

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. XIII. No. 8.

AUGUST, 1947.

Has the Church Failed?

THIS is the title of a recently published book, copies of which have been sent to many Churches, with a circular stating, 'It is just right for the Church library, or for passing around the officers and key people, and maybe for a study circle.'

A reviewer says of its essays: 'Some are first-class . . . others are flimsy and ephemeral.' Some of the writers even doubt whether Jesus intended to establish a Church. Dean Inge says that Jesus 'spoke much of a reign of God, and His disciples came to regard Him as the Messiah-designate. I find it very difficult to believe that He made any such claim before the Sanhedrin or in the presence of the Roman Governor. The chief priests wanted to get rid of Him as an outspoken critic of their ways. They procured false witnesses who said that He proposed to destroy the temple, a religious charge: but they denounced Him to Pilate as a Mahdi. Both they and Pilate knew that His teaching was not political. Pilate was not the man to be content with one execution if he had thought otherwise, but he took the line of least resistance, and, if we may judge by the inscription on the cross, enjoyed a joke at the expense of the accusers, We may take it as certain that neither Jesus nor His disciples had any thought of founding a new religion, or breaking with the Jewish Church,' etc.

We suppose the above is more of 'the findings of a qualified and

reverent scholarship' which we are advised to accept. Why do these men accept some parts of the gospel records and reject others?

Statements such as the above, held and published by leaders in Churches, supply a reason for the failure of organised religion. Many passages could be quoted from the new Testament showing the utter falsity of Dean Inge's statements. We refer our readers to Matt. xvi. 13-20, xviii. 15-20, xxiii. 63-66, xxviii. 18-20, Mark xiv. 60-64. These passages clearly show that Jesus did intend to found a Church; that it was to be built upon the fact that He was 'the Christ the Son of the living God,' that He did claim before the Sanhedrin, the High Priest, and Pilate, to be the Christ the Son of God; and that He was crucified for this claim.

Further in the great commission, He said: 'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Jesus evidently had the Church in mind where disciples (scholars) would be taught and trained.

If the Church is not so preaching Christ as to win disciples for the Christ and His Church she is a tragic

failure. For years there has been a continuous decline in Church membership: and the world seems further from the Church than ever it was. There has, too, been a serious decline in the numbers of Sunday School scholars.

Some thirty years ago Mr. Marion Lawrence, of the International Sunday School Association, spoke of the Sunday School as 'the greatest evangelization agency in the world,' and declared: 'If the world is not saved in its youth it will not be saved at all.'

The Scriptural justification for the Sunday School is that it is a field for telling the Gospel to the young, and that Gospel is as easily, nay often more easily, understood by the young than by the old.

The Church has failed to win the young: the world and the cinema have captured them, and consequent eighty per cent, of the people in this so-called Christian country never enter a place of worship.

H. R. L. Sheppard, in his book 'The Impatience of a Parson,' gives another reason why the Church has failed to win the masses. He says: 'What survives and does duty nowadays, through the Churches, as Christianity, is a caricature of what Christ intended.' (p. 12).

If Jesus came back to earth could He not say, as He did of the religious folks of His day, 'In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men?' And if He did would there not soon be another calvary?

A stronger contrast than that between simple New Testament Christianity and organised religion of today would be difficult to imagine'. There is plenty of the 'form of godliness,' but little of its 'power.' The preaching and practice of the present day is vastly different to that of the Church's first and best days. Pulpits and platforms are occupied by those who have imbibed 'the findings' of scholars so-called, especially such books as *Peake's Commentary*, and have lost their bearings, until the only thing

they are now sure of is that they are sure of nothing.

What hope is there of the preaching of such men ever winning anyone for the Christ and His Church? The preaching and teaching of such men, and books, has created a generation of doubters. Why do not those who desire to be up-to-date read and circulate the latest books which expose and explode the critical theories, and demonstrate the Bible to be true in history and in fact? Most of 'the findings' of modern 'scholars' can be found in Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, of one hundred and thirty years ago. Had he been living today he would have been the head of a Theological College.

Paul's warning is still needed: 'Take care lest there be some one who leads you away as prisoners by means of his philosophy and idle fancies, following human traditions and the world's crude notions instead of following Christ.' (Col. ii. 8. Weymouth)..

When the Church ceases to listen to the idle fancies, opinions, and speculations of men; and learns not to go beyond the Scriptures of Truth, she will regain her ancient power and fulfil her divine mission. Until then she is doomed to failure.

EDITOR.

Cremation.

Dear Editor,—Again may I reply to Bro. Ferguson on this 'burning' question of cremation. It is rather interesting to discuss the effect of the Devil's handiwork and speak of his acre—the graveyard.

I notice our Brother still finds it difficult to prove from the Scriptures that cremation is wrong. Instead he asks us to follow an example of burial which Moses, Abraham, Christ, and Stephen had. The type of interment Christ and Abraham had we know of, the others we are not told, we only presume. However, regarding the two mentioned, we know they were buried according to the custom of that time. This included being buried in a sepulchre, with embalming, burning of incense, etc. Bro. P. suggests this type of interment 'worthy of imitation.'

I ask is it possible and practicable in this twentieth century, to do this in our country? Should we bury our brethren in caves, and embalm, them, because Christ and others were?

It is evident that Christ's burial was according to the custom and the 'time in Judea, according to information from the Encyclopaedia Britannica (see reference to Cremation).

In Egypt, at the same time or period, the bodies were buried in an underground tomb. Greece had the custom of cremation; other countries had their own methods, but it is known that cremation was widely practised between the first and fourth centuries. Embalming was not successful in wet climates.

Even to-day, in France, Germany, America, and Asia, cremation is being practised more because of its hygienic attributes, and their efforts to avoid disease with ordinary burial.

