

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

War.

WAR After weeks of suspense during which we hoped against hope that peace would be preserved and after what we believed were sincere and strenuous

and strenuous efforts in that direction by the Prime Minister, the fateful announcement was made, 'This country is at war with Germany.'

The folly and futility of war is almost universally admitted. Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson, speaking in 1933, said, 'he had spent nearly half a century on matters connected with war, and he had arrived at the conclusion that war was a futile thing, for if neither ensured peace nor composed differences.'

The great war of 1914-1918 was, we were assured, 'a war to end war,' and that it would result in a new world of peace, freedom, and righteousness. The years that have followed have witnessed the lowering of the moral and spiritual tone of the nation, the increase of pleasure seeking, and the desecration of the Lord's Day, to an extent that has been appalling.

History records again and again how great empires have arisen, and for a

time have wielded almost supreme power, and then fallen, their downfall being brought about not by enemies from without, but enemies within. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation,' while sin always brings nations down. Nations that forget God cannot long exist

Well did the poet Burns pray, that 'a virtuous populace may rise the while, and stand a wall of fire around their much loved Isle.'

Had a tithe of the money spent in preparations to destroy life been spent in efforts to save, we would have been spared this terrible holocaust of war.

'Were half the power that fills the world with
terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps
and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no needs of arsenals and forts.'

Speaking in the House of Commons on August 23rd, Mr. James Maxton said, 'Mankind has tried for two thousand years to find civilisation along this road. Every country has the dead bodies of men who believed that a war could achieve it. . . . How many more times has mankind got to try the ordeal of war before it realises the complete futility of trying to get somewhere through this road?' And now again a war is being waged to end militarism! When Satan casts out Satan then we may expect to see

war end by war. President Roosevelt in a broadcast message spoke of his belief in spiritual values, and in the New Testament, every page of which he said, is opposed to the use of force. That is our faith too. During the Boer War and the Great War we took a firm stand against militarism, believing it to be, as declared in a resolution of Annual Conference of Churches of Christ, 'Out of harmony with and antagonistic to the teachings of our Lord,' (*YearBook*. 1900 p. 80.) and we see no reason for changing that attitude now.

During the days that are ahead our faith will be put to the test. We have often sung, 'Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defence is sure,' and now we need more than ever to put our trust in the Lord. How appropriate are the words of the Psalmist: 'He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust Because thou hast made the Lord . . . even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' (Psalm xci.) Often in time of danger from war and pestilence those who trusted God, and refused to abandon principles, have been preserved from bodily harm. But whether we suffer bodily harm or not, if loyal to the Lord and His Word we shall be saved from what is infinitely worse, spiritual harm. The three Hebrew conscientious objectors, cast into the furnace of deadly fire, found only their bonds burned, and best of all one walked with them whose form was like the Son of God. (Daniel iii.) After the last war, Mr. Lloyd George, said, 'If in 1914 the Churches had said, 'Stop! this murder shall not begin,' no government would have dared to enter into the war.'

War, like the Drink Traffic, will be ended when the Church says it shall.

Oh, that the Churches were united, and with one voice, one heart and soul, would seek to hasten the day when 'they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into

pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, - neither shall they learn war any more.'

That should be the chief concern of every loyal soldier of King Jesus.

EDITOR

Important.

ACCORDING to arrangements, the editor expects to be in England until the end of 1939. As we shall be moving from place to place, will correspondents please note addresses, which will be given in the **S.S.**, and send matter for insertion therein as] early as possible. !

During October, our address, D.v.j will be W. CROSTHWAITE, II GILBERT; STREET, HINDLEY, WIGAN.

Holy Water.'

IN our issue of August, 1938, we published a report of the Vicar of Littlehampton sprinkling holy water; on motor cars, and expressing the hope that this would reduce road-accidents.

.Now in the *News Chronicle* of August 17th, this year, is a picture and report of the Rev. Bernard Whelan, at the Roman Catholic Church, Hampstead, London, sprinkling holy water on more than one hundred dogs. 'This,' he said, 'was not a religious service, but a blessing of a nature found in the Roman' ritual for animals. It has been done abroad often.'

The Editor of the *News Chronicle* classed this among 'strange and silly things,' and hoped it would not be done again in this country.

But, if the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the face of an unconscious babe can ingraft it into Christ, remit its sins, and regenerate it, why should not the sprinkling of water on motor cars and dogs do something wonderful for them? Can any of our readers tell us why not?

EDITOR S.S.

