

# The Scripture Standard

at Saith the Scripture. (Rom. iv. 3.)

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## Where are the Dead?

QUESTIONS relating to the intermediate state of those who have passed away are interesting rather than vital. If life and conduct are right, we can leave the future with Him 'who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'

A preacher advertised the above query as the subject of an address. It attracted many who desire to know more than "God has revealed. Imagine their surprise when the preacher said: 'Where are the dead? I'll tell you. Ninety per cent, of them are in the Churches.' Those who really know the present condition of many Churches will agree with that preacher's diagnosis. And it is no new thing for the Lord's people to be in that state.

The Israelites in Babylon are represented as dead, dry bones, and their revival and restoration to their own land as a resurrection, a coming out of their graves. (Ezek. xxxvii. 12). How often God sought, through His prophets to rouse them: 'Awake, awake: put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.'

'The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem . . . the church of the Firstborn,' has ever needed similar appeals. Of His own Church at Sardis, the Lord said, 'Thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.' That Church, like many to-day, might boast of a large membership, perfect organisation, eloquent scholarly preaching, and artistic worship; but

He who seeth not as man seeth declared them to be dead.

Mr. Campbell Morgan recently said: 'What about your Church? Oh, you reply, we are having a good time; we enjoy our fellowship? Is that all? Then write *Ichabod* over its door, and beneath it, in plain English, write: Business is suspended here. How is the Church to fulfil its purpose? By better organisation? God forbid! The Church is cursed with organisation from end to end.'

The Methodist Church, reporting a decrease of 10,000 during the past year, sent out a circular which states: 'We are challenged by the dearth of conversions . . . the large number of those who seem to make no progress in a life which is supposed to be supernaturally reinforced.' In discussion of the situation at their Conference, Mr. Isaac Foot said, 'It is the non-functioning member who is our trouble. Methodism would regain its strength when every member of the society learned to fulfil his own duty.' Dr. Russell Maltby, said: 'There had got to be a renewal of free, frank, and unofficial witness. If the witness of Methodists had shrunk to the official witness of an official ministry, they could not expect it to fulfil God's purpose.'

Surely these are lessons and warnings for others than Methodists, especially for those who think a whole time trained 'minister' in each Church is the solution of our present-day Church problems.

Every member needs to hear and heed Paul's appeal, addressed to

Christians: 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' The fact that of all the ten virgins, wise and foolish, in the Master's parable, it is said, 'they all slumbered and slept,' has given much trouble to expositors, but probably the one was right who said, 'The watchfulness of the holiest Christian compared with what it should be is a sort of slumber.' 'Brethren,' said another, 'We are none of us more than half awake.'

We know to what extent these statements apply to us, and we may each ask ourselves, 'Am I among the dead?' Think of the poverty of our gifts and service, of how selfish material interests and pursuits are put before the claims of the Lord, of how cold are even our warmest thoughts concerning Him, of the many times we have forsaken the assembly of His people when we could have been present. 'To be carnally minded is death.' To put things of the flesh before the things of the Spirit is a sure indication that we are among the dead. 'They who live in pleasure/ said Paul, 'are dead while they live.' There is a coldness and deadness about much so-called Christian work that is appalling. If some professed Christians did their daily work or ran their businesses as they do Church work, the ranks of the unemployed would be swelled, and bankruptcy courts would be very busy.

Spiritual life and power come from the Lord alone, and can only be maintained and strengthened by the means He has provided. You cannot get spiritual life and fruit from a non-spiritual root. There is too much dependence on human power, and too little seeking for the power from on high. To His Apostles Jesus said, 'Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses.' That power made those fishermen and tax-gatherers, who had not passed through the schools, powerful witnesses, and marvellous soul-winners. While we cannot claim the power in the full

and miraculous measure given to them; yet our bodies are 'temples of the Holy Spirit,' and we can be filled with the Spirit, if we will. The 'body without the spirit is dead,' and without the Holy Spirit the Church, its members, and all its activities, will be cold, lifeless, dead, and will come to nought. Oh, that every believer may 'awake, arise from the dead,' and be 'strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man.'

EDITOR.

EDITOR'S ADDRESSES:

DURING NOVEMBER:

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DURING DECEMBER:

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### *From the Treasurer.*

To our Agents, and Readers.

YOUR subscriptions, gifts, and orders for 1938 (D.V.) as soon as ever possible will be appreciated. Please **DO NOT** leave everything until the month of December if you can possibly avoid it. Also, will all kindly note that during 1938 we shall print more strictly for orders only, and we shall appreciate your co-operation in this matter so as to avoid waste..

