

The Scripture Standard

'What Saith the Scripture,' (*Rom. iv. 3.*)

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Church Landmarks—The Methodists

WHEN religious bodies are traced to their source it will be found that all the sects of Christendom began during the past four hundred years.

The great Methodist Church owes its origin to John Wesley, the son of a clergyman, who was born at Epworth, Lincolnshire, in the year 1703. Studying at Oxford, then notorious for the 'riotous depravity of its students,' he, and some of like-mind, met for Bible reading and prayer. They were nick-named, 'Bible Moths,' 'The Holy Club,' and later, because of their regular habits of life and study, they were called 'Methodists,' which they defined as those 'who live after the method laid down in the Bible.' Wesley left Oxford a narrow Church of England clergyman. At a Moravian meeting in 1738, he heard one of the brethren speaking on the Epistle to the Romans, and in his own words, '-I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation I testified openly to all what I now first felt in my heart.'

He founded societies in connection with the Church of England, which met regularly for, mutual confession and exhortation. When the pulpits of the English Church were closed to him, Wesley erected the first Methodist Chapel in 1739, stipulating that it was not in competition with, but supplementary to the Parish Church, that meetings were not to be held at the same time as the Church services, and that all members of the Societies were to take the 'sacrament' from the parish clergy.

The condition of England in those days was appalling. 'Robbers and murderers abounded. Gangs of drunken ruffians paraded the streets and subjected women to nameless outrages, and defenceless men to abominable tortures. . . . It seemed as if the whole population were given over to an orgy of drunkenness, which made the very name of Englishman stink in the nostrils of other nations.' Churches were empty, and clergymen were mostly given over to pleasure and hunting. The people were 'as sheep having no shepherd.' Wesley was joined by George Whitfield, a preacher of great power, and they were incessant in their labours. Large crowds gathered at all hours to hear their message, and it is claimed that the great evangelical revival thus created saved England from revolution. At many places the clergy hired 'lewd fellows of the baser sort,' who pelted Wesley and his colleagues with mud, eggs and stones. Towns were set in an uproar; mad bulls and packs of hounds were used to break up their meetings. But this, as persecution always does, only served to help forward the work.

When Wesley died in 1791, there were eighty thousand members in the Methodist Societies, three hundred 'ministers,' and one thousand local preachers.

GOVERNMENT.

The position and power of 'ministers' has been a fruitful cause of strife and division. The 'Deed of Declaration,' drawn up by Wesley, conferred 'the right of appointing

preachers at the Conference, to be composed of a hundred members, to be drawn from the clergy exclusively.'

Resulting from refusal of the Conference to heed pleas for a more democratic assembly several splits took place, and other bodies, as 'Primitive,' 'New Connexion,' 'Bible Christians,' 'Reformers,' came into being, in all of which the power of the minister was curbed. In a few years, one hundred thousand members were lost to the parent Church, and yet Conference declared its determination 'to hold the pastoral crook with steady and unfaltering hand,' one leader declaring that 'Methodism hates democracy as it hates sin.' However, in 1878, a 'Representative Conference' was allowed with 'ministers' and 'laymen' in equal proportions, this to be followed by the 'Pastoral Session' possessing power of absolute veto.

Some of the smaller bodies having previously joined together, in 1932 the 'United,' 'Primitive' and 'Wesleyan Methodists' became one, to be known as 'The Methodist Church.' The constitution of the Conference was altered, but there is still a 'Representative' and 'Ministerial Session,' the former consisting of four-hundred-and-fifty 'ministers' and four-hundred-and-fifty 'laymen,' the latter having the same four-hundred-and-fifty 'ministers' and one-hundred-and-fifty 'ministers' elected by the district synods. And this Ministerial Conference is the final authority.

This, of course, is quite foreign to the government of the Church as set forth in the New Testament. Subject to the Divine and only Head of the Church, and with His Word as guide and final authority, every member has a voice in the management of its affairs.

DOCTRINE.

In 'Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists,' drawn up in 1743 by John and Charles Wesley, it is stated that God's 'written Word is the only rule and the sufficient

rule, both of our faith and practice.' But the 'Model Deed' declares that, 'No person . . . shall be permitted to preach . . . in the said Chapel, who shall maintain, promulgate, or teach any doctrine or practice contrary to what is contained in certain notes on the New Testament, commonly reputed to be the notes of the said John Wesley, and in the first four volumes of sermons, commonly reputed to be written by him.' As there were different editions of these latter volumes, legal opinion was sought, and given in 1914, that the edition published in 1788, containing forty-four sermons, constitutes the standard of Methodist doctrine and practice. The doctrinal standard was not altered when the union took place. So God's 'written Word' is not 'the only and the sufficient rule' of 'faith and practice' in the Methodist Church.

