

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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JULY, 1969

FAITH AND THE WORD OF GOD

PART III: OUR FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES TO US

IN Romans 4:18 it is written of Abraham that "in hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations." In other words, Abraham's hope never waned, although what God had promised him seemed to be beyond hope of fulfilment. From the time of God's promises Abraham's whole life and objectives were fixed on and aimed at that hope.

Our Relationship to Abraham

What connection has Abraham's faith to ourselves? For answer we can do no better than read Heb. 10 from verse 13: "For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying 'Surely I will bless you and multiply you.' And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath. So that through two unchangeable things, in which it was impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Who are "the heirs of the promise" spoken of in the above passage? Ourselves, the people of God today, Christians, the church. "We," says the writer, "have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul." What is "this"? It is "the hope set before us" spoken of in the previous verse. This hope "enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain" into heaven itself. Jesus is the Forerunner in that place, preparing the way for us to follow. The High Priest of the Jews under the Old Covenant entered only himself into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the temple. The people could not follow, not even the priests. But Jesus is not a High Priest like Aaron, but like Melchizedek. Not Jesus alone enters into heaven, but His people for whom He is now preparing the way. And this hope is an "anchor," fixed, immovable, in heaven. It is not the circumstances of this life and world that decide or govern our eternal habitation. It is God's promises that, if we believe His words and act upon that belief, His blessing and reward are certain. As "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" so with us. Abraham's faith is of vital importance to us, for our faith must be like His—hearing of what God says, believing it although unexplainable to us, and acting upon our belief.

And this faith is not something abstract, simply faith itself. What gives this faith power and reality is that it is faith not in *something* but in *someone*, or rather not faith in *anything*, but faith in *what*, faith in *whom*. It is not so much the *strength of my faith as the faithfulness of Him in whom my faith is placed*: of Christ Jesus it is written in 2 Tim. 2: "If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself."

Our faith is like Abraham's in that we cannot understand how or why we should be saved through believing God's words and promises: we do not deserve salvation through this belief or through our obedience. Salvation is not of works we do, but through obedience by faith. Nor does salvation depend upon our *feelings*: one can *feel* saved one moment and lost the next. Salvation is much more sure than that. It is based upon what God has said, promised, guaranteed: thus Paul writes in Eph. 1:11-14: "In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplished all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

Not Yet—But Sure

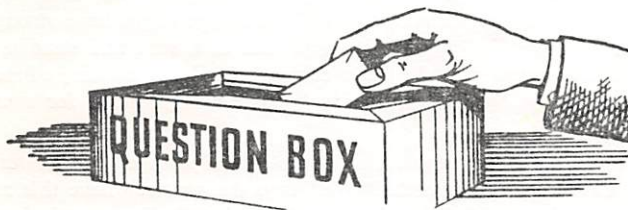
Many things are promised to God's people whose fulfilment has not been fully realised yet: "Because I live, you shall live also"; "He that endures to the end shall be saved"; "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ"; "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience." The glorious realisation of these promises has yet to be seen, but their fulfilment is as sure as that the promises were made, because of Him who spoke them. The hymns are true, because true to scripture, which say

"But here and now, on earth some glimpse is given
Of joys which wait us through the gates of heaven."

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine: O what a foretaste of glory divine!"

(Concluded)

EDITOR



Conducted by
James Gardiner

"Could you please throw some light on Rev. 20, with particular reference to the thousand years' reign? Some of my friends speak so often about the millennium and the reign of Christ on this earth for a thousand years that I would like some information on the subject."

This is a difficult subject, and one which cannot easily be discussed in a short article such as "Question Box," but I shall advance a few comments for what they are worth. For the present, perhaps it would be best to show in this month's article what Revelation 20 *does not* teach, and later to try to show what it *does* teach. I am convinced that a thousand years reign of Jesus on earth is not taught in this passage, and shall try to show why. The common idea held with reference to Rev. 20 is that at the end of time Jesus will return to earth and reign for a thousand years with His saints. Some also believe that Christ will return to the holy city, Jerusalem, and occupy the

throne of David. The New Testament, apart from the Revelation, leaves us in no doubt that Jesus will certainly never return to this earth, let alone to Jerusalem, and will not begin a reign of one thousand years' duration when He does come. Once we have established with certainty this important fact, then those of us who wish may speculate as to what *is* meant by Rev. 20 and the rest.

