

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

VOL. 25. No. 11

NOVEMBER, 1959

Johannes Warns.

JOHANNES WARNS: "BAPTISM." (Translated from the German by G. H. Lang. Paternoster Press, 352pp. 1957. 15/-).

The author of this book was born in 1874 and died in 1937. His father was a Lutheran clergyman and Johannes Warns, too, studied for this ministry. But he was of independent mind and refused to accept any teaching or practices not warranted by Scripture. Thus he rejected the ideas of a State Church, infant sprinkling and confirmation. He was ready to act upon his convictions and turned his back upon the future which awaited him in the Lutheran Church.

Knowing a little of the author we can have some idea of what the book contains and the way in which the subject is treated. Its sub-title is "Studies in the original Christian Baptism, its history and conflicts, its relation to a State or National Church and its significance for the present time." Neither the author nor the translator was a Baptist. In the words of the translator the book's object is "strictly to elucidate Biblical truth and encourage Biblical practice."

The subject of baptism is dealt with uncompromisingly towards sprinklers and pourers, yet with fairness and courtesy. A deeply spiritual atmosphere pervades the book, as becomes the subject. First, Scripture concerning baptism is examined thoroughly, in which its form is clearly shown to be immersion, in both Jewish and New Testament practice. It is shown that infant "baptism" has no place in Scripture, and the origin and growth of the practice are traced. Then follows the history of the attempted suppression of Scriptural baptism. This is a most interesting section, revealing how mercilessly the religious powers tried to stamp out by force what they could not withstand by Scripture and reason. The Anabaptists or "re-baptisers" as they were scornfully dubbed, were persecuted, burned, drowned, or strangled, not by the Roman Catholic Church only, but by the Reformers Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin and by the State.

The inconsistencies between N.T. teaching and even Church doctrine on baptism and the practices of infant sprinkling and pouring are demonstrated. It is shown how ridiculous are these traditions, even in the light of the teaching of the Churches practising them. At the heart of these errors, in the Protestant Churches at least, is the fact that even the Reformers did not go back wholly to the Bible, but retained certain Church traditions having no authority in the Scriptures. Bishop Tillotson's statement, therefore, is not entirely true, that "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." Do we members of the church of Christ wonder any longer then at the statement that "we are neither Catholic nor Protestant, but simply Christians"?

Not only the doctrine of Scripture baptism and the perversions of the ordinance are exhaustively examined, but the wider implications of baby "baptism" are brought out in a manner we have not seen before. It is shown that these practices are a

denial of freedom of conscience. Persons are made members of Churches not by their own will or consent but by the choice of others, or, chiefly, merely by tradition and convention. The author proves that, without this nominal and, as it were, artificial membership, the Churches, especially the State Churches, would be a still more negligible quantity than they are now. Even confirmation at a responsible age is an admission that the child "baptised" was not responsible when it was made "a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." For very few are confirmed at their own desire, and the vast majority are lost to the Church within a few months. In other words the Churches that "baptise" infants dare not give up the practice for the Scriptural mode of leaving it to the personal decision of a responsible believer in Christ as to whether he will be "buried with Christ by baptism." The clergy's hold upon and control of the Churches' members would be broken if true freedom were allowed in this most vital matter of the receiving of Jesus Christ as one's Saviour and the dedication of one's life to His service in His church.

The author makes an unanswerable case for immersion as the only Scriptural baptism. From the book there again emerges the pathetic inability of those who advocate or practise infant "baptism" to defend themselves in this matter. They are put to the most desperate shifts to extract a grain of evidence or comfort from most unlikely Bible passages and examples and from arguments which are ridiculous and childish. One wonders if these defenders have themselves any confidence or belief in their attempts at reasoning. I remember reading an article on Infant Baptism by that profound Bible scholar T. W. Manson, a one-time Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. He was one of the world's foremost Bible expositors. Yet it was pathetic and tragic to read the apology (it was no less) advanced to justify the practice of his Church. A case needing such justification is a poor case, indeed, no case at all.

Yet in spite of the masterly treatment of its subject, we must differ from what the author writes concerning baptism and the new birth—"baptismal regeneration." As is so often case, the author in destroying and rejecting one extreme has swung to the other. In proving that the doctrine that irresponsible and innocent babies are reborn as children of God through the application of a few drops of water upon their unconscious heads is little short of heathen magic, Johannes Warns goes on to deny that baptism has anything to do with the new birth or salvation even with a believing willing subject. We do not see how such a view can be maintained in the light of the N.T. In John 3:3-5 Jesus said, "Unless a man is born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus does not understand and asks, "How can a man be born when he is old?" In making it clearer, Jesus answers, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." This passage is treated in two ways. First, it is said that the new birth is the direct operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart, a mysterious mystical experience apart from any action on the believer's part. Yet Christ compared the coming into God's kingdom with a birth. In the natural life birth is an outward and physical act that takes place once for all, an act that transforms the new life to everything around it. The new birth brings us into a new state, new relationships, new surroundings, a new outlook and a new way of life. Could a more apt illustration be given of what baptism does in the life and experiences of the Christian? It brings him into a new relationship with God and His people. Yet it is to make Christ's illustration meaningless, if baptism has nothing to do with the new birth.

