

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 37. No. 1.

JANUARY, 1970

THE WORD OF GOD FOR 1970

"I AM THE LORD: I CHANGE NOT." (MALACHI 3:6)

"We wither and perish, but naught changeth **THEE**"

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND
FOR EVER." (HEBREWS 13:8)

"Yesterday, today, for ever Jesus is the same:
All may change, but Jesus never: Glory to His Name"

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Carlton Melling

MANY brethren have recently drawn attention to the fact that in churches of Christ a generation has grown up and another is rising who have little or no knowledge of the history of what is termed the "Restoration of New Testament Christianity." Quite an appreciable literature exists on the subject, published especially in the United States, Australia and Great Britain. But little of this literature is easily available. Many of the books are out of print, and copies that exist are getting rarer and more valuable. One result is that those who possess them are understandably reluctant to make them available for reading or study. There is much ignorance as to who we are and what are our objects and what justification we have for remaining apart from the religious denominations because of any distinctive witness we bear.

In such an atmosphere of uncertainty it is all the more easy for teaching and practices to be adopted which, when examined, are found to be foreign to the New Testament, on which we claim to be based. There is the tendency to follow tradition simply because "other churches believe it or do it." Once this tendency sets in there is no logical stopping place, and it becomes easier to embrace beliefs and to practise customs for which there is no divine authority.

Hence, in view of these dangers, there is a growing demand for information and teaching on New Testament Christianity, yet a feeling of frustration as to where these can be obtained. To attempt in some small way to satisfy this need I have revised a series of articles on the subject, written for the "S.S." during 1945. God willing, we intend to reprint this series in monthly sections during 1970, so far as possible. Here is the first:—

I: GENERAL SURVEY OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Why Restoration and not Reformation? It is true that the leaders in the Movement sometimes called themselves Reformers and their work was designated a "Reformation." But when we speak of the Reformation we usually mean that of the sixteenth century, when the tyrannical power of the Church of Rome was broken and Protestantism established. A comparison of the great movement with the one whose history is to be sketched in this and the following articles will show why it is correct to speak of the former as the Reformation and the latter as a Restoration.

In the first place the Reformation was not purely a religious movement, but the outcome of forces intellectual, political, social *and* religious. The movement was led, guided or supported by kings, princes, nobles and burghers (citizens). In some countries the support of the secular powers was obtained, and even war resorted to, to advance or defend the Reformation. Union was entered into between Church and State: Luther looked upon the State as sacred, and its head as head of the Church. In contrast, the attempt in the first quarter of the nineteenth century to restore Christianity as it was at the beginning was a purely spiritual movement. The men leading it were of little or no standing in worldly circles, though in some cases they were men of great intellectual power. They resorted to no earthly means for the propagation of their teaching, and allied themselves with no influential or secular powers. But more, they were "mighty in the scriptures" and, by their burning zeal in preaching and teaching the word of God, cleared away much rubbish which had been piled upon the foundation of Christ's church, and, instead of the traditions of men, gave authority for what they did with a "Thus saith the Lord."

Again, the Reformation was to reform existing abuses in the Church of Rome. When the Church refused to tolerate such reforms the Reformers left that Church. Though we recognise what a tremendous upheaval was brought about, especially when we consider the times and circumstances in which the Protestant Reformation took place, yet the Reformers did not go deeply enough, or far enough back. Most of them were ready to accept and submit to the Church of Rome if she corrected certain abuses. They failed to see that those abuses were the logical results of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching. Even reformation of doctrine was not enough: the roots of the evils lay deeper—in departure from the word of God. And the Reformers never fully returned to *that* standard.

This the Restoration leaders set themselves to do. They required a "Thus saith the Lord" or "approved scripture precedent" for their teaching and practice. They rejected tenets of however ancient tradition or authority if no support for them were found in the Bible. They appealed to the scriptures as a rational whole, interpreting scripture not by the Fathers but by scripture. And they refused to adopt the mystical theological jargon through which the meaning of the Bible was hidden, but they spoke of Bible things by Bible names.

