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

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A CHRISTLESS CHURCH

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

THAT has been the theme of innumerable appeals to those outside the Church to open their heart's door, and let the Saviour in to be King of their lives.

There may be no real wresting of the Scriptures in this, but it tends to eclipse the fact that this appeal was primarily made by the Lord Jesus to a Church claiming to be a Church of Christ (see Rev. 3:14-22).

That Church at Laodicea, in Asia Minor, was in a city famous for its wealth, pride, pomp, and show; and this world spirit had so captivated the Church that the Christ who should have been its Head and Lord was crowded out, and the door closed against Him. The Lord's letter to that Church demonstrates that a Church may be rich, as the world counts riches: may have a large membership on its roll, be well organised, and yet have no room for Christ. The Lord names the things which crowd Him out:

They were not out and out for Him.

"Thou are neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot.' Probably the members of that Church prided themselves on their moderation. They were not extremists, they had struck the happy medium. But surely it is better to be extremely right than even moderately wrong. Their attitude made the Lord sick. 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' The Lord wants those who are all out for Him: He has no use for those who are half and half.

Facing that mob of digressive compromisers on Mount Carmel, Elijah cried: 'How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.'

The Lord demands our all. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind' (Matt. 22:37). It has been well said: 'Christ is not loved at all unless he is loved above all.' His searching question is, 'Lovest thou me more than these?' Do we love Him more than we love anyone or anything else? 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' (Matt. 10:37).

A Church is what its members are, and if in their hearts there are

divided loyalties Christ is crowded out. He will not stay where He is not wanted.

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store;
From each idol that would hold us—
Saying, "Christian love me more"."

They measured prosperity by a material standard.

'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' Such was their self-satisfied estimate of their state. So Churches to-day using the same standard think all is well with them. But a Church may have an elaborate meeting house, with steeple or tower, with costly furnishings; a fine organ and choir; heaps of money in the treasury; with numerous and wealthy members to supply all its material needs; and yet in the eyes of the Lord be absolutely poor and destitute: a tragic failure.

Like many Churches to-day, the Church at Laodicea was blind to its real condition. 'And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' That is how they appeared to Him who 'seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' What a contrast in the two estimates! They said, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.' The Lord said: You are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' He stripped them of their gaudy clothing and showed them as they really were.

The Lord can do nothing for those who think they 'have need of nothing'; who are proud, self-centred, and who trust in uncertain riches. We must come down from the lofty pedestal we have erected for ourselves if we want the best the Lord can do for us.

'Just as F am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come!'

Christ offers true riches.

'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.'

He offers 'treasures that never can waste': that neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

He Himself is the 'pearl of great price.' 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious'; far more exceeding precious than the wealth of the whole world; and all it can offer. 'Jewels to thee are gaudy toys, and gold is sordid dust.' His Word is 'more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold.'

He offers 'white raiment,' the wedding garment of His own righteousness to cover our shame and sin. He was 'made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Of true believers it is written: 'As many of you as have been baptised [immersed] into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. 3:26-27). Of the Church, the Lamb's Wife, it is written: 'To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints' (Rev. 19:8). Having put the white garment on we must see that we keep it 'unspotted from the world.' If the Church is to be kept pure, clean, and white, each member must so live as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

'Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.'

Robert Burns wrote:

'Oh, wad some power the giftie gie To see oursel's as others see us! It wad fra monie a blunder free us And foolish notion.'

But how much better if we could see ourselves as the Lord sees us: that would surely humble us to the dust. It was in love for the Church that the Lord administered the strong, stern words contained in His letter to Laodicea. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent.'

The chastening of the Lord is for our good: that we may yield 'the peaceable fruit of righteousness.' The Lord calls for repentance, a change of mind leading to a change of conduct: to pour contempt on pride, and satisfaction with material riches; and to grasp more firmly spiritual riches found in Him, 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' It was to a Church that had rejected Him that the Lord Jesus appealed for admission: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

Doors are generally fastened from the inside; and the Lord recognises the right of the tenant to open the door, or to keep it closed, even against Him. All theories that deny the free-agency of man are false to the Scriptures, and to all human experience. We are continually exercising our power of choice.

'Behold [marvel, wonder] that I stand and knock.'

Who is this? 'The amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.' The One by whom, and for whom all things came into being. He stands, and pleads for entrance into a Church that claimed to be one of His; and is left outside. What a revolution there would be in some Churches if He was admitted and allowed to have His own way! As He cleansed the temple at Jerusalem so He would drive out many things done in His name, for which He has given no authority.

Could He not say of much so-called worship to-day, 'In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'? If He was given His right place in some Churches other so-called Heads and Lords would be driven out. Worship arranged to please human eyes and ears would have to be given up. In worship and service the determining question should be, not 'What do we like?' but, 'What doth the Lord require?' For an answer to that we are shut up to one book, the New Testament. Outside that book no man, whatever his position, pretensions, and claims to scholarship, knows what is acceptable and well pleasing to the Lord.

If all Churches would keep an open door for the Christ, and a closed door against all that is not in harmony with His Word and Will, they would enjoy continual seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and would attract many weary sin-sick souls to come and share real communion with the Christ and His people. 'He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell' (Col.1:18-19).

BE A MODEL!

IN a letter to one whom he called his 'true child in the faith,' the aged Paul wrote, 'Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an ensample to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity' (1 Tim. 4:12). Observe the word ensample here—the Greek term tupos. It means 'a model,' and that in the sense of a pattern for imitation. So in this admonition Paul is urging Timothy to be

A Model to his Brethren.

