

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Facing the Facts.

AT THE FOOT of the article "Be Ye Clean" in last month's "S.S." appeared this note: "Next month we hope to write on the wider implications to Christians and non-Christians on the principles touched on in the above article." That article examined the recent Report on "Smoking and Health." It may be thought that we gave undue importance to the subject of smoking and that too much space was used which could have been devoted to better purpose. After all, smoking is only one of various habits people have; why single out one and be silent on others? And is it not an intrusion upon the liberty of the individual to "interfere" with what he does with his money and even his body?

Reaction to the Report on Smoking

In the time that has elapsed since the Report was issued there has been an amazing amount of publicity given to it, in the Press, on wireless and television and in other quarters. At the risk of seeming to over-labour the point we mention some of these reactions.

First, it is gratifying how seriously, on the whole, the Report is being treated. It is a best-seller, and reprints are being called for. It is having a profound effect upon M.P.s; legislation is contemplated to put its recommendations into effect; it has been debated in the House of Lords, when Lord Hailsham declared that it was flying in the face of facts to oppose or doubt the Report's findings; the medical world has almost unquestioningly accepted and endorsed the facts set out; there is now a realisation that children and young people must be discouraged from starting the practice of smoking; and doctors and school teachers are setting the example to their patients and scholars in giving up the habit; the tobacco companies themselves cannot deny, though they try to evade, the truth of what the Report says: their voluntary decisions to remove cigarette machines and to do less advertising through the various channels are admissions that the products they manufacture and sell and from which such enormous profits are made are at the cost of health, or even life, of many of their customers.

Because the ill-effects of smoking are so slow in revealing themselves and are so insidious; because there is something satanic in the subtle and gradual way in which the habit enslaves those who indulge, the full effects had not been realised until this Report called attention to them. It is indeed serious enough when 15,000 deaths are caused needlessly every year from lung cancer, many due to smoking. Our road deaths average 6,000 annually: it has been expressed that people are little moved by these figures, spread out as they are over a period. But if a railway or air accident causes the death of a few we are horrified—it is more spectacular; it makes news. Yet the 15,000 a year dying from lung cancer means the wiping out of a small township. It is time attention was called to these sinister facts by those qualified to present them, as has been done in this Report.

In spite, however, of the incontrovertible evidence, some—especially those most involved, manufacturers and heavy smokers—refuse to accept the findings. They pretend to be unconvinced, as though, if further evidence were placed before them, they would honestly examine and accept it. But this attitude is just wriggling. It is an attitude of bravado—"I've smoked so many years and no harm has come to me, so I intend to carry on." How do they know no harm has come of their smoking?

Or an heroic attitude of standing for the liberty of the individual—"Nobody's going to take away my right to do what I want with my money, or is going to dictate to me what pleasures I shall have." Or a fatalistic attitude—"You've only to die once, anyway, so you may as well enjoy your pleasures"—as though there is any difference in principle between committing suicide over a long period and committing suicide as a sudden act. All these objections and excuses are like whistling in the dark to keep up one's courage. Those who make them are clutching at straws. They reject the concrete evidence of the Report, but cling pathetically to their flimsy wishful thinking.

Responsibilities

A few days ago a 25-year-old sailor died of lung cancer. He was in the habit of smoking 90 cigarettes a day. B.B.C. interviewers talked with other sailors on the matter. Some scoffed at the idea that anyone *could* smoke 90 cigarettes a day; others ridiculed the idea of any connection between the smoking and the death. In that few minutes' programme the absurdity of some of the statements made was unconsciously shown. The interviewer passed from one lad, who stated his disbelief that his fellow-sailor had ever smoked such a quantity of cigarettes, to an older sailor. This latter said quite readily and naturally that he smoked on average 80 cigarettes daily!

The Government and the Admiralty stand convicted for encouraging young men, some of them boys, to take into their system a poison, by giving special facilities in obtaining cigarettes so cheaply. And Parliament stands convicted, too, of sinking moral considerations and of lacking sense of responsibility in turning a blind eye to this monstrous business for the sake of drawing into the National Exchequer £885 million from taxes upon this traffic in the lives of men. It is not many years since Mr. R. A. Butler, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, urged smokers not to give up, because of the revenue accruing to the finances of the nation from the smoking habit. Such cynical conduct will inevitably bear its fruit, for "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Ted Leather, an M.P., voiced his opinion that the Report on Smoking was a conglomeration of "unscientific tosh." The Bishop of Crediton stated on an "Any Questions" programme over the wireless that, whatever else he was giving up during this "Lent" season, he did not intend to give up smoking. In respect to this matter, at least, they are "blind leaders of the blind." It would be far more manly and honest to admit that their true reason for holding to their smoking is that they are held captive by it and are afraid of making the effort that giving up entails. But then, we must not put our trust in those who "promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves . . . for whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2 : 19).

