

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Aspects of Our Father's Kingdom

(Matthew 19:27; 20:16).

OUR reading speaks of an aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven put into a parable, a form of teaching which Jesus oftimes used towards the close of His ministry. A parable has various meanings of truth, chiefly that of putting into line things for the purpose of comparison; a throwing out, something gathered by the way, truth hidden behind a veil.

See how our Lord reveals spiritual truths by means of objects taken from this world: lessons from the processes of nature, a narrative to instruct or warn, comfort or condemn, as He endeavours to give us heavenly meanings through lower mediums.

How we love the words, 'God holds the key of all unknown, and I am glad'. Why? Is it not because we can see without seeing, and hear without understanding? Everything in this world works with a purpose, so that it has an extended meaning in the spiritual world. It is good of our Lord to draw us heavenly comparisons, to take us by the hand out of this world, and lead us into the affairs of His kingdom.

Some of our finest poets have tried to give us earthly and heavenly comparisons, a kind of human inspiration; but Christ has the source of all authority in illustrating the works of His Father, and there is far more in parables than we can ever fully understand. His intention was that we might get deeper meanings through the study of the Word, looking as in a mirror for an inward reflection. In parables we see outward symbols of inward realities, and we become impressed with the harmony of the natural and the spiritual world as our minds are directed to the highest spiritual truths, and we are led into the blest abode of His kingdom.

Truths or realities of heavenly comparison have always existed, only waiting for the eye to see and the voice to reveal. Christ knew human nature and how best to secure its attention, to take up what lay at hand and make it attractive.

His teaching became so popular that 'the common people heard him gladly'. The sower or farmer going out to sow, the woman searching her house for a lost coin, the growth of a mustard plant from a tiny seed, the shepherd going out for a lost sheep, and many other parables were turned to profitable account.

His teaching had to protect Him until His time was at hand, and having attracted or fascinated the minds of the people by some delightful story, His object was secured, to stimulate inquiry, as well as to disarm antagonism. His disciples gathered round Him, He explained this to them: 'Therefore speak I to them in parables because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not and do not understand' (Matt. 13:13). Taking them further into His confidence, He said: 'Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God' (Mark 4:11). Truth was revealed to them as they were able to bear it.

That is largely the reason of the Christian dispensation being preceded by the Jewish. The Jews, a proud and jealous race, largely believed in a literal restoration of their earthly kingdom, reading their sacred Scriptures in the light of this fulfilment. Had Christ plainly affirmed to them that His kingdom was not of this world, as He did to Pilate, they would have given no further heed to Him. But in His wisdom His parables veil that fact. He was the word made flesh, the incarnation of spirit and life. 'The flesh profiteth nothing' (John 6:63), but to those who lacked that spirit, there was nothing in the person of Christ but mere humility. They regarded Him from a material standpoint, as they did in planning by force to make Him a King (John 6:15). His claims of Divine birth were undergoing the process of a fuller revelation, that truth was through that which was to pass away, a shadow of good things to come. The substance belongs to Christ; and in so far as they hungered for spiritual food, a parable shone as an illumination.

For ourselves, we know that truth, to impress us, must come by study, and becomes clearer as our spiritual lives are developed. Individual parts of our Father's teaching are drawn closer and grow into the structure of our lives, and we become conscious of a spiritual awakening. That was the case with the disciples who gathered round Him at the close of His preaching to the multitude, exemplifying the spirit of enquiry. 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath' (Matt. 13:12).

In the parable of the Vineyard, the world, its thoughts and its customs are drawn through the wondrous depths of our Father's love and wisdom in heavenly contrast. We see that God is the householder, and Christ is the steward, and that those called to work in the vineyard in the early hours did so on their own stipulated terms, and that those who called in the later hours, even in the eleventh hour, did so through their faith in the steward ('Whatever is right that shall ye receive'). We thus learn the verdict of the spiritual realm that those who trust in themselves get less than they expect, but those who do their work in faith get far more than they expect. The world labours in a hireling spirit, and groans under a sense of injustice. 'These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden and heat of the day.' The steward makes no attempt to justify Himself. He says, 'Take that thine is and go thy way. . . . Is it not lawful to do what I like with mine own? Is thy eye evil because I am good?' How often do we make our eye evil through envy, and thinking that we have not received the reward of our merits. The hireling spirit which our Father here condemns corresponds precisely to that of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son, who stood angry outside his father's door, as he heard music and dancing, and would not go in. He dwells on his model behaviour, and his many years of faithful service to such a degree as to regard favours shown to a lost and found son as a slight upon himself. 'All that I have is thine' is the model of our Father's love for us if we work in faith and labour in love. There was much of a hireling spirit in Peter in his words to Jesus, 'Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?' For all this bargaining spirit, Jesus sees in Peter a genuine disciple, and treats him with great tenderness, in saying, 'Ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory will also sit on twelve thrones . . .—that promise of a new birth in the fulfilment of the Father's Kingdom, when all old things will have passed away, and all things have become new (Rev. 21:5).

