

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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GOD'S BUILDING

"EXCEPT the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalm 127:1).

We read in the Bible about buildings made by God, and some by men. Those designated "God's building" are built according to God's instructions. He alone is the architect. He furnishes the plan and tells His workmen how to build, and with what materials.

Noah's Ark

The first example we have in the Word of God is that of the Ark, built by Noah. In those days the earth was so corrupt that God purposed to destroy all flesh by a flood of waters, but, as Noah had found grace with God, he and his family were saved from the general destruction by means of the Ark. God gave Noah the blue-print, with the design, measurements and description of materials to be used in building it. (Genesis 6).

By obedience Noah and his family were all saved—"By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. 11:7). This example is given so that we may learn how to win good success.

The Tower of Babel

The next building we notice in the Bible is the one conceived in the heart and mind of men—the tower of Babel. A generation had arisen which knew not Noah nor his God. They would, they decided, build a city and a tower whose top would reach to heaven, to make for themselves a name and to prevent their being scattered abroad upon the earth (Genesis 11:4).

These people had imagined a vain thing and so they laboured in vain, for God was not in all their thoughts. "The Lord bringeth the counsel and devices of the people to nought"; on the other hand, "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:10, 11). Because of God's word, the tower was never finished.

This historic event is an analogy to all the subsequent attempts by men to devise schemes whereby righteousness, peace, prosperity and joy may be realised, without any reference to the mind and will of God. In our generation we still see the nations of men taking counsel together, but it shall not stand.

The Tabernacle

When the children of Israel were journeying from Egypt, through the wilderness, to Canaan, God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle. God gave the plan with all particulars—even to the most minute detail. Like Noah, Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for the testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5). "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he" (Ex. 40:16).

The Temple

King David of Israel had purposed in his heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of God. He had made ready for the building of it, but God told him that, as he had shed much blood in wars, he should not build His house. Nevertheless, "Solomon thy son shall sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel; he shall build my house." (Read 1 Chron., chapter 28). Here again the Lord provides the pattern (see verses 11 to 19). In the matter of building the Lord's house at Jerusalem, Solomon was faithful, for the record says ". . . so Solomon built the house and finished it."

The Church

These buildings by God's servants—Noah, Moses and Solomon—were made of earthly materials and by men's hands. They were inadequate to true and pure spiritual worship. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25). "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Jesus so spake to the woman at the well of Samaria. For this purpose, Jesus had left His glory which He had with the Father and came to show us the things of the Father. To achieve His purpose, Jesus said that He would build His church, and that it would stand for ever. This necessitated the death, burial, resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus.

The church of Christ is a spiritual building. It is not made of wood or stone or any other earthly material, but is composed of living men and women, who are called "living stones," and ". . . are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

The plan for building the church of Christ is found in the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Hear Him: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Matt. 7:24). Jesus is Himself **The Rock**.

He acknowledged this when Peter made the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). This truth is the foundation of His church. "No other foundation can any man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). The Lord Jesus is also referred to as "the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20); moreover, He is the "head of all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

Living Stones

These quotations are surely sufficiently clear to keep us from giving heed to the thoughts and opinions of men relative to the church of Christ. To become a "living stone" in the house of God—the church of Christ—is to be born again, to be saved, to become a saint, a child of God and an heir of glory.

As it was imperative that Jesus should give Himself to die for our sins, so also it is imperative that we give heed to His commands. (Please read Hebrews, chap. 5, verses 8-9).

Firstly, it is necessary to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). We must also repent of our sins, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5). Likewise the good confession that Peter made is required of all who hope to be saved: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32). Baptism, too, is essential to acceptance with God, for Jesus has commanded it (see Mark 16:16). He taught Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Jesus set for us an example when He was baptised.

Baptism is into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Thereafter we must be faithful to observe all things besides that Jesus has commanded.

Dear reader, we pray that you will be advised. Be not ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ; but like the Apostle Paul, and multitudes more, commit yourself entirely to the Lord and in confidence you will be able to say, "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).

SAMUEL WILSON.

A TOUR OF PALESTINE—3

By G. Lodge

(Two previous contributions in this series appeared in the S.S. in November and December, 1960.)

Capernaum

THE synagogue at Capernaum is worthy of special note because of the prevalence of Roman influence in the carving to be found in it. The idea of Jewish worship and Roman symbols mixed together seems unthinkable—and in a place where Jesus preached. An explanation was suggested, though of course it cannot be proved, that possibly a part of the "alms" of Cornelius (Acts 10:2) was the building of this synagogue.

