

EDITORIAL

With Psalm 51 echoing in my ears, it is only right, though a little gloomy, that I should begin with an apology for the late publication of this issue of "The Record". A brave attempt was made to provide the membership of The Church Service Society and the wider readership of "The Record" with a verbatim transcript of last Autumn's Conference at Paisley Abbey.

The principal speakers were recorded on a cassette recorder by our diligent Secretary, but my audio-typist insisted that it should be re-recorded on a Dictaphone for ease of typing. That second recording has been completed, but not in time for this issue of "The Record", already delayed in the hope of providing the transcript herein.

It will form the basis of the next issue of "The Record".

+ + + + +

HOW DID JESUS PRAY?

The Gospels suggest that when Jesus prayed, he did so in a way precisely like our own. Prayer for him did not seem to be something automatic that he could turn on or off as he wished. He had to choose a place (the desert, the mountains, or some lonely place), the right moment and the circumstances that were appropriate for prayer.

He led a very busy life, and it was often difficult for him to find the time to pray. Even at the beginning of his public ministry, Mark tells us that Jesus had to get up long before dawn in order to pray. Sometimes he went off by himself in the evening, or he stayed up late at night. Occasionally, in order to have the quiet that is necessary to prayer, he had the Apostles take him out on the lake in their boat.

Yet, it appears that in spite of all these precautions, Jesus was apparently unable to enjoy any reasonable period of peaceful solitude. There were always

interruptions. People always wanted to see him or have him do something for them.

It was necessary for Jesus to withdraw in order to regain his calm and interior peace. Do we not do the same thing - walking the dog in the early glimmerings of day, sitting or kneeling in our own churches or side-chapels far from telephones, newspapers or the television ?

Prayer is simply the act of becoming aware of God's gifts. It is remembering that we have a Father, that our Father has already given us whatever we could ask him for, and that he has given it more generously and lovingly than we could possibly expect him to. Therefore, when we pray insistently for something that we do not have, is it because we hope to wear down God's resistance to giving it ? Or is it perhaps that we hope to wear down our own resistance to receiving ?

This last Term the Eucharist has been celebrated in the School Chapel at 7.30 am on Friday mornings - the School's "Rising-Bell" time. Up to 16 pupils are present at these weekly celebrations - perhaps 3 of the 16 are "regulars". The others come because they want to, are called to, or need to. To enable me to be "clothed and in my right mind", having walked the dog and be in the Chapel at around 7.10 am - it means a 5.00 am start.

As the Chapel Bell rings out across the Earn valley at 7.20 am I am conscious of the regular offering of prayer and the Eucharist by monastic communities through the centuries whose earnest prayers stem from the time when the Early Church confidently moved throughout the Roman Empire, the Celtic monks strode the coastlines of our islands, when, again, the faithful offering of prayer withstood the vicissitudes of "Persecution", "Dissolution", "Reformation", "Darwinism" and "Atheism".

The only true prayer for a Christian consists in imitating the prayer of Jesus. It is not a prayer of slaves and servants but of sons, full of confidence and assurance: "Father ... I made your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love you had for me may be in them, and I in them."

Gaelic Lurgan