

EXCERPTS FROM

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THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

AFTER THIS MANNER ... PRAY YE

(A Study in the Lord's Prayer)

Part 8

We are now to examine the fifth petition: "AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS. AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS." (Matt.6:12). Or as in another Gospel: "AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS; FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERY ONE THAT IS INDEBTED TO US." (Luke 11:4). But first one or two observations should be made.

This pattern prayer has but one petition relative to the body - "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD." - whereas there are two petitions which pertain to the soul - "FORGIVE US OUR SINS." AND "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION." From this we are to learn that we should be far more concerned about spiritual than material matters. In no way does this mean that the body should be neglected, for it is part of human personality created by God, and unique: neither must we look upon the body as inferior as did the Gnostics, who regarded the body as but a prison of the soul, and that at death the soul is liberated and flies into immortality, much like a bird let out of a cage, which when released soars away into liberty.

Immortality is a word never used of the soul in Scripture; this is Hymn Book terminology (not always a sound source of theology). Immortality belongs to the body, or more correctly, the WHOLE PERSONALITY. When the body is resurrected at the last day, and REUNITED with the soul and spirit, THEN it is that we take on immortality. The body must never be regarded as unimportant; it is an integral part of us, and redeemed at Calvary as much as the soul, and is destined for eternal glorification. (cf. Phil.3.21. Rom.8.23)

However, in giving instruction in prayer, Christ does give a correct balance by placing an emphasis upon the spiritual. Vital though material things are, how much more vital the forgiveness of sins.

A person may suffer loss of health, yet make a good recovery. A man may lose an estate, or fail in business, but make good again. But if a person loses their soul, then ALL is lost; that is FATAL.

If a person knows the grace of God in forgiveness then, not only the SOUL, but one day, the BODY also will know the GLORY of Christ upon it; for we are to be "fashioned like unto His glorious body" - this is IMMORTALITY: but this final blessedness is dependent upon SPIRITUAL blessings now, not MATERIAL.

In our Bibles there are verse divisions, which although helpful for reference purposes, are not inspired, and there are instances when these divisions can detract from the full force of meaning: we must ever guard against this happening.

Referring back to the fourth petition in verse 11. Christ says, "When ye pray say - Give us this day our daily bread AND forgive us our sins." The petition for forgiveness is actually joined to that for material needs. Why? What is the connection? It may be helpful to ask another question - What use is daily bread to a man perishing in his sins? It must be remembered that the One who is giving this is none other than Christ himself, and He sees right into the hearts of men: He knows the fearful eternity which awaits every unforgiven sinner, and in consequence puts the emphasis upon the spiritual.

If a man is in prison awaiting execution: of what comfort and profit are sumptuous meals to him WITHOUT

PARDON? In Luke's Gospel chapter 16 our Lord gives the account of a man who "fared sumptuously every day." But he knew not the grace of God in forgiveness of sins in his heart; and it is recorded "that he died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

Having made these observations, we now look more closely into the petition itself: "AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS" (Matthew) - "FORGIVE US OUR SINS" (Luke). Comparing Scripture is a vital principle in the study of God's Word. By holding the record of both Matthew and Luke together, we learn that our SINS are reckoned by God as A DEBT. This makes every sinner A DEBTOR. Debt means NON-PAYMENT. A debtor is a man who has not rendered that which is his just due, and failed to meet his liability.

This raises the question, to whom is the sinner in debt? He is in debt to God, his Maker. What then does he owe? What are the liabilities? Man owes to God implicit obedience. The creature is bound to THE LAW OF GOD. He is obligated, liable and responsible.

Being in default of that law, and not paying his just due (which is obedience) he has run up a vast account. Yea, he is HOPELESSLY in debt. When this happens in the material world, and it be criminal, the debtor goes to prison for his default. This is precisely how it is with the sinner. By sin and disobedience man is a debtor, he cannot pay, or discharge his liabilities; he therefore is found guilty, and in consequence faces imprisonment, that imprisonment being eternity in hell.

Mortal man likes to boast of his freedom, he is a free-will agent, he has liberty! In actual fact he has not! Only the child of God, the forgiven sinner, has liberty. The natural man, in his sin, is "CONDEMNED ALREADY."

He is but awaiting the carrying out of the sentence. The liberty he may seem to enjoy until he is actually incarcerated, is but a bondage in itself, for all the time he is under the strong arm of God's law from which he will NEVER ESCAPE.

