

The Scripture Standard

'What Saith the Scriptures.' (Rom. iv. 3.)

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From Jerusalem to Rome.

'BEGINNING at Jerusalem' was the instruction of the Founder of the Church to the Apostles whom He had chosen. That the Pentecost after His ascension was the birthday of His Church is generally admitted. The Church portrayed on the pages of the New Testament is either the model Church or we have no model; and if we have no model Church, our plea for a return to the ground on which the Church stood at the beginning is a farce.

That inspired Church history, the 'Acts of Apostles,' with its record of daily additions, a great company of the priests becoming obedient to the faith, and a world turned 'upside down,' shows it to be the most effective Church ever known.

IT WAS POWERFUL BECAUSE OF ITS SIMPLICITY.

It has been well said, 'When Christianity began, it had not a single religious building, not a spire, not an altar, not a priest.' An English Church historian (H. R. Haweis) says, 'Nothing could be more unadorned than the primitive worship. A plain man, chosen from among his fellows, in his common garb, stood up to speak, or sat down to read the Scriptures, to as many as chose to assemble in the house appointed. A back room, and that, probably, often a mean one, or a garret . . . was their temple.'

The first preachers were, in the world's estimation, mostly 'unlearned and ignorant,' and the one *educated* apostle feared his learning might make the Cross of Christ of none effect.' (1 Corinth, i. 17.) So long as primitive simplicity was maintained, and

faith was centred in the power of God, and not in the wisdom of men, nothing could stay the progress of the Church.

But *the mind of the flesh* has ever desired the grand, the majestic, and the imposing, forgetting the Lord's words: 'That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' So the Church started on her tragic and fatal journey to Rome. The *pride and ambition of men* were the most potent cause of apostacy from the way of the Lord. In the first Church, elders, to feed the flock and take the oversight, were appointed by each local assembly. (Acts xx. 17-28, 1 Peter v. 1-4.) Dr. Cramp says, 'At first all bishops (or elders) possessed equal power. But this equality was gradually destroyed. The bishop of a metropolitan city was usually called upon to preside in the provincial synods . . . and they early laid claim to some pre-eminence among their brethren.. This was the germ of subsequent usurpations.' Thus early did the elders take the work of the Church out of its hands; and did not, as in the first days, call the Church together to consider matters. There were men like Diotrefes who loved the pre-eminence, and they did not die without issue. There are 'popes' who have never seen Rome! By the close of the third century, one claimed to be the 'Bishop of Bishops,' and in 532 A.D. the Emperor Justinian conferred on Bishop John II. the title, 'Head of all the Holy Church.' Boniface VIII. said, 'The pope is as God on earth;' and the Fifth Lateran Council declared him to be 'Another God on earth.'

Thus was fulfilled the Apostolic prediction concerning one, 'Who exalteth himself . . . so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' (2 Thess. ii.) From this usurpation arose a class of 'priests' and 'clergy'—'lords over God's heritage;—bringing His people under bondage, darkness, superstition, and tyranny.

Compromise with the world was another fatal step. At the first, the Church and the world were in deadly antagonism. Christians were 'not of the world,' to them the world was 'crucified,' and friendship with the world meant enmity with God. So long as the Church was met by the world with the persecuting sword she triumphed gloriously, the blood of martyrs proving faithful seed. But the world, with its crafty leader, the Prince of this world, changed its tactics, met the Church with smiles instead of frowns, the tempting bait was taken, and her life, glory and all-conquering power forfeited. And when, under the Emperor Constantine, who professed conversion to Christianity, the Church was allied to the state, she bartered a heavenly for an earthly crown. Church historians testify to the great changes then made: 'The Churches vied in magnificence with palaces; and the robes and pomp of service, imitating imperial splendour, eclipsed paganism itself, with mitres, tiaras, tapers, crosiers, and processions.' (Haweis.)

'The public worship of the Deity was now no more than a pompous round of external ceremonies, the greatest part of which was insignificant and senseless, and much more adapted to dazzle the eyes than to touch the heart.' (Mosheim.)

All these developments were according to the mind of man. The Lord expressly forbade His followers to exercise lordship, to wear long robes, to be seen of men, or to use distinctive titles as Rabbi, Teacher, Master, Father. (Matt, xxiii. 1-12.) So the Church, led by men, and forsaking the plain teaching of her Lord, reached Rome.