Secondly, it is argued that to be "born of water" is to be born of the word of God. We cannot but think that this is an attempt to do away with the thought of any "works" being connected with salvation,—“not of works, lest any man should boast.” Baptism is a work, they say, and must therefore be rejected as having any part in our salvation. Therefore being "born of water" has nothing to do with baptism. Do such Scripture expositors pause to think what a reflection such an idea casts upon Christ? They claim Him to be the Great Teacher. Yet, when he meant God's word He could not say it in plain speech, but hid it under the figure of "water." What would Nicodemus understand by Christ's statement? In this 5th verse of John 3, in speaking of being born of water and the Spirit Jesus is ex-

plaining in clearer fashion in response to Nicodemus's puzzled question in verse 4. Yet Jesus explains his meaning by making it still more mysterious! Great Teacher, indeed, who, when He meant word said water! And this in the matter of eternal salvation, life or death! And yet the proponents of this theory agree that when Jesus said Spirit He meant Spirit. But if water is word, by what rule of Scripture exposition is Spirit Spirit?

Further, in Titus 3:5 we learn that "God our Saviour . . . saved us . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewing in the Holy Spirit." Is this "washing of regeneration" a mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit, or is it that which any Christian would obviously understand when he reads the words,—the washing away of his sins when the blood of Jesus was applied to cleanse him as he was buried in baptism into Christ's death?

If baptism is not the new birth, what is it? What does it signify? If in baptism our sins are not cleansed and forgiven, just what are the meaning and significance of such passages as Acts 2:38—"be baptised . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" and Acts 22:16—"Rise and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his name"?

C. MELLING.

The Christian Home: Children.

IT is with extreme trepidation that parent, psychologist and teacher approach the constructive study and righteous teaching of children. It is with even greater trepidation that the present writer—a bachelor—approaches the subject of children, and only because of force of circumstances rather than voluntary service. However, as one who not long since was a child, perhaps my reminiscences and thought will be of some value to children themselves of all ages.

School Days

School days are the happiest, if you are reflecting and not attending! Yet it is each man's lot now by force, if not by pleasure, to learn. If only at school, this would be none too bad, but when we have to learn at mother's side and over father's knee at home, education becomes a bore, to some of us at least. The importance of such a commandment as "Honour thy father and mother" is always more obvious to mother than to child. To those of us at school, burdened by control, restriction and cramped liberty for the better part of the day, half-past three and home may well be the light relief of every day. It is now that our minds turn not unnaturally to play. What better than football and skipping-ropes to complete obedience to the oft-repeated commands of "come straight home" and "I want some errands." Yet how thankless we are in our attitude towards our parents at times, especially when we are disobedient. Indeed, if memory serves me rightly, I recall that even if I cared not when I arrived home from school, father certainly did, and trouble inevitably ensued. Sharp words were uttered and even sharper reminders applied. The look in his eyes rather belied the well-established saying, "This is going to hurt me more than you." It certainly hurt someone, and somehow I do not think it was father. No! Disobedience never really pays, does it? To disobey mother makes it more difficult to receive the extra pocket-money that father does not know about; to disobey father invariably has its quick, unhappy reward.

Jesus the Ideal Child

Besides being unhappy, selfish children, who want all their own way, never have many chums, do they? Besides, those of us who have Christian parents have great advantages. We can be sure that our parents will never beat us unnecessarily; that they have our best interests at heart; that they are really interested in making us happy. Think how Jesus paid back the goodness and kindness of His parents. Luke tells us in his gospel that Jesus "came to Nazareth and was subject unto them." In other words, He was completely obedient to them and loved them. No huffiness, no unhappiness, no selfishness, no unpleasantness featured in His life. There was no doubt of His love for His parents. Indeed Luke goes further,

and says that Jesus "increased in favour with God and man." Everybody liked Him because He was a happy, obedient, contented boy. How easy friends and neighbours, aunts and uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers find it to give presents to boys and girls, nephews, nieces and grandchildren whom they find nice, mannerly and likeable. Jesus was liked because he was obedient. Perhaps there is a lesson for us here.

