

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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The 'Scripture Standard' and the Future.

THIS magazine is costing £34 per month to print and distribute, or fully 6½d. per copy. We are losing about £18 per month. This is a higher figure than given to the Tranent meeting; costs have risen considerably since then. As reader know, the penny post has gone—perhaps for ever in this country.

Of those who started the S.S., only Brethren Crosthwaite, Holmes McDonald and myself remain. We have to announce that **in 1952 (D.V.) the price will have to be 6d. per copy.** This is a sharp rise, but there is no other way. After all, it is only 6d. per month. Other papers have risen, and in many homes papers cost two or three shillings per week. We cannot keep going by making appeals. A few Churches and individuals have responded to the appeal which appeared in the May issue, for which we are grateful. It should be said that the response has been best from Scotland, both Churches and individuals. In comparison, Churches in England have failed, only three responding, and these very small Churches.

It must be plainly stated that, by the year end, there will **be no money in hand.** But for a legacy of £100 two years ago, and the gifts of Churches and brethren, this would be the position **now.**

The Editor, Treasurer and agents all do their work gratis. It should be said also that Brother Barker has despatched agents' parcels every month since 1935 without charging a penny piece for time, wrapping, labels etc.—a tremendous service to us all. Copies for 1952 must be ordered from agents as soon as possible, copies by post from me. There will be no surplus printing. Payments in advance wherever possible will be appreciated. Payments from U.S.A. in advance, will be revised in view of the increase, and readers advised.

The magazine is needed as much as ever. It is the only medium for articles, news, reports, and announcements, and is a vital link between Churches and brethren at home and abroad, who are pleading for restoration.

As the appeal referred to has been largely disappointing, may I again urge Churches and individuals to do something so that our funds do not

become exhausted, and do it **now**. The new rates by post will be announced in next issue.

Later.—Since writing the above, two weeks ago, many letters have reached me. Without exception, they urge charging 6d. for this magazine as being fair and honest. As one agent says: 'It is only 1½d. per week.' I did not wish to give the impression that our needs will not be met and that Churches and brethren will not rise to the occasion; I have every confidence that they will. A number have sent in the amount due for this year, and others gifts. I hope each morning's post will be heavy with gifts for some time to come.

Thanking you in advance.

A. L. FRITH.

Preaching Jesus.

IN our last editorial, we wrote of Philip's preaching at Samaria, and the harvest of souls 'delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.' In the midst of this great mission, an 'angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.'

Would any modern preacher regard that as a call from the Lord? To leave a flourishing work, and a large congregation, to go to a desert! But Philip was a servant of the Lord, 'and he arose and went.' There he found a traveller returning from Jerusalem, an Ethiopian, a Chancellor of the Exchequer under the Queen of his land. He had been to Jerusalem seeking that for which his soul craved: and must have been disappointed with the religious teachers there, who, as our Lord said, 'taught for doctrines, the commandments of men'; and by their traditions were binding heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and laying them on men's shoulders. He had, however, procured a treasure, the Scriptures written by Isaiah, and was reading them as he journeyed home.

This was the man for whom Philip was sent that long journey. One soul, and that of a black man, was so precious in the sight of the Lord.

'Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.'

Why did not the angel who spoke to Philip in Samaria, or the Spirit who now spoke to him, speak direct to the Ethiopian seeker, and tell him what he desired to know? The simple answer to that query is that when God makes a plan He does not depart from it; and God's plan is that human lips, the lips of those who have tasted the joy of His salvation, shall tell the saving message to others. After the Lord gave the great commission to evangelise the nations, there are no cases of conversion recorded in the Scriptures without the convert first hearing the gospel proclaimed by a preacher. 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10: 14).

As the Ethiopian was reading the Scriptures aloud, Philip ran to him, and said, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' How would a modern statesman, or anyone else, take such a question? Would it not give offence to many? But the Ethiopian had the humble, childlike, teachable disposition, 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.'

He was reading that wonderful portion which we know as Isaiah 53, which told of the great sin-bearer who would suffer for the sins of many. 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.' Astonished at such wonderful words, the Ethiopian asked, 'Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?'

'Philip began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.'

Jesus, the Christ, is found in all the Scriptures. 'To him give all the prophets witness.' He, Himself, after His resurrection, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, 'expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:27).

Modern commentators and critics, scholars so-called, deny all this, and the following verse, expressing faith in what the Lord said of the Old Testament Scriptures, is omitted from hymn 448 in *The Christian Hymnary* (yet many of us still sing):

The types and shadows of the Word
Unite in Christ, the Man, the Lord,
The Saviour, just and true;
O may we still His Word believe,
And all His promises receive,
And all His precepts do!

Most of the New Testament writers quote portions of Isaiah 53 and apply them to Jesus the Christ. Philip had a splendid starting point, and he would tell how that prophecy was fulfilled in Him, 'who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree . . . by whose stripes ye were healed' (1 Pet. 2:24). Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in Jesus, none other than He was 'wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.' 'He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.'

'What doth hinder me to be baptised?'

This was the Ethiopian's question after Philip 'preached unto him Jesus.' Who told him anything about baptism? Evidently preaching Jesus then meant telling not only of the person and work of the Saviour, but also of His commands, and the conditions attached to His promise of pardon. The Lord Jesus said: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned' (Mark 16:15, 16). New Testament preachers carried that out faithfully and loyally.

'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'

'If,' said Philip, 'thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,' and the Ethiopian having confessed his faith in Jesus, 'they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him.' That one passage is sufficient to show that New Testament baptism was immersion; and with Paul's statement in Romans 6:4, that 'we are buried with him by baptism,' should satisfy all who are willing to be taught of God. Coming 'up out of the water,' preacher and convert are separated, and the Ethiopian having found a greater treasure than any he had charge of, 'went on his way rejoicing.'

