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No. 32

RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION, BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE

WHAT SEEK YE?

COME AND SEE!

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION
(under the auspices of the Jaffna Christian Union)

will be held at the Fort Church on

the 28th, 29th and 30th of Aug. Meetings each day will start at 9 a.m. All arrangements for convenience of those attending will be made. Noon and night meals will cost 15 cents per head. There will be a stall for Religious Literature, Hymn Books (1937 edition) will be on sale. If you have old copies bring them along. Collection will be taken at all meetings.

PRAY! PREPARE! ATTEND

S. KULANDRAN,

Erlalai, Secy, Christian Union,
7th Aug, 1940.

Government of Ceylon War Purposes Fund

The Government of Ceylon War Purposes Fund has risen rapidly during the last week. There are welcome features in the list, the most noteworthy being a block of subscriptions (total Rs. 48,693.51) forwarded by the Central Working Committee of the Social and Sports Clubs of Ceylon War Fund and which includes a gift of Rs. 10,000 from the Chettiar community of Ceylon besides several large individual gifts. Two sums of Rs. 6,000 have been forwarded by the Princes Club of Colombo and the Nuwara Eliya Golf Club, whilst the other Clubs too have given with equal enthusiasm. Of special interest too, are the generous donations of Rs. 5,377.13 from the Ceylon Survey Department, Thrist Society, Ltd., and Rs. 2,500 from the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills. Hand-some donations have also been given by private individuals.

Previously Acknowledged:—

From the General Public—Rs. 57,693.32

Social and Sports Clubs Rs. 147,271.02

The Public Services and Govt. Pensioners Rs. 39,391.70

Total Rs. 244,356.04

All Ceylon Methodist Ministers' Convention

All the Ministers and Missionaries connected with the Methodist Church in Ceylon are meeting for a Convention in Kandy 3rd to 6th Sept. The chief topics to be discussed are:—

(1) The life of the Church in relation to Finance and Organisation.

Speaker: Rev. D. J. Bartholomew.

(2) Is there a Theological Basis for Church reunion?

Speaker: Rev. R. A. Nelson.

(3) The Ceylon Church and present day Problems of Evangelism.

Speaker: Rev. James S. Mather.

(4) The Church and Social and Political Trends in Ceylon.

Speaker: Rev. G. A. F. Senaratus.

(5) The Church and the State.

Speaker: Rev. E. Middleton Weaver.

One of the objects of the Convention is to help ministers to come to know each other, as there were many who had never even met, though belonging to the same Church.

All Ceylon V. M. C. A. Conference

For the first time the Ceylon V. M. C. A. decided to marshal its forces scattered in the various parts of the Island and make a concerted, all-Island effort to study, explain and re-make the social patterns of the country

when the Third All-Ceylon V. M. C. A. Conference was held at Udavil.

The conference felt the need for greater co-operation between the various branches in the Island, and has therefore appointed an All-Island Committee with a view to co-ordinating the activities of the various associations and exploring the possibilities of concerted action. One of the tasks assigned to the committee is to inaugurate the publication of a series of books on social patterns of the Island. Literature on local problems such as caste and dowry is lacking and publication of books on such subjects would certainly be a national service.

Jaffna Urban Council.

At a general meeting of the above council held on the 9th inst. it was decided to adopt the same taxes on vehicles and animals for 1941 as were imposed in 1940.

Mr. S. Nagendran was appointed Electrical Superintendent on probation for one year subject to the concurrence of the Chief Engineer and Manager of the Department of Government Electrical Undertakings. It was decided that the six houses still remaining un-occupied be allotted to those persons recommended by the Medical Officer of Health.

It was decided to withdraw a sum of Rs. 15,000 from the Jaffna Kachecheri and place that amount in the current account in the Jaffna Branch of the Mercantile Bank of India Limited.

It was decided to refer the papers regarding erecting a Pavilion for radio listeners to the Superintending Engineer N. D.

The other items on the Agenda were considered at a special meeting held yesterday.