Steadfastness

THOSE in Christ are enjoined to be steadfast; and the frequency of the idea in the Scriptures indicates its need and importance. We understand by steadfastness the stayed and firm character of those who take the name of the Lord Jesus. Stability in all that is good and pure and lovely is wholesome doctrine for Churches of Christ, engaged in work for the spiritual growth of members who are rooted and grounded in the faith. The meaning of the word is both simple and clear; still we give some of its occurrences in the New Testament. The verbal forms 'stood,' 'stand,' etc., are frequently named. It is interesting to note how the same idea is variously rendered. The thought of fixedness as compared with motion runs through them all, but sometimes the thought is accentuated. It is said of the guiding star, in Matt. ii. 9, that 'it came and *stood* over where the young child was.' Here, standing for a short time is suggested by the circumstances, but in Acts

xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed the day,' literally, 'made to stand'—that is the day of judgment, that nothing shall be able to move; it shall stand against the wishes as well as the powers of men. Also in 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God *standeth sure*.' Here we have the idea of continued stability, and that alone agrees with the context of the passage. In the imperative form we have only a few instances. The noun occurs but once. 2 Peter iii. 17, reads: 'Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.' A kindred word rendered by the same term is found in Col. ii. 5. Such references bring clearly to our minds the radical idea running through various forms of the word.

We observe how material things and natural laws are used to convey lessons about things immaterial and spiritual. When we consider things around us we see some of them at rest and some in motion. There is a power that draws everything towards the earth, but there are other forces in operation that overcome the former. The hurricane rages in its fury, and edifices that were thought to be secure are sometimes laid in ruins. We, too, are subjected to conflicting forces in the spiritual realm. Man, however, is not like a tree or a stone that is moved and can't help being shifted. No! he is endowed with a will, and there is stamped in his being that individual responsibility that makes him accountable to the great Judge of all.

The injunctions 'stand fast,' 'be steadfast,' imply that we are able to stand, otherwise they would be unreasonable and absurd. There is also the implication of danger that we may fall from our steadfastness.

There must be some basis or foundation on which we can rest. A house that is not built on a solid foundation is not secure. Some may build 'castles in the air,' but they are always sure to tumble down. The most casual reader knows that the word of the living God was the substantial and safe foundation on which Christians at the beginning stood fast. To those at Ephesus Paul wrote: 'Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the *foundation* of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.' Divine authority and guidance we can all trust because it is a fortress in which all may feel safe. It is the only reasonable ground we can take as Christians and invite our fellow men to build upon with

assurance for the present, and hope for the future. Paul had to warn those who thought something else would do; hence the warning was given: 'Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men.' How impressive are the words of Paul to his son in the faith: 'O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.' The wisdom of the wisest fades away as succeeding generations arise, for every succeeding age brings increased knowledge, but of this we are certain, 'All flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord *endureth for ever.*' On this immovable foundation, that, has been tried during the centuries, and provided security for man in his greatest need, let us as Christians stand, for 'all other ground is sinking sand.' Paul knew well the devices of Satan, and how hard the contest must be for those who have turned 'from darkness to light, and from, the power of Satan to God,' hence the imperative command, 'Stand fast in the faith.' (x Cor. xvi. 15).

Sometimes, there are difficulties presented which cause the young to stagger in their faithfulness to God. Hard questions are put in an ingenious manner, that not only perplex the mind as to how they may be answered, but in some cases lead away from the Word of God that alone directs our steps aright. Science too speaks with such an air of authority, and declares itself in conflict with the Bible, that the latter is looked upon as discredited and the former received with implicit trust. Some of us have felt the effect of these, and think there is need for watchfulness and caution. That there are difficulties in the sacred volume is not to be wondered at, but no one should feel alarmed at

these. Time and experience have removed some of them, and it may be truly said, 'What we know not now we shall know hereafter.'

Let men of science deal with scientific questions, that is their province, and let us be thankful there are so many who reverence God and stand firm upon His revelation. It would be unreasonable to give up so much we know to be good and true because there are some things we do not understand. In other branches of knowledge men act thus reasonably, why not in religion? When perplexing difficulties come in our way, like Peter may we say, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

Iniquity as a flood is surging around us; the tempests of temptation still work destruction. There is the fascinating gin palace that appeals to the lower passions of man and allures the young. Heedlessly, many a one has been drawn into the vortex and soon terminated life, amid gloom and sadness that touches every tender heart. Closely related to intemperance is the curse of gambling. Perhaps, some of us can scarcely imagine its bewitching influence and overwhelming power, but many a neglected home and untimely end utter their most solemn warnings, that we enter not into her ways. There is, too, the rush to make money and become rich; the tendency to regard truth as trifling in pushing forward business, and many other things that require careful watching if Christian steadfastness is to be maintained.

