

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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A REPLY TO "AN OPEN LETTER"

Dear Editor,

I refer to the "Open Letter" on evangelistic co-operation printed as the leading article in the June issue of the "Scripture Standard."

The basic argument presented rests on the false assumption that (a) the preaching of the gospel to the point where one is immersed for remission of sins, and (b) the things pertaining to the Lord's table, are two separate watertight compartments. We are being told in effect, that we may unite for the one purpose while being divided upon the other. Alexander Campbell has been quoted in an attempt to give some semblance of reason to a proposal which is wholly irrational.

I would invite brethren to examine this quotation in more detail: ". . . but in order to this [co-operation] Christians must regard the church as a community . . . which under Christ AS THE SUPREME HEAD . . . KING . . . AND LAWGIVER . . . has the conquest of the whole world in its prayers, aims, plans, and efforts." Place the emphasis on the Lordship of the Saviour, and you have a clear idea of what A. Campbell meant to convey. The commands of the great Lawgiver prior to the crucifixion, Matt. 28:19-20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them . . . TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I command you . . ." The will of Christ for the church on earth is summed up for us here in the Great Commission, and we are informed that the WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL is to bring men into the kingdom of God AS SUBJECTS to the King, and TO OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS in that kingdom.

Foremost among the things pertaining to the kingdom of God on earth; first among the commandments to the people of Christ, is the observance of the Lord's table (Acts 2:41, 42). This observance was intended by the Lord to be an open demonstration of our oneness in him, and the Holy Spirit has therefore left no doubt as to the nature of this ceremony, and the manner in which it is to be observed. The commandment to preach, and the commandment to observe the Lord's table in his own appointed way are given in the same breath. In the latter, we demonstrate our faith in the atoning death of the Lord, *i.e.* in the gospel (1 Cor. 11:26). The object of the gospel is to bring men under the rule of Christ, which includes the keeping of the feast, and continuing in the way of life according to the apostles' doctrine. There is no point in being baptised if we have not repented, and if we have no intention of keeping the commandments of Christ. When one deliberately BREAKS the commandment of Christ by interfering with the Divinely appointed order of the things pertaining to the Lord's table, he breaks the covenant of God.

Much has been written and spoken on the precise point which has caused so much trouble in the church in recent years. Views have been expressed at some length in the "S.S."; discussions have taken place both in public and in private; offers to debate the issue have repeatedly been made by loyal brethren and refused by the adversary. One wonders where Bros. Dodsley and Makin have been that they should express such ignorance of the publicity and the attempts which have been made to air the views of both sides on this issue.

With regard to "party shibboleths," it is said by those who have deserted the Christ-given pattern that their "practice" at the Lord's table is NOT A MATTER OF FAITH. Where shall a man stand in the judgement if he breaks the command of the LAW-GIVER and so divides the house of God for that which he does not even consider a matter of faith? Where is his avowed love for his brethren from whom he is separated by his own faithless practice? How does he expect the gospel (for which he expresses so much zeal) to be effectively preached, or the kingdom to stand when it is so divided against itself because of a practice which he stubbornly adheres to, and which is not even a matter of faith to him?

We have here a parallel to the position set forth by Alexander Campbell in *The Christian System*. He states: "In our ecclesiastical pilgrimage we have occasionally met with some vehement declaimers against human written creeds, and pleaders for the Bible alone, who were all the while preaching up the opinions of 'saint' Arius or 'saint' Athanasius . . . The Bible alone is the Bible only—in word and in deed, in profession and in practice; this alone can reform the world and save the Church. As the Bible was said and constantly affirmed to be the religion of Protestants, it was for some time a mysterious problem why the Bible alone, confessed and acknowledged, should work no happier results than the strifes, divisions, and retaliatory excommunications of rival Protestant sects. It appeared however, in this case, after a more intimate acquaintance with the details of the inner temple of sectarian Christianity, as in many similar cases, that it is not the acknowledgment of a good rule, but the walking by it, that secures the happiness of society. The Bible in the lips, and the creed in the head and heart, will not save the church from strife, emulation and schism. There is no moral, ecclesiastical or political good, by simply acknowledging it in word. It must be obeyed. A deep and an abiding impression that the power, the consolations, and joys — the holiness and happiness — of Christ's religion were lost in the forms and ceremonies of sects and schisms, originated a project many years ago for uniting the sects, or rather the Christians in all the sects, upon a clear and scriptural bond of union, — upon having a 'thus saith the Lord,' either in express terms, or in approved precedent, for every article of faith, and item of religious practice. The principles on which the church of Jesus Christ—all believers in Jesus as the Messiah—can be united with honour to themselves, and with blessings to the world; on which the gospel and its ordinances can be restored in all their primitive simplicity, excellency and power, and the church shine as a lamp that burneth to the conviction and salvation of the world: — I say, the principles by which these things can be done are now developed, as well as the principles themselves, which together constitute the original gospel and order of things established by the apostles.