But let it never be forgotten that in the darkest days of apostacy there were loyal souls shining like *stars in a dark firmament*. The Church—depicted as a woman with whom 'the dragon was wroth' and made 'war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus'—was never out of existence. There has always been a *loyal remnant* who refused to submit to the apostate 'mother of harlots.' The Waldenses stand out as an example of those who kept the faith pure, 'when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.' Their plea, given in their own words, sounds familiar to us, 'Whatever is not enjoined in Scripture is to be rejected; and those only are lawful Church ordinances . . . which can be traced to the period of our Lord's ascension.'

Milton called on God to avenge His 'slaughtered saints, whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,' slain by the Pope's soldiers, 'who rolled mother with infant down the rocks.' It has been said that in this people, whose origin can be traced back through the centuries, we have 'the golden candlestick that has never been removed, the rock-built edifice that has resisted the gates of hell, the bush that has burned but never been consumed.'

Space fails to tell of Wickliffe, Luther, Knox, Wesley, and others, who were valiant for the truth on the earth.

The Protestant Churches of Christendom have come into being as the result of attempts to throw off the papal yoke; and yet many of these are practising things for which the only authority is found at Rome.

The Church, intended by her Lord to be One Body, is divided, and is courting defeat in face of her powerful foes.

To call all that name the name of Christ *Back to Jerusalem*, to unite on the original ground, is our task, and the object for which this magazine is published.

The Plea-Can it be Re-Stated?

BY 'the plea' is meant that for Restoration of New Testament Christianity, to advocate which Churches have been in existence in this country for over a century. It would be strange if with the passing of years there were not some changes, and slackening on the hold on convictions dear to hearts of the pioneers.

Because of this, we believe it may be necessary to re-state our position, but in so doing, care must be exercised lest the 'ancientlandmarks' be removed, and the principles of our fathers trampled underfoot. We have no desire to live on a dead past, and it may be necessary for us to use modern language; but some who attempt this, as their books show, give us something differing vastly from the old faith.

Can we re-state the plea in the language of to-day? It is a challenging question. If it is intended to modify or repudiate 'the things surely believed among us,' the answer is, a thousand times, 'No!' But if it means a reiteration of our declared position, a closing of the breaches, a re-consecration to our ideals and a more earnest contending for 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' then it will be well to re-state it.

The only justification for the separate existence of Churches of Christ is the repudiation of sectarianism, and the plea for a complete restoration of New Testament Christianity. We have no desire to be egotistic, or to claim a monopoly of truth, but we are firmly convinced of the soundness of our position, that it is unassailable, being based as the solid rock of Divine truth. Sceptics have ever opposed, not the Christianity of the New Testament, but its caricatures as manifested by various sects and parties.

Our faith can only be re-stated in the same strong, virile, and challenging way, which brought the conviction of its validity to our own hearts,

In a generation accustomed to so much sophistry, we must speak of Bible things in Bible words, and hold fast to the old, all-embracing, slogan, 'Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent we are silent.' In place of a negative theology, whose teachers are ever telling us what they *do not believe*, let us boldly state what we *do believe*,

1. *The 'Scripture of Truth' as the only, and all-sufficient standard for the people of God.* It has stopt the test of ages; and there can be no other. We are more than pleased with the title of this magazine, and pray that in every way it may hold up the Scriptures as the only standard.

Paul wrote, 'Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, 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 Tim. iii. 16-17. R.v.) And Peter reminds us, that, 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.' (2 Peter i. 20-21.) Surely then, we have in the 'volume of the book' a perfect standard for every age.

2. *The Lordship of Christ, the only Head of the Church.* The repudiation of all human authority, whether Pope, or Parliament, Synod, or Conference; and the Church subject to Christ, the one Head. The Church is His own possession, purchased with His own precious blood.

3. *The Church of Christ the only Church of Divine Authority.* We do not claim to be the only 'Churches of Christ,' but we do claim to be 'Churches of Christ' only.

'What's in a name?' is asked in a half cynical manner. The name denotes to whom the Church belongs. Sectarian names, even such names as Paul, Peter, Apollos, (1 Corinth, i.) are dishonouring to Christ, and divide His people.

'Let names, and sects, and parties fall,

And Jesus Christ be all in all,'

4. *The conditions of membership set forth in the Word.* A careful perusal of the 'Acts of Apostles' will show that persons were required to believe that Jesus is the Christ, to repent of their sins, to confess Jesus as Lord, to be immersed into His name for the remission of sins; and thus obeying from the heart, were added to the Church. Men have set these aside, but they are still the Divine conditions.

Much more comes within the scope of this plea. Worship, centralising around the 'Breaking of the Bread' every Lord's Day. The Lord's work carried on, not by appeals to those outside, but by those who first give themselves to the Lord. Elders and Deacons in every Church to take care of and feed the flock of God. Pleading on these lines, we are out for the unity of God's people on a Divine basis.