We must also guard against innovations introduced in the name of religion. Satan appears sometimes as 'an angel of light,' and when he cannot drive the Christian from his position as an antagonist, he will assume the garb of hypocritical friendship. In a trying hour, Jesus said to His disciples, 'Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' (Luke xxii. 46). Prayer is necessary every day, for each day brings its trials and temptations. If we pray without ceasing, and grow in grace and in the know-

ledge of our Lord and Saviour, we need fear no evil. Steadfastness is not against progress, but ensures it. The tree grows when rooted and grounded in suitable soil, and Christian progress can only be made when we stand fast in the faith.

The hope of the gospel gleams before, and that hope is ours if we make 'no surrender' Shall we shift from the sure foundation of truth and step on the sinking sands of error? Shall we forsake the fortress of safety when enemies gather round on every side? Shall we surrender in the grandest conflict in which mortals can be engaged? May we answer 'never,' but let every one continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. i. 23). •

JAS. WARDROP.

Correspondence Class.

THERE is still time to send in your replies to the questions set in the first paper of the new session, which will be found in our September issue.

In view of the war restrictions as to meetings, lighting, etc., many will have on hand time that might be utilised to great advantage in gaining a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures. Don't procrastinate, do it now!

J. SCOULLER.

Evangelism.

MY own experience this past year has shown me that an evangelistic mission can be a source of quickening to a Church; that it restores the joy, and perhaps the anaemic faith of the missionary, and that there are many unconverted people who recognise in an evangelical appeal the authentic note of gospel preaching. It seems to me we have too often tried secondary expedients which run down like a battery.—R. PYKE, President Methodist Conference,

Urgent and Important.

From the Treasurer.

WILL all readers who have not done so, please remit to cover this year's subscription?

ALL AGENTS are asked to remit money on hand at once, please do this up to end of June, or better still, September. Far too many agents retain money until the year end, which makes it impossible to meet our printing costs month by month, especially as the year wears on. Just a moment's thought will make this clear.

This magazine is published at a loss always, and we depend upon our readers. All work is done without payment, or it could not go on.

Difficult times are ahead, and every penny sent will help our printer to cover our needs for some time. Paper costs are already rising and will continue to do so. Will all concerned please attend to this request **AT ONCE.**

As this is the October issue, I should be glad to hear from as many readers and agents re next years' requirements as soon as possible (D.V.) **A. L. FRITH.**

[All our readers can help by taking note of and attending to the above. Please send on at once to Bro. Frith. Ed. S.S.]

What should the the Attitude of the Christian Church to National and International Affairs ?

(concluded).

THE second factor in national and international affairs with which we must deal is the problem of war. What should be the attitude of the Church towards war ?

It is a question which demands an immediate and final answer. The past—with its mistakes, divisions, and bitterness—must be forgotten in its urgency. To separate members of a community into those who do and those who do not conscientiously object to bearing arms is an attitude, which to me, seems impossible. How can a Church honour its responsibility to all its members if some are fighting, and some are in prison because they will not fight, in carnal warfare? Moreover, it is unthinkable that the teaching of the Lord and of the Holy Spirit should produce such divergent results. There is no unity of the faith in it, but a disunity which, if continued, will be utterly disastrous.

What saith Scripture? Have we not sufficient to guide us in this matter? Let us hear the prophet first. 'He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war** any more.'

The value of that is not so much that it is prophetic, but that it is a revelation of the divine will. It is what God aims to bring about. To carry it out, says the prophet, is to 'walk in the light of the Lord.'

So it is, that when the Lord came to usher in the new age, He said: 'If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.'

As the Lord then stood before Pilate, every good cause for which man might go to war, then, now, or at any time, was on view. The destiny of the Lord's own people and country were involved in His death, and He knew it. The power was there to save both Himself and His country, but He could not use that power without denying truth to which He was then bearing testimony. The innocence of the child was there, and human helplessness in face of a cruel despotism. Truth was being assailed and justice deliberately denied. Things were being done to make the 'blood boil' of any decent, honest man; but when one man, earlier, would have taken his sword in defence of His Lord and His cause he was bidden to put it away.

