

The Scripture Standard

'What Saith the Scripture.' (Rom. 4:3.)

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Back to Jerusalem

WE have seen that there was a 'Restoration Movement' in Britain long before the 'Reformation' was commenced in America. It should be noted that there were Churches of New Testament faith and order at Dungannon (Ireland) and Coxlane, near Chester, in 1810. At Nottingham, in 1836, one existed with fourteen members, which by 1837 had increased to sixty-two.

At the first General Conference, held in Edinburgh in 1842, forty-two Churches reported a membership of 1300. There were other Churches which did not report to that meeting. The Chairman, Bro. John Davies, said, 'Six years ago, he thought himself and a few others were the only persons in the country advocating the Bible alone as their only rule of faith and practice, but now he found himself in company with many brethren in the Lord. Taking into account the principles and practices contended for, the opposition met with from all classes of professing Christians, the many interests every one who buckles on the armour of truth has to war against, and the humble means employed, we are constrained to say, with gratitude, "It is the Lord's doing and is wondrous in our eyes." Surely, such proof of the mighty power of the truth is sufficient to inspire the heart of every lover of Jesus with renewed zeal.'

These brethren proved that, as in all ages, the Lord uses what the world regards as foolish, weak, and despised things for the accomplishment of His work, 'that no flesh should glory in His presence,' but 'he that glorieth let Him glory in the Lord.'

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES CONTENDED FOR

by these pioneers were well stated, thus:

1. Nothing ought to be received into the service or worship of the Church, or made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.
 2. The observance of all Divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive Church and exhibited in the New Testament, without any additions whatever of human opinions or inventions of men. That we return to the same ground on which the Churches stood at the beginning.
 3. That where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.
 4. Nothing to be received, as a matter of faith and duty, for which there is not produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms or by approved Scripture precedent.
 5. The abjuration of human creeds as roots of bitterness and apples of discord, as the permanent cause of sectarianism.
- 'Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and obedience to Him as our Lawgiver and King, the only tests of Christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion, and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments, and traditions of men.'

6 Into every kingdom, human or divine, there is a legal door of admission. This, in the statute book of Heaven, is called a *birth*. Into the kingdom of nature we are born. Into the future kingdom of glory we enter, soul and body, by being born from the grave. As Christ, the first-born from the dead, entered the heavenly kingdom, so must fall His brethren. And as to the kingdom of which we speak as now existing in this world, Jesus Himself taught that into it no person can legally enter who is not born again, or *born of water and of the Spirit*.

The Gospel has in it a command and as such must be obeyed. That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which changes our state.

7. That the union of Christians is essential to the conversion of the world. That the word, or testimony, of the apostles is, of itself, all sufficient, and alone sufficient for the union of all Christians. 'Let the Bible be substituted for all human creeds; facts for definitions; things for words; faith for speculations; unity of faith for unity of opinions; the positive commands of God for human legislation and tradition; morality for partizan zeal; the practice of religion for the mere profession of it, and the work is done.'

So long as these principles and practices were rigidly adhered to, real solid progress was made. In thirty years, the 1,300 members of 1842 became 4,053, in another thirty years they numbered 12,537. But during the next thirty years, from 1902-1932, a period in which there has been serious departure from the things for which our fathers stood the increase was only from 12,537 to 16,126. During the past ten years, during which it is claimed we have got beyond 'the crude shallow and arrogant' methods of the pioneers,

and have become better educated, more liberal and tolerant, there has been a decrease in membership. Compromise with the world, toning down the truth, seeking to stand well with other religious bodies, is a fatal policy, even judged from the numerical, to say nothing of the Scriptural and spiritual standard.