MEMBERSHIP.

In 'Rules of the Society,' it is stated: 'There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into these Societies, viz., a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.' Classes were formed under leaders, to meet weekly, 'to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require.' Every member to contribute 'one penny weekly, and one shilling quarterly.'

A later rule says, 'If . . . it be found that any person, in other respects eligible for recognition (as a member), has not received Christian baptism, that Sacrament shall be administered before the recognition of that person.'

Like the Romish, English and Scottish Churches, Methodists practise infant sprinkling; and this has caused much discussion on 'the relation of baptised children to the Church.' In a Report to Conference in 1901, it was recommended that 'classes should be formed for such children to teach them that the act of baptism should be *supplemented by the personal decision of the person baptised.*' In the discussion on this,

one minister urged 'that they ought to decide first who were the proper subjects for baptism.' Professor J. A. Beet (Methodist), in *Churches and Sacraments*, published in 1907, said, 'The New Testament says nothing about the baptism of infants In order to prove that spiritual blessings are conveyed to an unconscious infant, what is the proof adduced? Simply teaching in the *New Testament about the baptism of believers, for no other baptism is ever mentioned there,*' (p. 118).

Wesley, in his notes on Romans vi. 4, says, 'We are buried with Him—alluding to the ancient manner of baptising by immersion,' and in his *Journal* is "this entry: 'Saturday, February 21st, 1736, Mary Welch, aged 11, was baptised according to the custom of the first Church by immersion.' In his notes on Acts xxii. 16, Wesley says, 'Be baptised, and wash away thy sins. Baptism administered to real penitents, is both a means and a seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive Church bestow this on any, unless through this means.' So in this matter Methodists are not adhering to what their founder declared to be the teaching and practice of the New Testament. We may well say, in Wesley's own words: 'Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot, and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear His Word, to imbibe His spirit, and to transcribe" His life in our own!' (Preface, *Notes on New Testament*.)

Dr. Scott-Lidgett (President of Methodist Church, 1932), when editor of *The Methodist Times*, said, 'we shall plead for the maintenance of the Church on lines laid down for us in the New Testament. It is not sufficient for us to say, "This is Methodism," we must be able to add, "This; is Christianity." Nothing must be brought in from the out-

side. What the New Testament requires must be insisted upon.' That sounds like the Restoration watchword, 'Where the Scriptures speak we speak, where the Scriptures are silent we are silent.' When all take that ground, Wesley's aspiration, expressed in his hymn, will be realised.

**'Names and sects, and parties fall,
Thou, O Christ, art all in all.'**

EDITOR.

The Present Crisis.

**ONCE to every man and nation comes the
moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the
good or evil side:**

**Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever
on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and,
behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping
watch above His own.**

**Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they
were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonised for hurled the
contumelious stone.**

**By the light of burning heretics Christ's
bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the Cross
that turns not back:**

**For humanity sweeps onward. Where
to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the
silver in his hands,
Far in front the Cross stands ready and the
crackling faggots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in
silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into history's
golden urn.**

J. R. LOWELL,

The Conference.

THE Conference was held at Albert Street, Wigan, on Saturday, April 20th. Bro. Walter Smith, Secretary of the Church, welcomed visiting brethren to Wigan. Bro. Alex. Carson, of the Church at Burnley, was appointed chairman. A report of the September Conference at Birmingham was given; and Bro. McDonald presented the Treasurer's Report. He urged the brethren to more liberality in their support of Bro. Entwistle, so that the accounts might show a better balance at next Conference.

Several letters were read, the most interesting and encouraging being that from the newly-formed Church at Aberaman.

Bro. Entwistle gave a report of his journeyings in various directions, particularly interesting were the results of his services at Whitehaven, and the letter of appreciation he had received, as were also the labours during March at Belfast. He is booked to return there for two months at the end of the year.

The Report from the Committee appointed at the Conference at Blackburn, on March 31st, 1934, was considered. It was agreed to adopt the suggestion that at the next Conference two papers should be presented (pro. and con.) on the topic, 'Should Churches and individuals seeking to walk in the old paths remain in the present Co-operation of Churches of Christ.'