By the way, God never buried any man in the N.T. as our brother seems to suggest. In the burial of Jesus and others, man performed the act.

He also maintains cremation (or burning) is not mentioned in the Scriptures. Might I refer him to 1 Sam. iii. 12-13, where after the bodies have been burned, the remains were buried.

Therefore cremation does not rule out the idea of burial. The remains can be laid in a casket and buried in the usual manner, with the burial service included. Speaking of the funeral service, not that I disagree with it,"but it is rather striking we have no example of such in the N.T.

In conclusion, let me add that the act of cremation performs, in a few minutes, what we leave the earth to do in a few years, without the risk of endangering or contaminating the water supply and spreading disease. (See Encyclopaedia Britannica on Cremation). AT ALLAN.

Essentials and Non-Essentials of Christianity.

THE religion of our Lord Jesus Christ is by many broken into these two chapters—essentials and non-essentials. But to do this is to commit a grave blunder; it is to disjoint the symmetry of the divine plan; to dislocate the perfect frame of truth provided by the Lawgiver. There is no such division declared, implied, or even hinted at in the divine records of Christianity. On the contrary, everything points in the opposite direction, all being essential, whether facts, commands or promises.

All things taught in the New Testament are taught by the direct authority of Christ Himself or indirectly through the medium and ministrations of His inspired apostles. And if we affirm that any appointment or ordinance prescribed by either of these is not essential to salvation, then we are guilty of libel on the government of the Lord Christ. Will any real believer say that the Great Head of the Church has enjoined any law or ordinance that may be violated or neglected? By what right, authority, or power will any man, be he priest, parson or

preacher, take Heaven's Law Book in his hands and discriminate between the essential and the non-essential; between the fundamental and the secondary?

One of the worst features of this human division is, that what has been divinely commanded is often omitted, and what is not divinely commanded is often introduced, thus causing confusion of faith and practice, and dividing those who would otherwise be united. Two illustrations of this will serve here. The omission by many professing Christians of believers' baptism, which every honest man admits is immersion only, and the introduction of baby sprinkling in its place. Then the omission also of the weekly celebration of the Lord's death in the breaking of the bread by those who are Scripturally married to Christ, and the introduction of a monthly or quarterly celebration of the 'sacrament' by all a *id sundry*. These two corruptions hinder unity among God's people, and are, therefore, wrong.

. Let the error of this sort of conduct be tested in other departments

of God's domain. In the great material universe let us test this course. Inquire of nature in all her forms, which of her laws are essential and which of them non-essential? And if the question is not too absurd for anything deeper than silence, one voice through all her organs will declare the essentiality and necessity of all her laws, perfect in their range and uniform in their operations.

And so it is in the sublime field of the divine economy of Redemption.

But there is yet another aspect of this question we have not mentioned. What is the order, the nature, of human division of essentials and non-essentials? It is the spirit of discontent with and rebellion against the Divine arrangements. The Master said, however, 'Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' Certain it is that the disciple who

questions and disputes his Lord's commands at the commencement of his discipleship will never advance far in Christian truth and service; never make a soldier of the Cross. Let no one suppose he can neglect the Gospel appointments with impunity.

At the same time, let us make no mistake here. We must avoid the ancient error of resting in the observance of institutions to the neglect of the great end of them all. We must look onward beyond the bath and the table, and ponder on the design of all—of type and prophecy, of law and gospel, of fact and promise—the elevation of the human spirit from the degradation of sin to the glory of God. We are to be lifted to the rank and dignity of sons of God.

And ever worship and adore,
In God's own presence blest.

R. K. FRANCIS.

Threatened Dangers Ahead.

'Take heed unto yourselves . . . I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock' (Acts xx. 29).

Modernism. Are there possibilities that loyal Christians may become modernists? A few years ago, thousands of members of the Christian Church became higher critics, wandered away from the faith and then were lined up with the more pronounced sceptics, which, in other words, in our day, are called modernists. In the realm of higher education and particularly in religious schools of all classes—except the Church, the school of Christ—this is now the order of the day. This is one of the failures of higher education in modern life. A century ago the various denominational Churches established schools—religious schools—for the moral and spiritual training of their children. They selected teachers who were deeply religious. All of **them**

were of the faith and order of the various Churches or religious bodies establishing the schools. The old practice among the Puritans and their successors would bar any teacher who was not deeply religious. He must be a student of the Bible and of the faith and practice in his Church; he must be prayerful, pious, consecrated, and capable of instructing children how to read and write and also in other branches of study, but especially in the Bible. As the schools and colleges and universities grew and became great, the effort was made on the part of these various religious schools to affiliate their work with the state schools. In order to do this, they must have teachers who had degrees from great universities like Yale, Harvard, and Columbia, and who could thus articulate their work acceptably with these great institutions. They desired teachers of their own faith and practice, but when

those who could satisfy these conditions and still belong 'to the same faith and order' were not obtainable, they secured others who had the qualifications minus the 'faith and order.' Thus they introduced sceptical teachers, higher critics, modernists—and today by far the greater number of denominational schools are simply a hot-bed of scepticism, infidelity and atheism. The steps were gradual, but led unerringly to the sad plight of the present day denominational modernism that prevails almost universally among these schools.

The Christian Church pursued exactly the same course. Alexander Campbell founded Bethany college for religious purposes rather than education after the manner of this world. But where is that school today, and where are many others like it? The leaders in the Christian Church have taken strides longer and more rapidly even than many of their religious neighbours about them. It is not long ago since I heard one of their most distinguished leaders say that he was sending his daughter to a State University because he did not want to entrust her to the religious teaching of a school conducted by the Christian Church. And I suppose that I am not betraying confidence in making this statement. Anyhow, it is true.