G. BARR.

Christian Science, Cult of Mary Baker Eddy

V—A completely Unreasonable Faith.

1. 'One only of the following statements can be true: (1) that everything is matter; (2) that everything is Mind. Which one is it?' (*S. & H.*, p. 270, 2-4). Here is a typical example of Mrs. Eddy's completely illogical generalisation—I will not call it thinking. One of the virtues she assigns to the ideal woman on p. 517 is noticeably not clear logical thinking. Lacking this and being devoid of all sense

of humour she was able to perpetrate this book. Besides the two straight possibilities she outlines above, three others occur to me: (1) All things might be neither mind nor matter, but made of something else; (2) all things may be some mixture of both; (3) there may exist together all these variations, some being all mind, some all matter, and some mixtures. (This latter is, of course, the case.)

1. 'What we term mortal or carnal mind, dependent on matter for manifestation, is not mind. God is Mind: all that Mind, God, is or hath made, is good, and He made all. Hence evil is not made and is not real' (*S. & H.*, p. 311, 3-6). The fallacy here is that God made all in the absolute sense. True all created things were made by Him—all things with any matter in them. God was not made—is He unreal then? But of course Mrs. Eddy's use of words is not to be assumed to be normal—far from it.

3. 'God is Mind, and God is infinite; hence all is Mind. On this statement rests the Science of being, and the Principle of this Science is divine, demonstrating harmony and immortality' (*S. & H.*, p. 492, 25-28). This is taken as highly important among Christian Scientists and yet that phrase 'hence all is Mind' has no logical bearing whatever on what goes before it.

4. 'The divine metaphysics of Christian Science, like the method in mathematics, proves the rule by inversion. For example: There is no pain in Truth [Not always true.—G. L.], and no truth in pain; no nerve in Mind [This depends on what Mrs. Eddy means to imply by that capital M on Mind.—G. L.] and no mind in matter; no matter in Life, and no life in matter [pure nonsense.—G. L.]; no matter in good [Quite meaningless.—G. L.] and no good in matter' (*S. & H.*, p. 113, 26-32). There is a part of geometry where the method of inversion is used, but it is nothing like so weird and wonderful as Mrs. Eddy's escape from reason demonstrated here. How can one reason with a person who has so abandoned herself to whims and fancies?

Conclusion

It is clear from what has gone before that there can be no condoning of Christian Science with its pernicious denial of our Lord and all that He came to accomplish. We are not, however, interested in scoring points against this body of people or trying to bring their movement to an end. Our purpose must be purely to enlighten the benighted adherents who may come within our ken. To do this I am sure Scripture statements as to the true standing and purpose of the Christ will be the most effective line to take. When acts of healing are advanced as proof of a totally acceptable doctrine, it should first be pointed out that this does not follow in logic; secondly medical evidence of cure should be required. It is not enough for a person to say he had some complaint—he may well believe it and still not suffer from it. Nor is it sufficient for a patient to say he is cured; though he may believe it, he may still be possessed of his ailment.

Let us keep clear before our minds the need for these and all men to see Jesus 'lifted up', and our efforts must prosper.

G. LODGE

From a Christian's Diary

By Berean

Evangelising New Towns. It has long been recognised that new housing estates offer better opportunities for evangelism than areas where religious traditions have had time to become established. Young parents with families are probably more open to receive New Testament truth than other people who are less inclined to change their religious beliefs. The children, too, in the Bible School have opportunities of learning unadulterated truth which yields fruit in later years.

What are we doing, then, about establishing churches of Christ in the new towns? By 'new towns' I really do mean those brand-new towns which have been created to relieve the congestion in larger cities. These should be the most fruitful

fields for new churches of the Lord. Fourteen such towns have been planned throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Eight are round London to provide, ultimately, for over 350,000 people. Stevenage, Harlow, Basildon, Corby and the rest will be populated by whole families who have left old towns, old interests and friends and will be making new friends and starting life anew. Such lives will obviously offer less resistance to our Saviour's appeal to commence the new spiritual life.