This is terrible, we say. It is indeed! There is no liability like that of the debt of sin; it is a fearful condition. It is the worst of all debts, because we have NOTHING wherewith we can pay.

In the business world, if an enterprise is going downhill and it is obvious that financial disaster is impending, the head of the concern, if he is an honest man, will call a halt. He will bring in a Receiver. A financial expert will analyse the whole situation, all will be scrutinized and assessed, the creditors listed, and amounts owing to them. All the firm's assets will be valued and realized, and although the man himself may end up without a penny, the creditors will receive so much in the pound. However, there is no action of this nature in the spiritual realm, there cannot even be a salvage operation, for man has absolutely nothing to salvage: not a thing to bring to God, and if he had, it would not be accepted, for the perfect law of God demands FULL PAYMENT.

Adam in his primal and unfallen state had a stock of ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: he entered into the world with this. He was made in the IMAGE OF GOD. He had the wherewith-all to render unto his Creator ALL that was justly due to Him. Adam was so furnished to be able to meet all his liabilities. There was no reason whatsoever why Adam should run into debt, but he did. He disobeyed God: he failed to meet his commitments, and he became, in consequence, a SPIRITUAL BANKRUPT. What is more he bankrupted ALL his posterity. In Adam - the federal head - fell ALL the race. HIS ruin is OURS. "By one

man's disobedience many were made sinners." (Rom.5:19). "In Adam all die." (1 Cor.15:22). This is ORIGINAL SIN. We have all lost "THE PRINCIPAL": our "CAPITAL" is gone. We have nothing left - nothing to trade with. And then there is the "INTEREST." and this goes on accumulating. Original sin produces actual sin. The sinful nature with which we were born produces nothing but that which is defiled and polluted. We cannot even pay so much in the pound to God, because, even our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (cf. Isa.64:6). Every day we live we sin, and so the debt accumulates. The Psalmist said: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about." (Psa.40:12)- SINS - INNUMERABLE - COUNTLESS. The figures on the debit side of the ledger defy computation.

What man or woman has the faintest idea of the size of their debt? "The thought of foolishness is sin." (Prov.24:9). The sins of the mind alone, must be as a swarm of locusts for multitude, to say nothing of the sins of word and of deed. "Who can understand his errors?" (Psa.19:12). Who can grasp the extent? Would any dare to estimate the amount which they owe to God?

Even if we were called upon to prepare a case, and produce a STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS. where would we start? Our affairs are in such a state that no mortal can sort it out. But God has them carefully ANALYZED and AUDITED. "He will set our sins in order before our eyes." (cf.Psa.50:21). There are no inaccuracies in the records of heaven. The DIVINE AUDITOR is unimpeachable. One day the accounts will be rendered, and from their liability none can escape. "There is none that can escape from Thy hand," wrote Job.

If a debtor on earth dies in prison, death frees him from his liability; but this is not so spiritually. The sinner who dies in his sin is not free. Inflexible

justice has to be met. There is immediate distraint upon the soul. The rich man of Luke chapter 16 was instantly in hell.

In case of failure, fraud, or debt, men often flee the country to escape the creditors. In no way can SPIRITUAL DEBT be evaded. The moment a sinner leaves this world at death he is immediately arrested on the other side. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." (Psa.139:7-10). Thy RIGHT HAND - the strong hand of ALMIGHTY POWER and IMMUTABLE JUSTICE will never let go, or release. IT HOLDS! How mortal man recoils from hearing this! What debtor likes to be found in the presence of a creditor? To come face to face with a person to whom he owes money is, to say the least, embarrassing. How true this is in the spiritual! Why do not men come to hear the Word of God preached? Why are men of the world evasive of Christian company? It is because they are afraid the question of SIN may come up. They do not want to be reminded of the fact that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom.14:12). The natural man wants to hear nothing of a day of reckoning. Neither does he want any contact with a servant of Christ who might remind him that one day the Judge of all the earth will say to every man, "give account of thy stewardship". If only men could really believe that death was the end, that it was complete and utter annihilation, they would be much more at ease; but somehow such a thought does not ring true: there is a constant inner apprehension of "AFTER DEATH THE JUDGMENT." (cf Heb.9:27).

There is a very real reason for this inner unease. To use legal terms, God has ISSUED A WRIT against the sinner. The extent and nature of his debt is such as to be criminal. Would it not be strange if the courts had issued a writ against a man, warrants put out for his arrest, judgment granted to seize that person and his estate, and for him to still be at peace in his heart and enjoying himself? IMPOSSIBLE!

