

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## On Reading the Bible

"BUT there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books . . ." So write the apostle John in his gospel record.

Thousands of writers of religious books have done their best to prove the truth of those words. Countless books have been written on the life of Christ, His teaching and His works. Commentaries innumerable have been produced on every book, chapter and almost every verse of Scripture; the great passages of the Bible have found voluminous expositors; while some of the very words of God's revelation have had massive works written around them to enlarge upon the meaning and application of those words. "Of making of many books there is no end" is true in the world of religion as in every other walk in life.

### The Bible explains itself

Many of these books could well be done away with without Christians and Bible students being any the poorer. We have all had the experience of turning to a commentary for light upon some Scripture passage, only to find that the commentators are often as much in the dark as we are. One commentary advances one exposition, another brings out a fresh and sometimes a totally contrary meaning, and we are left bewildered as to the meaning of the passage we are studying. The story is told of a Negro who was given a commentary on some of the Bible. When he was later asked by the donor whether he had found the commentary useful, Sambo replied, "Yes, massa; I sure found the Bible done throw a lot of light on dat commentary." Read, for instance (if you can!) some of the commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans, and see if you have any better understanding of the Epistle than before. Such theologians as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner have produced enormous studies of epistles and great doctrines of the New Testament, but their expositions are far more difficult to understand than are the epistles and doctrines themselves as found in the Bible. The finest commentary on Romans we have ever read is the translation of that epistle in the "Goodspeed Bible." "God is His own interpreter and He will make it plain" is true of the Bible, as of all God's dealings with His people.

Why are we saying all this? Because in the first place much of this work of commentary and exposition contributes to the widely-held impression that the Bible is a book impossible to understand without the help of such works; and in the second place there is the tendency and temptation to try to get at the meaning of Scripture by a short-cut method—finding out what other men say it means rather than reading what the Scripture actually says. In such cases commentaries and "Bible helps" are, in a sense, crutches which, rather than aiding us to walk, prevent our doing so because we are not exercising our powers as we should. There

comes a time when crutches are better thrown away, that we may stand and walk upon our own feet. Equally so with Bible commentaries: they are better left alone when they do not stimulate but rather hinder Bible study. But the Bible cannot be managed without. It is the necessary book which remains.

It is said that a man who had a theological library of about two thousand books one day took them to the bottom of his garden and set fire to them. He commented that he had got more light from his books that day than ever before!

### The Bible alone

We are not suggesting that literature aiming to give clearer understanding of the Bible should be scorned, nor that we should pride ourselves upon our ignorance of what scholars teach concerning Scripture. We are indebted to their research and knowledge for many background facts of the Bible, and for exposition of Scripture words which we could not understand unless we be Hebrew and Greek scholars. But we are advocating that we read and study the Bible itself more. One day in the Wigan Reference Library a lawyer asked the library assistant for a certain Act of Parliament. "Do you want a commentary on the Act?" asked the librarian. "No," replied the lawyer, "I want to see what the Act itself says. Commentators attach their own meaning to Acts." Truly, in another sense, commentators have given their own meanings to the book of Acts in the New Testament!

Another common practice which detracts from the authority and necessity of the Bible is that adopted by religious sects like the Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science. The first insist that the Bible is the divinely-inspired word of God, authentic and authoritative, but that it cannot be fully understood without their *Book of Mormon*. They will point out "contradictory" and "mysterious" passages in Scripture which, they say, are explained only in the *Book of Mormon*. Thus the Scriptures alone are made of little use; we must have the Scriptures and the *Book of Mormon*. Yet the latter book is a collection of nonsense which one finds it hard to believe anyone can accept as truth. To claim that such a farrago is divinely given is a libel upon God. Jehovah's Witnesses, too, claim to accept the Bible as the revealed and infallible word of God, but only in their own translation, the *New World Scriptures*. This translation bolsters up their own fantastic teachings, and must be supported by the numerous publications issued through their own authors and from their own presses.

It can be said that one can be a perfectly good Jehovah's Witness even if he knows nothing of the Bible, so long as he knows parrot-fashion the Scriptures quoted and the doctrines advanced in those publications. Similarly, Christian Science claims to be based upon the Bible, but the Scriptures cannot be understood without Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*. And we know the reason advanced for the keeping of the Bible away from the people in the Roman Catholic Church—that it cannot be understood without the exposition of a priest.