We retraced our steps to Tiberias and then followed the coast of Galilee past the hot springs to the southern tip of the lake, where it empties into the Jordan. Some of the party filled bottles of river water here—idolatry is remarkably popular. As we drove through upper Galilee we got a fair impression of country life in Jesus's day. We saw the mixed herds of sheep and goats, men ploughing with various animals (and occasionally tractors), the often tiny fields, with rarely any hedges, unless they be cactus. The soil here is a deep brown, with lots of limestone rock strewn in and about it. The Jews make great use of irrigation by three-inch pipes and sprinklers. The Arabs, in every way and at every level, did a poor job compared with their counterparts. They would often plough around stones year after year which they could have picked up and carried to the edge of the plot with ease. What a feckless people!

Megiddo

The following day, we visited first the excavations of Megiddo—the Armageddon of Revelation. The city is thought to date back to 3000 B.C., having sheltered some twenty different civilisations in its time. It is on a commanding hillside overlooking the valley of Jezreel (Esdraelon), which is the most important route from the East to the Mediterranean coast. Whoever held the city controlled this route, so that countless battles have been fought around this area. Hence the use of this name in the book of Revelation for the ultimate triumph over evil. This city was one of Solomon's fortress towns (1 Kings 9:15) where a company of chariots was stationed. The ruins of the stables were quite easily identified, with their stone-built stalls and mangers carved out of solid lumps of stone, with rings for fastening the horses' halters carved out of the same blocks. This was the only place where I noticed oats growing—in the stable area. I wondered if these plants could be direct descendants of the oats dropped by Solomon's horses. It was here that king Josiah was mortally wounded (2 Chr. 35:20-24).

Megiddo drew its water from a spring which flowed out of the hillside on which it is built, below the city walls. Thus, in time of siege, the city lost its water supply to the enemy. This was remedied by digging down into the centre of the hill a vertical shaft and connecting this "well" with the spring by a tunnel meeting it at a point inside the hill. They had some device whereby they could block off the entire natural flow and divert it to run into the great well. Some two hundred slaves were employed to carry water either from the normal outlet of the spring or else from the bottom of the great well which was approached by a spiral staircase cut into its side. The water was then stored in rock-hewn cisterns. These carriers may well be some of the slaves referred to in 1 Kings 9:20 and 21.

We went next to Acre on the Mediterranean coast, and visited the old Arab quarter with its tiny shops and outdoor street vendors, very smelly, noisy and busy—very interesting. We entered our first mosque with its beautiful decorations and carpets. We had heard a little earlier the call to prayer being made from the top of the minaret.

We ended our day by visiting Safad, in the hills. The hotel where we had lunch catered for the orthodox Jew to the same extent that our hotel on Mount Carmel catered for the unorthodox. Whilst we were lunching in one room, a large party of Jews danced and sang in the next, as part of their celebration of the Passover. Safad is the artists' settlement in Israel. It was at this point that several of our party began to be ill—a trouble which was to spread to most of us eventually.

On the next day, Tuesday, the 19th April, we left Haifa and our hotel on Mount Carmel, by way of the ridge of hills which extend from Carmel south-eastwards. This journey provided some most beautiful scenery, rivalling, I was told, Swiss mountain scenery. Our goal was the Kibbitz at Givatt Brenner.

The Jewish Settlements

The Kibbutz (Hebrew for settlement) life needs some explaining. The zealots for modern Israel have banded together in these collective settlements to live and work as a community. The reward of their labours is simply to have no worries, their actual cash reward being only a few shillings per week for personal indulgence in sweets, tobacco, etc. By their dedicated way of life, they have been enabled to transform in thirty-two years a desert area into a flourishing collective farm but at what a price in human terms!

In order to enable both parents to work in the fields, the children are taken from their mothers' care at six weeks old, provided the babe has normal health. They are reared then in a pre-school kindergarten group. The parents can drop in to see them for a few hours each day and especially on the Sabbath. When of school age they go to live as an age group in a house which includes dining, recreation, bath, bed and schoolrooms, under the one roof. This they would refer to as their house or home. The two-roomed house where the parents live would be termed their father's house. This age group will move through life together as a "family." They change houses and foster-parents only once in childhood, and these two things do not happen together. As they become old enough they visit their parents' home for a few hours at a time, particularly on the sabbath, never sleeping there. They claim that parents spend as much time with their children as is the case in Britain, and that the fathers actually see more of their children than we do.