Higher Issues

This refusal to face realities is a prominent characteristic of mankind. We try to convince ourselves that we are acting from the purest motives when really (and we know it) we are being merely selfish and at times childish. Greater issues are raised by this characteristic than whether to smoke or not to smoke. Our whole attitude to life and death, to the gospel and spiritual and eternal things is determined by it. The disbelieving or indifferent attitude to the proven results of scientific investigation which the Physicians' Report sets out is no more extraordinary than is the attitude of countless millions towards the gospel of Christ, His sinless life and marvellous works, His atoning death and resurrection, and, indeed, the whole revelation of God in the Bible. Jeremiah's poignant words applied to Jerusalem have even more poignant meaning when applied to the crucified Son of Man and Son of God: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" (Lam. 1:12). And today they speak with sharper meaning than ever. The facts of the gospel—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, with all that they mean, have been presented and demonstrated for 1900 years. These facts have been termed "the best-attested facts in history," yet are, perhaps, the most ignored, as though they had no meaning for men. Just as the findings of the Report are denied by those who do not *wish* to accept and act upon them (for "there are none so blind as those who *will* not see"), so men ignore or reject the gospel because they know that to accept means to act upon it, to turn from self to serve the living God, to take up responsibilities, to follow a new way of life that is going to mean loss and sacrifice.

But men try to deceive themselves that they do not follow Christ or believe in the Bible because Christianity is divorced from modern conditions, disproved by modern science, not satisfying to the modern mind. Christianity, we are told, has been rejected because its teaching is out-of-date, its doctrines refuted. Yet in a Mass Observation survey a few years ago people who advanced these "reasons" why they did not "go to church," could not state a single doctrine of Christianity, let alone show how that doctrine had been disproved. In other words, they did not

know what Christianity is, let alone being able to refute its teaching. Yet men still try to convince themselves that they reject the gospel for the highest and noblest reasons of truth.

It is time that people faced the facts of the gospel. We hear much these days of "the facts of life." In the gospel are the facts of life and death—"having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Civilisation has tried its systems since the world began. We boast today of being more highly civilised than ever before. We are proud of our achievements in science, education, politics, philosophy, literature and even religion of sorts. Yet with all our attainments we have not found God. We are like the Greek philosophers—we know so many things about this life; we are able to control natural forces for our own use and to prolong our days. We have raised the standard of living immeasurably higher than ever in the past. But, as with the Greeks, God is "the Unknown." We confess that we know little of Him, and are content to have it so.

Yet the word of God, the Bible, is there for all to read and learn His will. The evidence, the testimony, is open before us. We can accept it or reject it. The gospel is the revelation of God; the Bible is the book of God. However great religions may be, however sublime their teachings, they are of man and from man and rise no higher than man. It is not a case of "Either believe and obey or . . ." with these religions. No book, however great, claims that men stand or fall according to their attitude and response to it. But the Bible does. Christ says, "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day" (John 12:48). Peter claims that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Smokers believe or disbelieve the Physicians' Report: the consequences are accordingly upon themselves. So with the gospel and the Scriptures.

The only compulsion in the gospel is love—the love of God. Our love to Him is because "He first loved us and gave his Son." God is the prime mover, the motivating force: our yielding, obedience and devotion are the response to His having drawn us through His love, for "God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Robert Browning in his poem, "A Death in the Desert," says :

"The acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it."

EDITOR.

Is the Bible Self-Interpreting?

ACCORDING to Peter in 2 Peter 1:20 it is. He writes: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

Thayer explains in his Lexicon that a prophet is a proclaimer of a divine message, and prophecy is the spoken message. Interpretation, he writes, means to loose, solve, explain.

So then Peter is saying in this passage that no spoken message of God is of any private solution, explanation. If the explanations of God's messages are not private, then the Bible must of necessity be self-interpreting.

A case in point is Acts 2:38. Our Baptist friends tell us that Acts 2:38 teaches that because our sins have been forgiven we should be baptized to show we are members of the church. Very well, let's agree with this statement. Yes, this is what Acts 2:38 teaches. Now, what will we do with Acts 22:16 and 1 Peter 3:21, etc.? Acts 22:16 reads: ". . . be baptized and wash away thy sins . . ." 1 Peter 3:21 reads: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . ."

If we accept the Baptist's private explanation of Acts 2:38 we have a contradiction, for certainly Acts 22:16 clearly teaches that baptism washes away sins, and we learn from 1 Peter 3:21 that baptism also now saves us. The error lies in not understanding Acts 2:38. Within itself it may be a difficult passage to understand, but when it is read and understood in the light of such passages as Acts 22:16 and 1 Peter 3:21, then the difficulty disappears—provided, of course, that we permit the Scripture to interpret itself.

Another case in point is Matt. 16:18. Our Catholic friends tell us that Matt. 16:18 teaches that our Lord's church is built upon Peter. Very well, let's agree with this statement. Yes, this is what Matt. 16:18 teaches. Now, what will we do with Eph. 2:20 and 1 Cor. 10:4, etc.?

Eph. 2:20 reads: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," and 1 Cor. 10:4 says: "... and that Rock was Christ."

If we accept the Catholics' private explanation of Matt. 16:18 we have a contradiction, for certainly both Eph. 2:20 and 1 Cor. 10:4 clearly teach that Jesus Christ is the foundation of His church. The error lies in not understanding Matt. 16:18. Within itself it may be a difficult passage to understand, but when it is read and understood in the light of Eph. 2:20 and 1 Cor. 10:4, etc., then the difficulty disappears—provided, of course, that we permit the Scripture to interpret itself.

