

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 23. No. 9

SEPTEMBER, 1957

The Necessity of Prayer

The Neglect of Prayer

PRAYER is much neglected, as a subject and as a practice. We do not speak of it as often as we should and only rarely do we give or receive teaching upon it. True, prayer is not so much something to be talked or taught about: it is rather something to be practised. The worst thing is that among Christians it is the most neglected exercise. Our individual lives are so crowded with activities that we must cut out something, and too often that something is prayer. Even in the church the same applies. We find we cannot keep up with all the meetings, so it is from the prayer meetings that we feel we can most easily absent ourselves. That is, if a prayer meeting is held at all, for in how many assemblies is a prayer meeting, as such, a regular feature? If any meeting can be dispensed with by a church it is the prayer meeting. If time is cut for any part of worship it will most likely be in the prayers. How often we hear the instruction to 'Make the prayers brief.'

All this establishes the fact that we do not pray as we should, neither privately nor in our gatherings. As New Testament Christians we are strangely lax in fulfilling its teaching concerning prayer. Yet prayer is mentioned at least 150 times in the New Testament, and sometimes in commands and exhortations every whit as imperative as those on baptism and other teaching we rightly stress. 'But these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.' Exhortations to prayer are found in such passages as, 'Pray ye the Lord of the harvest . . .'; 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation'; 'Men ought always to pray'; 'Pray without ceasing'; 'Is any among you suffering: let him pray'; 'Pray one for another'; 'Give yourselves unto prayer'; 'Praying at all seasons'; 'In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God'; 'Be sober unto prayer.'

Nearest to God

These passages should impress upon us the necessity of prayer. This necessity is further stressed in the words of the hymn:

'Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air.'

Years ago we used to love to hear an old brother in the church thank God that 'in prayer we breath the pure air of heaven.' As the air around us is vital for health and vigour of body so is the atmosphere of God's presence for spiritual life,

For that is just what prayer does : it brings us nearest to God, even into His very presence. In the tabernacle which God instructed to be built by the children of Israel for His worship there were two portions—the holy place and the holy of holies. The two were divided by a curtain. In front of the curtain and nearest the holy of holies was placed the altar of incense. The holy of holies was a figure or picture of heaven, the dwelling-place of God. Incense is shown in Rev. 8 : 3 to represent the prayers of God's people. As the smoke and aroma of the incense offered in the tabernacle rose over the curtain into the most holy place, the presence of God, so the prayers of God's saints ascend into heaven itself. A popular rhyme says, 'You are nearest God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth.' That is not true : we are nearest to God in prayer.

Prayers and the Action of God

But what *is* prayer ? The late Archbishop William Temple once spoke of 'the involuntary ejaculations which pass for prayer.' He meant the natural impulse, when one is helpless and in peril, to call upon God in such expressions as 'God help me !' These may relieve one's feelings, but they are not prayer. They are often uttered by those whose lives show no conception of God and no acknowledgment of any responsibilities to Him ; people by whom God is left completely out of the reckoning. This raises another question : how often, even by Christians, is prayer regarded as something useful only when we are utterly helpless ourselves, when the way is dark before us, when we are at the end of our tether. It is gloriously true, for it is the word of God, that 'God is a very present help in trouble.' But the pity is that we seek His face only when we are in trouble and forget to thank 'the giver of every good and of every perfect gift' for the things we take for granted because they are such common blessings, or to ask His guidance in the everyday matters of life.

Then again, we conceive of God as acting only in times of crisis, whether in history, in His church or in our lives. We regard things as being only the action of God when there seems to be some dramatic intervention in events. For instance, in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, the miracles recorded in both Old and New Testaments, and such mighty historical events as the Reformation in the 16th century we see the action of God. But then, perhaps unconsciously, we imagine God as retiring into 'the dim unknown,' leaving the world and us to our own devices. But this is far removed from the Bible revelation of God. 'In *all* thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' (Prov. 3 : 6) ; 'In *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' (Phil. 4 : 6).

Prayer is getting in touch with Divine power. We have heard it illustrated as setting in motion all-powerful machinery, as though God is unwilling to do anything for or through us unless He be called upon ; or as though He is awaiting our signal to set His Divine power working. But we have not so learned Him in His word. There He says of His ancient people, 'Before they call I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.' (Isa. 65 : 24). And surely the Lord, who changes not, means the words as an eternal truth. God is perpetually working, in small and great things. Jesus said of Him, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' (John 5 : 17). The secret of 'perpetual motion' which scientists have long sought in vain is demonstrated in God—

'Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might.'

The Privilege of Prayer

Does this fact that God is ceaselessly working exclude or make unnecessary activity and prayer on our part ? Certainly not. God could do all

things without us. His works in creation were wrought without our aid and before we had a being. Read the magnificent 38th chapter of Job, with its superb depiction of God as the source of all power, authority and life. But in the highest and noblest of all His works, that of redemption, it has pleased Him to give man the opportunity and privilege of being the means through whom God works to bring about His purposes and accomplish His will. One of the necessary things to these ends is prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. The service to which all of us are called is the service of prayer, fervent, effectual, constant prayer.

God willing, we hope next month to develop in greater detail the ways in which Christians can co-operate with God in this ministry of prayer.

EDITOR.

Religious Delusions-I

Substance of lecture delivered at Hindley Bible School, 1957.

Mormonism

WHEN you attempt to expose the errors of religious bodies you are told by some to preach the Gospel and let other folks alone. That seems to have been the advice given by disciples to Jesus, when, taking hold of their own words, He said: 'Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch' (Matt. 15:12-14). Meaning, 'I am rendering them the best service by trying to save them from falling into a destructive ditch.'