We are in the last economy of God on earth, and are privileged to be living in the latter times of God; the last days. Heb. 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by His son . . ."; 2 Peter 3:3: "Knowing this first, that there shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (See also 2 Tim. 3:1; James 5:3).

We are living in the last days and some day the last days will draw to a close and we shall reach the very last day of time. Logic and common reasoning demand that the last days shall have a *last day*—one final day when time shall end and eternity shall be ushered in. The New Testament appropriately concedes this obvious fact and actually indicates to us some of the momentous events which will attend that great and awful day.

The Last Day

Let us notice some of the things which will take place on the last day, and see if any man is justified scripturally in contending that Jesus will come and reign for a thousand years on the last day.

(1) JESUS WILL RETURN.

The *fact* of Christ's return is certain; the *time* is absolutely unknown, albeit some modern prophets with a mathematical bent assure us that the time of His return can be found by a somewhat simple mathematical calculation in the book of Daniel. Jesus said the angels did not know of the time of His return, neither did He himself know. One would have thought that Jesus would have been familiar enough with the book of Daniel to make the simple calculation himself if such had been possible. Mark 13:32: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The coming of the Lord is thus always imminent—as imminent as a ripe fig ready to drop from the tree: the fig is ripe but who can say when it will fall? Jesus will come visibly—"every eye shall see Him"—and audibly *i.e.* to the accompaniment of a great shout, the trumpet and the voice of the archangel. Neither shall He come alone but shall be accompanied by His mighty angels. Jesus shall come so audibly that He shall literally waken the dead. He shall come in power and great glory, and it is important that we should notice why He is coming and to give due regard to the events which will occur *simultaneously* with His appearance.

(2) Simultaneously with Christ's coming will be the GENERAL AND ONLY RESURRECTION (The Revelation talks of the first and second resurrections). John 5:28 "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth." That this will all happen in a twinkling rules out the theory of a long space of years between the rising of the dead in Christ and the rest of the dead. 1 Cor. 15:52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The trumpet (last trump) will sound *when Christ comes* and *at the resurrection* (one and the same time), *i.e.* the last day. John 6:44: "No man can come to me except the Father (which hath sent me) draw him; and I will raise him up *at the last day*." This is "the last day" of which mention was made earlier.

(3) THE JUDGEMENT will be simultaneous with Christ's coming, and indicates that He is coming not to reign but to judge.—2 Thess. 1:7: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This surely links up the time of judgement with the coming of Jesus, and shows that He is coming

to judge the world and not to reign on earth for a thousand years or any other length of time. Paul urged Timothy: "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). Both those alive and those dead will be judged when Christ returns. The Bible will cease from being a guide book and will become an indictment and basis of the judgement. John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him *in the last day.*" Once again we notice the term "the last day," and can see that the judgement will take place on the same day as the resurrection and the day of Christ's return. (See also Rev. 20:11-15, and parables such as is contained in Matt. 25).

(4) THE ASCENSION will take place at the coming of the Lord on the last day.

A brief quotation from 1 Thess. chapter 4 suffices to assure us of this, and also without a doubt to indicate to us that Jesus will never again set foot upon the earth, let alone spend a thousand years in Jerusalem. Verses 15-18: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

(5) At Christ's coming THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED.

2 Peter 3:9-11: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise [of Christ's return] as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness." No reign on earth therefore at Christ's coming—no earth. Jesus' coming is delayed that none might perish, for after His coming there will be no extra days of grace or second chances during the so-called millennium. We have no abiding city here but Jesus is preparing one now in heaven, and this is God's gift and promise to both Jew and Gentile. The Jews need never strive to refurbish the holy city and foster national aspirations in Palestine because God's promises are spiritual and the promised land is in many mansions beyond the skies.