Youth and Self-Discipline

There is always one great boon about childhood and it is this, that we are constantly growing. If you will turn your mind back even one year you will be quick to realise that you have grown. Last year's suit and dress are now too small, aren't they? Yes, we, like Jesus, are constantly growing "in stature." And it is when we realise that we are growing that we, boys at least, begin to study our growth. We begin to compare ourselves with father and mother. We watch the steady growth of muscle, we challenge, honour, and dream dreams. This is no age for childish pursuits. Going errands, etc., is for the smaller fry and weaker mortals. It is now that we notice more than ever before that mother wants something at the most awkward time; it is now that we feel grown up enough to stay up late; it is now that freedom is sought. Yet discipline seems to dog our trail. How often is it that we are caught up in the frenzy of fun and excitement only to be clamped down; we almost feel martyrs at times. Yet how much we do and enjoy when father and mother are not there. In the summer, climbing trees perhaps; in the winter, sliding down the pavement. How often do we pit our wits against our parents or, in other words, "try to get round them" for extra favours, for example.

No, we have a jolly good time and realise it. The discipline of our parents is not at all bad and worth while enduring for the benefits we receive. The very basis of the discipline we realise is, of course, to help us to be like Jesus and to be obedient to Him. In any case, soon we leave this phase of growing and really become quite grown up. Soon we become teenage and leaving school becomes a certainty and reality for many of us. This is the age of ages. Now we are approaching what we think of as almost equality with father and mother. Certainly father is much bigger and stronger than we, and mother more mature, nevertheless, they are out of date and puritanical. They just don't understand. We note, too, that now our senses—feeling, smell, touch, taste and hearing—become more acute indeed. So does our observation. Now we realise how important our early discipline at home really was, for now we know that discipline—which neither father nor mother can exercise—must be exercised by one's self, and we may find it difficult indeed. There is so much to catch the eye, to enter the eye, to corrupt the mind. Many temptations which we now suffer can be and are easily overcome because of our early training and teaching; others are more difficult—yet all must be controlled.

In my own youth (which was not all that far back), such difficulties arose. To obstruct the inlets of such propaganda and to learn self-control I tried the following: to help me to spurn the unhealthy sight I would deliberately turn my eyes from some advertisement I desperately wanted to look at; to control the body, I would do without something either in food or clothing I longed for; to purify the mind, I would train my mind to cut off worldly thoughts by instant prayer and meditation. Such practices I still continue, as self-discipline is an essential part of the Christian life. Granted, being too strong-willed may be looked upon by some as a mixed blessing, nevertheless it is much preferable to softness and ill-controlled and uncontrolled mind and action.

Parental Control

Perhaps even more difficult to endure than self-discipline is the now apparently more determined home discipline. Now we find our parents controlling our pleasure-seeking, spending, self-indulgence, revelry and love of dress. Tiresome in the extreme it may well be. After all, we are now old enough to earn a living and to have girl friends and boy friends; we are to a degree quite independent; why cannot we enjoy ourselves? Perhaps Isaiah best answers this point: "Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly,

that sayest in thine heart, I am and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come upon thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood" (47:8).

How transient indeed are pleasures and pride. "I am and none else beside me" amply describes our attitude. We are now somebody. The beau before he meets his belle will preen himself before a mirror, adjust his tie, make sure his hair is well brushed back—that his appearance is just right. Similarly, the belle will gaze into the mirror with a curl comb in hand ensuring that all her curls are tight. She will adjust her dress and ensure that she is at her coyest to retain the attention of her beau. All this is healthy and good. But we ought never to be carried away with our own self-esteem and independence. Remember the prodigal son (Luke 15:12) who was independent—but for how long? The step from his father's home was but one, over the threshold. The way back was a long, winding, humiliating return. Independence may be fine, but false independence is definitely disastrous.

Again, the curb of our self-indulgence may appear petty at first sight, yet in the light of the Scriptures quite necessary. The writer of Ecclesiastes brings it into true perspective, "All the labour of man is for the mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled." The more we have, the more we spend on our own selfish pursuits and the more we want. We have only to look at the lives of wealthy people, perhaps millionaires, to realise that even when money and time are spent fully on one's self happiness is not necessarily the result. In any case, it is better to curb one's self-indulgence early than to rue it later. For when we are on our own, with no parents perhaps to turn to, then we soon realise that there are twenty shillings in a pound, and that that is only worth ten shillings. Every penny we have then will be our own hard-earned cash, and when it is spent no-one else will lavish their hard-earned cash on us. Of course when our parents come to dampen down our revelry we immediately cry "Spoil sport!"—and this may on balance be true. They perhaps prevent us, or would prevent us, going at all to pictures, dancing and such like. True, as we say, all pictures are not bad. However, are we so sure that we are the best judges of what is good? Are we sure the smuttiness which we have not seen has gone unseen by others? Is our presence and example being used by some other for unrestricted picture-going? From my own experience, very few pictures are in any way edifying, and many are most definitely degrading. Dare we place in jeopardy our own salvation, and perhaps someone else's, because of our desire to be as others in the world?