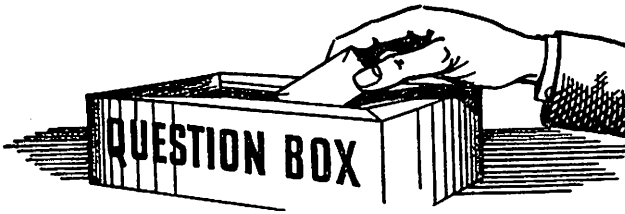
In the third place the Protestant Reformation resulted in the formation of many sects and denominations, each having its own "Confession of Faith." Every Church stated the terms of its own communion, thus sanctioning sectarianism. While most of the Roman "sacraments" were rejected, equally unscriptural forms of admission to the various communions were enforced. Moreover in theory—and sometimes in practice—the various sects were almost as intolerant as the Romanists—witness Luther's obstinate insistence upon consubstantiation (the "real Presence" of Christ in the bread at the Lord's table) in opposition to the Swiss Reformer Zwingli, and the fearful persecution meted out to the Anabaptists ("adult immersionists").

The Restoration of New Testament Christianity meant the rejection of all sects as equally without the authority of Jesus Christ, the Head of the church. In the New Testament was no Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational or Methodist Church, but simply the church of Jesus Christ. Thomas Campbell in his "Declaration and Address," 1809, stated that: "The Church of Christ on earth is one; consisting of all that profess faith in Christ and obedience according to the Scriptures . . . There

ought to be no schisms or divisions. They ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing, and to be perfectly joined in the same mind and judgment."

Fourthly the greatness of the Protestant Reformation lies not only in what was done but what was made possible. What was accomplished was that the colossal power of the Church of Rome was overthrown, no longer to hold the nations in fear and subjection; men were taught that they could know God for themselves without the intervention of usurping priests; the great doctrine of justification by faith was brought to the front (though in the reaction from justification by works the other extreme—justification by faith *only*—not taught in scripture, was insisted upon).

But in spite of these great accomplishments the Reformation was never completed. Men spoiled the still more glorious results which would have followed, by their ambition, quarrelling and bigotry. Divisions and multiplication of sects ensued. And the same is true of the noble Restoration Movement. Man when acting apart from God spoils whatever he sets his hands upon. Especially in religious matters is this so. When man acts upon his own authority and departs from the word of God, the work of God is marred. The history of all noble movements has its lessons for us. As with the Reformation, so the work of Restoration has never been completed: the pioneering days are not ended, for there is still need for the simple, original gospel, there is still error to expose; and, indeed, there is need for the Restoration of New Testament Christianity within churches of Christ themselves.



Conducted by
James Gardiner

"What is the teaching in the New Testament regarding the taking of the oath, say in a court of law. If we are called as witnesses should we take the prescribed oath?"

The taking of an oath was authorised and recommended under the law of Moses, and falsehood under oath condemned: "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God; I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:12); "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name" (Deut. 6:13); "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

It is very important, however, to notice that the practice did not *originate* in Moses' law but had merely been *carried over into* the Mosaic dispensation. The practice of swearing in God's name goes back to Abraham, and the first instance is recorded in Gen. 21:23. There is a close affinity, you will notice, between lying under oath and taking God's name in vain, for the one amounts to the other. The essence of taking an oath is that we call upon God to witness that what we say will be the truth, and to hold us guilty if we should lie. The writer to the Hebrews puts it succinctly when he says that "an oath for confirmation, amongst men, is the end of all strife" (Heb. 6:16).

Light-Hearted Oaths

Over the years, like everything else, the people became careless in the use of the things of God and the Jews in their oath-taking began to get frivolous and vain. Oaths were lightly taken and just as lightly broken. The Jews came to believe that, so long as they did not actually invoke God's name in the oath, it could be broken without serious consequences. Thus they substituted in place of God's name the names of various other things, from false gods to inanimate objects. I suppose that to a limited degree, people

quite often today follow the example by trying to avoid taking God's name in vain in such profane exclamations as "By God" or "My God" by substituting "By Heavens" or "My Goodness."