Are we prepared for the possibilities that seem imminent and for prospects that already are looming on the horizon of modernism in our Christian colleges? It may not prevail at the present time in any of them. It, may not be countenanced by the leaders of the colleges or Bible departments now, but remember that the head of the Bible department in such schools becomes the authority. He is the one to dictate and give out the religious views of the entire school. If this assumed prerogative is not exercised in all the schools, if it is not exercised in some now, the time will come when it will be so exercised. As great educational institutions are developed—as they grow larger and

greater and more wealthy—it will be necessary to get men of learning—men who hold degrees from great universities—to become the head of the religious division or department in the school and what these heads of such departments are, and what they become, and what they advocate, and what they authorize, and give out, will influence and modify the life, faith and practice of all students who attend the schools and are influenced—as students most generally are—by their teachers. There are dangers—and some of them serious—that in this brief paper it would be impossible to detail—the prospective possibilities in educational institutions that claim to exercise authority in the realm of religion. They place their men here and there among the Churches and as is the faith and standing of the religious school in the educational institution, so will be the faith and practice of those who go out of them. It is not possible to control them now for the days to come, and hence it is an improbable presumption that they will always be free from such doctrine and influence as will wreck the faith of some. Let the Churches remember that they are, in deed and in doctrine, the teachers in the school of Christ and that no educational institution of men has the right, or is prepared to take up and carry out this particular spiritual and religious education that God has divinely placed on the Churches themselves.

Dogmatism and Egotism. The peculiar religious teaching of the various religious groups may be defined as distinctive dogmata. The denominational Churches with their creeds, confessions of faith, and articles of discipline, throw out boundaries and plant limitations on the faith and practice of their members. This becomes the doctrinal range of each and every member. The great leaders become confident of their qualification, wisdom and ability to define and fix laws and regulations. There are possibilities of assumed prerogative, and of 'dogmatists' arising among the professed

followers of the Lord. This is more specially apparent among leaders who are preachers and teachers. They come to the conclusion that what they say and teach and practice ought to be accepted, believed and practiced by people generally. It is a sort of an *ipse dixit* characteristic of certain types of teachers and masters. What is said by the 'master' must not be called in question. What is taught by him must not be disputed, examined or challenged. It is to be swallowed without examination by loyal students and followers. The danger is that students and followers of this type will take just that course in order that they might please their teacher. It is a dangerous thing to the Church of our Lord when anyone accepts without question and without examination what is taught by uninspired men. And herein is involved danger. Some would-be leaders are 'puffed up.' Many become egoists. We have the warning from inspired men that no one should think of himself more highly than he ought to think, that Christians should not be wise in their own conceits—and that he who would be great in the Church of the living God must be least of all and servant of all. And to the extent that this word of wisdom is overlooked, there are 'dangers ahead.'

We must remember that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the highest, greatest, grandest and

most sublime institution that has been founded or that is known among men today. It is sufficient for every good word and work. It provides for everything necessary for the spiritual life and well-being of men. All things necessary for life and godliness have been committed to the Church. Christ loved it and gave himself up for it. For its redemption he shed His own life's blood, in the agonies of the cross of Golgotha. To modify it or change it is exceedingly sinful. To introduce into it anything that will mar, or injure, or hinder, is alike sinful in heaven's sight. For the glory of God and for the good of man the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must rise in the strength of Israel's God, defend its right, title and position, teach, warn, comfort, and— as the pillar and ground of the truth— save the lost by bringing them into the holy and divine relationship of that Church purchased with the precious blood of Christ, and which was, has been, is, and will be, without spot, wrinkle or any such thing. When, and only when, the Church is kept free from Professionalism, Institutionalism, Dogmatism, Modernism, and Egotism—from assumed prerogative and destructive forces within will it be possible for her to shine forth in the livery of heaven, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.

—Editorial 'Firm Foundation,'
U.S.A., Aug. 6th, 1946.

Pre-existence of Christ.

THAT our Lord had an existence before he was born of the virgin Mary is a truth which rests upon an abundance of evidence in the New Testament. It is my purpose in this essay to produce some of that evidence, sufficient to prove to any reasonable person that He did exist before His birth of Mary, and such as will serve as a basis for proof of His divinity and equality with the Father.

1. 'In the beginning was the Word . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.' (John i. 1-14). These words, 'in the beginning,' surely refer to the beginning of things temporal. This is the same beginning we read of in Gen. i. 1. At that time the Word was. But that Word which was in the beginning

'became flesh, and dwelt among us.' This identifies the person who is called 'the Word.' It can refer to none other than Jesus Christ. John makes it more emphatic by adding in the next verse: "The same was in the beginning with God." (John i. 2). And in his first Epistle, John declares that the Word of life was with the Father and was manifested unto us. (1 John i. 1, 2). From these statements we must conclude that Jesus had an existence with the Father before His earthly or fleshly, existence. How far back into the past this existence reaches, and how exalted, are subjects for later study. This is sufficient at this time to prove that He had a pre-existence.

2. 'He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me." (John i. 15). This is the language of John the Baptist. The fame of Jesus was growing; and though Jesus came after John—began His work later than John—He was being preferred by the people; and John explains this preference on the ground that Jesus was before him, that He had prior existence, referring to His divinity and coexistence with the Father. There are those who deny that this word 'before' is to be taken in the sense of time; they say it refers to His rank or dignity. But this gives it the same meaning as the first 'before,' and, hence, a needless repetition. According to this, the meaning would be: He outranks me, because he outranks me. While the true meaning is: He outranks me, because He existed before me.