And with all this, there must be the manifestation of the life and Spirit of Christ in all things. The Church of Christ is a body of redeemed ones whose lives should be adorned with the 'fruit of the Spirit.' So while striving all to 'speak the same thing,' let us also strive to be New Testament saints, set apart to be holy, as He is holy. ALLEN MURRAY.

War.

THAT popular English Church preacher, H. R. L. Sheppard, has been anxious to discover whether it is true, 'that the majority of thoughtful men in this country are now convinced that war of any kind, or for any cause, is not only a denial of Christianity, but a crime against humanity, which is no longer to be permitted by civilised people.' He called for support for the following uncompromising resolution: 'We renounce war, and never again, directly or indirectly, will We support or sanction another,' and says the response has been far in excess of anticipation,

We think all will agree that this matter should be considered now, and not left until war is declared, when the war fever gets into the veins and brains of the people, making calm thought almost impossible.

If we are to judge by statements in the daily press, we have reached the time of which the poet sang, when:—

'The warrior's name would be a name abhorred;

**And every nation that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead**

Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain.'

Field Marshal Sir W. Robertson said, 'I have spent nearly half a century on matters connected with war, and have arrived at the conclusion that war is a futile thing, for it neither ensures peace nor composes differences.'

Sir Ben Turner says, 'War is a gamble, with the lives of the multitude at stake. It is immoral; it is unchristian; it is useless. The results are barren.'

Mr. T. Rhondda Williams, from the chair of the Congregational Union, said, 'It is high time the Christian Churches washed their hands clean of this war business. I am against the next war now, before I know what it is going to be about. I do know that it will not be about what they will say it is about. There will be, as before, a falsification of war aims. I know also that if the aim was the noblest in the world, it could not be served by war.'

Mr. Silvester Home well said, 'Unless the Church brings this era of militarism to a close, and exorcises the demons of hatred, suspicion, and aggression, there is no power that can.'

We have seen recently that even Dictators have to bow to the will of the Church.

It is surely the duty of all Christians and Churches to use all their influence on the side of peace; and by broadcasting the principles of "their Master, the 'Prince of Peace,' seek to make war impossible. EDITOR,

Notes on Hebrews *A Letter from our Treasurer*

CHAPTER two opens with a warning, as appropriate to-day as it was then, against the danger of drift and neglect. The drift from principles—whether in Church or State—is truly appalling. Need we ask whether the word spoken through angels (here including the prophets) proved steadfast? The Jewish race is a living testimony to the correctness of the statement, and the truth of the Scriptures. How then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? This is a question that is unanswered, because unanswerable. The Apostle has pointed words of warning, which we should do well to heed, in Romans xi. 20-22. Violent opposition need not be adopted; neglect—treating the Gospel as an idle tale—is as fatal as blaspheming God.

The quotation from Psalm viii., though applicable to mankind in general, finds its fullest expression in Christ, made lower than angels, and perfected through sufferings—not perfected as respects His humanity or divinity, but perfected in human experience, through suffering. The quotation in 12v. is taken from that wonderful Psalm xxii.

The phrase, 'bring to nought' (14 v.) is a favourite expression of Paul's, found twenty-eight times in his writings and found elsewhere only in Luke xiii. 7.

Jesus brought help and salvation, not to angels, but took upon Himself the nature of man, born of the seed of Abraham, that He might officiate with understanding and mercy as a High Priest for all mankind. j.s.

(There is still an opportunity to begin the correspondence classes on this important book. Also those who, through pressure of work, or otherwise, have dropped the classes, may resume at the point at which they left off. Apply for question papers to John Scouller, 79, Tweedmuir Road, Glasgow, S.W. 2.) .

DEAR BRETHREN—Very sincerely, I would say, 'Thank you, one and all!' The birth of the *Scripture Standard* has been a great event. Day by day, gifts, orders, pre-payments, letters and cards of appreciation, have exceeded expectations.

The Gift Fund, as I write, stands at £50 19s. iod. As one of our leading Brethren wrote, 'This work has appealed to and has touched the hearts of the Brethren because it has touched their pockets.' And the end is not yet.

The magazine has been well received all over the land. In fact, there has been one long chorus of praise; so much so, that the Editor called my attention to Luke vi. 26. We have been greatly encouraged in our task. Requests are still coming in for the January issue.

All money receipts have been acknowledged, as far as possible by letter. Thanks are due to those who are acting as agents for the *Scripture Standard*, and for prompt replies to cards sent requesting information.