You know the pre-eminence the Lord claims for Himself: if a man love father or mother, son or daughter 'more than me, he is not worthy of me.' That claim lies here. If ye cannot fight for Him who is pre-eminent, we may not fight for what is lower: for wife or children, king or country.

To those who plead the religious duty of obedience, in war, to higher powers, we reply: there are no higher powers than His. He has, and must have, the pre-eminence over all, and for Him His servants may not fight.

War is utterly opposed to the spirit of Christ. You can imagine, without distress, the Lord making boots and

shoes for mens women and children, and going at the end of the week to draw His wages; you can see Him as a doctor caring for the sick; or a teacher giving instruction; or a farm labourer, caring for cattle, sowing seed, and providing food for man; but your mind will not allow you to think of Him (who came to give life, and that more abundantly) with a bomb in His hand to drop on the humanity He came to redeem. Nor can you see Him digging a trench in which to shield His body from harm, or wearing a gas mask; or even handing them out for others to wear. Nor can we see the Apostles doing any of these things.

Paul says—with a man of war, a soldier, chained to his side, giving point to his words: we wrestle—we fight—not as this man fights, against flesh and blood; but against man's real enemies, against principalities and powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

But test war not by faith only, but by reason, commonsense, and we know it to be a cruel and barbarous way of trying to settle a dispute. It destroys, by physical combat, hundreds of thousands of lives—not of old people, but of the very best of the youth of the country. Future war will not only destroy combatants, but hundreds of thousands more of lives of men, women, and children in their own homes.

War is a lie. It offers security but gives none. Those who remember 1914-18 saw the Allied Powers out to destroy the enemy—to the last man, if necessary. Militarism must be crushed once for all, they said. As though belief in force can be destroyed by force. The war over, the same powers, in their own interests, were compelled to make even more prolonged efforts than in war to set the vanquished on his feet again. After that, came from the enemy their demand for 'security,' and the preparation of arms. Now, twenty years after that war ended, victory has changed hands and has gone to

the vanquished. Militarism, instead of being crushed, is triumphant, and we see ourselves arming more fiercely than ever, in fear of the aggression of a power this nation first sought to destroy and then helped to set upon its feet. That is not security. It is sheer lunacy, and Christians—whose religion is intelligent or it is nothing—must keep out of it.

I have referred to the condemnation passed on the Jews for their inability to read the signs of their times. And God's judgment will fall upon us and our children—and it will be deserved—if we fail to read the signs of these days with respect to war. The crisis of last September provided obvious object lessons for our learning.

It was abundantly clear at the time—and subsequent events have gone to prove it—that it was the unprepared state of the common people for war which kept the peace. The peace which followed has shown us the Government of this country working at full pressure to remove this state of unpreparedness, not only by providing more and more arms, but by its A.R.P. propaganda seeking to allay the fears of the people of the consequences to them of war when it comes.*

In successive issues, over a long period, the *Christian Advocate* printed a declaration of Sir Edward Grey—who was in a position to know—that to prepare for war made war inevitable. That we believe to be true, and we believe it to be also true that to prepare for the consequences of war will help to bring those consequences just as inevitably upon us. What answer should the Church give to such propaganda? Should she fall into the trap prepared, and encourage her members to become parties to this work of getting ready the minds of the people for death and destruction?

Readers will understand this paper was written before April, when it was read in Conference. What has now occurred gives point to what is here contended. In the crisis of 1938, the nation was not ready for war, now, says the Prime Minister, 'the nation is prepared'—and war has come.

With last September's crisis and its lessons in mind, I unhesitatingly affirm that if Christians would resolutely refuse to attempt to save themselves and others by the means provided, war would be made impossible. We need something of the spirit of the young men of Daniel's prophecy: 'Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and He will deliver us . . . but if not, be it known, we will not serve' this God of War.

What were the forces that brought such relief in that critical week? Was it the threat by the Allies of united action in war, as some declare? Was it the will for peace unmistakably manifested here, and—as Mr. Chamberlain said—in every part of the world? Or was it that some shaft of light from the throne of heaven pierced, unperceived, the obsession of vanity and lust for power of one man?

Only the finger of God himself can record the true history of that time. But of this, I am convinced, that the outpouring of the human spirit then brought about a condition something like that which God demands from us. Good men and women, with men and women not so good, were drawn into a community of need which they felt could not be met, save by some act of divine intervention, and into pray they fell. There was no organisation—none was deeded—the way to the throne of God is direct, and that was the way takeh.