"The principle which was inscribed upon our banners when we withdrew from the ranks of the sects was Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to him as our Lawgiver and King, the only test of Christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion, and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments, and traditions of men.

"The constitutional principle of the 'Christian Association' [Pioneers of the Restoration movement] and its object are clearly expressed in the following resolution: — 'That this society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall, to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and only such, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard, in conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence; only such as reduce to practice the simple original form of Christianity expressly exhibited upon the sacred page, without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship of the Christian church.

“Nothing is essential to the conversion of the world but the union and co-operation of Christians. Nothing is essential to the union of Christians—but the apostles’ teaching or testimony.”

According to Alexander Campbell it is not the energies, dollars, or “expertise” of Americans that is required for Christian union, or for the winning of souls!

Loyal brethren throughout the earth still plead for a complete return to the original faith on the basis of the principles enumerated by A. Campbell. We can safely conclude that wherever the writers of this open letter get their ideas, it is certainly not from the works of Alexander Campbell.

Those of our generation who are becoming weary of this and that would be well advised to consider whether they are in fact weary of the opinions of men, or the commandments of the Lord.

JOHN M. WOOD

BIBLE STUDY

III: BY CHAPTERS

THE division of the books of the Bible into chapters is convenient and helpful. We can hardly think how we could find our way in the Bible if we had not these divisions. One tradition has it that this marking off into chapters was the work of Cardinal Hugo St. Caro (died 1248); another attributes it to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1227).

But, although such a help, this division into chapters can be also a hindrance in Bible study. Sometimes a chapter ends and another begins at a most awkward part of the reading. The most outstanding and absurd example is the separation of chapters 21 and 22 of the book of Acts. The last verse of chapter 21 does not even end in a sentence, and we have necessarily to read into chapter 22 to complete the sense. Thus we end chapter 21 with the words “he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying:” Only the next chapter tells us what Paul said. Thus we see that if we were to partition the Bible into watertight compartments of chapters we should have some peculiar results. Look also at the end of John chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 8. By the chapter breaks we miss the connected narrative, and perhaps contrast. Chapter 7:53 ends by saying “every man went unto his own house” and chapter 8:1 opens with the words “Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.” Do not we miss something if we do not read the two verses together?

Indeed, we miss much if we adhere to the chapter divisions. This is especially so in the epistles. They were intended to be read and heard as one writing, not a little at a time. The epistle to the Hebrews is an outstanding example: notice how an often used and significant word is “therefore,” especially at the beginnings of chapters. “Therefore” connects us with what has been written previously—“in view of,” “because of,” “arising from.” Only when we ignore chapter divisions do we get any understanding of the development of the argument, the working up to a conclusion, a climax. Look also at 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 & 13. Chapter 12 ends with Paul’s saying “And yet I show unto you a more excellent way.” If we ended there we could not know what that “more excellent way” is. Only when we read straight into the 13th chapter are we told it: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass and a clanging cymbal.” Only thus do we see the contrast between having the gifts of the Spirit, which were only for a time, and the abiding attitude of love. The latter is much more necessary than the former.

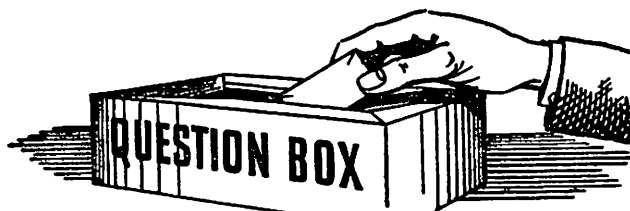
Nevertheless there are many cases in which to study a chapter of the Bible can be spiritually profitable. We speak of the “Book of Psalms,” but the Psalms are not so much a book as a collection of poems, mostly by David, sometimes by other writers.

Each psalm is separate in itself, and does not need reference to what goes before or what comes after it. In the New Testament such great chapters as Acts 2 and Romans 8 form a study complete in themselves.