Again, many and warmest thanks.

A. L. FRITH.

How You may help the 'Scripture Standard

BY prayer daily for this work.

By becoming an agent in your Church and district, and make it a special duty to deliver the magazines to the homes of the readers. If you are willing to do this, write to the Treasurer.

Order an extra copy, if you can, and pass it on; or pay for a copy to be sent to a Brother, Sister, or friend, who may be 'isolated.'

Send a postcard, giving name and address (write clearly, please) of anyone to whom a specimen copy might be welcome.

Notify any change of address at once.

Send me your district plan, and mark any names not receiving the *Scripture Standard*.

Extra copies of this issue may be obtained. A.L.F.

Latimer's Light.

LATIMER and Ridley were burned at Oxford for resisting Papal doctrines: Oct. 16th, 1555. As we read these lines, let us pray that 'a double portion' of their spirit, which was the spirit of the Restoration Pioneers, may be granted unto us. (Ed. S.S.)

IN Oxford town the faggots they piled,
 With furious haste, and with curses wild,
 Round two brave men of our British breed,
 Who dared to stand true to their speech and deed;
 Round two brave men of that sturdy race,
 Who with temerous souls the worst can face;
 Round two brave souls who could keep their tryst
 Through a pathway of fire to follow Christ.
 And the flames leaped up, but the blinding smoke
 Could not the soul of Hugh Latimer choke.
 For, said he: 'Brother Ridley, be of good cheer,
 A candle in England is lighted here,
 Which by grace of God shall never go out.'
 And that speech in whispers was echoed about:
 Latimer's Light shall never go out,
 However the winds may blow it about.
 And we, the sons of those rugged sires,
 Who bought us our birthright through martyr fires,
 And gave us the glory we proudly prize,
 With the bleeding hand of self-sacrifice,
 Will guard that candle with resolute care,
 Which once was set burning on Oxford Square;
 Will guard that candle lest guile or ease
 Should cause its flaming to flicker or cease,
 It has cost too much, and has burnt too well
 For the glorious land in which we dwell
 To let it go out, Aye, we'll keep it still,
 Let others walk in what light they will.
 Latimer's Light shall never go out,
 However the winds may blow it about;
 Latimer's Light is here to stay
 Till the trump of the coming Judgment Day.

(Kansis City Reciter, No. 56.)

Queries.

How is it that the Lord's prayer (so called) is not used in our services, whilst it is taught in the schools, and almost universally used by the sects?

The prayer recorded in Matt. ix. 6-13, and Luke xi. 2-4, is erroneously designated the Lord's prayer. This is the disciples' prayer. The Lord's prayer is contained in John xvii.

It is not used in the services of Churches of Christ because it is in-

appropriate for the time in which we live, and ever since the Day of Pentecost mentioned in Acts ii. In the first place, it lacks the name of Christ; and in view of John xvi. 24 it is quite evident it was a prayer only for a temporary purpose. Though they may have used the so-called Lord's prayer every day since it had been spoken by the Saviour to His Apostles, it was not offered in His name. Paul instructs that 'Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all **in the name of the Lord Jesus.**' This

is emphasized in Ephesians v. 20. For this reason we do not use it. However there are further objections to its use; it has a human standard of forgiveness. Now the Apostle Paul has defined the height and depth of what our measure of forgiveness should be—*viz.* 'Forgiving one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you.' (Eph. iv. 32.) For this further reason it is highly inappropriate for Christians to-day. Again it teaches to pray for the coming of a Kingdom that now is in existence. It is notable that the burden of the message of John the Baptist, of the Saviour and of His disciples was 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand!' In Mark iv. 1, we are informed that Jesus said that some standing in His

audience would not taste of death, till they should see the Kingdom of God come with power. 'This was accomplished on Pentecost after the Lord was raised from the dead. So thereafter there was no preaching that 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand!' The Kingdom having come, there could be no sense in a prayer on the part of those in the Kingdom that the Kingdom should come. So Paul could conclusively assure the brethren that they had been translated from the power of darkness 'into the Kingdom of the Son of his (God's) love.'

In our view there is a more pressing need that we all should present the preliminary petition of the disciples—not, Lord, teach us **HOW** to pray! but 'Teach us **TO PRAY!**' J. SCULLER.

The Communion Question.

