

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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Maintaining the Divine Standard

THIS series of articles has so far attempted to show that the Scriptures are the standard by which doctrine, organisation and worship in the church and, indeed, all work in the name of Christ, are tested. We must be zealous to adhere to God's standard. Yet even mere outward observance can give us a feeling of satisfaction towards God. Adherence to the Lord's ordinances, regular attendance at His table and other meetings, insistence upon correctness of doctrine are all necessary. But there remains something further.

When we read the letters to Christians in the New Testament, we are impressed by the fact that the greater part is devoted to exhortations on the *lives* that Christians should live.

The Standard of Living

We hear much talk amongst trade unionists and politicians of the higher standard of living we enjoy to-day. Such talk means only the higher wages and increased purchasing power, better housing and social conditions, and the welfare society in which we live. But there is a standard of living that neither politicians, social workers, industrialists, educationists nor scientists are concerned about. Their avowed task is to change the outward environment and conditions of people. The church of Christ, and that alone, is equipped for the task of changing people's hearts, minds and lives.

Quotations on the Christian's standard of living are rich in the New Testament, but only a few need to be given. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17, we are told that 'every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.' 2 Pet. 1:3 reminds us that 'God's divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue.' And the same writer goes on to ask (3.11) 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness?' Hebrews 6:1-3 exhorts Christians to 'press on unto perfection.'

'Impossibility' of Living the Christian Life

How often we hear it said that to live the Christian life as taught in the New Testament is impossible. Christ's sermon on the mount is acknowledged to be the most ideal teaching ever given. Lip-service is paid to it; quotations from it are inscribed and enshrined in prominent places. But it remains an 'impracticable ideal' with most people. 'It would be very nice if everybody could live like that, but it just can't be done,' they say. 'After

all, we're only human.' God forbid that Christians should ever speak like that. For that is to accuse Christ of teaching the impossible, and of using words without meaning. Christians are called upon to live on a higher level than the human. They are new creations in Christ Jesus.

Of course it is difficult to live and suffer as a Christian. Of course the standard is difficult to maintain. Jesus never told us it would be anything else. On one occasion He had been teaching His disciples about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He had said that no man could come unto Him except it were granted him by the Father. Some of the disciples themselves said these were hard sayings. Yes, they were: Jesus was not given to speaking 'smooth things' (Isa. 30:10). And they turned from Him for ever.

How Jesus Maintained the Standard

The way Jesus dealt with this situation is a constant lesson and inspiration to us. His disciples were few enough, and He could ill afford to lose any. To-day things are smoothed out so as to be done as much as possible without effort. On every hand, we see advertisements claiming that, with such a machine or method, 'drudgery' (the modern term for work) is done away with and one can take it easy whilst the work is done. Or the most valuable things can be obtained on 'easy payments,' without sacrifice. Too often is this true in the religious sphere. People are offered salvation without effort on their part, with nothing to do and on easy terms. But not so with Christ. He did not lower His standard, even though it meant losing some. He did not run after them begging them to return and He would water down His words or explain them away. He had said what He meant and meant what He said. He asked the twelve if they also would go away, as though to say, 'If you will, you must. There is no other way than either to accept my standard or to cease from following me.'

Think, too, of how Jesus dealt with the rich young ruler. Here was a man who would have been a triumphant acquisition to Him — wealthy, young, of high authority, a member of the Sanhedrin, and, moreover, blameless in character. How easily Jesus could have softened His teaching to accommodate such a disciple. But no milk-and-water appeal was made. Instead He set before the young man the sternest challenge and the hardest choice that could have been made.

There was no winning of converts by false pretences on the part of Jesus. He always set the alternatives before His disciples: 'Let him take up his cross.' Following Christ demands all we have and are. We must be nonconformists in the truest sense: 'Be not *conformed* to this world: but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind . . .' (Rom. 12:2).

How We are to Maintain the Standard

On one occasion, when C. H. Spurgeon was dismissing his students before they took up service in the Baptist churches, some of them asked how they should deal with the various questions that would confront them: how they should preach to the rich, the worldly, and others who might be offended at what they should say. Spurgeon's reply was 'Preach the word . . . reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.'

In 1940, when this country was threatened with invasion, Prime Minister Churchill in a famous broadcast to the nation said, 'I offer you nothing but blood, tears, toil and sweat.' And he got the men he wanted.

If that be true in human conflict, how much more in the spiritual warfare. Christ is the Captain of our salvation, Captain of the Host of the Lord. We are to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. In setting such a standard before men for salvation and daily living our Captain draws to Himself men perfectly equipped for every good work, who will honour His cause and maintain His standard in whatsoever He commands,

Yet, at the end, we must humbly confess that we 'are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.' Our salvation is not earned: it is the free gift of God. We gladly serve Christ in His cause, not to be saved, but because we have been saved.

'Lord, help us to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to labour and not to ask for reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.'

EDITOR.

Approaching the Word of God

II.

IN our first article, we noticed the Casual Approach as being the first error to avoid, whether reading the Bible (1) from a sense of duty only, or (2) irregularly, or (3) only in one's favourite passages. These all approach the Bible with no real intention to understand it. They are casual and passive. Now let us consider those wrong approaches which are more actively wrong and therefore more dangerous.

The Dishonest Approach

This is a rather sinister approach made with an eye for ulterior considerations. Though we must call it dishonest as a method of reseasoning we must not assume that all who treat the Scriptures in this way are dishonest people. They may be blinded by prejudice though they are not dishonest themselves. It has been known that, even in war, two conscientious officers may read the same dispatches and reach opposite conclusions, not because either is dishonest but because either or both have allowed themselves to become blinded by their own local or personal interests.

In studying the Bible we must avoid all prejudice and any semblance of 'turning a blind eye.' Opposing interpretations cannot both be right and therefore can only arise from bias, whether deliberate or unintentional. To assert that 'we cannot all understand the Bible alike' is only begging the question. If this is true we may as well give up attempting to know the will of God.