Indeed, it would be quite legitimate to render this phrase thus: 'Be a model for your fellow Christians to imitate.' It is as if the old apostle says, 'So live, that if your fellow believers copy your life, they will be saved.' The force of the exhortation is underlined by verse 16, 'Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee.' If any 'young Timothy' reads these words, let him stop here awhile. Brother, your own salvation, and that of others, depends upon your faithful life and teaching. Could you honestly ask others to imitate you?

The apostle Paul did just that—he urged the saints to imitate his conduct. He said, 'Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample' (Phil. 3:17). He and his fellow labourers were a model to their brethren in singlemindedness (verses 13-14). Well might we imitate him in this—the Church to-day suffers much for lack of members who can say with the apostle, 'This one thing I do. . . .' Let us model our lives according to his shining example in putting first things first!

Don't imagine though, that this thought was applied to apostles and evangelists merely. Here's another instance of the word's occurence. In 1 Peter 5:3, elders are instructed to be 'ensamples to the flock.' If the bishops in the congregations are the kind of men God wants in the office, they are men who live exemplary lives. Their behaviour is a model for the flock of God. We may imitate them, and be saved by following their example. The pastors of the flock must not merely be men who teach the Lord's will in word—they must also exemplify it in life.

A final quotation where this word is used, before we observe the items in which Timothy was to be a model to his brethren. We read, 'So that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' The 'church of the Thessalonians' was therefore a model Church in a very significant respect. What was it? Hear the explanation: 'For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything' (1 Thess. 1:7-8). In this respect that Church was a model for congregations to-day. We could not do better than to imitate it. The 'sounding forth'—echoing, resounding—of the good news of salvation, is the responsibility of all the members of all the Churches. It is not the prerogative of any special class within the Church; it is the purpose for which the Church, as a whole exists. To make known the glad tidings of the grace of God is the duty—and the high privilege—of every child of God.

Now notice that Paul named particular items in which Timothy was to be a model to the saints. Every one is vitally important in this matter of godly example. First he was to be a model

In Word.

This would certainly cover the young preacher's teaching and preaching. but clearly the main things here is speech, or conversation. We need the exhortation greatly. It is fatally easy to slip into using questionable language.—especially when many of us hear it oft from the lips of unsaved men and women. There is both a positive and negative aspect to Bible teaching about our speech. Notice first the negative. In Ephesians 5 we have a list of things which are 'not even to be named' among us. We read, 'Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks' (v. 4). A Christian should never tell a 'dirty' story. His speech should never be suggestive, silly or profane. I believe that a 'sense of humour' is a grand thing. It has its place (and a real one) in Christian character. None-the-less much of what passes for 'joking' in the conversation of many members is totally unfit for the ears of the Almighty. Perhaps gospel preachers are more prone to the temptation to 'raise a laugh' than others. Brother, if the Lord were to tap you on the shoulder after you had told your 'funny story,' and ask you to repeat it in his ears, how would you feel? Embarrassed? Then never tell it again!

The positive aspect to Christian speech is seen in statements like this: 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one' (Col. 4:6). In our dealings with the unsaved ('them that are without') we must know just how to answer. The manner will hardly ever be the same in any two sets of circumstances. The way we go about it varies according to need. But one thing never varies, never changes. It is our responsibility to God to make our speech always gracious. There is no exception to that rule.

If incentive be needed in this, let us find it in this sober truth, that 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment' (Matt. 12:36).

Further, Timothy was to be a model

In Manner of Life.

In the Authorised Version, the word 'conversation' is used. But in the Revised (quoted throughout this article) 'manner of life' is given. The latter is correct, giving a true idea of what was meant by the word 'conversation' in the seventeenth century. 'Conduct' and 'behaviour' are both true synonyms of this word.

We must never forget that what we are (manner of life) is just as important as what we say (word). The very fact that we maintain a true doctrine will be the surest thing to make others despise it if our behaviour is a denial of it. 'Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...' (Phil. 1:27). It has been well said that 'my life often paints my neighbour's picture of God.' And again, 'I cannot hear what you are saying, because what you are is shouting so loudly.'

Many a faithful man has been led to obey the truth through the godly example of a Christian partner. 'In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives' (1 Pet. 3:1). Recently, a woman who had been immersed gave this testimony: that her conversion was the fruit of a young Christian girl's godly example in the large factory where they both worked. Our behaviour is a vital factor in the salvation (or condemnation) of those who are watching us.

In Love.

No doubt the prime thought here is the 'love of the brethren.' Without this, none of us can be saved. It is a divine command—'Love the brotherhood' (1 Pet. 2:17). If we do not manifest brotherly love we disobey the Lord. It is one of the virtues we must 'add to our faith' if we are to gain 'entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord' (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Just one observation about love for the saints. 'Love' is no mere attitude of mind—it is a quality that cannot be separated from conduct. When one loves, he can't help manifesting it in what he does. The greatest example of all is seen in this, that 'God so loved that he gave . .' He gave because He loved. In like manner, if we love one another, we can never remain indifferent to each other's conditions, circumstances and needs. Here is a practical illustration of this: 'But whose hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?' (1 Pet. 3:17). Well did the Saviour say, 'If ye love me ye will keep my commandments' (John 14:15). Moreover, Timothy was to be a model

In Faith.

We know that the faith that saves is no mere intellectual assent to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. It is a whole-hearted belief that impels one to trust and obey the Saviour completely. Thus, the 'faith' here mentioned points to a loyalty to the Lord that is maintained consistently through life—better still, faithfulness.

In Hebrews 13:7 we read, 'Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.' The reward of faithfulness, for both pastors and flock, is a crown of life and glory (1 Pet. 5: 4; Rev. 2: 10).

Finally, Timothy was to set a model to the brethren

In Purity.

This referred to the young man's attitude to those of the opposite sex. The apostle continued, 'Rebuke not an elder [i.e., 'an older man' | but exhort him as a father; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters in all purity' (1 Tim. 5: 1-2).