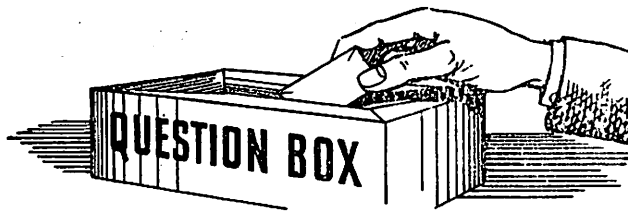
Similarly with dancing: those who go generally say it is for recreation. Yet how many go to country dancing, which indeed is recreation? The modern dance-hall, from my own experience, gives little room for standing, let alone dancing; and is generally pervaded by an unhappy atmosphere, and is haunted by an unhealthy basis of primitive fleshly desire. If the Lord should return do you think that he would call at your dance-hall to get you? Or will He consider you as the disbeliever and disobedient?

Again, parental control on dress can annoy us and be perhaps too restrictive. For my part I am sure the Lord has no objection to seeing us in good apparel, or taking personal pride in our appearance, providing of course all things are done in modesty. To make oneself attractive is good; to make oneself a hideous showpiece is despicable. If we allow virtue to prevail we cannot go wrong.

Spiritual Growth

In conclusion I would exhort every one of us to be like Isaac and to grow towards our parents. He did not have anything but faith and confidence in his father, even at a time when his father had his death in mind (Gen. 22:7). Be like John the Baptist—grow in spirit (Luke 1:80). Be like Jesus—grow up and leave off childish pettiness (Luke 2:40). Be like Timothy and be a good influence (1 Tim. 4:12). Life will then be an avenue of peace and joy in the Lord, and lead to eternal happiness with Him, if we are but obedient and truly love His appearing.

JAMES H. MALTMAN.



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Q. I have been taught that according to Jewish time the Lord's Day, or first day of the week, begins at six o'clock Saturday evening, and ends at six o'clock Sunday evening. Is this correct?

A. In New Testament times there were two ways of reckoning time: the Roman method and the Jewish.

Roman. The Romans had two different computations of their days, and two denominations for them. The one they called the "civil" day, and the other the "natural" day. The civil day was from midnight to midnight, a method of reckoning which the modern world has adopted. The natural day was from sunrise to sunset.

Jewish. The Jews on the other hand reckoned the twenty-four hour period from sunset to sunset. Their Sabbath, for instance, was from sunset Friday evening until sunset Saturday evening (see Lev. 23:32). The twenty-four hour period was divided up into hours, as in these times. The earliest mention of hour divisions seems to be in Daniel 3:6, 16; 5:5. Since the Chaldeans invented such a division of time it is probable that the Jews adopted it from them.

The Jews also divided up the twenty-four hour period into longer periods: eight in all—four at night, and four during the day. The night periods were called "watches" (see Luke 12:38; Matt. 14:25; Mark 13:35). The daylight period was originally reckoned from sunrise to sunset. But because this varied according to the seasons, the minimum hours of daylight being nine hours forty-eight minutes and the maximum fourteen hours twelve minutes, this period was afterwards reckoned from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The four main periods of the day were: the first hour, at 6 a.m.; the third hour, at 9 a.m.; the sixth hour, at noon; and the ninth hour, at 3 p.m. These periods were particularly significant for the Jew, for they coincided with his periods of worship. The third and the ninth hours were the times of the morning and evening sacrifices and the offering of incense in the Temple (see Exodus 29:38-42; 30:7-8; Luke 1:10), and together with the sixth hours were times of prayer (see Acts 3:1; 10:9). Indications of the main periods of the day and the use of separate hours are seen in Matthew 20:3-9.

Time in the New Testament. Throughout the New Testament, the Jewish method of reckoning time is used. Some have claimed that there is an exception to this in John 19:14, where it is said that the Lord's crucifixion took place "about the sixth hour," against the statement of Mark 15:25 that, it was "the third hour," the latter being supported by the times mentioned in Matthew 27:45-46, Luke 23:44, as well as Mark 15:33-34. Various suggestions have been made in order to harmonise these statements, including the one that John was using Roman time, and the term "the sixth hour" really meant 6 a.m. But this still leaves a discrepancy of three hours between John's account and that of Mark, and therefore does not get rid of the difficulty. Further, Jewish terms for periods of time were never applied to Roman time, and the expression "sixth hour" always meant noon to the Jew. Again, the theory does not accord with John's reference to time elsewhere in his gospel. John 4:6, for instance, more naturally suggests by the term "the sixth hour," midday rather than 6 a.m. The best solution to the problem is found in the fact that John says "about the sixth hour," and in so doing was using the general method of expressing time amongst the Jews by speaking approximately. This would mean that the crucifixion took place between the third and sixth hours.