Bro. David King, to whose paper on *Fifty Years Work, and the Lessons it Suggests*, we are indebted for much of the foregoing, said, 'If these principles are surrendered, our continuance in separation from surrounding denominations has no justification. Success cannot be determined by numbers, as its main feature; complete adherence to aim and purpose is the more important element. Could a membership of ten thousand be increased to eight hundred thousand in six months, upon conditions, of enlarged facilities for the influx of the world, the flesh, and the devil, acceptance of the conditions would not be success, but failure and ruin, as in the time of Constantine and on to the consummation of Popery. . . . 'Buy the truth and sell it not,' even though the proffered price be multiplied success.'

To stand well with, and be well-spoken of, by those whose principles and practices are contrary to New Testament teaching, is cause for self-examination rather than gratification. 'Woe unto you,' said our Master: 'When all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.' The unjust steward who gave away his master's goods to the debtors, would be thought of by them as a good fellow, broad-minded, liberal, and generous. We live in a day when the old charge is true:—'The prophets prophesy falsely . . . and my people love to have it so.' Lines from *The Primitive Gospel Herald* aptly sum this up:

'Not the great of earth, or wealthy,
Not the popular or wise,
Not the famous or successful
Who are lauded to the skies,
But His precept, 'Be thou faithful,'
Is held high before our eyes.

'For it brilliance were the passport
To that Homeland of the soul,
Or were worthiness essential
One would never dare enrol,

Or if strength were the condition
Few could ever reach the goal.
Yet the faithful have the promise
In His own God-given scroll.'

EDITOR.

The Church—The Sphere of its Work.

THE CHURCH, by command, operates throughout the world and seeks the conversion of every creature. Its field of operation is unbounded but the nature of its work, as a community, is circumscribed. The operations authorised by the great Head of the Church are confined to what is spiritual and His Church should not go where He does not lead.

The Scriptures show Christ as the great Centre and around Him, marked off by His word, a clear line encircling all that is spiritual. Outwith that line, where the Church may not trespass and where only the individual Christian can go, is everything that is social and political.

Within the circle where the Church operates we find every pure motive that the knowledge of God and the love of the Lord Jesus can beget in the human heart. There you find the grounds and assurance for every hope that stirs us to patient continuance in well-doing, and within its compass there is clearly laid down every principle and virtue that can guide us to actions honouring to God and beneficial to man. Reverence, humility and devotion are in its atmosphere.

If the Church within its defined province of work is able to give to its members a love of the Scriptures, a right spirit, pure motives, bright hopes, sound principles, good morals, and examples of faith and zeal, how great is the work it may accomplish. It is limited, you may say, and our reply is, how inexhaustible and unfulfilled. Great would be the change in the world if these, the allotted duties of the Church, were fully accomplished. The necessity to main-

tain loyalty to Christ, to increase our love to God, to stir up our pure motives, and keep true to our principles, calls for unceasing labour.

With lawful duties more than it has yet overtaken, why should the Church stray into matters that are unauthorised, and be involved in work that divine wisdom has left for the members as individuals in their capacity as citizens to perform? The Church now, as at the first, makes progress spiritually just as it confines itself to the things our Lord has approved. Had our Lord thought that spiritual work would be assisted if His Church intruded into social, political, and worldly matters, then it is natural to conclude that He would have authorised it, and the early Church would have led the way. It would not have been left for men or women to discover where the primitive divinely-built Church was incomplete. 'Primitive simplicity is held to be the secret of primitive power.'

As the Church through the Gospel changes man and by its teaching maintains his spiritual life, then, as a consequence, there will soon follow a change in our laws and social conditions. A full faith in the divine plans will prevent the introduction into the Church of that which rests only on feeling or unconscious presumption. So-called helps and hand-maidens arise but to detract from real effort and to impede harmonious spiritual labour. Let us catch the spirit of the Church of apostolic times in its devotion to the proclamation of the Word. We are to be as 'lights in the world holding forth the word of life.' It is also written, 'Stand fast in on?

spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.' Experience shows and history proves that when a Church entertains other than spiritual affairs, its vision of the Gospel becomes dim and the vigour of its religious force grows weak. I also venture to say that when Churches interfere with matters political, it is doubtful whether they retard or hasten reforms, and on occasions they only muddle the result where a simple effective issue was desired. Apart from the work being unscriptural, the expediency of such efforts is condemned by results. They weaken the Church and fail to bring reforms where active individual effort might have succeeded.