This is a word that young Christians need to lay to heart. Moral standards have never been lower than they are in the world to-day. In no way is this more evident than in the relationships between young men and women. Such things as 'petting,' for instance, are taken for granted among the unsaved. Let it be said emphatically, that Christian youths and maidens ought to keep themselves above all such. Their behaviour toward one another must ever be governed by this word: 'in all purity.' To make a kind of public spectacle of one's affection for the opposite sex is bad enough when those involved truly love one another (though I can't help thinking any 'love' is suspect if it be flaunted or paraded in public)—but when no abiding affection exists it is repugnant beyond words. Let us set a model to one another (and to 'them that are without') in the blamelessness of our conduct.

The Divine Model.

If we are to be models to the believers, we must model our thoughts, words and deeds on the divine model—the Lord Himself. God help us every one to '... run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...'

A. E. WINSTANLEY, in Mission Messenger.

THE MINISTER

THE 'located preacher,' 'the pastor' or 'the minister' is everywhere met with, and the vast number in 'the profession' suggests that the occupation is considered desirable, lawful and profitable. This office generally passes unchallenged and the attempt to establish 'the Divine right of the minister' is rarely undertaken. A few 'stones from the brook,' or river of life, may lead 'the minister' to review his position or dislodge him, and lead him to work with his hands (1 Thes. 4: 11-12, 2 Thes. 3: 6-15). He may also offer good Christian service 'without money and without price.' Our Saviour taught: 'it is happier to give than to receive'; working with the hands was commanded (Acts 20: 28-35), and warned of grievous wolves!!

Status of 'the minister.'

Money, time and effort are expended 'to produce' him. After graduation, he expects to take charge of a 'vacant Church.' The uninitiated and possibly financially poorer folk are instructed and encouraged to support him. He is thought to have a thorough knowledge of the Bible and to be an authority upon Christianity. Is his service a benefit to man? Do results justify his official position? Does the large number of capable advocates for Christ, and a regiment of soldiers, prepared to do battle for Christ's Kingdom, emerge from his ministry? By these tests, it would appear that dismal failure results from his work. Also, actually, a real shortage of teachers and workers for Christ is evidently due to his appointment. Tongues must be silent, that 'the minister' may be heard! Resignation or dismissal of 'the minister' is usually a calamity, unless a successor is speedily installed. Note the joy, upon the induction of 'the new minister,' into the empty Church: and how much greater the welcome accorded a 'real reverend'! The increasing number of 'women pastors' and 'child pastors' shows growing dissatisfaction with present arrangements and rebellion against 'ministerial' authority. Ichabod accurately describes much of mis-named religion! Did God appoint 'the minister'? From early times a petty trade was made with the Word of God, and to-day many claim the right to be paid as 'the minister,' etc. Apostles taught that elderly, well-behaved and experienced Christians, who were capable teachers of Christianity, were to be 'elders,' 'pastors' (shepherds) or 'overseers.' These names viewed their Christian duties from different angles. 'Elder,' or experienced old man; 'pastor' (shepherd) or guardian; 'overseer' (foreman), or helper, encourager, corrector. Originally, Christ endowed miraculously, apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers, to perfect the saints, not one special class of saints, but all saints, to build His Body, the Church, and to educate Christians to be men in mind and service (Eph. 4: 11-16). The work was well commenced by living apostles and their writings in the Bible carry it forward. Proficiency in the Christian life can be attained by diligently reading and obeying their words.

'The minister' may suggest he occupies the position of 'the elder,' and demand payment for his services. Can he bend 1 Timothy 5: 18 to fit his request for remuneration? Look at Paul's argument: (1) The ox gets corn for his labour; (2) the labourer gets wages for labour; (3) the ruling and teaching elder gets 'double honour' for his work. There is here no authority to pay 'elders.' Even our dear Scots brothers cannot render the passage, 'let elders have double pay'! Elders were taught to work with their hands so as to feed themselves and others (Acts 20: 32-35). Peter's teaching is equally conclusive: 'Don't be elders for fifthy lucre' (1 Peter 5: 2-5). Who can remove the filthiness? Since elders have 'double honour,' who has honour (single honour)? Elders (old men, 1 Tim. 5: 1) were to be treated

as fathers, and in accord with Christ's law, were to have honour (single honour). An objector asks (a) 'was Peter paid,' and (b) 'how did he live?' God has not provided answers to these two questions, yet Peter said, 'don't be elders for filthy lucre'!

Can public worship be reverent and decent without 'the minister'? Numerous assemblies of Christ in Britain and elsewhere are the conclusive and best answer. Where 'the minister' reigns, he mounts on the bushel as his right, beneath which lie hidden the talents and capabilities of his flock. Oratory and eloquence may flow from 'the minister,' but the Church needs sound speech calculated to produce a manly race of Christians, sound in truth, sincerity and every Christian service in perfection. God's golden plan is: every Christian a worker (Eph. 4:16); the tinsel method is: 'the minister' must do it!

Godly elders can assist younger Christians to put on, and keep on the whole armour of God and help them in their Christian life. The battle is still raging and Christ calls every soldier to 'fight the good fight.' It is good to see zealous young Christians qualifying for service both in and out of the assembly. Lazy members refusing to prepare for battle will be subdued by ambitious men who will turn them away from Christ into perdition. Beware of apostacy!

Who will qualify for eldership in the Lord's Body? Joy follows painstaking, unselfish work as the flock grows in the knowledge and love of God and in usefulness. Elders' efficient service receives double honour now, and the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, promises unfading glory in the coming age (1 Pet. 5: 1-5).