3. Of similar import is a statement of the Lord Himself: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.' (John viii. 56-58). Though Abraham lived nearly two thousand years before the birth of Jesus, our Lord declares that 'I am' before Abraham was born. I am aware that this

statement is not good *grammar*, but it is perfectly good *theology*. He could have said, Before Abraham was born, I *was*, and this would have been sufficient to prove that He existed before the day of Abraham, and would be sufficient for our present use of the passage. But He intended more by the statement, so He said, 'I *am*.' In this statement it is affirmed that He existed before Abraham's day, and has had a continued existence ever since his day. The statement, 'I *am*,' is the meaning of the word *Jehovah*. So in this statement Jesus not only declared His existence prior to Abraham, but His eternal, existence. And the Jews understood Him thus, and thought Him to be guilty of blasphemy, and took up stones to kill Him.

4. We have a number of passages in which it is said that Jesus came down from heaven: 'For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John vi. 38). How could Jesus say that He came down from heaven if He had no existence prior to His birth of the virgin Mary? He either had a prior existence or He made a claim which is not true.

'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven . . . This is the bread which came down out of heaven.' (John vi. 51-58). At these sayings many of His hearers stumbled, among them His disciples, and He said to them: "Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?" (John vi. 61, 62). Undoubtedly, Jesus referred to His ascension which was to be after He had finished His work on earth. So we have His word for the fact that He descended from heaven, came from heaven to do the will of His Father, and would go back 'where he was before'—that is, before He descended, or came to this earth by birth. Hence, His pre-existence is proved.

5. 'And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' (John xvii. 5). If this were the only statement in the

Bible on which to rest our faith in the pre-existence of Christ, this would be sufficient. In this statement Jesus is praying to His Father, He is not trying to make an impression on His disciples. Would He, *in* solemn prayer, ask God, His Father, to give him something which He had not previously enjoyed, when He was bound to know that His Father knew He never before existed, and, therefore, could never have enjoyed it? To say that He had no previous existence is to charge Him with an effort to deceive the heavenly Father, and that' in the most solemn act of prayer. This is unthinkable; hence, we conclude that He existed with the Father, before the world was, and enjoyed a degree of glory He wished to enjoy again.

6. Statements from the apostle Paul prove the pre-existence of Christ: 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.' (2 Cor. viii. 9). When was Jesus rich? He was born in a home of poverty; He lived in poverty; and He died, penniless. If ever He was rich, it must have been before He came to this world. He became poor that we might be rich. He came to this world to die for us that we might have salvation-

He was rich in that He existed in the form of God and was on equality with God. He became poor in that He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. (Phil. ii. 5-8). When was He in the form of God? When was He on equality with God? When did He empty himself? These statements cannot refer to anything in His' earthly life: hence, they must refer to His existence prior to His birth of Mary.

7. The creation of all things is attributed to Jesus Christ; therefore, He existed before creation. Paul said we have redemption in Christ: 'Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist' (Col. i. 15-17). And in Heb. i. 2 we learn that God created the worlds through Him. These passages can mean nothing if they do not teach that Christ existed at the time of creation and took part in it.' Hence, we necessarily conclude that He existed before His birth of Mary.

Gospel Advocate.

Noah's Ark has been Found.

FIVE thousand years after Noah's dove hovered over the Ark which was grounded atop Mount Ararat, bringing good news about the flood in the shape of an olive leaf in its beak, a Russian airman named Vladimir Roskovitsky, gliding down the slope of the historic mountain in Armenia, suddenly heard his copilot yell: 'Look down there!'

Following his companion's pointed finger, Roskovitsky saw a strange object: a huge boat with an over-all deck lying a-stranded against the shore of a glacial lake. The pilot

circled his plane as low as he dared fly, noting all the details visible, from the air—the stubby masts and curved deck, built as though the vessel's designer expected waves to wash right over it.

Back at his base, the airman related what he had seen to his fellows. All greeted his story with roars of laughter, except' the captain, who insisted on taking a look for himself. When the plane had again circled the ship on the mountainside, and landed, the captain

said, 'I believe what we have seen is Noah's Ark.'

As soon as conditions permit, an expedition of experts will visit the scene to attempt final confirmation of the Russian captain's verdict—which three subsequent investigating parties have concurred in.

The first great war—was being fought at the time of the first 'rediscovery of the Ark,' and the Russians had more to occupy their attention than ancient history. So the story spread slowly. But when it reached Moscow two companies of special soldiers were sent to investigate. Scaling precipitous cliffs and making their way over icefields, they finally reached the Ark, measured it, and photographed it thoroughly inside and out.

The Ark was found to contain hundreds of compartments in keeping with the Lord's instructions to Noah: 'Rooms shalt thou make in the ark.' Some were very large, presumably to accommodate the larger animals—elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses. Others had high ceiling, probably for the giraffes and camels. Still others were lined with stout cages, for all the world like monkey-houses at the zoo; some had rows of tiny bars along the front, as if for the multitude of birds. The protective deck planking appeared to carry out the order given to Noah: 'Finish it above.'

A few days after the records had been sent to Russia, the revolution broke out, and all the documents and photographs were destroyed, presumably by men who sought to destroy belief in all things Biblical. In subsequent world turmoil, the "rediscovery" of the Ark was all but forgotten. New Turkish officials, discovering a vague account of the Russian investigation of a few years before, decided to send a commission to the scene. After great hardships, the expedition reached the scene, and found the ark in good condition, but largely embedded in the ice.

An English expert in the party identified the wood of which it was

built as the ancient 'gopher' of the Scriptures — a member of the cypress family. Measurements checked closely with the specifications laid down by the Lord in His instructions to Noah: 'The length shall be 300 cubits.'. The cubit is generally held to be slightly more than a foot.