From the age of 16 years up to the age of 18, the young folks live together, two or three to a room, in little two-roomed bungalows, each room having only an outer door. Occasionally, one room in a block may house girls and the other room boys. In any case, they mix quite freely with little or no surveillance. I asked the camp guide if this had not led to social misbehaviour, but he assured us that no such trouble arose. I was not convinced.

Housing is given according to position on the waiting list. All needs — food, clothing, furniture, etc. are provided by the store, without exchange of money. Record cards are used to check on the time in which clothing, etc., has been worn out and need is determined by the storeman, or, on reference, by the Camp Council, which is the community's representative government. Anyone wishing to leave the Kibbutz may do so, but it is usually permanent if he does; generally he would not be re-admitted.

From about twelve years old, the young folk do some manual labour. All attend school until they are eighteen, when they enter the army—boys until they are twenty-one and girls until they are twenty. The Kibbutz keeps its own form of the Passover—"made more meaningful for the present age." Religious instruction is not given at all, but the Bible (Old Testament) is taught from the beginning of school life and only those who view it reverently are allowed to teach it, so we were told.

Contact with these people and careful scrutiny of their arrangements and ideals, made it plain to me that they are not zealous for anything which the Old Testament Jews would have gloried in. Their leader commented very bitterly on the fact that there were more Jews, and more Jewish money, in New York city than in the whole of Israel. To them any Jew who will not live in and sacrifice for the state of Israel is not really a Jew, however religious. Only about four per cent. of the Jews in Israel live in the two Kibbutzim. Many of the new camps are near the border so as to act as manned patrol points and probably as launching stations for the inevitable break-out into Jordan. Though we found much here that was disturbing, even distressing, they were extremely generous people in thought and deed. They cared for us all very well and those of our party who were too ill to move on with us had excellent treatment from fully qualified staff in their hospital—all free, which is not the usual practice in Israel.

[To be continued].

'HOW LONG DID THE BODY OF JESUS LIE IN THE GRAVE?'

IN the twenty-six completed years of this magazine, several articles have appeared at different times and in different ways, purporting to tell us how long it was that Jesus lay in the tomb, and the question, apparently, is not answered even now, for in last month's issue it was raised once again. Can it be that we, as a community, are of those who, forever learning, never come to a knowledge of the truth?

The name of Wilson has been a familiar one to me over many years but "Samuel" of the ilk is one of whom I have not previously heard. In his article, he writes of "brethren," so presumably he is a member of a church of Christ. There is authority for saying—which is recognised—that members of these churches should all speak the same thing. However, despite the assurance with which he writes, I, for one, must certainly disagree with him in the conclusion at which he has arrived. Bro. Wilson has obviously spent thought, time and trouble in his attempt to prove his case, and he should be answered.

I believe it was from Alexander Campbell that I once read that man always **thinks in words**. Whether that has been proved to be so universally, I have no idea. **Probably it never has been nor can be so proved**, but it is certainly true of this writer. **Being an Englishman who has never been out of his own country, and knows no other tongue but that of his own land, I think in terms of the English language, its idioms and colloquialisms.** Had I been born in France—being the sort of man I am—**my thoughts would have presented themselves to me in French, with its peculiarities of speech.** Or had I been born a Jew, my thoughts would have come to me in the language of the period and place in which I lived, and in my thinking, I would have used its Hebraisms. In writing that, I bring myself in line with what Bro. Wilson has striven so ardently to show, upon which he builds his case.

It must be made clear, however, that the Scriptures, as well as being, in part, the thoughts and words of man, are, in part, the thoughts and words of God. And God is not a man. "My thoughts," He says, "are not your thoughts," and we can well believe that neither are our ways of thinking His ways.

Bro. Wilson accepts as literal a statement of Jesus which has every appearance of being proverbial. He quotes Luke 13:32, "Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected, and stops there, stating "This figure of speech was literally fulfilled in the time he [Jesus] lay in the tomb." Had he finished the whole of the passage it would have been seen that it did not have the literal application he gives to it. The second part of it refers, in terms of "walking" to what the Lord must yet do. "I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following," so as to reach Jerusalem, to which He "had set His face." In the first part of this two-fold passage, Jesus used the word "perfected." "Young's Concordance" translates the original word as "completed." When and where was the walking of Jesus completed? Not in the tomb but at that moment in time, on the day he died, when He said, "It is finished."

Taking that literally means the third day was not the day of His resurrection but of His death.