What some call charity, if the truth be told,
Is backing up the errors others hold;
'Tis love, 'tis duty, shrilly to alarm,
And signal give, when error threatens harm,
Lest unarrested it runs madly on,
Till fear of God and love for truth be gone.
Omnipotent, do Thou each thought subdue,
And help us hate the false and love the true.

The Mormons do not seem so active as they were forty and more years ago. Before the first World War (1914-18) some Continental governments had expelled their missionaries because of their persuading women and girls to go to Utah, U.S.A.

In conversation with a Mormon elder, he objected to being called a 'Mormon,' and said their proper name was 'Latter Day Saints.' I said 'Very fitting too. Paul told of the kind of saints to be seen in the latter days: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts"' (2 Tim. 3:5-6)

The Mormons are divided into two main sections—the Utah Mormons and the Reorganised Church.

Now to deal, as briefly as possible, with the founder, the Book of Mormon, and some of their unscriptural teaching and practices.

(1) The founder was Joseph Smith, who was born at Sharon, Vermont U.S.A., in 1805. According to his own account, at the age of 14 he was praying in a wood, when in a vision he saw the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He was told that all religions were wrong and that in due time the true gospel would be revealed unto him. Three years later, an angel told him where an ancient record was hid in a hill. On September 22nd, 1827

he discovered this record which was written in curious characters on metallic plates. From these, with the aid of a peep stone placed in an old hat, he professed to translate the Book of Mormon. I have often wondered whether that stone in his hat is the origin of the saying, 'he's talking through his hat.' After this he had other revelations which are contained in the Mormons' *Book of Doctrines and Covenants*. The plates were in a large stone box, and it has been estimated that they must have weighed about two cwts. When Joseph Smith was asked, 'What became of the plates?' he replied, 'I gave them back to the angel.'

Among other revelations he professed to receive, were the following: *Doctrines and Covenants*, p.168: 'It is mete that my servant Joseph Smith have a house built, in which to live and translate;,' p.179: 'If ye desire the mysteries of the kingdom provide for him raiment and food, and whatsoever he needeth.'

In the *History of the Latter Day Saints* we read of a revelation that the faithful were to deposit their money in a bank, over which Joseph Smith presided. In 1837 Joseph Smith and his colleague Sydney Rigdon were fined 1,000 dollars for starting a bank without a charter, and for swindling. Mormons admit their founder's character was bad, and say, 'Don't discuss Joseph Smith, discuss his doctrines.' Jesus challenges us to begin by discussing *Him*. 'What think ye of Christ?' 'Whom say ye that I am?' 'Which of you convicteth me of sin?' And it is because no flaws can be found in His matchless character that we can trust and safely build upon His teaching.

Plurality of Wives

On July 12th, 1843, Joseph Smith professed to receive a revelation on the 'Marriage covenant, including plurality of wives.' For his wife, Emma Smith, there were special clauses, 'And let my handmaiden Emma Smith receive all those that have been given to my servant Joseph, who are virtuous and pure before me.' (Sec. 132, par. 52). Par. 54: 'And I command mine handmaid Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord.' Par. 62: 'And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore is he justified.' And of this, and much more, it is written: 'Behold I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant, and if ye abide not in that covenant, then are ye damned, for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into my glory' (par. 4).

The Reorganised Church denies that Joseph Smith received that revelation, or taught and practised polygamy. In discussing that at Birmingham, in 1916, with Mr. Greenwood, a representative of the Reorganised Church, I quoted testimonies from their leaders, who affirmed that Joseph Smith taught and practised polygamy, that it caused his death, and split their church. Then I asked: 'Did these men tell the truth about Joseph Smith?' He would not answer that until I pressed it again and again. Then he said, 'I say most deliberately and emphatically, they did not tell the truth about Joseph Smith.' 'Now,' I said, 'we know where we are. The names of some whose testimonies I have quoted appear on the title page of the *Book of Mormon* guaranteeing its authenticity, others are apostles and founders of the Reorganised Church. It is upon their testimony that we are asked to believe that Joseph Smith was a heaven-sent prophet, that the *Book of Mormon* is a divine revelation, and that the Latter Day Saints' Church is the only true and living church. But Mr. Greenwood says they did not tell the truth, they were untruthful men. Where has his church gone now?'

In June, 1844, the 'Nauvoo Expositor' exposed the immoral lives Smith and some of his colleagues were living. Smith's supporters destroyed the office and printing press of that paper. There was a riot, and Smith and his brother Hiram were lodged in Carthage jail. The infuriated mob broke in and as they came up the stairs to the room where the two Smiths were, Joseph Smith partly opened the door, and with a six-shooter fired at them. ('Times & Seasons,' a Mormon paper, July, 1844). When the mob got to them they shot both men.

In *Rays of Living Light* (a Mormon tract) No. 9, par. 4, we read: 'The man chosen of God to commence the work of the last dispensation was Joseph Smith, who was slain at Carthage, Illinois, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus. No prophet who has ever lived on earth, except the Son of God Himself, accomplished a greater work, brought forth more truth, or received greater revelations from on high than he. Having finished the grand mission required of him by the Lord, he sealed his testimony with his blood, and stands with the martyrs who will be crowned in the presence of God as kings and priests forever.'

(2) The Book of Mormon

(1) External evidence regarding plates from which it was claimed to be translated: *Doctrines and Covenants*, Section 5: 'And in addition to your testimony the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things.' Par. 14: 'And to none else will I grant this power,' etc.