Thank you,

A. L. FRITH.

**South Wales Conference.**—On Saturday, November 27th, in the meeting-house at Commerce Place, Aberaman, Aberdare. All brethren are heartily invited and urged to attend. Afternoon, 3. Tea, 5. Evening, 6.30. Speaker, Bro. J. A. Hudson (U.S.A.)

The Church Anniversary will be held in connection with the Conference. Bro. Hudson being the speaker for the Lord's Day also.

Visitors from a distance will be warmly welcomed.

## *Freedom from Sin.*

### ROMANS VI.

IN order to understand clearly the teaching of the Holy Spirit we should know the meaning of the terms used, Freedom is a state of being made free; delivery from the thrall or power of a person or thing. It means liberty, deliverance, as it is set forth very clearly in the sacred text. The Apostle John writes, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth against the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.' If ever there was a definition of sin given in the world we have it here. Sin is transgression of the law. Of course the law of God is meant, and that law may be transgressed by thoughts, feelings, actions, or words. In the New Testament we are taught there are wicked thoughts and feelings; that these lead to wicked words and actions. The Apostle James said, 'To him that knoweth to do right and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' If we know a thing is good and right and we neglect to do it, we are committing sin. We know that all that God commands is right, that what the Lord bids us do is good. If we neglect to do what God bids us, we are committing sin—we are sinners. The Apostle John, by the Divine Spirit, tells us that 'all unrighteousness is sin.' Righteousness means doing right. Everything wrong is sin. In the light of these passages we have all sinned and are guilty before God.

We do not realize how exceedingly sinful sin is. We have no true conception of the enormity of sin. We are blinded by the pleasures of sin—blind to its consequences. While I have no intention of speaking of the punishment of sin, that is the only correct way of viewing it—in the penalty enacted against it. We have a loving Father willing to forgive, but He threatens as the penalty of sin, everlasting destruction from the glory of His presence, and we are thereby

led to see that it is an exceedingly sinful thing. Sin is a terrible thing, and men are not done with sin when they have committed it—even though they may have covered it up so that there best and dearest friends know nothing about it. Unless we are forgiven for that sin, we shall answer to God for it. Men sometimes commit crimes and sin against human law and government, and yet escape punishment, but there is no escape from the punishment of a just God for our sins. We cannot run away from God.

In part, the penalty for sin is in ourselves, for a feeling of remorse, of shame, of conscience comes to us when we feel we have done wrong. We cannot get away from our own conscience, and so our sins come up before us by day and night. It is a serious thought that we must answer to God for it. How true is the inspired word, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' From the beginning the sons and daughters of Adam have been suffering pain, sickness, sorrow and death. Go were you will, in every land you will see graveyards fast filling up. Death is in the world. The Bible tells me these things are the result of sin. Death is the punishment a just God is exacting in this life.

But death is not the whole punishment. The full punishment will be meted out on the great coming day, and it is certain as death unless we are forgiven; and the one thing you need is forgiveness of sins. That is what the world needs. There may be much fine preaching in the world but the pith of all Bible teaching is that we need deliverance from sin.

We know that the Church of God at Rome was composed of Jews and Gentiles. The great Apostle Paul undertook to show the Jews that they were emancipated from the law

of the old covenant—that 'Christ is the end of the law to all that believe'—and that both Jew and Gentile are now under the Gospel of Christ. Paul said, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.' The Gospel is the only power to make us free from sin. If we are not saved by the Gospel we have no promise of being saved at all. It is God's only means. But the Gospel has no power over those who will not receive it. It has only power to save those who hear, heartily receive and obey the word. Paul says to the Romans that they had reached freedom from sin and he tells how they had reached it. The Christians of Rome were made free from sin by becoming servants of Jesus Christ and that they had become servants by obeying. This service was a voluntary service on their part. The Apostle teaches that we become servants to that which we yield ourselves to obey. 'To whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.' We choose our own masters. We are serving our own choice, and the Apostle laid down the principle that we are perfectly free in this matter to yield to the pleasures of sin and die, or to yield to God and live—that while God invites us to render honour to Himself and obedience to His Son, God compels no one. Everyone is free to serve sin and Satan, or the Saviour. The former ends in ruin and death, for it is written, 'The end of those things is death.' On the other hand, 'But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.'

What a wonderful teaching this is, that we become free from sin by becoming bond slaves to a new Master the Lord Jesus Christ—who says, 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.' He is a lovely Master to serve, and a blessed Leader to follow. We must become His servants before we can

be free from sin. Then the Apostle sets forth that obedience must be from the heart. It is quite possible to render the true correct form of obedience, to be in the right form, and yet never to render true obedience to God. There is only one right way to obey, but we can disobey the Lord by refusing to do right; by doing something forbidden; by going beyond what is commanded, or by leaving it undone. There is only one way to obey; it is to do precisely what we are told to do, in the way we are told to do it—and it must come from the heart.