The dishonest approach to the Word may be sub-divided into the following wrong motives of interpretation, which result in the misuse of the Scriptures:—

1. *The desire to please the world.* We are required, of course, to please our neighbour for his own good, because if we give offence we may lose our power to be of assistance. But it is the inordinate desire to please the world which can hinder the proper understanding of the Word. The apostle Paul warned Timothy about people who would not endure sound doctrine, but, 'having itching ears,' would gather round teachers willing to please them, and there are preachers to-day who would please their hearers at the expense of truth.

2. *The selfish motive.* Here the prejudice is in favour of maintaining selfish interests, whether the Word condemns them or not. In the nineteenth century slavery was defended by the wrong use of Scripture. In the same way we may find ourselves in the unlawful possession of a desirable estate or commodity and we may be tempted to defend it. The Mormons still attempt to justify the unlawful practice of bigamy. Let us not approach the Word of God with this determination to justify doing just as we please.

3. *The sectarian motive.* This is largely responsible for the ignorance of the truth in the religious world. Here one's desire to be associated with the successful or popular party provides a strong temptation to bend the Scriptures in favour of that party. Even well-meaning people are blinded by this desire. Perhaps, in the heat of argument, they find themselves

unable to support their contentions, so they resort to any passage of the Bible which appears to help them out of their difficulty, and then, later, when perhaps their mistake is exposed, they do not care to retract as it may mean a less of prestige. This is evidently akin to—

4. *The craving for distinction.* This is not so much the desire to promote distinctive doctrines or to favour a sect. It is rather the desire of the individual to be known as an intellectual leader. The desire to search the Scriptures for the deep things of God which the Holy Spirit has revealed is commendable, but when the ambitious mind seeks the exaltation of self, there is a tendency to discover in the Scriptures what no one else has been able to find. It may lead to the discovery of all the ordinances of the church in the Book of Job, or some abstruse theory on prophecy which denies doctrines of the New Covenant. It can lead even as far as claiming supernatural revelations. Certainly, the discovery of sabbath-keeping by the Adventists can be included in this category.

5. *The pseudo-scientific motive.* Here the Bible is approached with the determination to bend and squeeze it until it fits into the popular pigeon-holes of speculative 'scientists' and 'critics.' Let us remember that the man who can assert that science contradicts the Bible is the man who knows (a) all about science and (b) all about the Bible. That certain popular hypotheses (such as that of organic evolution) contradict the Bible is obvious. They are the 'red herrings' of infidels.

In the past, theologians have objected to the discoveries of science because the facts were at variance with their own interpretation of the Bible. To-day, pseudo-scientists oppose the truths of the Bible because those truths are at variance with popular interpretations of science. But it has been well said, 'He who made the universe made the Bible, and when we come to understand them both, we will be delighted with their beautiful harmony.' If we approach the Word of God assuming that it is inaccurate, we shall never 'receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls' (James 1:21). We shall find instead that the slightest apparent discrepancy becomes a mountain of doubt, ultimately insurmountable, instead of a molehill of queries which a few minutes of prayerful, intelligent study will eliminate completely.

(To be continued)

R. A. HILL.

Ye are . . . a People for God's Own Possession

(Notes on the fourth lecture given at Hindley Bible School, June 2nd, 1955, on 1 Peter 2:9 By W. Steele)

DESCRIPTIVE phrases describing the people of God:—The Church of the Lord: the called out Body. The Household of God: God's family. The Kingdom of God: in government. The Body of Christ: many members, one Head. The Temple of God: a spiritual building, where God dwells. The Vineyard of the Lord: the place of labour. The Elect Palace: choice. The Royal Priesthood: custodians of the Faith, keep, guard it; offer spiritual sacrifices. The Holy Nation: to discipline the nations, because disciplined. The People for God's Own Possession (see Eph. 3:10-11)

In Titus 2:11-14 this subject is revealed thus: (a) *The motivating cause:* the grace of God—for God so loved. (b) *The procuring cause:* the grace of God bringeth salvation; who gave himself for us. (c) *The obtaining cause:* instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. (d) *The maintaining cause:* we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (e) *The sustaining cause:* hope; looking for the

blessed hope, (f) *The consummating cause*: the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (g) *The purpose God has in the possessed people* : that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works (compare 1 Pet. 2 :11-12 ; 3 :8-11 ; Ps. 50 :23 ; Eph. 2 :19-3 :6 ; Acts 15 :13-17).

Often in the New Testament the word 'people' denotes Christians as the people of God—* Those upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord.' In the Old Testament, it is used to denote the typical Israel in the typical Kingdom.

Possession. Compare Revised and Authorised renderings of Eph. 1 :12-14. 'God's own possession' and 'purchased possession.'

Purchased. Acts 20 :28, . . . the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his own blood.' 1 Pet. 2 :9, A.V. Margin, * A purchased people' (see also Titus 2 :14). Compare Ex. 19 :5, 'a peculiar treasure.'

Peculiar. This word, as commonly used, is misleading. Someone said, 'We are a peculiar people and some of us more peculiar than others !' The word is commonly used in the sense of 'queer.' That is not what the Word of God means to convey. The original Greek word may be translated * valuable.' Christians are a valuable treasure, a valuable people unto the Lord.

Coming back to 'possession.' G. Campbell Morgan suggested that this might signify the idea of being God-possessed. Just as some were demon-possessed, we are now God-possessed. People grow like what they worship. Demon worshippers, possessed by demons, manifest demoniacal characteristics. The God-possessed people will show forth the characteristics of God. See Jn. 14 :23, "abode." See John 14 :2, "mansions," *i.e.*, 'abodes.' When Jesus was here it was God *with* us ; now we can have God *in* us.