The more liberty a Church takes in its corporate capacity, the less liberty have the members as individuals, and more limited becomes their sphere of influence. Go beyond the injunctions of inspired men or the example of the apostolic Church, and bring in every work that a majority, however wise, may think clearly makes for good and, as a result, the unity and spirit of the Church will depart. It ever was so. We cannot submit to each other on matters of reason: In matters of faith there can be unity, but in matters of opinion we will fight for freedom.

If power has been vested in the Church not only to press its members to do good to all men, but also to dictate in what manner, place, or time, other than by preaching the Gospel, they should do good to the world, then passages should be given to show that she has this authority. The personal example of the Lord is not a guide as to corporate action of the Church. The primitive Church must be the standard. It operated with divine guidance and stands in a comparable position.

Let me quote: 'We all agree that every region of human life is to be Christianised. All the relations of men are to be regulated by the spirit of Jesus, Not only the life of the

soul within but all the activities of the man without are to undergo this change. But we differ as to what methods are open to the Church in working toward this end.' In its duties, the Church stands distinguished from the world, and only seeks the regeneration of mankind. As citizens its members are not distinguished from their fellow-citizens, and they seek, united with all citizens, to improve the social life and conditions that surround them.

political and social matters rightly viewed and compared with spiritual are not worthy of a place in the Church. God has always left man to do that which he could accomplish for himself. We are endowed by nature with the capability to govern our nation or empire. It is our selfish worldly disposition that leads to a misuse of our power to organise and rule. Make the heart right through the Gospel and man will soon create conditions that are merciful and just. One of our writers said:

**'How small, of all that human hearts
endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause
or cure.'**

The Jews had divine laws, but they failed to bring happiness because man was not regenerated and forgiven.

You may ask why the mingling of duties should reduce the effectiveness of the Church and not have a like effect on the individual. It can have a bad effect on the individual if he neglects to keep first things first, but we must carry out God's plan, and He places this responsibility and trial on the Christian and not on the Church. Government is a necessity and the nation places a responsibility on every citizen, but neither God nor the nation has asked the Church to actively share this responsibility. The presence of bishops in the House of Lords is merely a relic of papal days. If the Church remains purely spiritual its influence will be the greater to keep spiritual things ever to the fore, and to help its members being carried too far by the secondary matters of

trades unionism, co-operation, temperance reforms, politics, etc.

In matters of faith, unity; but in matters of opinion, liberty. This remains still the sound and profitable position. 'Let the love work in its own way, and it will do well.'

JOHN ANDERSON.

A Call to Prayer.

I CANNOT tell why there should come to
me

A thought of someone miles and miles
away'

In swift insistence of the memory

Unless there be a need that I should pray.

He goes his way, I mine; we seldom meet

To talk of plans or changes, day by day,

Of pain or pleasure, triumphs, or defeat,

Or special reasons why 'tis time to pray.

Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight,

A more appalling weakness, a decay

Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of
right;

And so in case he needs my prayers, I
pray.

Friend, do the same for me, if I intrude

Unasked upon you, on some crowded day,

Give me a moment's prayer, as interlude;

Be very sure I need it; therefore pray.

ANON.

Truth and Tradition.

A BOOK with the above title, by Professor Angus, M.A., D.D., etc., of Sydney, is claimed to be a best seller in Australia, and is now being published and pushed in Britain.

A reviewer in *Forward*, says, 'We commend this book to young readers interested in Christianity as a moral and progressive force. It will supply just those facts which will emancipate their minds from the bondage of tradition and set them free.'