It was also agreed that a Committee of five be appointed at each Conference to make the necessary arrangements for the ensuing Conference, and to work in conjunction with the Church where the next Conference is to be held. One of the Committee to be responsible for making a record of what takes place at the Conference, and to arrange for publication of a report of the proceedings.

The Committee's suggestion to hold an additional Conference in January each year was negatived.

In accordance with the above resolution, a committee of brethren mainly of the Yorkshire district, was appointed to arrange for the next Conference which it was agreed should be held either at Morley or East Ardsley.

In the evening Bro. Edward Price, who presided over a gathering that filled the meeting place, spoke of the necessity of Jesus Christ as the basis of our faith, without whom there could be no fellowship, such as was now enjoyed by brethren who had gathered from many parts. Brother George Hudson (Birmingham) speaking from 1 Cor. ii. 1-5, wondered where we might stand to-day, nationally, socially and individually, if we placed our confidence not in the wisdom of men but in the wisdom of God. 1914-1918 had been the result of placing confidence in men, and to-day we were again on the brink of the precipice. The lethargy of Christian men and women had been largely to blame, because they failed to take advantage of opportunities they have, to make their power and influence felt in the nation.

Bro. George Hassell (Leicester) said this was the first Conference he had attended, and he rejoiced to be among brethren who sought to stand for the faith once delivered unto the Saints. The strenuous fight must go on for the restoration of primitive Christianity. If there was no definite body of truth in the New Testament, which we could believe and defend, it was time we should forsake our plea. Arguing from Hebrews viii. 4-5 as to the positive instructions God had given Moses as to the tabernacle, he thought it most reasonable that God should have vouchsafed to us some definite instructions. The same thought was found in 2 Tim. i. 13, 'Hold fast the FORM of sound

words,' and in Rom. vi. 17, 'God be thanked . . . ye obeyed from the heart that FORM of doctrine.' To Timothy had been given something quite as definite as that given to Moses. Men had laid down their lives to hand this truth on. Much valuable truth lay on the surface of the Scriptures, but like a mine, there were veins of precious ore which had to be excavated with arduous toil. It was the only guide in this age of doubt and uncertainty; and we could still say,

**'It is our chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksand?,
Still guides, O Lord, to Thee!'**

Bro. Wilfred Hoyle (Liversedge), said that Moses had encountered just such a time of apostasy as we to-day were facing; but it was just at such a time Moses began to write his book?. Elijah had lived in a similar time, but in co-operation with God, had done a great work in calling the people back to their allegiance to Jehovah.

Faith.

FAITH was bewildered much by men who meant

**To make it clear; so simple in itself,
A thought so rudimental and so plain,
That none by comment could it plainer make.**

**All faith was one. In object, not in kind,
This difference lay. The faith that saved a
• soul,**

**And that which in the common truth
believed,**

**In essence were the same. Hear, then,
what faith,**

**True, Christian faith, which brought salva-
tion, was:**

**Belief in all that God revealed to men:
Observe, in all that God revealed to men:
In all He promised, threatened, commanded,
said,**

Without exception, and without a doubt.

R. POLLOCK, *The Course of Time.*

**'WHEN the Son of Man cometh, shall he
find faith on the earth.'**

'Called to be Saints.'

THE word 'saint' occurs many times in the New Testament, and is found in the opening sentences of some of Paul's letters. It was frequently used by the old Puritans, who knew, and were not afraid of its implications, calling them to a holy, separate life. Dictionary definitions of Bible words are interesting, though not always Scriptural. The *Student's English Dictionary* defines saint as: 'A person sanctified; a very holy and godly person; one eminent for piety and virtue; one of the blessed in heaven; an angel in the Bible; a person canonised by the Roman Catholic Church, often contracted St. when coming before a person's name.' Part of this definition reflects the popular idea of a person removed from his fellows, or even from his Christian associates. The word is not too frequently heard among our people, and of late has been used in an exclusive sense. It is becoming common for some to use the prefix 'Saint' when referring to New Testament writers; and it is frequently used by readers of the Scriptures in our meetings. The first time we heard a brother announce that he was going to read from the 'Epistle of St. Paul' it came as a shock and surprise. The surprise would be greater still if it was announced that 'Brother Saint Jones will read us the Epistle of Saint James.' This, though unusual, would be quite Scriptural, as there the word is applied to all the followers of Christ.