'WE take our stand on the simple question, whether it is right for the disciple to lay down or sanction any ground of communion other than that appointed by his divine Lord, and from this we do not move one inch. No matter what the design or what the value may be of the Lord's institutions; no matter whether the purpose might be attained ten thousand times more easily than Christ, in His wisdom, has ordained, we say it is wrong, it is sinful, it is unwise, it is unsafe for the disciple to alter or set aside one of the least of His commands, and to teach men to do the same. Recurring to the question of immersion, and viewing it as a means appointed by the Lord for the personal and individual appropriation of His redeeming work, who can measure or delare the weight of responsibility incurred by those who seek to weaken or destroy its efficacy as coming from His lips?

If, then, we have come to know the right ways of the Lord, the way to obtain a full knowledge of pardon in the remission of sins; the way to become a fully constituted disciple of

Christ, a child in the family of which Christ is the Living Head, and in which all such are brethren, shall we dare to fritter away this grand heritage? Shall we despise our very birthright, and part with it for a shadow that will be certain to elude our grasp, and may land us in quagmires of doubt and unbelief? There are perhaps but few of us who have not had the temptation to adopt open communionism powerfully present to our mind at one time or another, and who have not longed under it to clasp the unconsciously disobedient to our hearts, overleaping all barriers to communion, and escaping thereby all the pain and labour of witness-bearing for Christ; but then the imperative duty we owe to Christ, as the only Lawgiver in the kingdom of God, and moreover, the intrinsic and far-reaching value of ordinances bearing His authority, and fraught with so many blessings to the obedient have ever risen before us, and stayed our hand from touching things so much more sacred in their character than even the Ark of the Covenant itself. We have no fear as

to the result; instead of this adherence to principle weakening our hands, we contend that it is the only thing by which, in the conflict between truth and error, we can maintain our status as Christian men and Churches, and exercise any real and lasting power for good. Neither does it prevent our estimating at its true value everything attempted or accomplished in the name of Christ for the advancement of His cause and the good of mankind, or rejoicing in every mark of progress toward apostolic ground. So far from this, we believe it gives us a power, which we can secure in no other way, of aiding forward, and, perhaps in the end, directing such movements towards a speedier consummation.

It is our ardent hope and prayer that the brethren may still stand firm and immovable in the pure ways of the Lord. . . .

We have endeavoured to keep before our readers the great duty of absolute obedience to Christ in all things pertaining to His kingdom, and with respect to our Churches, their grand original aim, which, founding itself upon the pure teaching of the apostles, and reaching far beyond the present, contemplates, not the dawdling with here and there a sectarian man in half communion in order to stand well with men; not the falling in with sectarian practices for the same end, but the utter destruction of sectarianism itself, and the rearing of the glorious temple of God upon its ruins. It must be clear to every candid mind that, with such objects as these, we are bound either to keep within divine lines, and be able to appeal to apostolic testimony for our position, or abandon the ground as untenable, and our plea as a mistake.

From these passages (Matt, xxviii. 18-20; John iii. 5; Acts ii. 38; Rom. vi. 3-4. Gal. iii. 27, etc.), we learn that the only persons scripturally within the kingdom—constitutionally disciples—are those who, believing in Christ as the Son of God, have

turned away from their sins, and put on Christ in immersion. . . . And Scripture in thus clearly defining what true discipleship is, gives us wherewithal to stand by our plea in its integrity, if we "are so disposed. Of course, the alternative is to break through the line and to extend fellowship to the unbaptised on pleas of various kinds. But in doing this, we unquestionably abandon our faith in the all-sufficiency and alone-sufficiency of Scripture; give up our distinguishing position as pleading for a divine order of things, and sacrifice all at the shrine of an expediency whose sole object is to find a place at the Lord's table for those who have no right to be there on Scripture grounds.'

G. Y. TICKLE, SEN. (1879.)

[We commend to the earnest consideration of our readers the foregoing statement of the Scriptural position, from the pen of a beloved brother, the writer of 'Lord of our highest love,' 'We close the feast, so sweet, so blest,' and many other of our soul-stirring hymns.

Though a voice from the past, the position set forth rests upon the 'impregnable rock of Scripture;' and from that standpoint is unanswerable.

ED.]

Drink and the Workers.

HENRY FORD says: 'Liquor never did anybody any good. I am against it in every form. I wouldn't have a labourer who drinks. He can neither drink on or off duty. We can't afford to risk machinery that costs thousands of dollars, and priceless human lives, to a worker who poisons himself, even if he does his drinking outside working hours. I do not want a man working for me, if he has the smell of liquor on his breath.'