Then Bro. Wilson writes: "Some brethren are puzzled about the expression in Matt. 12:40 [which refers to Jonah in the whale's belly]. "They think that this expression is a contradiction of the *facts* by the writers of the Gospels . . ." This means that Bro. Wilson accepts as truth [facts] the statements of men (which he has laboured to show are indefinite and unreliable) and rejects as a Hebraism (that is, as being inexact) the clear and precise statement of the Lord. That is a mistaken assumption and a grievous error of judgment, which cannot be allowed to pass.

The question at issue is one of time. A great truth about God (timeless in Himself, eternal, without beginning or ending) is His manifold dealings with man in the processes of time. It is He that set the stars in their courses, by which time is measured, as—timed to the last degree of perfection—they spin their way through the universe. From the time he first came into being, and through all ages since then until now, time has been a factor in God's dealings with man. He has spoken to him in the "sure" word of prophecy—"sure" because it is the word of God, and sure in its method of fulfilment. For God, the great mathematician, is precise and definite in all His ways.

The story of Jonah is prophetic, proved to be so by the Lord's accepting it as a "sign" of what should happen to the Son of man, and its significance is chiefly one of time. If we look up the story at its beginning we shall see that "God prepared a great fish," and the act of preparation implies the expenditure of time. And so it must have been. There was a ship in the midst of a storm, blown hither and thither by the forces of wind and waves. In the ship were men distraught by fear for their lives, desperately driven by a superstition which led to Jonah being thrown overboard to save them, and it needed the precision of a divine power to synchronise all the opposing elements so that when Jonah went overboard the prepared fish should be in the right place, at the right moment, to receive him. Not only that, the divine power—that is God—had still to sustain the poor man in his strange situation, and actuate the fish to eject him at the place he would wish to be—on dry land. Not only did God prepare the fish to receive the prophet, He also ordained the length of time he should lie in that strange place of succour, and it is only by the inspiration of God that that time could be so precisely indicated in the Scriptural record, for no other than God could know it.

No answer to the question that has been posed can be adequate which fails to deal with the story of Jonah, embracing as it does the facts outlined above. The prophecy and the sign are a two-fold witness to what was to be, which cannot be gainsaid. How does Bro. Wilson deal with this witness? The prophecy he ignores, and the sign he brushes out of the way as a Hebraism. This he does because they stand in the way of His own interpretation of what took place. This is his answer, in his own words: "Jesus was buried near the end of preparation day. His body lay all the next day—the Sabbath—and was raised early on the morning of the first day of the week."

Try as one may there cannot be got more than two nights in that period. Both the sign and the prophecy explicitly affirm that there were three nights.

That there may be statements in the records which are not easy to understand is admitted—hence the raising of the question—but to charge God as speaking to man in Hebraic terms of time, seems to this writer impossible. Is it not a denial of His word? Moreover, the sign given by Jesus Christ, which comes within the scope of that knowledge claimed to have come to Him as from God (John 8; 12:49)—and is assuredly God given—is also called in question. Paul wrote: "Let God be true, though every man be a liar." Man is always liable to be caught in the coils of his own way of thinking, but not so God.

How long did the body of Jesus lie in the grave? Let prophecy and a God-given sign answer for us all: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly **so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**" The answer to the question, explicit and undeniable, is in those words.

W. BARKER.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

THE SCRIPTURES FOR MARCH

5—	Jeremiah 3:11-25.	Hebrews 12: 1-17
12—	„ 5:18-31.	„ 12:18-29.
19—	„ 26.	„ 13.
26—	„ 36:19.	Ephesians 1.

The conclusion of a great letter

It is very clear that the eyes of the Hebrew Christians are not to be fixed on their earthly destiny apart from their heavenly reward. "Some better thing" (11:40) is what they will experience in company with the heroes of faith who went before. It is the "being made perfect" when He, Jesus, shall be manifested in glory. "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Has this great truth gripped our very hearts—that to be like Him is the consuming ambition of the Christian, and if it really be so will in fact be finally and fully fulfilled?

So the picture presented by the writer in chapter 11 is of endurance to the end in a fight of faith ending in some cases in apparent defeat, but from the standpoint of God and His people, in real victory. Obedience to God involved many in much affliction. The summing up in verses 35-38 is almost terrifying but the grace to endure constitutes the victory—"This is the victory that overcometh . . . even our faith" (1 John 5: 4). We do not know into what conditions we may be cast, but we do know that our Father will with the temptation provide the grace to overcome.