God looks at the motives that prompt the act, and justifies or condemns according to the motive. 'God be thanked that ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' Obeyed from the heart! There is a danger that we comply with the Lord's will to please somebody else than the Lord. I have known cases where men have joined the Church to please their wives, and wives who have taken this most solemn step in the world to please their husbands. I fear sometimes young people come just because other young people have done so. Young people, if you have no higher motive than that, stay where you are. Sometimes a professional man will do it for patronage—for business. It seems to me that kind of thing must be as a stench in the nostrils of our Father in heaven.

Obedience must come from the heart. A man cannot render obedience from the heart until belief from the heart makes him render it. Why I would never think of obeying the Lord Jesus Christ until I believed in my mind and heart that He is the Christ and has the right to command me. Belief in this only fits us in mind and heart render obedience to God. You say, that is so clear that you accept it. Are you sure? When you do so you surrender the most popular doctrine preached in the world—the doctrine of justification by faith only. The Apostle

writing to the Romans, said, 'God be thanked, ye obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine.' Faith prepares us for obedience that yields remission of sins—freedom from sin. Belief with the heart does not reach freedom from sin until we obey with the heart. 'God be thanked, ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' This is in harmony with everything in the Gospel of God's grace. If a man loves sin in his heart, he will just hold to it.

It is true philosophy, that what we have in our heart we hold to, and we take pleasure in yielding to that which is in the heart. If we yield to sin, we take pleasure in it. The Apostle John said, 'If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.' We cannot serve two masters, even if they are good masters. We might respect them, but we could never serve them. More so is this the case when the two masters are so vehemently opposed to each other as the Prince of Life and the Prince of this world. It is impossible. Jesus asks us to become His servants, and we cannot obey from the heart until there is a changed heart. That is why Christ must be enthroned in the heart by faith. 'God purified their hearts by faith.' When we believe with all our hearts the simple facts about Jesus we love Him, and when the heart is purified and changed we delight to do that which will please Him whom we love. The Apostle Paul, in the city of Damascus, was just in that condition. Ananias was sent by the Holy Spirit to inter-view him, and his words to Paul were, 'And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.' Here in this letter he is writing to the Roman Christians, he says, 'God be thanked that ye obeyed that form of doctrine.'

Now what is the doctrine of Christ to which Paul refers? Simply the Gospel of Christ. Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians, 'I declare unto you the gospel which I preached

unto you, wherein ye stand and by which ye are saved . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day.' Did Paul always preach that? Paul said in writing to the Galatians, 'If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.' What the Apostle preached he preached everywhere, viz., the great facts of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is there about the death of Jesus that a man can obey? Nothing. Facts are given for faith, not obedience. We believe facts. Is there anything about His burial we can obey? No! We believe that He was buried and on the third day He broke the sceptre of the tomb. These are things we believe.

The Gospel is a system of facts to be believed; promises to be enjoyed; commands to be obeyed. What commands have we in the Gospel which could be looked upon as the Gospel in a mould? This most striking figure could only have come from the mind of God. It sets forth the birth death and resurrection. 'God be thanked that ye obeyed from the heart that form or mould of doctrine.' What is that doctrine? Christ died for our sins.

I read in the second verse of this chapter, 'You became dead to sin.' Dead unto sin. That is part of the doctrine, so by faith we die to the old life of wrong things and become alive to a new life of the right things. The second fact is burial. 'Therefore being buried with Christ by baptism into his death.' Every time you witness a baptism, the Gospel is preached that Jesus died. But the Apostle proceeds, 'that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' In this incident, we see the form of doctrine to be obeyed, which when obeyed from the heart brings freedom from sin,

I often think it is a terrible thing to be lost in this world. Some time ago, in a village in New York State, three children wandered away from home, out on to the hillside. A snowstorm came on and they were unable to find their way back. As darkness came on a search was made for them, and it was only a few minutes till a hundred men were out "looking for them. They were out all night, and in the grey of the morning they all came back. One man suddenly thought of a place that had been overlooked, and on going there he discovered the children lying dead. The brave little lad—the oldest of the three—had died first. He had taken off his coat and wrapped it round his little baby sister, while he had put his vest round his elder sister. Soon a big crowd had gathered round the spot, and the man who told me the incident said it was the most awful scene he had ever witnessed. Big, strong men cried like children.

The Great Shepherd came that He might wrap your soul and mine for their eternal safety. If we are not wrapped 'in Him,' we are lost. If Jesus had come merely to free us from our sicknesses and diseases, it would have been worthy of Him: but He came to do more: to save us from everlasting death. We think about those down in the slums as lost, and we are apt to consider that reasonable: but it is a hard thing to think of those moving in respectable society as lost. If we are to die out of Christ we are lost. It is not a question of respectability. 'There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' Everyone who is out of Him is lost.