Did God hear? The Archbishop of Canterbury, broadcasting the same night, said that as they came out of the House of Commons there were those who remarked to him: 'This is the hand of God.' He himself claimed it as an answer to prayer.

Was it an answer to prayer? Many would scoff at such an explanation—but those who are here ought not to scoff. May I remind you of one of the most remarkable utterances of the Lord? Referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the disciples' escape therefrom, He said, 'Pray that your flight be not in winter.' If that

means anything at all, it means that the coming desolation was inevitable, but, by prayer, Christians might change the time of its coming, to their benefit.

War is *not* inevitable. It is against God's will, and cannot be inevitable. Given the right attitude of faith and trust, it may be prevented. The will of God is not static, but operative. The will of God for man—as manifested by the Lord in His works of compassion, in the identification of Himself with human need—was not just temporary. The providence of God is—it must be—as real and as available for to-day and its needs as it ever was in the world's history. God's will for war is that it shall cease for ever. That is positive. Let that trust in God which man exerted for a moment—during a period of acute mental and spiritual crisis—become the permanent state of heart and mind of all Christians, as it should be, and the very gates of the kingdom of heaven will be thrown wide open before our eyes.

The attitude of the Church for which I plead, is that she will seek "first the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, leaving the other things to be added unto her, as Divinely promised. w. BARKER.

A Methodist Minister on Design of Baptism.

REPENTANCE means that I show my shame in resolute action towards becoming the opposite of what I was in the days of rebellion. That explains the invariable association in the New Testament of repentance with baptism. That simple symbolism meant that the man's sins were carried down the river into the sea, where they were lost for ever: and he emerged from the water with his past repudiated and cast away, to live a new kind of life under a fresh dominion.

'Rev.' Joe Brice M.A.
in *Joyful Nexos*,

Sincerity Seeking the Way to Heaven,

BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

(continued).

IF THE reader doubts that SINCERITY was converted according to the Scriptures, let him read the following list, containing the Lord's own account of the principal cases of conversion under the Apostles and Evangelists recorded in the sacred writings, from the ascension of Christ forward:—

'When they heard this (Peter's discourse), they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are' afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.'— (Acts ii. 37-41.)

'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'— (Acts iii. 19).

'Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord, gave heed unto those things which Philip spake/hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed of them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city . . . But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of

God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.' (Acts viii. 5-13)-,

'And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went; and behold a man of Ethiopia, a Eunuch, of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the Prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the Prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before the shearer, he opened he not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the Eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speakest the Prophet this? of himself or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou behevest with all

thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.'—(Acts viii. 26-39).

'While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word, and they of the circumcision, who believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.'—(Acts x. 44-48).

'And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.'—(Acts xvi. 13-15).

'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, **and** came trembling and fell before

Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto (him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of that night, and washed" their stripes; and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.'—(Acts xvi. 25-34).

'And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what, then, were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after Him: that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.'—(Acts xix. i-5)-

'And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus? and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus,

And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews that dwell there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou should'st know His will, and see that Just One, and should'st hear the voice of His mouth; for thou shalt be His witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.— (Acts xxii. 6-16).

(To be continued).

Bible Readings.

OLD TESTAMENT.

Proverbs 2 Can there be anything more mere desirable or essential than wisdom

The very antithesis of wisdom is to run in the way of evil men and emulate their deeds. The fear of the Lord, and an understanding of the mind of God, would save from these degrading depths of folly. The way of evil may be more alluring, but to walk in integrity, having learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, will bring blessing and peace, even amid the turmoils of the ungodly.

Prov 3:1-20; The final result of certain sins is the destruction of life, and if we could fully trace all sins to their conclusion, we should probably find that the effect of ALL sin is to curtail and destroy life. So the writer links together the keeping of God's commands with length of days and peaceful years of life. To acknowledge God is to walk in the way of His commandments, for He who founded the earth and established the heavens by His wisdom will not err in the directions which He has given for the welfare of men.

Prov iii Wisdom and discretion are 21-35 indissolubly linked. It is

impossible to be discreet without wisdom to make this possible. So shall these virtues guard us from evil whether awake or asleep. The goodness of God, despite all our unworthiness, should make us ready to help those who may be in need, and slow to raise strife; also fearful of being joined to those who inhabit the house of the wicked, and the scorers of goodness and of God.

Prov iv The last words of David, 1-19 quoted 2 Samuel xxiii.