Ambrose in the 4th century said: "Men in debt are full of shame, they lie hid, and do not care to be seen; let even a dog bark and their heart begins to pound." How true this is of the sinner! Let the dog of SERIOUS ILLNESS bark at their body so that they are laid low; then secretly their heart will begin to race. There is an inner undisclosed fear which they cannot stifle, for man somehow has this mysterious persuasion that he cannot get away from his sin. He is hopelessly in debt.

Is there not a ray of hope? Can the sinner not raise some capital or discharge? None whatsoever! He is totally and irretrievably insolvent.

However, the Divine Creditor speaks in the person of the Son. Here on the mountainside He is giving direction concerning prayer, and in this instruction He touches upon this very matter. "When ye pray say ... FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS." What! come to the Divine Creditor in this manner? Approach the thrice holy, sin hating, sin avenging God, and talk about my sins; even to ask Him to forgive them? Yet this is EXACTLY what the Lord is saying.

It should be noted that in this fifth petition there is an acknowledgment of THE DEBT; there is a confession of SIN. The natural man, in his pride and arrogance will never bring himself to do this, but let the Holy Spirit commence a work of grace in the heart, and that

person become TRULY aware of his hopeless condition, then he will begin to think this way; he will commence to pray, albeit falteringly, and this question of debt will become very real.

When a sinner in sincerity comes to God in confession, for the first time in his life, he brings glory to God. "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him." (Josh.7:19).

The TRUE ACKNOWLEDGMENT of our sins in the presence of God puts the Almighty in correct perspective. It is the HALLOWING of His name; this being in full accord with the first part of the prayer.

That of which we are now treating is the primary stage of conversion; the Holy Spirit at work in the heart causing a person to pray, "AFTER THIS MANNER." and when that person does so, God will answer. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psa.32:5).

Forgiveness of sin follows genuine confession, and this is one of the first mercies which God bestows upon repentant sinners. He alone can do this. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7).

However, the inquiring mind might well ask: how can a holy righteous God do this? The debt is there, the writ has been issued, and the warrant put out. Furthermore, the case is a criminal one, and an immutable sentence has been PASSED already by God himself, that "THE SOUL THAT SINNETH. IT SHALL DIE." (Ez. 18:4). How then can God forgive the sinner and discharge the guilty? What of the debt? What of Divine Justice? Yea, what of the character of the Almighty? This is now bringing us to the free and sovereign grace of God.

In this matter of the forgiveness of sin, there was no OVERLOOKING of the debt on the part of a holy God. Holy justice had to be FULLY met, but in the Divine plan a SURETY had been appointed. The eternal Son of God was to take human flesh and come into this world, and in the capacity of Mediator become a substitute for sinners; to fulfil the law in His life on their behalf, and in His death to bear the curse of God due to their sins. In other words, become TOTALLY and ABSOLUTELY responsible for them, and to fully discharge ALL their liabilities. Jehovah God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. (cf. Isa.53:6). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet.2:24).

"O Christ what burdens bowed Thy head,
Our load was laid on Thee,
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me;
A victim led, Thy blood was shed,
Now there's no load for me."

It is on the basis of substitution and suretyship that a holy God forgives our debt. In no way does He OVERLOOK it. Divine justice has exacted the uttermost farthing, and our blessed Redeemer has paid all.

"Complete atonement Thou has made,
And to the utmost Thou hast paid
Whate'er Thy people owed." (Toplady)

This is the reason, and the only reason, why we can pray "after this manner, "saying: "Heavenly Father forgive me my debts." Because of the perfection and finality of the work of Christ in atonement, "God can be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (cf.Rom.3:26).

We do well to remind our hearts of what the Scriptures say regarding FORGIVENESS. "I, even I, am He that

blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa.43:25).

A creditor, when the debt is paid, blots it out of his ledger and FORGETS IT. A business man is only worried over bad debts so long as the money is owing, but once settled, and he has marked PAID across the page, the debt vanishes from his mind.

Dear reader, if you have come to Christ in true repentance, seeking God's forgiveness, the great catalogue of your sins held in the strong room of the eternal law courts have, through sovereign grace, had a red line drawn across by a pen dipped in Emmanuel's blood. Upon the pages have been written: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7). Our Heavenly Father will NEVER refer to those ledgers again. The account is settled.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." (Isa.44:22). The picture is of a HEAVY CLOUD, that which obscures the light, bringing in its wake, fearful storms. Sin is just like that. But when it is forgiven, that frightful cloud is dispersed. Then does the light and warmth of God's presence break forth upon us; impending storms give way to rays of eternal light.