Back to Acts 2:38 now, because this passage presents another case in point, "the gift of the Holy Spirit." It has been suggested that this passage *does not* teach that the scripturally baptized believer receives the "gift of the Holy Spirit," the indwelling measure of the Holy Spirit. Very well, let's agree with this statement. Yes, this is what the passage teaches. Now, what will we do with such passages as Acts 5:32 and 1 Cor. 6:19?

Acts 5:32 reads: "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him." 1 Cor. 6:19 reads: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own?"

If we accept the statement that Acts 2:38 *does not* teach that the scripturally baptized believer receives the "gift" or "indwelling measure" of the Holy Spirit, then we have a contradiction, for certainly both Acts 5:32 and 1 Cor. 6:19 clearly teach that he *does*. Once more, the error lies in not understanding Acts 2:38. Within itself, it may be a difficult passage to understand, but when it is read and understood in the light of Acts 5:32 and 1 Cor. 6:19, etc., then the difficulty disappears—provided, of course, that we permit the Scripture to interpret itself.

Is the Scripture self-interpreting? According to Peter it is. He writes in 2 Peter 1:20: "Knowing this *first*, that *no prophecy* of the scripture is of *any* private interpretation."

A. C. STEPHENSON.

BRO. STEPHENSON, answering his own question at the head of the article recorded above, "Is the Bible self-interpreting?", says, "It is." And we agree: "It certainly is."

To his answer our brother adds the words (quoting 2 Peter 1:20) "No prophecy is of private interpretation." This prompts the question, "What is meant by private interpretation." Before giving our own answer to that question it would seem best to have the whole passage as Peter gives it. This is the authorised version: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Rotherham translates it: "Of this, first take note: that no prophecy of Scripture becometh self-solving; for not by will of man was prophecy brought in at any time, but—as by the Holy Spirit they were borne along—spake men from God."

A third translation, taken direct from the Greek, in a N.T. published by David King, reads: "No prophecy of Scripture comes from private interpretation; for the prophecy came, not at any time by the will of man, but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Three different translations, each teaching essentially the same thing. The private interpretation actually in mind is not that of us, who read, but that of the "man" who originally spoke the prophecy, to whom interpretation of what was said or written was forbidden. It necessarily follows from that statement, that, if the interpretation of the prophetic word is forbidden to the speaker of it, then it is forbidden to the reader. God's word is not open to interpretation, at any time, by anyone, but only to one of two things: belief or disbelief. As put, we see that, in the commission to the apostles ((abbreviated): "Go . . . preach . . . He that believeth . . . he that believeth not . . .") There is no room there for individual interpretation, only for acceptance or rejection.

God's word in its origin came to us in a language we do not understand. It has needed to be translated for our ears. Translators, in the main, I believe, have dealt with us honestly, having sought to give us, in our own tongue, the meaning of the Word, as originally written, and we should be thankful that, as far as the N.T. is concerned, we have so many of these translations. "With a multitude of counsellors there is safety."

So we come back to our question: "What is meant by *private* interpretation?" We answer: **the reading into any Scripture a meaning it does not have.** "If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God." It is only when we thus speak, that we honour Him whose word it is. Largely because of the pernicious effects of private interpretations of God's word, we have the multitude of religious opinions and sects of today—divisive and destructive of that which they profess to believe.

So we come back to Bro. Stephenson and his purpose in writing. He says: "If we accept that Acts 2:38 does not teach that the scripturally baptised believer receives the gift of the indwelling measure of the Holy Spirit, then we have a contradiction, for certainly both Acts 5:32 and 1 Cor. 6:19 clearly teach that he does."

Overlooking the somewhat unbiblical phrase, "the indwelling measure of the Holy Spirit," and noticing his "proof" passages, we look for his contradiction and fail to see it. What and where is it?

In last month's issue of the "S.S." there were extracts from a book by Alex. Brown, and one of them read: "This exposition of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38 in no way precludes teaching from other portions of the Scriptures respecting the help of the Spirit to all Christians. But that is not taught in the passage under consideration, and I dare not import it." That able and well-informed writer saw nothing contradictory in the Scriptures involved here. Neither do I. That, I think, is the answer to one of his proof passages, 1 Cor. 6:19.

As for Acts 5:32, I ask our brother, and anyone else who cares to do so, to remind themselves of the contents of the portions of Acts which surround this verse, and ask again, what is the prevailing idea that interweaves itself throughout those passages? Is it not that of miraculous power shown by manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Yet he presents that verse of his to us as illustrating the "indwelling measure" of the Spirit which, supposedly, is without power!

That which characterised Pentecost, miracle, characterises the whole of this period in the history of the church. In the 4th chapter, we have the incident where the gathered company—after hearing from the apostles of the treatment they had received from the chief priests and elders—lifted up their "voices" with one accord in praise and supplication. What they *all* said is recorded for our reading. If that was not miracle, what was it? In the 8th chapter, we have the story of Philip preaching and baptising in Samaria, and of Peter and John being sent to bestow upon the new converts the Holy Spirit with power. Is it to be supposed that the two apostles would have been sent to Samaria to bestow that gift to converts there and those in Jerusalem not to have received the gift? From what we read throughout the Acts, it was the rule almost immediately to impart the Holy Spirit by the laying of hands on believers who were obedient—not, mark you, as a consequence of baptism—but so that, miraculously, they might always speak the truth about the faith they had in Jesus Christ. It should be remembered that, at that time in the history of the church, they had no written word to guide them, and the dispersion was on the verge of taking place. The apostles were all centred in Jerusalem, but not for much longer, and the wisdom of God was, perhaps, never more clearly revealed than in the imparting of this gift of power to untaught men.