The Apostles were honoured by their Lord in being called to high office, and were inspired for their work, but they were men of like passions as ourselves; and one of them said he fought hard 'lest that by any means, when I have preached to others', I myself should be a castaway.' It is not because we belittle or dishonour these that we refrain from using the prefix 'Saint'

when referring to them, but because we believe that it is unscriptural to do so. This, like other practices which are becoming common, is a sign of departure from the pure speech and custom of the New Testament Church. It is interesting and instructive to note the terms used by New Testament writers. Paul speaks of 'Luke the beloved Physician and Demas.' Peter refers to Paul 'as our beloved brother Paul.'

Young's Analytical Concordance gives the literal meaning of 'saint' as 'set apart, separate, holy.' The same word is translated 'holy' a number of times in the New Testament, as in Romans xii. i, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service'; Colossians iii. 12, 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, *holy* and beloved, bowels of mercies,' etc.; Ephesians i. 4, 'That we should be *holy* and without blame before Him in love'; 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath

saved us, and called us with a *holy* calling.' 'Called to be saints' is indeed a high and holy calling. There is need for more outspokenness in the call for holy living. It is far more difficult to retain than to make converts. It would be good for the Churches if missions for members were organised. I would suggest as an addition to our plea, 'A COMPLETE RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLES AND PIETY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AS TAUGHT AND LIVED BY CHRIST, PROCLAIMED BY HIS APOSTLES, AND PRACTISED BY THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.'

The line of demarcation between the Church and the world is very indistinct; and the lives of some Christians seem little different from those of the worldling. The Devil seems about as busy catering for the habits and amusements of the one as the other. Far better to be like the old Puritans than to drift with the spirit of the present age.

G. HASSELL.

The Cleansing Blood.

'THE blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin,' is part of a sentence in John's first Epistle. Sin' is a dark stain upon human life, which nothing else than the precious blood of Christ can remove. What is sin? The Apostle says it is 'lawlessness'—rebellion against God. Its malignant character and damaging effects should make us desire its removal. Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' If such dire consequences follow what we often mistakenly conceive as a trifling wrong against one of His, what terrible punishment must result from sin against Almighty Jehovah, Life is forfeited by one sin, as in Adam's transgression. What, a joy to know there is a remedy for the deadly disease of sin.

'Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.' There is a red line running through the Bible, from Abel's sacrifice until the Lamb of God was offered as a sacrifice once for all. The animal sacrifices (sin offerings) under the Law were most impressive pictorial lessons that sin deserved death, and that a victim had to be offered as the means of escape for the guilty. But the blood of bulls and goats could not make those who offered them perfect. The life of an animal is not value for the life of a man, hence those who were under the Law had a consciousness of sin because of the insufficiency of the sacrifice offered. These, however taught them to look for

**'A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.'**

In contrast with these, 'how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered

himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.' (Heb. ix. 14-15.) The sacrifice of the Son of God is the ground on which forgiveness of sins, past, present, and future, can alone be obtained..

How do the blessings secured through the atoning death of Christ become ours? The former part of the sentence informs us: 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light.' It is a serious error to take part of a sentence and apply it to an unsaved person as sufficient for acceptance with God. A tract came into my hand appealing to the sinner to accept salvation, quoting only this part: 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' This was very misleading. Who are the 'us' thus cleansed from all sin? Those who 'walk in the light.' It is like telling a hungry man there is ample provision in the cupboard without giving him the key that admits to its abundant supply. 'The entrance of thy word giveth light.' To walk in the light is to conform to the things that God requires of us as contained in His Word. We may know the will of God, believe it to be the way that is right, but unless we *walk* in it the pleasure of fellowship cannot be ours, nor the assurance of cleansing from sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christy To have the knowledge of sins forgiven, we must obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered by inspired men. To the Apostles, Jesus said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' (Matt, xxviii. 19-20).

Consider the blessings 'walking in the light' will bring to us personally and mutually. It gives assurance of forgiveness, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and vouchsafes the resources of God's abounding grace. It leads to fulfilment of that for which Christ prayed, that His people might be one, and would certainly be a powerful factor in winning the world for Christ. If all who profess the name Christian were to walk in the light, add nothing to and take nothing from the Word of God, then the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace would become a grand reality.

JAS. WARDROP.

Query.

Verses 9-20 of Mark xvi. are often called in quzstion. Can we be sure they are reliable ?