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." (Mic.7:19). In this instance the imagery is that of a grave, and it is a grave from which nothing can be disinterred. The believer's sins are in the depths of a grave from which they can never be exhumed. They are not scattered UPON the sea, such as corks that would rise with every wave. Rather are they cast INTO the sea; yea, rather into the DEPTH of the sea. They have sunk like lead to the ocean bed, there to lie undisturbed for everlasting ages, NEVER to re-surface.

What a mighty work was that of atonement, and what a wondrous position has the Christian been brought into through grace. When a sinner cries to God for forgiveness He freely forgives the sinner ALL. "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me." (Jer.33:8).

Never must anyone lose sight of the fact that Calvary was a FULL DISCHARGE. Every sin of every elect soul was known to God; and in their ghastly reality, every single sin which we have committed or ever will commit, was imputed to Christ, and He paid the debt in EVERY DETAIL, and to the FULL AMOUNT. Everything written AGAINST us which was contrary to us was DECLARED AT CALVARY. and when our blessed Saviour was nailed to the cross, every one of our sins was nailed WITH HIM there. "He took them out of the way." (cf.Col.2:14).

Were it not for the redemption which is in Christ Jesus we could never pray "AFTER THIS MANNER." No man could ever come to God and say, "Forgive me my debts," were it not for Christ the Mediator.

W. H. Molland

To be continued

"BLESSED IS HE WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN, WHOSE SIN IS COVERED.

BLESSED IS THE MAN UNTO WHOM THE LORD IMPUTETH NOT INIQUITY.AND IN WHOSE SPIRIT THERE IS NO GUILF."

PSALM 32:1-2

THE SUBTLETY OF COMPROMISE

Dr Davton Hobbs

"Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?" (Jer.2:33-36).

Compromise is spiritual decay. Compromise begins with a departure from a previously held Scriptural position. The possibility of compromise is entertained during a time of crisis.

Compromise begins with a decision, a decision that is justified as necessary. Compromise is accompanied with justification that the move or change in direction is designed to get spiritual results. Compromise is a move from what is perceived to be a hard or unloving position to a softer or more loving position. Compromise tends to lead one from strong principle oriented positions to more "people" oriented positions.

The act of compromise causes one to take the position that controversy is caused by well meaning though unloving defenders of the faith. Compromisers tend to be defensive about their new found positions, whereas those who stand on principles generally are satisfied with letting God be their defence and allowing time to justify their positions.

Compromise on the part of once strong champions of truth is most often brought on by expediency; a believed need for a change of position brought on by a supposed

crisis, yet often clothed in pious sounding reasonings which give supposed credence to the new position taken.

Compromise is subtle. In its beginnings it makes claims to be a more justifiable and spiritual level of caring, but in its end it destroys the effectiveness of the individual or ministry caught in its web. It is as old as its author, the Devil, and is the means of spiritual destruction of every ministry that has ever been deceived by its lies.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:8-9).

"There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. iv. 14). There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten paths of our forefathers. Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true.

There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings. There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity. The religious life of many is little better than spiritual dram-drinking, and the "meek and quiet spirit" which St Peter commends is clean forgotten. (I Peter, 3-4). Crowds, and crying, and hot rooms, and highflown singing, and an incessant rousing of the emotions, are the only

things which many care for. Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide, and so long as the preacher is "clever" and "earnest," hundreds seem to think it must be all right, and call you dreadfully "narrow and uncharitable" if you hint that he is unsound!

I must honestly declare my conviction that, since the days of the Reformation, there never has been so much profession of religion without practice, so much talking about God without walking with Him, so much hearing God's words without doing them, as in this country at present. Never were there so many empty tubs and tinkling cymbals! Never was there so much formality and so little reality. The whole tone of men's minds on what constitutes practical Christianity seems lowered. The old golden standard of the behaviour which becomes a Christian man or woman appears debased and degenerated. You may see scores of religious people (so-called) continually doing things in which days gone by would have been thought utterly inconsistent with vital religion. They see no harm in such things as card-playing, theatre-going, dancing, incessant novel-reading, and Sunday travelling, and they cannot in the least understand what you mean by objecting to them! The ancient tenderness of conscience about such things seems dying away and becoming extinct, like the dodo.