What we need to know and to live is not the Scriptures but . . . nor the Scriptures and . . . but the Scriptures alone. Bishop Tillotson said "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." He could better have said "the religion of Christians." One of the original rules of the British and Foreign Bible Society, still adhered to, is to publish and spread the Bible alone, without notes or comments. What mighty effect this book must have had upon the lives of men in the 154 years since that Society was founded! Put the Bible alone into men's hands and let them read it without men's comments. And what will it produce? Not denominational adherents, nor parties wearing all kinds of names, but simply Christians, disciples, saints as in the New Testament. Leave them to find the way of salvation as laid down in the New Testament without the intervention of men's theories and ideas.

### Read your Bible

This, then, is a plea for more Bible reading and study, for daily systematic reading of God's holy word. Of course, reading alone or ability to quote from the Bible will not transform our lives. We all know that we read a book with

much greater interest when we know its author. So with the Bible. As we read we shall come to know Him who in the written word is set forth as the living Word, through whom God speaks to us today.

"Divine Instructor, Gracious Lord,  
Be Thou for ever near;  
Teach me to love Thy sacred word  
And view my Saviour there."

EDITOR.

## Holidays and Holy Days

IT has been usual for the Church to claim credit, if not for the creation of holidays at least for their preservation and all the blessings they bestow. A certain type of ecclesiastic is only too happy when he can find an opportunity of telling the laity that the very word "holiday" is derived from the mediæval "holy day."

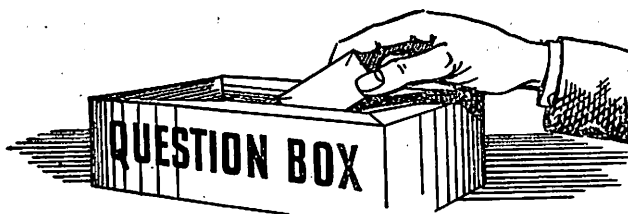
Should the Church be proud of this? The August Bank Holiday has never had any particular religious significance (according to Professor Margaret Murray there is a slight association with the witch cult), but as a holiday it compares favourably with the hectic jamborees which pass themselves off, in these times, as the great festivals of the Church. There is nothing holy about a bank holiday (outside the pages of *Erewhon*), but to those of us in the Puritan tradition there is a great deal which is positively unholy about the modern Whitsuntide and Easter and Christmas. In them the customs and much of the spirit of pagan England have been successfully preserved by the very Church of God whose aim should have been to extirpate them.

The Churches have tried to woo the world into Christian observance by bribing it with its own customs. Gregory I of Rome began the attempt, with his letter to Mellitus of London—"Gregory advised the adaptation of ritual to local circumstances," Latourette says. But after thirteen and a half centuries it seems that the conquered have largely overcome their conquerors. Father Christmas (or "Xmas") is far more prominent than the Christ on December 25, and he is, substantially, Woden, not even St. Nicholas; it is no triumph for the Church of God that the time of special celebration of our Lord's resurrection coincides with a general exchange of egg-shaped chocolates, for the springtime egg is an offering to Eostre, not to Christ. And in what way do Whit Friday parades witness to the Gospel? Perhaps the Puritans of the Commonwealth had reason on their side, as certainly as they had the minor prophets, when they abolished all the holy days.

The adoption of heathen worship has been condemned in itself. Calvin said: "When . . . we wander after our own fictions and offer to Him a worship, the work of human rashness, how much sœver it may delight ourselves, in His sight it is vain trifling, nay, vileness and pollution" ("The Necessity of Reforming the Church"). When, as has largely happened with modern Church holidays, pagan sentiments—including drunkenness and gluttony—are associated with pagan rites, some Christians find more value in a purely secular holiday, such as today's.

The surrender by all the Churches to the popular demand for uncanonical rites and offices in a good theme for meditation in the peace and quiet of a bank holiday, when they are no cards to be sent, no processions to head, and no last-minute buying of presents to be done. Free Churchmen must confess to wandering after Mothering Sundays, and sportmen's services and anniversaries innumerable; these are, after all, "a worship" which is "the work of human rashness." Anglicans, too, considering Church union, should be thinking carefully about the equivalent mediæval innovations which are insisted on by some of their brethren. And those who rightly look askance at the May queens of Nonconformist Sunday schools, originating as they do from the religion of witchcraft, must not be surprised if others see in those still more controversial figures the bishops, not Hooker's "legitimate and expedient development from primitive Church order," but a type of priesthood which may be even more primitive than the Early Church.

—B. K. S. (*Manchester Guardian*, August 4th, 1958).