With all the advantages of modern planning the places of worship will not be neglected and doubtless approval for building will be given to those religious communities which are actively able to serve the new areas. How about it, brethren? If any of the larger churches have an opportunity to 'hive off' in a new town they should do so. Young Christians attracted to such towns should go and pioneer for the truth.

* * *

New Churches of Christ. In the past there have been many congregations of the Lord's church which have commenced, not as 'ready-made' assemblies, discharged from larger churches, but growing from the activities of individuals who have moved to new areas. They may not have had any assistance from an older church but, having a nucleus of one or two families whose fathers have been preachers and teachers, they have set to work for the Lord and a thriving church has been the result. If a whole-time worker has been available to work with them so much the better, but the work has gone on whether or not.

Persistent effort, prayerfully prepared and scripturally based, cannot fail to result in good. If a scriptural precedent is wanted we need not look beyond Acts 18.

* * *

Tragic Losses. On the other hand we must admit that there has been a falling seriousness of isolating themselves from congregations of the Lord's people. Because they were not taught that such a departure was sin (except with the intention to pioneer for the Lord and spread his table in the new area) they followed their professional and commercial inclinations, satisfied to 'make do' with 'worship' in a Baptist or other sectarian church where false teaching blinded them to the truth. They have thus become tossed about by every wind of doctrine, capsized in a sea of interdenominationalism and lost to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This attitude of accepting 'the next best thing' if there were no church of Christ nearby was all part of the retrogression which played havoc with official 'Churches of Christ' earlier this century. One was taught then that 'breaking bread' with baptised believers such as Baptists, Pentecostals and Plymouth Brethren was to be preferred to not 'remembering the Lord' at all, in spite of the fact that these sects taught such untruths as (1) hereditary total depravity, (2) salvation by faith alone, or (3) once saved always saved, and many more. The idea thus developed that certain sects had God's approval and that their members were saved because they were sincere and knew no better. How easy then to let them remain in ignorance and not teach them any better!

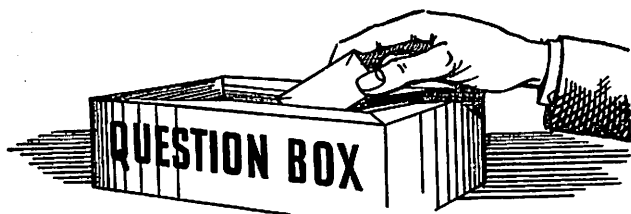
* * *

Sectarian Blindness. 'There are none so blind as those who will not see', and this is true of many good people in their attitude toward (among other things) the essential need of baptism in order to obtain assurance of pardon before God. Take the following quotation from the late Dr. A. T. Robertson, a renowned Baptist theologian and conservative scholar. His words are typical of protestant reasoning on Mark 16:16. On the words 'but he that believeth not shall be condemned' he wrote: 'The omission of baptised with "disbelieveth" would seem to show that Jesus does not make baptism essential to salvation. Condemnation rests on disbelief, not on baptism. So salvation rests on belief. Baptism is merely the picture of the new life, not the means of securing it. So serious a sacramental doctrine would need stronger support anyhow than this disputed portion of Mark.'

The doubt in this last line about Mark 16:9 must be left aside just now, except to mention that 'this disputed portion' has been defended by the ablest scholars. The word 'sacramental' also can wait for later attention. However, if 'stronger support' is needed Acts 2:38 can give it, along with Acts 22:16 and Galatians 3:27. But I am particularly concerned with the illogical reasoning about 'the omission of baptised with disbelieveth' (did he not mean 'un-baptised with disbelieveth'?).

Suppose an omnibus company advertised in words like these: 'Travellers who board a 'bus and pay the fare will reach their destination but those who do not board a 'bus will be left behind'. Should we do right to assume that paying the fare is not essential to completing the journey? Of course not, yet this is how the above statement would have us read it. It seems clear to me that those who do not board a 'bus do not need a ticket, but those who do are the very people for whom tickets are provided, because they have to pay.

This is not to say that baptism is merely a ticket to heaven. I do not presume to invent a parable, but merely suggest a similar type of sentence construction to that of Mark 16:16.