EDITOR.

OUR EXCHANGES.

Owing to increased cost and difficulties of production, etc., we must stop all our exchanges of magazines, as from the end of present year, 1951. EDITOR

'DESPERADO' AGED SEVEN

Taken before Salford Juvenile Court yesterday by her mother, who described her as 'little desperado' whom she was unable to control a seven-year-old girl was said to smoke and continually to steal money.

Principles of Evil.

No. 4—The Doctrine of Division.

'There is among you . . . divisions' (1 Cor. 3:3).

WE now come to the fourth partner in this quartet of evil: 'Doubt,' 'Denial,' 'Substitution,' and 'Division,' the latter the inevitable result of the three former.

When the seeds of doubt are sown, denial swiftly follows. This applies to any doctrine. That is why such doctrines as Communism demand a blind faith, amounting to fanaticism, from its followers. But once doubt and denial take root, it soon follows that faith departs and that, in turn, means a substitution of the original doctrine by something, in the language of salesmanship, 'just as good.' But when that 'something just as good' is not of Divine origin, it ceases to 'fill the bill.' In short, it fails to supply the deepest calls of human need, and division results.

This is precisely what happens in the affairs of men when God is left out, and something else is put in His place. No amount of learning, knowledge, science, or any of the modern, 'Counterfeit Christianities' can do for man what God, Christ and His teaching can do. The devil, realising this and recognising the impregnable position of true Christianity founded upon Christ and His Apostles, sees his only hope is to sow the seeds of discord and division in the ranks of the Church of the living God, and to our everlasting shame he has succeeded only too well.

It will be interesting as well as profitable for us to notice the methods the Evil One adopts in order to attain his object of 'division in the Church,' and to note the fundamental principles that are the hallmark of his handiwork.

Let us note first of all one or two human characteristics, failings if you like, that are common to most of us. In all human relationship, differences of opinion inevitably arise. It is virtually impossible for a set of people to associate together and not to have differences; if they do, somebody is dictator, and sooner or later the one dictating will be challenged and trouble results. The beauty of the Christian Church is that men and women from all walks of life and all ranks of society, many even holding strong and diverse political views, can live and work together in harmony and peace within the confines of the teaching of the New Testament. The reason is that they have a common ground of interest on which to walk and it is significant that ninety per cent. of the differences that have marred Church life down through the years have arisen round things not in the Bible. We do have a tendency to think differently on many matters. Wise men of God seek the guidance of God's Word in these things and adjust their thinking accordingly; but unfortunately other human failings make themselves manifest: pride, anger, jealousy—yes, and even spite—rear their ugly heads, and before we know where we are, differences are in our ranks. Here is where the Devil takes a hand. In these quarrels and differences that have arisen we tend to herd ourselves together with those of like mind and unless we are careful a clique results. "Isms" are introduced as in 1 Corinthians 3. The satanic principle of 'divide the brethren' comes into operation.

We see this principle in operation in the international field. In 1914, it was Kaiserism. Between the two world wars it was Bolshevism; in the Abyssinian War it was Fascism; in the recent war it was Hitlerism, and now, in the present 'line-up' of the nations, it is either atheistic Communism

or Anglo-American Imperialism, according to which of the opposing camps you are in.

It is so in the Churches. The great and memorable men who in time past fought to restore Christianity to its former greatness and purity, never intended to form sects and parties. It was their misguided followers who tacked such names as Methodism, Congregationalism, Unitarianism, etc., to their doctrines. Satan, in pursuit of his doctrine of division, took some of the saintliest of men and round them built a sect, to the rending of the Church. He is prepared to take the most godly thing if he can use it in his nefarious work of dividing the brethren. Thus, to-day, we have a vast conglomeration of sects and parties in the religious world, all claiming the same God and the same faith, and yet dissipating their energies in fighting one another instead of uniting with each other in the sacred bond of Christian love and a faith based on the written Word, and uniting their 'diversities of gifts, administrations and operations' under 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Eph. 4:5).

H. BAINES.

(To be continued.)

These Forty Years.

ON Tuesday, October 2nd, 1951, it will be forty years since I stood up in the place where I had been brought up to give my first public address. Sixty or seventy were present, the subject was 'What think ye of Christ?' This is still the supreme subject for all of us. Previously, I had found my feet in the Methodist Class Meeting and Lord's Day School. Here I gratefully acknowledge my debt to village Methodism and its influence. Men and women whose memory I revere, simple souls whose lives were above reproach, and who were faithful to the truth as they saw it. The wonderful singing and the prayers are an inspiring memory. By 1913 I was 'an accredited local preacher.'

Then came 1914—a fateful year. Almost suddenly, war came, the bugles sounded, the drums beat. The cry was: 'Your king and country need you.' The so-called messengers of the Prince of Peace became recruiting sergeants, nearly every sermon was a call for recruits, both by 'ministers' and 'laymen.' The war, they said, was to end war, to smash German military power, to make the world safe for democracy, and make this country a land fit for heroes. Patriotism was the great word. Services in chapels began or ended with the National Anthem. There seemed, to the thoughtless congregations, nothing inconsistent in singing: 'Send him victorious.' On several occasions I refused to stand up, as I should to-day. There was a religious frenzy about that war which will never be repeated. More people see the absolute futility of war to-day than ever before, even though they feel helpless and have little opportunity to express themselves. Still the armaments pile up, bigger and more satanic. Politicians and religious leaders lose no chance of drumming home their favourite topic—peace through strength of armaments. Here it is that the Press, the radio, and the cinema have a sinister influence. Slowly, even in this country, our thinking is being regimented. The political Party now in power have betrayed their trust, having accepted war and conscription as instruments of policy.