Wedding

The marriage of Mr. F. E. Armstrong, Electrical Superintendent, Dodanduwa, son of Mr. J. S. Armstrong, Supt. Minor Roads, Batticaloa and Mrs. Armstrong with Miss Gladys Anne Chelvanayake daughter of the late Mr. J. C. Thamotheram and Mrs. Thamotheram was solemnized last Saturday at St. Peter's Church, Jaffna in the presence of a large gathering of friends and relations from all parts of Jaffna. Rev. James S. Mather and Rev. E. M. Weaver officiated; the attending witnesses were Mr. A. R. Supramaniam and Mr. R. Ramachandran. The bride was given away by her uncle Mr. C. P. Thamotheram, Principal, Hartley College. A reception followed at the bride's residence at Chunduculi, when Mr. M. Prasad, Govt. Agent N. P. supported by Miss Northway proposed the health of the newly married couple. Rev. E. M. Weaver proposed the health of the hostess.

—Last Saturday at Naval Church a Service of Blessing of the marriage of Mr. Isaac Ponnampalam and Miss Mary Samuel, sister of Mr. Edwin Samuel was conducted by Rev. S. P. Vijayarajam and Rev. S. Selvarajam.

Personal

Mr. K. P. Suppiah, Government Apothecary, Maha-oya Hospital has now been transferred to the Batticaloa Town Hospital.

—Mr. J. C. Thambirajah of Jubilee Cottage, Tellippalai, is one of those who has been selected for service as an Underguard in the Ceylon Government Railway.

—At a public farewell accorded recently to Mr. F. J. R. Vickramasingham who had officiated as Manager of the Pachchilappalli-Karachechi Division, a gold medal and chain were presented.

—Mr. T. Balachandran of the Irrigation department, Colombo, and son of Mr. G. T. Alexander, Kokuvil was one of the candidates selected as a Probationary

Divisional Revenue officer. He is now attached to the Trincomalee Kachecheri. He is an old boy of the Jaffna Central College where he had a brilliant scholastic career.

—Messrs. S. Selvarajah, T. Sangarapillai, and W. Mathiparanam have been appointed Notaries Public throughout the judicial division of Jaffna.

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IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE

OF

Emily Chinnammah

Beloved wife of

John K. Christodas

Born 23rd November 1890.

Promoted to Glory 22nd August 1939.

Dear Mother, Darling,

Thou hast gone ahead,

Leaving us behind astray

To enjoy Thy Bliss.

We bow our Saviour's will.

(Inserted by her sorrowing husband

and children).

'Jubilee Cottage'

Tellippalai.



Love's sad tribute to the cherished and Loving memory of Benjamin Amirthanayagam John who left us for his Heavenly Home on 20th August 1938 at Manipay.
"Two years have passed since that God called our dearest one away; Time may wear away the edge of grief,

But memory turns back every leaf,
Inserted by his sorrowing wife and children.

'Batra Manor'

Manipay.

IN

Ever-Loving Memory

OF

DANIEL JOHN PONNUTHURAI

(FORMERLY OF THE ANGLO-CHINESE SCHOOL SINGAPORE)

Born: May 24th, 1901.

Died: August 22nd, 1938.

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The Morning Star

Friday, Aug. 23rd, 1940

Your Contribution to the Convention.

The Annual Convention held by the Jaffna Christian Union takes place next week at the old Church of the Hollanders in the Fort. "Another Convention!" the sceptic will say to himself and perhaps to his friends "I wonder how much good it is going to do!" Many Conventions have come and gone; but Jaffna goes on as usual. Many Christians live as they have always lived—though we refuse to believe that there is hardly a Christian who has attended these Conventions, in whose life they did not make a difference, perhaps imperceptible, but still very certain and very definite. We are however prepared to admit there are people in whose life a Convention may make no substantial impression; or if it does, does so only for a short time.

Why should such things be? Are we then to imagine that these Conventions are merely human gatherings, like many another? Men come together, and they go home. There is no divine power about these meetings. Do our Conventions also partake of the pathetic futility of many such human gatherings? Is it merely men meeting one another? Does not God come to meet them? Does God make no contribution to them? If He does how is it, often, so little effected?