W. D. CAMPBELL.

## Marriages.

**Belfast, Berlin Street.**—On September 1st, Bro. S. Hunter was joined in matrimony to Sister P. Innes. On October 16th, Bro. J. Farr was united to Sister Ellen Beattie. Both services were conducted by Bro. W. Hendren.

## Bible Readings.

### OLD TESTAMENT.

THE glory of God is revealed Psalm six, in the heavens. The movement of the planets is an absorbing and endless study, and a matter of never ceasing wonder. The immensity of the space through which they travel, and their infinite revolutions, shew beyond all question the working of an intelligence which can only appropriately be applied to God. The perfection of these works in the heavens is the warrant for the declaration that God's law is no less perfect. One of the most presumptuous of present-day sins is the result of the idea that fallible men can alter and improve that which God has laid down in His Word for our guidance, instruction and warning. The wisdom of God is there enshrined, and it is folly beyond words to tamper with that which He has ordained.

Psalm 39. This is a lament for the futility of mens actions even though they be godly men. Unless

men do realize how frail they are, there is constant danger of falling into error by way of commission or omission. The best illustration of verse three in this connection is Jeremiah (xx. 9), who when he said he would forbear speaking the Word of the Lord, it became a raging fire within him. We may well pray, as the psalmist did, to know the measure of our days. It is well if we recognize that our hope is not in men—much less in rich men—whose schemes go often astray, but in God.

The twelfth verse is reminiscent of David's prayer as contained in 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

It is evident from this prophecy Isaiah xi. that the family of Jesse would not, at the time of its fulfilment, be in a very flourishing condition—for the descendants are described here as a 'branch out of his roots.' No fulfilment occurred in the royal successors of David, for little less than a century later the last royal descendant of Jesse had his eyes gouged out, and he was led blind into captivity. It was from a poor scion of the family of Jesse there came Jesus, upon whom alone there rested in rich abundance the Spirit of God and it is He who shall

bring to pass a righteous judgment. Earthly judgments are based on hearing and sight, but the Saviour, knowing what is in man, can pass just judgment. He shall also bring blessing and recovery to the Jewish people, for we have the assurance that they shall be gathered in again if they continue not in unbelief.

The second part of Isaiah's prophecies begins with this chapter, and it is a message of peace. It is a tragedy that Israel should not have known the things that belonged to her peace. Had the people given attention to that voice that cried, 'prepare ye the way of the Lord,' how different the course of history might have been for them. The folly of those who seek to overturn, or minimise the importance of the Word of God is apparent, in view of the assurance that it will abide for ever.

The figure, in verse twelve, of measuring the waters and weighing mountains may, at first sight, seem merely a picturesque phrase, but the fact remains that the proportions of earth and water as they exist in the world are necessary for the sustenance of life.

To resort to idolatry in the knowledge of the power and wisdom of God is surely the supreme folly; yet that people who had the surest evidence of these were most prone to worship wooden or golden images, although these were specifically forbidden in the law to do so.

The last verse seems, at first sight, to be somewhat of an anti-climax. But more endurance is needed for the daily walk than for the ascent of the heights; and that is the portion of those who wait on the Lord for strength to overcome.

## NEW TESTAMENT.

To fawn on the rich and despise the poor is all too common in this time, as it was in Christianity's early days. There is moreover little reason in this discrimination. The rich were the principal oppressors of followers of Jesus, and at their instigation many Christians were dragged before courts, which condemned them, for crimes of which they were innocent.

The statement of the relation of faith and works is very important, and many have rejected this teaching as it seemed to

conflict with Paul's teaching in Romans iv. James is dealing with works in general; while Paul refers to works of the law (sacrifices, feasts, circumcision, etc.) He is very far from saying that good works as a result of faith are unnecessary, for in 1 Thess. i. 3, he speaks of their 'work of faith.' The Saviour (John vi. 29) calls faith a WORK.

The opening sentence seems **James 3.** somewhat anomalous, as one would have expected that the more numerous teachers were, the better it would be for the general body of Christians. The succeeding verse shews that it is the stumbling teacher he has in mind. The teaching of the Master seems a fitting parallel (see Matt, xxiii. 8-12). Few teachers in that time, and still fewer Christians, had a copy of the O.T. Scriptures. They had to depend on what they could remember of readings in the Synagogue and also oral teachings of Apostles and others. Any misapprehension of such teaching would involve the spread of erroneous doctrine, likely to cause stumbling. The exhortation as to guarding the tongue is still most necessary. The words that create jealousy and strife are not born of heavenly wisdom, but arise from hearts that are in the bondage of earthly things.