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

Send your questions
direct to L. Channing,
9 Ripon Street,
Aylesbury, Bucks

Q. Is it scriptural for a church to have a paid evangelist or preacher working with it?

A. Most decidedly it is scriptural, if the local church sees the need to have such a preacher working with it. Otherwise it would mean that a preacher could not even spend a week-end with a church and be supported for so doing. If he can stay and exhort the church and preach to the unsaved for two days, then he can do so for two years, or as long as the church desires it. The length of time involved does not alter the principle.

Moreover, there are clear examples in the New Testament of preachers working with churches for considerable periods. Paul and Barnabas worked with the church at Antioch for a year (Acts 11:26); Paul worked with the church at Corinth for eighteen months (Acts 18:11), and with the church at Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31). Again, if as is commonly accepted, the first epistle to Timothy was written between A.D. 62-67, it means that Timothy worked with the church at Ephesus at a time when it had elders (compare 1 Tim. 1:3 with Acts 20:17). This may be one of the reasons why Paul wrote 'Let no man despise thy youth' (1 Tim. 4:12).

If, however, the questioner has in mind the support of the preacher, then the scriptures are equally clear on this point also. The New Testament teaches that if, by reason of spending all his time in preaching the gospel, a man is unable to support himself by secular work, then he has a right to look for full support, either from the church with whom he is working or from the church that sent him to preach in a particular area. By full support is meant that which will provide him with a standard of living comparable to his fellow Christians, including provision for his wife and family, if he has any.

The fact that Paul did not always exercise this right, and chose to labour with his own hands (see Acts 18:1-3; 20:34; 1 Cor. 9:12, 15-17; 2 Thes. 3:8-9) does not

alter the principle, as he clearly shows in 1 Corinthians 9. In verses 5-6 of this chapter he says that both he and Barnabas had a right to be supported, even if they chose to marry, as was the case with some of the other apostles. In verses 7 and 13 he reinforces his argument from scripture illustrations and analogies. Then in verse 14 he lays down the general principle, 'Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel'. Paul also demonstrated this principle by accepting gifts from at least one church, the church at Philippi (Phil. 1:5-6; 4:15-17). Note that this is not an expedient or an arrangement subject to man's inclinations alone, but a divinely ordained method!

Q. Is it a violation of New Testament teaching for Christians to do jury service?

A. This is not an easy question to answer, and in the last analysis must be left to the conscience of the individual concerned. This writer can only state his own view of the matter.

It has been argued that, since the state requires many householders to do jury service, and the New Testament teaches that we must obey the powers that be (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14), as Christians we must comply. It has also been argued that a Christian can profitably contribute to the upholding of the law by so doing, in that his presence on a jury is an additional safeguard that true justice will be done.

But against such arguments is the overwhelming consideration that a Christian doing jury service will find himself endeavouring to uphold a law which is the very opposite of the law of Christ, and as such, to say the least, he is in a compromised position. There are two kingdoms in this world, that of Christ, and that of the world. In one sense therefore the Christian is under two systems of law, the law of the kingdom of Christ and the law of the world, the latter represented in the laws of the country in which he dwells. God allows worldly powers to exercise authority in order that complete anarchy among men might be avoided, but let us never assume that their laws are necessarily one with the laws of God, or that because God allows them, and sometimes uses them for His own purposes, He thereby approves of them. Only in this sense are the powers that be 'ordained of God' (Rom. 13:1). A Christian should do his utmost to abide by and uphold the law of his country, for this is the will of God, but can only do so insofar as that law is compatible with the law of Christ. Where there is a conflict between the two, then his loyalty must be to Christ.

Now in the opinion of this writer such a conflict exists in regard to doing jury service. On the one hand, God allows the powers of the world to execute their own vengeance, and by the very nature of things this must be so. In this sense, the power is a '... minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil' (Rom. 13:4). But under Christian law, retribution must be good for evil (Rom. 12:9-21), with vengeance belonging not to the Christian but to God (Rom. 12:19). Note, too, the clear distinction made in Romans 13 between the powers that be and the Christian. It is the view of this writer that the Christian should no more become involved in the judicial systems of the powers that be than that those powers should be involved in the affairs of the church (see 1 Cor. 6:1-6).

It will be objected that the passages referred to in Romans 12 are concerned with individual relationships, and not with the question of upholding the law of the state. But in jury service the persons involved are acting as individuals. Their private judgments and consciences are required to be exercised in the service of the state. Again, a Christian can never have one conscience whilst acting collectively and another whilst acting individually. He will have to give an account for the deeds done on his own behalf or someone else's, including those deeds done in service to the state.