In the title page of the *Book of Mormon* eleven witnesses declare that they saw, handled, and 'lifted' the plates. The plates were to be seen by faith. Faith has to do with things beyond our natural, physical sight. It requires no faith to see a pile of metal plates. *Doctrines and Covenants*, Sec. 17, par. 2: 'And it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them . . . as my servant Joseph Smith has seen them, for it is by my power that he has seen them, and it is because he had faith.' The foregoing is clear evidence that those plates only existed in the imagination of Joseph Smith; or the one from whose writings he got the matter for the *Book of Mormon*.

The Witness

The three chief witnesses are Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. In *Doctrines and Covenants*, Sec. 69, of Oliver Cowdery, the Mormon, God said: 'It is not wisdom in me that he should be entrusted with the commandments and the monies which he shall carry to the land of Zion, except one go with him who shall be true and faithful.' In *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith said, 'Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were spreading false reports, and plotting to rob the saints.' Martin Harris was a wealthy farmer, and there was a special revelation for him: 'I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the *Book of Mormon*. D. & C. Sec. 19. But in D. & C. Sec. 3, Martin Harris is called 'a wicked man.' And it is upon the testimony of such men that we are asked to believe that Joseph Smith was a heaven-sent prophet, and that the *Book of Mormon* is a Divine revelation!

Internal Evidence

Joseph Smith claimed that Mormon was a reformed Egyptian word meaning 'more good.' Authorities say it is from the Greek *mormo*, meaning a monster, spectre, hobgoblin. This is confirmed in the book itself where we read they came 'to a place called Mormon, having received its name from the king . . . having been infested . . . by wild beasts.' (Moriah, ch. 18, 4). What the *Book of Mormon* contains is summed up in *Voice of*

Warning: 'When the Lord confounded the languages at Babel, he led forth a colony from thence to the Western Continent, which is now called America. This colony, after crossing the ocean in eight vessels, and landing in that country, became in process of time a great nation; they inhabited America for some 1500 years. They were at length destroyed for their wickedness about 600 years before Christ. A prophet by the name of Ether wrote their history' (pp. 94-95). And yet we read of 'Christians' and 'Churches of Christ' existing more than 600 years before the coming of the Christ! (*Book of Alma*, ch. 46). One writer states that there are in 426 pages of the *Book of Mormon* 298 quotations from the New Testament, and that a good part of the book is borrowed from the Bible. The quotations from the New Testament are from the Authorised Version, which was not published until 2,200 years after the time they appear in the *Book of Mormon*—600 years B.C. The rest of the book is a romance, and was well described by Mark Twain the American humorist as 'Chloroform in print.' And of such a book it is written: 'They shall remain under this condemnation until they repent, and remember the new covenant, even the *Book of Mormon*' (*D. & C.*, Sec. 84).

(3) Anti-Scriptural Doctrines, Practices and Offices

Time is too short even to name all these; I can only now touch a few.

GOD (*D. & C.* Sec. 130, par. 22): 'The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's.' The highest authority, Jesus, said: 'God is a Spirit,' and 'a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.' (John 4: 24; Luke 24: 39).

THE BIBLE. In Articles of Faith, No. 8, it is said: 'We believe the Bible to be the Word of God . . . We also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the Word of God.' Now whether the Bible be dragged down to the level of other books, or other books be elevated to the level of the Bible, the result is the same, the supremacy of the Bible is destroyed.

THE FOUNDATION. They claim this to be revelation, and they claim to receive revelations continually. This affords no sure foundation; they may receive a revelation that they are all wrong. The rock foundation of Christianity is Jesus: the belief that He 'is the Christ the Son of the living God.' (Matt. 16: 17, 18; 1 Cor. 3: 11).

THEY HAVE APOSTLES. Any body of people can appoint apostles, but they are only apostles of those who appoint them. Apostles of the Christ were appointed by the Lord Himself; they were witnesses, especially of His resurrection, and can have no successors.

THEY CLAIM TO POSSESS MIRACULOUS POWERS, as named in Mark 16: 17-18. When pressed to prove their claims they say, 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it.' (Matt. 16: 4).

THEY IMMERSE BELIEVERS. But into what? Whether a person is immersed into Jesus Christ, or into a belief in Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon* will make an eternal difference.

THEY HAVE MANY UNSCRIPTURAL OFFICERS. They have a President, Patriarchs, Apostles, High Priests and Priests. On some of these the New Testament is silent, and the only priests named there are believers, who are a holy, royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2: 5 and 9). There is only one High Priest, the one mediator between us and God (Heb. 3: 1 etc.; 1 Tim. 2: 5). Like other religious systems, Mormonism exalts men to the place belonging to the Lord Jesus. Loving 'to have the pre-eminence' has ever been fatal to simple New Testament Christianity. Mormonism is another proof of where those are led who are not satisfied with the revelation God

has given in the Scriptures of Truth. Like many other false religions it panders to human lusts. False religions need other books, they could not exist without them. Christianity flourishes on the scriptures only. There we find all that we need, all that God intends us to know during our pilgrimage here.

'Cling to the Bible, though all else be taken;
Lose not its precepts so precious and pure;
Souls that are sleeping its tidings awaken;
Life from the dead in its promises sure.'

W. CROSTHWAITE.

The Organisation and Government of the Church of Christ--IV.

Qualifications and Duties of Evangelists

WHAT is also apt to be overlooked is that the qualifications and duties of evangelists are no less explicit than those of elders and deacons. They were to be no ordinary preachers of the good news, in the sense that such an obligation is placed upon all members of the Church, including elders and deacons; but rather were they to *excel* in all matters pertaining to such preaching and knowledge of the Word (1 Tim. 4:12-16; 1 Tim. 6:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 2:7-8).