CONDUCTED BY  
L. CHANNING

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Aylesbury, Bucks

**Q. Should a Christian buy Premium Bonds?**

A. In spite of its high-sounding name the Premium bond system is nothing but a state lottery, and is therefore gambling.

A Christian cannot take part in gambling in any form, for behind it is always the deadly sin of covetousness. Many will take part in milder forms of gambling without remorse or conscience simply because they fail to appreciate that the motive behind it is covetousness. Indeed, covetousness is a sin made light of today, but is one of the greatest sins of the age. The Bible everywhere condemns it, both in the Old and the New Testaments. It shows that:

(a) It is not held lightly by the Lord, but is numbered amongst such sins as fornication (Col. 3:5).

(b) It is a form of idolatry (Col. 3:5), for it is one of the worst forms of selfishness.

(c) It is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Gambling, because of the motive behind it often leads to so many other sins, such as irresponsibility, injustice, oppression.

(d) It is never satisfied (Eccl. 5, 10) for it engrosses the heart (1 Pet. 2:14). Once started, there is often no stopping place.

(e) It will exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven (Eph. 5:5).

(f) Christians are therefore exhorted to mortify (kill) such desires, as works of the flesh (Col. 3:5).

**Q. Why is the injunction of James 5:14-15 not practised in the churches of Christ?**

A. There is much confusion and controversy among religious bodies over this passage. Yet, whilst admitting that there are difficulties, the passage becomes much clearer if it is realised that certain limitations are clearly indicated in regard to its application.

Firstly, it was limited in its application even in the New Testament age, as the following considerations will show:

(a) If its application was unlimited, the early Christians might have lived for ever, their lives being renewed by repeated anointings! Note that the promise is quite emphatic, and with but one qualification—"and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." This we know could apply without limitation even in the apostolic age!

(b) Again, if it were generally true, why was there so much anxiety in regard to the health of a number of the servants of the Lord? Epaphroditus was severely ill, a sickness that appears to have been the direct result of his labour in the gospel (Phil. 2:25-28); Trophimus was left sick at Miletum (2 Tim. 4:20); Timothy was exhorted to use natural means for the cure of his infirmities (1 Tim. 5:23). Surely, if the passage in question was of unlimited application, Paul had no need to be anxious, for he had but to pray over these brethren and anoint them with oil, and all would be well.

(c) The passage is further limited in the case of sickness that was the result of sin. In New Testament times physical sickness was often visited upon those that had sinned (1 Cor. 11:30-32). Verse 16 of James allows for this, in which case not only prayer and anointing with oil were required, but confession and repentance on the part of the sick person, before healing could take place. If there was no such confession and repentance, then death might ensue.

Secondly, the passage also shows that it was limited only to the apostolic age.

(a) From 1 Corinthians 12:9, 30 we learn that healing was one of the spiritual gifts manifested in the early church.

(b) That such a miraculous gift of healing is referred to here is indicated by the injunction to anoint the sick person with oil. Oil was certainly used medicinally in New Testament times when the need arose, as in the case of the healing of wounds (Luke 10:34). But in this case the command to anoint with oil is a general one, *irrespective of the type of sickness involved*. This plainly indicates that the oil is to be used in the first place as a symbol, whatever else may be accomplished by it, and not for medicinal purposes. Throughout the Scriptures anointing with oil is in such cases connected with the work of the Holy Spirit—in this instance the miraculous gift of healing (see Mark 6:13).

(c) The expression "the prayer of faith" also confirms this view. Although in principle the passage teaches us that there is no limit to the power of prayer, in the immediate sense the expression relates to the gift of faith (see 1 Cor. 12:9; 13:2), and thus to miraculous gifts. Faith in this connection is more than that gained by hearing. It was the "energy of faith," which carried with it divine power (see Acts 3:16). Thus the elders could come to the sick person knowing without a doubt that, providing all the requirements were faithfully carried out, they could accomplish the healing of that person.

(d) In many cases such gifts were readily available in the early church. It was therefore merely a matter of the sick person calling for the elders of his local church in order to ensure recovery.

(e) However, the power to exercise such gifts could only come through the laying on of the hands of the apostles (see Acts 8:15-17; Rom. 1:11; 2 Cor. 12:12; 2 Tim. 1:6). Since no-one else had the power to impart them, the gifts ceased on the death of the last person on whom the hands of an apostle had been laid, and Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 13:8 was fulfilled.

We have therefore neither the power nor the authority to practise this rite today. All rites claiming to be based upon it, such as Extreme Unction, and the rest, are but hollow mockeries.