"The End"

When one considers these many happenings to take place on the last day of these last days and the positive finality of it all when Jesus comes again, one has difficulty, I suggest, in finding room for a reign of a thousand years and indeed for finding time or room for anything at all, "seeing that all these things shall be dissolved." The concept of "the thousand years" of Rev. 20 must therefore have some spiritual or metaphorical application.

Jesus is reigning now (and has been for about two thousand years) over His spiritual kingdom and will continue to do so until the last enemy (death) shall have been destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). "Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power." The end will be not the time to reign but to cease from reigning—the time to hand the kingdom over to the Heavenly Father.

ARE THERE ANY LAWFUL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE FOR THE CHURCH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ?

THE ancient Jewish law of marriage as described in the "Bible Dictionary" by William Smith (edited by F. N. & M. A. Peloubet), page 383: . . . "Between the betrothal and the marriage an interval elapsed varying from a few days in the patriarchal age, Gen. 24:55, to a full year for virgins and a month for widows in later times. During this period the bride elect lived with her friends, and all communication between herself and her future husband was carried on through the medium of a friend deputed for the purpose, termed 'the friend of the bridegroom,' John 3:29. She was now virtually regarded as the wife of her future husband; hence faithlessness on her part was punishable with death, Deut. 22:23-24, the husband having the option of "putting her away," Deut. 24:1. Matt. 1:19: "The betrothed woman was called his wife before the marriage was consummated, and a divorce was necessary to make the separation legal should the husband demand it *for cause*."

Jesus gives the cause as *fornication*, Matt. 5:32, Matt. 19:9. Jesus does not use the term *adultery*.

The next question to arise is this: "Does the term *fornication* cover *adultery*?" or "Are these terms synonymous?" In referring to Galatians 5:19, 1 Cor. 6:9, and Mark 7:21 we find both words used in one verse or expression side by side. If they are synonymous, why are they so used? A Dictionary of Modern English Usage by H. W. Fowler defines (p. 190) FORNICATE thus: Fornication, as distinguished from adultery, implies that the woman is not a wife; it is sometimes but not always understood to imply that neither party is married. The Concise Oxford Dictionary makes this difference between the two words being considered:

Adultery: Voluntary sexual intercourse of married person with one of the opposite sex other than his or her spouse.

Fornication: Voluntary sexual intercourse between man (occasionally restricted to unmarried man) and unmarried woman.

Thus Mary, espoused (betrothed) to Joseph, could have been put away (divorced) on grounds of fornication but not adultery, the reason being that although she was termed his wife she was not his wedded wife, which she would not become until the completion under the ancient Jewish law. (Refer to Matt. 1). Until we can answer the question as to why both words are used in several scriptures side by side *must we not assume that they carry different meanings?* If they do, what is the distinctive meaning? And then finally we must ask, "Which one did Jesus give as grounds for divorce?"

Why does the Lord say that putting away a wife *save for fornication* "causeth her to commit *adultery*?" Must we not consider carefully the use of the two words here?

Do we have any marriage laws or customs such as those mentioned? The nearest to it is the engagement and the giving of an engagement ring. This modern engagement is easily broken and does not require a divorce. Were a young man to find that his fiancée was with child by someone other than himself he would not be required by law to marry her. It was so in the time of our Lord: no man was forced by law to marry a woman not a virgin. And the ancient law of divorce was for his protection and thus the protection of the lineage, the records of which were kept so proudly.

Is marriage *for life*? Read Rom. 7:2-3. Why is the term *adulteress* used instead of *fornicator*? Is the Christian law of marriage any less stable than that given by Moses? What Moses *allowed* was no doubt for the protection of the woman from the cruelty of a husband determined to get rid of her. *In the beginning*, from the time that God instituted marriage, it was "till death do us part." Paul through the Holy Spirit gave the teaching found in 1 Cor. 6:11 and 1 Cor. 7:10-11. In the church it must be kept.