'IF any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

Isaiah This chapter is a prophecy of of Israel's restoration. The Wilderness

xxxv. and solitary place' is a favourite theme of the prophet. 'Strengthen the weak hands and confirm the weak knees' is adopted by the writer to Hebrews (xii. 12). Whatever local bearing the prophecy may have had, it found its fullest and final fulfilment in the work of Jesus Christ, who opened the eyes of the blind, physically and spiritually; and He alone can fulfil the destiny here spoken of, for those who shall find everlasting joy upon their heads, where sorrow and sighing are for ever banished.

Isaiah Old Testament more beautifully foreshadows the glory and blessings of the New Covenant (**3V.**) foretold by Jeremiah (xxx. 31) conditioned on obedience. The inspired Apostle applies the words, 'even the sure mercies of David' to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts xiii. 34).

The warning of **8-9** is much needed in these days. Neither God's thoughts nor His ways are those of mankind. Yet what men *think* right and proper is often taken as acceptable before God. What men think, purpose, or do, carries no weight in religious matters. What say the Scriptures? If God's thoughts and purposes are not sublimely set forth there, men are in impenetrable fog, and nigh to despair. See, for example, how Paul's thoughts led him astray. (Acts xxvi. 9).

The word of the Lord is compared to rain which brings forth the harvest, but we must also remember the variety of soils the Saviour mentioned in the parable of the Sower.

I Joshua, well-stricken in years

ing departure, recalls to the Tribes of Israel God's dealings with those whom He had called out of Egypt, preserved through the wilderness journeyings, and brought to the

promised land. Viewing all these, he rings out the challenge to serve the Lord with sincerity and truth. They heard the decision of the old heroic soul, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' Christians often use this phrase wrongfully. In the Christian era, a man may only speak for himself. It may be, as in earlier times, that a man's foes may be those of his own household.

Hosea prophet of Israel's iniquity and its penalties, is still burdened with the threatenings of previous chapters, and now declares how little can be effected by Israel's spasmodic fits of repentance, so inadequate are they in view of all their transgressions of God's law. Verse 2 is reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxviii. 1-10). Their acknowledging God would be as the latter and former rain (the same figure as in the lesson in Isa. lv. 10).

The moral to be gathered is that God desires mercy and not sacrifice, and the meaning drawn by the Saviour (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7) from that declaration, throws a searchlight on the need for it in those days, and the fitness of the lesson for our own times.

NEW TESTAMENT.

John iii. Nicodemus came by **1-24** revealed, and speculation is futile. His standing before God depended on his birth as a son of Abraham (Genesis xvii. 12). The Saviour's words cut away the ground from under his feet, as John's message also had done to his hearers (Matt iii. 9). The earthly relationship and birth now count nothing in God's sight. 'Ye must be born again'—born of water and of the Spirit. Men are begotten of the Spirit and are born out of the water. See Eph. v. 26 and Titus iii. 5 for the same thought, and note that, in all, water is placed first.

The 'wind bloweth' is utterly misleading, as is also the word 'sound' (8). It should read, 'The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and you can hear

the voice.' How? you ask. The Holy Spirit was with the Saviour and His voice gave forth the words of the Spirit. So is everyone begotten of the Spirit (now in the Word) and born in water.

'Which is in heaven' (13) Heaven here is a condition or state.

'Whosoever believeth.' This cannot limit man's obligation to belief only, as it would negative the Saviour's teaching to Nicodemus, and destroy the value of the statement, 'he that doeth truth.' (21.)

Jesus came not then for judgment or condemnation, although one day He shall. Men judge themselves, according to their attitude to the truth (Acts xiii. 46).

John iv avoided the route to Galilee which Jesus here takes. The origin of Samaritans is given in 1 Kings xvii. 24. At Jacob's well he met a woman and talked with her (a thing no Rabbi would dare do). Her natural surprise arose not only from this fact, but because he was a Jew. Jesus reveals himself as the giver of living water. The marvel of the Lord's insight is here seen as Jacob's well was not a spring, but a mere gathering ground-cistern of water. Jesus cut short the discussion by revealing her past. Her speech becomes more respectful, as she perceives in Him a prophet, and she raises the debateable point where worship should be offered: Gerizim or Jerusalem. The reply is that place matters nothing but spirit is all-important.

The disciples return from procuring food, and beg of 3 -54* Him to eat. They misunderstand His reply, as they too frequently will do in succeeding days. What of the harvest? (35V.). This is thought to indicate the time of year, but is" it not more likely to apply to the company who came to Him, attracted by the woman's story? Is not this a prophecy—yea, and the reason—of that great ingathering by the preaching of Philip (Acts viii. 4-8)? Galilee

was disappointing after Samaria, but one noble man shewed a deep abiding faith that secured the blessing he sought.