It is to people thus blessed our brother turns to prove a contradiction, implying, as he does, that they did not have the spirit in power, but only an "indwelling measure of the Holy Spirit." It is not contradiction that is in this verse of Acts 5:32, but fulfilment, a fulfilment of a prophesy of wonders to come, now—at that time—received and surrounding them on all sides.

I have said that I agree with our brother's answer to his own question, "Is the Bible self-interpreting." I would now like to give an instance of self-interpretation, drawing upon certain advice given by Paul. Written to Timothy, he said: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly *dividing* the word of truth." We thus see from the two passages, one from Peter and this from Paul, that not only does Scripture interpret itself by the way statements bear upon each other, but also by the way they separate (divide) themselves.

As an example of separation, I refer you to an incident mentioned in my article last month, where Paul came in contact with disciples who believed in John and had been baptised into John's teaching. The separating influence was that they were altogether behind the times. Since John's days, Christ had risen from the dead, and what the disciples of John believed was no longer operative. Paul's instruction was a means of separating these disciples from a belief that was dead, to lead them into one that was alive.

That incident, I think, has its repetition in this discussion, for it has revealed that there are those who need to separate themselves from beliefs they cannot

sustain from God's word. To declare that "God grants at baptism a gift of the Holy Spirit," yet not be able to produce a scrap of Scripture nor a single N.T. example of what they affirm, is not "speaking as the Bible speaks," nor is it being "silent where it is silent." It is doing what we teach ought not to be done, substituting our own thoughts for words which God has delivered to us.

A striking parallel was made by David King in his definition of Peter's words at Pentecost. He asks, "When and how were they to receive this gift? In baptism answers a mistaken friend. Let those who bring infants to the water that, in baptism, they may receive the Holy Spirit ... and those who teach believers to look for a reception of the Holy Spirit in baptism, remember that the inspired word gives no such promise."

As a people, we have spoken and written strongly against the sprinkling of infants, and rightly so, and have sought to separate parents and others from so "dead" a belief and practice, but if that statement of David King is just — and who shall dare to say it is not?—then we also—or some of us—stand in like case with these mistaken people and need to separate ourselves from error in our ways of thinking and teaching, if we would be true to the principles we so confidently affirm.

W. BARKER.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR MAY

6—Leviticus 19:1-18.	John 13:21-38.
13—Job 19.	„ 14:1-17.
20—Exodus 4:1-20.	„ 14:18-31.
27—Isaiah 5:1-17.	„ 15:1-17.

LOVE

In our readings this month we have the last teachings given by Jesus before His death. They are vividly reported by His close friend, and are very important. We cannot know them too well. The thoughts we want to study are centred around the word "LOVE."

What is love? Here are some dictionary meanings: affection; strong liking; mutual sympathy and goodwill; fondness and care; benevolence; charity; devoted attachment. These do convey a correct impression of a great and good motive, but the thing itself, like electricity, is not seen except in its outworking. We can feel it when it fills our hearts whether it is for a person, an object, a doctrine or a habit. It is excited by kindness, beauty, truthfulness or pleasurable feelings of any kind, sometimes indeed often sinful things.

How does the Lord Jesus appeal to us? What is it about Him that draws so many to Him with a love which has and does overcome death itself? Even Napoleon, the master of men, confessed the supreme power of our Saviour over the hearts of men. We may perhaps have an insight into this power when we consider how greatly also Jesus was hated. He was utterly pure, but His purity was manifested in doing the kindest and the most unselfish of deeds. Those who are tied to their own

satisfactions and dislike anything which disturbs their consciences, finally come to hate goodness, and manifest the hatred by spiteful action. The same things which draw out love can excite hatred. A Christian is a person who loves Christ because he knows that in Him is all goodness and a love which forgives sin.

Emphasis and repetition are most useful in teaching and in these readings we have eight repetitions of the commandment to love one another, either direct or indirect. First consider the verses 13: 34 and 35. Jesus has just spoken of His "going away" where they cannot come, for the time at least, and so He gives the vitally-necessary instruction. They are losing His immediate presence in the flesh, so who is going to be the leader now? The apostles must work together—unity is to be manifested if they are to continue their leader's work, and that unity depended (and now depends) very largely on their attitude towards one another. With the motive power of love at work as it worked in the Saviour's life and death, they will be able to maintain that unity, but if they take up hostile attitudes and quarrel among themselves for the top place, all will be lost. So the Saviour gives the new commandment.