THE margin of the Revised Version reads: 'The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and som: other authorities, omit from verse 9 to ths end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.'

The manuscripts referred to are the Sinaitic and the Vatican. The Vatican MSS. has a blank space between verse 8 and the beginning of Luke's Gospel. Nowhere else does it leave such a space at the end of a book, and this suggests that the writer knew of verses 9-20, but for some reason did not put them in. The Sinaitic MSS. ends with verse 8, 'for they were afraid,' surely a strange and incomplete ending.

These verses (9-20) are found in the Syriac and Vulgate versions of the Scriptures, and these were made before the oldest of the existing Greek manuscripts.

The evidence of Irenaeus is of great value. He lived about 120-202 A.D. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John. In his writings against heresies, Book iii. chapter xi., he says, 'Also at the conclusion of his Gospel Mark says, And so the Lord Jesus, when he had spoken these things, was received

into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God.' Now, as all the ancient manuscripts which include verse 19 here quoted have also the verses 9-20, we may reasonably infer that they were all in the copy which Irenaeus had before him when he wrote the above.

All the verses are frequently quoted by writers from the second century onwards. There is no valid reason for their rejection. All that is contained in them is in perfect harmony with the testimony of other parts of the 'New Testament. They are an epitome of the accounts of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; the commandments and powers He gave to His apostles; and of His ascension to heaven. The same Divine order given in verses 15-16, is found in Acts viii. 12, 35-40; xvi. 30-34; xviii. 8. The design of baptism stated in verse 16 is seen also in Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; 1 Peter iii. 21. And there are frequent references in the Acts to the 'many wonders and signs done by the Apostles.'

These verses, 9-20 of Mark xvi., are a reliable record of the 'things most surely believed,' taught, and practised, by the first Christians.

EDITOR

Spurgeon and a Degree.

AN American visitor to Spurgeon's College spoke of the admiration they had for the great preacher, and producing a roll of parchment intimated that he had been commissioned by a certain university to confer the Doctor of Divinity degree upon him, begging him to accept the document and the distinction it conferred.

Spurgeon, in reply, said, 'I'm really much obliged to you, sir, and to the good friends you represent, for all the kind things you have said. I wish I deserved them all, but I am sure that I do not.' Then, as if suddenly recollecting the parchment, which lay on the table, and with a genial humour, in a tone which put all rudeness or discourtesy out of the question, (But as for this—well, to tell you the

truth, my dear friend, I wouldn't give you tuppence for a bushel of 'em.'

Reminiscences of C.H.S.

by W. WILLIAMS.

Titles Repudiated.

WHEN in America the late Bro. Sydney Black addressed large audiences in Alleghany City. His biographer says, 'His dislike of everything clerical was shown here. An evening paper had announced his services as by the Rev. Sydney Black, of London, England. In the evening, before commencing his address, Mr. Black took occasion to repudiate the title, saying with characteristic bluntness, "Believing as I do in the universal priesthood of all obedient believers in our Divine Redeemer, I know of no hierarchy of priests and ministers in the Christian Church. Every immersed believer here to-night is a priest. Every immersed believer here to-night is a Christian minister. I never dabble in prefixes nor affixes of any description."

Sydney Black by T. J. AINSWORTH.

The Real Magnet.

'NEVER can the Church of Christ thrive on theories and dreams, music and art, literary entertainments and social clubs. The Cross, the Cross alone, is the inspiration of the Church: the Cross alone is the hope of the world, the magnet which alone can draw men from moral darkness and carnality to purity and light. Set that aside and the Church becomes a nerveless disclaimer of useless inanities, mumbling to itself make-believes, theologic and philanthropic, of its own devising, and depending more for its numerical success on operatic programmes and other performances than on the life-giving power of the Spirit of God.

. . . . Nothing stands out more clearly in all the mountain range of the centuries, than that periods of spiritual declension have always been marked by low views or obscuration of the person and work of Christ.'

R. J. COOKE.

Bible Readings.

OLD TESTAMENT.

Psalm S O M E O N E has described
 xxiv. Psalm xxii. as picturing the
 Saviour making atonement,
 Psalm xxiii. as caring for His sheep,
 and Psalm xxiv. as His kingship. We
 have it dinned into our ears, of late,
 that Israel's idea of God was that of
 a tribal deity. Here the Psalmist has
 no such limited view. The whole
 earth and its contents are the work of
 His hands, and while He is the God
 of Jacob, only those of clean hands
 and pure hearts can appear before
 Him.