The answer is, in every convention of this kind there is a divine contribution and a human contribution. The human contribution does not consist in merely coming together. It consists in coming together in such a manner as to avail ourselves of the divine contribution. St Paul speaks of our being "fellow-workers with God." This is very definitely true of Conventions also.

Speaking of the foolish virgins our Lord refers tersely to their fatal omission. "For the foolish when they took lamps with them took no oil with them." Of what use were lamps without oil? What avails lighting them? They simply will not be lit.

It is related that years ago when the wireless operator of the Titanic was hammering out his message on that dreadful night, some miles away there was another steamer. Its operator had undressed, and not expecting anything special for the rest of the night had switched off his instrument. As he lay there the fateful message was thumping away at his silent instrument. If only he knew, what difference it would have made! That was an appeal for help. God's message is a message of pardon, of redemption, of hope, of comfort, of courage and strength. But of what use is the message—thump, however hard it might—when the instrument is switched off? We who complain that the Convention has not moved us what instrument have we taken with us?

If a Convention fails who is it who has not done his part? "And He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief" records the scriptural narrative. Their unbelief was an obstacle in the divine path. "Make ye ready the way of the Lord and make His paths straight." There is much spade work to be done in our minds and hearts before the Convention. Four years ago the Christian Union invited Miss Lillian Picken, the noted American lady evangelist of Satarra, to come and conduct a series of revival meetings in our Churches. She wrote saying that if her work was to be of any use it must be preceded in the Churches by an intensive campaign of prayer on the part of individuals and groups. She could not later come on medical grounds.

We have therefore our part to perform. Come therefore with prayer. Come not in unbelief, but in faith. Come expecting. Come seeking. Seek and ye shall find.

The Faith We Proclaim

It is important to realise that the faith of the Church is not primarily a system of general truths, but centres around what may be termed God's "mighty acts." In other words it is not a philosophy; it is a story. It is the story of those unique and miraculous events in which God "bath visited and redeemed His people," events to which authentic witness has been borne in the great documents of our faith, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

No statement of the Church's faith has meaning or significance which does not face the fact of Sin. If the Church's faith is to be vital it must be realistic; it must not minimise or hide the dark aspect of life. It must face that radical wrongness which is at the heart of things; it must reckon with the mystery of a "fallen" world. Nothing is more characteristic of the Bible than its profound insight into the reality of sin and in nothing is the Bible more timeless and relevant. Sin is sometimes spoken of as man's imperfection, a "carry-over" from an earlier stage in his development. Men often prefer to describe it in terms of error or mistake. But all such descriptions are essentially shallow; they do not penetrate the depths of iniquity. The Church has always defined sin in its theological sense, that is to say, in its relationship to God. Seen from that angle the essence of sin is its hostility to God, its refusal of the Divine will, its opposition to the Eternal though confronting the soul.

A classic doctrine of the Church has been the doctrine of Original Sin. We need to recover the deep insight which this doctrine proclaimed and realise that sin is everywhere woven into the texture of human nature. We need to recover the significance of such a statement as that "the whole world lieth in the Evil one" and realise that sin is not individual but cosmic, not only the soul's disease but the wound at the heart of humanity.

We are all tempted to minimise the gravity of sin but the events of our time are driving us to a new awareness of it. There seem to be special periods in the world's history when the abysmal depths of sin are exposed and its demonic quality laid bare. We seem to be living in such a period to-day. Our age is teaching us that sin is the obstinate accomplishment of all man's highest endeavours and noblest achievements, that our new knowledge which has let loose such a wealth of good upon the world has also given a new impetus to the deadly powers of evil. Our poison gases and our bombers are surely illustration enough. Paradoxical as it may seem, the only hopeful interpretation of this tragic world is the theological interpretation, the interpretation which declares that man is a sinner. The Church, in its grave and age-long emphasis upon sin, has been right.