The Lord's Day. It will be seen therefore that in New Testament times the Lord's Day, or first day of the week, covered the twenty-four hours from 6 p.m. on Saturday until 6 p.m. on Sunday. It is true that in connection with the resurrection the New Testament writers speak of the early part of the first day of the week, when in fact they are referring to the latter half of the first twelve hours of that day, but it is obvious that they mean the light period of that day, and not the twenty-four hour period which began on the Saturday night (see Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). This seems to be contradicted by Matthew 28:1 (A.V.) which begins, "In the end of the sabbath." But this is incorrect, for the Sabbath had ended at 6 p.m. the previous day. The correct rendering is as the A.R.S.V., which says, "Now after the Sabbath." An even better rendering is that of Knox, "On the night after the sabbath, at the hour when dawn broke on the first day of the week."

The Meeting at Troas. It seems clear that the meeting at Troas for the Breaking of Bread, as recorded in Acts 20:7-12, took place on the Saturday evening, which to those present would be the beginning of the first day of the week, since it seems that the Greek-speaking world, like the Jews, also reckoned their days from sunset to sunset. The claim by some that the meeting took place on Sunday evening, and that the statement that Paul was "to depart on the morrow," meant that he was leaving on the Monday, is without support. It has already been seen that nowhere in the New Testament do we find the use of Roman time, and Luke certainly never uses it (see Luke 23:44; Acts 2:15; 3:1; 10:3; 23:23). The expression simply means that Paul was going to depart when daylight came, that is still on the first day of the week, for the Jews spoke of the day in two senses as we do, not only to denote the twenty-four hours, but also for the hours of daylight (compare Acts 20:31 with 21:7-8).

Q. Is it scriptural to spread the Lord's Table on Sunday evening? If not, then at what time of the day shall we do it?

A. In the view of this writer there are at least three objections to the spreading of the Lord's Table on Sunday evenings.

The first objection, as we have seen, is that strictly from a New Testament point of view those who meet to break bread on Sunday evening, do not do so on the Lord's Day. In view of our modern reckoning of time, this fact is lightly dismissed by many or not even considered, but this should not be so when we consider that there are seventeen hours which, both by New Testament reckoning as well as modern reckoning, constitute the Lord's Day, and at least half of these offer convenient times in which to meet.

The second objection is that so often the evening observation of the Breaking of Bread is for those who are habitually absent in the morning. The result is that there are virtually two separate congregations meeting, the one in the morning and the other in the evening. This is contrary to New Testament practice, for all the indications are that the early church met at one time and in one place in each district to partake of "the communion" (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20). If the more usual mid-morning time is not convenient for the church to gather together, then it should be so at a time convenient to most of its members, and the rest should see to it that they fall into line with the majority.

The third objection is that, although there will always be those who genuinely cannot attend at the appointed time, according to this writer's observations, this is outweighed by the fact that a second spreading of the Lord's Table encourages indolence and worldliness. There are those who either do not trouble to meet at the appointed time, or who are occupied in material gain, rather than being concerned with spiritual gain in meeting with their brethren.

"The poorest man is he who has nothing but money."

"Small deeds done are greater than great deeds planned."

I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday and I have today.

You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NOVEMBER

1—Leviticus 19:1-18.	Romans 13.
8—Isaiah 45:14-25.	" 14.
15—Psalm 69:1-21.	" 15:1-13.
22—Isaiah 52.	" 15:14-33.
29— " 40:12-31.	" 16.

The Christian and the Powers that be

This question arises of course in our readings for this month, and is quite often discussed. Some feel that the support of the powers should be absolute—that is the Christian will be justified in any wrong actions he may perform by the authority of the state. Bearing in mind that the authority immediately spoken of by Paul was that of Nero, and the military domination of Rome, we observe that the righteousness or otherwise of the power does not affect the requirement that we shall obey. On the other hand the apostles for ever settled this point by saying "We must obey God rather than men." It needs no intelligence to see that the Christian cannot (for instance) commit adultery in any circumstances. No state can alter this law of God, and the Christian who breaks it is disobeying his Saviour. So our obedience is not absolute. It is governed by a higher authority—God's—the One who appointed the state as a means of maintaining order, and doing justice. Immediately a government ceases to be a rewarder of the good and a terror to the evil-doer, it ceases to perform its function satisfactorily. Nevertheless God permits evil governments to prevail at times and we might at any time come under such. We cannot rebel. We refuse, however, to obey its wrong commands and take the consequences meekly, while using all Christ-like methods to protest, and if possible remedy the position. In this way Rome herself finally capitulated to the religion she hated and had sought by every means in her power to destroy—not one Christian took up arms against her unless they became unfaithful to the command.

Taking the wide view of God's appointment of the Roman power, we know that humanly speaking it was this world domination that enabled Christians to travel from place to place with comparative freedom, which would have been im-

possible in a world made up of small independent and often warring nations. We realise too that the present age with its wider and wider spread of the English language, and its vast resources for spreading truth—and falsehood—over the whole earth, is a time suitable for gospel work in many quarters of the globe, but not in all by any means.

With the passage under notice we should read also our instructions for prayer: 1 Tim. 2:1 and 2, "First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way." The purpose of the request is that Christians may live a Christian life. The issue of politics is of small importance; the living of a Christian life of supreme importance. We need to preach but still more to practise.