But on the whole the practice of Bible study by chapters is, in my view, not to be recommended. We shall find that only rarely have we sufficient in the chapter itself to set out its full meaning and power: we must constantly refer to other parts of scripture to enlarge upon what is written in the chapter. Of course this is all to the good, but it is hardly study of the Bible by chapters. We shall find such a method of study awkward and disjointed, and that we are forced into artificial and arbitrary divisions not arising from the scripture itself. Many chapters amply repay a whole series of studies, and justice could not be done to them if we attempt to cover them as one whole.

C. MELLING

Next month: STUDY BY VERSES.



Conducted by
James Gardiner

Could you please comment on Christ's promise in Matt. 5:5 that the "meek shall inherit the earth" in the context of "Jehovah's Witnesses" teaching on the passage.

In the beatitudes (or beautiful attitudes) Jesus says that those with such beautiful attitudes in life will receive certain blessings thereby. "Blessed are they." It is notable that none of these blessings are material things. Not only are the blessings not earthly but these beautiful attitudes themselves are the very antithesis of the normal characteristics associated with material success in a worldly world. For example, Christ is not saying that the physically strong are blessed, or the clever, or the person attractive in appearance, or the witty or the talented. There is no merit in such things. Rather, God blesses those who strive at *overcoming* physical weaknesses and superimposing the spiritual graces and adornments—i.e. "the poor in spirit"; "those that mourn" (for sins); "the meek"; those that covet—but covet righteousness; "the merciful"; "the pure in heart"; "the peacemakers"; "those persecuted for righteousness' sake"—spiritual attributes all of them, physical faculties none of them. The blessings are likewise not physical and material, but spiritual. This should provide us with our first hint: "the earth" as promised to the meek is not the physical earth but rather a blessing of a spiritual nature. Briefly, "Jehovah's Witnesses" teach that only "the 144,000 will enjoy eternal life in heaven—the rest to have an abiding place here on earth. They quote the present passage in support of their contention, and also, amongst others, Eccl. 1:4 ". . . the earth abideth for ever."

Before considering Matt. 5:5 perhaps a short comment on Eccl. 1:4 is necessary. Solomon, was of course ruminating over the transiency of man's short existence in life, and is comparing it with the relatively more lasting qualities of the earth upon which man lives. Actually the full quotation of the verse is "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever." The phrase "for ever" must be handled very carefully, because it does not necessarily mean "eternal," but merely indicates an extremely long period of time. One quotation will illustrate the point—Exodus 12:14, 17—the feast of unleavened bread was to be kept as an ordinance "for ever."

What the Psalmist and Peter say

Jesus was not the first to make the point that the meek would inherit the earth. The Psalmist made this pronouncement many hundreds of years before, and in fact did not limit such inheritance to the meek. Psalm 37:9: "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord they shall inherit the earth"—this surely includes all God's servants. The same Psalm, verse 11, says "But the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace," and verse 22 reads, "For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth, and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." It seems to me that the inheriting of the earth will take place when the cursed of God will be "cut off." In Psalm 25:12, 13 we further learn that he that fears the Lord will inherit the earth.

Jesus, like the Psalmist, used the future tense—the meek *shall* inherit the earth. It is crucial to ponder the "earth" to which the Psalmist and Jesus alluded. Were they referring to this literal ball on which we stand, or did they mean the "new earth" mentioned elsewhere in New Testament scriptures? Had no mention been made in the New Testament of the sure fact that this literal earth will some day be unquestionably destroyed, or the further fact that God is going to make a *new* heaven and a new earth, then we could be excused for believing that Jesus meant that the meek would inherit this physical ball. Indeed no other construction could possibly be placed upon his words. However the apostle Peter supplies us with these staggering truths—listen again to what Peter says, in his second epistle, chap. 3:9-13: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness? Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise (what promise? Matt. 5:5, I suggest, J.G.) look for new heavens and a new earth; wherein dwelleth righteousness." Peter, then, tells us what will befall this literal orb—it will be burned up and no one, surely, would charge Jesus with the infamy of promising the meek a dwelling place which any day is likely to disintegrate into hot soot. That this earth shall come to such an end seems to be implied in its very construction and physical constitution and I am given to understand that if its chemical constituent parts were merely to be rearranged in a certain order the earth would explode and destroy itself. Certainly if the heavens fail (sun and moon) the earth cannot remain. Peter says that first of all the heavens would pass away amidst great noises. Three heavens are spoken of in the bible (2 Cor. 12:1-4)—the dwelling place of birds, the dwelling place of planets and thirdly the dwelling place of God. The first two are in the material universe and, with the earth, will liquify and pass away—the third will remain.