A. L. FRITH.

(To be continued.)

Some things which cannot be found in the New Testament.

ONE cannot find where God, Christ, or the Apostles ever told anyone 'to get religion and join the Church of your choice.' Yet, we hear this expression quite often among religious people. The 'mourner's bench' is not in the Bible. You cannot find in the New Testament where anyone ever received the remission of sins as a result of, or in answer to prayer. You cannot find where God authorised the alien sinner to pray for salvation or even a 'second blessing.' Men who teach such do so in disobedience to God's Word.

One cannot find where any Church took the Lord's Supper upon the first day of the week and washed the saint's feet in connection with it. Feet were washed in New Testament times as a matter of hospitality and cleanliness and not as a Church ordinance. Feet washing as a religious service is another of the many 'doctrines and commandments of men.'

One cannot find in God's Word where any Christian was ever voted on to see if he should be baptised. Such doing is all the getup of men.

One cannot find where any New Testament Church ever used instrumental music in the worship of God. The New Testament does command that we 'sing and make melody in the heart,' but it is as silent as a tomb regarding any mechanical accompaniment. Such is an unwarranted addition to God's order and a plain violation of His law. (Rev. 22 : 18, 19 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 6 ; 2 John 9.) From the first verse of Matthew to the last verse of Revelation there is not so much as the slightest hint of the use of instrumental music in Christian worship. Jesus Christ nowhere mentions it ; no Apostle ever sanctioned it ; no New Testament writer ever commanded it ; and no apostolic Church ever practised it.

One cannot find where any Church ever had an ice-cream supper, pie supper, mock-wedding, carnival, or any other such affair to raise money for the Church. This is some more of the foolishness of men as they attempt to improve on God's order. The New Testament teaches that the members of the Church are to give of their means as God has prospered them for the support of His cause (1 Cor. 16 : 1, 2 ; 2 Cor. 8 : 12 ; 9 : 7).

One cannot find in God's Word where the preachers were called 'Reverend,' 'Pastor,' 'Father,' 'Doctor,' or any other distinguishing title or honour. The New Testament plainly condemns all such (Matt. 23 : 1-12). Many denominational preachers of this day and age covet all such titles and honours. They are like the Pharisees described by Jesus in Matthew 23.

One cannot find in the Bible the doctrine of 'justification by faith only.' In spite of this it is a very prominent doctrine to-day. Men teach and believe it as though it were the truth of God, when nothing could be further from the truth. No man was saved 'by faith alone,' and the doctrine will cause many an honest soul to be lost—because they were deceived by false teachers and didn't study God's Word to find the truth. The New Testament plainly and emphatically denies this damnable heresy. James says, 'Ye see then that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only' (James 2 : 24). It is 'not by faith only.' How much plainer could it be put ?

One cannot find in the Bible where Christ is to come back to this earth to rule and reign for a thousand years ; to establish His Kingdom, and sit upon the throne of David in earthly Jerusalem. Yet there is perhaps no other doctrine so much discussed and taught. False teachers all over this

land and country are teaching this as though it were God's Word. Their speculations vary and their vain imaginations picture great and amazing things. People are easily deceived by this sort of thing. This theory is known as the doctrine of Premillennialism. The Bible teaches that the Kingdom has come and has been here fully established since Pentecost (Heb. 12:28; Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:9); that Christ is *now* king and that he is *now* reigning on David's throne (Acts 2:29-36). Jesus said the Kingdom and power would come together (Acts 1:8); and the Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4); therefore the Kingdom and power came on that day. Furthermore, the Bible nowhere says that Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again. The nearest to this earth he will come is to meet his saints 'in the air,' which will occur at His second coming (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

In the entire New Testament there is not one solitary case of where any person ever had a little water poured or sprinkled on his head, and called it baptism. Not one such case. To the contrary, Paul calls baptism a burial—read the sixth chapter of Romans. Those sprinkled in lieu of baptism have no higher authority for their decision than the Roman Catholic Church, which started this ungodly practice.

The Word of God is the truth (John 17:17), and we must 'know the truth' to be saved (John 8:32). We should study God's Word, to find out His will. Using His infallible Word, we should 'prove all things; hold fast that which is good,' but reject the doctrines of men. Be not deceived; search the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things are so or not (Acts 17:11). The destiny of your soul is at stake. —*Truth in Love, U.S.A.*

The Virgin Birth of Christ.

THE doctrine of the virgin birth has been taught through the centuries. It has lived through innumerable fiery controversies. It has survived all its adversaries. In our day this ancient doctrine is doubted. In many quarters it has been positively denied. However, this is nothing new. It has always been questioned by some and has always been rejected by others.

In the second century the Ebionites and Gnostics rejected it, looking upon it as a fanciful embellishment. During this period we find that one of the earliest known Gnostics to reject it was Cerinthus. He taught that the earthly Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary by ordinary generation, and that the heavenly Christ descended on him at the baptism, but later deserted him at the cross. It has been pointed out by Irenæus that the apostle John wrote in direct opposition to the nefarious tenets of Cerinthus. From the second century we drop down to the eighteenth century, where we find that the virgin birth is discarded by the sceptics as a piece of fiction. In this period the chief opponents of it were Tom Paine and Voltaire. It might be added that Voltaire treated it with scurrilous indecency. From the second to the eighteenth century we have a period of about sixteen centuries with little or no opposition to the virgin birth.

