to the evil one and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's just" (1 John 3:12). Look carefully at these things:

1. He belonged to the evil one. That means Satan, of course. The Saviour once told the religious leaders, "You are of your father the devil." Why? Because they were determined to do evil—and Satan is the one from whom all evil has come. So with Cain—his

heart was wrong. He hated his brother. He made himself a child of the evil one.

2. His deeds were evil. You may say, "We don't know much about his deeds—except that he disobeyed God." That's the point—he *disobeyed God*, and that is "evil." The Bible says that "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). If we know what the Lord wants us to do and we don't do it—that is evil, or sin. And by so doing we serve, not God, but the Devil.

3. Abel's deeds were just. Abel was obedient to the Lord. What he did was "just" or "right." Strange that Abel should be hated by his brother because he did right! Yet that is what happened to the Son of God too. He did always that which pleased God—yet many hated him, and at last had him killed. Be prepared to meet unpleasantness from those who do not love Jesus as you follow him and do his will. But don't ever let it "put you off."

My Thoughts; the Real "Me"

Solomon said that as a person "thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Heart" here is what we mean by "mind" because with the mind we "think." So my thoughts are the real "me." We know that to be true because every word we say or thing we do starts in the mind—in our thinking. Jesus said, "A man's word depends on what fills his heart. A good man gives out good—from the goodness stored in his heart; a bad man gives out evil—from his store of evil" (Matthew 12:35-36). So, as we are determined to live for Jesus and to be like him, we must watch our thoughts. Let's do what Paul tells us: "Fix your minds on whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and praiseworthy" (Philippians 4:8).

Sin Brings Suffering

Wrong-doing is always punished. Read Genesis 4:9-15 and notice that sin cannot be hidden—God cannot be deceived. Notice too that Cain had to suffer for a long time for what he had done. Satan

would like us to think that we can profit by doing wrong, but we know better. It never pays to disobey God. But we are chiefly concerned to learn how to be like Jesus—how to live lives that please God—so here are lessons to learn from the story of Cain:

1. Don't be a coward.

Cain was a coward. When he disobeyed God he had not the courage to "own up" and ask forgiveness. If he had done so everything would have been so different. We sometimes make the same mistake. We try to make excuses, or even to hide our wrong-doing from God. That is foolish and cowardly. When we do wrong let us be wise and admit it to God, and ask him to forgive. He will. And that will be the end of it.

2. Do learn to love.

Cain's trouble was that he didn't love God. If he had loved the Lord he would have obeyed him. We learn to love God by thinking of his love for us. Think of all the good things he has given us—food to eat, clothes to wear, homes to live in. Think of this: that he sent his Son to be our Saviour. How can we help loving Him when He has done so much for us? And because we love him we shall be glad to obey him. That is how we show our love for God. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments."

DO YOU KNOW?

DO you know that radar is not a new thing at all? You know what radar is? On many fishing vessels there is a special instrument which "bounces" radar waves off the bottom of the sea—so that the crew can see at a glance just how deep the sea is. It is used in aeroplanes too, on big passenger ships, and in many other ways.

Well, even though all this is regarded as quite "modern," it is true that radar has been used for a very long time. Who by? By bats! When a bat is flying, it broadcasts sounds which are so high pitched that we can't hear them. The bat guides itself by the echoes which come back from the sound. This is all done so quickly that it seems almost miraculous. For instance, in experiments, bats were released in a room that had been festooned by hundreds of ribbons, ropes and things like that. The bats darted about the room very, very quickly, but they never ran into any of the ribbons or ropes. Cover the bat's

eyes and it doesn't make the slightest difference. Stop his ears, or keep his mouth shut, and he is helpless in flight.

What gave the bat his radar? God, of course.

SOMETHING TO DO

READ 1 John 3 and answer these questions:

1. Who "sinneth from the beginning"?
2. For what purpose was "the Son of God manifested"?
3. What is "the message . . . heard from the beginning"?
4. What is a person who "hateth his brother"?
5. How do we "perceive (see) the love of God"?
6. On whose name should we believe"?

PEN PALS

YOUNG people from a number of foreign countries have written asking for pen friends and have been put in touch with young people in Britain. If you would like to write to someone from another country let me know and I'll arrange it—Albert Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bro. T. W. Hartle (Cape Town, South Africa).—Many readers of the "S.S." will know Bro. Hartle through his regular news items concerning the churches in South Africa, and his occasional articles in this magazine. We are sorry to announce that Bro. Hartle has been ordered to take a prolonged rest, owing to ill-health. This will mean his giving up for a time his vigorous and effective work in the Gospel. This is particularly disappointing in that Bro. Hartle took up full-time evangelism a few years ago, after much prayer and preparation for God to open the way. Yet we are confident that this occurrence is one of the "all things" that "to them that love God, work together for good."

Let us encourage Bro. Hartle by the assurance of our prayers and fellowship in service to our one God and Father.

Bro. Hartle also sends word of change of address to Hope Villa, 8th Avenue, Rondebosch East, Cape. Repub. South Africa.

Birmingham (Summer Lane).—We are pleased to report that a young lady, Miss Christine Bennett was immersed into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the 23rd of December, 1962. Our sister had been a most faithful member of the Bible School; we look forward to her faithful continuance in the higher calling and pray a blessing on her and her parents.

Hindley.—In the midst of many sorrows, we have rejoicing. At the close of the last Lord's day in 1962, we were delighted to hear the good confession of Susan Sutcliffe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

She is the daughter of Bro. Robert Sutcliffe, whose wife so tragically passed away a short time ago. We pray that this event may be to him a ray of sunshine and help him to bear his grievous burden.