What is "The Earth"?

But "Jehovah's Witnesses" would reply that when Peter said that the earth would be burned up he was meaning not the literal sphere but the earthly works and the evil, in the same way in which Peter in chap. 1:6 says that "*the world*" perished in the flood. The literal world obviously did not perish, only the worldly works on it. Also in Gen. 6:13 God said to Noah ". . . behold I will destroy them (the wicked) *with* the earth," yet God did not in fact destroy the physical earth. Therefore, according to "Jehovah's Witnesses," Peter is talking in a similar vein and means that God will cleanse the earth with fire and that is all. It is true the term "earth" and "world" should not always be taken literally, and that "earth" sometimes means the people on it, e.g. Gen. 11:1 "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech." However a closer examination of Gen. 6:13 shows a marginal note which informs us that God was not saying to Noah that he would destroy the wicked *with* the earth but "*from off* the earth" and this is something entirely different. It should also be obvious to all reasonable readers

of the N.T. that Peter *did not* mean the wicked works of the world when he said "the earth" would be burned, because in fact Peter says that the earth "and the works that are therein" shall be burned up. Two separate and distinct components: the earth itself, and the works that are in the earth. With reference to their argument on chap. 1:6 ("the world" perishing in the flood and still remaining intact) it is vital to note that the word "world" in this verse comes from the Greek "cosmos" and means the world's arrangements and beauty, which things did, of course, perish in the deluge. In contradistinction, the "earth" which Peter talks about in chap. 3 is from the Greek "ge" and means "earth or land," the same word as in Matt. 5:5 and the one used most commonly for "the earth" in the N.T. (Young's *Analytical Concordance*). It is interesting also to note that when Solomon in Eccl. 1:4 (mentioned earlier) was reflecting upon man's short life-span he was contrasting it with solid-enduring qualities of the earth, but when the Psalmist (Psalm 102:24-27) is talking about the eternal nature of God he contrasts this eternal quality of God with the relatively short life-span allotted to the earth and shows, in fact, that the earth's days are indeed numbered. "Thy (God's) years are throughout all generations. Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment; as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But *thou* art the same, and *thy* years shall have no end."

Similarly, Jesus speaking of the eternal nature of His words could say (Luke 21:33) "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

"The meek shall inherit the earth": but when, and what earth? Peter and his Christian contemporaries were doubtless meek; they feared the Lord; they waited upon the Lord; therefore they surely qualified to receive the predictions of the Psalmist and the blessings of the Saviour; they will therefore inherit the earth (as will all such) yet Peter had no impression of his inheriting this earth. "But we, according to His promise, look for *new* heavens and a *new* earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

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

"IN HEAVENLY PLACES"

PAUL'S Epistle to the Ephesians has a distinctiveness from his other epistles. This lies in the fact that it deals mainly with the status of converts to Christ, "to the intent that they might walk worthy" of it (chap. 4:1). He had told the Corinthians that "if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature: the old things have passed away: behold all things have become new."

Now it is the position of this "new creature" that Paul calls attention to in this epistle. Consider such terms as "formerly afar off now become near"; from "strangers and foreigners" to "fellow citizens"; from "dead in offences" to "alive in Christ." Even in his epistle to the Colossians he reminds them that they have been translated from under one authority to that of another.

This new position of believers is described by the apostle as being "in heavenly places" and this is said to be "in Christ." According to him in chaps. 1:3 and 2:6 it is indeed a very gracious position to which believers have been raised. This testimony included at that period Jewish and Gentile converts. The exalted nature of this position is seen when we read that this term "heavenly places" is applied by Paul to a position to which Christ has been raised and invested with all authority (chap. 1:20). The church of Christ is upon the earth, but not of it. Neither is it in heaven, yet it is of it. It appears that Paul uses the term "in the heavens" to denote the very exalted position the church is called upon to occupy in the world. Again, according to Paul this position of believers in Christ is strictly in accordance with Divine purpose and intention (chap. 1:9, 14 and 3:11).