There is a suggestion of being watched in the contest as runners in a race but the witnesses referred to are those of whom we have read, whose steadfast faith is our example, and the emphasis is on the "weight" and the "sin." These have to be got rid of like any heavy garments or impediments of a runner. The world, the flesh and the devil are the encumbrances which hinder fatally both the individual Christian and the church as a body. When worldly amusements (called harmless), pretentious buildings, wealth and popularity get a hold on us, the real contest cannot be continued satisfactorily. The heavenly objective is lost sight of, overshadowed by the craving for numbers and influence. We no

longer endure. The writer bids us run with endurance, and points us to the endurance of the cross by the Saviour, with its fearful agony and shame which, however, culminated in His exaltation. Again in verse 3 endurance of the hostility of sinners by Him is set before us as encouragements against growing weary—losing our endurance.

The Hebrew Christians had suffered much but not yet to bloodshed, as had the "witnesses" whose cases had just been set forth. They were inclined to grow weary, and needed to be reminded that discipline is part of the Christian's life and training. Perhaps we also need to recognise the hand of a Father when we are called on to suffer pain and hardship, which so many regard as harshness on His part, and deeply resent. That would easily be when we regard our earthly comforts as essentials—"we never had it so good," but we would like it and expect it to be better—and our spiritual good as not so important. The so-called Christian world has rushed from otherworldliness to materialism, and real Christians can get caught up in it.

Parenthood involves punishment and training, and failure in these is undoubtedly responsible in large measure for the juvenile delinquency of our time. Most folk can see this clearly enough, and love is not a substitute for discipline but would lead us to exercise it severely at times. Hence our teaching, "God deal-eth with us as with sons." Sometimes we can see this all too plainly, recognising the need of "the big stick" as a brother has put it. And in any case we do know that "all things work together for good" when God's conditions are fulfilled, and these are quite searching—loving Him and being among the called "according to His purpose."

Leaving finally the primary spiritual requirements and exhortation, the last words of this letter, like most of the other New Testament letters, relate to the daily life and moral character of Christians. These are simple, yet searching, and difficult to carry out consistently. We can only summarise them here.

Brotherly love is a first essential. How far do we as individuals practise it in our relations? With what continuous brotherly and sisterly affection do we regard all the members of the church in our locality? What extent of genuine

sympathetic interest do we manifest?

Hospitality is not easy in the modern world, and our means do not extend in many cases to the exercise of it as fully as we would wish and the Saviour would desire; but our homes should certainly as far as possible be spots where Christian love and kind sympathy are available, especially to our own brethren.

Some of our brethren in the world are suffering in prison but we have little if any information of their condition, and need to know before we can exercise this grace. There are prisoners we can reach perhaps as individuals, though not suffering for conscience's sake.

Marriage is an institution which Christians in general respect highly, as is right, and it is important for us to avoid even appearance of evil in this matter.

Covetousness is the opposite of contentment; practice of the latter will save

us from the former. Other points just as important as these are brought to notice—remembrance of the apostles and prophets, avoidance of strange teachings about food, etc., bearing abuse for Christ's sake, continual praise of God, good and kind deeds to others, obedience to leaders in the church and finally prayer for the workers in the Lord's vineyard.

As with so much of our sacred writings, the full understanding and practical outworking form a lifetime programme, made possible only by divine grace.

R. B. SCOTT.

A CORRECTION

In the Notes in February issue, page 20, column 2, lines 12 to 22 should be in place of lines 1 to 11.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THINKING

IF you are pained by the necessity of thinking for yourself, you were born in the right age of time. Today, more than ever before, "society" will make up your mind for you, the "crowd" will set the moral pace for your actions, and "everybody" else will remove from you the rather unpleasant and responsible task of individual thinking. It is the accepted and popular thing to "drift" with the tide of religious, social, and moral ideas. After all, why should one tax himself to be original when he can just adopt the popular cry and rest his mind? Why should he trouble himself with concern over such old-fashioned things as "truth" and "right living"? It's so much more comfortable the other way. Besides, you can get yourself bruised by trying to travel against the tide of things.

This rather sums up the philosophy of too many "up-to-date" people. Just think about the contrast between this and the attitude our Lord taught his people. It is easiest just to fall in with the majority, but God says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil . . ." (Exodus 23:2). It requires much less of a man to conform, but Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). Such proof requires deep thought and careful examination. In fact, God holds the Christian responsible to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Just as the Christian differs from the world in so many other ways, so he differs in the matter of thinking for himself.