The sparsely-settled, half-wild mountaineers who lived near the resting-place of the Ark were reluctant to speak of the ancient ship, and even more unwilling to go near it. • 'Evil spirits' were supposed to have been seen at the windows, and it was a place to be avoided. The inhabitants were, however, able to answer one question which had puzzled even those investigators most willing to believe that the vessel on the mountainside was indeed Noah's Ark, which had saved representatives of all the world's creatures. The Lord, in His wrath at the sinfulness of the newly-created earth, we remember, had sent the deluge. The problem was: How could a vessel, even built of the stoutest wood, and 'pitched within and without with pitch,' withstand the ravages of 5,000 years? Doors built of 'gopher' or cypress had been known to stand 1,000 years—but not 5,000. And even though in its present location the Ark was sealed in a solid preserving coating of ice for 10 months in the year, the thawing and weathering for even two months of every twelve would long since have rotted the hulk into nothingness.

But old residents explained that in 1883 violent earthquakes had dislodged huge blocks of ice from the very summit of Ararat. And from one of these blocks wondering mountaineers had seen this hull protruding one late summer. In other words, until 60 years ago the Ark had probably never been touched by air, but had been buried deep in eternal ice. Members of the expedition were convinced with this final piece of evidence that they had found the true Ark.

Another remarkable confirmation came later from Archdeacon Nouri

of Jerusalem and Babylon, a learned and noted traveller. After exploring along the Euphrates, so rich in Biblical history, he reached Mount Ararat and with his guides and associates climbed to the rest-

ing-place of the Ark. After thoroughly examining the vessel he pronounced: 'I am very positive we are beholding the Ark of Noah.'

—American Magazine Digest.

A Dangerous Errand.

(1 Kings xiii).

THE Kingdom of Israel had become a foreign country to the Kingdom of Judah. Jeroboam, King of Israel, had set up a 'gold calf,' in the south of his land at Bethel, and another in the north at Dan, and made proclamation that these idols were gods, and that they were to be worshipped. 'He-goat' idols were also set up by the King. Not content with making Israel to sin, by idolatry, he, himself, served as priest to the 'calf at Bethel. Both King and people knew that idol-worship was wrong, degrading, and forbidden by Jehovah. Why did no one dare to smash the calf and so inroove to all the folly of bowing to it? Idol worship was commanded fay the King. God calls for willing worship and in accordance with his instructions. History records how Nebuchadnezzar demanded that all should bow to his idol, and he suffered a severe repulse.

God's priests in Israel land were now unemployed. They would not bow to a 'calf,' so with the godly people they migrated to the land of Judah. For three years, Judah prospered, when they also turned out of God's way.

A Judah prophet was sent to warn Jeroboam. The prophet's mission took him to foreign territory and the task was a difficult one. He had to speak against the idol-altar, where the King was offering incense to the calf at Bethel. His proclamation was as follows: 'Altar, altar,' Jehovah says, 'a child shall be born to the house of David, named Josiah, who will sacrifice the incense-burning priests upon you and they will burn men's bones

upon you.' 'Here is the confirmation of his word,' 'the altar will be rent and the ashes upon it, will be-poured out.' Both signs occurred. King and people could no longer doubt the fearless statement.

The King was irritated, and maddened with rage, stretched out his hand to order the speaker's arrest. Did the King's conscience trouble him? Would the King kill and so shut the mouth of the prophet? No, God protected His faithful messenger. He paralysed the King's hand. How useless to injure the messenger whilst the message must remain in force! The King begs his victim to plead for the recovery of his hand. The prophet speaks to God and the King's hand is healed. Here are two additional signs, confirming the prophet's denunciation, but the King hardened his heart.

The tired, hungry, and thirsty prophet is now invited home by the King for a feast and reward. The messenger declined in these words, 'if you will give me half your house, I will not go with you, nor eat bread nor drink water here, I must obey my Lord.' Strong in his right resolve, the prophet goes homeward. The cursing of the altar and its destruction was public and made no little stir. The news reached an old prophet at Bethel. He admired, respected, and loved the fearless man. Was he not in the same work as himself? God had not called the Bethel prophet to denounce the King and his idols! The old man pursued the bold man and found him resting. 'Come home and feed with me,' said the old man. 'I cannot, because forbidden to do so.' The

old man said, 'I also am a prophet and Jehovah told me to bring you home and set food before you.' The old man's words were supported by the tired man's hunger and thirst. What was he to do ?

He had stood firm under temptation from a wicked King, 'but this man is a prophet like me,' 'need I enquire what God's will is now?' He returned home with the old man. Can we in imagination see tears on the Saviour's cheeks as his faithful messenger believed the lie? Are we causing grief to the Saviour as we listen to men, instead of demanding a 'thus saith the Lord'?

The host was compelled, during the feast, to reveal to his guest, that he was guilty of lying, and to pronounce God's sentence for disobedience upon the Judah prophet. 'Because you have disobeyed the Lord, your carcass shall not come into your father's sepulchre. Which of the two prophets was the more ashamed ?

The Judah prophet rode on his homeward way, and a lion attacked and tore him, and remained, near the corpse and the ass, without devouring either. When the sad news reached the old man, he went, collected the corpse and laid it in his own tomb and requested that his bones might be laid with those of the disobedient prophet.

'All the words spoken by the young man will be fulfilled': history records the fulfilment. 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will be accomplished.' 'Prove all things' and hold fast the word of God.'

W. H. CUMMINS.

NEW TESTAMENT QUESTIONS.

We were advised that these books left America- on June 3rd. We have not received them up to date July 15th.

They will be sent on to those who have written for them as soon as possible.

Ed. 'S.S.'

The first casualty when war comes is truth.—*Hiram Johnson.*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Peter's Second Letter (Chapter iii.)

The Day of the Lord.—The purpose of Peter's letter-writing is stated first, and the fact of this being his second letter. Our letter-writing should also be purposeful, and if this same purpose were evident in ours it would be good—even though the immediate reason for writing were not so general. It is a stirring of the mind, a re-call to consider truth (remembrance can be a means of grace, as the Lord's Table is). The particular truth in view is two-fold: (a) We must take heed to the prophets of times past. Their words were fulfilled in Christ very largely, but now the prophets of the New Covenant spoke of Christ's second coming—which will be fulfilled with equal certainty and accuracy, (b) Then our vital need is obedience to Christ's word as passed to us through His apostles. The revisers' 'your apostles' points us to those who taught the 'Dispersion' in those districts for which the letters are specially intended, and Paul was responsible.