They were required not only to preach the gospel and to be examples in the process; they were also solemnly charged to *teach* the members of the church (as they were in a position to do, by virtue of their abilities, more so even than elders who were required to be only 'apt to teach'). Not only were they to *teach*, but also to *exhort* and *rebuke* (1 Tim. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:1 and 19-20; 2 Tim. 2:14; 2 Tim. 4:1-2 and 5 [showing that these things constituted the work and duties of an evangelist]; Titus 1:5 and 13; Titus 2:15; Titus 3:10).

It is true that these Epistles to Timothy and Titus are interspersed with general directions, involving church members. What is often overlooked is that the evangelist is required to see that these directions are observed, not only by the members, but also by the officers of the church. This does not release the elders and deacons, nor other members from their obligations and duties, but in the Divine wisdom it ensures that a benevolent and instructive source of guidance and correction is available, for the building up of the church, in whatever district it is placed.

Evangelists' Sphere of Work

It might be assumed from Paul's injunction to Timothy to 'abide still at Ephesus' (1 Tim. 1:3), that the sphere of an evangelist's work was confined to the city, containing the church by whom he had been ordained. But this is not a safe conclusion. Timothy's stay in Ephesus was not intended to confine his activities to that city, but only, as the use of the word 'still' indicates, until he had discharged Paul's direction to gainsay the teachers of false doctrine there. In any case, we must guard against the modern idea that the church consisted of a building within a particular city, in which members congregated. I think the expression 'Ephesus' is a loose term, intended to cover all the district surrounding Ephesus where the members of the church lived. The centre of activity, however, would be in Ephesus, from which the Gospel would radiate to other towns in Asia Minor. No doubt Timothy was appointed to this sphere, since he would be well acquainted with the churches in that district (Acts 16:1-2).

A similar analogy can be found if we study Titus's sphere of activity in Crete, as he is told by Paul to 'set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city.' (Titus 1 : 5). Nothing is said by Paul about the ordination of Titus, but I think that, since the Word of Truth cannot contradict itself, Titus was, like Timothy, ordained by the elders of a church, perhaps at Philippi, from which the letter was written and to which he was asked to return by Paul (Titus 3 : 12). Philippi was probably the chief church of Macedonia (Acts 16 : 12), as Ephesus was in Asia Minor.

Further confirmation that evangelists worked from a central strong-point seems to be provided by the example of Philip who, as we see in Acts 8 : 40 had entered on an evangelising tour 'through Azotus and all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.' Philip was one of the seven appointed by the Apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 6 : 3). Twenty years later we still find him at Caesarea, where Paul, as we read in Acts 21 : 8, entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, as he is now called. We cannot doubt that Caesarea was now the centre of Philip's activities.

Antioch was likewise the central point from which Paul and Barnabas and other teachers or evangelists issued forth on their Gospel tours (Acts 11 : 25-26 ; Acts 13 : 1-4). Note how the Church at Antioch was responsible for the sending out of these evangelists—a responsibility laid upon them by the Holy Spirit.

Who will say, in the face of such evidence, that ordination is unnecessary? That evangelists were sent out as Paul (an Apostle) and Barnabas were, clearly proves how necessary such a procedure was ; and if it was necessary for even an Apostle to be ordained for such work, how much more necessary should it be for one who is not an Apostle to be so ordained.

Note how, at the end of their first journey, they returned to the church at Antioch 'from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled' (Acts 14 : 26). When we reflect on Paul's own words in Ephesians 3 : 21, 'Unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus throughout all ages,' we can see how Paul did not set out on his own initiative, as our weak human reasoning is apt to imagine. No, even the great Paul was careful to do so only in accordance with the Divine order and arrangement.

Paul's second journey with Silas, was likewise recommended by the church (Acts 15 : 40) and again, at the close of that journey they came back to report to the church (Acts 18 : 22). Paul's third and last journey as a free man was, of course, interrupted through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that he returned not to Antioch, but to Jerusalem ; but observe how he gives glory to the church there, by reporting 'What things God had wrought among the Gentiles, by his ministry' (Acts 21 : 19). Observe how the church was responsible for the sphere of work of its servants. It is true, Paul sometimes determined where they might go (Acts 15 : 36), but he still was careful to obtain the covering approval and recommendation of the church (Acts 15 : 40).

Further examples are the visits of Paul and Barnabas to the Church in Jerusalem. Note how, in Acts 15 : 3, *they were sent on their journey by the church*, and how, in the case of the return visit of Judas and Silas, 'it pleased the apostles and elders, *with the consent of the whole church*' in Jerusalem, to send these chosen men to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas.

W. BROWN.

(To be continued).

'As captain of the host of the Lord am I come' (Josh. 5 : 14). Christ comes, not to help, but to take command.

The Glorious Company of Fools

FOOLS of a certain type have always been the way-showers of life. They are the folk who keep the avenues open to God. The fools who perform this high mission for humanity are not meddlesome fools, nor ignorant fools, nor conceited fools, nor blatant fools, but fools who are 'fools by heavenly compulsion,' whose folly is one with the wisdom of God.

The fools of history are really a glorious company of immortals. They were not without brains or vision, neither did they lack character nor courage. They dreamed and dared, and were not ashamed to be called 'fools.' Think of the great company of way-showers who, like Paul, went pioneering for God and gloried in being called 'fools for Christ's sake.'