There are, of course, "professional" non-conformists, who take issue with every idea expressed because they feel that it is "smart" to do so. This makes a man ridiculous. Also you must remember that while independent examination is a must, there is another side to the question. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). The Bible emphasises the rightness of respecting our elders and those of more experience than ourselves. You must think for yourself without becoming arrogant and unteachable.

Independent thought is the best safeguard for the cause of truth in the hearts of men. You must become big enough and honest enough to examine willingly ALL the evidence—to take a fair look even at that which you might be

tempted to ignore. Some good and some truth turn up in the strangest places. And once you have opened your mind to all sides, then you must be courageous enough to grasp the truth and live it. Be sure that your cherished beliefs are honest convictions that you have made your OWN—not the prejudices that you have inherited from someone else. The Jews made void the commandments of God by the traditions of men (Matthew 15:6, 9) simply because each generation blindly accepted the stock interpretations accumulated by preceding generations.

Many a young person has sold his purity of life because he waited until too late to question the loose moral ideas of the majority. Truth never suffers from the light of honest investigation. You who are young can find no better time than your youth to begin doing your own thinking.—“Old Paths Advocate.”

CORRESPONDENCE

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Dear Editor,—May I answer one or two questions which continue to come to me in letters about the Vacation Bible School to be held at Bangor, North Wales, August 5th-19th, 1961?

1—“What about deposit?”

We want a deposit of one pound for each adult booking, and ten shillings for each child's booking, regardless of period.

2—“Can I book for less than a week?”

No. Bookings will be accepted only for one week or two weeks. We are not able to accommodate anyone for odd days or periods.

3—“How soon should I book?”

As soon as possible. Already (at February 9th) bookings are close on sixty. Total of beds available is 107, and we are making bookings on a strictly “first come first served” basis. Deposits with bookings, please.

4—“Who is classed as an adult?”

Anyone who attains the age of fourteen prior to August 5th, 1961. Adults pay £5 10s. per week and children £3 per week.

5—“Can I have friends come for meals?”

No. Allowing visitors who “dropped in” to have meals caused a great deal of difficulty for the domestic staff last year. They have to plan carefully for a predetermined number, and for their sake we ask that anyone who chooses to visit the school make his/her own arrangements for meals.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

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NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Fort Jameson, N. Rhodesia.—Bro. Clayton Nyanjagha writes on February 7th: “This letter to you is accompanying a long with recent baptisms for . . . January this year. There have been five souls added to the church and Lord's work is still in a combined effort. We have Brother Efron Mtonga, from Tanganyika, where he has been four years and three months with his family. He spent two years for Bible studies and two years three months on evangelical work and established some congregations whilst there, now he is back to us and is working in the High Commissioner's Office and he is doing a good deal of help to Bible studies.”

Newtongrange.—The mission held during January and concluding on February 5th conducted by our Bro. A. E. Winstanley, has been one of the brightest and most invigorating experiences of the church here for a long time. The church and our brother have not spared themselves, and the results our God has blessed us with have been amazing. There were meetings every night except Monday, and often in members' homes. The attendances averaged during the week: Training for preaching, 10; mid-week gospel meeting, 70; women's meeting, 50; children's meeting, 60; Saturday gospel meeting, 90; gospel meeting, Sunday, 70.

Added to the church by the Lord were six young people and two were restored to the fellowship of the church. May the Lord bless them and keep them and may they at all times be the means of glorifying the name of our Lord and Master.

We think that this field is still white unto harvest and we crave the blessing of God and the prayers of our brethren for the success of the work here is Newtongrange.

W. H. ALLAN.

Woodstock, Capetown.—On January 9th, the husband of the lady who was baptised from the Chest Hospital, Capetown, was baptised too. On January 10th, shortly after one of our cottage meetings, a young lady was baptised. Her mother and father are members of the church, and it is hoped that others of this family might respond soon. We were also privileged to have fellowship with brethren from Johannesburg (the Davids and Nel families and others) and Bro. J. Brown from Namwianga Mission, N. Rhodesia. Their stay with us was of great encouragement, by sound messages the brethren delivered, the importance of the "body of Christ," our obligation to it, and the service and sacrifice that should be made to extend its growth.

T. W. HARTLE.

OBITUARY

Sister Mary Firth Booth

On December 22nd last there was laid to rest in Wigan the body of Sister Mary Firth Booth. Only five mourners comprised the funeral party, and only a handful of her brethren in Christ attended the service. No death notice appeared in the local newspapers. Judging from these facts it might be said that our sister died and was buried "unhonoured and unsung". We feel, therefore, impelled to record something of her life and service. Not that she would have desired it, but because of the influence her life had upon some who, perhaps, will read this appreciation.