In Matt. 16, Jesus gave Simon a new name. This was prophetic of him who was to become an example of a partaker of the divine nature. The letters Peter wrote are evidence of his having become *Petros*, rock-like, a partaker of the divine nature (compare Matt. 16 :18 ; Jn. 1:42 ; Lu. 22 :32 . 2 Pet. 1:2-8).

Notes on my Life

BY WALTER CROSTHWAITE

Preaching Among Baptists

EARLY in 1893, owing to illness and subsequent death of Mr. Pilling, the Baptist minister at Ulverston, I was invited to preach for the Baptists as often as possible. As the Church of Christ in Ulverston had no morning meetings on Lord's Days, I was free for morning services, and for about three months I preached at the Baptist Chapel. I did not neglect any of our own meetings to serve them, and although they offered it, I never accepted any pay for my services.

Oh, the audacity of youth! On the second morning at the Baptist Chapel, I gave an address on the difference between Baptists and the New Testament Church. I started each division of that address thus : 'You Baptists say' (and gave some item of their belief), 'but this book, the New Testament, says,' and read out what the book says on each item. At the close of that service one of the deacons said, 'Was that a farewell sermon ?' 'Well,' I said, 'I thought I might not get another opportunity, and I wanted to make clear where I stand.' 'Well,' said the deacon, 'as long as you are willing to come we shall be glad to have you.'

Dr. Wilson, a Baptist, preacher in **the** district, who **had** taken a degree in medicine, called several times to urge me to enter a Baptist college, assuring me that they would pay all costs, and as I was an acceptable preacher I would receive fees for that, I thanked him for his very kind interest in me, but said I must decline to do as he wished, as my knowledge of New-Testament teaching would not permit me to be either a 'Baptist' or a **minister**

I continued working at my trade, jiving much time to preaching in the Furness district until the end **of** the year 1900.

Full-time Evangelist

Being on a visit to Yorkshire, I attended the Conference of Churches of Christ in that division, on December 26th. Bro. Joshua Mortimer introduced me to that gathering, and I was invited to speak at the evening meeting.

The Yorkshire churches were on the look-out for a whole-time evangelist ; and they invited me to accept that position. I had a strong aversion to accepting pay for preaching, my ideal being to support myself. After much prayerful and careful consideration, I decided to waive my personal feelings, and agreed to go to Yorkshire for three months. A letter from Bro. John Crockatt, of Leeds, had much to do with my decision. He wrote : 'I know it will be much more agreeable **to** your ideas of independence (as it would be to mine) to labour with your hands, and preach as opportunity offers. But the opportunities are so many that cannot be seized when we all do that, that we are obliged to call on some to take the more honourable, and much more difficult position of devoting all their time to this work, and depending on their bretkren to supply the needs that belong to the body, From what I saw and heard, and from what I know from those well able **to** judge, you are well adapted for this work, and much glory would accrue **to** our Lord, and many souls would be saved, were you to enter this field **of** labour. I hope, therefore, dear brother, you will comply with our request, and come amongst us, if only for two or three months at first. We will try to do our part loyally, and in such a manner as shall make it easy **and** pleasant for you, and we shall rejoice in working together in a field white unto harvest that we are allowed to garner much of the precious grain **that** would otherwise be lost. May the Lord guide you to a wise decision in **the** matter.'

Experiences in Yorkshire

I, with my wife and child, left Furness for Yorkshire on January 31st. 1901. I was quite confident that I would be back at my trade at the **end** of the three months. Morley, near Leeds, was to be my first field of labour. When we arrived there snow was falling fast, and the brother who **met** us informed us that we wete to lodge at the house of one who for years **had** been landlady of a public-house, but who would not have any lodgers **who** were not teetotalers. We stayed in Morley eleven months, during which period some 218 meetings, indoors and in open-air, were addressed.

This was a strenuous time for a novice, and meant much hard work **and** study. A good deal of interest and opposition was aroused. As an outcome of heckling at an open-air meeting I was invited to read a paper **on** Baptism, in a Primitive Methodist chapel. There was a large attendance and a lively discussion. One man said: 'I have studied this question **for** years and have come to a totally different conclusion to the writer of **the** paper; and nothing that has been said to-night, or ever will be said, will cause me to change my opinion.' On old man rose, and said quietly : 'I **have** read that there are only two kinds **of** people who never change their ooinions. fools and **HELL**

The minister said : ' There is much I ought to say on this subject, but unfortunately I have had a cycle accident which has affected my vocal organs.' Some who were present at that meeting were afterwards immersed by the Baptists. During our stay in Morley eight were added to the church.

Then we spent two months at Harrogate, a fashionable watering place. The church was small in number, but we had very good meetings and one young woman was added by faith and immersion. We then passed on to Doncaster, remaining there four months. Of this effort, the secretary of the church reported : * Splendid meetings are being obtained, and real good work done. By diligence in teaching, proclamation and visitation, the church has been quickened, and our numbers increased by baptism and restoration, thereby, we trust, bringing glory to our Father.'

(To be continued)

The Lectureship, Frankfurt on-Main, Germany

A Young Christian's Impressions

A SERIES of Bible lectures\was conducted by our American brethren in Germany during the week commencing Sunday, August 7th. Thirty-two British brethren formed a motor-coach party and attended this lectureship, together with a few other brethren who travelled from Britain by air or motor-car.

It was the writer's great privilege and joy to attend this encouraging event and to experience the fellowship in Jesus Christ that is so firm and sure. It is difficult to express in words the true value of this experience, but let it suffice to mention certain characteristics.

When Hebrews 10 :25 says, ' not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together,' the greatest part of fellowship, simply being together, is stressed. This is the experience of any community bound together by certain principles and by love. But above all is this true of the Church of the Lord, whose binding principles and bond of love are able to withstand the forces of evil of this world. It was grand just being so far from home yet to find the Lord's Church and meet Christians from many parts of the Continent. I was made glad to know that my presence encouraged those labouring for my Lord, especially those assemblies small in number. When engaged in prayer, one is now able to speak with a greater realisation of their needs.