Paul teaches that Christ and His church are ONE and in chap. 5:31, 32 cites marriage as an illustration of this union. In this connection about marriage we have in chap. 6 Paul's teaching respecting believers' attitude towards their children and children's towards their parents. Further, from 1 Cor. 7 we learn that, where the married state existed, the believer must not put away the unbelieving partner. Where the married state did not exist, the believers are free to marry whom they would, with the proviso "only in the Lord." Thus in verse 39 we get freedom of selection in "whom she will" and limitation in "only in the Lord." Thus only believers were to marry. Even from 1 Peter 3:7 it is clear that believers should only marry believers, else, how can husband and wife be "heirs together." ? How can they pray together ? How can such a marriage be an illustration of Christ and His church ? Even where marriage is contracted in spite of this the believing partner will have to await the "Day" as to whether the setting aside of Jesus' claims will be accepted.

In chap. 6:12 it appears from the context that this exalted position of the church by no means made it exempt from corruption and evil propensities within it. It certainly had "fears within, without" and the "spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" is another aspect of "the mystery of iniquity" (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:7) and also the working out of the parable of the woman (the church) who hid leaven (corruption) in the three measures of meal, culminating in the Great Apostasy (Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20, 21). Peter along with Paul assures Jewish converts that their status under the administration of Jesus was far superior to that of Moses (1 Peter 2:9; Rom. 11:12). We must not forget that this exalted position of believers brings with it responsibilities which Paul enumerates in the first six verses of chapter 4. They are pledged to uphold the unity of this new administration under Jesus, which had cost so much. This unity embraces the one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. Furthermore, Paul in 1 Cor. 10:17 says the bread at the Lord's table represents the unity of the church and even in chap. 11:20 goes so far as to say that condemnation will fall upon the one who partakes yet fails to recognise that unity.

If, then, it has so pleased the Divine mind to give believers in Christ, through the medium of the Apostle Paul, a revelation of their status, it behoves each to do all he can in however humble a manner to walk worthy of this high calling of God to "heavenly places." We all know *how* to be saved; few know *what it is* to be saved. In this epistle the ambassador reveals to us what it is to be saved. Shall we consider these things ?

ALFRED JACKSON

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY, 1968

7—Joshua 3:5-17	Matthew 14:22-36
14—Exodus 20:1-21	Matthew 15:1-20
21—Isaiah 29:13-24	Matthew 15:21-39
28—Judges 6:33-40	Matthew 16:1-12

CRAMMED FULL

This is almost slang but describes the impression I have of the life of the Saviour as recorded in our July readings. What moments did He have to Himself in the crowded hours ? We read in Mark's gospel (6:30-44) "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile;

for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." So He knew some rest was advisable after the work of preaching, teaching and healing which He had entrusted to the apostles. They took "ship" therefore "privately" (Mark 6:32; Luke 9:1) "apart" (Matt. 14:13) for quietude. However the people saw them go and the feeding of the five thousand followed. We note He "received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9:11). "He had compassion on them" (Matt. 14:14). So the time for rest became a time for more work; the disciples "to the multitude" (v. 19). Have we ever thought what a work that must have been, and who personally broke the bread for a

vast multitude of folk? How tired were the disciples? Did their legs ache? Were the Saviour's hands sore?

A crisis followed. The Jews were ready to rise against their Roman captors. Many risings took place under fanatical leaders, and they were cruelly and promptly stamped out, but the sting remained. The sparks could kindle into fire when strong men got together. John records the movement (6:15). How Jesus dealt with it we do not quite know but He got away from the crowd, having quenched the fire. "He constrained the disciples to enter into the boat" and to put out from the land. "Constrained" has the meaning of "forced" as though it was against their will. Did Jesus not need to pray in loneliness—"yet I am not alone but the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). He had a deeper and closer relationship than we have with the Father. We can surely see that Jesus had power to lead men, and with such quite unlimited power as was manifest in supplying the multitude with bread, how could even the power of Rome succeed to overthrow a movement with such a leader? Did not the devil suggest this method of bringing the world to Jesus's feet? Contemplation of a rebellion backed with miraculous power perhaps makes us wonder "Why not?"

The way of the cross and the way of worldly material triumph are irreconcilable. Violence such as was contemplated by the excited multitude of men could not be used by the Son of God. It would have meant submission to wrong motives and wrong actions on the part of the men themselves. Love, joy and peace are the fruits of His spirit. His object rather was, in the words of the hymn-writer, "To teach His brethren and inspire to suffer and to die." So in the silence of night He prayed on the mountainside and at 3 a.m. looked out over the sea where His truer followers were struggling with the contrary wind in obedience to His word. He went to them on the water and gave them still further evidence of His power, His sympathy and His love. What an experience Peter had that night in particular—though they all shared it so they confessed with awe, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God."