We come next to the nineteenth century, where we find that the Rationalists looked upon the matter as a legend—a myth. Strauss and Renan represent the opposition in that century. In our twentieth century we have those who call themselves Liberalists and Modernists, who reject the virgin birth. It appears that the greatest opposition has come to the virgin birth in the twentieth century.

Just at this point we should like to relate an incident which seems to have brought on the present controversy. In the year 1892 a young Lutheran minister in Germany was deposed from his pulpit because he refused to repeat the so-called 'apostles' creed.' The reason he would not repeat this creed was because he did not believe the virgin birth to be true. That incident precipitated a great discussion which raged with fierce fury over all Germany. The conflagration which began in Germany leaped the English Channel and ran over all England, and finally across the Atlantic into the New World.

In 1907 James Orr of Glasgow came over to this country and delivered a course of eight lectures in New York City. With great learning and skill, Doctor Orr presented the arguments for the virgin birth, and to his arguments little has been added since.

There have never been lacking men to criticize the virgin birth and condemn it. But what makes the present situation especially distressful is the fact that now the doctrine is questioned not only by outsiders, but by those who claim to be Christians and theologians. Most all the major denominations have discarded it, including the liberal wing of the Christian Church. And no doubt, soon or late, the denial of it will creep into the Churches of Christ—indeed, if it has not already done so. This I know: the spirit of compromise has crept into the Churches of Christ throughout the land. This is the first step in the denial of the supernatural element in the Bible. It is, then, incumbent upon us who love the old paths to set ourselves in the defence of the ancient gospel.

We should like to point out the grounds on which the virgin birth has been rejected. Only five of the arguments will be mentioned in this article. In the first place, we are told that the Bible is silent on the subject of the virgin birth with few exceptions. This is known as the *ex silentio* argument. It is true that in the entire Bible we have only some three direct references to it. These direct references are: (1) 'Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isa. 7:14). The original word here scholars tell us is very emphatic—the *virgin*. That is, the only one that ever was, or ever shall be, a mother in this way. (2) 'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph . . . was minded to put her away privily. . . . An angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying . . . Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. . . . Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.' (Matt. 1:18-23). (3) 'And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son. . . . And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:30-35).

Here we rest our case in the truth of the proposition that by the 'mouth of two witnesses or three shall every word be established.' (2 Cor. 13:1). However, aside from these direct references, there are many indirect references to the virgin birth throughout the Bible—to wit: The seed of woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. (Gen. 3:15). This certainly refers to the virgin birth of Christ, for 'the person who was to destroy the

works of the devil was to be the progeny of the woman, without concurrence of a man.' 'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.' (John 8:23). 'But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman.' (Gal. 4:4). Thus we see that to the honest heart we have ample evidence to establish the fact of the virgin birth. But let us not forget that inspiration has but to mention a matter but once to make it true. So the *ex silentio* argument will not stand the acid test.

Again, it is contended by the opposition that the Hebrew word *almah*, which Isaiah uses, and which is translated, 'virgin,' really means a young, but married, woman. If this were the meaning, it is difficult to see why there should be any allusion to the mother at all, since the predicted child would only be born like other children and would be a poor *sign* in the prophet's sense—as a matter of fact, it would not be a *sign* at all. The contention with reference to this word is utterly false. *Almah*, the Hebrew word for 'virgin,' is used of Rebekah before her marriage to Isaac (Gen. 24:43); of Miriam, the maiden sister of the infant Moses (Ex. 2:8); and in four or five places in the Old Testament. There is no decisive ground for thinking that any but unmarried women are meant. It is said that Martin Luther issued a challenge that was never accepted. He said: 'If a Jew or a Christian can prove to me that in any passage of Scripture *almah*, the Hebrew word for "virgin," means a married woman, I will give him one hundred florins, although God alone knows where I shall find them.'

Some reject the virgin birth on the ground that it is unscientific—that it is against the laws of nature. It is argued that it is impossible for an individual to come into the world with only a mother. We are told that it is unthinkable that a child could come into existence without a father. How do we know but that the virgin birth is the *natural* way for Deity to become humanity? Scripture does not say that Christ was born into the world without a father. The Bible tells us who the mother of Jesus was. The same Bible tells us who his father was.—So, then Jesus had both a father and a mother. Jesus was conceived not of an earthly father, but the heavenly Father. He was the son of Mary; he was also the Son of God. The impugnors of the virgin birth insist that frequently Jesus is referred to as the Son of man. And we are asked: 'Is it possible for one to be the Son of man and the Son of God at the same time?' Yes, if the virgin birth is a fact. Jesus was as human as his mother and divine as his Father.

Let us remember that the virgin birth is not a matter of human reason. It is not to be explained by scientific methods. Indeed, it is not to be explained at all. It is a matter of faith. And that is the ground on which Christians accept it. We believe that with God all things are possible. Is it not possible if God touched the earth and made Adam, and touched Adam and made Eve, that the sovereign God of this universe could touch the womb of the virgin and conceive the body of Jesus Christ? To ask such a question is simply to answer it.

Again, some object to the virgin birth because they say that the early Church did not accept it. This is a mere conjecture. It is an assertion not based on fact. We have every right and reason to believe that the early Church accepted the virgin birth without question. The early Christians accepted the entire record as given by Matthew and Luke. The writings of Ignatius and Justin Martyr show this. The writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen confirm the same fact. But suppose that the early Christians did reject it, and suppose so-called 'modern scholarship' rejects it; what does that prove? We answer: Absolutely nothing. The Bible account of the virgin birth is true even if all men reject it. However, we find comfort in the knowledge that more people accept the Bible

account of it than there are those who reject it. Among those who have defended it we have such world-renowned scholars as : Godet, Lightfoot, Westcott, Sunday, Swete, Gore, and many, many, more.