A Scriptural view of sin is one of the best antidotes to the vague, dim, misty, hazy kind of theology which is so painfully current in the present age. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity nowadays which you cannot declare positively unsound, but which, nevertheless, is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound. It is Christianity in which there is undeniably "something about Christ, and something about grace, and something about faith, and

something about repentance, and something about holiness"; but it is not the real "thing as it is" in the Bible.

The tendency of modern thought is to reject dogmas, creeds, and every kind of bounds in religion. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatsoever, and to pronounce all earnest and clever teachers to be trustworthy, however heterogeneous and mutually destructive their opinions may be. Everything forsooth is true, and nothing is false! Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody to be lost! The Atonement and Substitution of Christ, the personality of the devil, the miraculous element in Scripture, the reality and eternity of future punishment; all these mighty foundation-stones are coolly tossed overboard like lumber, in order to lighten the ship of Christianity, and enable it to keep pace with modern science. Stand up for these great verities and you are called narrow, illiberal, old-fashioned, and a theological fossil!"

J.C. Ryle. D.D.

MISSION '89

Now that much of the activity of Mission '89 has subsided it may be prudent to ask the question - can God's people be any longer indifferent to Dr Billy Graham and * all that he has come to represent? Time was when there were those who felt uneasy about the "methodology" and the decisionist type of evangelism which characterised the various crusades and rallies. That unease has now faded into oblivion in the light of the emphases that now dominate, and the objectives and aims of the evangelist himself, and those who are behind him. Without a shadow of a doubt - and sad to say - Dr Graham has now become the great evangelist for the church of Rome and is acknowledged by that church in that role.

Immediately after the latest Mission in London, with its attendant Livelink programmes throughout the country, Cardinal Hume, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, was written to with regards to the Roman Catholic church's involvement in, and attitude towards, those events. A copy of the reply has been given to us, and we ask every child of God to look to their conscience in relation to the statements made. As ever, we would add the rider, that as far as the Gospel is concerned it matters nothing whether an unconverted person is a Catholic or a so-called Protestant. Be that as it may, the Roman church is still the great proclaimer of justification by works - that "other gospel" which the word of God accounts "accursed". The staggering fact is, that this "gospel" is now being accepted, and advanced. by professed evangelical Christians.

The reply, on behalf of Cardinal Hume, comes from Rev. Michael Seed, who is styled, "Ecumenical Advisor to the Cardinal", and we simply reproduce a few parts of the reply as indicative as to how things stand at the present. There is numerous documented material available regarding the whole Billy Graham / Rome-ward trend of today; we simply insert the following to invoke our opening question, and because it is so recent - 23rd July '89.

With regard to official involvement by the RC church in Mission '89, Rev. Seed writes - "Roman Catholic involvement in Mission '89, from the point of view of Cardinal Hume and within the diocese of Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood ... have been very good indeed. From an 'official' point of view, the Bishops of England and Wales (RC) joined with other churches in 'inviting' Dr Graham to London to give a Mission. Bishop Charles Henderson of Southwark was the Bishop appointed by our Bishops' Conference to represent them. Cardinal Hume

issued an official statement to his priests which was mailed to all the other Bishops in England and Wales ... asking for 'prayer and co-operation' for the mission."

There is an interesting paragraph in the letter which may help to explain why a good many people were not fully aware of Rome's involvement in the whole affair; it refers to the policy adopted by the Billy Graham team. "Because, very sadly, of certain 'fundamentalist protestants' the Billy Graham Mission team asked us to keep our participation very 'cool' - we did not want to anger people with our participation any more than they were. It was a sad state of affairs."

After relating the fact that "Dr Graham called on Cardinal Hume the day before his Mission", Rev. Seed then comes to express his delight in the Mission, and in Dr Graham, as well. "Some 2100 Catholics 'went forward' at the Mission evenings in London which was excellent ... Billy Graham has helped our Church greatly and many have 'renewed ' their faith under his great ministry."

Rev. Seed also gives an interesting word of clarification from the Roman Catholic viewpoint; "By the term 'went forward', he says, "is understood a 'dedication to Christ', and indeed in the case of the majority of Roman Catholics, a 're-dedication' to Christ."

Indeed! In no sense are they being "born again". They have already been "born again" in Rome's regenerating waters of baptism. What they have become are more dedicated to Catholicism - with its Mass, its worship of Mary, and its works salvation.