Finally, if we hold such convictions what can we do about them? How far a Christian can go in such matters must be left to the circumstances and conscience of the individual, knowing that, if he acts while doubting, he sins (Rom. 14:13).

Unfortunately, the law does not allow for exemption from jury service on conscientious grounds. But anyone holding such views can at the time of registration make his convictions known to the authorities, and he will find them very understanding. This writer knows of one case where a brother found himself selected for a jury service which involved a capital charge. He made it known that he had a conscientious objection to capital punishment, and was immediately released by the judge from service.

Where can I find this Tune ?

I HAVE been asked the above question many times, and it has been suggested that a list be published of the books and numbers of tunes suggested by name in the new hymn book. If you have around you a good variety of tune-books, there will be little difficulty in finding most of the well-known ones. If, on the other hand, you are without a tune-book, I recommend 'Redemption Hymnal', published by Assemblies of God Publishing House, 6 Marsh Road, Luton, Bedfordshire.

One word of warning. While this book is the finest I have come across for tunes (it contains such tunes as Blaenwern, Crimond, Rimington, not all of which are found in older books), many of the words are contrary to Scripture and cannot be sung with truth.

Here, then, is the key to the lists which follow. The first number, preceding the tune title, shows the number of times the tune has been selected. The next column gives the name of the tune. The following numbers refer, in that order, to (1) the Bristol Tune Book, (2) the Christian Hymnary, (3) Sankey, 1200 pieces edition, (4) the Sunday School Hymnary (Carey Bonner) and (5) Redemption Hymnal. Any tune not in these books will be marked thus *, and the book in which it is found will be noted at the foot of the column.

The tunes are arranged in alphabetical order under their metre.

Meter: S.M. (6.6.8.6).

Times selected	Name of Tune	1	2	3	4	5
1	Amerton	343			558	
4	Augustine	1	6	68	1	
2	Cambridge					251
5	Carlisle		2			693
1	Dennis		3	506	567	713
7	Franconia	5	4	190	426	470
3	Huddersfield	7	5	809	608	539
8	St. George	352	7	759	546	205
6	St. Michael	16	8	691		707
6	Silchester	11			591	169
1	Southport*					
5	Trentham		11		506	231
2	Woolwich	356			506	488
S.M.D.						
1	Diademata	749	12		485	157
2	Leominster	461			517	587
1	Nearer Home			917	282	780

* Not yet found.

PRAISE the Lord! ye saints adore Him,
All unite with one accord;
Bring your offerings, come before Him,
O praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord! who every blessing
On our heads hath richly poured;
Sing aloud, His love confessing,
O praise the Lord!

To Correspondents

Many letters have been received, some of them lengthy, arising from the recently published articles by Bro. W. Brown on the government and organisation of the Church of Christ. We deeply regret that at this early stage we cannot print any further correspondence on the subject. We think it wisest to close it now, for inevitably any one writing later will feel unfairly treated if their letters are not published.

The reasons for this decision are two: First, the smaller format of the 'S.S.' compels the strictest economy in the use of space. Should correspondence be included other contributions would have to be omitted. We have always too much for insertion in any single issue, and articles have sometimes to be held over for several months before space can be found for them. Secondly, the correspondence in question seems to be developing upon the lines of that some eighteen months ago—'pro- and anti-Committee and pro- and anti-Conference'. We feel most readers will agree that these matters have had sufficient publicity in the magazine.

We have no wish to prevent free expression of views, nor even to stifle the voice of controversy. We are convinced that, under the circumstances mentioned, our decision is the best.

We ask, too, that correspondents sending in news items should keep such items as short as possible. We are always glad to receive news, but the items should be confined to NEWS. Such remarks as (in cases of immersions) 'may they be kept faithful unto the end' or (as in reports of deaths) 'our sympathy goes out to . . .' should not be included. Such hopes, prayers and sympathy should be taken for granted among those who are brethren in Christ.

EDITOR.

Appeals for Financial Aid

CAN you help the Church in Aylesbury to raise £5,000? The Church is earnestly seeking your help to raise this amount for a building project.

We believe that we can commend the work here as being worthy of your assistance, because of both its progress and future prospects.

The Aylesbury church is one of the very few new churches to be established in the British Isles since the war. It is situated in an area of 120 miles by over 200 miles, which has never heard the plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

The church began with only two members. However, Brother Len Channing moved into the area, and the membership has grown to 40 members. In the last two years we have had 26 additions, of these only one has not remained faithful. The congregation is an active one, and includes a fine group of young people.