Stumbling blocks

"... decide never to put a stumbling block or a hindrance in the way of a brother." One of the hardest things Jesus Himself said was against these. It would be better for a man who caused a little one to stumble had he been drowned beforehand. Obviously this requires some really careful consideration. Christians have just got to watch their step in this matter. There are so many ways in which we can cause to stumble that one is constrained to say, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" We humbly confess our liability to fail. Grace needs indeed to abound. "For we all make many mistakes, and if any one makes no mistakes in what he says, he is a perfect man" (James 3:2). Yes, our words may cause to stumble, and they are the products of our thoughts—and our actions may cause to stumble. Obviously genuine striving to be indwelt by the very spirit of Christ is the only way to minimise our liability to lead others astray.

Paul's reference to meat indicates he was thinking of the eating of meat sacrificed to idols—a question dealt with more exactly in 1 Cor. 8. This hardly affects us today, but the principle might well guide us away from resorts where evil company and doubtful entertainments are. We might ourselves be innocent of any evil thought but if the action or the place is doubtful, we ought to avoid it lest we are identified in other minds with those evils, and so become a cause of stumbling. The case of the minister who took alcoholic drink at a party, has often been quoted. A young

man seeing this also took drink, and in his weakness took to it and became a criminal. Worldly people seeing worldly Christians are encouraged to stay worldly. Those outside the church are remarkably critical of those inside, and use their faults to excuse themselves from paying any attention to the gospel.

There is a sense in which a Christian is required to mind his own business, but there is still a more clamant requirement that he considers the needs of his brethren, especially those young in the faith or having known weaknesses. "To his own master he stands or falls" (14:4); "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4); "Looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

Surely the plea for a return to what has been revealed to us in the Word is the safeguard against causing to stumble. If we do what we know is commanded, we cannot be wrong. It is the additions and subtractions that put us off the track. R. B. SCOTT.

SCRIPTURE READINGS, 1960

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Lesson Outlines

SERIES 1. LESSON 8

Conversion: "The community grew ever larger" (Auth. N.T.).

Lesson verses: Acts 9:19-31.

Memory verse: Acts 9:31.

Objective: "Walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the holy Spirit."

Time: A.D. 35?

Places: Damascus; Jerusalem; Judea; Galilee; Samaria; Cæsarea; Tarsus.

Damascus was included in Solomon's kingdom which extended from the river of Egypt and the Red Sea to the river Euphrates. Naaman the Syrian said that the river Barada of Damascus was better to dip in than the Jordan (1 Kin. 5; Luke 4:21). The "Christian" quarter with the Jewish quarter to its south is at the eastern end of the street called Straight — *Derb El-Muskatim*. Today Damascus is in religion mainly Moslem.

Persons: Saul; Jews in Damascus; disciples; Barnabas; apostles; Hellenists; the Lord Jesus; the Holy Spirit; Saul.

The Lord had chosen Saul to be the means of bringing His name before (1) the Gentiles; (2) kings and (3) the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). Saul had seen the Lord Jesus who had spoken to him in the way (Acts 9:27). Saul was appointed by God (1) to know His will; (2) to see the Just One and to hear Him

speaking with His own lips. He was to be a witness for the Lord of what he had seen and heard (Acts 22:14, 15). The Lord said to Saul: I have appeared to you in order to appoint you to my service as a witness to what you have seen and in what I will appear to you" (Acts 26:16). Paul said, "The good news was not received by me from men; I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12). Because of his blindness Saul had to be led into the street called Straight, but with sight restored and spirit renewed he went forward as the apostle to the Gentiles. After three years in Damascus the disciples helped him to escape the fury of the unbelieving Jews by lowering him in a basket through a window in the city wall. In Jerusalem the Hellenists went about to kill him but friends took him to Cæsarea from whence he went to Tarsus.

Message: Saul declared in Damascus and in Jerusalem that Jesus was the Son of God. "Here is the Messiah." Even the disciples were afraid of Saul but Barnabas befriended him, declaring to the apostles, "How Saul had seen the Lord in the way and that he had spoken to him and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus."

Results: "The church throughout the whole of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was spiritually built up; and grew in numbers walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31, Weymouth).

Emphasis: I can help the church to grow spiritually and in numbers by giving my heart, soul, mind, and strength to our loving heavenly Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. A. HOOD.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Haddington.—You will be glad to hear of another demonstration of God's power unto salvation in this place. On Wed., October 7th, a young man, James Moncrieffe, a stonemason by trade, and his wife Patricia, a school-teacher, were buried with Jesus that they might walk in the new way of life. They were first of all attracted to the gospel by reading a poster displayed in a fish and chip shop last January, advertising meetings being then held with Brother Albert Winstanley preaching. The seed which was faithfully sown fell into good ground. The brethren here watered and God gave the increase. Our hearts are overjoyed and we give thanks to God for His great goodness. We thank you brethren.

ren, for your prayers in the past and ask that you should continue to remember the work here, before the throne of grace. Our warmest thanks are due also to the brethren at Tranent for the use of their meeting-placing and baptistry and for their labour of love in seeing that all the needful arrangements were made.