Why should it be called "new"? The word here indicates "fresh" as distinct from "stale" or "old," not "new" as distinct from "aged." It is true that the command to love is embodied in the Mosaic law and is its chief glory, but the illustration of it in the life of Jesus was quite new to Jewish thought. Jesus was "among you as He that serveth"—the greatest doing the humblest services, and the apostles must be the same towards one another, and every disciple of the Lord must take the same attitude towards his brethren—no distinction between sexes here. The glory of the early church was its

complete family spirit in all parts of the earth, and we believe the same principle distinguished the early history of the churches pleading for New Testament Christianity; but we have slipped into less godly ways, the family spirit has been associated with wordliness rather than godliness, with playing together rather than working together, with pleasure instead of prayer. How shall we restore this great distinction—without which the movement of which we are a part is lost? Somehow the conventions and selfishness of modern social life have quenched the simple, heart-to-heart impulses of Christ's love in the lives of His people. We have too much "THINE" and "MINE," not enough "OUR." A sister once remarked "I know that if I become poverty-stricken, a certain brother will share what he has with me." That was the highest compliment ever paid, and it should be always fulfilled in one way or another—to the glory of the man of Nazareth, who had nowhere to lay His head; but the noble women, some named and some not named, saw to His earthly needs (Luke 8: 2 and 3).

Our second passage is 14: 15, where it is love to Jesus Himself which is made the condition of receiving the Holy Spirit in that special miraculous sense which was experienced at Pentecost. And it is not strange to us that their love (and of course our love) will be proved by obedience to the commands of Jesus. If we do love the Saviour we just cannot take unkind attitudes towards those who do harm to us, because that simple command is His. We may indeed be overcome by the feelings of a moment but we shall desire earnestly to fulfil the injunction to do good to them that hate us, and will pray for strength to resist our natural human reactions.

Again we have in the 21st verse the same thought with a wonderful promise. The loving and the keeping of the commands qualify for still closer and clearer realisation of the abiding presence, and in answer to Judas's enquiry (not Iscariot) we have further emphasis on the obedience, and a still closer intimacy with the Godhead is promised. Here we see again what is clear throughout the teaching at this time, that Jesus is pointing His apostles to the Father as being so close to Him and to them, and so utterly at one with the Son. They must learn to regard the Father as just so near to them in their coming trials.

Verse 28 brings a new thought, in that love must see beyond the present, and even rejoice in deprivation when Father and Son and Truth are to be served. The going away of the Son was for His ultimate glory, the glory of the Father and the spread of the Truth. The "greater works" surely are the winning of human souls for God by the gospel.

In 15: 9-11 love, obedience and joy are

joined together. We cannot think of any greater love than the Father's for the Son, nor is there a greater love than the Saviour has for us, but if the love is to stay, remain, abide, make its home with us, it must be evidenced by action—obedience to the commands. Joy follows the obedience and the abiding presence "as the night the day." Then follows in verses 12-17, beginning and ending with repetition of the commandment, the expression of the Saviour's confidence in His apostles. He is to manifest His love to them by the greatest sacrifice a man can make—to lay down His life for them—but they are to be raised from the position of servants (slaves is the true meaning) to that of friends, because He has chosen them to labour for Him with a full knowledge of His purposes, and His Father will for His sake grant them what they need in that service.

R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

[Bro. Albert Winstanley passed the following letter to us some four months ago. It has been inadvertently delayed in being published. Bro. Winstanley thought it would be of interest to the brethren, so do we, and we commend it to your thoughts and prayers.—Ed.]

Dear Bro. Winstanley,

I have pleasure in informing you that I was able to receive your nice letter of November 10th, 1961. For which I am grateful. After I read the letter through, I passed it on to some of the evangelists, who were delighted to express their willingness to write to you.

I am more than grateful to learn that you have secured permission from the editor of "Scripture Standard" to publish my letter for the purpose of giving information to the brethren about help for the work in Nyasaland. I am behind you in full support for your suggestion to send someone to come to Nyasaland to see the situation here and bring you back the report of his findings there. In my weak effort I will try to send you any information that might help you to understand conditions about the different things here.

Below are the answers to the questions you asked me:—

(a) The congregations among which I work are 104. Of these, 50 are in the Southern Province, 49 congregations are in the Central Province and 15 in either Northern Province and Southern and Northern Rhodesias. We have some more congregations whose prayer-houses are not registered; when they are registered, then they will be recognised congregations.

(b) There are 22 districts throughout the entire Protectorate of Nyasaland. They are divided into three provinces.

(c) The mostly populated provinces are Southern and Central Provinces.

(d) The principal towns are:—

Southern Province—Blantyre, Limbe, Zomba.

Central Province — Llongwe, Mzuzu and Mkata Bay.

The most developed places in Northern Province are all administrative centres, mission stations and plantations. Some of these are growing into little but modern towns.

Our work is pretty strong in the South and Central Provinces. Many white settlements are scattered in the South, where climatic conditions are more favourable than anywhere in the Protectorate. The modern but universal language is English, but Chinyanja and Chitumbuka are some of the main official languages.

We do not have evangelists in Central and Northern Provinces but we are intending to train some brethren to take care of the congregations there. Our difficulty is transport, since there are woods where lions live. These lions make it difficult for people that journey through these woods by bicycles. The cause of the Lord was started there when the brethren in the States of America bought me a cycle before support was discontinued. I sold the cycle and bought the car. I sold the car but it is hard for me or the church to get enough money to buy a new car.