John 1:24 Hope's springs eternal in the human breast is

seen in this poor man, who, troubled with infirmity thirty-eight years hies him to the Bethesda (House of Mercy) pool. Now that he is there, he has no one to help him get down into the pool. He had probably been there from the previous day or earlier, in view of the Jews' objection to his carrying home his matt (bed). The man's ignorance as to who had cured him seems strange, but we need not assume that he had any sinister intention in reporting to the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. Possibly he may have thought they would be glad to hear of this wondrous physician. The persecution of the Saviour began on account of His healing on the Sabbath day. Jesus justifies His action on the fact that His 'Father worketh even until now.' True, God had rested on the completion of creative work (Gen. ii.). The work of God knows no cessation. Night and day, Sabbath and week-day, summer and winter, are all alike in His sight. While He has ordained this day of refreshment, He is not bound who gave the command. His works of mercy and loving-kindness to the children of men know neither measure nor end. J. SCOULLER.

Nyasaland Mission.

NYASALAND Protectorate has a land area of 37,596 square miles, with a population of about one and a half millions of natives, one thousand five hundred Asiatics and two thousand Europeans. It lies along the southern and western shores of Lake Nyasa, forming a strip of territory, five hundred and twenty miles long and fifty to one hundred miles broad. Lake Nyasa, the third largest lake of Africa, is about one hundred and twenty miles long and fifteen to sixty miles broad. Several rivers flow into the lake, Bua, Rukuru, Songwe, and others, while it is drained by the Shire* River which flows into the *Ēapibēši*. Readers

might refer to an Encyclopedia for other interesting features.

We have recently had very encouraging reports of our Mission there. In 1911, efforts had been made by Bro. Hollis to establish work in Portugese East Africa but, to quote Bro. Ronald, 'It was not the time of God to let His good message be received by them.' In June last, eighteen were immersed at Likangala. One of these was of Malokotela, Portugese East Africa, to which place he returned home. Later Bro. Wellem Kunde, evangelist of Likangala, made a two-days journey to visit him, and to explore the world with the gospel. He returned bringing reports that the people were hungering and thirsting for the gospel. After he reached there, he had little time to rest for he was occupied telling the people things pertaining to God, and says the fields are already white unto harvest. Some have accepted the gospel and are coming to Thondwe for further help. Bro. Ronald says, 'I can see that Almighty God has kept our long desire back and waited His own time to reveal it among the P. E. A.' In 1911, Bro. Hollis and another went and later sent Bro. Ronald with six others. „He writes, 'If God permits I will go in 1935 to that district and make arrangements with the Governor.'

Bro. Frederick has returned from visiting the brethren to the west of the lake and reports the progress and extension of the work westward and northward. At Dowa, beyond Gowa, 'we have Bro. John Malembo stationed. Then we have a preacher at Kota Kota, on the shore of Lake Nyasa. Our converts have followed their occupations, and are now at Fort Jameson, near North Rhodesia, while farther north the district of Kasungu is ready to be entered.'

Our brethren in Nyasaland ask for our prayers and assistance. They are indefatigable in pressing forward with the work of the gospel. At Namiwawa the new meeting house will shortly be begun, the bricks are almost ready and much preparatory work has been done. They are willing and anxious to get on with the house. In other places three new prayerhouses have been opened, while a fourth is ready for opening.

During the past year, I have received, from Churches and brethren, £83 is. iod., and have disbursed £78 9s. 7d., leaving a balance of £4 12s. 3d., though by the time these notes appear there will be but a few shillings left.

Since last announcement, I have received with grateful appreciation, the following:—

Rept. No.	Church	£	s.	d.	
373	***	***	12	0	
378	East Ardsley	...	1	8 3	
382	...	...	1	0 0
384	Heckmondwike postm'k	...	1	0 0	
387	...	...	10	0
389	...	...	10	0
390	...	...	5	0
391	Shettleston	...	2	12 0	
393	H.T., Canada	...	12	10	
394	A Friend, Glasgow	...	10	0	
396	Eastwood	...		50	
397	...	...	10	0
				9	18 .1
Disbursed during the same period				£16	17 3
				W. M. KEMPSTER.	

Obituary,

Bathgate—Bro. William Williamson passed away on January 15th. Fuller notice, D.V., later.

Carluke—Bro. James Scott passed away on December 19th, 1934, in his seventy-ninth year; and was interred at Cambusnethan Cemetary on the 21st. For a long time, he had been prevented by illness from meeting with us. His sufferings are now ended, and he rests in peace. 'The memory of the just is blessed.' The service was conducted by Bro. James Wardrop. c.A.