When William Carey started off for India, wise men stood around shaking their heads and regarding him as a fool. Exactly the same thing happened when Robert Morrison went to China, when David Livingstone set out for Africa, and John G. Paton for the New Hebrides. When James Gilmour, the brilliant scholar of Glasgow, decided to go to Mongolia, his friends of the University looked at him askance. They thought he had lost his mental balance. His only apology was, 'I go out as a missionary, not that I may follow the dictates of common sense, but that I may obey the command of Christ.' How perfectly foolish was Wilfred T. Grenfell when he turned his back on a promising career in England, and started for the icebound shores of Labrador.

These men, and countless others like them, dared to follow their ideals in the face of a so-called practical world which said 'Don't do it! Don't be foolish! Don't throw your life away! Do something practical.' Idealists are pretty much all fools, but they are God's fools, and in the long last the worldly wise always follow where fools blaze the way. History reads like that.

No man in all history ever adopted a more foolish course than that chosen by Jesus of Nazareth. Here we are on sacred ground indeed. At the beginning of His ministry He made a decision which in the eyes of the world seemed perfectly absurd. He had come to establish a world-kingdom founded on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. How could He most surely accomplish His purpose? By what route should He travel to His goal and mount His spiritual throne? He might have done spectacular things and won temporary fame. There's nothing, in fact, He might not have done. All power was at His disposal. Every resource was at His command.

He might have employed miraculous power and won position and influence. He might have moved with a strong military force and won a temporal throne. These were precisely the things that the world would have advised Him to do, the very things He was, in point of fact, tempted to do. He did none of them. He chose rather to follow a course that seemed incredibly foolish. He would move toward Calvary. He would live the life and deliver the message that God gave Him. He would sacrifice all in self-giving love. He chose the Cross. He laid down the life that no man could take from Him.

And let us make no mistake about it—to go the full length of the religion of Christ is to be regarded as a fool. The trouble with this old world is just this—there are not enough of us who are willing to be 'fools for Christ's sake.'

Where Lies Hope?

WHAT is the most powerfully corroding emotion in the world to-day? Some would say hatred, and some would say jealousy.

But much more probably it is fear. Stark and ugly fear.

Every day one can see the consequences of fear. Wars, strikes, tragedies stem from this root cause. On one page of to-day's newspapers is the report of the inquest on poor Frank Tilsley, who killed himself because he thought his writing powers were deteriorating, and feared for his future.

In another column a man who murdered his 19-year-old wife and then committed suicide feared that their baby, expected in June, would take his wife's love away from him.

And so on it goes, every day.

Tranquilliser pills are becoming the most popular demand of the day. The ever-increased consumption of sleeping pills to calm night fears is already a source of concern to the doctors, who often prescribe them with reluctance.

What is the remedy for this modern accent on fear? There is no single remedy, but the greatest hope must be a healthy mental and physical state, coupled with a sturdy religious faith.

Sunday games and motoring, television, hiking and gardening are no substitutes for the spiritual refreshment that comes of worship and the renewal and strengthening of Christian faith.

The 'daily dozen' is no substitute for the daily prayer.

In that simple faith in the loving protection of an all-understanding Father lies more hope and more comfort than in all the tranquillisers and soporifics known to man.

—*West Lancashire Evening Gazette.*

'If you had asked of me . . .'

AT the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago was a beautiful drinking fountain to which my daughter led me. She bent down and drank from an ample stream of sparkling water, crystal clear and cool. But as soon as she left the fountain the stream ceased and when I reached it there was no water. I looked for a lever. There was none. I asked her how water came. She said, 'Just bend over and drink, daddy.' I said, 'Don't tease. Where is the hidden handle I can turn to make water flow?' Earnestly, she said, 'But daddy, you can't do anything to make the water come except bend down; if you bend down and expect it to come, it will come.' I nevertheless did as she told me, and lo! as I put my lips to the fountain's mouth there gushed forth an ample stream and I drank to my satisfaction. Then I learned that just in front of the fountain was an invisible beam which, when broken by my bowed head, released the flow of water from the fountain. But I never would have drunk had I not humbly inclined my head.

So the Fountain of the Water of Life flows freely for all who in humble obedience to God's gracious invitation will bow and drink.

* * *

THERE was no need for commands and rules as to how much the members of the New Testament church should part with, how it was to be contributed and such like. They gave *what* was needed, *when* it was needed, and *all* that was needed.

—WM. CROCKETT in *Churches of Christ Year Book*, 1897.

Beware

BEWARE of panaceas or patent remedies in religion. Jesus Christ gave his own prescription for the ills of mankind, sealed it with his blood, stamped it with the authority of heaven and promised to be with those who use it. You will find it applied in the book of Acts. The resurrected Christ laid the foundation for his church in his own divinity; then he gave the blueprint and specification in the New Testament. Perhaps we need a constant 'Restoration Movement.'

Why do God's people suffer?

A NATURALIST once took up a chrysalis and, thinking to help the moth in its violent throes to come forth, took a lancet and slit the cocoon. At once the moth came out, but its colours never came; it drooped and died. The naturalist discovered the struggle was necessary to bring all the fluids of the body into play and put the lustre on the wings.

God who made the chrysalis also made the soul; and bitter disappointments and cruel sorrows are working the lustre of our souls. When nearly a hundred years old Robert Chapman said, 'As I look back, those dealings of God bitterest at the time are, in the remembrance and understanding of His dealings, the sweetest. The discipline under which our flesh writhes is our preservation.'

'To them that love God, all things work together for good.' (Romans 8:28).