1-7, run along the same line as those uttered here by his illustrious son, who now conveys them to his sons. Acknowledging the beauty and truth of his father's instructions, he endeavours to impress them on the younger generation. Yet how far did Solomon fall away in practice from the high moral maxim which he here inculcates. Moral instruction is of little avail if practice is wanting, and this is well illustrated in the folly of Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

Prov iv 20-27 The heart is an organ of the body just as is the ear or foot

In Scripture, it is used metaphorically as the centre of the affections and the seat of the will. The Saviour used the word in that sense in Matthew xv. 18-19. To 'guard the heart' is therefore to see that evil thoughts, intents, devices, and habits, do not find lodgment there, and if we give heed to the injunction, we shall be able to walk, breast forward, in the path of duty and of peace.

'Turning to the left or right,' were terms to denote departure from the Law of God. (See Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14; and Joshua i. 7).

NEW TESTAMENT.

Matt v 33-48 The practice of swearing usually arises from a debased view of truthfulness

hence the necessity for undue emphasis on any assertions made,

The Jews considered that they avoided perjury if they did not use the name of God by which to swear. Jesus shews that a false oath taken by heaven, by earth, or by Jerusalem is equally a profanation of God's name.

The law of retaliation is often unwittingly driven into the minds of children, so that the wrongness of it is hardly appreciated. The Saviour shews a more excellent way.

The Law did not say 'Love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' The latter part of the phrase had through wrong teaching come to be a necessary inference. How far we fall short of the goodness of God can only be realized when we think of the patience, the tenderness and love of God for the unjust as well as the just. Sonship must be realised here below in goodly deeds.

Matt vi Hypocrites, play-actors, are
1-13 those whose actions are not the true reflection of their thoughts, whose piety is external and unreal. Against these, the Saviour uttered his most severe reproofs. The inner chamber—not the public street—is the place of approach to God, yet that need not hinder us from praying everywhere. Prayer should be simple, direct, brief. The words: 'after this manner,' precludes the idea that this model prayer was intended to be used 'parrot-like' on all occasions. After the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour was established, there was no need to pray for its coming. The other petitions were for the disciples of that time, and not for later ages. It contains only a human standard of forgiveness, while Paul enjoins on Christians a divine standard. (Eph iv. 32).

Matt vi The temporary nature of
19-34 all earthly things, treasures, and even life itself, makes it certain that the pursuits that absorb mankind are of much less importance than men usually attach to them. It is only as viewed in the light of

eternity that a true perspective of life is attained, and a realization of the comparatively worthless character of those things to which men bend all their energies to the exclusion of allegiance to God. If mammon is the chief end of existence, there can be no true service of God. The word 'thought' formerly bore the idea of 'worry.' The Saviour's meaning is 'Do not worry' as to your life, or food or raiment. 'The troubles that never come make the most grey hair; and backs are bent by loads they never bear.' The Saviour says, 'Avoid that.'

The Saviour here does
Matt. vii. not ban all judgment of men and their teachings, for in verses 15-19, he points out the necessity of judgment and gives specific rules for forming judgment. What is denounced is hypocritical, or blind, judgment that condemns others for sins prevalent in our own lives.

This wonderful sermon closes with an admonition against simply hearing the words of the Saviour and neglecting to obey them. Disaster lies that way, and the reminder is much needed even to-day

Leprosy was a disease
Matt. viii. so contagious that those who contracted it were banished from civilised society. No one would talk with a leper except at a distance. The loving sympathy of the Saviour is seen in that he touched him. The leper had a wonderful faith in the power of Jesus. He had never seen Him cleanse a leper; yet he felt assured not only that Jesus could, but would, heal him. The law was still in force," and Jesus sent him to the Priest. He was the only person who could certify that he was cleansed and fit to mingle once more with his fellow men. (See Lev. xiv.) The ceremony for restoration is full of interest for those who have been cleansed by Jesus from worse than leprosy. j. SCOLLER.

Nyasaland.

ON August 18th, Bro. Ronald sent a very interesting report of the progress of the work. On July 2nd, eight were baptised at Thondwe, when Bro. Rabson, of Ncheu Church conducted the service before two hundred and thirty persons. On July 16th, six were baptised at Chipoola, when Bro. Ronald conducted the service before one hundred and eighty people.