Another time of feverish anxiety to get

healing help met them on the other side of the sea. In the district of Gennesaret the whole countryside experienced His healing power (14:34-36). He then had to deal with criticism of His disciples by scribes and Pharisees who came from Jerusalem for the purpose. It seems that a teacher to have their approval must keep their "tradition," and He had not instructed His disciples on this point of washing before food. Surely they were much too occupied in service under Jesus to be "finicky" about exactly how and when they ate. The washing in question too was a formality and Jesus had no sympathy with that, so His answer was an attack upon evil traditions used for excuse to forget the "weightier matters of the law." Their consciences would give the answer its force, and the disciples were given the vital lesson that physical dirt is less dangerous than mental, moral and spiritual dirt. A society may have every modern convenience and still be unclean. At about this time also Jesus taught in Capernaum and incurred the displeasure of some of His own disciples by insistence on His claim to be the bread of life (John 6:66).

The withdrawal to the parts of Tyre and Sidon may have been a further effort to secure some privacy, for we read in Mark (7:24) He "would have no man know it" but "He could not be hid." Here he dealt with the Syrophenician woman whose persistent faith was the means of her daughter's recovery. His return towards the sea of Galilee brought again the multitudes with their afflicted ones even up the mountain where He sat. They must have toiled up the hills laboriously from the towns and villages and stayed three days just to be with Him. They forgot their physical needs in His presence but He did not forget them. He called His disciples and it seems that they had forgotten the five thousand that had been fed, so here another lesson was given when four thousand plus women and children were abundantly fed.

Whether the enquiry for a "sign from heaven" followed immediately on this miracle we would not be sure but it recalls Cowper's lines—"Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain." What could they want? Suppose Jesus

had said "If I be a man of God, let fire come down . . ." (2 Kings 1:10) would it have been any worse fate than their unbelief would finally bring upon them? "He that believeth not hath been judged already because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). The Lord have mercy upon us and preserve us from unbelief—there is more about than we think.

R. B. SCOTT

"STIRRING UP OUR PURE MINDS BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE"

The greatest impediment to the spreading of the gospel is ungodliness within the body of Christ. When members are living holy consecrated lives no force is strong enough to silence the voice of righteousness. Opposition may slow down the work. Aggression by unfriendly elements could be of terrible hindrance. Slander, and reproach from the mouth of the enemy of the cross of Christ might deceive a few. Modernism and liberalism may deny the virgin birth of our Lord, and His resurrection and miracles, leading captive the unstable mind.

But! there is nothing, nothing, that can hinder the Truth as much as an ungodly example among those who are Christians.

Take Israel in their conquest of Canaan. As long as they measured up to God's standard, while they depended upon Him and His word, they accomplished their mission. The cause they represented was challenged, but it continued to be victorious. It was only when a defector entered the scene that they were defeated in their work to occupy the promised land.

Achan's life was ungodly, and the whole camp suffered. Why? The alien gained the upper hand, and retained it until the ungodliness was disposed of. There was "sin in the camp." One man's ungodly act resulted in the smiting by the enemy of thirty-six Israelites.

As soon as Achan's ungodliness was disposed of, Israel became victorious again.

This is the story of the church today. No force can turn us aside from our goal or destroy us, except sin in the camp. When even one member does not live a circumspect life, it hinders in no uncertain way the work and efforts of the rest.

When we quarrel, bicker and backbite, we are contributing to the cause of Satan. When the devil can get us to quibble and gossip and be divided, his aim is met. Outside persecution will cement the body of Christ together firmly. But slander and malicious-speaking of one member about another will create a schism, cause war within, and wreck the church.

Woodstock (S.A.) Church "Bulletin"

MAN IS WONDERFULLY MADE

In the human body are 206 bones, about 600 muscles. The alimentary canal is 12 feet long. The amount of blood in an adult is about 30 pounds. The heart is 6 inches long, 4 inches wide, beats 70 times to the minute, 4,200 times in an hour, 36,792,000 times a year, and each beat pumps 2½ oz. of blood through the body—7 tons a day. All the blood passes through the heart every three minutes.

We breathe 1,200 times an hour, inhaling about 100 gallons of air, 2,400 gallons a day. The surface of the air cells in the lung is more than 20,000 square inches—equal to a room 12 feet square.