EARL B. SEVERSON, Gibsons, Brit. Columbia, Canada.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JULY 1969

6—Isaiah 45:14-25	Romans 14
13—Isaiah 11:1-10	Romans 15:1-13
20—Isaiah 58	Romans 15:14-33
27—Isaiah 40:12-31	Romans 16

HARMONY WITH ONE ANOTHER

(Romans 15:5 r.s.v.)

THESE simple words describe what should characterise the church of our Saviour always. Every true Christian knows this and practises self-denial and restraint whenever there is inclination or need to differ from or oppose fellow-Christians. He should of course exercise the same virtues when facing worldlings, but among the Lord's own people it is surely a "must." This may be regarded as a "counsel of perfection"—and so history sadly proves it to be.

From the beginning of chapter 12 to verse 13 of chapter 15 we have instructions for Christian behaviour, and heart obedience to these assures a wonderful new community of consideration and love, previously unknown in the world. In chapter 14 Paul has one particular obstacle to harmony in view. There is no longer with us the question which troubled for a time the infant church. Jews who formed the backbone of that church would be the most seriously religious type. They rightly venerated the sacred writings of the old covenant. Jesus put His *imprimatur* on those writings and obeyed their ordinances. His life, death and resurrection fulfilled them and proved to the hilt their divine origin.

It was natural that these Jewish Christians would feel superior to their Gentile brethren who were without this helpful background—freedom from heathen habits and superstitions. However, their advantage easily became a stumbling-block. The final sacrifice abolished by fulfilment those sacrifices and other observances which were woven into the warp and woof of their lives. The special feasts and days, and the careful selection of food with ceremonial and physical

cleanliness, had separated them from the Gentiles before they became Christians. All were good in themselves, and some certainly would be adopted into normal habits with advantage. Their observance no longer remained obligatory, and some became impossible when the Temple and the priesthood were destroyed. Obviously special grace and understanding were necessary if the Jewish and Gentile members were to develop "harmony with one another."

Consideration and Respect

We have further apostolic teaching in 1 Corinthians 8 along the same lines. While the Jewish convert might wish to continue observance respecting clean and unclean meat, the Gentile might retain superstitious fear about meat offered to idols. Jewish special days as well as heathen special days might also be in view. Some, developing the same robust faith as the apostle himself, would feel quite free of fear and superstition about anything, having reached that understanding of God's love which made Paul content, in spite of repeated appeals, to bear his infirmity in the flesh with complete patience. "I have learned," he writes, "in whatsoever state I am therein to be content" (Phil. 4:11). Jews maintaining close contact with unconverted Jews, and Gentiles in their normal daily lives, would be under constant pressure to fall back from Christian standards. If they retain some of their old ideas, they are not to be criticised. We might render verse 1 "Welcome; do not criticise!" On the other hand such are not to be allowed to impose their backward ideas on others. Each is to recognise his Lord as the One to whom he must answer. While the conscientious conviction remains there must be mutual respect.

Consideration of our position before God demands consideration of one another. This does not come with thinking kindly. It must be shown in action. There is a deeper point reached than those immediately in view. We need to think of the effect of our actions on the minds of others. This is expressed by Paul here in 14:21 and in 1 Cor. 8, 13, and we return to our opening thought—the practice of self-denial and restraint. The Christian's life is often the worldling's Bible. If that

life does not enshrine his Lord, it can lead astray. But it is harmony within the church we are considering.

Firmness and Faithfulness

There is no limit to the exercise of loving consideration, but it is obvious there is a limit to the toleration of weak faith or wrong teaching in the church. We need to reconcile toleration with the "intolerance" exercised by the apostle Paul as expressed in much of his writing. Perhaps the letter to the Galatians illustrates this best. Here false teachers came insisting on observance of Mosaic rules as a qualification for Christian standing. It was not a question of persons weak in faith. The Judaisers claimed apostolic authority; opposed the revealed gospel; vilified the apostle Paul, to whom the Galatians owed their conversion from paganism. Teaching contrary to the Word of God has to be vigorously opposed. In our readings this month we have the instruction "Take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine you have been taught; avoid them" (16:17). Even in those early days of "the faith once for all delivered," false teachers were about and had to be "judged" by that same faith, as provided by inspired prophets and embodied in the Writings so wonderfully preserved to us. It remains true that we must not condemn the individual with unkind thoughts, but truth has to be spoken, falsehood exposed.