There are seven registered schools throughout the brotherhood. One is the Senior Primary School and the rest are the Junior Primary Schools.

Our need for a missionary is great and we would appreciate if you brethren would send someone to come and see things for himself in the very nearest future.

We shall be grateful as to whether you would be kind enough to send us a few copies of "Scripture Standard" so that we can read for ourselves the interest of the brethren in regard to the help we have asked the brethren to give in the hand.

Yours in His service,

E. C. SEVERE.

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P.O. Box 562, Limbe,
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Church of Christ,
c/o M. K. Bobat,
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Zomba, Nyasaland, Africa
28th March, 1962

Dear Bro. A. E. Winstanley,—

I am believe that you have received already my letter dated 2nd January, 1962 in which I have let you know how is the work of here in Nyasaland, Africa

and I think you have heard everything clear how is the Church of Christ here.

Today I am let you know also that the work of God is progressing well indeed. On 11th February, 1962 we was at Saima Meeting House, Zomba District. Three sisters and four brothers were baptized there and one restored.

And on 4th March, 1962, Bro. G. Cimwaza with others was at Kulumba Zomba District. Two brothers were immersed there. And on 18th March, 1962, we was at Saima again. Five sisters and two brothers were baptized there and two brothers confessed their fault. Now Bros. James and Cipwaila, they are ready proceeding Meanje District, and P.E.A. to see how is the brethren there. I am believe that in future you will hear a good news from Meanje.

Surely the work of God is removing well here in Africa. Please our white brethren in Britain (Nyanja Bibles) and English Bibles with references is very needed here as you have heard in my letter of 2nd January that we have more brethren here having no Bibles.

Please our brethren in Britain, remember your poor brethren who are here in Africa. Surely we shall be very much glad to receive a reply from you our father in Christ Jesus.

I am, your son in our Lord Jesus Christ.

J. R. PONDAN.

THE "MISSION MESSENGER"

This monthly paper is published in St. Louis, Missouri, by W. Carl Kercher-side, a brother known and loved by many in this country. We know it to be a splendid publication, setting forth the teaching of the New Testament as to the faith, practices and life of the church, and applying them to our time. The paper is fearless, yet humble and loving, in presenting the clear and simple pattern of the church in the beginning. At present a series of articles is appearing on the history and causes of divisions in the church, with a view to restoring that unity which Christ's church must show to the world.

We commend the "Messenger" to our readers. You can obtain a copy monthly by sending 7/- for a year's subscription to Paul Jones, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B.

"It is not what we eat, but what we digest, that makes us strong; not what we gain, but what we save that makes us rich; not what we read, but what we remember, that makes us learned; not what we profess, but what we practice, that makes us Christians."

—Francis Bacon.



(Conducted by
A. E. Winstanley,
43a Church Road,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent).

ATTENTION, YOUNG CHRISTIANS!

Viscount Hailsham, Minister for Science, and Government leader in the House of Lords, said there on March 22nd:—

“I say with all the emphasis at my command that this case has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt whatever—that the smoking of cigarettes as they are now made is, in popular language, *the cause of lung cancer.*” (*Daily Mail*, March 23rd).

Lung cancer is a dreadful disease—a “killer” of the worst type. Its victims die in slow agony. The above statement was prompted by the Report of the Royal College of Physicians on *Smoking and Lung Cancer*. They warned of the terrible dangers inherent in the habit. We Christians, above all people, should be beyond reproach in such matters. We have a three-fold responsibility in the way we live our lives.

1. To God

When we became Christians we gave our lives to Him. The Christian's body is a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17). We must “glorify God in our bodies.”

2. To Others

We have to set a good example to others in all things. Our whole way of living should be constructive and helpful to those we wish to influence for Jesus. (See 1 Timothy 4:12).

3. To Ourselves

Jesus is worthy of the very best that we can offer. Our love for Him should compel us to set our faces against anything that reduces our usefulness in His service. He gave His best for us—we can do no less for Him.

Remember: The person who need not worry about “stopping smoking” is the one who never started!

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the human brain is made up of about ten million nerve cells, called neurons? These are like electronic valves which either do or do not pass electric current. Whether these “valves” are “on” or “off” is governed by signals generated elsewhere in the body. Each neuron in the brain operates at a potential of about 0.07 volt.

The most complex device of this kind that man has ever made is an electronic calculating machine which has 18,000 electronic valves. If man were to make an electronic equivalent of the human brain, it would require our largest building to house it, and as much electricity as Niagara Falls could generate to operate it! Truly “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.” The human body is a wonderful testimony to the existence—and infinite wisdom—of God.

WHAT ALCOHOL DOES

THERE'S alcohol in beer. Swallow the beer and you put that much alcohol in your tummy. In next to no time there's some of it beginning to get into your blood; the blood's circulating round and round your body and the alcohol goes with it; next thing, there's alcohol washing round your brain, snooping into the brain cells and pinching the water and oxygen the cells want for themselves. Cells begin to feel the pinch—can't cope with their work efficiently—everything's thrown a bit out of gear—and what's worse, you can't trust your own judgment any longer to tell you when you're taking risks and making an ass of yourself—your judgment's out of order too.