## Our Bible

By Jack Nadeau

THE story of the English versions of the Holy Scriptures is one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of the Bible. A true understanding of this story depends on an understanding of this period of English history. While the Latin Vulgate was the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, Latin was not the speech of the common people, and thus the Vulgate was never accessible to the common man. Various attempts were made throughout the period, from the introduction of Christianity into the British Isles until the Reformation, to make the Scriptures available to the people in their own tongue. Britain had been a part of the Roman Empire since the first century of the Christian era, and during this early period Christianity had spread to this part of the Empire. However, under the pressure of attacks from the Teutonic tribes, Emperor Honorius in 410 A.D. was forced to withdraw his troops from Britain, and the isles were left to the mercy of the attacking Angles, Saxons and Jutes from Northern Europe. These Teutonic tribes overran the country, slaughtering the Britons and almost completely wiping out Christianity in the land. Around 500 A.D.,

independently of Rome, Patrick evangelised Ireland and reintroduced Christianity into Northern England. Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory 1, came to Kent in 597 and converted the king and his people.

### Anglo-Saxon and Middle English Versions

From the later half of the seventh century until the Norman invasion of England (1066) seven names stand out as translators or paraphrasers in verse of portions of the Scriptures in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Caedmon, in the monastery at Whitby, Northumbria, made a paraphrase in verse of Bible stories in the Old and New Testaments, which is the first known attempt to put Bible stories into Anglo-Saxon. Aldhelm, bishop of Shelborne in southern England, receives the honour of being the first person to translate the Psalms into his native tongue, about the year 705. During this same period he probably influenced Egbert to translate the Gospels. A copy of this work is in the British Museum. Bede (673-735) is the greatest name in the Northumbrian school, the centre of Western European learning in the eighth century. He was a scholar, historian, translator and monk, who translated the Gospel of John, finishing it on his death bed. Cuthbert, one of his disciples, records the touching scene of his last work:

Realising he was dying, Bede pressed himself all day long, dictating to his scribe in his great desire to finish the gospel. The next day he was very weak, and one chapter yet remained to be copied. His scribe said, "Dear master, there is yet one chapter to do, but it seems so hard for thee to speak." But Bede would not rest; he said, "It is easily done; take up thy pen and write quickly." Through blinding tears the scribe wrote hurriedly until finally he could say to his teacher, "It is finished, master." The old man answered, "Truly you speak; it is finished now," and repeating the words of the Latin prayer known as the "Gloria" he passed quietly away. Although there remains no trace of this translation, the influence and name of Bede left a profound impression on ancient England.

The great king Alfred (848-901) was deeply concerned that his people know the Holy Scriptures. In spite of his wars with the Danes he found time to translate a part of the Psalms together with Exodus 20-23 which he used in the introduction to his laws for the kingdom, Aldred in the tenth century made an Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospels between the lines of the Latin version in a manuscript known as the Lindisfarne Gospels. Aelfric about the year 1000 made the first independent version of the Gospels which we have in English. In addition this same scholar translated the first seven books of the Old Testament, Kings, Esther, Job and the apocryphal books of Judith and Maccabees, two copies of which are still in existence in England.

With the Norman invasion, interest in the Bible seems to have been crushed for a time; the old Anglo-Saxon language became mixed with the Norman-French to form the basis for our modern English. By the thirteenth century this intermixture had proceeded to such an extent that paraphrases were made by Orm of the portions of Scripture used in the daily church services. Two famous versions of the Psalms were made during this period, one by William of Shoreham (1320) and the other with a commentary by Richard Rolle of Hampole (1340). The Anglo-Saxon Gospels seem to have fallen into disuse and only the Psalms remained in the native tongue until the time of Wycliffe.

### Wycliffe's version

The fourteenth century saw the rise of learning in Western Europe with the establishment and growth of universities and the beginnings of literature in England. With this increase of learning came the increasing desire for liberty among the common people. Into this period came John Wycliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation," to influence profoundly the entire course of English history. Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire about 1320, and educated at Oxford, where he was Master of Balliol College until 1366. He received the Doctor of Theology degree from Oxford. Entering into the controversies then raging between the Pope and Parliament, he wrote his famous tract against the claims of the Pope to receive tribute from England. While his chief enemies were the bishops, Wycliffe had the

powerful support of John of Gaunt, Oxford University and the common people. He wrote tracts and pamphlets addressed to the latter, in which he used the Scriptures powerfully to refute the errors of his time and to combat the abuses of the mediæval Roman Catholic Church. He believed that every man should have the Bible to read in his own native tongue, and set himself the task of translating the Latin Vulgate, the Bible of the Middle Ages, into the English of that period. He was the first person to conceive of translating the whole Bible into the English language for the people to read. The New Testament was finished about 1380, with the assistance of other scholars. Nicholas of Hereford aided greatly in translating the Old Testament, which was finished before Wycliffe's death in 1384.