"I would have you wise to that which is good, and guileless as to what is evil" (16:19).
R. B. SCOTT

PART-TIME PREACHERS AND N.T. MINISTRY

Is there a need for a full-time professional ministry nowadays?

This is the question posed by Bishop Stuart Blanch, of Liverpool, in the Liverpool Diocesan News.

It has been argued that a great deal of the work done by a parish priest could be equally well done, or even better done, by well-equipped lay people.

But to the question: Do we need any

longer a special group set apart for the ministry? the bishop answers with a resounding YES.

"The ministry of the early Church was a shared ministry involving, among others, teachers, evangelists, administrators, prophets, healers and the special talents of the local congregation," says the bishop.

"It was unpaid, non-professional and unstructured. Nevertheless our Lord found it necessary to call, train and commission 12 apostles.

"These 12 apostles were to be totally dedicated to the work of the Kingdom and were required to leave their previous occupations.

"We need apostles now every bit as much as they were needed then. There are 45 million people in this country who are entirely out of touch with the Church and many of them, like the people of Nineveh, do not know their right hand from their left. Whom shall we send and who will go for us?" asks the bishop.

(*"Lancashire Evening Post," May 3rd, 1969 — sent by Bro. J. Breakell*)

A Series for our Womenfolk

LESSONS FROM LIFE

No. 4: Water

"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting Life" (John 4:14)

THE subject of our meditation this month is one of the most commonplace of all the commodities at our disposal—and, in our climate, one of the most abused. We waste water in an appalling manner, in ways that astonish people of other climes less fortunate than ourselves. We moan about our "wet climate" with its downpourings of rain; yet it is our rainfall that causes our country to be termed "that green and pleasant land" although we don't think so when we are sheltering from a rainstorm in the promenade shelter at our favourite seaside resort on our summer holiday!

At the time of writing the American astronauts have just accomplished the

triumph of the century by circumnavigating the moon, and have brought back the stark fact that the moon, around which so much speculation and romantic nonsense has been written in the past, is nothing but a solid ball of rock, waterless, airless and lifeless, without any natural means of sustaining life.

It is also a fact that man may live quite a while without food; but deprive him of water, particularly in a hot country, and he would soon die a horrible death.

Yes, when Christ talked about the water of life he was stating a great truth, for without water there would soon be no life. Maybe that is why a wise Creator made three-fifths of the surface of our earth to be water: He knew we should need plenty of it. In passing, think for a moment of the myriad forms of life this water maintains.

What Water Is and Does

Scientists tell us that water is composed of two gases. One is hydrogen, a highly inflammable colourless gas, that in these modern times has a sinister association with The Bomb and all the horrors that calls to mind. The other gas is oxygen, so necessary to life, which, if combined with acetylene gas, can melt steel. Yet such was the wisdom of the Creator, that these two fiery elements with such destructive potentialities, become that life-giving substance we call water—something man can copy but not create. Chemists have combined these two gases and produced an artificial water, but it proved lifeless and insipid and completely incapable of sustaining life like its natural counterpart.

Think of the uses we make of water. Apart from its life-giving properties it has a thousand-and-one uses in all branches of industry and home life. We often try to imagine the flow of superfluities that would come from advertising if mankind had invented water. Think of the "Whiter than White" campaigns of certain branches of the detergent industry, and the extravagant claims made for their products. We tremble to think what lengths they would go to if they happened to have invented water. Do you realise that without water there would be

no glass for windows or optical lenses; steam for industry could not be generated; cloth could not be manufactured; and most important of all, we could not keep clean without it; disease and death would soon wipe out humanity without that life-giving and life-saving element of water?