Such then seemed to be the position when Jesus came amongst His people, and so it was that in Matt. 5:33-37 Jesus condemns them in their oath-taking: "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time; Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform to the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Not only, then, did the Jews not swear in God's name but they swore by almost everything but God's name—the heavens; the earth; Jerusalem; their own heads and so on. Jesus points out that not only are such things eminently unsuitable as witnesses to the truth of statements uttered but being the work of God's hands were in effect equal to swearing in God's name (although they had been specifically used to avoid using the name of God). This is perhaps best illustrated a little later in Matthews' gospel—in chapter 23:16-22, when Jesus scathingly deals with the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees on oath taking: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon." And so to swear by the temple involves swearing by him that dwells therein and he that swore by the throne of God was, wittingly or otherwise, swearing by him that sitteth therein, *i.e.* by God. Thus Jesus short-circuits their little arrangement whereby to swear by the temple wouldn't be regarded as binding, but to swear by the *gold* of the temple would be, and so on.

What Jesus Taught

In Matt. 5 therefore Jesus, disgusted with the pathetic cunning of the Jews in this matter, says that all of this frivolity and evil purpose in oath-taking was to cease forthwith: "But I say unto you, swear not at all." Simply answer any question, with a "Yes" or "No" (*i.e.* with brevity) and stop this tiresome, useless and evil practice of punctuating all of your answers and conversation with worthless oaths. The whole thing had not only become pointless but wicked and a travesty of the original intention.

The foregoing is a rough summary of the reasons behind the outburst of Jesus but the important issue before us relative to our question is, did Jesus mean that He was prohibiting *all* forms of oath-taking (including the formal or judicial oath) in His statement, "Swear not at all"; or did He mean swear not at all *in the idle and foolish manner* (which He subsequently describes) to which the Jews had stooped. With reference to being placed under oath to speak the truth in a court of law it would seem that Jesus Himself submitted to such a thing at His trial before the Sanhedrim—Caiaphas administering the oath in the form "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). So then, perhaps, although not allowed personally to swear oaths to all and sundry at our own behest in general conversation, we may permit ourselves to be placed upon oath by others in office, say a judge, to speak the truth in the sight of "the living God." There seems little doubt that Jesus was being placed upon oath in this instance (see Lev. 5:1 and 1 Sam. 14:24-26).

We have also, I suggest, examples of the apostle Paul swearing by an oath to the Christians at Corinth in which he says "I call upon God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth" (2 Cor. 1:23). This surely is a plain example of a man swearing before God that he is telling the truth. In Gal. 1:20 the same apostle says, "Now the things which I write, behold, before God I lie not" (see

also Rom. 1:9; Phil. 1:8; Rev. 10:5 & 6). Paul then, apparently, did not shrink from swearing (or taking an oath before God—the difference being academic) to his brethren that he was telling them the truth. Does this mean then that this type of oath was not included in Jesus' statement that we should, "Swear not at all"? Can we deduce from this that on the rare and proper occasions where the situation demands it (e.g. a court of judiciary) we can, and should, be adjured before God by the judge to tell the truth, or alternatively (like Paul) we can volunteer an oath before God that we shall not be guilty of perjury?

Another View

Not all disciples of Christ would make such a deduction and many feel that "swear not at all" has the sweeping meaning it appears to have, and that nothing even vaguely resembling an oath is permissible. Recognising this point of view, judges in the courts are prepared to administer what is known as a "Solemn Affirmation" to those who have a conscientious objection to taking the official oath. The difference in the two lies mainly in that the words "swear by Almighty God" are omitted in deference to Jesus' "swear not at all." In avoiding the words "swear" and "God" in the "Solemn Affirmation" are we not back in the Jewish position of affirming our truthfulness but avoiding words such as "God"? I sometimes feel that the difference between the affirmation and the oath is merely academic. However each of us should study the matter well for ourselves and after weighty consideration of all the facts be persuaded in our own minds. Anyone in doubt, and having to appear in the witness box, can quite easily say to the judge that, on religious grounds, he would prefer to receive the "Solemn Affirmation."

(More questions please to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JANUARY 1970

4—Isaiah 28:1-22	1 Peter 2
11—Psalm 34	1 Peter 3
18—Proverbs 11:1-20	1 Peter 4
25—Proverbs 3:21-35	1 Peter 5

A MESSAGE FROM "THE BIG FISHERMAN"

I AM aware that I am using the title of a book about the apostle Peter, but the thought is that though we know nothing of his physical make-up, this beautiful, sympathetic, warm-hearted letter proves him to have been big in the finer and better sense. He remembers that when he was in a hostile company, he shrank from confessing his Master, and perhaps also the occasion when he withdrew from Gentile company to please his Jewish brethren. He knew well what human weakness can do. Hence he sounds the

note of warning and encouragement to those who are suffering for their faith, and are likely to be further tested.