We are convinced that if we had a building of our own, the work could make even greater progress. Up to now we have had to meet in a building which we can only use on Lord's Days. The rest of the church's activities have been

conducted in our own homes in the form of cottage meetings. All efforts to find another building, or a site on which to build, have until now proved unsuccessful. However, we have now purchased a large ten-roomed house, standing in its own grounds. Architect's plans have been drawn up, by which with some alterations and extensions, the existing house can be converted into a fine church building.

The site is in an ideal position, easily accessible, being on the border of the town centre, and with good prospects, for it adjoins a large new housing estate containing over 1,000 houses.

The whole project is estimated to cost £7,000. This is less than half the cost of an entirely new building of comparable size. This congregation has by its own efforts raised the sum of £1,500; a wonderful achievement, for the Aylesbury brethren are only of average working-class incomes—but they are really giving! We aim to raise this amount to £2,000. However, due to government measures against inflation, with restrictions on credit, we are finding it extremely difficult to raise a mortgage on this property.

The prospects for the work here are extremely good. Aylesbury, the county town of Buckinghamshire, has a population of 20,000 people. Although mainly an agricultural centre, industry is now moving into the town. The town is planned to expand ultimately to a population of 38,000. We believe that, with a building of our own and the Lord's blessing, the church here can grow as the town expands.

For this purpose, we are earnestly seeking your fellowship in the gospel and in enabling us to obtain our own building, and so increase the growth of the Lord's church in this area. We are confident that we will not appeal in vain.

Please send donations to J. R. Rogers,
7 Limes Avenue, Aylesbury, Bucks.

L. H. CHANNING
J. R. ROGERS
C. L. TWEEDIE

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).—For a long period we have been endeavouring to find a suitable site for a Church meeting place, for building land in Ince is really scarce. Several times our hopes were raised, but difficulties arose each time. At last we are able to report that our offer for a plot of land, adjoining a large council house estate, has been accepted. A plan for a prefabricated building has been approved by the Town and Country Planning and local authorities. The conveyance of the land is now in our solicitor's hands, and in the near future we hope to be able to go ahead.

As a result of a previous appeal we received the sum of £447 7s. 1½d. To this amount the Church here has contributed a sum of £300, making a total of £747 7s. 1½d. The plot of land, 97 ft. x 72 ft., is costing us £250. We estimate that at least £2,000 will be needed to erect and furnish our building, so we shall need, very soon, to appeal to the generosity of Churches and individuals to help us to accomplish our task. In the meantime, any contributions or promises of loans would be very gratefully acknowledged. We hope, very shortly, to give you further details, but until then pray for us, brethren, and help us if you are able.

PHILIP PARTINGTON
(Secretary).

636 Atherton Road,
Hindley Green,
Wigan, Lancs.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Mar. 2 Zechariah 4. John 13:21-38.
 „ 9 2 Kings 2:1-14. John 14.
 „ 16 Isaiah 5:1-10. John 15:1-11.
 „ 23 Leviticus 19:1-18. John 15:12-27.
 „ 30 Jeremiah 38:1-13. John 16:1-15.

'LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED' (John 14:1).

We think ourselves safe in saying that this is one of the best-known scriptures—and yet it perhaps offers advice and comfort that are never fully taken, so liable are we all to those fears and worries which can only be removed by either utter indifference and callousness, or unflinching faith in God. Even then these words come as unutterably sweet to every troubled Christian, and in hours of pain, weariness and the shadow of death something to lean upon.

The conditions under which the words were originally spoken should be considered first. Jesus had taken His last meal with His apostles. Weeks before they had been warned of His leaving them, and they had sensed the extreme gravity of the position in relation to 'the powers that be.' Hence Thomas's brave words, 'Let us go and die with him,' were an echo of all their thoughts. We can in a measure imagine how much the disciples had come to rely upon Jesus. Every word and action of His, and the wondrous powers He had exhibited over the devils, disease, and the elements had, as it were, bound them to their leader. The future without Him was unthinkable, yet He has made it plain to them that He is leaving them, and going where they cannot follow. What will they do, seeing He is their leader and all their hopes are centred in Him?