Public Bible Readings

THERE is no lovelier sight than a spiritually-minded man standing up while people listen to the reading of the Scriptures. It is an error when the direct message to the people is not read to them. The Spirit of God speaks through His word. Divine life is in it, as physical life in the seed. 'Behold, a sower went forth to sow . . . the seed is the word of God.'

Most of the knowledge of the Scriptures gathered by the public has come from hearing the word read. For, while people reverence the Bible, the majority do not trouble to read it for themselves.

Moffat's translation of Revelation 1:3 reads: 'Blessed is he *who reads aloud*, blessed are they who hear the words of this prophecy and lay to heart what is written in it.'

The Ethiopian as he travelled through the desert was reading aloud from the prophet Isaiah, for Philip heard him (Acts 8:30). When the decree went forth from Henry VIII that a copy of the Bible in English was to be placed 'in every parish church' in the land, hundreds of people crowded to Paul's Cross in London simply to hear the word of God read.

What a noble ministry is that of reading aloud the Scriptures in the congregation! Brethren should prepare themselves for this service, and only those who can read intelligently in such a way that the meaning is understood should be called upon to read in public. It must have been an education in itself to have heard Jesus read the Scriptures in the synagogue at Nazareth. (Luke 4:17).

Pertinent

ON the pulpit of a famous mission appears the text: 'SIRS, WE WOULD SEE JESUS'—a gentle reminder to the speaker to keep to his subject: Christ and Him crucified. When the pulpit is used for any other purpose than to set forth the living Word of God the glory has departed.

Peace

'The peace of God . . . shall keep your heart.'

IF peace be in the heart

The wildest winter storm is full of solemn beauty ;
The midnight lightning flash but shows the path of duty.
Each living creature tells some new and joyous story ;
The very trees and stones all catch a ray of glory—
If peace be in the heart.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sept. 1—	Isaiah 6.	John 1:29-51.
" 8—	Genesis 2.	" 2:1-22.
" 15—	Psalms 139.	" 2:23-3:21.
" 22—	Malachi 3.	" 3:22-36.
" 29—	Isaiah 55.	" 4:1-42.

THE WORD OF GOD

My dictionary gives as the first meaning of 'Word'—'the spoken sign of an idea.' Definitions might be many and elaborate, but perhaps this is sufficient for our purpose. We cannot express ourselves satisfactorily without words, and when we come to reasoning with one another they are absolutely indispensable. Man is distinguished from animals by his reasoning powers—a gulf between him and lower creation which cannot be bridged at all.

So God has given us His Word that we may be in touch with Him, and He has chosen the supremely perfect method of conveying His will to us by revealing Himself in the person of His Son. How very fitting then that the title 'Word' should be applied by the apostle John to that Son. How beautifully too does the writer of the letter to the Hebrews express the same thought—'the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance.' Again we have Paul writing—'in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' and 'the image of the invisible God'—in his letter to the Colossian Christians. How delightful is this unity in glorifying the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

John begins his gospel with a short but sublime declaration of the eternal existence of the Son, for surely 'was' means this; and His oneness with the Father. That He became flesh and dwelt

among us is the most amazing fact in all history, and even that is surpassed because He came for the purpose of suffering death for every man—'it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Tim. 1:15).

The title is used by John also in his first letter, from which we should read the first four verses with the introduction to the gospel. Again it is used in the Revelation, where His victory is pictured symbolically (19:11-16). We can see that the Word of God being the expression of His thought must be perfect, and as Churches we have laid so much emphasis upon this point that some have called us Bibliolaters. There would be some strength in the accusation if we were merely concerned with the words themselves—but what are they unless they bring thought, and are taken to heart? Merely ciphers without value. However, transfer of thought cannot take place without them, and it is foolish to make the phrase 'the letter killeth' (1 Cor. 3:9) contradict 'incorruptible seed' (1 Peter 1:23). The contrast is between the Old and New Covenants and, however true and perfect the word, it may be rejected or made fruitless in various ways, as we read in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

It is only through the written word we can come to know the writer's mind, and as we are instructed to let 'this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus' we must apply ourselves diligently to the study of that Word which reveals His mind to us. We shall find the readings from John's gospel a continuous source of spiritual help and strength if we allow the Holy Spirit thus to become part of our very selves. He has quickened us, and He will also sustain us while we draw upon His supplies.

John's purpose in writing is clearly stated to be 'that ye may believe . . . and that believing ye may have life in his

name. We shall then reap stronger faith as our minds increasingly store the Word of God which liveth and abideth, and find it quick and active to discern our thoughts and motives, cleanse us from secret faults (Psalm 19:12) and increasingly make our words and meditations acceptable to our Father. R. B. SCOTT.

CHOICE

Life is a serve-self restaurant,
Piled high with joys that mortals want;
And each who comes to earth may
choose

What he will take and what refuse.

We pass along from day to day,
Viewing life's glittering display—
And at the end the cost is paid
According to the choice we've made.

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in

From a Christian's Diary!

By Bereav

'Bishops in the Kirk.' Much discussion seems to have been provoked by the recently-published report on relations between the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches and it appears that comment is called for. That two large communities of professed Christians should be recommended to draw closer to full communion with each other might be considered to be a laudable move and a distinct advance towards Christian unity, but is that really so? Church union may indeed be in view but that it not the same as the unity in Christ.

Among Presbyterians, particularly in Scotland, it is evident that feelings are running very high at the thought of reverting to episcopalian control, especially since the Anglican communion is only required to pay the smaller price for its extended fellowship—the appointment of 'lay' elders. We can well understand why some in the Church of Scotland consider the whole idea to be a step nearer to Rome than nearer to God's ideal. It would certainly appear to be a departure from the position of 'the second Reformation' at least.