I was able to spend much time between the main discourses of the day in discussing topics of real importance to Christian living. The Christian's obligation towards the State was a topic much referred to and is very important. The need to confide our problems to each other concerning our spiritual welfare will bind us closer together in Christ, and will give us greater skill in wielding the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

Much time was spent singing hymns. This is always a great inspiration, when meeting together to teach each other. The words of a spiritual song convey instruction that one's own words cannot quite express. I call to mind the words of the hymn :—

" 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, ' Thus saith the Lord/ "

The last line of this verse denotes the prevailing spirit behind all the lectures: a desire to know purely and simply nothing more or less than that which God has prescribed for us in His Word. j R DANIELL.

And now the other side of the picture. Bro. E. Worth, of the church at East Ardsley, Yorkshire, calls attention to an article in a recent issue of the *Mission Messenger*, published by Bro. Carl Ketcherside in America. The article claims that the missionary work in Germany is a 'transplanting of a sectarian "Church of Christ" to foreign lands.' What chiefly concerns us is that it was claimed that there exists 'a very close fellowship between the brethren in Great Britain with the work [in Germany] and the congregations which have been planted.'

A word of warning seems called for. In allowing the unimmersed to partake at the Lord's table and to contribute in the collection, our American brethren are practising what we have strongly protested against in the Association of Churches of Christ (formerly the Co-operation). Are we being consistent in our witness to the New Testament church?

We do not propose to open our columns to correspondence on this matter. It has long been a subject of controversy between our American brethren and ourselves. We have had the arguments *pro* and *con* presented ever since the 1870's, in Bro. King's *Ecclesiastical Observer*. We make this comment to call attention to a situation which we all know exists, which causes us great concern, and upon which we cannot conscientiously yield.

—EDITOR.

Living Words

'The Word became flesh' (John 1:14).

HAVE you ever thought what wonderful things words are? Words can make you mad or they can make you glad; they can make you laugh or make you cry; they can make you run or compel you to stand still. Words can make you see pictures of places in which you have never been and see things which no one has ever seen. And yet what are words, just letters, marks on paper arranged in a certain order, or waves of sound passing through the air? Why should words have such a strange power?

You say that the real power is not in the word; it is in the thought, the idea which the word expresses. A man's words tell one what he thinks. **Do** you know that not so long ago people called letters 'characters,' just as when someone says what sort of a person you are, truthful or careless, he gives you a character. Even now we often call the letters of the alphabet the characters and say, for example, that there are so many thousand characters in the Chinese language.

Words are not just marks on paper, they are the outward sign of secret thoughts. Someone said of Jesus that He made His words come to life and walk up and down in the minds of men. So John says that Jesus was God's thought spoken to us in a way we could understand. If you wanted to make someone understand what courage is, you would not tell him how the dictionary defines it. You would tell, for example, the story of a man who went down an old mine shaft at the end of a twisting rope to rescue a dog. Courage must become flesh before you can understand it.

If all the things which Jesus said had been written in a book and dropped from the sky, we should not have been able to understand them. But when Jesus came and went about doing good, blessing little children, healing the sick, caring for everyone who came to Him, and, at last, dying upon the Cross, and praying for His enemies, then we could all understand what Jesus meant when He said, 'God is love.' 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'

'His Name shall be Called Wonderful'

Isaiah IX

WONDERFUL Saviour! we worship before Thee,
 Jehovah Almighty—Eternal 'I AM'!
 Thee we confess, and our glad hearts adore Thee,
 As, washed in Thy blood, we cry 'Worthy the Lamb.'

Wonderful Jesus! the Babe in the manger;
 Though born of the Virgin, Thy nature was clean:
 Thine was the Kingdom; yet counted a stranger,
 How cold was Thy welcome, Thy lodging how mean!

Wonderful Person! the Son of the Father;
 Known only to God shall this mystery be:
 We may not fathom its meaning: but rather
 Our faces we veil as we think upon Thee!

Wonderful too in Thy manifestation:
 Revealing the Father, declaring His name,
 Who but Thyself to procure our salvation—
 God's justice could meet, and His mercy proclaim?

Wonderful price of eternal redemption;
 Oh! marvellous work with which nought can compare!
 Precious the blood that has bought our exemption
 From judgment, which else we for ever must bear.

Wonderful object of worship in Heaven
 Unspeakable gift from the heart of our God!
 Countless the blessings with Thee which are given
 To sinners brought nigh unto God by Thy blood.

Wonderful Saviour! we love and adore Thee;
 How blessed the hope that ere long Thou wilt come:
 Then shall we see all Thy beauty and glory,
 And offer our praise in Thy wonderful Home!

Jottings on Bible Portion

THE PARABLE of the Vineyard Labourers (Matt.20 : 1-16) is full of interest and timely instruction. Giving rise to it was a conversation Jesus had with His disciples about the difficulty (not the impossibility) of rich men entering the Kingdom of God. Whatever we sacrifice (if we can call it that) for His sake, Jesus pointed out, the reward would be one hundred-fold in this life, and in the end, eternal life. Seeing this is ample reward for everyone, even for those who have laboured the longest' (all their life), there should be no jealousy in consequence of the goodness and mercy of God in awarding eternal life to those who give the 'shortest' service in life, especially when they have never been 'hired' previously, or never realised and understood the Gospel appeal. In other words, what God offers to us all in Christ Jesus should be regarded as far above mere reward, but should be thought of as the Gift of His Love—unmerited and free, to all who fulfil the conditions. So the Motive of Service is really the lesson of this parable. The true motive of service to Christ is love and gratitude. Remembering also that Divine Love is an ocean without a bottom or shore, what greater incentive could we have for this 'loyal service'?