We pray that our new-found brother and sister in Christ may remain steadfast in the faith and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

JACK NISBET.

Kentish Town.—By the mercy of God we have been able to give thanks and join together in an eighty-eighth anniversary meeting. We gathered on Saturday, October 3rd, at 3 p.m., for an afternoon session, with Bro. David Dougall leading a study and discussion on Romans 12:1 and 2, after a brief report, hymns and prayer. Bro. Coles presided, as he anticipates leaving us for British Guiana shortly. With the thoughts of our study we should do better in our future labours, and it was a joy to hear the gospel preached by Bro. Dougall in the evening. About thirty-two sat down to tea between the meetings, and forty were present in the evening. We are grateful indeed to those who came to encourage us from other churches.

R. B. SCOTT.

Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.—With joy we report the immersion of Mabel Parker, who was buried with Christ in baptism on Lord's Day, October 4th. At the same meeting was also baptised Thomas Steedman, son of our Bro. and Sis. Steedman, who are well known in the brotherhood. Tom has attended Lord's Day School and Bible Class and expressed his desire to obey his Lord and Saviour after the gospel service on Lord's Day, September 27th. We praise God for their decisions and trust that they may have grace given unto them and continue steadfast unto the end.

JOHN MOYES.

Morley.—We have experienced again, at our annual autumn rally, a season of real spiritual blessing from the presence of the Lord.

On Saturday, October 3rd, tea was ably provided by the sisters, when a company of over eighty sat down. The day, which opened dull and misty, came out beautifully warm, and our spirits rose accordingly.

The evening meeting was presided over by Bro. F. A. Hardy, who offered a word of welcome to visitors from East Ardsley, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Eastwood, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Ilkeston, Loughborough, Cleveleys and Hindley. The meeting-house was well filled, late-comers having brought the company to over a hundred.

Addresses were given by those two stalwarts, Bro. Charles Limb, of Eastwood, and Walter Crosthwaite, of Ulverston, each urging us to greater efforts. Bro. Limb, by comparing the church with the tabernacle, and Bro. Crosthwaite, recalling the great days of the past and the "giants in those days," said we could likewise achieve great things for God by adhering to the "one Book."

On the Lord's Day, Bro. Limb gave a fine address on "Fellowship," and Bro. Crosthwaite addressed one of our best-attended meetings this year on the question, "What is a Christian?," leaving his hearers in no doubt as to the answer.

We thank God for a "mountain-top" experience, and look and work for even greater days ahead.

HAROLD BAINES.

Tunbridge Wells, 5 Mount Ephraim Road.—During September Brother David Dougall laboured in the gospel with the saints here. In addition to preaching the gospel each Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday night, Brother David took a class in the Bible School, preached a number of times in the open air, and exhorted the church at the breaking of bread.

The effort was widely advertised and a great deal of visiting and personal work done. Quite a number of non-members came in to hear the gospel, and they were left in no doubt of their need of a Saviour and of the terms of salvation. Brother Dougall proclaimed Christ crucified with great power and sincerity.

We are confident that the faithful sowing of the good seed will bring ultimate harvest. We commend Brother Dougall to the blessing of God, and pray that he may be used greatly to the Saviour's glory.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Slamannan District.—The Sunday school teachers' conference was held in the meeting-place of the church at Newtongrange on October 3rd. There were approximately twenty present. After an enjoyable meal, Bro. Jim Morris (New-

tongrange), acting chairman, gave an exhortation on "Truth." He said, "As it is not in man to direct his steps we must seek after truth, that we be not stumbling-blocks to others, forthright in our attitude to all, shunning all appearance of evil. Having the power given to us to become the sons of God, we must witness before the world that we are complete in Him, having everything we need to make us perfect. Moses was set as an example, 'choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

Bro. Tom Nisbet (Haddington) spoke on "Worldliness and how to counter it." He said the question of worldliness cropped up in every generation. We never can encounter worldliness in the Sunday school unless we know what it is. Worldliness is the lust of the flesh: a list of these works, God gives in Galatians 5:19-21. These are manifest, even the appearance of these things; the dance is included in this list. They which do these things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Our souls' salvation depends on our carrying out the Word of God according to truth. We either accept or reject. Worldliness destroys the truth. If we are friends of the world then we are enemies of God, and we cannot present our bodies holy to Him if we present them to the devil. If we therefore love the world we shall pass away with it. "but he that doth the will of God abideth forever."

On the other hand if we have the wonderful qualities set forth in Galatians than words spoken. In examining our-5:22-24 our living example will be better selves, if the world enjoys our company then there is something wrong, but "if they think it strange that we run not with them to the same excess of riot," then glory be to God. Let us walk in the Spirit if so be we live in the Spirit.