In the last place, we suggest there are those who reject the virgin birth because they say it is a matter of little or no concern. We are told that is makes no difference whether one believes it or not. We are urged that one may or may not accept it, that it has nothing to do with one's salvation. It is said that a young preacher went to Phillips Brooks and asked him this question : 'Is it necessary for me to believe in the miracles of Christ ? or, to put it more accurately, must I believe in the miracles of Christ ?' This is the sorry answer that the young man received from the misguided Doctor : 'No, I do not say that you *must*, but I do say that you may.' Many feel about the virgin birth in the same way. Can we take it or leave it ? Can we accept it or reject it ? Can we believe it or deny it and our salvation not be affected ?

In answer to that we say : If Jesus was not born of the virgin Mary, he was not divine. If he was not divine, he was not the Son of God. If he was not the Son of God, he was not what he claimed to be. If he was not what he claimed to be, he was an impostor. If he was an impostor, we are all without hope in this world and the world to come. There is salvation for none of us. The credibility of the Scripture rests on the truthfulness of the virgin birth. And not only that, but the redemptive work of Christ as well. The everlasting Son of God was born of the virgin Mary that He might take on Himself our form and in that form die for us in order that we might live in His divine form for ever and ever.

The supernatural Son of God, supernaturally incarnated, supernaturally sacrificed, supernaturally raised, is supernaturally coming again and will supernaturally gather unto Himself His own, because He is the Son of God.

—*Gospel Advocate.*

Should it be according to thy mind ?

(*Job 34:33.*)

THE book of Job contains the report of a discussion between Job and his friends, and is an attempt to justify the ways of God from the standpoint of human reason. Job, as an uprightman, is grievously afflicted. He loses his property, then his children, and then is afflicted with a painful and loathsome disease.

The theology of these primitive times seems to have been after this fashion : God is inflexibly just, and in this life rewards the righteous with all temporal blessings, whilst He sends affliction and disaster to the wicked. Job's position is, 'All this is true, but I have not sinned, therefore I cannot understand God's dealings with me.' His friends insist that Job must have sinned against God, and when he protests his innocence, they declare him a hypocrite. Our theology is right, therefore you must be a great sinner. At times during the debate Job rashly charges God with injustice. He fails to see any advantage in serving God, since affliction comes to both righteous and wicked. Job calls upon God to vindicate His own justice and His servant's righteousness. Job and his friends try to explain the matter according to their own mind, fail. Then Elihu, who has heard the argument, steps forward and in modest and beautiful language speaks on God's behalf. He shows that wisdom comes not from men but from the Spirit of God. The clue to the maze is with God. Elihu maintains

that God is just, that He will reward men according to their deeds; that God deals with men in love and for their good. He shows how useless it is for frail creatures of dust to enter into judgment with the Almighty and Eternal Creator of all things. Elihu maintains that though 'men see not the bright light in the clouds,' yet all will be well. So Job found it, God spoke to him, and his latter end was better than the beginning.

The failure of Job and his friends was in trying to shape the ways of God according their mind. Are not many of us guilty of the same mistake? We try to interpret God by our experience, instead of interpreting our experience by God. How oft we trouble ourselves to know the why and wherefore of His dealings with us. It is not for us to exercise ourselves in these matters, which are too high for us.

A child does not understand its father's dealings, but who will say that the father is not wiser than the child, and that even in chastisement is seeking its best interest? So though our mind fails to explain God's ways, well is it for us if we have so learned the mind of God as to trust that 'all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.'

Are there not many who seem to think that all God's ways should be according to their mind? Some seem annoyed that God did not consult them in making arrangements for the government of the world. If we may judge by the conduct of many, they seem to think that the Almighty One should have consulted their ease and fancy. Christianity is not according to the mind and desire of many. Does not ecclesiastical history bear witness that men have agreed that things should be according to their mind? There has been a tendency on the part of men in all ages to interfere with the Divine arrangement, and the recorded punishment of these interferers are beacons warning us not to try the same experiment.

Yet although God has given so many warnings and declared that He will be approached and worshipped in the way He has appointed,

'Man is careless, and of hard set will,
Reluctant all God's pleasure to fulfil,
He says some other way will do instead
Of that in which Jehovah bids him tread.'

A common saying is, 'many men, many minds.' Yes, and many minds, many ways of approaching God. Does not the number of sectarian parties bear witness that men think Christianity and Churches should be according to their mind? When we point men to the only infallible standard, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, they say: 'You have your way, we have ours, let us alone,' thus leading us to the conclusion that in some quarters the human mind is supreme, and the Divine Mind shut out. By what standard are we to judge? If God has not spoken to man, and if the Bible containing the words of the Lord, Apostles, and Prophets is not true, then we have no reliable standard. In that case one Church or religion is as good as another, for if it is to be according to your mind, why not according to mine? But if God has spoken to men, and if in His Word He has laid down a plan as to how we are to approach Him and enjoy His salvation, then we are not at liberty to please ourselves and say it should be according to our mind. That God has spoken, and that we have such a plan will be admitted by most. The way to come into fellowship with the Father through the Son is clearly revealed. We have it typified in the tabernacle of old. First the altar of sacrifice, then the brazen laver in which the priests washed before entering the holy place to do service unto the Lord. So under the new covenant we come first to the Altar, we gaze on Calvary, and 'behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' We trust in

Him, and realise He died for us. Then we come to the laver, where we are 'baptised into Christ,' and 'become united with Him by the likeness of His death.' Then made free from sin, we present our bodies a living sacrifice unto Him—which is our reasonable service. We 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled with an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water' (Heb. 10 : 22).