Persecution of Christians

We should know something of the conditions of the time to be able to appreciate the great need for Christians to be upheld by divine grace, and to be able to place complete reliance on the word of God. I suppose there are very few British people who have had to withstand anything like the trials which were the daily portion of the first Christians. The apostles were regarded in some quarters as "the off-scouring of all things" (1 Cor. 4:13). Paul gives the attitude they adopted—"being defamed, we intreat"—in the same passage. This is the point at which every human being gets enraged: "We are being unjustly treated, and we are going to get our own back." Pastor Wurmbrand writes that all was well in the Rumanian communist prison. The guards put the prisoners to the most horrible and nameless torments—and enjoyed it: the prisoners bore it

without resentment, and God upheld them—so all were happy! That such things are happening in the modern world (especially among those who claim to exhibit brotherly love instead of capitalist exploitation) is a comment on the supposed progress of humanity—evolution.

Misunderstanding of the Christian religion made Christians the subject of suspicion. They were called atheists because they denied the heathen gods. They were accused of vice because they exhibited such wonderful love to one another. They were accused of eating flesh and drinking blood because they observed the Lord's Supper among themselves only, and often in private because of their enemies. Their refusal to burn incense to the Emperor was regarded as treason. It is well known that Nero laid the blame of his fire of Rome upon them as a way of avoiding the blame himself. We should mention the stake, the crucifixion, the arena as realities to be faced when accepting and practising the Christian faith in those days. All through the Roman Empire they were in danger of public and private persecution. The unbelieving Jews were the first enemies but their instigation to persecution in some measure recoiled upon themselves as worshippers of the true God—anti-semitism was rife, and this was not surprising in view of their contempt and hatred of Gentiles.

Ignorance about the early days of Christianity may blind us to its most wonderful impact on the world. We have got to realise that the mightiest empire the world had seen, and its most durable, tried with all its force to stamp out Christianity, and not only failed to do so but was brought to its knees by a mere caricature of Christianity. When Constantine was "converted" the apostasy had come, but there were sufficient faithful and real Christians to keep the true light shining.

Spiritual Darkness

Ignorance of the "dark ages" may blind us to the truth that "the word of God is powerful to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:5), for the whole force of the apostasy was exercised to withhold the word of God from the common people, by destroying and burning the translations

over hundreds of years. Fortunately the early monastery had its Scriptorium where manuscripts were preserved and copied with great care. But (as an example) Pope Innocent III in 1199 wrote, "It was once rightly ordained in the divine law that a beast that should touch the mountain should be stoned, obviously lest any simple and unlearned person should presume to reach as far as the sublimity of Holy Scripture or to preach it to others." The policy of burning or putting to torture any who dared to defy authority in this matter was so rigorously pursued that it was stated in May, 1514, "There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more." But this was the very time when Luther was formulating his theses, and long after Wycliffe had issued his English translation, and the Lollards had been preaching Christ in Britain.

So the need felt by Peter has never been removed, and is in place today, but the need for the encouragements is in place without persecution. The truths the letter contains are full of instruction and help today. Let us read them earnestly, prayerfully, and make real, practical application of them in our own lives, so that the same Holy Spirit Who caused the words to be written may indeed continue to dwell in us in 1970.

R. B. SCOTT

JESUS MY PATIENT: A NURSE'S PRAYER

Dearest Lord, may I see Thee to-day and every day, in the person of Thy sick and whilst nursing them minister unto Thee.

Though Thou hidest Thyself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognise Thee and say, Jesus, my Patient, how sweet it is to serve Thee. Lord, give me this seeing faith, then my work will never be monotonous.

I will ever find a new joy in humouring the fancies and gratifying the wishes of all poor sufferers. Oh, beloved sick, how doubly dear you are to me when you personify Christ, and what a privilege is mine to be allowed to nurse you. Sweetest Lord, make me appreciate the dignity of my high vocation and its many responsi-

bilities. Never permit me to disgrace it by giving way to coldness, unkindness, or impatience; and my God, while Thou art Jesus my patient, deign also to be my patient Jesus, bearing with my many faults looking only to my intention which is always to love and serve Thee in the person of each and every one of Thy sick.