The main feature of this letter **Hebrews 1.** is that of comparison and contrast. This is seen in the opening verse where is emphasized the contrast between the revelation given through prophets at various times and different ways, with that given once for all by Jesus Christ—God's Son—the greatness of whom he pictures in graphic words; and backs these high eulogies with quotations from the psalms. He is greater than all the messengers of God, whether human or divine. None of them were ever designated by the dignified titles borne by the Son. Indeed all messengers, earthly and heavenly, are bidden to worship Him. Is it any wonder that the writer proceeds to say, 'We ought to give the more earnest heed' to His message.

**Luke 1**  
**5-25** According to I Chron. xxiv.

10 and 26, Abijah was a priest in David's time, to whom it fell by lot to take the eighth course in the

service of the Temple, his duties being particularly with the treasures. In Zechariah's time the treasures were sadly depleted, but this did not lead him to neglect his duty. As he officiated at the altar of incense, an angel spoke with him, promising that he should have a child, who should be great in the sight of the Lord. John, the Baptist, was, according to the

estimate of the Saviour, the greatest of Old Testament saints and prophets. He was not literally Elijah, but the spiritual fulfilment of that ancient stalwart. He came to do for his generation what Elijah did in Ahab's time—to turn the people back to God, that they might be a prepared people for Him. j.s.

## *Leeds Conference.*

THIS was held on Saturday, September 18th, in Friends' Meeting House. Bro. R. McDonald presided over a large gathering. After hymn, and prayers led by Bren. J. Wardrop and J. A. Hudson (U.S.A.), Bro. Sugden (Mprley) read Ephesians i. Bro. H. Wiison (Morley) was appointed Minute Secretary. The Chairman welcomed Bro. Hudson (U.S.A.) who had spent eighteen months visiting New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania, and is now spending a few months in Britain. Bro. Wardrop conveyed greetings from Slamannan Churches, and in well-chosen words pleaded for closer co-operation of those contending for the old faith.

Bro. J. Hamilton (Berlin Street, Belfast) spoke of difficulties and opposition overcome in that city, and of the splendid send-off they had in their new meeting house. He thanked the brethren who had helped them, and paid tribute to Bro. Crosthwaite's untiring labours among them.

Bro. C. Bailey gave report of his work at Charles Henry Street, Birmingham, and Commerce Place, Aberdare, also of flying visits to Bristol, East Kirkby, and Doncaster.

Bro. Bryden spoke of the good work done by Bro. Bailey in Birmingham, and the Church at Aberdare sent a report and appreciation of services rendered there.

A letter was read from Cefn Hengoed telling of efforts of a small loyal band, who, amidst difficulties and opposition, were remaining true to New Testament practice,

Bro. W. M. Kempster gave a report of the work in Nyasaland.

The next conference will (D.V.) be held at Summer Lane, Birmingham.

A large and enthusiastic meeting in the evening was presided over by Bro. W. Steele (Dalmellington), who spoke of Paul's exhortation to 'Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong, let all that ye do be done in love.' It was an appeal to preach and practise the things revealed in the Word of God.

Bro. W. Hoyle (Liversedge) based his address on Paul's message to Titus, 'Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.' He emphasised the facts that there were false doctrines then as now; that we must be careful to speak only the things which become sound doctrine; and earnestly appealed to all not only to do this but what is equally necessary to expose and denounce all false doctrine. Silence aids apostacy.

Bro. J. A. Hudson (U.S.A.) in a racy manner spoke of the Church as the Divine Missionary Society, the Gospel the message, the evangelisation of the world the programme; and the Word of God the only standard. He spoke of departures in America, and shattered the modern fallacy that the New Testament Church can be improved. In a very logical manner he demonstrated that compromisers and innovators are the cause of divisions. It was refreshing and encouraging to hear such a capable and enthusiastic pleader for the old paths,



Bro. Crosthwaite took up and drove home points made by previous speakers. In a very short time he showed that but a few years ago the Churches of Christ in this country stood foursquare for the Bible only. Quoting from official publications he showed that we of the old path movement still stand where pioneers and leaders stood, and hence are not responsible for present division, difficulties, and stagnation. Present conditions are a call to definite and determined action.

It was a grand meeting indeed. We were cheered at seeing a good number not seen at these meetings before; and much enthusiasm was manifest throughout.

Bro. W. Steele served the Church at Dewsbury on the Lord's Day, and we hear of a great day there.

Bro. G. Hudson (Birmingham) was at Morley, and doubtless, memories of boyhood's days would be stirred. Bro. J. Wardrop (Slamannan) rendered highly appreciated service to the Church at Liversedge.