The promise of the coming was regarded evidently as imminent. If this were so now it would indeed be better for us all. We need to be like men who wait for their Lord, and surely in these times we have every reason to be so. In any case, our lives may end at any moment. As it was then, so it is now: the promises of God are slighted, mocked at and disbelieved. They will nevertheless be perfectly fulfilled in every detail, and the argument from present silence was used to Noah! Just as he was mocked and his faith counted for folly, so it will be. The folly of the mockers and those who are deluded is terrible to ponder, seeing the issues are so great.

It would be good if the obvious warnings even of recent events—the atomic bomb, for instance—should arouse men to their danger.

Final Exhortation and Warnings.—When men have been persuaded by some false prophet that at a certain time the Saviour would return, great excitement and some of the most foolish actions have taken place. The thought

should, however, result in personal consecration to good living and quiet, sober behaviour.' Steadfastness and growth in grace and knowledge are what are needed to stabilise not to fluster. The dissolution (verse 11) is something to be earnestly desired by those who look for 'new heavens and a new earth.' We cannot hope to mend the broken world, but we can spread that salvation, which the transcendent patience of "God has given to man, and entrusted to His children.

' The delightful reference to his brother apostle from whom he had received, and evidently accepted with true humility, an open rebuke, takes away the ground from those who would wish to divide the apostolic band into opposing doctrinal camps. The immediate reference is probably to the letters to Thessalonica, but it indicates widespread knowledge of Paul's writings.

John's first letter (Chapters i. to Hi., verse 12).

Introduction. — There is a striking change in style when we leave Peter to read John. No one could fail to be struck with similarity of thought and expression between gospel and epistles, and the introduction is particularly similar. The purpose of the letter is stated: the sharing of the revelation of Christ, indicating the fulfilment of Christ's will that the words of the apostle should spread the truths they had learned as eye witnesses. The very close relationship they all, but especially John, had with Him, is emphasised in these first few verses. It must indeed have been a wonderful joy for the apostles to look back and recall that relationship. Are not the sweetest experiences of life the associations with truly beautiful lives?

Fellowship, and our Sinfulness. —

Light and darkness are figures of God and sin respectively. Our relationship as Christians with God involves our obedience to His will, and our separation from sin, yet we do continue to sin, so that we have constant need of our Advocate. How hopeless would our condition be, had God not provided for our repeated failure to cleanse ourselves from all defilement. But we cannot deliberately go on sinning, or love sin, and remain in fellowship with God. 'A broken spirit and a contrite heart,' issuing in continuous confession of both individual

sins as they become known to the sinner, and the condition of unworthiness common to us all, all the time, are necessary, if the divine forgiveness and cleansing are to continue. The eighth, ninth and tenth verses of our first chapter must have brought comfort to many a sin-conscious soul.

A New and Old Commandment. —

We note that the knowledge we have of our condition before God does not depend on experience in the sense of feeling, but upon our actions. Not the person who calls God, 'Lord,' but the one who does His will, is justified. We assume that the command to love one another would be well known to all, but its practice by Christians in their lives was like a new revelation, which John is emphasising. There may be here a reference to the 'greatest) commandment' of the Mosaic Law. The contrast between living a life of love and hatred is just like that between light and darkness. We must remember that the unkind thought is forbidden to us.

Love of the World. — In ii. 12 and 13, we have a double and threefold set of reasons for the letter. The tense of the verb 'write' is changed in the second triplet, however (see R.V.) and it has been suggested that the reference in this case is to the gospel which had already been written. The term, 'little children,' is a term of general endearment not of literal application. The terms, 'fathers' and 'young men,' would indicate the old and younger members respectively in the Church. The reasons seem to accord with this, in that, wisdom and knowledge would be the characteristics of age; strength and vigour those of youth. The natural development of thought from the strength of youth is to the solemn warning against love for the world.

Anti • Christs. — The characteristics of Anti-Christ are given in ii. 22 and iv. 3 — denial of Father and Son, and failure to acknowledge Jesus as having come in the flesh. The term is used only in John's first and second epistles, but the ideas are expressed perhaps in the following passages with equal clarity: Matt. xxiv. 5, 24; Mark xiii. 22, 23; Acts x. 29; 2 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Peter ii. 1; and with particular emphasis 2 Thess. ii. 3. John, in common with others of the N.T. writers, expected an early end to the age; yet both him-

self, Peter, and Paul, have said just what - can be readily understood to mean that period of the final dispensation of the ages, taking Peter's words (2 Peter iii. 8) and the Saviour's in this connection (Matt. xxiv. 36; Acts i. 7).

False teachers had already appeared within the Church, and some had gone out taking their deluded followers with them. The process is still in action, and the Christian's only safety is in cleaving to that he 'has heard from the beginning,' the faith once and for all delivered. The 'unction' or 'anointing' is in contrast with anti-Christ, but the English obscures the connection. Christ means 'Anointed One.' I have heard Christians described accordingly as 'Christed ones.' 'Kings, priests, and sometimes prophets, were anointed, in-token of their receiving Divine grace,' which is a figure for the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

The Distinction Between God's Children and the Devil's. — We are warned, as we know God to be righteous, that this will be the distinguishing mark of His children: 'like Father, like son.' We need not expect the world to understand us." The final outcome of our new Relationship will be the complete likeness to our Father, so we shall now be making utmost efforts to purify ourselves (Iii. 3). We must not be deceived. If we drift into conformity to the world, find ourselves enjoying worldly companions, or in any way getting loose in our behaviour, let us remember Lot's wife, and not, be deluded. The apostle uses absolute terms, but I take him to mean that the dominating power in life must be God. We may fall and stumble at times, but we continue our journey towards the heavenly home, but if the Devil dominates us we may hesitate and hang back, but our face is towards hell. A further evidence of our sonship to God is our love for one another.