The supreme announcement of the Christian faith is, that against this background of man's sin and guilt, God has acted. From beyond time and history God has come

forth in eternal succour. All the great chapters in the Church's faith are the announcement and celebration of God's saving action and achievement. It has ever been the faith of the Church that in such events as the call of Abraham, the history of a chosen people, the warnings and entreaties of the great prophets, God has acted, but that his unique intervention is seen in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord. Here we are face to face with the great doctrines of the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Resurrection.

There are many aspects of the Incarnation which are full of mystery but the supreme miracle is that God has come in the flesh. In no other way can we describe this indescribable event than by saying that God has come. It has been said that the conviction that in Jesus Christ we find not a man who mirrors the character of God but very God come to seek and save the lost is vital to the Christian faith. That is why, as Professor Harold Roberts has recently said, "the fundamental confession of the Christian Church is the confession of the divinity of our Lord." Another great scholar has expressed it thus: "The central and pivotal dogma of the faith is the Incarnation, taken not as a metaphor... but in its proper sense of an inconceivable act of mercy on the part of Almighty God in human history."

Thus it was that in the course of His ministry Jesus could say: "The Kingdom of God has come upon you". In the person of Christ the heavenly powers had invaded time and history; in Him the Kingdom and Rule of God were present. All his works and words were signs of the Kingdom; the inbreaking of God's supernatural power. Matched against the powers of evil, the hardness and refusal of men's hearts so vividly revealed in His rejection and crucifixion. Our Lord's death was the final and decisive struggle with the powers of sin, and his resurrection was the glorious proof that the victory was complete. The Church has always seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus something stupendous and unique. It has seen nothing less than the decisive act of God, beating and overthrowing sin and robbing death of all its powers. To speak of the death of Christ as the death of a good man who died for the sake of his beliefs and of the resurrection as merely the proof of survival after death, is to empty the Christian faith of meaning. The Cross and the Resurrection were God's final, complete and once-for-all answer to the arrogance and awfulness of man's sin. Henceforth the Kingdom was open to all believers.

Our fathers, with great propriety, spoke of the "finished work of Christ." In the death and resurrection of our Lord something happened which was of cosmic significance, something which had significance for all time and history, something which had significance for the whole human race past, present and future. Some new thing had en-

tered into the texture of the universe; some new relationship had for ever been established between God and man. Something had happened, the fruits of which would for ever remain. It was unprecedented and unrepeatable. It was God's mighty act.

But the story of God's "mighty acts" does not end there. The Cross and the Resurrection were followed by the Day of Pentecost, that creative moment when the Spirit of God came to found and for ever remain with the Church. Here again we see a new moment in the redeeming action of God, God, who had come amongst men in the person of His Son and on the plane of History had wrought redemption, had now come in the Person of the Holy Spirit, to be the Head of a redeemed humanity and the Lord of the Church. It was a real coming; as real as that of the historic Christ. It was an experience so fresh and new that the early Christians exclaimed that hitherto the Holy Spirit had not been given. In the moment of the Spirit's coming the Church was born. We can only speak of the Church as God's accomplishment, not a society contrived by human means; in spite of its blemishes and failures it is the continuation and extension in time of God's great redeeming act. It is the body of Christ.

The Church believes that the final act of God's redemptive purpose is yet to come. It is that act for which we pray when we say: "Thy Kingdom come." In a very real and vital way the Kingdom is already here; "the powers of the age to come" have in Christ broken in upon us and are at work in the world through His Church. But though the Kingdom is here it is here in its hiddenness. We wait for its unveiling; its perfect consummation. That supreme event cannot take place upon the plane of world-history; this finite order cannot contain the final unfolding of God's eternal purpose. There will be a winding up of history, an end to this present world-order, and then will be seen the perfect Rule of God in all its inconceivable glory. This does not mean that what happens here and now is of no final significance but rather the contrary. As Professor Whale has said: "The Christian faith cares profoundly about to-day, because it cares still more profoundly about the Last Day."

It has been well said that the great affirmations of the faith should be sung rather than said. There is a vital link between the faith of the Church and the high moments of the Church's worship. A believing church is a worshipping church and the reality of its worship will be determined by the depth of its faith. All our thinking concerning the Church's faith must at last lead us to the great words, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost," which in themselves are at once a supreme summary of the Christian faith and a great and exalted ascription of glory to God.