Bro. J. A. Hudson travelled by 3 a.m. train to fulfil an appointment with the Church at Brighton. He has an extraordinary capacity for work.

Bro. Crosthwaite travelled to Blackburn (Lanes.) to spend a fortnight with the Church there. We have reports of splendid meetings.

Much has been discussed and planned, hard work, earnest prayers, and generous support are urgently needed. Please reserve Easter Saturday for next Conference at Birmingham. R.M.D.

## *Private Interpretation.*

To the Editor of the *Scripture Standard*.  
Dear Bro. Crosthwaite,

Will you allow me to make a few observations on your article in the October number of the *Scripture Standard*?

You quote with evident approval the words of the late Bro. L. Oliver: 'We all claim the right of private judgment, . . . and refuse to accept any interpretation of the Word of God, such as that of a pope, a council, a synod, or conference, as binding.'

I was surprised when I read your article. I had always thought that the issue you were striving to keep before your readers was not the one between private interpretation and 'Catholic' interpretation, but the one between all human interpretations on the one side, and on the other, a Scripture standard on which no sort of interpretation is admissible. Standards are not normally interpreted, they are applied; for a standard that admits of a variety of private interpretations is no standard at all.

This principle of private interpretation, *within certain limits*, is surely very dear to the heart of every lover of religious liberty; and as you probably know, was one of the questions on which George Fox, the great Quaker, fell foul of the religious authorities of his day.

But the religious history of George Fox is a proof that in practice the question is not as simple as on paper it appears to be. His private judgment led him to discount baptism and the Lord's Supper as of little spiritual value, and also to assess a value to the 'inner light' almost equal to that of the Scripture. That is private interpretation in practice.

Again, I have found to my cost that the private judgment of the individual has often run amok, and with devastating effect, just where that private judgment should have been subordinated to the combined vision of our duly appointed rulers. On the other hand, we all know brethren who try to bind their own interpretations on others in that sphere where every man has a right to his own judgment. The truth is that many of us accept the principle of private interpretation only if it happens to be our own; and when an honest difference manifests itself we deny to others the right which we claim for ourselves.

Where differences of opinion are ruled out by precision of language, the phrase 'private interpretation' does not apply, for 'private interpretation' implies that differences are admissible and inevitable. There is here a large field in which are two distinct

areas. There is an area in which differences of interpretation are as personal and private as any matter in the Christian's life can be; and there is an area in which differences of interpretation and practice are essentially the concern of the whole body. Is private interpretation to be held and acted upon equally in both areas? If not, who is to draw the boundary line between them?

'In things essential, unity.' But there can be no real organic unity unless we are willing, in these matters that concern the whole body, to submit our private judgment to the combined and considered judgment of those whom we have set to be our leaders.

'In things doubtful, liberty.' But who is to decide what things are doubtful and non-essential? Is this also a matter for private interpretation? And if the private judgment of one man as to where private interpretation should begin to exercise itself does not coincide with that of his brother, what is to happen? You cannot here apply the written standard, because you have conceded to both sides the right of private interpretation, and they may have different interpretations. If not, then 'private interpretation' is an empty phrase.

Thus reason and experience both show that, at its worst, private interpretation leads in opposite directions to spiritual anarchy and religious despotism; and at its best, to a diffuse spirituality devoid of any strong doctrinal framework. **E.W.JEPSON.**

*Reply:*

IF Bro. Jepson had read our articles carefully he would see that the issue we have kept before our readers is between the Scriptures as 'the all-sufficient standard and rule of faith and practice,' and human additions thereto. In the article he criticises, it is made clear that we stand for the Scriptures and refuse to accept as binding 'human authoritative creeds,' etc. Nothing we have ever said or written has deviated from that. We continually insist on searching the Scriptures, and testing all things thereby. This is vastly different to the idea of private interpretation Bro. Jepson would father upon us. It is not a question of one man's mind or another's; but of *man's mind or God's mind* as revealed in the Word.

Bro. Jepson evidently thinks that private judgment should be 'subordinated to the combined wisdom of our duly appointed rulers.' That would leave us without any reliable standard, for so-called leaders and rulers say to-day the reverse of what

they once said. What about their views of war during 1914-1918, and what they are saying now? And the same men who pleaded for the Scriptures as the only standard, and the New Testament Church as the Divine model, now tell us the standard is defective, and deny that there is any model for the Church. Combined wisdom! 'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' (1 Cor. iii. 19.) Of course, if Bro. Jepson's contention is right, the Apostles and Martyrs should have subordinated their preaching and teaching to the wisdom of the ruling powers. Martin Luther should have subordinated his judgment and knowledge of the Word to the 'combined wisdom' of the Pope and his councils. Thomas and Alexander Campbell should have submitted to the wisdom of the rulers of the Seceder Presbyterian Church.