No Departure from the Jerusalem Church

IF we are to depart from the Jerusalem Church because it was in its infancy, and not reproduce the primitive church, we should like to know how far we are to depart from it, and in what. If the faith, practice, the precept and example of the primitive church may not be adopted now and followed; if in all things we should not now have the same faith and practice, precept and example they had, we should be pleased for some expounder of the new doctrine to explain to us in what the departure shall consist, and what rule we are to adopt now. If we let go of the rule that governed the first church, what rule shall we adopt? If we cut loose from the divine, shall we adopt a human rule? If so, what human rule? Some one of these already made? Or shall we have the presumption and folly to think we can make a better one than these human rules already in use?

We are not ready to cut loose from the Jerusalem Church, its rule of faith and practice, its precepts and examples. We have more confidence in the old ground than ever, and have no idea of departing from the Jerusalem Church, its faith and practice, precepts and examples. The men that will not stand on Apostolic ground, the faith and practice of the Church, will not stand on anything long. We want something reliable, permanent, sure and steadfast, a kingdom that cannot be moved. In the old Bible, the old gospel and the old Church we find it. Here is something to lean upon, living and dying, for this world and the world to come. If we leave this, all is uncertainty, darkness and night. Let us 'hear what the Spirit says to the churches,' and not be of those who 'depart from the faith,' 'giving heed to seducing spirits,' not listen to 'unstable souls' or those 'ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

New Publications

The Churches of Christ Salute You

This booklet is an English edition of that compiled by Bro. J. B. White of Austin, Texas, with alterations to make its message better understood by British readers. In thirteen concise and simple statements, the history of New Testament Christianity is traced to the present day. The booklet deals with the gradual growth of untrue teaching and unauthorised practices, resulting in the Roman Catholic Church; the Reformation, with its return to the Bible; the tragic rise of sects and divisions and the formation of many Churches; and finally points out and pleads for the only possible way to restoring the pure faith of the church through the simplicity of the gospel.

These truths are presented in a reverent and courteous manner, inviting the attention of readers.

The booklet consists of 28 pages, half of which are appropriate illustrations which really do illuminate the text. It is edited by Bro. W. Steele, and Bro. John Steele is responsible for the illustrations and design. Editor, artist, and printer

Bro. Walter Barker, have co-operated in producing a book which is a joy to handle, and it is pleasing to know such work can be carried out among us.

There is one misprint: on p.19, line 2, 'where' should read 'were.'

The publication is warmly commended for distribution both by Churches and individuals. It is to be hoped that there will be a great demand for it; there is certainly a crying need for its message.

Orders for the booklet *The Churches of Christ Salute You* will be handled by: In England: A. E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent; and in Scotland by Thos. Nisbet, 8 Haldane Avenue, Haddington, East Lothian.

Prices, all post paid: Single copies 9d., per dozen 8s., in lots of 50 30s., in lots of 100 55s. Orders already placed will receive early attention.

The Church that Jesus Built

In response to many requests, I have issued a revised edition of my tract, *The Church of Christ*, under the above title. A copy, with list of prices, will be sent to any who write me at 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

CORRESPONDENCE

AN APPEAL: CAN YOU HELP?

The following letter was sent to Bro. Albert Winstanley, who has done all he can to satisfy this request. Can others help?

Dear Brother Winstanley,—Kindly send us *Truth in Love* (three dozen if possible). At Fort Jameson there is a Church of Christ. The address is: The Church of Christ, P.O. Box 240, Fort Jameson, N. Rhodesia, Central Africa.

May you send a free Bible correspondence course to Clayton Nyanjagha in care of the above-mentioned address, please.

Have you any tracts to spare, Brother!

[A report from the same brother appears in this issue.]

Dear Brother Editor,—I would like to bring to the notice of the churches in this country a paper which is published in Germany by Christians from America. The paper is named *Contact*, and is headed thus: 'Published monthly to keep members of the Church of Christ who are serving in armed services overseas in contact with one another.'

In the August issue there is a Directory of Churches in Europe, which includes faithful Churches of Christ in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. I, for one, strongly object to the listing of a church of which I am a member in such a paper. I believe that members of the Church of Christ ought not to be serving in armed services, and the fact that our Churches are listed in such a paper gives the impression to all who may read it that we approve of such things, and that we are a people who are pro-war.

The publishers of this magazine ought not to list any churches without their consent, and I suggest that churches in this country should make themselves heard in protest, for I feel sure that many of my brethren believe as I do that Christianity and war are as far apart as heaven and hell.

PHILIP PARTINGTON.

Nyasaland Fellowship. — Gratefully acknowledged from a brother in Leicester: £1 1s.

W. STEELE.

Restoration.

Come, all who wear the Christian name,
And build Christ's Church anew;
Its sacred emblems re-inflame
On altars pure and true.

We all will join with willing hands,
God's temple to restore,
And spread its glories in all lands,
To stifle Satan's roar.

Let's use our strength of heart and mind,
Working with love and will,
And so extend Christ's law, designed
God's purpose to fulfil.

Don't let the demons have their way,
Our neighbours to entrap,
But teach our friends this fateful day,
To all their fetters snap.

March smartly on the King's highway,
And aim to gain the crown,
And fear the safety path to leave,
To glory and renown.

About a Minute

A minute is very small, but it is very important. There are 1,440 minutes in each day. The apparent smallness of them makes us foolish mortals overlook them.

Someone said beautifully: 'Lost yesterday, between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each studded with sixty diamond minutes. No reward has been offered, for they can never be found.'

You and I each have two great gifts that go along with life: Energy and Time. We cannot waste either one without great personal loss.

We fool ourselves into believing that little things do not count. They are the only things that really do count. Sand grains stay the ocean's fury. A minute may be little, but it is large enough for the biggest people to live in.

You can fill the water bucket, or bring in an armful of kindling for a tired mother in a minute. You can speak a tender love to a dear one, or give a word of sympathy to someone with a heavy heart in a minute. You can look up from the evening meal, and thank your good wife for her skill in cooking, or you can tell your husband how you appreciate his hard work for the family in a minute.