Due to the pedantic style of Hereford and the colloquial style of Wycliffe, a revision, probably by John Purvey about 1388, was made to smooth the differences, and it is this revision which was so widely distributed before the Reformation in England. Despite the fact that it had to be copied by hand, Wycliffe's Bible was very popular. A complete copy of the Bible sold for about £40 in our money. Foxe tells us that a load of hay would often be exchanged for the privilege of reading from it for one day. Wycliffe's work was powerfully spread by his followers, known as "Lollards", but was as powerfully opposed by the Roman Catholic Church. Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote the Pope in 1412, calling Wycliffe "that pestilent wretch of damnable memory, John Wycliffe, the son of the Old Serpent, the forerunner and child of Antichrist, who had compelled his iniquity by translating the Scriptures into the mother tongue." This same Arundel in 1408 condemned the Lollards in the Provincial Council at Oxford in a group of thirteen propositions, the seventh of which reads:—

"Since it is dangerous, as S. Jerome witnesses, to translate the text of Holy Scripture from one language to another, because in such translation the same meaning is not easily retained in all particulars: Even as S. Jerome, although he was inspired, confessed that he had often erred in this matter: Therefore we decree and ordain that no one shall in the future translate on his own authority any text of holy scripture into the English tongue or into any other tongue, by way of book, booklet or tract. Nor shall any man read this kind of book, booklet or tract, either recently composed in the time of the said John Wycliffe, or since then, or any that shall be composed in the future, in whole or part, publicly or secretly, under the penalty of the greater excommunication, until that translation shall be recognised and approved by the diocesan of the place, or, if the matter demand it, by a provincial council."

The Roman Catholic Church was violently opposed to the common people possessing the Bible in their vernacular speech, fearing that it might confuse them and, knowing it was better for the purposes of the Church to keep them in ignorance of its teachings, a law in 1414 forbade all persons to read the Scriptures in the mother tongue on pain of losing their land, cattle, life and goods. The council of Constance in 1415, which condemned John Hus and Jerome of Prague to death for following Wycliffe, also condemned Wycliffe and demanded that his bones be taken out of the grave and scattered. In 1428 his grave was torn open on the order of Pope Clement VIII, the skeleton carried to the banks of the River Swift and there burned and its ashes scattered on the river. As late as 1514 a man was condemned among other things because "he defendeth the translation of the Bible and holy Scripture in the English tongue, which is prohibited by the laws of our holy mother church." Wycliffe's work spread not only among the universities of his time, but lived on to influence profoundly the later English versions, for the Wycliffe Bible was the only English Bible until Tyndale's New Testament 145 years later.

*(To be continued)*

## The Christian Way

A missionary engaged a guide to take him across a desert country. When the two men arrived at the edge of the desert the missionary saw before him the track-

less sands, without a single footprint or road. Turning to his guide he asked, 'Where is the road?' With a reproving glance the guide replied, 'I am the road.'

## The Bible

THIS book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practise it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgement, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

### 'If thine eye or hand offend thee'

(Matthew 5 : 24-30)

My Lord commanded me to search my heart:  
 And there I found an idol—a very part  
 Of self—unknown to me until He spoke,  
 A tiny acorn grown to be an oak.  
 As mother love will seek to save her child,  
 I sought to prove that it had not defiled  
 The soul of me; but pleading was in vain,  
 For He could see the cure that followed pain.  
 With ruthless hands I cast my idol out:  
 That His dear self was best I could not doubt;  
 It burned in place of sacrifice that day,  
 Till winds of victory bore the ash away.  
 Then in my heart He poured His healing balm:  
 No pain I knew, but blessed peace and calm  
 That I had never known before came in,  
 To heal the place where I had held my sin.

### Ye shall reap if ye faint not

Not in vain thy work, O noble toiler,  
 Though scant the fruitage thou dost meantime see.  
 If wrought, controlled and guided by the Spirit,  
 How truly great will yet the harvest be.  
 Not in vain, O silent, suffering servant:  
 Thy Lord beholds, and all to Him is known.  
 Not vain nor valueless the sore affliction,  
 If by its means Christ more in thee is shown.