This is the element Christ was talking about here. Let us look at the background of this story in John chapter 4. Our Lord is passing through territory that is forbidden land, for we read (verse 9) that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Furthermore, he is talking to a woman of disreputable character. What would happen to preachers in these critical days if we were found in the company of, and engaging in earnest conversation with, a woman of her character? We have to watch our step even in the company of respectable members of the church, or all sorts of evil surmisings are conjured up by those who see evil in everything we do. Our Lord cared for none of these things: here was a woman deep in sin, in whom He saw a soul worth saving, and He gave to her one of his finest discourses on the deep subjects of worship to God and everlasting life.

Life-Giving

What water was this that Christ talked about to this sinful woman? It was nothing more nor less than the 'Gospel' itself, that grand and glorious News that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and to give unto them Eternal Life.

What are the facts about water? It is a *cleansing* agent; it is a *life-sustaining* agent; it is a *life-giving* agent. But, like all other agents, it has to be applied before it can be of use. In the case of cleansing it has to be combined with a man-made element in the form of soap before it can be adequately used; so it is with the Gospel: all the love our Heavenly Father has shown us is of no value unless we accept it and use it in His service. To draw an analogy: how many young people have suffered from unrequited love,—the object of their affections has not been able to accept or return the love offered? The writer knows of many cases of both sexes where this has happened, and the one affected has gone through life unmarried,

not being able to offer the rejected love to another. How much more does our Heavenly Father feel our rejection of his love?

Cleansing

If the Gospel is to cleanse and save it must be applied before it can do its work. The same applies to its life-giving qualities: it must be partaken of, and that daily. Recently we had to go to our doctor with some disorder that had occurred. We were told we were not drinking enough liquid: "Drink more water, an extra pint at least." We did so and our trouble disappeared.

We conclude with a true story, poignant and sad, but a true reflection on present day values.

A traveller was lost in a desert. Search parties went out and searched for days before he was found alongside a dry water-hole that had been apparently used by bandits, for hidden in its dry depths was much gold and precious stones. He had died the horrible death of thirst, and scratched out in the sand were these significant words, "I came seeking water and found only gold." There was a fortune in gold in that dry well, but that which mattered most was missing: only gold was there—gold for which men fight and murder—yet utterly useless to a man dying of thirst. Men fight, nations go to war, untold misery is caused by the greed for the passing things of this life, yet the "Water of Life" that Christ came to give and his faithful church still offers is left unheeded and unwanted.

As we use the plentiful and not much valued commodity of water, let us think of the Giver, and thank Him daily for His wonderful provision of this very necessary element; and think also of that richer water that shall be to us a "well of water, springing up into Everlasting Life."

Next month we hope to write about **Light**.

Thought for the Kitchen:

"Whosoever shall give a cup of water to drink in my name—shall not lose his reward."

H. BAINES

CORRESPONDENCE

90 Longate, Peterhead,
Aberdeenshire,
Scotland.
4th June, 1969

Dear Brother Melling,

Would it be possible for you to put the names and addresses of two Sisters, who belong to the Church of Christ in America, in the "Scripture Standard"? I write to Sister Sylvia Clements, in Texas, and her "Sister Joan," and a very dear friend would like to start writing to two "Sisters" in the Church in Britain; they would prefer them to be near their own age.

Sister Joan is 28, married with 4 little girls. Her married name is:

Mrs. Roy M. Hargrove,
Route 1, Box 188,
Temple, Texas.
76501

Sister Helen is 38, married, with 2 children. Her married name is:

Mrs. Ross R. Willhoite,
255 Bastrop Highway,
Austin, Texas.
78741

They are very eager to write to and get to know at least some of their Sisters in Christ in Britain. I would be very grateful if you could help them.

In Christian love,
Sister Isabella Strachan

Dear Brethren,

Greetings in Jesu's name.

On behalf of Bro. Grant, myself and all of the brethren involved, I wish to express our thanks for your generous response to the appeal for help with Bro. Grant's fare to Malawi. This joint effort, directed by Bro. Grant's home church (Wallacestone) and the 21st Street Church, Oklahoma, is a most rewarding experience in Christian fellowship. It also illustrates the pleasant and beneficial results when brethren co-operate in mutual respect. Of the total £576 needed for Bro. Grant's fare, £335 has been received to date.