To Bible Christians, however, the whole issue must appear to be trivial when compared with existing doctrines and practices which are flagrantly un-Scriptural. Infant membership, apostolic succession, hereditary total depravity and certain Calvinistic tenets are only a few of the existing barriers between Protestantism in general and the faith once delivered to the saints. Until some attempt is made to discard such doctrines of men and return to the purity of apostolic doctrine it will be impossible to believe that unity is intended. A superficial Church uniformity might be achieved by this kind of pooling of existing titles and offices. It could make two Churches more similar to each other but less like the Church of God, if that is possible.

* * *

Bishops in the Bible. In apostolic times bishops and elders were identical (see Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5, 7) and always more than one in each congregation. There was no suggestion that they were anything like presbyters over a circuit or group of churches, let alone the idea of one bishop ruling a 'bishopric.' As for 'archbishops' and 'primates,' when such titles became current the 'church' had already lost its right to be known as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23) for a body cannot exist without obedience to

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

Opinions differ as to how to finance the S.S. Six years or so ago the price was increased from 3d. to 6d. with no serious loss of readers. The response to the appeal of Bro. Jones proves there is a solid core of readers and churches, and for the moment the paper is saved.

Based on experience, my considered view is that for 1958 the price should be increased so as at least to cut the loss. At 8d. it is only 2d. per week; at 10d., 2½d.—the price of one day's newspaper. I believe a very large number would approve of this, and many will feel as I do, that there is neither sense nor reason in accepting a copy monthly which the subscription rate is not covering, the balance being met by gifts from churches and individuals. Since the inception of the S.S. provision has always been made for those who cannot afford

the subscription to have a copy and this can still be done. A. L. FRITH.

[We have received several further letters on the use of individual cups at the Lord's table. These have, however, been returned to the writers with the note that correspondence on the subject is now closed. It was reopened to allow fair hearing for brethren whose case had not been fully stated.—Editor]

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylsbury.—We again rejoice to be able to report that two more souls have been added to the Lord. Eileen Tweedie, the eldest daughter of our Bro. and Sis. Tweedie, and a member of our senior Bible class, was baptised on July 14th. May our young sister be blessed with a life of long and fruitful service in the Lord's kingdom.

On August 7th, Edward Chappin, husband of our Sis. Vera Chappin (whose baptism was reported last month), was baptised into Christ. He was formerly an active member of the Church of England and in the local church choir, but he had been studying the Word of God with us for some time. As with his wife's baptism, our brother's baptism was a grand testimony, being in the open air, in a reservoir near his home. It is wonderful to see husband and wife come to the Lord in this way. Both are eager to serve, and particularly to use their home in witness and work for the Lord.

L. CHANNING.

Belfast, Lawnbrook Avenue.—We are happy to report six baptisms. In June Mrs. Lily Gardiner, Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Campbell and Mr. and Mrs. Faulkener. Bro. Faulkener is confined to a wheelchair, and his decision, followed by his constant attendance at the services and Bible classes, has been most encouraging. Sister Martin, our last convert, when in hospital seriously ill, expressed her desire to be baptised at the first opportunity. This was arranged, and our sister is now progressing physically and spiritually.

We are striving to secure enough money for a building site, which is being sought after by Roman Catholicism. Remember this effort in your prayers.

R. JUSTIN.

Peterhead.—Again we rejoice at the restoration of a sister who has been absent from the fellowship of the saints for over twenty years, and of two young men. May the Lord keep them and strengthen them in the days that lie ahead.

A. STRACHAN.

Tranent.—It is with great joy that we record the addition of another to our number. A young woman, Mrs. Ella Inverarity, put on the Lord in baptism on July 16th. Her decision came after attending the mission conducted by Bro. David Dougall.

We thank God for this further proof of the power of the Gospel unto salvation.

D. SCOTT.

Tunbridge Wells, 5 Mount Ephraim Rd.—On Lord's Day, August 4th, Pauline Ada Golding was immersed into the Christ. She had attended our meetings for some six months, being as consistent as any member, and made her decision after very careful thought. We commend her to the Lord, praying that her example and faithfulness may bring many more to a full knowledge of the truth.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Woodstock, Capetown.—From July 9th to 14th we held a series of special gospel meetings, with an average attendance of 38 each evening. With our usual speakers we had Bro. F. Murphy of Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, to speak one evening, accompanied by his wife, on their way to Yorkshire for a short furlough; also Bro. Conrad Steyn, originally from Pretoria, who, after a five years' study in the States, has returned to South Africa to assist the Churches when called up. He is settling down in Capetown permanently, with the intention to extend the gospel amongst the Afrikaans people and others not knowing the New Testament Church.

OBITUARY

Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.—On August 10th our Bro. Younger passed away after a long illness borne with Christian patience. He had been a member of the Church of Christ for many years. To all who mourn his loss we offer our sincere sympathy. May the peace which passeth all understanding fill their hearts and minds.

T. MOYES.

Ulverston Conference

Saturday, September 28th.

TIME-TABLE

Afternoon, 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.: Discussion on future of the *Scripture Standard*.

(It would be advantageous if brethren would come prepared with suggestions for the well-being of the magazine. Brethren unable to attend may like to put their suggestions in writing to: Arthur Hood, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Lancs.

Evening, 6 p.m.: The Gospel.