Who is the King of Glory? In
 1 Cor. ii. 8, the Apostle argues that
 had the rulers known, 'they would
 not have crucified the Lord of glory.'
 We cannot be wrong then in applying
 the shout of triumphal entry and
 praise to "Him who overcame in the
 battle against principalities and powers
 antagonistic to the well-being of man-
 kind. No other so merits the title:
 'He is the king of glory.'

Isa 61 Though Isaiah was a herald of
 good tidings to Israel, the pro-
 phesy is of too great a scope
 to be confined to Isaiah's work. We
 are not then surprised that Jesus
 (Matt. iv. 17) should have quoted the
 opening passage and applied it to His
 own personal work. He omits the
 last part of verse 2, 'and the day of
 vengeance of our God.' Why? Be-
 cause it would have been untrue to
 add, as He did, 'To-day is this scrip-
 ture fulfilled in your ears.' The day
 of vengeance for Jerusalem was still
 pending. The prophet's reference to
 the everlasting covenant (see Jer.
 xxxi. 31) yet to be made justifies the
 application of the prophet's words to
 the Gospel age.

psa 103 This psalm calls for all
 to bless Jehovah for what He
 does, as also for what He is: full of
 compassion, slow to anger,

plenteous in mercy, which extends
 far above earth for all that fear Him.
 It is enduring as the ages, and is
 reserved for those who remember
 His precepts to do them. There is no
 genuine fear of the Lord with those
 who allow God's commands to
 be despised, neglected, or forgotten.

Ezek 37v 1-14
 significance of the valley dead
 bones shewn to the ' prophet would
 have been lost

'but for the explanatory verses
 Israel, so dead morally and
 religiously that they are depicted as
 dry bones, will yet be brought to life.
 The how and wherefore are suggested
 by Paul in Romans xi. 15. The cast-
 ing off of Israel, has brought blessing
 to the Gentiles, through the Gospel.
 Israel will yet return to David, their
 Lord—Jesus, the Christ—the spiritual
 resurrection foreshadowed by the
 prophet.

Those who promise temporal bless-
 ings, a return to Jerusalem and setting
 up the Temple once more, are merely
 deluding themselves and confirming
 God's ancient people in their rebellion
 against God, and refusal to accept
 His way of salvation.

Psalm xlii This and the
 following psalm

are closely allied by the re-
 frain, 'Why art thou cast
 down, O my soul?' Israelites were
 bidden appear before the Lord three
 times in the year. Only the exper-
 ience of being debarred from atten-
 dance at the feasts could have called
 forth this psalm. How little are such
 opportunities prized or even appreci-
 ated, till one is, like the writer of
 the psalm, deprived of the privilege.

NEW TESTAMENT.

Acts 1 1-14 The. Ascension
 probably occurred on the first
 day of the week, in view of Luke's
 statement that Jesus appeared by the
 space of forty days. being charged

to wait in Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would endue them with power, the Apostles are assembled with other interested persons, among whom was Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brethren. According to Matt. vii. 5 the latter did not believe on Him. Paul mentions a special appearance of the risen Lord to James (1 Cor. xv. 7), and there is no doubt that it was the conviction of the reality of His resurrection, that changed James into one of the stalwarts in the early Church.

Acts 2 1-21

The Feast of Pentecost found the eleven Apostles and Matthias gathered together. The antecedent of 'they' is found in chap. i. 26. The sound of the rushing, mighty wind was heard by "many in Jerusalem, who had come up for the Feast. It drew them to ascertain the cause, and then they heard the Apostles addressing them in various languages. The burst of language perplexed many, who could only suggest that the men who spoke were drunken. Peter's vindication is immediate, and thorough. He claims this as fulfilment of prophecy spoken by one of Israel's earliest seers. Peter was now controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit in the things he spoke, just as the prophets had been, and he justifies the claims of Jesus to be the Christ so convincingly that three thousand are led to surrender to the Saviour.

2 Cor 13 Some in this Church had evidently disparaged the

Apostle as weak in bodily presence and contemptible in his accomplishments. Now he says, while he comes in love, he will not spare those who have sinned, when proof of it is established, as the law required (Deut. xix. 15). Then the power of Christ in him (despite the weakness of body, which' had also been shown by Jesus) would be demonstrated. He calls on them in

view of his coming to examine themselves. Reprobate means 'failing when tested.' His prayer is that they may not fail in living for Jesus Christ even though he (Paul) may not succeed in coming up to their estimation when he again comes among them. The power given them is not for destruction but for construction (chap. x. 8).