Apostles of Christ are his 'heralds,' 'ambassadors' or 'preachers' (the herald or preacher is kerux) and their preaching is in the New Testament. He appointed their food and drink from the gospel (1 Cor. 9:1-5). See the illustration from soldiers, farm workers and cattle. Paul robbed (stripped) Churches in order to announce Christ (2 Cor. 11: 8). Those evangelising, where Christ is unknown, should also live 'of the gospel'! You will see how different this work is from that of 'the minister'!

W. H. CUMMINS.

CHATS TO CHILDREN.

FAMILY CIRCLE HAROLD BAINES

OUR story this month concerns a Railway Engine called 'Puffin Billy.' He is not the ancient one of that name, but a new one, and he first saw the light of day in a North of England Engineering Shop where railway engines are built.

At the time our story opens, Puffin Billy hadn't any wheels, but was being built on an array of stands, and as he looked about him he soon discovered he was the newest engine in the shop and also quite the largest. He also noticed a lot of important-looking men were coming every day to see how he was getting on.

This made him feel very big and important and as he grew bigger and bigger every day he soon realised he was something quite out of the ordinary. In fact he was, for his designers had built him to be one of a new fleet of fast express engines to haul heavy loads over long distances at great speed,

There was something else Puffin Billy noticed. Alongside him was being built a Steam Road Wagon (not much in evidence these days) and quite small compared to his massive self and as the days went on he began to despise the insignificant Steam Wagon, alongside him.

The day came when he was hoisted on to his wheels and filled with water and a fire put in him, and he began to get 'steam up.' As he was waiting he saw his little companion the Steam Wagon was also getting 'steam up.' And then one day these two, the Railway Engine and the Road Engine, all shiny bright in their new paint and brasswork, set off out together on their trial runs.

Puffin Billy was indeed 'puffin'' with pride as he puffed his way out of the shed into the bright sunlight and away down that narrow road of two railway lines that he had to run on.

He noticed, however, that his little companion the Road Engine had quite a different road to run on than he had, but he was at the moment so full of self-importance that he didn't worry about it.

The next day the engine driver took him out again, on a longer run this time and much faster. Puffin Billy fairly scooted along that railway line and got back in record time.

He was now ready for real work so they put a long train of coal trucks behind him and sent him on a long journey, and right well did he do it, too.

It came to pass, however on his journeys that he began to be rather envious of his little companion the Road Engine, who seemed to be able to go just where he liked while he, the great and mighty Railway Engine, had always to run on those two narrow lines.

One day while passing under a bridge he saw his friend the Road Engine coming down the road and he passed over the bridge as the Railway Engine passed underneath and to make matters worse he gave a derisive snort on his hooter as he did so, for the Road Engine knew that Puffin Billy was getting jealous of him.

That night in the shed as they were side by side, the Road Engine began to swank about all the nice places he saw whilst Puffin Billy was confined to the straight and narrow railway track and went under bridges and dark tunnels, whilst the Road Engine went over them.

This made Puffin Billy wild and he said to himself, 'Why should I stick to this straight and narrow track whilst that fussy little thing, the Road Engine can go where he likes? I'm going to leave this skimpy narrow track and go out over the hills and dales like he does.'

Now, boys and girls, you know railway engines are made to run on railway lines, aren't they? Well, when Puffin Billy did try to leave the track that day—for he did do it—he got a shock. He jumped the railway lines at a junction and set off, as he thought, down a road, but he did not go very far before he fell over and hurt himself very badly and a great big crane had to come and lift him up and carry him back to the shop to be repaired and made well again.

Needless to say, Puffin Billy didn't try to run away down the road any more but found it safer to stick to the 'straight and narrow track,' his makers had put down for him.

And we, boys and girls, have, too, a Straight and Narrow Path that our Maker, God, has put down for us. It is called The Christian Way and like Puffin Billy we shall meet with a fall if we leave it for any other, so we will stick to God's way, won't we, and then all will be well,

For our Tiny Tots:

Mary had a little pig,
It wasn't very clean,
In fact it was the dirtiest pig
That ever you had seen.

It wallowed in the mud,
It wallowed in the mire,
And in all the dirtiest places
That little pigs conspire.

She took it to the Doctor's Who gave it a 'New Heart,' And now our Mary's little pig Is clean in every part.

Next month we shall have an unusual but exciting story about—what do you think?—'Cowboys and Indians'!

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

LAST week we attended the services commemorating the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Four-mile Run Church, near Youngstown. This congregation had its beginning in a meeting led by Walter Scott when he was evangelist of the Mahoning Association. And it was in this church that the Mahoning Association dissolved itself as an ecclesiastical body, a significant step in the progress of the Restoration movement.

One hundred and twenty-five years is a long time in human history. One hundred and twenty-five years ago was 1828. It was the last year of John Quincy Adams' term of office as President of United States. Andrew Jackson was elected that fall and took office in 1829. It was only two after the death of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on July 4th, 1826. George IV was reigning in England. It was nine years before Victoria began her reign. The first passenger railroad in the U.S. was begun that year. There were just twenty-four stars in the flag. Abraham Lincoln was nineteen years old.

Alexander Campbell was forty years old; Walter Scott thirty-two; Isaac Erret was a lad of eight. The *Christian Baptist* was in its fifth year of publication; it was yet two years before the founding of the *Millennial Harbinger*.

Many changes have come in that time. Empires have risen and fallen. Political and religious leaders have come and gone. Wars and revolutions, inventions and discoveries, exploration and expansion, shifting and growing populations, have wrought almost unbelievable changes in the past century and a quarter.

But through all the changes the Four-mile Run Church has continued to meet each Lord's Day. Each week it has spread the Lord's table, and has listened to the unchanging gospel of the changeless Christ. Its faithfulness remains as evidence that it is part of a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

What is permanent and eternal within the structure of human society is fostered and kept alive by thousands of Four-mile Run churches across

the nation. By whatever local name they may be called—Bethany, Old Union, Liberty, Smyrna, Plum Creek, First, or Central—they are the guardians, defenders, and propagators of all that is worth preserving. The proportion of decency, honour, sobriety, and virtue in the world one hundred and twenty-five years from now will depend on the continued faithfulness of Four-mile Run.