Sister Booth was 76 years of age. She was the last of three spinster sisters, all remarkably gifted in intellectual talents, and all devoting a lifetime's service to Christ and His church in various capacities, first in Adelaide, Australia, then in this country. Mary had high artistic ability as designer, painter and sculptor, and was for many years, until her retirement in 1947, head of the Art Department of the Wigan Girls' High School. This skill she consecrated to her Lord's service in any way in which it could be used, for example in the painting of posters for notice-boards

and the designing of illustrations as Bible lesson helps.

As a teacher of women's classes and a speaker at women's meetings Sis. Booth was superb. She had a refreshing approach to a Bible subject, and one marvelled at the previously unrealised truth and beauty she brought out of the Scriptures, literally "treasurers both new and old." I remember clearly lessons Sis. Booth gave in morning and afternoon schools at Scholes, Wigan, more than forty years ago, and today often use illustrations suggested by her teaching.

She was gentle and shy, even timid. Yet she had firm and strong views on the word of God, but advanced these humbly and reverently. I have rarely met a humbler character. During her life she diligently visited the poor and needy and many are the souls to whom she had given a new hope and inspiration by dispensing the word of God to them, and helping in urgent and tangible ways. Many, too, are the souls she has won to her Lord, through her prayers, visits and patience. Many of these facts became known only years later, and even then not because of Sis. Booth's telling but because those who have been blessed by her ministry still "rise up and call her blessed." "She, being dead yet speaketh."

She was a woman of prayer and of faith, and deeply spiritually-minded. Through these vital weapons she accomplished what she of herself could not have done. For she was frail and weak and suffered from ill-health most of her life. All the greater glory, therefore, to God, in whose strength her weakness was made perfect, and to Christ, through whom she did all things. That so feeble a woman should be the means of such blessing and strength is in the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Her pen, too, was devoted to comforting and encouraging the weak, the lonely, the poor, the distressed and the bereaved. In letters and in articles in various publications she was used to bring much help by this means. Two or three of Sis. Booth's contributions appeared in the S.S. in 1957 and 1958, and she would have written more had strength permitted.

All three Sisters Booth were deeply interested in spreading the gospel in other lands. They were close friends of the late Sis. Mary Bannister, missionary to Nyasaland. Among other ways of helping there and in other parts, they

harnessed the vigour and willingness of boys and girls in Bible schools for the rolling of bandages, packing of parcels, etc. for the use of natives in those countries.

Sis. Booth shed around her a love, peace and holiness which reflected the glory of the Saviour she so deeply loved and faithfully served.

“As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.”

Those words typify her life. Not only the human words of a hymn but the divine words of Jesus Christ speak of such a life—she was a Mary who “sat at the feet of Jesus” and who did “what she could.”

C. MELLING.

Hindley.—

It is with deep sorrow in our hearts that we report the passing of two of our members. Sister “Polly” Rowland fell asleep in Jesus on January 27th, aged seventy-two years. She had been in failing health for a long time, but was always present at meetings when circumstances permitted. We commend her loved ones to our heavenly Father, who alone can supply strength in the hour of need.

Sister May Kemp entered into rest on February 2nd, aged fifty-seven years. She had been in hospital on two occasions and had returned home for the second time when she passed away suddenly. She leaves behind a deep sense of loss, for she was an untiring worker in church and school. Originally a Wesleyan, she became a member of the church in Hindley in 1938, at a mission conducted by Bro. W. Crosthwaite. From that time she had laboured unceasingly in the Master's word and work. Loved by all, particularly those who had been in her charge in the school, she leaves a vacant place and she is greatly missed.

Her earthly tabernacle was laid to rest on February 9th, Bro. L. Morgan performing the farewell service. We commend her sorrowing husband and children to God who alone can ease the inner

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—We are saddened to have to report that death has taken yet another of our members. Sister Mrs. Harold Busby fell asleep on January 23rd in her seventy-third year.

It was fifty-seven years ago when, as Ida Johnson, she was baptised from the Bible School, in which she afterwards became a teacher. Her father was one of the elders of the church. She leaves a husband and four sons to mourn her loss, besides a brother and three sisters (one being Sister Mrs. Hudson of Blackpool). We extend our Christian sympathy to all those who have thus been bereaved and pray they may be consoled by the happy remembrances of her faithful life.

F.C.D.