The Conference at Ulverston.—As the conference of loyal brethren and sisters in Christ is to be held, if the Lord will, on Saturday, September 28th at Ulverston, we shall be glad if those intending to be present will kindly let us know as early as possible so that arrangements for catering can be made. The church here has not a large membership but we will gladly do our best to lodge any who desire to stay overnight. All communications to W. Crosthwaite, Ford Villa, Ulverston, Lancs.

COMING EVENTS

Kentish Town—God permitting, we shall be holding our usual anniversary meetings on Saturday, October 5th. Bro. F. C. Day has kindly consented to serve us on the occasion, and on the Lord's Day following. Visitors from all parts will be warmly welcomed. Afternoon 3, tea 5, evening 6.30.

Tunbridge Wells, Kent.—Brethren are cordially invited to join us on Saturday, September 14th at 7 p.m. in the lecture room of the Public Library, Mount Pleasant, Tunbridge Wells. This is the first meeting of a six night mission (September 14-19) in which Leonard Morgan will preach the gospel. Meetings on the Sunday will be held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall at 5 Mount Ephraim Road. Monday to Thursday at the Public Library at 7.30 p.m.

The Library is in the centre of the town, behind the War Memorial. All visiting brethren warmly welcome. We beseech all the disciples to pray for this gospel effort. A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Loughborough.—Anniversary Services, September 21st and 22nd (D.V.). Speakers: Bren. Andrew Gardiner (Scotland) and John Breakell (Eastwood). Saturday, 21st: Tea 4.30; Meeting 6.15. Chairman Bro. Barry Sharpe. Special singing by the Ilkeston brethren.

Morley, Yorkshire. — Saturday, October 5th, Autumn Rally. Speakers: Brethren L. H. Channing and T. Nisbet. Tea 4 p.m., Rally 6.15 p.m.

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 Slamannan on Saturday, September 28th, 1957, at 4.30 p.m.

The speakers will be four of our very young brethren, the brothers Sneddon, with Bro. Peter Wilson chairman.

A warm welcome is given to all interested in the work amongst the young.

GREAT YARMOUTH FISHING SEASON, 1957

Further to our notices in the June and August issues of this paper, we intend holding Gospel services with the fisher brethren, beginning October 5th. The Rally will be on October 26th. Time and place will be advertised in the next issue of this paper.

We would appreciate the help of visiting brethren at any of our meetings, as the number of fisher brethren travelling south has been fewer these past few years than formerly. Make a date with us at the Rally. We know the travelling is difficult; but the welcome and experience at the end will be well worth while.

One offer of accommodation has come in so far. Terms 17/6 per day board residence.

Write me if you intend being with us: David Dougall, Seaview Cottage, Wallacestone, Brightons, Falkirk, Stirlingshire.

COMING TO CANADA?

When in the TORONTO district, the brethren of the Maplewood Avenue congregation extend a hearty welcome to all who desire to worship. The meeting house is situated at 10 Maplewood Avenue, near the corner of Vaughan Road, Toronto, Ontario.

Services for the week are as follows:—

Lord's Day—

10 a.m.: Bible School for all ages.

11 a.m.: Worship & Breaking of Bread.

7 p.m.: Preaching of the Gospel.

Wednesday—

8 p.m.: Prayer and Bible Study.

Maplewood Avenue Church of Christ.
Secretary: John D. MacKay, 7 Locust Street, Toronto 9, Ontario, Canada.

When in VANCOUVER worship with the church of Christ at 604 East 12th Street, Lord's Day: Bible Classes for all ages, 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.; Gospel, 7.30 p.m. Thursday: Prayer and Bible Study for all ages, 7.30 p.m.

AN INVITATION TO CLEVELEYS

Last year 129 visiting brethren met with us to break bread and we were greatly encouraged by their presence and help. We renew our invitation to all who visit this area to have fellowship with us in the Co-operative Hall, Beach Road. We meet at 10.30 a.m. for breaking of bread and at 6.30 p.m. to preach the gospel.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Secretary of Devonport (Plymouth)
Church: W. F. M. Lakeman, 598 Budshead Road, Whitleigh, Plymouth.

**BROTHER L. CHANNING AND
'QUESTION BOX'**

We are sorry that for the second successive issue 'Question Box' is omitted from the S.S. This is due to the illness of Bro. L. Channing, who is responsible for this feature. The prayers of his brethren will, we know, go up to our Heavenly Father that Bro. Channing may be sustained in his constant pain and that, in God's good time relief and healing may be brought to him.

CAN ANY READER HELP?

Sister E. Read, 3 Whitesideloon, Brightons, Falkirk, is desirous of buying a bound volume of the "S.S." for 1948-49. Has anyone a spare copy which our sister could have? Please address as above

PUBLICATIONS

'Truth in Love' (monthly). Albert Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells.

'Talks on the Tabernacle,' by Walter Crosthwaite. Prices from Paul Jones, 122 Heathfield Road, Birmingham 19.

'The Young Christian' (monthly). 'The Churches of Christ Salute You.' Prices of both from Thos. Nisbet, 8 Haldane Avenue, Haddington, East Lothian.

'The Gospel Banner' (monthly). From Lawnbrook Avenue Church of Christ, Belfast). Hugh Tidsley, 34 Sarajew Crescent, Cavehill Road, Belfast, N.S.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 8/-; two copies 14/-; three copies 20/-, post free. U.S.A., one dollar per copy. Canada, Africa, Australia, New Zealand: One copy 7/-; two 13/-; three 19/6. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B.

All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (news items the 15th) to the Editor: C. MELLING, c/o James Melling, 2 Pyke Street, Wigan, Lancs.

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

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

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

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is printed for the publishers by
Walter Barker (Printers) Ltd., Langley Mill, Nottm.