R. B. SCOTT.

SILVER WEDDING.

BAINES—LOCHHEAD.—August 19th, 1922. At St. Andrew's Church, Bruntcliffe, Morley, Harold Baines, to Eliza E. Lochhead. Now in membership with the Church of Christ, Zoar Street, Morley. Present address: 42 Garnett Street, Britannia Road, Morley, near Leeds, Yorks,

September Conference.

At Tranent. East Lothian, Scotland,
on 20th September, 1947.

Will all who intend to be present during this meeting, please write to W. Steele, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian. Please state how long you intend to stay, and if you are writing on behalf of a company, please indicate the make-up of the party so that hospitality can be arranged accordingly.

A welcome awaits you. Come !

GOSPEL AND SOCIAL WORK.

The Rev. James Smith, ex-Moderator of the Lancashire and Cheshire Baptist Association, stressed the importance of prayer and the preaching of the Gospel, and said that the Church ought to make sure that it put essential things in their rightful place. As he looked back and thought of the time he had given to many social activities he was sure that he would have done better had he concentrated on the work of bringing people into touch with the living God.

'Ulverston News.'

SPIRITUAL FORCE.

There are forces other than physical and selfish which motivate human conduct. I mean by that, that while sheer force does affect and influence the lives of men and nations, other forces exercise a greater and more lasting influence. Let me illustrate.

'Rome conquered Greece, but Greece conquered Rome,' we have often heard. Well what is meant by that? Simply this: that Rome, by the power of the sword, conquered the fair land of the Grecian peoples. But the Grecian works of art and culture in turn subdued and overcame the brutality of the Romans.

If a purely cultural force will overcome brute force, how much more will spiritual force do so!

The Diamond Ring.

A RICH old man, as we are told,
gave to his sons his goods and gold,
but kept in store one precious thing:
A large and brilliant diamond ring.

the old man sent his sons away
to travel till a certain day,
when he who did the noblest deed,
should have the precious golden meed.

not a long time had passed away,
When home they all came back one
day,
And to their father, one by one,
described the deeds that they had
done.

Listen! The eldest thus began,
There came to me, one day, a man
Who trusted all his wealth to me
Without the least security.

I might have kept it all, but no!
I would not serve the stranger so,
I gave him back the sum he lent
With interest added, cent, for cent.,

'Twas well, the father said,
But you have only done, what all
should do.

The second said, where torrents roared
I saw a child fall overboard,
I plunged beneath the threat'n'ng
wave,
The life of innocence to save.

The father said, 'twas bravely done,
Nobly you risked your life, my son,
But though it was a gallant thing,
Far higher worth should claim true
ring.

The youngest came: Once tending
sheep,
My enemy was lulled to sleep,
Close to a precipice.
I left him not there to start and die,
I awoke him, though my fiercest foe,
And saved him from impending woe.

The father cried, with pride and joy,
Take it, the ring is thine, my boy!
He who can banish from his heart
Revenge, and act the Christian part,
Has fairly won the golden meed,
I promised for the noblest deed.

—Selected.

True Religion.

True religion is not what men see and admire; it is what God sees and loves; the faith which clings to Jesus in the darkest hour; the sanctity which shrinks from the approach of evil; the humility which lies low at the feet of the Redeemer, and washes them with tears; the love which welcomes every sacrifice; the cheerful consecration of all the powers of the soul; the worship which rising above all outward forms, ascends to God in the sweetest, dearest communion—a worship often too deep for utterance, and one which the highest heaven knows nothing more sublime.

'Gospel Broadcast.'

The Real Need.

IT is idle to talk of Christ as a social reformer if by that is meant that His first concern was to improve the organisation of society, or provide the world with better laws. These were among His objects, but His first was to provide the world with better men.

The one need of every cause and every community still is for better men. If every workshop held a workman like Him who worked in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the labour, problem and all other workmen's problems would soon be solved. If every street had a home or two like Mary's home in Bethany, the domestic life of the city would be transformed in three generations.

HENRY DRUMMOND.

Right Treatment for Worry.

SOME people can worry. It is easy and natural, but it is a poor way to use our time. Worry does not help. It wastes strength, tends to increase our fears, and makes things look much blacker than they are. An old negro woman had the right treatment for worry. When someone asked her how she had kept her health to such a good old age, her reply was: 'When I works, I works hard; when I sets, I sets loose; and when I worries, I goes to sleep.' Worry will not make us well; it will do just the opposite.

He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that—Mill,

PRIDE AND AMBITION.

Perhaps there is not a quarrel among individuals in private life, nor a war among nations, that does not proceed from pride and ambition. Neither man nor nation will be content to be less than another: and to acquire the wished-for superiority, all is thrown into general confusion both in public and private life. It was to destroy this spirit of pride that Jesus was manifested in the extreme of humility and humiliation among men. The salvation of Christ is a deliverance from pride and a being clothed with humility. As far as we are humble, so far are we saved.

ADAM CLAKKE

We search the world of truth, we
cull The good, the pure, the
beautiful Prom graven stone and
written scroll, Prom all old flower-
fields of the soul; And, weary seekers
of the best,

We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said,
Is in the Book our mothers read.

JOHN WHITTIER.

UNWILLING TO CONTEND.