It must have been inconceivable to them that He would now desert them, giving Himself up to death, and thus destroying their false Messianic hopes of earthly power and victory. His teaching and His behaviour had always been so noble, and now they are called on to put absolute trust in Him. To them the future was dark without relief, until they came to realise that He was going

to the Father who was exactly like Himself, but was dwelling in another realm to which they also would come—"thou shalt follow me afterwards" (13:36). And so in these words of comfort He assures them that He is actually going away to prepare a place for them in His Father's house.

We are so prone to be tied up with our earthly joys, sorrows and possessions that we need to face these truths as the disciples did. 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable' (1 Cor. 15:19). The idea that it is only the life and teaching of Christ that are important is wrong. Had He not risen from the dead His whole life would have been deceit and falsehood. Very few even among outstanding sceptics, would dare to find fault with either the life or the teaching, but the implications respecting both God Himself and the Bible are not so acceptable to men. Nevertheless it is true we must have complete confidence in this—that Jesus has gone to prepare a place in heaven for His people, that there is room for all who obey Him, and that a fulness of joy will be there which we can never realise now.

Rapture of bliss is there before which the greatest and best joys of earth are but dim shadows. Paul puts it this way, quoting Isaiah 64:4, 'Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God hath prepared for them that love him' (1 Cor. 2:9).

There is the identity of Father and Son working out our eternal blessings—what more could we ask? And yet if it were not so, how empty would be the future of any real satisfaction for man or God. 'It is Jesus,' writes Marcus Dods, 'who has transformed the darkness of the grave into the bright gateway of the Father's home, where all His children are to find eternal rest and everlasting joy.'

These thoughts were given to His disciples in their hour of extreme sorrow. He also promised them, 'I come again, and will receive you unto myself.' They could not distrust Him however dark it seemed, but they were certainly overwhelmed for a time by sorrow and unbelief—Peter to the extent that he denied Him.

It was 'the surprise of their lives' when He revealed Himself to them after His resurrection, but thereafter they fol-

lowed His instructions, and the Comforter, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, came according to the promise with power from on high.

While they laboured with unflinching devotion to do good to all men, and thus to make this world a better place to live in, their hopes were fixed upon the 'inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled' which their Lord had promised them in the words of our text.

Many have laboured for the betterment of their fellows in different ways but all true reformation must come from those who, 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts . . . live soberly and righteously in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ' (Titus 2:12, 13).

It is the good pleasure of God by the foolishness of preaching the gospel to save those who accept it (1 Cor. 1:21). That gospel has to be acted as well as preached for best results, yet the message itself has power to change human hearts, bringing them into submission to Jesus, and that submission brings us to another subject embodied in our month's readings—'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' And the disciples had been quarrelling among themselves as to who should be greatest among them!

R. B. SCOTT.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury.—We are happy to report that on Lord's Day, February 2nd, Mrs. Mavis Dabrowski was baptised into Christ. Our new sister in Christ is the wife of our Polish brother, Paul Dabrowski. We pray that she might find much joy and blessing in the service of her Lord. Our numbers have been further increased by Bro. and Sis. John Justin, from the church at Lawnbrook Avenue, Belfast, taking up membership with us. Our brother and sister have actually been here for some little time, but due to an oversight their coming had not been reported. Our brother and sister are eager to do all they can in the service of the Lord, and are already doing good work in the church here.

L. CHANNING,

Newtongrange.—On January 19th, John Sharp made known his desire to lay aside his former life and take up the cross of Christ. He was baptized the same night. We rejoice again over the evidence of the power of the Word of God, and pray that this same Word shall lighten his path and guide his steps in that narrow way that leadeth unto life eternal.

A. J. BROWN

Tunbridge Wells, 5 Mount Ephraim Road.—On Friday, 7th February, the wife of our brother Tom Speirpoint obeyed the Lord in baptism. Our sister has attended the services for some time, and her decision is the fruit of patient teaching. She and her husband are rejoicing in their new-found assurance of salvation. Our brethren in Brighton kindly placed their baptism at our disposal. We give thanks to God, and take courage.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

GOLDEN RULES FOR PARENTS

1. KEEP your children at school during school hours. 2. Know where they are after school hours. 3. Help them to choose the right companions and amusements. 4. Discipline them when necessary. 5. Bring, do not send, them to Bible school and church services. 6. Provide daily Bible study and prayer in the home. 7. Give your financial and moral support to the work of the church. 8. Take time for your children—give them sympathy, instruction and guidance.

F. J. DUNN.

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

WE are sent not to preach sociology but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not progress but pardon; not the new social order but the new birth; not revolution but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation but resurrection; not a new organisation but a new creation; not democracy but the gospel; not civilisation but Christ. We are ambassadors, not diplomats.