East Ardsley.—We regret the passing of Sister Mrs. Annie Weir Sykes, at the age of seventy-one, after a short illness, on January 10th. When well she was always in her place amongst her brethren. She had been in the church for 25 years and was a very earnest and helpful Christian. The funeral was conducted by the writer on Saturday, January 14th.

E.P.

Kentish Town.—We record with sorrow the passing of our sister Mrs. J. Reynolds, aged 81, who had been living with her daughter, Mrs. Scott, for the past three years, since giving up her home at Oakham, owing to bodily weakness, due to old age.

Tunbridge Wells, 5 Mount Ephraim Rd.—Sister Mary Ann Green died peacefully, after a long illness, on January 20, 1961. She was 89 years of age and was baptised into Christ when she was 81. For about six years, she had been under great physical handicap, and for most of that time bedfast, yet her radiant faith was never dimmed. Her smile was a tonic to any visitor, and her example of patient endurance an encouragement to her brethren. We thank God for her faithful life, and rejoice that she has passed from suffering and weakness into the Saviour's keeping.

We commend her family to the God of all comfort. We are specially appreciative of the ministry of love performed by her daughter, Mrs. Bodkin.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

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MARRIAGE

Sister Barbara Melling to Barrington Horbury, in the meeting-house of the church at Doncaster, Saturday, February 4th, 1961, Bro. J. Garnett officiating

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bro. Andrew Gardiner, 20 Hyvoe Grove, Gilmerton, Edinburgh 9.

COMING EVENTS

Ince-in-Makerfield (Lancashire). Meetings to commemorate the opening of our new meeting-place will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 4th and 5th, 1961 (D.V.). Saturday, 2.30 p.m., meeting to be addressed by Bro. Will Steele (Edinburgh). After this meeting tea will be provided. At 6.30 p.m., meeting to be addressed by Bro. Geoffrey Lodge (Dewsbury) and Bro. Tom Kemp (Hindley). Sunday, Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.; Bible School 2.30 p.m.; Gospel meeting at 7.30 p.m., to be addressed by Bro. Frank Worgan.

A warm invitation is extended to all brethren to meet with us on this occasion. Accommodation will be provided for week-end visitors.

Spring Conference, Sat., April 1st, 1961 Blackburn.—A conference of brethren is to be held (God willing) in the meeting-house of the church at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, on the afternoon of Saturday, April 1st, 1961, commencing 2.30.

Should any brother desire the inclusion of any proposal for discussion by the conference a note to Arthur Hood, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Lancashire, would ensure its inclusion on the agenda.

Bren. F. A. Hardy and Arthur Hood are due to retire from the committee and both are eligible for re-election by the conference.

There will be a meeting of the conference committee on Saturday morning, April 1st, 10.30, at Hamilton Street, Blackburn.

Tea will be served in the meeting-room at 5 p.m., to be followed by a gospel meeting at which Bro. A. Winstanley will preach.

A. HOOD (Conference Secy.)

MISSION AT BLACKBURN

The church at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, is to hold an intensive gospel mission, with Bro. Albert Winstanley as preacher, commencing Saturday, April 1st, to Lord's Day, April 9th, inclusive; Every night except Monday, April 3rd, and Friday, April 7th. Community hymn-singing before each meeting. Lord's Days: Breaking of bread, 10.30 a.m.; gospel 6 p.m. Weeknights, 7.30 p.m. We appeal to the brethren to come over and help us in this campaign.

At note from each church as to numbers expected to attend the conference will be helpful.—Harry Wilson, 10 Hollin Bridge Street, Blackburn, Lancashire.

Brighton.—The church here is proposing to hold the anniversary meetings on April 22nd and 23rd and would welcome the presence of any of our brethren from other churches. Tea will be provided at the chapel in Oxford Street (London Road) at 5 p.m., on Saturday, 22nd, and the public meeting will be held at 6 p.m., when Bro. Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells) will be the guest speaker and also at the meetings on Lord's Day, 23rd, at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Your presence would be a help.

E. T. THORPE, Secy.

Newtongrange.—Sunday school teachers' conference, May 6th, 4 p.m. Speaker, Bro. Jim Morris (Newtongrange). Subject: "Preparation for the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah."

COMING EVENTS

Hindley Bible School, Saturday, May 20th, to Tuesday, May 23rd. Prayer meetings, lectures, discussions, gospel meetings. Preacher: Bro. W. Crosthwaite (Ulverston). Write for hospitality to: Bro. T. Kemp, 52 Argyle Street, Hindley, Wigan, Lancashire.

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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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