Lord, increase my faith, bless my efforts and sanctify my work now and forever.

Amen

WOMEN'S PAGE

Conducted by Harold Baines

Text for the coming year: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." — (Prov. 3:6).

Greetings and sincere good wishes for 1970. And to our Scottish readers, "A guid new year ta yin and a."

Dear Sisters,

For some time the Editor has known and felt the need for a page specially for women, being aware that you were not being catered for in our little paper in the way you should. One difficulty has been finding someone willing and able to take on the work of conducting it. As I have sought on occasions to remedy that by writing articles with you in mind the Editor has asked me to undertake such a page for at least twelve months. So here you are, sisters, at last with a page of your own—that is, if you can put up with a mere man running the feature!

We would emphasise, however, that it is a "Women's Page" and not a man's, so we invite your co-operation with ideas, thoughts and written contributions: indeed anything that will create interest and be of help to women, young or old, wherever they may be.

We learned with astonishment last summer while serving the church at Kentish Town that we have readers as far away as California; we met some of them on holiday. [We have readers much farther away than California, in New Zealand and Australia, literally "the uttermost parts of the earth"! — ED.] So, wherever you are, send your ideas, please, to the following address: Harold Baines,

21 High Street, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Bucks.

* * *

We have three aims in view in running this page: 1, Something for you to look forward to; 2, Something for you to read with interest; 3, To lay it aside with satisfaction and to look forward to the next one.

I shall of course include little talks of my own based on the Text for the Month at the head of the page. Our message this month is a New Year one. Next month we hope to start a short series called "Lesser Lights," based on Gen. 1:16, reviewing some of the little-known characters revealed in Scripture, yet used of God in such a way that their actions, if not always their names, have gone down in the sacred record and influenced history and taught us the great lesson that great and small can be used to His glory.

* * *

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Our text suggests three points: Ways, Knowledge, Direction.

Think of the ways of life—not just the way we travel. A way can be a road, a street or lane. Ways are also actions, things done that are characteristic of persons, communities or industries; we may say of a person, "Well, she's all right but I don't like her ways," meaning there are some of that person's actions with which we disagree. We speak of a way of Life, a particular way of living: we show this most in family life. Think of the myriads of families in the world, yet it would be hard to find two alike. They may have basic principles, nay they will need to have these principles or they would soon cease to be a family. But their ways of life will be totally different from each other in leisure, work, interests, etc.; yet enjoying self-expression, that most important liberty which if taken away deprives one of freedom. Parents inclined to be possessive with their children, please note. To get back to our text: this good old proverb says, "In ALL thy ways [whatever or wherever those ways may be] acknowledge Him." This thought will act as a preventive from going where we ought not.

The word "acknowledge" here means,

"know," "recognise," "respond." If we see someone we know we acknowledge her with a nod, a word of greeting, or a wave of the hand. In this case we are invited to "take knowledge" of God, to recognise His sovereignty in all we do or say or wherever we go—which brings us to our next thought:

DIRECTION

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths." In other words He will give guidance. If on a journey, we don't hesitate to ask even a perfect stranger the way to our destination if we are on unfamiliar ground. How much more so in the journey of life.

Once as a small boy I was playing cricket, and not being satisfied with my side's score, when my turn came to bat I decided to liven things up a bit. So I lashed out at my first ball and hit it straight through a kitchen window. Patience was never my outstanding virtue. However, the party concerned forgave my lapse—but I still had to pay for the damage! How true also of life: God readily forgives the penitent sinner, but we cannot always escape the penalty of our actions. What a blessing it is to realise the truth behind our text! And while committing our ways to him learning also another great truth, "Wait patiently for the Lord" (Psa. 40:1).

Another point to bear in mind here is that a wise and all-seeing God has denied us the ability to see into the future. Possibly some of you will have read your horoscopes in periodicals and daily papers, purporting to forecast your fortune for the day or year as the case may be. We find it rather amusing to compare one paper with another and note how they contradict one another. No: the year 1970 is in the hands of God and only He knows the end from the beginning. This year will bring us into many and varied pathways, some will marry or be given in marriage; to some there will be times of joy, to others of sorrow, to some the end of the road. How much better it will be, whatever the year may have in store, if we follow out our text and seek God's guidance "in ALL our ways."