On July 22nd, Bren. Ronald and Hetherwick visited the brethren at Mlanje, Thanguzi Church, and held the first meeting at the stream, where five were baptised, Bro. Hetherwick conducting the service at which there were one hundred and sixty-eight persons. Bro. Ronald conducted the Breaking of Bread meeting. On the Monday, Bro. Hetherwick returned to Namiwawa, intending to meet meat Gulidi, Chiradzulo District. On Tuesday, I left Thanguzi to go to Nkhonjeni with an elder from there who came to meet me at Thanguzi. We reached our destination, Nkhonjeni, by the evening. On Thursday evening, I met the brethren. Many questions concerning the 'Watch Tower' people were put to me and I was very pleased to answer them. The next day, Friday, seven were baptised in the stream where I conducted the meeting, preaching from: 'the time is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel.' After the baptism, we had another meeting at the prayer house, at 2 p. m., when I spoke from: 'whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.' When the brethren heard that to-morrow, Saturday, I was preparing to go to another Church, they asked me to lodge there until Sunday. I begged them to allow me to go and keep my previous promise to open a prayer house at Gulidi on July 30th, and I would come to them again, God willing. The brethren agreed, and on Saturday, I left Nkhonjeni for Thanguzi. On the Sunday morning, I left this place about 7 a. m., and walked at full speed to get to the meeting at Gulidi, where I arrived about 11 a. m. I found that Bro. Hetherwick had arrived the Saturday before. Bro. Hetherwick baptised two, and I rested for an hour. At 1 p. m., I addressed the meeting on: 'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.' We kept the Feast. We arrived home on July 31st, since when I have been in bed with fever and headache.

I have prepared to be out of the district on August 31st, Visiting stations in the

northern province. This will be a long journey, for I hope to visit Malimba, Kota-Kota, Dowa, Kabrunguti, after which I will return to Lilongwe. During this visit, I will also see the Chiefs and the Native Authority and arrange with them about schools.

Readers of the *Scripture Standard* will appreciate that considerable work is being carried on in Nyasaland. w. M. KEMPSTER.

Would any reader care to help?

A YEAR ago, I started a boys' Bible Class, which meets every Lord's Day. Eight or nine attend, varying in age from eleven to thirteen. One boy, who had attended regularly and showed promise, a good reader, intelligent, and keen, suddenly ceased to attend. I found there were two reasons. He was having to deliver papers on a Lord's Day morning, and his clothes were too shabby to come in, and he was very conscious of this. He was delivering papers to help to make ends meet at home. Four in family, total weekly income, twenty-nine shillings; rent, seventeen shillings.

I next heard he had won a place out of three offered at Fleetwood Grammar School, and wrote to congratulate him. He came to see me to say he could not go, as it was impossible to find the money to fit him up with clothes, footwear, etc., needed. He was in tears, and the writer, too.

However, I took the risk, and have fitted him up from head to foot, and last Lord's Day, he was at the class in high spirits. His father had been more or less unemployed for months, but has promised to try and repay what has been, and will be done.

Help will be needed for some time, and if any reader will give a helping hand I shall be very glad, and will see every penny is carefully spent. Send your gift however small, to A. L. FRITH, 10 Poulton Street Fleetwood, Lanes.

Conference Cancelled.

IT was deemed advisable, in view of difficulty of transport, to cancel East Kirkby Conference, which was to have been held on September 9th. The Committee sincerely regret any inconvenience caused thereby.

'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.' (Isaiah xxvi. 3).

L. MORGAN, SECRETARY.

News.

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—We were much encouraged in our work for the Master when, at the close of our service on Lord's Day, 3rd September, Mrs. Maud Pugh made the good confession after hearing the Gospel message by our Bro. F. Townley. She was baptised at our Thursday evening meeting on the 7th inst., and to our further joy, George Gee, after witnessing the immersion, also confessed his faith in Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, and (D.V.) is to be baptised on Lord's Day evening, the 10th inst. So the work goes on, and so the blessing of God attends the faithful proclamation of the Gospel

F. c. DAY.

Birmingham, Summer Lane. — It is with joy that we are able to report a further two additions. Bro. Gilbert J. Gee confessed Christ and was baptised on Lord's Day evening, 10th September, and at the close of that service, his wife, after witnessing the immersion, came forward and made the good confession. She was baptised at our week-night meeting on Thursday, 14th September. We pray that they may be kept faithful to their begun confidence in Christ Jesus as Lord.

FRED C. DAY.

Cape Town, Loop Street.—We praise God for further blessings. Attendance at our Bible School has increased from fifteen to forty. Open-air work has been resumed. On July 23rd, two young men and one young woman confessed the Lord Jesus and were united to Him in baptism, and on July 30th another young woman thus put on the Lord. These were from the Wynberg Assembly.