Should this Divine arrangement be set aside to please men? Should the ordinances of baptism and the breaking of bread be distorted to gratify man's pride and love of ease? Should the plan of the Divine Architect for the construction of His Church be set aside, and Churches built according to the mind of men? These things ought not so to be. It was an evil day when men thought a slight deviation from the Divine plan of little importance. It was the opening of the floodgate through which has flowed a tide of apostacy that has laid the Church in ruins. Let our appeal in all things be to the law and the testimony.

Our choice lies between the changeable teaching of human minds, and the unchangeable unerring Word of God; between the sand of human invention, and the rock of God's truth. Which shall it be?

'The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

W. CROSTHWAITE.

(Written in 1902 for *Christian Pleader*.)

Wasted Power

FEW things are more appalling to a thoughtful Christian than the enormous waste of force which abounds. Were a tenth of the mental and physical power, now utterly squandered in pleasure and unproductive employments, turned into spiritual channel, what mighty benefits would follow! We read of a young woman, at New York, aged twenty-four, completing 700 consecutive miles of bicycling along the roads of Long Island, breaking all the previous records made by women. At the end of her ride her face was extremely worn, for she had the appearance of a woman of forty. Her temperature was 100 degrees, she had lost greatly in weight, and was completely exhausted. Now what has God or humanity gained by that tremendous output of physical power? The rider has probably shattered her health, and she has set up a record for some other foolish one to beat, at a similar cost to health.

If men and women would be ambitious to excel in holiness and goodness, and labour with both hands earnestly for the education and saving of society, how vast the change! Our schools would be staffed with strong, brave, and indomitable souls. Difficulties would melt away. Obstacles crumble to dust under the mighty hammers of faith and love. Religion's chariot harnessed to youth's fiery zeal and strength would outstrip the evil of the world. But, alas, men lay hold on God not with their strength, but with their weakness. The modern world laughs at the ascetic of the olden time, and the pale student of to-day. But which is nobler, to die fighting for eternal things, or to perish at thirty-five with heart and lungs wrecked by excessive athletics? Pleasure and sport have more martyrs than God.

—Selected.

A Plea and a Plan for Union.

Why be anything but 'Christian'?
That's a name to glory in,
For it tells of our relation
To the Christ who saves from sin;
He's the Prophet like to Moses;
He as Priest the winepress trod;
He's the Sovereign Son of David,
Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

If you say you're 'Presbyterian,'
That at most suggests a sect;
Or if you're an 'Independent,'
That is ditto, I suspect;
If you say that you're a 'Baptist'
That an ordinance proclaims;
'Methodist' is no whit better—
Why then use such human names?

God's great purpose is that Jesus
Shall in all things be supreme,
As the centre and circumference
Of redemption's gracious scheme;
Hence, of all the new creation
He's 'the Firstborn from the dead';
He's the Church's holy Bridegroom,
And alone the Church's 'Head.'

He's the Vine, believers 'branches';
He's 'the Shepherd of the sheep';
He's 'the King,' His people subjects,
Bound His holy laws to keep;
He of God's great living Temple
Is the precious 'Corner Stone';
Let His followers, then, be 'Christians,'
And their gracious Saviour own.

'Twas the name divinely given
To disciples at the first;
Though by Jew and heathen hated
As a designation cursed,
Yet the Lord's Apostle Peter
Taught that, spite of praise or blame,
All should own themselves as 'Christians,'
Honouring God in that dear name.

Let the Saviour's prayer be answered,
For the oneness of His flock;
Let the Church be one grand structure,
Built on Christ the living 'Rock':
All believers can be 'Christians,'
Sacrificing naught that's true;
All will never join a party,
Be that party old or new.

Let the Christian Scriptures settle
All to be believed and done;
Drop the things that are but human,
And the long, hard battle's won!
Creeds and sects and party labels
All will then be laid aside;
True believers be united
And the Father glorified.

That would do far more in turning
Men from darkness unto light
Than ten thousand thousand preachers
Toiling hard both day and night:
It would prove to demonstration
Jesus came to save mankind,
And to make them, Jew and Gentile,
One in heart and one in mind.

What an impulse would be given
To the work of Christ below,
Could the army of the faithful
One great solid phalanx show!
Oh, for this grand consummation
Let all Christians work and pray;
And may God above right early
Usher in that glorious day.

J. M. C. CARTNEY.

DIGNITY OF SERVICE

'I would to God that I might help you to see the glory of Christian service. There are some, perhaps, who are a little weary and tired. You wonder whether the toil and drudgery are worth while. Lift up your service and look at it in the light of these great words: "Working together with Him." Therein is the glory of service, and except for that blessed assurance I think it could not be continued, but that the burden of it would crush out the very heart and life. When I know that this little life of mine, with all its uncertainty of duration, in the comparative insignificance of its sphere, can yet be a life co-operative with God, then am I conscious of the dignity of my service.'

DR. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

DEATH OF JOHN STRAITON

As we go to press, the news of the death of Bro. John Straiton, of Fort Worth, Texas, has been received.

An obituary notice will appear in the next issue.—Editor.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct. 7th: 1 Kings 19:1-18; 2 Corinthians 11:16-23.
Oct. 14th: Exodus 24; 2 Corinthians 12.
Oct. 21st: Deuteronomy 34; 2 Cor. 13.
Oct. 28th: Deuteronomy 4:1-13; Galatians 1.