The White Ribbon.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Whose ass spoke?
2. Who made a golden calf for the Israelites?
3. Who rode into Jerusalem on a young ass?
4. Who made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole?
5. Of whom is it said that “the dogs came and licked his sores.”
6. Who killed a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass?
7. Who is “the lion of the tribe of Judah”?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUIZ

1. Six days (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11).
2. One door (Genesis 6:16).
3. Seven times (Joshua 6:15).
4. Three days (Jonah 1:17).

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Hamilton Street, Blackburn.—Again the Church is made to rejoice over another being added to the assembly, a young lady giving herself to the Lord in His own appointed way. This was Miss Anne Swindlehurst, whose father and mother joined us four months ago from the Church of England. She is already proving a great asset as a Lord's Day school teacher. Our prayer is that God will bless her vocation and service for her Redeemer and Master, as the days come and go. H.W.

Blackburn (Park Road).— On Lord's day evening, March 18th, Bro. A. E. Winstanley concluded his work in the Gospel here at Park Road. During the short time he was with us he laboured faithfully in the Lord's work, preaching the message of salvation both in the meeting-place and elsewhere. Many old friendships were renewed as the invitations to hear of Jesus were given. By the power of the Gospel, one soul was saved as she expressed her belief in Christ Jesus as God's Son and arose from the watery grave of baptism. Also three others, who had been absent from the table of the Lord for many years, have now returned. We give God the glory as we rejoice with the angels in heaven. We pray that the one who has been added to the church, and those who have been reunited will remain "steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

We extend our thanks to brethren of local and nearby congregations who encouraged us by their presence and prayers, to Bro. Albert, and to his family and brethren at Tunbridge Wells for their co-operation in making such a visit possible. R.R.

Blackburn (Park Road).—The church is pleased to report that another soul has been saved by obedience to the gospel. Bro. L. Morgan (Hindley) preached the message of redeeming love on Lord's Day, April 15th, after which Mrs. L. Owens made known her need of Jesus as Saviour. At a meeting presided over by Bro. Morgan, on confession of her faith, she was immersed in the meeting place of the church of Christ, Argyle Street, Hindley. We pray that she will remain steadfast in the faith, and along with her brethren, witness for the Lord whom she loves.

Our thanks are due to the church at Hindley for their kind co-operation and the use of their baptistry. R.R.

Reading.—The First Year's Work. The third attempt to start a Church in Reading (previous ones being in 1898 and 1914) was made in 1961, the first Lord's Day service being held on 12th March. We have met every Lord's Day since, excepting once when there was a heavy snowfall.

We had the services of Bro. Nisbet for several weeks, and have held three Saturday Gospel Meetings, extremely well supported by our brethren in this area. Several Reading people came in response to the great number of invitations we sent out. We have had one new member and other people are now showing some interest in our cause. As regards contributions, brethren have been most generous in giving to our work. We feel there are great opportunities in Reading, the population being now approximately 150,000.

Our main problem is to find brethren to conduct the Lord's Day meetings, so we should greatly welcome a family coming to live in Reading. Just recently Bro. and Sis. Jackson have moved away, and Bro. and Sis. Miller will unfortunately be returning to the United States in a few months. Bro. Spencer is unable to come every Lord's Day, and the remaining members are all sisters.

We meet in a small room rented from the Society of Friends, but they will not allow us to advertise the address, which is a great handicap. Efforts to find a more suitable hall or building site have not yet been successful, but the Friends are rebuilding in four years' time, and we shall have to move out by then.

If anyone has relations or friends in Reading and would like them to receive a friendly letter or call, please send addresses to Miss R. M. Payne, 1 Kenilworth Avenue, Reading.

Tranent.—We are very happy to report another addition to our numbers. Elizabeth Black (daughter of Sister Betty Black) put on her Lord in baptism, on Sunday, the 18th March. We give thanks to our heavenly Father, for the further proof of the Gospel unto salvation. May the Lord bless our young sister, and keep her in all His ways. D. Scott.

Tunbridge Wells.—The "Site of the Good Intent" at Tunbridge Wells, thanks all who have so generously responded to our Building Fund Appeal. As previously reported, our total at February 11th, 1962, was £4,496 2s. 11d. It is now (at April 14th, 1962) £5,019 15s. 7d. This increase represents sacrificial giving by our own members and much very generous help from churches and individuals elsewhere. We praise God for the many wonderful demonstrations of brotherly love shown towards us. We are confident that, with the help of God, we shall reach our target: £6,071. It is ex-

pected that preliminary work on the site will start late in April.

We ask for the prayers of brethren everywhere, that our faith, zeal and efforts may be adequate for the task before us.

Contributions should be sent to A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Woodstock, Capetown.—On the afternoon of February 17th, a treat was given of light refreshments to our Bible School children, from about 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. after which Bro. John Ford presented 32 young hearts with text cards according to their ages. We were very thankful to the brethren and sisters who came along to help to make this treat one of success.

The various cottage meetings, convened in the suburbs of the peninsula, including a new work started in a new area, Steenberg, about 13 miles from our meeting-place, all invite great prospects of a growing work, and many souls surrendering to Christ. This new work at Steenberg was originally introduced by the Heyns family, who, having some months ago moved into that area, felt the great need of spreading the gospel amongst the neighbours. Other families having also moved into the area have helped to augment this admirable effort. While this work by organising of cottage meetings has as yet not grown large in numbers, we pray and hope that it will.