We hope Bro. Grant will shortly receive the necessary permission from the immigration authorities to enter Malawi and commence his labours. We earnestly solicit your prayers for the success of our joint efforts to extend God's kingdom.

Again our sincere thanks.

Yours in Christ,

James Orton

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bedminster (Bristol).—On May 13th and 14th we held our Church Anniversary. The occasion was one of help and blessing to us all.

We thank all who made it such a success, in particular Bro. Baines for his inspiring messages.

L. Daniell

East Ardsley.—The brethren have concluded a week's mission with Bro. James Howie (Scotland) as the evangelist.

We have had some good congregations and always there were some unimmersed at the meetings. We are grateful for the support of brethren from sister churches.

The spirit of the meetings and the fellowship was indeed a wonderful experience. Bro. Howie spared not himself. He gave sound, well thought-out messages, well delivered. We pray that we shall see some fruit in the future.

Haddington.—Here is some good news from the church in Haddington.

The church here was started just over ten years ago, and during that time our numbers have more than doubled, so that the congregation now numbers twenty-three.

Since last we wrote to you two have been added by baptism and two who formerly met with us have come back again. Our brother and sister Willie and Laura Logan had to leave Haddington because of their occupation, and stay in Edinburgh for about two years. We are now glad to report that they are staying

in Haddington again and are meeting with us. Bro. Leonard Nicholson was baptised last September and Bro. John Fairgrieve last April.

Our prayer is, that with God's help we all might be kept faithful to the end.

Jack Nisbet

Haddington (later).—The church is overjoyed to be able to report about "one sinner who has repented." Our new-found sister in Christ, Mrs. Crosbie, was baptised into the Lord on 25th May in the meeting-place of the church in Tranent. We thank those brethren once again for the use of their meeting-place. We pray that our sister by the grace of God may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," so that she may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Jack Nisbet

Tunbridge Wells.—On Sunday morning the 18th May Oscar Wicks came along to the meeting of the church and listened to Bro. Sandy Cooper, our anniversary speaker. After the meeting he asked to be baptised, and in the evening it was our joy to witness Bro. Wicks put on his Lord in baptism. Our brother had been a salvationist for 17 years but through his study of God's Word realised he needed to be obedient to the command of the Lord. We request your prayers for him that he may continue faithful to Him and that his wife may be led to follow his example.

Derek L. Daniell

Wigan (Scholes).— From May 31st to June 8th the church held special meetings, at which the preacher was Bro. John Dodsley (Kirkby-in-Ashfield). The purposes were: (1) to try to reach the new residents in the redevelopment area with the gospel; (2) to try to bring to their notice the church, not as commonly understood, but as portrayed in the N.T.; and (3) to try to get children and parents to attend our Bible School.

In preparation for these objects many hundreds of invitations were distributed. We report, however, that so far not a single response has been made from either adults or children. We find our most deadly

enemy is the almost total indifference to spiritual matters. But we are by no means discouraged.

The word of God has been opened up to the church and the gospel has been preached by Bro. Dodsley with clarity, simplicity and power. We rely upon God's promise that His word shall not return to Him empty. A few non-members have heard that word. As it is "the incorruptible seed" it cannot pass away or be without some effect, and we still look and work for the fruits.

An interesting and unusual feature of the mission was a meeting in which four young brethren, assisted by Bro. Dodsley, answered searching questions put to them by Bro. Jack Parker on the theme Christ. Indeed, Christ was the theme throughout, He being lifted up in His various aspects.

We are proving in these days "how hardly souls are wooed and won." But we refuse to despair and to be discouraged by surrounding circumstances. We are to "preach the word" not only "in season" but "out of season." We are cheered by that supposedly pessimistic book, Ecclesiastes (11:4-6): "He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good." So we take courage.

We sincerely and warmly thank the many who from the district churches and farther afield helped in this effort by their prayers and their presence.