You can learn something new in a little minute. You can read ten verses of the Bible in sixty seconds. You can

be ashamed of your sins, repent of them, and forsake them in a minute.

A noble resolve can be born in your heart in only a few seconds. A prayer sixty seconds long, in the midst of a busy day, will bring strength and beauty into your soul.

You can sing a stanza of a happy song, all in a minute. A phone to inquire after someone who is sick takes but a little time.

The misuse of minutes makes our hearts numb with the devil's opium of putting off great things till we 'have enough time.' Minutes are long enough if we will only use and not abuse them.

(If we expect to come out first, we must mind the seconds.)—Ben Holland.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

IMPORTANT

A correction in the N.T. reading for Lord's Day, October 23rd: Luke 24:30-35 on reading cards should read **Luke 24:36-53**.

READINGS FOR OCTOBER

2—Psalm 22:1-22. Luke 23:24-49.
 9— " 16. " 23:50 to 24:12.
 16— " 119:1-24. " 24:13-35.
 23—Micah 4:1-10. " 24:36-53.
 30—Zech. 3:7-4:10. Acts. 1

We should all give time to read the four accounts of these last portions of the gospels, especially the verses recording the Saviour's sufferings. The accounts supplement one another and complete what God has revealed to us of this manifestation of His love, and our sin. A 'Harmony of the Gospels' is helpful. We know the story well, but it should be our desire to learn its full meaning.

The last sermon (23:26-32).—It seems probable that the weight of the cross was too great for the patient sufferer to bear, so the impatient soldiery would impress a strong man passing by. Two sons of Simon were well known among Christians (Mark 15:21). Even the ancients recognised the cross as 'the most cruel and horrible punishment.' The people had cried out, 'Crucify Him,' but some women were moved to pity by the sight of suffering innocence, and wept. Jesus, however, knowing the terrible

results of this crime upon Jerusalem, pitied them, and we trust His words led to their ultimate acceptance of His gospel, and saved them from the fate of many thousands of their countrywomen when the tree (Jerusalem) had become withered and dry of every good thing, ready for its literal and figurative burning.

Crucifixion (23:33-38).—The crucifixion of one man was a small thing to the law and the soldiery who carried out the sentence. Here we view the perfectly innocent One uncomplainingly bearing the punishment reserved for the worst criminals. His companions in doom were robbers—not just thieves—and must have heard His wonderful prayer, one of them to good purpose, the other with scorn. How unwittingly true was the derision of the rulers. Jesus could not save Himself because He died to save others, in fact just because He was the Christ, the chosen of God to fulfil His purposes. Jesus refused the stupefying drink offered to Him (Matt. 27:34), and was then mocked by the soldiers with thirst-quenching wine, but upon His cry, 'I thirst,' He was given a drink to assuage the agony (John 19:28). The superscription was Pilate's means of venting spite upon those who had triumphed over him, and to whom he had surrendered his justice.

The Penitent Robber (23:39-43).—It is remarkable that this man gave such clear evidence of both faith and repentance. He believed in Jesus as a king, and confessed his sin. The Saviour's response accords with His previous treatment of 'publicans and sinners,' Paradise is the abode of the righteous after death, awaiting the resurrection, and must form part of the abode of departed spirits. Hades, seeing that Jesus was also in Hades (wrongly translated 'Hell' in A.V.) See Peter's speech (Acts 2:27 and 31). Many have used this incident to avoid the force of the divine command to be baptised. Jesus chose to forgive—that is His prerogative. In His gospel He has chosen to forgive upon obedience in baptism.

The final incidents (23:44-49).—The sixth hour would be mid-day with a sun normally much brighter than ours in Britain. Darkness over the land at such a moment brought misgiving and terror into the hearts of many, who till that

time had been unmoved by the tragic scene except to doubt the claims of Christ. The behaviour, the last words, the Saviour's early death, then the accompanying earthquake and other manifestations (Matt. 27:51) caused even the centurion in charge to admit both Christ's goodness and divine nature. Others went away with conviction of guilt on their souls, and the loving womenfolk, who knew Him so well and served Him so much, went with sorrow deeper than words, and despair.

Burial (23:50-56).—Who could have foreseen so wonderful a fulfilment of words—'They made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death?' Crucified between two robbers, but lovingly taken down and sumptuously buried (John 19:39). Joseph is no longer secretly sympathetic, nor Nicodemus, but the time for declaring faith had in their estimate passed. Both now considered that the good man had passed to His reward, not to three days temporary dwelling with the dead. The women were similarly doing the last acts of respect and love—so they thought.

Resurrection (24:1-12).—There remains some doubt as to the day of the crucifixion explainable either by the current meaning of certain phrases, or the fact of the days of unleavened bread being sabbaths, but there is no doubt about the first day of the week. It is the day of triumph, the day on which Christians remember their Lord in His own appointed way in the Breaking of Bread, or the Lord's Supper. No other day is observed by divine appointment, and the Church has no business to celebrate any, however attractive the idea. We cannot realise adequately the astonishment, fear and finally joy, which must have filled the women's hearts as the truth of the resurrection dawned upon them. Little wonder that Peter too ran to the sepulchre (John 20:3-8). Apparently there were three heavenly messengers to instruct the women. They did not appear to the others, whose own eyes in any case confirmed all the women reported.

The Walk to Emmaus (24:13-32).—This beautiful incident, told so vividly, reveals the minds of the disciples clearly. We picture the stranger joining them in their walk, and inquiring kindly into their troubles. The incident is recorded by Mark (16:12-13), but Luke fills in the

details. They reckoned Jesus to be 'a prophet mighty in word and deed.' Their trust that He was the Messiah had gone, and their hopes with it—no wonder they were sad! The reports of His having been seen were regarded with scepticism. Even the stranger's exposition of scripture which made their hearts burn—as ours do now at times—failed to open their eyes to His identity. The astonishing truth burst upon them when He gave 'grace before meat.' It is true He did this at the last supper, but it was His habitual habit and attitude in taking food. It is a good habit, not for exhibition (which might become mere sanctimoniousness) but as a habit of mind.