We commend our new sister for her courage, and pray that having "Remembered her creator in the days of youth," she may run the race with patience and receive the crown of life.

Tom Kemp.

Liverpool.—There are now on Merseyside and in the surrounding area more than one family which have been associated with loyal churches of the Lord in other districts. As a preliminary move towards a regular programme of worship in Liverpool advertising has been commenced in one weekly and two daily local papers. Replies are being received requesting copies of "The Churches of Christ Salute You" and this booklet is proving a valuable teaching medium. Contacts are also visited for Bible study. We hope, in the Lord's pleasure, to have more positive news soon. Meanwhile the prayerful interest of all readers will be appreciated.

Please see "Forthcoming Events" for further developments.

R.A.H.

Slamannan District.—The New Year Social Gathering was held in the Slamannan Church Meeting House, on January 1st, 1963, under the presidency of Bro. Joe Nisbet, Tranent. Despite the severe weather, there was a good

attendance and our thanks are due to the Slamannan brethren for their work in catering for the large gathering. Bro. Nisbet welcomed and exhorted all to seek after the spiritual things rather than the material things in the New Year.

Bro. E. Jess, our first speaker, expressed the wish that our faith may be stronger and that we would renew our confidence in the year before us and cast it not away.

Bro. A. Winstanley, our other speaker, spoke on Matt. 6:33, exhorting all to put first things first, to give Christ first place in our lives.

We were favoured with a solo, a quartette and choir pieces from the Slamannan brethren and a duet, male voice and choir pieces from the Motherwell brethren.

We look forward to a happy and prosperous year in the work of the Lord.

Hugh S. Davidson.

OBITUARY

Birmingham (Summer Lane).—On 3rd January, 1963, Sister Alice B. Adey passed away. She was well stricken in years and had been unable to attend regularly. We commend her family to the mercy of God, our Father. P.J.

Hindley.—Yet once more, sorrow has visited our assembly. Brother William Roughley fell asleep in Jesus on Friday, January 4th, at Billinge Hospital. He became a member of the Lord's church in 1939 and has never faltered. He was truly a testimony of the saving grace of Jesus, and was beloved of us all. He was fond of singing, and shared in the work of setting the hymns. He was ever ready to give hospitality to visitors and many who came to the Bible School will be sorry to hear of his death.

We tender to our Sister Mary our sincere sympathy, and pray that our heavenly Father will be her help-meet during this time of sorrow and parting.

Tom Kemp.

Wallacestone.—With sorrow the church here reports the passing of one of her members, Sister Mary Mathieson, on 10th January. Sister Mathieson's death is a blow to us all, for she was one of our most faithful members, in spite of physical infirmities. But the church rejoices in the knowledge that she "fell asleep in Jesus."

Gerald Fox.

NOTICE

Leicester (Church Gate).—Owing to the closing down of the Adult School, meetings are discontinued there, but are being held temporarily at 43 St. Barnabas Road, Leicester.

COMING EVENTS

Morley (Zoar Street).—Church Anniversary, February 23 and 24, 1963. Speaker, Bro. D. Dougall. Saturday: Tea, 4.15 p.m.; Meeting, 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24: Breaking of Bread 2.30 p.m., Gospel Meeting 6.0 p.m.

Liverpool, Broad Green.—Saturdays, February 23rd and March 2nd. Special Gospel Meetings in the Co-operative Hall, Wavertree Nook Road (Corner of Heywood Road) at 7.30 p.m., preacher, Bro. Frank Worgan. Light refreshments at the conclusion for all travelling from a distance.

Send for a map of the district and details of access if in any doubt. Overnight accommodation is also possible if booked in advance. Contact R. A. Hill, 31 Mossley Hill Road, Liverpool, 18. Telephone: Allerton 3772.

Wigan: Scholes.—April 6th to 14th, 1963, God willing. Gospel campaign, Bro. David Dougall preaching. Details:—

Saturday, April 6th, Gospel meeting 7 p.m. Preachers: Bren. Dougall and Frank Worgan.

Lord's Days, April 7th and 14th, Gospel 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, April 9th, 11th, 13th, Gospel meetings, 7.30 p.m.

Your prayers and presence and help in any way will be greatly appreciated.

Ince - in - Makerfield (Lancashire).—Gospel Effort, April 12th to April 21st, 1963 (D.V.). Preacher: Bro. Gary Adams (Holland).

This effort will include the holiday weekend (April 12th-15th), when we are planning additional meetings and activities with special interest for young Christians.

Amongst other activities Brethren A. E. Winstanley and Frank Worgan will be conducting discussions on the following subjects:— "The Christian's attitude to modern amusements," and "The Christian's attitude to war." Monday afternoon, April 15th, a ramble will be organised. Early notice of these meetings is announced to enable young Christians (and older ones, too), to plan to be with us. Accommodation will gladly be arranged if you will write, giving details, to Bro. Brian Stevens, 2 Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire. Fuller details later.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 10/; two copies 18/6; three copies 26/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 50 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: **PAUL JONES**, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

Articles, letters, appeals etc. for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month to the Editor, **C. MELLING**, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs. News items, obituaries, coming events, personal notices, change of address, etc., to **W. BARKER**, Station Road, Langley Mill, Nottm. Payments to **PAUL JONES**, as above.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to **R. McDONALD**, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: **A. HOOD**, 45 Park Road, Hindley, nr. Wigan.

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

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

"The Scripture Standard" is printed for the publishers by Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd., Langley Mill, Nottm. Tel. 2266 Langley Mill.