Rom This chapter which begins with **viii 1-17** "no condemnation"

proceeds to 'no separation,' but the important point for realization of this is 'in Christ Jesus.' The law of the Spirit frees from all allegiance to the Law, and those so freed must walk after the ordinances of the Spirit. How does the Spirit bear witness with our Spirit that we are children of God'? How frequently this is thought of as the Spirit coming into our hearts, producing joyous feelings, which are considered the witness of the Spirit. This is wholly wrong. The Apostle does not say the Spirit testifies to our spirits. We must testify by our lives that we are sons of God, by our obedience. The Spirit testifies through the Word to the same effect. Only those who are led by the Spirit have the assurance that they are sons of God.

Rom 8 18-39 The perpetual struggle not only of men but of all animals

against pain is evidence that these are not part of the scheme of nature but rather of a bondage from without.

He proceeds (23rd verse) to shew that Apostles are not exempt from the general experience. What follows is applicable to Apostles rather than Christians generally, and this is emphasized in 29-30. 'Whom he foreknew, he fore-ordained, called, justified, glorified. (Note the past tenses.) The Apostles were God's elect, and it was not to all Christians but to Apostles that could be applied the old psalm (xliv.), 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long,' j.s.

Notes on Hebrews

IN chapters vi. and vii. the writer returns to the consideration of the high priesthood of Jesus Christ, and in chapter viii. 4 he declares that He could not on earth have exercised the office of a priest at all, as there were at the time priests who officiated according to the law. This disposes of the argument of some who say that Jesus was baptized in order to His appointment as a priest. Yet the writer says He did not and could not be a priest on earth.

He then refers to the wonderful declaration by which Jeremiah had been empowered to foreshew the coming of the new covenant. Differing from the old covenant made with Abraham and ratified with the children of Israel when redeemed from Egypt, the necessity of the new lay in the disregard of Israel for God's commands. The law of the old covenant was written on stone; the new on hearts of flesh. Under the old, children of Abraham were within the covenant so soon as they were born (Gen. xvii. 12), and consequently without any knowledge of God. In the new, all must know the Lord, and can have no place in the covenant until they can know the Lord; for the reason that right to the benefit of the new covenant is not by the occasion of a natural birth, but of a spiritual birth, from above—of water and of the Spirit. John the Baptist indicates this in his warning, 'Think not to say we have Abraham to our father.' This basis was about to be abolished, to make way for the new basis enunciated by the Saviour to Nicodemus. This for ever rules out infant membership in the new covenant. From the least to the greatest all must know (acknowledge) God. 'They shall not teach every man his neighbour and his brother saying "know (acknowledge) God," for this acknowledgment is a prime necessity for all who would share in the blessings of the new.'

Note that the writer speaks of the first covenant in his day as becoming old and ready to vanish away. With the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the old covenant ended. He had prophetically announced on the night of His betrayal the coming of the new covenant, in saying, 'This is the new covenant, in my blood.' Sealed and ratified by the shed blood of Jesus, the old

covenant was for ever done away; and the covenant of grace inaugurated.

The old covenant was filled with types and prophetic figures, with some of which the writer now proceeds to deal. We shall consider these in our next.

These notes are for those taking the Correspondence Classes. A few sets of the questions may still be had by sending id. stamp to cover postage to J. Scouller, '79 Tweedsmuir Road, Glasgow, S.W.2.

Nyasaland.

WITH profound regret we record the loss sustained by our Bro. Frederick, whose wife entered into rest on April 7th. We received a letter from Bro. Frederick, dated March 26th, telling of the loss of a new-born babe, and the illness of his wife. Later, Bro. Ronald wrote stating that Sister Frederick passed away, and was buried on April 9th. She united with the Church of Christ in 1908, and has been most loyal and faithful. During the troublous war period, she, with others, continued in prayer and supplication, and never failed to visit the prisoners in their chains. We commend our beloved brother and his four children to Him who wept with the loved ones at Bethany.

The last report from Bro. Frederick told of three baptisms by Bro. Tabbu Chisiano* at Lingozi, Mkhoma. The Church there numbers sixty.