### Concerning the Collection

Paul's rules touching the contribution:—

- (a) As to time: 'upon the first day of the week' (1 Cor. 16:2).
- (b) As to amount: 'according as God has prospered him' (1 Cor. 16:2).
- (c) As to attitude: 'of a willing mind' (2 Cor. 8:12).
- (d) A planned act: 'every man as he purposeth' (2 Cor. 9:7).
- (e) A cheerful act: 'Not grudgingly or of necessity' (2 Cor. 9:7).
- (f) To promote equality: 'but by an equality' (2 Cor. 8:14).
- (g) A personal act: 'Let each one of you' (1 Cor. 16:2).



## Where can I find this Tune?

The Printers regret that by mischance some of the lines in "Where can I find this Tune," in August S.S. were accidentally overturned and not replaced in correct order. The affected lines are reprinted below. We apologise. W.B.

Key—1 Bristol, 2 Christian Hymnary, 3 Sankey 1200, 4 Sunday School (Carey Bonner), 5 Redemption Hymnal.

	6.6.6.6.	1	2	3	4	5
1 Kemerton .....	445	106	—	—	—	—
1 Ravenshaw .....	—	—	—	—	—	262
	6.6.6.6.8.6.					
1 Baca .....	—	110	621	—	—	580
1 Thy Life Was Given .....	—	—	78	—	—	—
	6.6.6.6.8.8.					
3 Adoration .....	138	—	313	178	—	215
1 Gopsal .....	745	—	—	—	—	195
2 Millenium .....	—	—	—	—	—	154
2 Samuel .....	746	115	1143	117	—	476
	6.6.8.4.					
1 Verbum Pacis .....	452	116	—	—	569	—
	6.6.8.4.D.					
1 Leoni .....	144	117	4	—	455	6

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Aylesbury.** Our numbers have been increased by the arrival of Brother and Sister James McGuigan, from the church at Mervue Road, Belfast. They have come to take up permanent residence in this town. Our brother is zealous for the Lord, and a keen Bible student. We look forward to them both being of great help to us in the work of the Lord.

L. CHANNING.

**Bedminster, Bristol.** We had the joy of hearing the good confession and of witnessing the baptism of Pamela White on Lord's Day, 20th July. Pamela is one of our Sunday School scholars, and has been attending the gospel meetings for some time. We hope and pray that she will continue to witness for her Lord and to serve Him throughout her days.

A.L.D.

## Happiness in the Home

The unbroken happiness of the country home in very early days was due in part to the entire absence of formal amusements.—Sir W. Beach Thomas in *Life of a Countryman*,

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

7 — Genesis 37:3-33.	Acts 7: 1-19.
14 — Exodus 3:1-14.	„ 7:20-37.
21 — Amos 5:14-27.	„ 7:38-60.
28 — 2 Kings 17:24-33.	„ 8: 1-25.

### STEPHEN

It is significant that whenever money is being distributed, trouble crops up. We have been exercising our minds on the most remarkable and striking feature of the early life of the church. This was the flow of unselfish generosity exhibited by all Christians who possessed anything more than they were actually using. They gave without thought of anything but the needs of others. Their love for Christ found its satisfaction in practical love for those poorer than themselves, and they had absolute confidence in the apostles at first entrusted with the distribution. People acting in this way are by many regarded as fools. Perhaps it is true in a measure. I still think it better to be one of the fools than a hard-headed "business man"—and the term often hides a selfish and hard heart.

However it is certainly true that there are always those who would be better not helped. If a man will not work, it is

a salutary lesson if he is short of food—it is of course different if he cannot work. There are always those who will take advantage of generosity—still it is better to be generous than mean. God pours out His untold benefits upon good and bad alike.

But even the apostles did not satisfy all the recipients of bounty, or they failed to see to them all. So there was a murmur, justified probably, and occurring through the impossibility of bearing the increasing burden of such work. How wise was the procedure adopted to meet the case! And in the divine providence the need forced on the remedy, and provided the prototype of a diaconate, or selection of brethren made for attending to physical or material help to church members; "with the bishops and deacons [overseers and servants]" (Phil. 1:1). Strange as it may seem, and yet how reasonable, two of those appointed to "serve" tables so developed their God-given capacities that they turned to prayer and the ministry of the Word (6:4), for which they were primarily intended to relieve the apostles—and undoubtedly did so. Stephen became an accomplished and most effective debater in the proper sense, that is, not to score points but to set forth truth in opposition to error with grace and power. Philip became a most effective gospel preacher.

The names of the "deacons" appointed indicate they were of Grecian-Jewish, not Palestinian origin, and this was fitting seeing it was Grecian-Jewish widows who had been neglected. Hence it was natural that Stephen should get into argument with other Jews of foreign birth or culture. Some of these, as subsequent history proves, were men of extreme fanatical loyalty to all that went for the Mosaic religion of their day (Acts 13:15; 14:2; 17:5; 21:27, etc.). Not being able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit of Stephen, they resorted to criminal action, such as had been used before, and has ever been used since against men of God.