Paul indulges in autobiography. Continuing his defence of his character and work as against those of the false teachers who had captured the imagination of some at Corinth, Paul finds it necessary to speak of his own experiences. It is so against the normal Christian behaviour to do this that he finds it advisable to make excuse. He now speaks as a man rather than a professor of Christianity, yet he is justified by the empty boasting of his adversaries who were compelled by the nature of the case to set themselves up as authorities. He has begun the argument in 10:7, 11:1, and 11:6, and now returns to it,

Upon every point where boasting has been done by his enemies, Paul himself has the better of them in fact. Thus he states the facts so that any who might not have the knowledge shall know and therefore be able to judge between true and false apostles. We thank God for this 'folly' of the apostle. We assume in verses 19-21 we have reference to the way in which the 'false apostles' had 'made merchandise' of the church, and behaved insolently towards any who doubted their credentials.

What a catalogue of endurance, we have also, reminding us of the picture-gallery of Hebrews 11. It was an undignified escape from Damascus but what of that? God through the disciples had saved His servant for further service. The High Priest of old had the names of the tribes of Israel on his breast when he entered the Holy of Holies: Paul had the churches and many individual Christians 'engraved' upon his heart. Have not all the imitators of Christ this same responsibility in due measure?

Revelations from God. However much Paul had laboured and suffered, a still greater honour was his. God had granted to him direct revelation of divine truths. We shall see in the letter to the Galatians, in which also he is compelled to defend himself from false accusation and slander, more of his being chosen for apostleship—as one born out of due time.

His 'boasting' is of what God did for him. Paradise and the third heaven are probably identical, and are spiritual dwelling-places, where doubtless at death the righteous stay until Christ's return. It would appear that Paul had not mentioned the honour conferred in this way for fourteen years. It was so great an honour that God had permitted Satan to afflict the apostle so as to prevent pride—one of the biggest enemies of us all. There is a very necessary lesson in the reference to prayer—'fervent prayer of a righteous man.' The answer was 'No.' When this is so, there is more than good reason for it. Our eternal destiny is in view. How much does the 'light affliction' matter? Would that, like the apostle, we might all rather rejoice in endurance of trouble—for great is your reward in heaven.

Conclusion of the argument from Paul's behaviour. 'Very chieftest' as in 11:5 would be more literally translated 'over-great,' and refers to Paul's detrac-

tors, not the other apostles as we think of them. The statement would be true in relation to the other apostles also, but Paul wishes to press home the contrast. The trouble at Corinth was that Paul was being forgotten. It is sometimes the case with churches now—a new preacher comes and the real 'fathers in the faith' are forgotten. One thing stood out in this case—Paul had not taken money from the church, and was still not expecting to do so. Surely this would prove his motives.

Warnings of Paul's anticipated visit. Like Paul himself, his messengers had taken the same line in relation to support. Paul could not even be accused of getting gain from Corinth through others. In no way at all, could it be said that his care for them had anything to do with their care for him. A Christian cannot 'take offence' and be right with his Lord. Christ loved His enemies—and died for them. Paul longed, however, for such a reception as should not put him to the pains and shame of having to spend his time in rebuking most severely those of whom he hoped and prayed better things, but the truth must be spoken. The condemnation would be carried out if necessary, hence the warnings and fervent appeals. The 'weakness' of Paul was the same 'weakness' as that of Christ, who freely gave Himself up for us all to sufferings and death, that the power of God might be exercised in us.

Final exhortations and salutations. Self-examination was particularly necessary for the Christians at Corinth. They had allowed impostors to come in and take partial possession of them. Their salvation is at stake in the matter, and careful thought inspired by this letter should bring them back to a proper standing in Christ. The character and motives of the writer have been made so clear and are even here so emphasised that they can have no excuse. It is their welfare, not just Paul's happiness that is at stake, but their perfection. The brief summary instruction in verse 11 will take up all their spiritual effort if understood, and guarantee fulfilment of the consequences mentioned with it. How frequently we use the 'benediction' on account of its simplicity and completeness—and how much it means.

The Epistle to the Galatians. Galatia was a district not a single church. 'The inhabitants, like other Gauls, were impulsive and inconstant. Their civilisation

was very imperfect, and their system of idolatry was extremely gross and debasing.' Paul may have preached there on his first missionary journey—in the region round about Lycaonia' (Acts 14:6), or perhaps not until the second journey (Acts 16:6) and again Acts 18:23. Again Paul is dealing with enemies of the faith. There will always be such—or we might think Satan dead—and hence the great need of these portions of the Apostolic writings. If readers can get hold of the little book by Alexander Brown, 'Paul's defence of himself and his gospel,' they will find it useful.

Introduction. It is plain that slander has been at work, and therefore Paul states his office and authorisation. We note the reference to the purpose of Christ's coming—a sacrifice and a deliverance. Another gospel has been preached in Galatia already.

Another Gospel. This part of the letter begins abruptly—no thanksgiving or congratulation. Sorrow fills Paul's heart. He knew that what he had preached was the truth. Even if he himself were to change, or an angel to speak, any disagreement with the original message must be wrong and be rejected. What impudence men possess who invent new, or attempt to change the gospel. Yet many are doing it to-day. Only a small minority are pleading for New Testament Christianity. It should make us tremble to come under the apostle's curse. We do not realise the seriousness of making the slightest change in the message. Paul is careless of offending false teachers. If we are intent on pleasing men, we may be sure we shall displease God. Being popular generally means being wrong.