Ten pounds has been sent to Frederick for building material. I warmly appreciate the gracious fellowship of the brethren, and would appeal for even more and larger subscriptions, as the work is extending on every hand.

W. M. KEMPSTER.

[We are sure all our readers will sympathise with and pray for Bro. Frederick and his family in their time of sorrow.

ED. S\ S.]

Mental Sin.

SIN. may be mental as well as physical. There are mental as well as physical strongholds that must be cast down. There are plans, schemes, philosophies, reasonings, that oppose Christ, and rob the soul of its peace, power, and tranquillity.—*Sel.*

News.

Blackpool.—A joyous and inspiring day was spent in fellowship at Blackpool, on May 5th. The Church was happy to welcome home our beloved Sister Adams, after being in South Africa for nine years. Our hearts were deeply stirred as we gathered round the Table of our Lord. We appreciated very much indeed also the presence of Bro. and Sister G. Hudson, of Birmingham, and Bro. and Sister W. Steele, pioneers of the new cause at Pennyvenie, Dalmellington, Scotland. Bro. Steele spoke to great effect both morning and evening.

In the afternoon, a welcome was extended to Sister Adams, Bro. L. Ives presided over a splendid attendance. His opening remarks were very well chosen, and appropriate. Sister Ives extended a welcome on behalf of the Women's Meeting, and handed to our Sister, on behalf of the Sisters, a handbag quire worthy of the occasion. Bro. H. Winter next spoke in his own inimitable way, and then Bro. Ives presented a beautifully bound and printed Hymn Book. The time spent over the tea tables afterwards was very enjoyable, and highly appreciated by all present. It was a real nomely gathering, and Sister Adams felt she had scarcely left us.

Sister Adams was one of the original band who formed the Church in Blackpool in 1899, and has been a loyal supporter of our work through the whole fourteen years she has been away.

During the war, she was a succourer of many who were in camp at Squires Gate. Brethren were always welcome at her home, and the table was spread there during that period. We wish for her a very pleasant holiday in the homeland. A.L.F.

Morecambe.—Brethren visiting Morecambe during the forthcoming holiday season will be heartily welcomed at the Breaking of Bread service each Lord's Day evening (D.V.), at 6.45, in the home of Bro. and Sister Charles Bailey, "Wild' Rose Cottage," 6 Warley Drive, immediately off Westgate. The bus on circular route from Euston Road Station, via Torrisholme to Bare stops, quite near (penny stage) at White Lund Corner (Six Cross Roads).

Whitehaven.—As the result of Bro. T. E. Entwistle's labours during the month of February, followed by the visits of five brethren from the Furness District in

March, the Church had the great pleasure of witnessing, on April 20th, the immersion of two young people, E. R. Atkinson and Bernice Graham. v.H.H.

Obituary.

Birmingham, Summer Lane.—Our Brother Francis William Skidmore fell asleep in Jesus on Monday, 15th April, being forty-nine years of age. He had been ailing for some considerable time, but had continued at his work up till six weeks ago. It was in 1909 that he became a Christian and joined the Church at Summer Lane, and from that time onward he consistently devoted himself to the service of the Lord, taking his share in that work, and latterly presiding at the Lord's Table. He had been secretary of the Lord's Day School for six years, and an Overseer in the Church for eight years, both of which positions he occupied right up till the end. He was of a cheery disposition always—we shall miss his smiling face. We can testify that we are the better for having known and worked with Frank Skidmore. To the Father of all mercies and consolation we commend our Sister Mrs. F. W. Skidmore, who for some years has been and still is leader of the Young Women's Bible Class. FRED C. DAY.

Burnley.—We mourn the loss, by death, of Sister A. Slater, aged sixty-two years. Sister Slater was one of our oldest members, and for forty years, except when illness prevented, has been a regular attender at the Lord's Table. She was present on April 28th, and passed away on May 3rd. The Church has been blessed by her association with us. As a true 'mother in Israel' she wisely guided her family, and her two sons are preachers of the Gospel, one son being a deacon of the Church. Her husband is our senior deacon. All these testify to the debt they owe for the spiritual help received from the wife and mother who has passed on. A daughter also is left to mourn her loss.

But none sorrow as those without hope; we look forward with confidence to the glad day of reunion, when all the faithful shall hear the Saviour say, 'Well done!'

Bro. T. E. Entwistle conducted the service on May 7th.

Sister Slater was aunt to Sister Mary Bannister, missionary in Africa. T.H.H.