Carluke—Sister Amelia Cumming died on December 2nd and was buried in Carluke. Our sister was sixty-seven years of age. She failed' in her strength during the summer and her illness continued through the autumn months. About thirty years ago, when living in Motherwell, she turned to the Lord and since then has been a faithful and consistent member of the Church there. Her influence will be missed.

Since her husband retired, four years ago, they have resided in Carluke. Our sympathy goes out to Mr. Cumming and to the sons and daughters who have been bereaved. We also wish to remember our late sister's three brothers who reside in Braidwood, and Sister Mitchell (Carluke), Sister Bell (Egremont), and Sister McKim (Burslem), her sisters. May they all be comforted in the love of God. Bro. Crosthwaite and the writer took part in the services.

JOHN ANDERSON.

News.

Aberaman, Commerce Place.—Our month's mission concluded on Dec. 29th. Bro. Entwistle strengthened and consolidated the brethren by teaching and preaching the Word. During the month six were added to the Church, two by immersion and four formerly immersed. The newly-formed Church here, together with Bro. Entwistle, gloried in the Lord for this manifestation of blessings bestowed on those who seek to follow Him according to His Word. P.A.

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—It is with very great joy that we are able to report a number of additions to this Church. On Dec. 20th, Mary Townsend made the good confession and was baptised into Christ. On Dec. 23rd, William H. Clarke was likewise united to his Redeemer. On the 30th December, we saw two others buried with Christ in baptism and rise to walk in the new life: Ethel A. Ball and Henry Hardy. Having made the good confession, on 6th January, Emma E. Hall was immersed on the 13th inst., and received into fellowship at the same meeting. At the close of that gathering, at which Bro. T. E. Entwistle was the preacher, Alfred E. Bull decided to follow the Saviour in His own appointed way, and is to be baptised (D.V.) at our meeting on Thursday evening, 17th Jan. Bro. Entwistle is serving with us during the month of January, and we are praying for further converts. We rejoice greatly at these additions and are encouraged in our work for the Master.

FRED. C. DAY.

Blackpool.—We closed the year with deep thankfulness to God for His mercies. Many splendid meetings have been experienced, and seven have been added to our number, the membership now being higher than at any time previously. Our sincere thanks are due to those who have fellowshiped with us during the summer, also to those who spoke at the meetings. Brethren to the number of over three hundred turned in with us.

Glasgow, Hope Hall, Camden Street.—During the months of November and December, Bro. John Scouller has laboured with the Church here. Meetings, both open-air and indoors, have been well attended. Visitors have been present on each Lord's Day evening. Bro. Scouller's labours have been

of great benefit to us, his sound Scriptural teaching has given us great spiritual uplift.

M.B.

Slamannan District.—The New Year's Social was held on January 2nd, in the Meeting Hall, Slamannan, a large company being present.

The Chairman, Bro. A. Gordon, expressed good wishes for the New Year, and speaking from experience, said the old brethren of past days were a standing example of zeal and faithfulness to the younger generation.

A cablegram from Bro. H. M'Kerlie, (Canada) was read, wishing a happy and prosperous year for the Churches, and success to the *Scripture Standard*. Bro. T. Henderson (Glasgow), spoke on 'Deepening the spiritual life.' He made good use of some homely similes, and gave valuable hints for spiritual growth. Bro. J. Scouller, taking as his basis, 'Ye are my witnesses,' spoke very forcibly on God's dealings with His people Israel, and their witness for the truth of the Scriptures. Speaking of their present persecution he was sure no nation would go unpunished for their cruel treatment of God's ancient people.

Bro. Crosthwaite spoke on words taken from the parable of the barren fig tree, 'This year also,' remarking on our great privileges and the poor return we are giving. If we applied the same zeal and sacrifice to Church work, as to material things, this year would be the best of all.

We had songs and recitations from brethren and sisters, and altogether we had an enjoyable and helpful time.

JOHN SNEDDON.

Coming Events.

A Conference of those pleading for Christ-ianity as at the beginning will be held (D.V.) in the Meeting House, Albert Street, Newtown, Wigan, on Saturday April 20th, 1935. Speakers are being arranged from Birmingham, Yorkshire, and Blackburn. Chairman, Bro. Ed. Price, of Wigan. All members of Churches of Christ are invited.

Blackpool.—Bro. J. Scouller is expected to be with us in February, 16th to 25th. Meetings, Lord's Days, 10.45 and 6.30, and each evening in the week at 8 o'clock. A season of blessing and ingathering is anticipated. Pray for us.