Professor Angus claims that 'Paul's epistles were first in the field . . .

and so greatly influenced the Gospel, writers that when the stories of Jesus were written they were all interpreted through the quite false bias of the Jew—Paul. Paul obsessed with the idea of the Jewish sacrifice, made Jesus the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world—an idea that Jesus Himself never suggested in any of His public utterances.' The Professor also says, 'According to Jesus the only essential of forgiveness is of a moral and spiritual character. If you forgive your brother, God will forgive you. And if you do not forgive your brother, God will not forgive you.'

Now if the Gospel writers can be appealed to and quoted for some sayings of Jesus can they not be regarded as true witnesses concerning all that He did and said? And if they are not reliable in some of their testimony can we trust them at all? To accept some of their testimony and reject some is an untenable position.

According to these writers Jesus did very clearly state that He came 'to give his life a ransom for many.' (Mark x. 45). This cannot be got rid of by saying, as the Professor does, that this is 'part of the pronounced Pauline influence upon Mark,' for the saying is also recorded by Matthew (xx. 28).

When, on that Passover night, Jesus instituted a feast commemorating a greater deliverance than that of Israel from Egypt, He said, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' (Matt. xxvi. 28, Mark xiv. 24, Luke xxii. 20.)

After His triumphant resurrection, which vindicated all His claims, and told of an accepted atonement, He said, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' (Luke xxiv. 45-47.)

Of course, the Professor and his school try to get rid of all this by

saying, 'As for the supreme authority of the New Testament, none of the early Christians accepted that view in the slightest degree; only the Old Testament had authority.' Well did not Jesus again and again state that in His death all that was written in the Old Testament was fulfilled (Luke xviii. 31-34, xxiv. 44)?

As to the authority of the New Testament, the early Christians were exhorted to 'hold fast the pattern of sound words,' to 'stand fast' in, and 'earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.' (2 Tim. i. 13, 1 Corinth, xvi. 13, Jude 3). These and many other passages show that there was a standard of New Testament doctrine in those first days. Peter classed Paul's writings with 'the other Scriptures.' (2 Peter iii. 15-16.) That the New Testament was regarded as of 'supreme authority,' and appealed to as such, is seen from the fact that the whole of it is quoted in the writings of Christians in the first three centuries.

It would be interesting to know how, with such views of the New Testament and its writers, the Pro-

fessor determines what is true and what is false, and what is really the actual teaching of Jesus. He claims to write for 'the educated youth of our age,' but he does not credit them with much intelligence, for it does not require a very brainy person to see that, if his view of the New Testament be true, there is no guarantee that Jesus actually uttered the sayings on which he builds his case. <

The Christ of the New Testament is the only real Christ, and all that Paul claimed for Him is supported by all the writers, and was predicted by the prophets in the Old Testament. And we must either accept their testimony or be left without any real knowledge of Himself, His work, and His teaching.

There is nothing really new in what Professor Angus says. These attacks on the old faith are simply the revamping of stale sceptical objections which have been exploded again and again. The New Testament will survive the attacks from pulpits and Theological Colleges, as it has those made in public squares and secular halls. **EDITOR.**

The Plea of the Churches of Christ

WE plead not merely for a measure of reform, but for a complete restoration of Christianity as taught by Christ and His Apostles, that His prayer, 'That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,' may be answered. Such union can never be brought about by the compromise of truth, but only by loyalty to the Lord and His Word. Therefore we plead for:

I. THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

God 'gave him to be the head over all things to the church.' (Eph. i. 22) In view of this we cannot recognise any monarch, pope, or man, as head or 'supreme ruler' of the Church of

Christ. Nor has any conference, synod, or council, the right to legislate for that Church. To attempt this is presumption and usurpation. Whether the Christ speaks personally or through His apostles the authority is the same. For of the apostles whom He had chosen the Lord said, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' (John xx. 21.) and Paul could say, 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit.' (1 Thess. iv. 8.)