Souls of men are not won by pretty sayings, philosophical ramblings or human platitudes, but by preaching the word of God.

PARADOXES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

HE who is the Bread of Life began His ministry hungering.

He who is the Water of Life began His ministry thirsting.

He who was weary is our true rest.

He who paid tribute is the King of kings.

He prayed, yet hears our prayers. He wept but dries our tears.

He was sold for thirty pieces of silver, yet redeemed the world.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet is the Good Shepherd.

He died, and by dying destroyed death for all who believe.

THE MARTYRS

WHERE should we have been to-day if the martyrs had argued that it was more necessary to live than to do right? Every man has to choose between these two. Many men deem life more important than righteousness. Others reckon that it is not necessary for them to live, but for them to do right. They say (what Pompey said when his friends besought him not to risk his life upon a tempestuous sea), 'It is necessary for me to go: it is not necessary for me to live.'

F. B. MEYER..

THE MODERNIST VIEW OF GOD AND CHRISTIANITY

'A GOD without wrath brought man without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministration of a Christ without a cross.'

RICHARD NIEBUHR.

BRIEFS

'Many a man who prides himself on being levelheaded doesn't know how low the level is.'

'Some wives leave their husbands and take everything; others take everything and don't leave.'

'It is weak policy to criticize someone else's work, when in the first instance you could not have done better. And then, anyone can follow a path after it is made.'

'Be it remembered that the strongest heads are not the headstrong variety.'

SPECIAL NOTICE

CONFERENCE

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST at
HAMILTON STREET, BLACKBURN,
LANCS.,

invites the brethren to meet in
conference on

SATURDAY, 5th APRIL, 1958.

2 p.m. BUSINESS SESSION.
(Members only).

3 p.m. BIBLICAL STUDY. Based on
1 Cor. 13:14. Introduced by three 10-
minute addresses, followed by general
discussion. (1) The grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ (Bro. H. Baines); (2) The
love of God (Bro. A. Daniell); (3) The
communion of the Holy Spirit (Bro. A.
L. Frith).

4.30 TEA. 5.45 PUBLIC MEETING.
Addressed by Bren. W. Crosthwaite
and C. Limb.

A hearty welcome awaits all Brethren
and Sisters. Come and strengthen the
links that bind us into the ONE BODY
—the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those intending staying in Blackburn
over the week-end are asked to write—
Roy Renshaw, 125 Pilmuir Road, Black-
burn, Lancs.

All other correspondence should be
addressed to Harry Wilson,
10 Hollin Bridge St., Blackburn, Lancs.

If arriving in Blackburn by train, take
a bus to Infirmary, via Bolton Road.
(Fare 3d.).

COMING EVENTS

Slamannan District.—The half-yearly
conference of Bible School teachers in
the Slamannan District will be held
(D.V.), in the meeting-place of the
Church at Newtongrange, on Saturday,
26th April, at 4.30 p.m. Speaker: Bro.
George Gardiner (Slamannan). Chair-
man, Bro. Brown (Newtongrange). All
welcome.

Ulverston, Burlington Street.—Anniver-
sary meetings, March 15th and 16th, 3
and 6 p.m. Tea 4.30, Saturday. Speakers:
Brethren D. Dougall, A. L. Frith, G.
Lodge and L. Morgan. Please let us know
early if you are coming.

Hindley Bible School.—Saturday, May
24th, to Thursday, May 29th. Prayer
meetings, lectures, discussions, Gospel
meetings, etc. Write early to the hospi-
tality secretary, Tom Kemp, 52 Argyle
Street, Hindley.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Dennyloanhead.—Thomas Cooper, The
Mill, Castlecary, Stirlingshire.

A CHRISTIAN

THE MARKS of a true Christian are:
In the home, kindness; in business,
honesty; in society, courtesy; in work,
thoughtfulness; in play, fairness; to-
wards the fortunate, congratulations;
towards the unfortunate, pity; towards
the wicked, resistance; towards the
weak, help; towards the strong, trust;
towards the penitent, forgiveness; and
towards God, reverence and love.

D. DEWITT HYDE.

TO say religion is the cure for all the
world's ills and to be no more specific is
like the doctor who examines a dying
patient, takes out his prescription book,
writes in it 'Medicine', and hands it to
the dying man.

E. A. FULLER.

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

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