In other areas of Athlone, Silvertown; Bridgetown; Salt River; Plumstead; average 40.

On March 8th passing through Capetown, on their way back to the U.S.A. indefinitely, were the Hobby family, from Namwianga Mission, Kalomo N.R. Though their stay in the Cape was very brief, they were able to visit with the Woodstock, Grassy Park, and Bridgetown, Athlone, congregations. The lessons presented by Bro. Hobby were encouraging. They sailed away on March 16th, after having spent 24 years of their life in service. No doubt they have left memories in the hearts of many people they had learned to love in Africa. We bid them "God speed," and pray that God's richest blessings may continue to shadow them, until we meet again.

From March 18th to 25th, a series of gospel services were held at Woodstock. The speaker was Bro. Conrad D. Steyn, Evangelist for the Church of

Christ meeting at Rosebank. Our average attendance for the seven evenings was 58, and although there were no immediate results we pray that the good seed sown shall bring forth fruit later.

T. W. HARTLE.

OBITUARY

Bathgate.—The Church at Bathgate has lost another of its members. Sister Fleming died on March 22nd and was buried on the 24th. She was a long time in the Church. Bro. Fleming died about four years ago. Our sister always remained to the Church a faithful member. She was of a cheerful nature and we miss her very much. We have just to go on trusting and working for the Lord.

H. Houston.

Doncaster.—It is with real sorrow that we report the passing of our esteemed Bro. Arthur Sleath, who fell asleep in Jesus, on Tuesday, April 17th. Bro. Sleath joined the Doncaster Church about forty years ago, having previously been associated with the Church at Underwood, which he joined when a youth. During the years he has been in our membership, he has been one of the most faithful and devoted by our members. Regular in his attendance at the services, he always maintained a keen interest in the life, and work of the Church, and although never assertive he was always willing to render any service in the Church he could. He was a man of strong character, but withal was one of the kindest and friendliest of men. He helped to create and sustain a warm and friendly atmosphere within the Church.

We thank God for his life, and for his work among us, and, in his passing are conscious that we shall sorely miss his presence, and help in the coming days.

Our very sincere sympathy is extended to Sister Sleath, and to the members of the family in the loss they have sustained.

J. Garnett.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Beulah Road.—It is with very deep regret that we have to record the loss of a very dear sister, Lucy Longden, who passed away suddenly on Tuesday, March 20th. Our sister, only in her 45th year, had been in Christ for 24 years and had endeared herself to us all by her courage

and serenity in years of adverse health. She was an example in patience and kindness to all of us, and when we think of her, the memory warms our hearts. We thank God for her life as Christian, wife and mother and look forward in faith to that day when we shall all meet again in that better life which the Lord has prepared for the faithful.

We commend her husband Frank, and daughters Janice and Margaret, and all who mourn her loss, to the comfort and care of our heavenly Father. We laid her to rest on Thursday, March 22nd, sorrowing, but not without hope. The funeral service was conducted by the writer. Tom Woodhouse.

Wigan: Scholes.—The church has lost an old and faithful member in Sister Rachel Bradshaw, at the age of 76.

Sis. Bradshaw had been in the church for some 45 years, having formerly been a member of the Church of England. She was for many years a teacher in the Lord's Day school and an active worker in the women's meeting. Until recent years, when ill-health overtook her, she was a consistent attender at Lord's Day and midweek meetings and busy in many of the church's activities. She was, too, a soul-winner: through her evangelism years ago women were won to Christ who became mothers of families who are now in the church. Like Dorcas, too, she was "full of alms-deeds," helping in a practical way many neighbours and others who were in need of succour in various ways. They and her own children "rise up and call her blessed." "Blest be her memory, and blest her bright example be."

COMING EVENTS

HINDLEY BIBLE SCHOOL

Saturday to Monday (inclusive), June 9th to June 11th. For hospitality write to: Bro. T. Kemp, 52 Argyle St., Hindley, Wigan. Further particulars later.

Hindley Mission.—Saturday, June 9th, to Lord's Day, June 24th. Speaker: Bro. A. E. Winstanley. The Church would be glad of support for this effort to extend the Kingdom.

Piltdown. — We intend to hold a Rally at Piltdown, near Uckfield, Sussex, on Whit-Monday, June 11th, and we are hoping that many will come and join us.

The meeting place at Piltdown has been closed for worship for a few months. It was first opened on Whit-Monday in 1846, and we are hoping that this re-opening will mark a revival of the work in this part of God's vineyard. Your presence is needed to encourage the church and to show them that they are not forgotten.

The Rally will take this form:

Welcome meeting at 12.30 p.m. The afternoon will be given over to recreation (ramble, games for children, etc.).

Rally meeting at 5 p.m. The gospel will be preached at this meeting, so try to bring a friend. Speaker: Harold Baines.

Will you please let me know how many will be coming, so that provision can be made for tea? (Please make your own arrangements for lunch. Piltdown is a country place and there are no shops where food can be bought). Any further details from Ernest Cole, 67 Hollingdean Terrace, Brighton 6.

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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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