Further appearances and instruction (24:33-49).—The apostles had by this time been thoroughly aroused by the reports and their own experiences, to which is now added that of the two from Emmaus. Still they were terrified, affrighted, and some even doubtful when Jesus Himself stood in the midst. Let feelings, and consider our own lack of us not be critical, but try to realise their faith in God's power. The resurrected Christ had flesh and bones, and ate before those who had known him intimately for three years or so. There could be no mistake on the part of such—and their subsequent lives proved their conviction. Every possible doubt was removed. Yet this body was not limited in any way by material obstacles, and needed no physical sustenance. The truth of the resurrection is the foundation fact of the gospel. We must also note the emphasis upon the truth of the Scriptures (Old Testament of course), and teaching based upon them during the forty days of revelation. Those who belittle or doubt those Scriptures are doubting God—whether they know it or not. The great commission is embodied in verse 47. Here is the apostles' life-work mapped out. It was concluded in each case by martyrdom. In the person of the Holy Spirit Jesus joined them at the appointed time. Without Him they could do nothing (of any real use), and neither can we. They waited accordingly in Jerusalem, and we have the results of the power then manifested.

The Ascension (24:50-53).—Other details are given in Acts 1. The disciples are satisfied with the evidence of resurrection, and now the heavenly nature of

deity of their Lord is shown in His going into heaven before their eyes. The immediate effect was to inspire them to worship. Then it filled them with the joy of His triumph. It was natural this worship should be rendered in the Temple at this time, and their continual presence there would signify much to the other worshippers, and prepare them for Pentecost.

ACTS OF APOSTLES

We recommend study of this book with Bro. McGarvey's commentary, if a copy can be got. Acts is the Book of Conversions, and is therefore instruction by the Author of the Word respecting proclamation of the gospel and its results. It forms one vital section of the New Testament, which we would divide as follows: (1) The four gospels giving the story of Christ's life; (2) The Acts giving the story of the beginnings of the Church; (3) Letters to Churches and individuals showing how Christians should live; (4) Prophecy in the Revelation. Luke is the historian.

Introduction (1:1-5).—The connection between this book and Luke's gospel is here made clear. The word 'began' is particularly significant. The introduction really continues to verse 14, which concludes the résumé and partial repetition of the last events recorded in the gospel. The promise is that first spoken of by John Baptist (Luke 3:16). It is clear that the kingdom of God is the Church now to be set up, identical with the kingdom of heaven or of God preached by both the Baptist and Jesus Himself as near at hand.

The work of the apostles (1:6-9).—The expectation of restoration of physical Israel is put aside entirely in favour of the real work—witnessing to what they had seen, and proclaiming the gospel of repentance and remission (Luke 24:47).

Ascension (1:10-14).—The place of departure was the mount of Olives (seven furlongs from Jerusalem. The promise of return is in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64 etc.). The company meeting in the upper room included not only the apostles themselves but the faithful women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and His own brothers, who had previously disbelieved. Their occupation while they await God's promised power is prayer, and that in one accord.

Appointment of Matthias (1:15-26).—The Saviour appeared to as many as five hundred at one time, but the number able to meet together during this period of waiting was one hundred and twenty. After the instruction of Jesus it is not surprising to find the faithful few intent upon fulfilling the Scriptures. Judas's end is recorded by Matthew (27:3-10) with some apparent differences, doubtless explainable with fuller knowledge of the circumstances. We observe one chosen for apostleship must have kept company with the Saviour during the whole of His public work, and also have seen Him after His resurrection so as to testify to the fact. The use of the lot in this godly way accords with scripture and commonsense, but does not make it right for just any occasion (see Prov. 16:33; 18:18). Nothing more is recorded of Matthias, but this does not prove him to have been anything but faithful to his very high honour.

R. B. SCOTT.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

[We regret that some news items and notices of Coming Events did not appear in last month's issue. This was no fault of our contributors, but was due to the editor's being on holiday.—Editor.]

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—It gives us much joy to report the addition of two to the Church. On Lord's Day evening, August 7th, Sister Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, who is in her 72nd year, was baptised for the remission of her sins. On August 14th she met with us at the Lord's table and was accorded a welcome to our assembly. At this same meeting there was restored to our fellowship Sister Alice Sutton, who in 1901 was baptised in our chapel but wandered away from the Lord and His Church. We are made glad by her return and praise God for these two now added to those that are being saved.

FRED C. DAY.

Dennyloanhead, Stirlingshire.—A joyful occasion was witnessed on August 11th. Two young girls from the Junior Bible School, Ray and Amy, daughters of Sis-

fer Davidson, were immersed into the ever blessed name. God be praised for His goodness in adding these young souls to His Church. We pray that they will be mindful of their Creator in the days of their youth and continue even to the end.

BETHIA DAVIDSON.

Eastwood, Seymour Road.—We are glad to report that our Gospel Mission goes well, and with success. Three have been added to the Church by immersion. Our joy is enhanced because these decisions have come by conviction, through the Word. We pray that our two sisters and brother will be kept steadfast and find joy in service. The praise is to God, through our Lord and Saviour.

CHAS. LIMB.

Peterhead.—Again we rejoice in the saving power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Billy Milne, aged seventeen, son of Sister Milne, responded to the gospel and was buried with his Lord in baptism on August 21st. We pray that our brother with follow Paul's advice in 2 Timothy 2:15.

A. STRACHAN.

Tranent, East Lothian.—With much joy we report a further addition to our number. A young woman, having heard the gospel preached by our Bro. Joe Nisbet, stood up and boldly requested to be baptised. She was baptised the same hour of the night by Bro. Steele. Our new-found sister in Christ is the wife of Bro. Peter Strachan, whose baptism we reported in the S.S. a short time ago.