Stephen had so imbibed the spirit of his Saviour that he spoke the plain truth about both temple and law, and in bold but humble and forgiving attitude. His faith in the heavenly realities was such that it transfigured his face—you and I ought to be transfigured (Rom. 12:2). His last prayer indicated that it had already transfigured his character, or he could

not have uttered it sincerely. When we recognise the awful truth of the reward of the wicked, anger against them is replaced by a loving and humble pity.

It is quite clear that Stephen made no effort in his address to the council to deny the charges. The facts he marshalled so skilfully all showed up the repeated rejection by the Jews of God's choice of their leaders, and finally His commandments. Solomon, the very builder of the temple which replaced the moveable tent, declared its insufficiency. Their own Moses promised them Jesus, who, said he, you betrayed and murdered. No doubt all the points held their interest and attention right up to the climax when their own crime, and criminal intentions, were brought home in a few direct sentences. Whether more than one of those present were influenced towards better thoughts and ways we do not know. We can hardly think that men like Gamaliel (5:34) could hear the message and witness its results without recoiling instinctively from the disastrous course of the extremists, and the young man Saul certainly remembered (Acts 22:20). Then there were of course Stephen's appearance and his prayer, calculated to touch deeply any but the most hardened, of whom, alas, there were and are so many.

Here we have before us the transforming and transfiguring power of Christ to make good and effective servants ("deacons") of us, the power of the plain truth rightly set forth to refute error, and the awful results of apostacy from the true religion of God—in that case Moses, in later history Christ. There is encouragement to be bold and ready to suffer, the need of a grasp of the truth to be spoken with wisdom and grace, and a solemn warning not to develop the vain worship, "teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," or the spirit which will not consider something new to us with a Berean willingness (17:11).

R. B. SCOTT.

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## The Christian's Platform

(Ephesians 4:4-6).

1. Unity of Worship—One God.
2. Unity of Authority—One Lord.
3. Unity of Organisation—One Body.
4. Unity of Life—One Spirit.
5. Unity of Teaching—One Faith.
6. Unity of Practice—One Baptism.
7. Unity of Purpose—One Hope,

# OBITUARY

**Bathgate.** The church has lost another member: Bro. John McLaren died on 9th July. Bro. McLaren served the church for a long number of years. As a teacher he built us up in the faith once delivered to the saints.

We miss our brother, but we go on trying to do all we can to keep the church here in existence. H. HOUSTON.

**Ilkeston.** It is with deep sorrow that we record the death of our Bro. John Webster, at the early age of 23 years. It came as a great shock when we heard the news of his sudden death on Friday, July 25th. Our brother was in the Fleet Air Arm and was taking part in a training flight when his plane crashed. He came of a good Christian family, his father, mother and sister being members of the church here. Early in life he gave his heart to his Saviour in obedience to His commands. He last met with us four weeks ago, and whenever possible he gathered with his brethren around the Lord's Table.

Our sympathy goes out to his sorrowing father, mother and sister, and we commend them in their sorrow to the loving care of our Heavenly Father "until the day dawns and the shadows flee away."

The funeral took place on July 31st in the presence of a large number of members and friends. The writer conducted the service.

F.G.

## COMING EVENTS

**Blackburn, Hamilton Street.** Brethren, come over and help us during our September mission with Bro. David Dougall. Commences Saturday, September 6th. Tuesdays and Thursdays 7.30; Saturdays 6.30. Lord's Days 6 p.m. Refreshments provided for those coming from a distance. Please let us know in good time how many we may expect from your assembly.—Harry Wilson, 10 Hollin Bridge Street, Blackburn.

**Brighton: Oxford Street, London Road.** A special mission will (D.V.) be held by the Church here from Saturday, 6th September to Friday, 12th September, and we should appreciate the presence and help of any of our brethren during the period. Bro. Philip Partington has

kindly consented to preach each evening. Tea will be provided on the 6th September (Saturday) at 5 p.m. in the Chapel, and a Social Meeting has been arranged for the evening to commence at 6.30. Please come. E. T. THORPE.

**Loughborough, Oxford Street.** 118th Anniversary Rally, Saturday, September 27th. Tea, 4.30; Meeting, six o'clock, presided over by Bro. Basil Jayne, Speakers: Bro. Albert Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells) and Bro. Frank Salt (Leicester). As this is the first anniversary since we withdraw from the Association, we are hoping to see a larger gathering than ever before. Welcome to all. Edmund Hill, 122 Derby Road, Loughborough.