The average man's brain is 3lb. 2oz.; a woman's 2lb. 12oz. The nerves exceed 12,000,000 in number. Atmospheric pressure is 14lb. to the square inch; a medium-sized person is thus subjected to pressure of 40,000lb. Each square inch of skin contains 3,500 sweat glands, each a drain-pipe ¼ in. long, aggregating 201,166 feet, or almost 40 miles.

In 1921 J. R. Mott said, "Unless you send 10,000 missionaries to Japan soon, you will be sending hundreds of thousands of soldiers later." This was a prophecy that came true, for in the war in the Far East from December, 1941, to August, 1945, hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the United States and their allies perished in conquering Japan by force of arms.

Why should 10,000 missionaries seem an unreasonable demand and millions of soldiers not? Because we are greater patriots than we are Christians; because we have not put the Kingdom of God first.

PROPOSALS OF FIVE BAPTIST MINISTERS FOR UNITY

in

"BAPTISTS FOR UNITY"

(Brit. Wkly., April 4th, 1968, page 3)

Freedom of the local congregation within a national representative "Cabinet" system, Church oversight exercised by democratically-elected Bishops, mutual recognition or common commissioning of all ministers in all uniting Churches, abandonment by non-Baptist churches of indiscriminate baptism, co-existence of infant and believers' baptism, a variety of forms of worship to be developed around a common pattern for the Lord's Supper (the latter to be open to all committed members of the Church).

"The Proposals in "Baptists for Unity" call upon the [Baptist] denomination to enter upon negotiation for union with the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Churches of Christ."

[We pass no judgement upon the above quotation. You can make your own.—Ed.]

A great reformer once said, "If I had three hundred men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, I would set the world on fire. Twelve men did it in the first century (Col. 1:23).

CORRESPONDENCE

TO HOLIDAY-MAKERS IN CORNWALL

Dear Brother Melling,

Recently my family and I spent a week in Cornwall, near to Penzance. On the Lord's day, it was our pleasure to meet and break bread with Brother Alma Mitton, formerly a member of Summer Lane congregation in Birmingham. Brother Mitton has lived in St. Just for quite a number of years, and is now a widower aged 79. So far as he knows there is no other member of the Church in that area.

The purpose of this letter is to suggest that any brethren visiting Cornwall should

make a point of visiting Brother Mitton, who would be delighted to have fellowship with them. If any of the brethren are in that area for holidays, may I suggest that they contact him so that arrangements can be made for him to share in the observance of the Lord's supper with them on the Lord's days? Any planning to do this might write him in advance:

Mr. A. Mitton,
11 West Place, St. Just,
Penzance, Cornwall.

Yours in service,

A. E. Winstanley

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Loughborough.—We rejoice in the baptism of Jennifer Menzies, age fourteen, on June 18th. Jennifer has impressed us all by her sincere desire to be a faithful follower of Jesus; and we pray that through her the Lord will be able to bring others to Himself.

Morley (Zoar Street).—Rejoice with us, brethren, as our time of harvesting continues. Bro. Jack Exum, who labours in Belfast, served us from the 12th to the 19th May. During this period he gave a special lecture on "The Home — Its Problems and Solutions," and a series of lessons on "Soul Winning," in addition to preaching the gospel and teaching our Adult Bible Class. We are sure that the church has been edified, and the seed of the kingdom planted in a number of hearts.

On Saturday, 18th May, Mrs. Mary Fish, mother of our young brother Robert, decided for Christ, and was baptised into Him. To God be the glory!

Slamannan District.—On Saturday, May 11th, the brethren again met at Slamannan for mutual benefit to discuss the subject, "Instrumental Music in Worship — Why Not?"

The discussion was led by Bro. Paul Jones, Evangelist, and Bro. Mark Plain, Tranent, and was presided over by Bro. Peter Wilson, Slamannan.

Bro. Old dealt with the Old Testament scriptures and the teaching therein, whilst

Bro. Mark concentrated on the writings of the New Testament. Many took part in the discussion which followed and many points made with regard to our attitude to this theme. We trust much was learned and that much good will result from the time spent in discussing this matter.

God willing, we hope next to meet at Motherwell on Saturday, 21st September, 1968, to discuss the statement made by our Saviour, "The meek shall inherit the earth," led by Bro. John Colgan, Tranent, and Bro. Jack Nisbet, Haddington, presided over by our young brother John Wilson, Slamannan.

Your thanks are due to the brethren at Slamannan for their hospitality.

Hugh Davidson

South Africa.—In the early hours of 17th April, Hyman Rodkin was baptized into Christ. We give God the Glory and pray that Bro. Rodkin shall lead his wife and family and others to the Lord.