Editorial in Christian Standard.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOTES ON SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1953.

Nov.	1—Jer. 8:1-12	Rev.	9.
,,	8-Ezek. 2:1-39.	,,,	10.
,,	15—Psalm 2.	,,,	11.
,,	22-Neh. 9:6-23.	,,	12.
••	29—Dan. 7:1-14		13.

We failed to comment on Chapter 8, and therefore summarise to keep the connection. The picture of the redeemed saints in heaven is followed by the opening of the seventh seal—the last and final seal. The silence which followed is in some way related to the silence of the worshippers in the Jewish economy when the priest made intercession (Luke 1:21). The scene of heavenly worship is continued as the seven angels with the seven trumpets are introduced. The altar fire is fed with incense to which prayers of the saints are added. From this fire the censer is filled and cast to the earth, there resulting in mighty signs of disaster. These indicate the power of God to carry out His just judgments.

The seven trumpets (8:2-13).—The sounding of the first four trumpets introduce cataclysmic signs of increasing power—the vegetation, the seas, the rivers and the heavenly bodies are affected in turn. These would indicate events bringing increasing deprivations and sufferings to men either physical, mental or spiritual. Greater woes than these are indicated as following upon the remaining trumpets.

Fifth trumpet (9:1-11).—Here is pictured a man, or a power, or Satan himself, opening the door of hell—the abode of evil—and letting out upon mankind a horde of demons with fearful power to torment. Just as locusts destroy every green thing and leave devastation and distress behind them, so these human or devilish plagues bring physical, mental and spiritual hardship. They have power limited to time, and limited to work harm upon those not bearing God's mark. The safety through such trials is only in being Christ's.

Sixth trumpet (9:12-21).—The angels restrained in 7::1 are now to be released at the exact moment at time appointed by God. At their release horsemen of fabulous power and terror are sent out to destroy men in great numbers. Like many who see the terrors and horrors of sin and its consequences, the survivors of this plague still remain unrepentant sinners. Man does not readily learn his lessons. He loves his sins too much.

The mighty angel (10:1-7).—A universal power is indicated by the angel placing his feet on sea and earth. Declaration by the seven thunders is kept secret, John alone receiving that revelation. The certainty of the consummation is declared with firm oath. It will come without delay when the seventh trumpet is sounded.

The prophet's food (10:8-11).—The mighty angel held an open book in his hand, and this the seer is commanded to eat. It was sweet at first but afterwards gave bitterness. Here is shown that the further revelations like those already given, are to be mixed in character. We can hardly think of the joy of salvation as we are now constituted without the sorrow of judgment. Note it is upon many nations that the joys and sorrows are to come.

Two witnesses promise (11:1-13).-Times of much trouble will be experienced on earth. The angel's oath was made to assure us that God's way will be done on earth and in heaven though now it does not look like it. How small is the sanctuary which indicates God's faithful people, while all outside is profaned? two appointed witnesses are to meet all the enemies including the spiritual dragon, and they will be at work in spite of all the opposition—does this indicate the almost underground work of faithful saints during the dark ages of Roman Catholic domination—the terrible darkness of superstition and ignorance, hardly conceivable to us in this so free age and country. We might know more if we lived under the domination of despotic tyrants. The witnesses suffer death when their period of triumph has ended, and the world rejoices as it always will when when the preachers of righteousness and selfdenial are silenced. It is too hard on the conscience. God will never, however, allow a final triumph of evil over good,

The faithful persons or principles will be raised to new life and strength.

The seventh trumpet (11:14-19).—As in the case of the seals, the scenes involve both heaven and earth (spiritually these are much closer than we realise). Here is the triumph in heaven because of Christ's victory over earthly kingdoms and powers—all are under His sway whether so appearing or not. The song of grateful praise expresses the recurring thought of the revelation—the victory of the saints over the enemies of God, and the final destruction of all opposition. The scene here closes for a further series of visions of the then future story of world and Church.

The woman and the dragon (12:1-17). There can be little doubt that the woman stands for the Church-the faithful Church—and the dragon of course for our great enemy. The events are pictured as appearing in heaven but it may be that both spheres are in view. The offspring of the woman is caught up to God, but is yet found in part at least upon earth, faithfully keeping the commandments of God, and maintaining testimony to Christ (see v. 17). The dragon is vanquished by the heavenly host, but he brings woe to earth. It is a striking thought here that those in safety are those who sealed their testimony with their blood. It is the rest of us that must 'trust and obey' so as to prevail. The war with Satan cannot hurt us if we do

The two beasts (13). — These The doubtedly represent world powers. first recovers from a deadly wound—world powers have certainly done this from time to time. He arises out of the sea with emblems of authority and blasphemous claims. His power comes from Satan, cruelty and despotism characterise his reign, which is limited to fortytwo months or twelve hundred and sixty days (see also 12:6). The whole world fell to worshipping him, seeing they worshipped Satan, who gave the powerwhether consciously or unconsciously. All fell under his domination except the faithful followers of Christ. They did not share the character or work of the beast, nor will they share his downfall. Note the warning that justice will be done, reminding one of They that take the sword shall perish by it.

The second beat is different in appearance, having a gentle aspect (verse 11) but a subtle and malicious nature. His difference from the first beast is entirely superficial, and more likely to deceive. The working of great signs went hand in hand with murder, and a terrible tyranny, which allowed no freedom whatsoever. The marking in the right hand signifies a claim on the work and the forehead a claim on the thought of all. We do not know the significance yet of the number but as seven is the perfect or complete figure in Scripture, 666 might meant threefold incompleteness — the counterfeit has to be next door to the real thing to be any good as such.