**Slamannan District.** The half-yearly conference of Bible school teachers will be held (D.V.) in the meeting-place of the church at Dennyloanhead (205 Glasgow Road) on Saturday, 27th September, 4.30 p.m. Speaker, Bro. Jack Nisbet (Haddington); chairman, Bro. Tom Nisbet (Tranent). Subject: Inspiration of the Scriptures. All are welcome.

**Zoar Street, Morley.** Annual Autumn Rally, Saturday, October 4th, 1958. Tea 4 p.m., Evening Meeting 6 p.m. Chairman: R. McDonald, Dewsbury. Speakers: W. Crosthwaite (Ulverston), C. Melling (Wigan).

To assist catering will brethren advise as to how many are likely to be present? Church Secretary, H. Baines, 42 Garnett Street, Britannia Road, Morley, Nr. Leeds.

**Great Yarmouth.** The Mission at Great Yarmouth will begin on October 5th, when we propose holding meetings in the Labour Rooms, King Street. A Rally will be held on October 18th in the Park Road Baptist Hall at 7 p.m. Book this date and be sharers in a wonderful season of refreshing. If you want accommodation for the week-end or longer, write Bro. W. Longden, "Braeside," Oxford Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts. Any information you desire can be had from David Dougall, Seaview Cottage, Wallacestone, Brightons, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland.

**Birmingham, Summer Lane** are hoping to have their 93rd Anniversary meetings on Saturday and Lord's Day, 1st and 2nd November. Arrangements are being made similar to last year for Tea in our own chapel at 4 o'clock and the Social Meeting in the Ormond Street Mission Hall at 5.30, on the Saturday. On Lord's Day, 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. in our own premises. Full details later.

## THE AUTUMN CONFERENCE AND RALLY

will be held (D.V.) on

**Saturday, September 27th, 1958**

in the

**SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL,**

**WALKER STREET, EASTWOOD, Notts.**

**Chairman: Bro. R. McDonald, Dewsbury**

Afternoon, 2.15 p.m.: Short Business Session, followed by three fifteen-minute talks based on I Corinthians 1:30: Christ our Righteousness, Bro. Alex. Allan, Blackburn; Christ our Sanctification, Bro. Tom McDonald, Dewsbury; Christ our Redemption, Bro. Jack Thomasson, Morley.

Tea: 4.30 p.m. Evening: Public Meeting 6.30 p.m. Speakers: Bro. Hugh Davidson, East Kilbride, Scotland; Bro. David Dougall, Wallacestone, Scotland.

Will those intending to stay over the week-end please communicate with Bro. G. E. Bullock, 74 Station Road, Ilkeston, Derbys. All other correspondence to Chas. Limb, 32 Chewton Street, Eastwood, Notts.

**Most important to assist catering.** May we have intimation of numbers not later than 23rd September?

Walker Street is off the Nottingham Road, half-way between Eastwood Market Place and Hill Top.

## AN INVITATION TO CLEVELEYS

The holiday season is an appropriate time to remind brethren once more of their opportunity to have fellowship with the church in Cleveleys, who meet in the Co-operative Hall, Beach Road. Breaking of Bread is at 10.30 a.m. and Gospel Meeting 6.30 p.m. We anticipate renewing fellowship with brethren from many parts of the country, and look forward to the spiritual benefits which we derive from this meeting with kindred souls.

We understand that it has been said in the past that visiting brethren have not been afforded full opportunities to take active part in our meetings. We should like to make it plain that this is not so. On the contrary, we welcome such help. We would again ask that when a brother on holiday knows that God willing, he will be meeting with us on a particular Lord's Day, and desires to serve us in the Ministry of the Word, he contact me (Eric Winter, 77 Kelvin Road, Norbreck, Blackpool). If brethren would oblige us in this matter, we are sure that it would be to the mutual advantage of both visiting and local speaking brethren.

## ... AND TO HEREFORD

72 Whitehorse Street

Will brethren and sisters when making their holiday arrangements please bear in mind that there is a 'little flock' in Hereford who would be very glad to have their fellowship at the Lord's table on Lord's Days at 3.30 p.m. and at Bible Study and discussion at 6.30. Also at Bible Study and discussion on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

Speaking brethren would be particularly appreciated.

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**EVANGELIST FUND:** Contributions to **R. McDONALD**, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.

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

**NYASALAND MISSION.** Contributions to **W. STEELE**, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

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