R. A. NELSON.

"Beyond the Sacred Page"

When a person lives far from his homeland he always greets one who recently left the home shores with eager questions about the various phases of life there. When Dean Graham of the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology was here recently I subjected him to such a questioning. In reply to my question about the condition of Christian belief among American students he said that there was a marked tendency towards Bible study. No reply could have pleased me more, for such a course will lead to a student generation not only of greater faith, but to a

ledge of the reasons for the faith that is in them, in contrast to an earlier generation which I knew whose acquaintance with the Bible was slight and whose Christian faith, therefore, when present, was well-intentioned but wandering and weak.

The vitality of one's Christian faith is in direct proportion to one's reliance on the Bible. I do not think this is too much to say. For whatever else the Bible is—and it is much else—it is the very life-spring of Christian belief. There is the record of how God called a group of

instrument He could use, and of how in the fullness of time He sent His own Son to complete His revelation of Himself and to fulfil His purpose with men. There are to be found the words of the prophets to their nation, of Christ to His disciples, of the apostles to the first believers. The freshness and simplicity of the birth of our faith has been somehow captured and stored there and all who go to that store are limited only by their capacity in what they may take

Programme of the Annual Jaffna Christian Convention, To be held at the Fort Church on the 28th, 29th, 30th Aug.

THEME: "What * Seek Ye? -- "Come and See", "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters"; 8.30-9 A.M. Season of Prayer and Intercession for the Convention and for personal requests. Leader: Rev. D. T. Niles.

9-10 A.M. Worship Service and Sermon. 28th Rev. S. Kulendran. 29th Rev. V. B. Mutha. 30th Rev. C. Thorpe. (On the 30th there will be a Communion Service at 7.30 A.M. at which the Rev. J. S. Mather will be the celebrant.)

10.15-11 A.M. Bible Study—Leader: Sadhu De Subjects: 28th—You must be born again. 29th—How shall these things be?

30th—Abide in Me The following will be present in the Church to help answer difficulties in Bible Study, Personal Religious Living, the Life of the Church. 11.15-12 noon, Rev. R. C. P. Welch Rev. Albert Lewis Mr. J. V. Dharmarajah

2.30-3.30 P.M. Rev. J. S. Mather Rev. J. A. R. Navaratnam Mr. Lewis Subramaniam 3.30-4.30 P.M. Witness Meetings—in charge: Mr. Lewis Subramaniam. Subjects: 28th Conversion, 29th Compromise, 30th Consolation.

6-7.30 P.M. Evening Rally. Speakers: Rev. D. T. Niles Rev. C. Thorpe

away. Every great movement in the centuries of Christian life has stemmed directly from the Bible. It is there that God's word comes to us with a clarity and power that no other source can own. The statements in this paragraph are not simply the repetition of doctrine or dogma, but are verified by experience in every generation.

But a word or two should be said about our approach to the Bible. Every part is not of equal value nor equally understandable. The gospels can be read and understood and their meaning can find its way to the simplest heart without other aid. But there are other sections, like the books of the prophets and many parts of the letters of St. Paul, for example, where some knowledge of the events and the thought-patterns of the times are necessary for full understanding.

Again, there are two kinds of study: one seeks to know who wrote the various portions of the Bible, when, where and why. It asks, what were the historic facts which helped to shape the form of this word of God? The other kind of study is concerned with listening to God as he speaks through the words of the Bible directly to me and my condition. Both of these are necessary, both should go on together, though not at the same hour, of course. The former kind of study finds its chief excuse in making ever more rich the latter study. The former must have aids—your pastor can tell you about them—but the latter requires at least a few minutes of uninterrupted time each day, the listening mind, and the absolute decision to obey.

Those who will submit themselves to this discipline will soon find out why we refer to the Bible as Holy Writ in the discovery that beyond its sacred pages and speaking through them is the God whose we are, whom we serve, and without whom our lives are empty.

S. K. B.