R. B. SCOTT.

A SOUTH AFRICAN LETTER

Lusaka,

N. Rhodesia

Some time has passed since we last wrote to you. In that time we made a long journey through Southern Rhodesia (in all about two thousand miles). had thought of visiting the Christians in Nyasaland, but this was not to be. were, however, able to pay a visit to the Sinde Mission and Orphanage. If you heard a group of African children, the eldest eleven, and most under seven, if you heard them sing from their repertoire of over one hundred Christian songs, 'Thank you to God in the Morning,' you, like us, would be thankful to God for all that is being done to bring these young lives into the Saviour's keep-

Dear friends, you can have no idea of the misery, ignorance and darkness that these poor children are born into. There are things to inherit which are far worse than poverty, and hunger. There is real spiritual darkness, and civilisation alone will never never overcome this

will never, never, overcome this.
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my footsteps," we say. Do

we need to seek God's forgiveness that we have not held out the Word of Light and Life to these people, in the way we should have done? We only ask the question, as we are bound to ask ourselves. We understand that the last words of Cecil John Rhodes were 'So much to do, so little time to do it in.'

The last words of the Lord Jesus Christ were: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned.' So much yet to be done. How much time to do it in? I often tell the Africans that the gospel is so easy to understand, the message is so plain. So is Christ's command to preach the message, and our duty is plain. One Christian has just left Lusaka. He has Bibles and hymn books to take with him, and he asks that we pray that God may help him to tell the message to the many he will meet, who do not know Christ and the wondrous story,

We had a letter to-day from a dear Christian lady at home—she is turned eighty, and rarely leaves her upstairs room and never more than once or twice a year leaves the house for a just a few hundred yards. This is what she writes:

I always pray every night about eight p.m. for all the sick and lonely and bereaved, and begin with the African Hospital, those working there, mentioning their names. Now the Orphanage, Mr. and Mrs. Brittell and family, and the dear orphan infants. I sent a parcel to Mrs. Brittell just a fortnight ago. I sent six little panties, six cotton vests bound round the armholes with red green and yellow, and twelve handkerchiefs hemstitched, with the promise of sending more for Christmas. I can add the money to my own (this being a small present which was given to her). I am so thankful to be able to do a little.'

Here is an aged missionary who lives in a single room, too frail in body to leave it. Yet she travels farther than most. She wings her way to heaven to intercede. She does not travel the dusty roads of Africa, but yet her prayers are like water to the good seed that is planted. One may plant, another may water. God will give to us the increase for His glory.

The lady continues to write: 'I do not feel that I shall be able to do the sewing as the dark days come. I have to do only so much at a time. There is very little sight in my right eye, and the last few weeks I realise the strain more and more.'

How dark are the days for these poor souls out here, and we think the darkness of this civilisation which threatens to engulf them, is in so many ways deeper than the heathen darkness of which we hear so much. Dear brothers and sisters, it is only Christ who can save. The Light that is in Him, alone is the Light of men. 'The light shineth in darkness and the darkness overcame it not.'

Will you not pray earnestly for the work out here? Let your prayers water the seed sown. Pray that the assemblies established may continue to prosper in God's Will. Pray for us that we may continually be given wisdom to decide, as we so often have to do, the work which it is best to attempt, and which to leave alone. That is a sad thing and the greatest anxiety to us-which to leave Pray for the Brittells and the children in the orphanage. Remember them in your family prayers that your children may be blessed with this broader view. Not once or twice but always remember us.

We are sure that it is the prayers of the saints ascending which give the blessing as it is needed. If you pray, spare time to write to tell us. How could we stop to preach the glorious gospel when we read a letter such as this we have quoted. You, dear sisters, you will be blessed if you can find a little to do for those children in the orphanage. I know what is being planted into the hearts of the children. In one portion of the Book we read. 'Let a woman keep silence in the churches' and there has been great contention about this plain command. In another portion we read the Saviour's commendation of a woman, 'She hath wrought a good work.' There is no contention about such a good work; we have no doubt that it receives the Saviour's approval. We may not anoint His feet with ointment 'very precious,' but, if our hearts worship Him with that same desire, we can do it unto 'one of these little ones.' 'She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, wea she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.'

Maybe, the Lord has need of the work of your hands. We send out a news-sheet of the work in Rhodesia from time to time. We hope that those who receive them are encouraged by news of the Lord's Church in other lands. If you would like to receive this send your name and address to the secretary of the Dewsbury Church, Bro. R. McDonald, 4 Clarke Street, Dewbury, Yorks. The Orphanage address is: Mr. O. V. Brittell, Sinde Mission and Orphanage, Box 132 Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia.

Christian greetings to you all.

FRANK & NANCY MURPHY.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury, Bucks.—From September 26th to October 4th we held a number of special meetings for the preaching of the Gospel. We were greatly indebted to the Church in Hindley, Lancs., for allowing Bro. F. W. Worgan to come and do the preaching for us, and we are grateful to our brother for coming among us. His ministry was of inspiration to all, and the fellowship, in the work of reaching the souls of our town folk, will not soon be forgotten by the Church here. Posters and handbills were sent around the town in preparation for the mission, but the response to our invitation was disappointing. Maybe the effort is not always the measure of success, as we would measure success. Bro. Channing intends to continue to be in contact with those that did attend, as he continues from door to

door in personal work.

A lady who has lived in the town for some years, Mrs. Lucker, having obeyed the Gospel call when a young woman in Wales, has been received into fellowship here. Our sister, who is really keen in the work of the Lord, is out to win her husband and son, and we are sure others too. Steady progress is being maintained in the Lord's service.