The Christian life offers us in this world of chaos, certainty. In a maze of

conflicting roads we find The Way. In a multiplicity of conflicting philosophies we find Truth. Among a world of false leaders we find Christ, who said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," and at the "end of the road" life everlasting.

The sentiments of the following poem will find an echo in all our hearts:—

When as a child I laughed and wept,
Time Crept.
When as a Youth I dreamed and talked,
Time Walked.
When I became a full-grown man,
Time Ran.
Then as I older grew, Time Flew.
And all too soon, while travelling on,
I find, Time Gone.

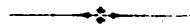
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IN LIGHTER VEIN

In this section we hope to publish little items, anecdotes, etc., true from life if possible, showing, as our title suggests, Life in Lighter Vein

Little Mary, the ten-year-old daughter of the house had the habit of dropping things, to the great annoyance of her parents. She did, however, try to mend her ways but without much success. On New Year's morning Mary, having been sent to fetch something from the kitchen, the family heard a resounding crash, followed by an exasperated, "Oh dear, there goes my New Year Resolution already!"

A Happy New Year to you all.



MALAWI MISSION APPEAL

Dear brethren,

The following letter is written to enlighten those who subscribed to this appeal of the latest and, alas, final news concerning this venture. As you will know, we at Wallacestone sought to assist the 21st Street church at Oklahoma, U.S.A., in sending Bro. James Grant and his family to Malawi to work with the churches there. We regret to inform you that Bro. Grant's permit has been refused and indeed we have just learned that permission for a white missionary of any description from the U.K. or the United States has

been rejected. Bro. Jerry Cutter, who visited Malawi with a view to pleading our case, was told on his arrival at the airport that "he was welcome to stay for three weeks, but if asked for a missionary to be allowed into the country, he had twenty-four hours to leave Malawi."

This being the case we would take this opportunity of asking you to advise us what you wish to have done with your donations. Some of you when sending it gave alternative causes you wanted it transferred to, but most of you, like ourselves, did not expect such a situation to arise, and so we appeal to you to inform us of your desires relative to it. We shall be delighted to either return it to you, or transfer it elsewhere. If however we hear nothing from you before June 1st, 1970, we shall use it to assist the brethren in Malawi to remain strong and steadfast, continuing in the Lord's will, through the sending of tracts and New Testaments, etc. Brethren, thanks be to God, from disappointment comes consolation: Having been left for a few months to their own resources, but, fearing they were not yet ready for such a blow, they have demonstrated their ability and faithfulness to such an extent that the last news from Bro. Kasendah, the secretary of the Blantyre church, was that they had established three new congregations in that area. And so brethren, let us hear from you, while we solicit your prayers for these African brethren whose task is great. Once again our thanks for the help which you willingly gave and our thanks also to Bro. Melling and the "S.S." for the assistance they freely rendered.

Yours in Christ's service.

Brothers John Baird

Tom Read

James Grant

For the Wallacestone and
21st Street churches

P.S.—We have reason to believe the original cause of the present trouble was the carrying of stories to the authorities by certain persons professing to follow the Lord; but the official reason given is that we are an offshoot of the original movement in Malawi or Nyasaland, as it was

then known, but we in the U.K. know who propagated the gospel there. God will certainly reward those unfaithful brethren for their evil speaking.—James Grant.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Blackburn (New Wellington Street).—

During November 22nd to 30th, 1969, the church was encouraged in her witness by the faithful services of Bro. John Dodsley (Kirkby-in-Ashfield). His messages were a source of inspiration to us all and a great comfort in these troubled times. He preached boldly in the gospel meetings on the theme "God hath spoken" through His Son Christ Jesus and by His Word of truth. The power of the gospel was manifest amongst us when Lucy Armstrong was added to the Lord's Body, by her faith and baptism, on Saturday evening, November 29th. May God continue to bless her in her walk with Him, and bless too our Bro. John in his labours.

R.R.

Wigan (Scholes).—Bro. Alfred Marsden, from the church in Albert Street, Newtown, conducted a four nights' mission from Saturday, December 13th, to Tuesday, the 16th, 1969. Although the weather was severe for the period there were fairly good attendances at all the meetings, with good support from the district congregations of Hindley, Albert Street and Ince. Best of all was the presence of several friends from religious denominations, especially Methodists. To all of these we offer our warmest thanks for their help.