Follow to its logical issue Bro. Jepson's contention and there is an end to the position and plea of Churches of Christ for a return to New Testament Christianity, and we shall one day find ourselves under an ecclesiastical despotism like that at Rome. That seems to be where some desire to bring us. **EDITOR.**

## News.

**Africa, 70 Loop Street, Cape Town.**—In report in S.S. (September) 'Clarence Street' should have been 'Claremont Cape.'

Two months ago we had with us Bro. A. Ruse and family from the mission at Livingstone, Rhodesia; also Sister A. P. Scott, of Namwianga Home, Kalomba. We had an enjoyable time praising the Lord and hearing addresses by Bro. Ruse, telling of his conversion, and how in 1929 he forsook all, left America, and came to South Africa. During his eight years labours, he has founded the Sinde Mission. He exhorted us to depend upon God and His never failing promises. Though he was returning to America, he hoped to come back to Africa to continue his labours. He begged us not to lean too much on those who, to the eyes of men, seem able brethren, but to look to and at all times lean upon the Lord.

**T. HARTLE.**

**Birmingham, Charles Henry Street.**—Anniversary meetings were held on September 25th and 26th. On the Saturday, after tea, prepared by the sisters, a social meeting

was held. A party from Summer Lane Church, led by Bro. F. Day, favoured us with two anthems. Our special preacher was Bro. H. Williams, of Griffithstown, South Wales, who gave us stirring messages, urging all to remain firm to the New Testament standard. s. HODGSON.

**Blackburn, Hamilton Street.**—The Church here has just concluded a two weeks' mission with Bro. Crosthwaite (Evangelist). We have had a great time of rejoicing and harvesting of precious souls for the Master. Two young maidens and one young man from the Lord's Day school have obeyed the Lord and gone through the waters of baptism. Two more young maidens are to be immersed on October 16th, and several more, young and old, are on the threshold of decision. Rejoice with us, brethren, and pray that they may be faithful witnesses and labourers for God. We closed our mission with a sincere note of regret that, because of other arrangements, we could not detain our brother. We are all looking forward to an early return visit. We heartily thank God for the season of refreshing through our brother, and heartily commend him as an able proclaimer and defender of the truth as it is in Jesus. H. WILSON.

**Belfast, Berlin Street.**—On August 8th, Bro. Breakell, of Wigan, visited us, and spoke at both morning and evening meetings. We much enjoyed his visit, and his addresses were very interesting.

During the month of September, we had Bro. and Sis. J. Scouller, of Glasgow, with us. The meetings were well attended, and all were pleased to hear the truth so ably expounded. The last week of the month we held an intensive mission and secured very good meetings. We are confident that, in due course, increase will follow our brother's great efforts. We were indeed sorry to have to part with Bro. and Sis. Scouller.

On October 3rd, we witnessed the confession and baptism of a young woman, and we rejoice that another soul has been added to the Lord and His Church. The Lord has indeed been with and blessed us.

C. HENDREN.

**Dewsbury, Yorks.** Sunday, September 19th, 1937, will be a day long remembered by the members of the Church of Christ, Dewsbury. We were favoured with the visit of William Steele, of Dalmellington, a young, but very able exponent of the Word of Truth. He addressed the Church in the

morning on the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Ecclesiastes. In the evening, he addressed a crowd of people in the Market Place, and later, in the meeting room, before a large congregation, spoke on the demand of Israel for a king. (1 Sam. 10.) He pointed out that the people rejected the heavenly government, preferring an earthly king. In like manner they rejected Christ, the true King. Their cry was, 'We have no king but Caesar.' Jesus is still the King and while worldly systems and governments fall because they lack stability and power to satisfy the people, the Kingdom of God is eternal, and Christ shall reign for ever.

**East Kirkby, Beulah Road.**—The power of the simple Gospel to break down barriers and overcome difficulties has been in evidence once again here, four young men being added to the Church. One formerly immersed was received into fellowship on Lord's Day, October 10th, and three others made the good confession and obeyed their Lord in baptism two days later.

We are greatly encouraged by these additions to our number, and pray they may be kept faithful and true to Him, whose name they now bear, unto their journey's end. May these be but the forerunners of other souls to be gathered into the Master's kingdom as a result of the labours of our esteemed Bro. Crosthwaite, who is expected to be with us during the month of November. WALTER. B. JEPSON.