We thank God for this further proof of the power of the gospel in the salvation of souls, and commend our brother and sister to the grace of God. May they be kept faithful and used as instruments of righteousness, to the honour and glory of our Lord Jesus.

N Rhodesia and Nyasaland.—In Eastern Province of N. Rhodesia and Northern Province of Nyasaland we have eighteen congregations with four full-time evangelists: Godwin Makwakwa, Kalimbambo Ngulube, Timothy Zimba, Ahazia Apollo mu Ngwira, who is at Fort Jameson.

During the last two months, about two thousand five hundred people attended eight gospel meetings and ninety people were baptised. We are working in a combined effort. We have no white brother to help us in the teaching programme. Remember us in your prayers.

Have you any tracts to spare, please!
The Church at Fort Jameson greets you.

CLAYTON NYANJAGHA.

OBITUARY

Buckie.—With deep regret we record the passing of Bro. James Innes, of Cullen, who fell asleep in Jesus on September 3rd. By his removal one of the true saints of God has been taken from our midst. Baptised many years ago, Bro. Innes rang true in all he said and did, and daily lived his Christian discipleship adorning the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. Bro. Innes was associated with the Church in Belfast for a number of years. We praise God for his faithful witness and example, and for his modest, humble and loving disposition, which drew all our hearts to him. Truly he was a brother beloved by all. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for their works do follow them." Our sympathy goes out to his sorrowing daughter and son-in-law and their family. May they be consoled by the hope of every Christian, the return of our Lord. The funeral took place on Tuesday, September 6th. The service was conducted at the house and grave-side by Bro. George Reid, assisted by Bro. Alex Harper and Alex Strachan.

JOHN GEDDES.

Peterhead.—On Sunday, September 4th, our dear Sister Coull fell asleep in Jesus at the age of eighty-five.

Sister Coull obeyed the gospel at the age of twenty-four. Her life has been a living testimony to the saving and keeping power of the Lord. Until about two months ago our sister was a regular attender at the meetings. She was affectionately known to all the brethren as 'Grannie Coull.' She always had a word of cheer and encouragement for the young in the faith. Those who visited came away feeling they had been in heavenly places.

Our sympathy goes out to her family. May they be comforted in the realisation that their mother has gone to be with her Lord and Saviour.

Bro. George Reid, Buckie, conducted the funeral service in the meeting house and Bro. Aik Strachan at the grave.

A. STRACHAN.

COMING EVENTS.

Birmingham, Summer Lane (corner Geach Street).—Ninetieth Anniversary meetings. Saturday, November 5th. Tea at 4 p.m.; social meeting at 5.30 p.m.

Because of the limited accommodation of our own temporary buildings the Saturday tea and meeting will be held in the Ormond Street Mission Hall (by kind permission of the trustees). This is only about three minutes' walk from our chapel, where cars and coaches should be left.

On Lord's Day, 6th November, the services will be in our own chapel. Morning worship at 10.30. Evening preaching service at 6.30.

East Ardsley, Main Street.—Anniversary Services, Saturday and Sunday, October 29th and 30th (God willing). Tea, Saturday, 4 p.m. Evening Meeting 6 o'clock. Speakers: Bro. T. McDonald (Dewsbury); Bro. J. Garnett (Doncaster). Chairman: Bro. H. Baines (Morley).

Kentish Town.— Anniversary Rally, October 15th. Afternoon session, 3 p.m.; tea, 5 p.m.; Evening Meeting, 6.30 p.m. Bro. Gardiner and Winstanley are expected. Forum and discussion. Prayer and praise.

Come and join us. If intending to stay overnight, write R. B. Scott, 96 Chetwynd Road, London, N.W.5.

Tunbridge Wells (5 Mount Ephraim Rd.)

—Special Mission Meetings during October, when Andrew Gardiner will labour with the church. Saturday, October 1st, at 7 p.m., speakers: Brethren Gardiner and Winstanley. Gospel Meetings on Sundays at 6.30 p.m., Thursdays at 7.30 p.m., with Bro. Gardiner preaching; Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m., "Your Questions Answered"; Saturday, October 29th, at 7 p.m., addresses by Brethren Gardiner and Winstanley.

Visiting brethren welcomed. "Brethren, pray for us."

Great Yarmouth Fishing Season, 1955.

—Our fisher brethren from the North of Scotland have arranged to have their rally in Great Yarmouth on Saturday, October 22nd, 1955. Bro. D. Dougall is being released by the Slamannan District, so that he may give his services for this mission during the herring season.

Brethren desirous of attending the rally can be accommodated in hotels, boarding houses, or apartments. It has been impossible to ascertain the tariff, but it is expected to be reasonable, being off season.

Will brethren who desire to be with us notify Bro. Dougall sometime during September, stating the length of intended stay and the kind of accommodation they require, and he will endeavour to make the arrangements during his stay in Yarmouth before the Rally.

For recommended accommodation, write Mrs. M. Blackburn, 'Jesmond Dene,' 2 Clarence Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, near Yarmouth. Terms 16/- per day. Good and plentiful food, cleanliness, homely atmosphere.

Brethren who can make their own arrangements are requested to do so, but should inform Bro. D. Dougall, 'Seaview Cottage,' Wallacestone, Brightons, Falkirk, Stirlingshire of their intended presence.

Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.—Rally, Saturday, November 5th, 2.30 p.m., to open a two months' mission by Bro. A. Gardiner. Proposed speakers for the Rally: Bro. W. Steele and Bro. S. Hunter. An invitation is given to all. Accommodation for long-distance brethren wishing to stay overnight, write Secretary, J. Inglis, 77 Salisbury Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife.

Newton Grange.—The Church proposes, if the Lord tarry, to hold the annual social on October 8th, 1955, commencing 4.30 p.m.

A warm invitation is extended to all the brethren, and it is hoped that many may be able to be present to renew a fellowship which is always sweet. J. BROWN.

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

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