MISJUDGED by a fellow missionary, Livingstone gave up his house and garden at Mabotsa, with all the toil and money they had cost him, rather than have any scandal before the heathen, and began in a new place the labour of school and house building and gathering the people round him. His colleague was so struck with his generosity that he said had he known his intention he never would have spoken a word against him. Parting with his garden cost him a great pang. 'I like a garden,' he wrote, 'but paradise will make amends for all our privations here.'—Sunday School Times.'

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Blackburn, Hamilton Street.—Further to our news in July issue regarding our Bro. Andrew Gardiner's labours, we were very grateful to the Evangelist Committee for granting us an extension of his services, which closed on July 13th. We thank God for his enthusiasm in the

Master's word and work and for his simple yet telling way of getting the Gospel messages over. By his help a Bible Brains Trust was put in operation on Tuesday evenings, which proved very interesting and profitable.

We pray that the seed so well sown by our Bro. Andrew will bear fruit after many days to the honour and glory of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As a little appreciation of our brother's service, the Church gave him a leather brief case.

On Lord's Day, July 7th, we had a pleasant surprise visit of our Bro. John Allen Hudson, of U.S.A. He addressed the Church Bible School and Gospel Meeting, in a very inspiring and uplifting way. We hope to renew his services and fellowship before he returns home again.

H. WILSON.

Capetown, Woodstock.—We are glad to sound out the glorious news that on the afternoon of May 18th, 1947, a young man confessed the Lord Jesus and was united with Him in baptism, due to the efforts of the Grassy Park Assembly. The baptismal service was exceptionally well attended and was conducted by Bro. Wentzel, of the Grassy Park Assembly. Brief addresses by Brethren Wentzel and the writer, stressed the fact that baptism, in its true sense, was an 'immersion' into Christ, and that no matter what else is set forth as a substitute it would be of no avail. In conclusion, Colossians iii. was read for the benefit of the young brother, and thus the afternoon was well spent, to the honour and glory of our Saviour, and to the mutual upbuilding of all present.

T. HARTLE.

Kentish Town.—Since our last report increased attendances have continued. Bro. Channing gave a series of addresses during April, but our plan to continue a special effort with him during May and June also, was only partially carried out owing to a succession of visiting brethren, and his own work for the Hindley Bible School.

We were very glad to receive Bro. and Sister J. A. Hudson from the States. They last visited us in 1937. Our brother preached the Gospel for us nine times in all to appreciative audiences, including several strangers, It did us good to hear

the old, old story so well set forth in its true Scriptural form, and we have benefited by his teaching and exhortation. We look forward to hearing him again before he returns home.

Bro. George M. Scott (Rhodesia) continues with us and has served us very acceptably in Gospel preaching. Sister Scott expects to be ready to sail for home in a few weeks now, having made satisfactory progress. We pray their trial of patience may soon be happily concluded by a safe journey across the Atlantic. Meanwhile we enjoy the fellowship and help.

Bro. and Sister J. D. Merritt and family from Rhodesia, also returning to the States on furlough, arrived by the Carnarvon Castle on July 9th. They were able to get passage to America by special arrangement on July 14th, and their stay with us was accordingly very short. It was good to meet them, and to bid them God-speed. Bro. Merritt addressed the Church on the Lord's Day morning.

On July 9th also we rejoiced to meet again Bro. Max Watson from Austin, Texas. He is visiting in this country for a period and renewing war-time friendships. He outlined some suggestions for the extension of our work when with us at the study class on July 10th, and we enjoyed his fellowship over the week-end. He will be with us again before his return, and we pray his visit may prove a blessing to himself and to all.

H. H. SCOTT.

Scholes, **Wigan**.—The Church is glad to report the addition of two to its membership, in the baptism on Lord's Day evening, June 22nd, of Mrs. Evelyn Tudor and David Sharrock. The former is the wife of one who has been a member of

the Church for about seventeen years. She was formerly a Methodist, but a, ,er attending our gospel meetings for the past three months was convinced of the **Tightness** of our teaching on the way of salvation. The latter is a young man of sixteen years, who is at present attending the Wigan Grammar School, where he obtained his School Certificate last year, and is hoping to take up training for school teaching in the near future. He, too, had been coming to the gospel meetings for a few months as well as attending regularly as a member of the Men's Bible Class.

The meeting at which the baptisms took place was of an inspiring character and well attended. Bro. Alex. Carson, from Nelson, preached, and the baptisms were carried out by Bro. George Myers. On the same evening, our new brother and sister were welcomed into the Church, and broke the bread with us for the first time.

May this be for both a beginning of a life of useful service and of joy in the Lord.

C. MRLINC.

Ulverston, Ford Villa—We rejoice in the addition of three to our numbers. Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Stratford and Michael Thistlethwaite (a Sunday School scholar) were immersed into Christ, on July 1st, at the Baptist Chapel, kindly loaned to us. These were welcomed by the Church on Lord's Day, July 6th. Bro. David Dougall, of Wallacestone, Scotland, has spent nearly three months with us, during which period he has given very acceptable help in preaching and teaching the Word. The Lord is blessing our united efforts; and we are confident that a strong New Testament Church will be built up here.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home: One copy, 3s.; two copies, 5s.; three copies, 7s. Abroad: One copy, 2s. 6d.; two copies, 4s. 6d.; three copies, 6s. 6d. AH post free. Agents' parcels are all post free.

All matter for Insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (News items, the 15th) to the Editor: W. CROSTHWAITE, Ford Villa, Hart Street, Ulverston, Lanes. All orders and payments to the Treasurer: A. L. FRITH, 12 Poulton Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire.

EVANGELIST FUND. Contributions to R. McDONALD, Lumley House, 4 Clark Street, Westbora, Dewsbury, Yorks.

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

Secretary of Conference Committee: F. C. DAY, Holmllegh, 69b Stamford Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is printed for the Publishers by Walter Barker, Lanelev Miff, Nerttm,