**Eastwood, Notts.**—The weather was delightful for the anniversary services on October 2nd and 3rd. On Saturday, seventy were present at tea, which was ably organised by the Sisters' Committee. In the evening, the social meeting was admirably conducted by our ever willing Bro. S. Jepson, of Ilkeston. Reference was made to our late anniversary speaker, Bro. W. H. Cook, and a resolution of appreciation and sympathy with the relatives was passed. Bren. T. Knighton (Mansfield), J. C. H. Parr (Nottingham), J. H. Britton (Netherfield), and our anniversary preacher, Bro. G. H. Hudson (Birmingham), gave stirring addresses. The Eastwood choir rendered anthems suitable for the occasion.

On Lord's Day, about fifty gathered to witness to the Lord's death for us. Bro. G. H. Hudson delivered three impressive addresses. We are grateful to all the visitors from other Churches, and for the messages which strengthened us in the faith, and spurred us on to proceed with confidence in the work of the Lord.

W. BONSER.

**Hindley, nr. Wigan.**—The Editor is in the midst of a mission here. Large numbers are assembling to hear the old time message, and two have already surrendered to the Lord. To Him be all the glory.

Preston Station, midnight, October 17th. Just returning from great meeting at Hindley, Wigan, where the Editor is having a great time. Chapel packed, an inspiring sight, and the singing uplifting. Editor in great form. An hour of powerful old time Gospel. Great joy as a man, wife and daughter, who have learned the 'way' more perfectly, came forward, followed by a young man from Chorley. The brethren contending for the old paths are having great encouragement by this effort on the part of the Editor. **A. L. FRITH.**

Five more decisions on Monday, October 18th, making eleven in all during fortnight's mission. 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'

W.c.

**Wigan, Albert Street, Newtown.**—Diamond Jubilee Services were held Sept. 25th-26th, 1937. On Saturday, 140 sat down to tea, followed by a public meeting, 180 being present. Bro. Hy. Sharrock presided. Bren. John McCartney (Birmingham), Edward Bannister (Blackpool), and Simon Miller (Piatt Bridge), who were present at the opening sixty years ago, referred to the work of the Church and recalled interesting memories of its early days and of pioneer workers who had passed on. The speeches were interspersed with a musical programme, given by Sister Hesketh and party. Bro. McCartney gave an address on 'Unity.' An enjoyable evening was brought to a close when an electric clock was presented to the Church by Sister M. Yates, on behalf of the Sisters' Class. Bro. J. R. Barker (elder) responded, on behalf of the Church. Members from district Churches spoke words of encouragement, and we all felt helped and blessed by the distinctive and timely messages given.

On Lord's Day, the meetings were continued, when our esteemed Bro. McCartney exhorted the Church, giving an interesting message on 'Why we do not repeat the "Lord's Prayer."'

In the afternoon, Bro. John Birchall, of Wigan, spoke to the children on 'Flowers,' how they keep their heads towards the sun, and in an interesting manner kept the minds

of old and young on Jesus as the light of the world.

In the evening, a very large gathering heard our aged Bro. McCartney give a clear and forceful address on 'The Christ,' and, as in characteristic zeal and faithfulness he pointed out the only way of salvation, we felt that some in our meeting could not resist the call, and, as our brother made the appeal, we had the joy of seeing four young people come forward and make the good confession. These were immersed by Bro. Ed. Price, and received the welcome to fellowship the following Lord's Day. We thank God for inspiration given, and for the fruits of our labours. **w. SMITH.**

**Old Paths Committee.**—Secretary: Bro. C. Bailey, Wild Rose Cottage, Warley Drive, Morecambe, Lancashire.

**East Ardsley Church.**—Secretary: Bro. L. Chesham, 66 Henry Street, Wakefield, Yorks.

## *Nyasaland.*

AT the recent conference at Leeds, a report of the work in Nyasaland was given by the undersigned. It was gratefully recognised that during the year from September 1936 up to the conference, exactly £100 had been contributed by British brethren towards the mission work. On date of Conference there was a balance of £2 10s. ojd. only. During the year, remittances had been sent to workers there on the first and fifteenth of each month, totalling £7 10s. per month. It is a matter for regret that, after doing so well, I had to seriously reduce the first October remittance from £4 10s. to £3 14s. for lack of funds. Perhaps brethren who intend to remit will do so on reading this, for unless, contributions reach me I shall be unable to send more.

The brethren in Nyasaland are continuing their work and extending their labours. Many of the native brethren have to go to Rhodesia and Johannesburg for work. In order that the Christians who so migrate shall be kept in mind of their Christian standing and their responsibilities as husbands and fathers, a preaching brother has been sent to each of the above mentioned places. This is a pastoral duty which commends itself as a wise step. It may be that the gospel will also be proclaimed by the native preachers, and additions made, while at the same time the faith of Christian brethren will be maintained and strengthened.

May I ask the readers of these notes to send along their contributions, however small, so that there may be no hardship inflicted upon the native preachers in Nyasaland. **w. M. KEMPSTER.**