These are sad facts; but facts need to be faced.

W. J. Seaton (Inverness)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

The Church has sustained a great loss in the sudden homecall of Mr Leslie Gee. He was beloved by us all and a faithful officer handling both secretarial and financial matters, a great encourager in the ministry, ever standing loyal to the Word of God.

A large number of relatives and friends, from a wide area gathered for his funeral on the 16th August to mark with respect the memory of a man who truly loved the Lord. Our prayers go out for Mrs Gee, that she might ever be kept in the sweet consolation of the Holy Scriptures, knowing at all times the Lords gracious undertaking and presence and that His blessing also might be known by all the family.

Mr G. P. Jackson has undertaken the secretarial work, and Mr D. C. Wort has been appointed treasurer. Both have been with us for some years and are eminently suited for these respective offices. We pray that God will help and bless them as they accept these important positions in the local church.

We have had reprinted a booklet first published in 1949 by the late Mr F. Aylwyn Adams entitled DIVORCE - WHAT DID THE LORD SAY ABOUT IT? A clear and concise treatment

upon a vexed subject. We are making this booklet available free of charge on receipt of a 14p stamp.

Mr D.C. Wort will preach on Lord's Day evening November 5th. (D.V.)

VISITING PREACHERS THIS QUARTER D.V.

Mr F. Ayoub. (The Arabic Evangelical Centre, Wolverhampton.) Thursday October 12th 7pm

Mr John Hooper (Saltash) Lord's Day October 15th

Annual Church Meeting Thurs. Nov. 2nd 6.p.m. (D.V.)

Due to the passing of Mr. Gee who was responsible for the typing of this magazine, followed shortly after by the sudden death of Bryan Molland (The Minister's son), 'THE LINK' this quarter has had to be somewhat hurriedly prepared and is a little late in production. We offer apologies for this.

The Molland Family wish to express their deep appreciation for the sympathy, love, and prayers of God's people during this time of great sorrow upon the sudden home-call of their beloved Bryan.

"As for God His way is perfect" Psa. 18. 30.

EDITORIAL

The latest craze in so-called Christian witness appears to be marching; when men, women and children, of all manner of beliefs and persuasions, get together in their hundreds and parade through the streets, some dancing, jiving, leaping, and jumping, shouting slogans and texts; sometimes singing, with incessant banging of drums, the noise of which can be plainly heard 2-3 miles distant. Many of the marchers appear in fancy dress, some grossly disfigured to appear as clowns. Banners, flags, logos and balloons are waved frantically as these bizarre columns pour along the public thoroughfares, usually with an ambulance bringing up the rear. (Presumably to pick up casualties)!

Whilst these parades have been taking place in many towns and cities for some time, we now have "Marches for Jesus" right across the nation, in which tens of thousands will be participating. It is said to be "THE CHURCH ON THE MOVE!"

Let a few questions be asked and fairly answered:

1. Does the Church of Jesus Christ move forward in this way?
2. Is this the manner in which Christ has instructed His followers to bear witness to the truth?
3. Can any thinking Christian ever conceive of the Holy Son of God - the Great Head of the Church leading such grotesque processions, with ill-clad jiving humans, jumping clowns, and banging drums?
4. How can such parades be styled "A march for Jesus," when many in the ranks, deny such fundamentals of

the faith as the inspiration, inerrancy, and sole authority of Holy Scripture? The historical fall of man in Adam, and his consequent death by sin. The atoning sacrifice of Christ, - the alone means of man's salvation. The personality of Satan. The wrath of God and the eternal punishment of the unregenerate?

5. When carefully thought through, are these ludicrous assemblies a God-honouring testimony?

It is sad to see and hear of many who profess the name of Christ entangled in these spiritually degrading novelties. May some at least see the folly of their ways and return to the Divine Mandate. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23.2) "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." (Jeremiah 6.16)

At a conference held at Swanwick on 4th September 1987 'A Declaration for Unity' was adopted and signed by representatives of 34 denominations, which included, Baptists, Methodists, Salvation Army, Brethren, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and many who deny the Trinity and Blood Atonement. Part of the Declaration reads - 'We now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in His own time, the one Church of Christ...'

ONE THING IS CLEAR TO US, we cannot be expected to meet in any union which comprehends those whose teachings on fundamental points are exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear. Cost what it may to separate ourselves from those who separate from the truth of God is not only our liberty but our duty.

C. H. SPURGEON