Great happiness and joy was the experience of Sis. Willie of Bridgetown, along with many others in the Bonteheuvel congregation, in witnessing her husband baptized into Christ, on Monday evening the 6th May. Our prayers are that they might lead their children the "way that leadeth unto life" (Luke 15:7).

CAMEROONS EVANGELISATION FUND

May I again take the liberty, brethren, of bringing the above work to your attention. Funds are still urgently required and I again ask church secretaries to bring the matter before their congregations. Some individual brothers and sisters, who have been long and dear friends of the fund, have again come to our aid and one congregation has taken a special collection and sent it all to me. Collecting money isn't easy these days, even although many are affluent, and I am very, very grateful to all who have helped the fund along. Thank you for your interest brethren, your contributions and your prayers for the success of the preaching in the Africas. May all three continue and, as before, send any gifts no matter how small to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

OBITUARY

Peterhead.—The church mourns the passing of our Sis. Cowie, aged 72. During her illness members of the church, in visiting her, were strengthened in their Christian walk by her steadfastness and testimony.

We thank God for such Christians, who are pillars of the Church. The service was conducted by Bro. D. Dougall—as was the wish of our sister.

The family wish to thank Bro. J. Stevenson (Belfast), who is meantime having a mission here, for his never-failing attention and comfort to our sister.

We pray that the strength that can come only from above may be theirs in their time of sorrow. A. F. Strachan

Tranent.—On May 29th, the church suffered a great loss in the death of Sister Wilson, (wife of the late Brother Walter Wilson) in her 89th year. Our sister was a most consistent member at Tranent, and throughout was a faithful attender to divine things and purposes, until illness confined her to the house. Of a quiet and refined nature, she endeared herself to all our hearts by her gentle kindness and faithful disposition.

We praise God for her steadfast life of selfless devotion.

We commend her sorrowing family to the compassion of the God our sister served so well, praying He may comfort them in their sorrow.

The services in the house and at the graveside, were conducted by Brother David Dougall, in which he offered a moving tribute to the life and character of our departed sister.

Wigan (Albert Street).—We are sorry to report the passing away of Sister Gibson, on May 28th, at the age of 72 years. The family have had long connections with the church, but she had not been able to meet with us for some time owing to illness.

Our sympathy and love go out to all the family and relatives who mourn her passing, and we pray they will find comfort and consolation in our Heavenly Father. The writer officiated at the cremation, preceded by a service in the meeting-house on June 5th. W. Smith

COMING EVENTS

Kirkby - in - Ashfield (Beulah Road). — Anniversary meeting, Saturday, 20th July. Bro. Leonard Morgan (Hindley) speaker for the week-end. Tea to commence at 4 p.m.; evening meeting 6 p.m. A warm invitation is extended to all brethren to come and enjoy another occasion of rich fellowship in the Lord.

Newtongrange.—The Church in Newtongrange will alter their times of meeting during the months of July and August. The times are (Sundays): 11 a.m., Breaking of Bread; 7 p.m., Gospel Meeting.

CORBY CHURCH

Secretary. — W. Wilson, 23 Buckfast Square, Corby, Northants.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bro. & Sis. A. W. Jones, 75 Alexandra Road, Blackburn, Lancs.

MARRIAGE

Dorothy Scott (Kentish Town) to H. E. Proud at Cheshunt, March 30th 1968.

BIRTH

To Agnes (née Watson) and Gerry Fox (Wallacestone), a daughter, Lorna, on May 29th. Both well. "Hillcrest," Mary Street, Laurieston, Falkirk.

I WANT NONE OF THESE

You say you don't like children,
They get upon your nerves,
When you get married, you won't have
Up and down your stairs. them

You'd rather have a pussy cat,
A dog, a bird, a mouse,
Than have these screeching rebels
Running up and down your house.

Oh stupid women, silly men,
You don't know what you miss:
There's nothing sweeter than a child
That you can hug and kiss:

A dirty face, a grubby hand,
His trousers badly torn.
You feel so tired, nod your head,
Then comes that noisy horn.

I'd rather have children any time
Than bank books bulged with money;
The innocence in children's ways
Is sweeter far than honey.

Oh let me plead with you young man,
And listen to me lady:
Don't let your life be parentless
Just love awhile—a baby.

Lily Renshaw

The pearl of great price is found by a
single man, not by a treasure - hunting
party.

Erich Meissner

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