A period of "questions answered" followed, this ending a profitable time spent in our Father's business.

BETHIA DAVIDSON.

Woodstock, Capetown.—We rejoice and are glad that in Bridgetown, Athlone, area two young men were baptised on October 1st, 1959. One of them is the son of Bro. and Sis. Martin, who opened their home for the Lord's work at

Bridgetown. This now makes a total of eight baptised during the year, since the work started there, including two sons of the Martin family and a daughter. October 5th marked the inauguration of a new "church that is in thine house." An open-air gospel service was convened on Lord's Day afternoon, October 4th. There were forty in attendance. After brief messages by various brethren tea and light refreshments were served in the home of the Martin family.

A brief outline of the start of the work there and its present growth was given by the writer, who also thanked the brethren concerned for the untiring support they had contributed during the year.

There are other homes besides the Martin's that have been opened to the Word of the Lord.

With the work on the momentum at Bridgetown, a number of our members residing there, others living near by and others from Capetown intending to move there, and people at Bridgetown wanting to know when we intend building a hall for our meetings, we intend to renew our application to the City Council to purchase ground in that vicinity.

Many visitors are attending our meetings at Woodstock and homes in my area of Salt River and Capetown. These need to be encouraged because faithful families in these homes, who were baptised during my full-time effort, are eager for their children and grandchildren to come to the Lord. We also express our appreciation to many of our young brethren, who are adapting themselves in the work of the Lord, and have shown their capabilities by helping the Bridgetown work and in general. If they are to be the future church, they deserve all encouragement. T. W. HARTLE.

OBITUARY

Kirkcaldy, Ross Street.—It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Sister Abercrombie on Monday, September 21st. She was a regular attender at the meetings until indifferent health and failing eyesight prevented her meeting during the last four years. Our sympathies go out to her family and we commend them to our heavenly Father who is supplying every need. J. MOYES.

COMING EVENTS

Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Beulah Road.—The church here extends an invitation to brethren to join them in anniversary meetings to be held on November 21st and 22nd. On Saturday there will be a tea at 4 p.m. in the Labour Hall, Beulah Road. The evening meeting will commence at 6 p.m. in the church's meeting room. The speakers, God willing, will be brethren Robert McDonald (Dewsbury) and Fred Day (Birmingham). Bro. McDonald will serve the church on Lord's Day, November 22nd. Come and help to make this occasion a time of real Christian fellowship.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Church of Christ, Morley.—Bro. Harold Baines is resuming his duties as secretary of the church at Morley. All correspondence to: 10 Pilden Lane, Bradford Road, East Ardsley, near Wakefield, Yorkshire.

BOOKS WANTED

Bristol Tune Book (tonic sol-fa).—Price to: Joseph Hamilton, 42 Jaffa Street, Crumlin Road, Belfast, N.I.

McGarvey, J. W. A commentary on Acts, or any other good commentary on the book. Conversion to God, A. Brown. New Testament Christianity, L. Oliver. Memoirs of David King.—Prices to Alan Balmer, 10 Laurel Crescent, Hindley.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, 1959

A balance sheet has been prepared by Bro. James H. Maltman, and audited by Sister Miriam Partington. A copy has been sent to the editor of the S.S., and any who attended may obtain a copy on application to A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (stamped addressed envelope with request).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, 1960

Preliminary Notice

It was the unanimous wish of those who attended the last V.B.S. that another should be held next year. We are glad to make known that we have booked excellent accommodation, details as follows:

The Place. Normal College (Teachers' Training College), Bangor, North Wales.

The Period. Two weeks, July 23rd to August 6th, 1960 (D.V.). Brethren may book for either one or two weeks, but not for parts of a week.

Accommodation. This is luxurious by past standards. The college will provide all bed linen—we shall not need to take sheets, blankets, etc. The extensive grounds overlook the Menai Bridge and Straits. There are two tennis courts and ample space for games.

Meals. Breakfast 8.30 a.m.; lunch 1 p.m.; afternoon tea 4.30 p.m.; dinner 7.30 p.m. Catering, preparation, serving and everything connected with the meals will be done by the school domestic staff.

Rates. Adults £5 10s. per person per week; children half price. Accommodation is not unlimited and bookings will be strictly "first come, first served."

Bookings. Those who book will be asked to make a deposit of one pound per adult and ten shillings per child.

Information. When available, fuller details will be sent to any who ask for them. All enquiries to: A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Jack Nisbet, 1 Caponflat Crescent, Haddington, East Lothian.

Peterhead.—Change of address of secretary: Alexander Strachan, 18 Harbour Street, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.

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All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (news items the 15th) to the Editor: C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lancs.

Forthcoming events and personal notices: 3/- for three lines minimum; 8d. per line over three lines.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Nr. Wigan.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

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