Missionaries have passed through Cape Town on their way to Northern Rhodesia. A meeting held with them was most encouraging to all. We regret that Bro. H. G. Stevens, who with us contended for the faith, has returned, to his homeland, Cornwall, England.

• T. HARTLB.

Obituary.

Eastwood.—After a long distressing illness, borne with patience and calm resignation, Bro. John Bonser passed to his rest on Lord's Day, August 20th, aged 58 years. He was a brother beloved. For forty years he was a

member of the Church, and for some years served as an elder. He was a consistent and exemplary Christian; and ever manifested the highest concern for the spiritual welfare of the Church. A kindly, sympathetic disposition was manifest in every sphere in which he moved. A most devoted and gracious husband and father, he has left a sorrowing wife and daughter. The family and the Church have suffered a great loss, but to him it is gain. A very touching service was held in the Meeting House, at which Bro. W. Jepson made sympathetic references to our departed brother's, 'work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope,' and the glorious resurrection morn.

After this, we proceeded to Greasley Parish Churchyard, where our brother's remains were laid to rest, the service there being effectively conducted by Bro. S. Jepson, of Ilkeston. We pray for all the bereaved, and for those who knew and loved Bro. Bonser, that their trust may be strong in the God of all comfort, who has promised to be a Husband to the widow, and a Father to the fatherless; and that all may rejoice in, and wait patiently for the coming of the Lord.

J. T. FRETWELL.

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—We have lost by death one of our oldest members. Mrs. Richard Jones, *nee* Emma Burdett, fell asleep in Jesus on Friday, 1st September, in her seventy-fourth year, after being laid aside and suffering much for some weeks. She was the same age as our chapel, and it is recorded that as a babe she was the first to be brought into the new building by her God fearing parents, when they asked the brethren to join with them in thankfulness to God for safe delivery of the child. Prayer was offered - that she might grow up to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in heir life, and this she certainly did, for it would not be easy to find a finer example of a life of Christian devotion and patient endurance, lived sometimes under the most trying conditions.

After a short service in her home, her mortal remains were laid to rest in the City Cemetery, Witton, on Tuesday, the 5th inst., Bro. George H. Hudson officiating.

We commend to the grace of God, her husband, son, and two daughters, who will miss her gracious presence, but to whom her life will remain a fragrant memory.

F. C. DAY.

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OUR AIM.

WE MAKE it our aim to further a movement, comprising Churches and individuals, for a complete return to Christianity as it was at the beginning.

HENCE, WE STAND:

1. FOR THE BIBLE AS THE ALL-SUFFICIENT STANDARD and rule of faith and practice, recognizing that what God required from His ancient people, Israel, is found in the Old Testament Scriptures, and what He requires from all now is contained in the New Testament Scriptures.

2. FOR THE UNION OF ALL BELIEVERS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT BASIS. Our Lord prayed that '*they all might be one that the world may believe.*' This prayer makes the union of His people essential to the salvation of the world, and can only be answered when there is a return to the faith, ordinances, and order of the Church of the Apostolic age.

3. FOR THE REJECTION OF ALL HUMAN CREEDS, Confessions of Faith, Doctrines, and Commandment.*, and the acceptance of the Divinely-revealed creed, '*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*' believing that a real heart-grip of that, with all iJLhriplies, will lead to a complete surrender of life and will to Him.

4. FOR THE ORDINANCES AS DELIVERED BY THE LORD, and kept by the first Christians. The Scriptures clearly show that BAPTISM was the *immersion* of a penitent believer into the *name of Jesus Christ*, in order to the remission of past sins. The Lord's Table, on which THE LORD'S SUPPER is spread, is *inside the Lord's Church*, and is *for the Lord's People*, to be partaken of on the *first day of the' week*. This Divinely-ordained memorial of His death for us is to be kept by the Church *until He shall come again*.

5. FOR THE MINISTRY OF ALL THE CHURCH—every member, in differing spheres, doing that for which they are fitted, limited by ability to edify the Church.

6. FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH BY THE CHURCH ONLY. Only those who have obeyed the Gospel have the duty and privilege of contributing to its treasury.

7. FOR THE ABANDONMENT OF ALL SECTARIAN NAMES AND ECCLESIASTICAL TITLES, and that Churches and believers should be called by the names found in the New Testament.

We shall be pleased to answer enquiries relating to the above, and to put those interested in touch with believers standing for these things.

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