Romans 8:28

SINDE VIEWS

Sinde Mission,
P.O. Box 132,
Livingstone,
Zambia, Africa.
March-May 15th, 1969

Dear Friends in Christ,

Truly the Lord provides so many blessings each day we sometimes just take them for granted and forget to thank the One who gives them. Daily we thank God for permitting us to work for Him in this vast harvest field, and for you dear faithful friends who make it possible for so

many to learn about Christ and do so much for us in so many ways. Thank you! It sounds so inadequate to express our appreciation for the many blessings you share with us. We just pray God to bless you abundantly in every way each day as together we journey to our heavenly home.

March 8th to 25th found me in Bulawayo visiting Christian friends.

In April many went to Mukuni for the Women's Meeting the first part of the second week, then from the 9th to 12th they came to Sinde. There were 60 staying here, studying and enjoying lessons given by various Christians, besides seeing many friends.

April 14th the Girls' Bible School began at Sinde with 34 girls, besides BaMiriam, Mabel and I. Two evenings Leonard showed films from the Book of Acts, and each day there was a speaker at chapel. The girls sang many beautiful songs, and gave some fine lessons in the evening programmes. They all begged for a longer Bible school next time. I wish some of you could be here to help!

April 28th to May 2nd was the Bible School at Chabalanda. Leonard, Mabel, 3 children, Jane and Dickson, BaZephaniah, BaJothum, Esther and I left Sinde on the old lorry to struggle through the muddy place (we only got stuck once up to the hubs), dig out some stumps that hit the bottom of the lorry, through two very sandy places, to arrive at Chabalanda. Then we held classes until 4.30 when the people had to go cook for it gets dark early and the evenings are very cold. God blessed the words spoken and 6 were baptized. It was a joy to be with them. There was an average of 59 present each day learning about God.

May 5th school opened. May 9th Leonard flew to England as his mother is very ill. He will return, Lord willing, by plane the 30th. On May 26th and 27th there will be a Bible School at Sinde with everyone coming at 9.30 for classes till 12, then everyone will eat here, then classes till 3.20 so they can get home before dark.

May God bless, guide, and keep you safely until He calls.

In Christian love and hope,

Elaine Brittell

COMING EVENTS

Kirkby - in - Ashfield (Beulah Road). — Anniversary, change of date. Will brethren take this as a preliminary notice of our Anniversary date, 16th August this year. We have obtained the services of Bro. Leonard Morgan and anticipate a rich time of fellowship in the Lord's work.

Tom Woodhouse (Secretary)

Advance notice

September Conference and Rally

The Ulverston church have again invited the conference for the September Rally. Please book the date — September 13th. Fuller details in next issue.

Tom Woodhouse (Secretary)

CHANGE OF MEETING-PLACE

Reading.—The church in Reading will be moving, D.V., to Walford Hall, Carey Street (corner of Castle Street), Reading, on 1st June, 1969. Lord's Day service at 3 p.m. as before.

The premises are bigger and better than our previous meeting-place, so we trust with God's help that we shall be able to make more progress in the future.

(Mrs.) E. C. Payne

The truth doesn't hurt unless it ought to.

B. C. Forbes

ATTENTION PLEASE!

Will contributors, correspondents and those sending notices to the "S.S." please do their best to send copy in good time — articles, etc., by the 10th of the month, notices by the 15th (but earlier if possible)? We do our best to get into the paper any such contributions, even though received after time. This, however, often means that at least three postings of copy (at 5d. rate) has to be made to the printer. In some cases writers are sending in copy late with only 4d. stamps, with the result that sometimes it reaches us four to six days after the deadline.

All this means considerably more work. So we ask correspondents please to send in news, etc., while it is still news, and not some weeks after the events. Some correspondents are very prompt in their postings, and we thank them for this. But we appeal to the others please to write out and post while the matter is in your mind and, if there is any doubt whether you will be in time, to post First Class Mail. Thank you.

EDITOR

He who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dare not is a slave.

Sir Wm. Drummond

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