Paul's Gospel is God's. In order to show this, Paul recounts the story of his first receiving the truth direct from God. He shows first, that he could not have received it in his early life, claims that he was chosen deliberately by God, and then that he had not been in such communication with those who were apostles before him, as to make it possible to receive it from them. Those who had brought the false teaching into Galatia used the fact of his not being among the apostles chosen by Christ during his earthly life, to reject Paul's authority, and to say that those other apostles taught what those teachers wished to impose on Gentile Christians, observance of the Law of Moses.

Paul's life before his conversion proved he had no original love for the gospel or true knowledge of it. The Jewish traditions ruled him, and his zeal for them was proved by his actions. He was known to be preaching in Damascus before he

visited Jerusalem, and it was divine revelation that had given him the knowledge and power for that work. This visit to Arabia is not mentioned in Acts 9, but we may assume took place almost immediately after his baptism. God's choice was notified to Paul not only directly but also through Ananias (Acts 9: 15-16). I would think it certain that some of the revelations mentioned in 2 Cor. 12 were made at that time. Acts 9:26-30 records the same visit as Gal. 1:18. It was so brief that it could not show Paul to have been dependent upon the other apostles for the truth he preached. Moreover they recognised 'the faith' as being the same, and glorified God. They would not do this unless it was in fact the same gospel.

R. B. SCOTT.

COMING EVENTS

East Grinstead.—Ninth anniversary, 6th of October. Speaker: Bro. F. C. Day. 3.30 p.m., Open-air meeting; 4.30, Tea; 6.30, Evening meeting.

Lord's Day meetings: 11 a.m., Breaking of Bread; 5.30 p.m., Open-air meeting; 6 p.m., Gospel meeting.

The Church here would be very pleased at any time to welcome visitors to the South. Meeting room over Curtis, Baker's Shop, in main London Road.

East Ardsley.— Anniversary meeting, October 27th and 28th. Speakers: Bro. F. C. Day (of Birmingham) and Bro. J. Pritt (Blackburn). Tea, 4 p.m., on Saturday; meeting at 6 p.m. Chairman, Bro. D. Brown. Visitors will be most welcome.

W. H. SLADE

Tunbridge Wells (Silverdale Road.— Anniversary services (D.V.) on November 10th and 11th. Saturday: Tea, 4.30 p.m.; meeting 6.30 p.m. Speakers: F. C. Day (Birmingham) and F. Worgan (Hindley). Sunday: Lord's Supper, 11 a.m.; Bible School, 3 p.m.; Gospel Meeting, 6.30 p.m. Speaker: Bro. F. Worgan. All brethren cordially invited.

CORRESPONDENCE

MORLEY RALLY

May I through the pages of the S.S. convey to the Morley Church my appreciation, and that of the other brethren and sisters who made the journey from the Wigan district, on September 1st, to the Morley Convention, for the wonderful time we had with them.

It was a glorious and inspiring few hours in which we heard the Word of

God faithfully preached by Bren. A. Winstanley and F. Worgan.

The Cross of Jesus Christ was certainly held aloft, and the flag of salvation fully unfurled by the messages we heard. One can feel the very nearness of God on these occasions, which I personally feel should be held more often, for it does indeed show to the world at large the true spirit of Christianity which we do our level best both to preach and practise. It was about 11 p.m. when we arrived back home, tired after our journey, but very happy after once more seeing many faces from sister Churches we have through the years, grown to love very much indeed.

W. H. CLARKE

The brethren at Morley are to be congratulated (and thanked) for the arrangements made for the September Rally. Those who contributed to the propagation of the Eternal Truths gave of their best and we felt even more how great is our Christian heritage.

The choice of the Tong Hall was a happy thought and for a few hours we were able to enjoy the fresh air straight off the 'Backbone of England.'

A. L. DANIELL, BRISTOL

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hereford.—On Thursday, September 6th, the Church rejoiced when John R. Rogers, of Pembrokeshire, made the good confession before witnesses, and was baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ.

We wish also to express our sincere appreciation of the services rendered by Bro. Harry Davenport, of Scholes, Wigan, who came at short notice to help in this baptism, and in the general edification of the Church.

Kentish Town.—We rejoice to record an addition. Margaret Simkins, a blind friend who has been attending our meetings for some time, made the good confession and was baptised on Wednesday, September 5th.

Morley.—We had a most inspiring weekend at our Rally. On the Saturday there was a very profitable discussion on God's Word and work in the afternoon. Some 125 brethren sat down to tea; and in the evening, Bren. Albert Winstanley and Frank Worgan delivered fine gospel messages to a packed hall. Bro. Ralph Limb presided over the meeting. The Lord's Day brought further blessings: an uplifting Bible study in the morning, the Breaking of Bread in the afternoon, gospel meeting in the evening, and a united gospel meeting following, to close the day. All three brethren mentioned above served us on the Lord's Day.

We thank all those who helped to make the Rally a success. We would especially thank brethren who travelled long distances to be with us, from Blackburn, Bristol, East Kirkby, Eastwood, Hindley, amongst others. The Blackburn and Hindley brethren each brought a coach-load.

The general feeling was that the Rally had been a fine send-off for our September Mission with Bro. Ralph Limb. We ask for your support in prayer for this effort.

G. LODGE

Ulverston.—Some weeks ago, Joseph Starkie was married to one of our members, Ann Thistlethwaite. Their home is at Haswell, Co. Durham. Being here on holiday, Joseph expressed his desire to confess and obey his Saviour and Lord. He was buried with Christ in baptism on August 29th. Our joy was mingled with the joy of heaven on that happy occasion. We pray that God will bless and keep the two, who are now more truly one; and that they may be able to show others the way of the Lord more perfectly.

W. CROSTHWAITE

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