Cape Town, Woodstock, - On the 27th September, we were privileged to witness a young man confess the Lord Jesus and unite with Him in Baptism, for which we Praise the Lord that in these very much declining days the Gospel has

again proved its ancient power.

Our labours for lost souls, apart from meetings in our Hall, are being mostly concentrated in personal contact in the homes of our brethren, who invite friends who come and listen to the Gospel and by friends opening their homes to us. This has been going on for many months now, and has, by the Grace of God, proved to be successful to the Glory of God, in having borne 'fruit.'

At one of the homes of our brethren. these meetings are convened. about seven miles from our meetingplace, namely Newtown, we are intend-ing to start an open-air Gospel service, once a month. Pray that this effort may result in many souls turning to Christ.

We hope and trust that these blessings which we experience from time to time. may inspire us to a more fervent zeal in being living testimonies to Christ in our labour for the extension of His Kingdom. And that while it is called 'To-day.' We may be 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord as much as we know our labours are not in vain in the Lord. Christ is coming, and we shall have to give an account. pray for us, as we pray for you, that we may contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

Crossroads, Leven .- We are glad to announce the addition of two to our assembly. On August 16th, Bro. and Sis. Moffat were received into fellowship. They were formerly members of the Plymouth Brethren. We pray God's richest blessing on their decision to become one with us. Already Bro. Moffat is proving a great help to the Church.

Bro. A. Gardiner (Evan) is again with us. Commencing October 18th he will be with us till November 15th, when he goes to serve the Church in Peterhead.

Bro. Andrew served the Church here in the month of April when he proved of great value. We again look forward to a very profitable time together in the service of the Master.

We ask for the prayers of the brethren on behalf of this small assembly at Crossroads. Methil (Leven). I. W. DAVIDSON.

Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.-It has been the writer's privilege to spend a few days in East Anglia at the commencement of the herring fishing season. Not quite so many boats are in Yarmouth this year. and of course this will have some effect on the meetings. However, the enthusiasm among the brethren is about as high as ever, and all are keen to make the meetings a real success. We arrived on October 6th which, being a Tuesday, afforded us ample time to make the necessary arrangements for the meetings at the week-end. On Saturday, 10th, the first Bible Study meeting was held. Bro. Dougal gave the first of a series of lessons on the life of Paul, dealing with 'The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus' teen were present, including the chaplain of the 'Deep Sea Mission' in Peterhead, Mr. Tom Paterson. Lord's Day, October 11th, the meetings were held in the Labour Club. Fourteen were in fellow-ship and Bro. Dougal exhorted us to manifest a greater 'humility' in our daily In the evening he spoke on 'Heaven, Missing or Attaining, Which?' At this service twenty-nine were present of whom the greater part were not members of the Church.

The fishing prospects are reasonable, and we pray that in spiritual matters 'Yarmouth-1953' may be a season long to be remembered.

The call of duty farther north takes me from Yarmouth on October 16th, but Bro. Dougal will remain during the whole season, and the prayers of brethren everywhere are requested, that he may be sustained in this field of labour, and that there may be a real harvest of souls for ANDREW GARDINER.

Hindley.-Window bills, handbills, 'Revivals' and loudspeaker announcements heralded the coming of S. F. Timmerman, American missionary in Belgium, to Hindley, to hold a six-day mission effort from September 19th to 24th. He was accompanied by his wife, and they soon endeared themselves to us all. brother's messages were based on Hebrews 1:1-4; the theme, 'God has spoken.' clear and understandable gave teaching with regard to man's attitude towards God and His Word, simply outlining the wondrous plan of salvation contained therein. His oft-repeated phrase will long be remembered: 'God has spoken, therefore man must listen.'

'S.T.,'as he was affectionately called, did not spare himself, but willingly submitted himself to the service of the Assembly in visiting and discussing the Word of God. The meetings were very well attended, approximately 120 nonmembers and non-attending members

being present over the six days.

Whilst we are unable to record any additions to the Church, we have faith to believe, that that which has been done well will be used for His glory in the future, which will bring to light the abundant harvest. We thank God for the opportunities presented to us, of declaring His Gospel, and we pray that our Brother and Sister Timmerman will be used and blessed by God in their work in Belgium, to which they have now returned.

Loughborough.—The 112th Church Anniversary Services were held on September 26th and 27th. Various Churches in the district were represented at the tea and service on the Saturday. On this occasion we were privileged to have as our speakers Bro. Fred Day (Birmingham) and Bro. J. Diggle (Eastwood), who gave excellent addresses and gave us much 'food for thought.' On the Sunday Bro. Day was the speaker at all the services. His messages were encouraging and stimulating, and all felt it had been a weekend of spiritual blessing.

F. WOOLLEY.

Morley.—We are very pleased to report the addition by baptism of Mrs. Eva Allum. Sister Allum is the mother of Sister J. Thomason, of Morley. She was immersed into the ever-blessed name of Jesus on Tuesday evening, September 29th. We feel quite sure our sister will be a means of grace in the work here,

E SUGDEN.

Morley.-We held our Autumn Rally on October 10th and 11th. The customary vigour and enthusiasm Morley puts forth on these occasions ensured well-attended meetings, and the final meeting closed at 9 p.m. on the Lord's Day with a general feeling of gratitude for the help and guidance given. The Saturday tea and meeting brought together about eighty brethren and friends. Brethren Frank Worgan and Philip Partington, of the Hindley Church, gave invigorating addresses, and Bro. Lewis Murphy, of Dewsbury Church, was an excellent chairman. Bro. F. A. Hardy gave a welcome to all. The Lord's Day was a busy one, eleven a.m., Open School, when Bro. Partington gave an object lesson, using cups—a broken one, a dirty one, one clean outside and dirty within and a thoroughly cleansed one. The scholars will always remember his teaching. Bro. Partington edified the Church in the afternoon. Bro. Frank Worgan preached the Gospel in the evening to a large gathering including many friends. Bro. Worgan opened the special invitation meeting at eight p.m. with the subject: 'What is wrong with religion to-day?' In the 'Your questions answered' session, which followed, many interesting and instructive points were raised. Partington was the chairman. Again we had interested friends present. We are

grateful to the brethren from the Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Midlands Churches, who again so faithfully supported us. FRED SUGDEN.