Bro. Marsden's messages were forceful, relevant and true to God's word. Especially memorable was that on "The Gospel and Modern Society," in which our civilisation and its morals were examined in the light of God's word, and the responsibilities of Christians set before us. Bro. Marsden used with good effect a projector portraying on the screen quotations from scripture and thoughts bearing upon his messages.

We thank our brother most deeply for the services he rendered to the churches and the encouragement given to "walk in the old paths." We are grateful that such brethren from local congregations are able

and willing to serve in this way. This year the church has held two such missions and plans in the future to concentrate on using the abilities we have among ourselves to build up the Body of Christ and to aim to save souls.

OBITUARY

Blackburn (Hamilton Street). — The church has suffered the loss by bereavement of Sister Elizabeth Berry. Through physical debility she had been unable to attend the meetings for some months, but had always maintained her faith and interest in the church. In spite of her handicap she was a jovial person, always ready to help those less fortunate than herself. We sorrow, but “not as those without hope,” and live in expectation with her, of seeing Him, “whom having not seen we love.” J.P.

Ilkeston. — Sister Kate Gregory, the beloved wife of Fred Gregory, died on November 22nd, at the age of 79 years. The funeral services were conducted by the writer at the church building in Ilkeston and at Kirk Hallam Cemetery on November 27th.

“Auntie Kate,” as she was affectionately known to a great host of members and friends, was born on February 18th, 1890. She was baptised into Christ on June 22nd, 1909. She and Brother Gregory had been married for almost 57 years. They began their married life in a small cottage in very hard times; but on the first Sunday they had in their own home they provided hospitality for a visiting preacher. They decided together that hospitality should be a sacred obligation of that home—and truly it was. It is significant that on November 2nd, just a day or two before she was taken to hospital in extreme weakness, Sister Gregory was performing this same ministry of love—caring for the visiting preacher and his wife.

It would be impossible to estimate the number of brothers and sisters who have enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Gregory home—people whose lives have been touched and enriched by our sister's loving service. The writer is just one of that great company. He speaks for many

more in saying “Thank you, Lord, for ‘Auntie Kate,’ whose memory will ever be a sweet fragrance in our lives.” Only the Lord can assess the final influence of such Christlike love and service.

Shortly before she died, our sister quoted this hymn to her husband:

“I have such a wonderful Saviour,
Who helps me wherever I go,
That I must be telling His goodness,
That everybody should know.

He helps me when trials surround me,
His grace and His goodness to show,
Oh, how can I help but adore Him,
That everybody should know.

My life and my love I will give Him,
And faithfully serve Him below,
Who brought me wondrous salvation,
That everybody should know.”

We cannot help feeling sorrow at the parting; but we do not sorrow like those who have no hope. We know that “Auntie Kate” sleeps in Jesus. We look forward to renewed fellowship with her, and all God's faithful ones, when the saved are gathered home to glory.

“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying: ‘Write this: Happy are the dead who from now on die in the service of the Lord!’ ‘Certainly so,’ answers the Spirit. ‘They will enjoy rest from their hard work; for they take with them the results of their service’” (Revelation 14:13).

We commend Brother Gregory and the family to the grace and comfort of our Father.

A. E. Winstanley

THANKS

Dear Bro. Melling,

May I thank sincerely all who sent letters and messages of loving sympathy to me on the death of my dear wife.

It would be impossible for me to answer them individually, but I do want all to know how grateful I am. It has been a great help to me, and to the family, to know that the brethren in Christ have remembered us at the throne of grace.

It has shown how wonderfully sweet is the fellowship of the saints.

The Lord bless you all.

Fred Gregory

SISTER K. GREGORY

An Appreciation

Ilkeston.—It was with a feeling of deep sorrow we heard of the passing of our beloved sister in Christ. "Aunty Kit," as she was affectionately known to children and adults alike, was a true example of a Christian.

Many who knew her and who have received hospitality from her husband and Kit in their home will understand how she was able to help and encourage. Kit's Christian personality portrayed itself in her life. This, coupled with her good humour on numerous occasions, gave strength to many during trying times.