Namakoka, Nyasaland.—Glad to report additions to our local congregations: one at Namakoka village, and two at Sakalawe. On September 20th we commenced another congregation at Mulema, with forty-five members who had been of the mixed denominations. On hearing our New Testament teaching they asked to join us. We were glad to show them the New Testament way, and they were happy to receive the unmixed Scripture teaching, and called us to receive them into Christ's Church. We need help from you brethren in Britain.

Tunbridge Wells, Mount Ephraim Road.—Bro. T. Nisbet (Tranent) served the Church very acceptably for a few days during September. He addressed our Thursday night gospel service, spoke at a Saturday night home devotional meeting, and spoke morning and evening on Lord's Day, September 20th. At all these meetings he gave special attention to the New Testament teaching regarding the Lord's Church—her distinctive position, worship, message and members. Our brother's faithful services, unstintingly given, were a real encouragement to the brethren here. We are confident that 'in due season we shall reap if we faint not.'

OBITUARY

Glasgow Hospital Street.—It is with sincere sorrow that we record the death of our dearly beloved Brother Edward Hendry on September 21st, at the age of sixty-seven years. He was elder, treasurer, leader of praise, and hall-keeper. All these duties he carried out with real consistency. For about two years his health was declining, but he kept up his attendance at the meetings, and his activities until March of this year when he was compelled to give in. His faith was strong, he never murmured, he was patient, and submissive to his lot. He has left to mourn his passing a dear, devoted wife, and a family of sons and daughters.

We pray that they may be comforted with the assurance that the one who has been taken from them trusted and obeyed the Lord Jesus, and that all is well with him. He has just gone on a while before.

The service in the home was conducted by Brethren A. Gardiner and D. Dougall, and at the grave by Bro. A. Gardiner. We laid our brother to rest in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.

A. MORTON.

THE PROPOSED NEW HYMN BOOK CONTRIBUTIONS

Recently two substantial amounts have been sent to me and returned to senders. Will Churches and brethren please note that I have no authority to receive such and so far as I know, no one has been appointed.

Please wait for a notice from Bro. C. Melling, 76 Tickhill Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster, to whom all correspondence should be sent.

A. L. FRITH.

COMING EVENTS

Tunbridge Wells, Mount Ephraim Road.—A month of evangelistic effort begins with a rally on Saturday, October 31st, at 7 p.m. Speakers, Bro. Frank Worgan and Bro. Leonard Morgan.

During November, Bro. Worgan will work with us in gospel proclamation. Gospel services will be held on Sundays at 6.30 p.m. and on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

Final rally on Saturday, November 28th at 7 p.m. Speakers, Bro. F. Worgan and Bro. L. Channing. Visiting brethren will be warmly welcomed. We ask for the prayers of the saints, that God may be glorified in all these activities.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Nelson.—Anniversary meeting, Saturday, November 14th and Lord's Day, November 15th. Saturday, tea at four p.m.; evening meeting at six. Speaker, Bro. R. McDonald, of Dewsbury. Everybody welcome.

Scholes (Wigan) — The Church will [D.v.] hold a Mission in conjunction with the seventy-first Anniversary, from November 14th to 23rd. We have secured the services of Bro. Fred Casmir, Evangelist, of Heppenheim, Germany, and he will conduct the meetings, which are as follows: Saturday, Nov. 14th, 7 p.m. Gos-

pel Meeting. Lord's Day, Nov. 15th., usual meetings at 10.30 a.m., 2.15 p.m., and 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30 p.m., Gospel Meeting. Saturday, Nov. 21st, Anniversary Tea at 4 p.m., followed by Gospel Meeting at 6.30 p.m. Lord's Day, Nov. 22nd, usual meetings at 10.30 a.m., 2.15 p.m. and 6 p.m. Monday Nov. 23rd, at 7.30 p.m., Gospel Meeting.

We shall be glad to see as many as possible of our brethren from near and far, and those who desire to stay with us for a part, or the whole of the Mission, please write and indicate dates to H. Davenport, 4 Warnford Street, Swinley. Wigan, Lancs.

We can assure all that our hospitality will lack nothing, and further that the spiritual uplift will be tremendous. We seek the prayers of all brethren, to the end that God will bless this effort, that many souls shall be won to Christ.

Beulah Road, East Kirkby, Notts.—The twenty-ninth Anniversary of the commencement of the Church will (DV) take place on Saturday and Lord's Day, November 21st and 22nd. On Saturday, tea at 4.15 p.m., to be followed by a Social Meeting at 6 p.m. Speakers: Brethren G. Lodge (Morley) and C. Melling (Doncaster):

On Lord's Day, Bro. Lodge will minister to the Church, and in the evening preach the Gospel. The fellowship of kindred hearts and minds is specially solicited, and a warm welcome assured. Book the date NOW, please.

W. B. JEPSON.

NEXT CONFERENCE.

Saturday, April 17th, 1954. Will any Church desirous of entertaining the Conference please communicate with the Conference Secretary, A. Hood.

BIRTH.

On October 2nd, to Bro. and Sister J. A. Edgar, of Ilkeston Church, the gift of a son, John Robert. Thanks to God.

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

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 8 Torquay Avenue, Owton Manor West Hartlepool, Co. Durham.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, Atholi Dene, Longniddy, East Lothian.

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