Whenever a meeting took place in the district we all looked to see Fred and Kit together in fellowship with the brethren and giving their support. On many occasions in the past, two years since her operation Kit could with reason have stayed at home, but her love for the Master and her brethren was greater than her affliction, and as usual she would be found in her place at the meetings of the church.

Kit amazed everyone after her operation, for after a very short time she was labouring again for the Master and showing hospitality to brethren. This she did to the end, as we visiting brethren can record, even though she herself at times was not well.

We know the church at Ilkeston feel her passing and miss her much, but none more than her husband Fred, our faithful brother in Christ. To him may I on behalf of the brethren at Loughborough (and personally on behalf of my family and myself) say how much we all loved her and will miss her. Yet this we know, brethren, she has "fought a good fight and kept the faith."

We commend our brother to the Lord in our prayers and pray that he may be strengthened and blessed at this time.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . They rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

Oh, brethren, that the Church were blessed with many, many more "Aunty Kits."

On behalf of the church at Loughborough.

Barrie A. Sharpe

Wigan (Scholes).—On November 29th, one day after her 70th birthday, Sister Margaret Kneller "fell asleep in Jesus," and was laid to rest in Wigan Cemetery on December 4th.

The words "fell asleep in Jesus" perfectly express the death of such a beloved sister in Christ. She had suffered quietly for many years without others, even her most intimate, knowing, for she did not mention her own sufferings in her concern for the well-being of others. Her death was typical of her life, for as she "fell asleep in Jesus" so she lived in Jesus. She was gentle, gracious and understanding, "slow to anger" and compassionate. Because of her great experience in service of Christ and her sympathy towards the needs of others, Sis. Kneller was able to help, comfort and strengthen those who sought her wise and reliable counsel in spiritual things. Without her adopting any attitude or position she was looked up to as the leader and the voice of the women in the church. For the loss of such a saint of God, and because the church will miss her service and fellowship, we grieve. Yet with our grief there is the joy of realisation of the certainty of Christ's resurrection and, because of that, of the rising again of His people to eternal life.

Sis. Kneller had met with the church in Scholes, Wigan, for the past thirty years, joining us from the church in Albert Street. From the beginning she was an active worker, a sound teacher in the Bible school and of the women in the church, and a deeply spiritually-minded Christian. For such a life and service we thank God. Truly of her it can be said "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. They rest from their labours and their works follow them."

She was mother of a deeply affectionate family of three sons and one daughter. These we commend, with her beloved husband, to the love of our heavenly Father, whom we know will comfort them. One of her sons, John, is a servant of the churches in the Edinburgh district, in teaching and preaching the word of God. Several grandchildren are regular attenders in the Bible school in Scholes.

"Blest be her memory, and blest
Her bright example be."

COMING EVENTS

Blackridge.—The annual social meeting will be held, God willing, on Saturday, 28th March, 1970, in the Seafield Hall. Tea will be served at 4 p.m.

John McCallum

SPRING CONFERENCE

The church at Eastwood have kindly agreed to entertain the conference in the Spring, that is on Saturday, 28th March. The business session in the afternoon will mainly concentrate on Evangelism and in particular concern itself with a "reconstitution of the Committee." We repeat, brethren, this is your concern, note the date and book it. Further news later.

T. Woodhouse, Secretary

MARRIAGE

Kentish Town.—On 22nd November in Hope Chapel, Brother Adeeb Abu-Alwan to Sister Rihab Zraik, both from Israel. May the Lord bless them richly and through them the church here.

Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. (Deut. 33, 25).

EACH of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and He will not send us on any journey for which He does not equip us well.

IS THIS YOU ?

Sometime when you're feeling important,
Sometime when your ego's in bloom;
Sometime when you take it for granted
You're the best qualified in the room;
Sometime when you feel that your going
Would leave an unfillable hole.
Just follow this simple instruction
And see how it humbles your soul:—

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it, up to the wrist;
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining,
Is a measure of how you'll be missed.
You may splash all you please, when you enter,

You can stir up the water galore,
But stop! and you'll find in a minute
That it looks quite the same as before.

The moral in this quaint example
Is that you do the best that you can.
Be proud of yourself; but remember—
There's no indispensable man.

"Woodstock Bulletin"

* * *

Do something useful every day. Don't retire.
Don't think, "How are they treating me?"
but "How am I treating them?"
Don't count slights, but count your blessings.

"Woodstock Bulletin"

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