We cannot accept the claims of successors of the apostles. Such are either imposed on, or are seeking to impose on others. Instead of listen-

ing to the contradictory claims and messages of such we prefer to continue stedfastly in the teaching of those apostles whose word was confirmed by signs and wonders and divers miracles; and who 'being dead yet speak' to us in the word of life and salvation.

2. THE BIBLE AS THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

As we are 'not under the law but under grace,' 'being under law to Christ,' (Rom. vi. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 20), we look not to those Scriptures which contain the law given only to the Jewish nation, but to those which tell what is required of those who are now seeking salvation through the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. The New Testament Scriptures tell us 'how to behave in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.' (1 Tim. iii. 15) We accept the Old Testament Scriptures as of Divine origin, but regard the New Testament as the Christians' law book. Other religious bodies accept the Bible as a standard, but to us it is *the only standard*. Human creeds, dogmas of men, decisions of councils, are of no authority, though they may be interesting as curiosities of religious literature.

3. CONDITIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AS IN APOSTOLIC AGE.

The order laid down by Jesus, 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved,' was carried out by His apostles and 'they that gladly received his word were baptised.' This has never been altered by heaven's authority. There is no Scriptural authority for receiving into the body of Christ, in Church fellowship, any who have not complied with the conditions stated by the great Head of the Church. We are told we must be charitable, and we trust that we excel in that grace. The charity enjoined is love, and 'this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' Charity does not mean the giving away of that which does not belong to us. To

our own table we may invite whom we please; but to the Lord's Table those only must come whom He has invited and is pleased to receive. The faith required is sincere belief in Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of the living God,' 'the fellow of Jehovah, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,' who 'was rich but for our sakes became poor.' He who denies the Deity of Christ, has no right in His Church. Jehovah provided no merely human Saviour, but one who has redeemed us with *His 'precious blood.'* The baptism required is immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt, xxviii. 18-20). It is 'for the remission of sins,' (Acts ii. 38). It is a burial with Christ from which we rise to walk in newness of life (Rom. vi. 4). *Sprinkling is rhanism and not baptism.*

4. THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.

Sacerdotal orders, archbishops, clergy, generals, are all foreign to the New Testament. Every Christian is a priest and a minister (1 Peter ii. 5-9). There is no more scriptural authority for a 'reverend minister' than there is for a pope. In the New Testament Churches, 'elders,' 'bishops,' or 'pastors,' as they are called, were appointed to take the oversight, not as 'lords over God's heritage but as ensamples to the flock.' These often laboured to support themselves (Acts xx. 34-35) With regard to preaching, teaching, and exhortation, the inspired injunction is, 'as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' (1 Peter iv. 10-11). It is unscriptural and irrational for one man to do all the preaching and teaching while others of equal ability have no opportunity of contributing to the upbuilding of the Church. Those who devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel as the Lord hath ordained 'should live of the Gospel.' (1 Corinth ix. 14) Such should be used for proclama-

tion of the glad evangel, and to render aid to weak Churches.

5. THE LORD'S WORK SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE LORD'S PEOPLE

Money is not the 'one thing needful,' but is one of the needful things, and in contrast to the custom of most religious bodies we accept no financial help from any who have not believed and obeyed the Gospel. Theologians talk of the 'Church Militant,' but it is generally the 'Church Mendicant' that the world sees. This brings shame and reproach on the Church. The apostles offered the gospel freely, and 'went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.' (3 John 7.) Churches to-day should not receive money from the world, either by collections, seat rents, or in any other way.

6. OUR HOPE IS JESUS CHRIST.

(1 Tim. i. 1)

When assembled around the Lord's Table, each Lord's Day, we 'show [I proclaim] the Lord's death until he come.' (1 Cor. xi. 26) This is the central object of the gathering, reminding us of our redemption, and the great hope of the gospel—the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'who shall change these bodies of our humiliation and fashion them like unto his glorious body.' Then shall those who have loved and served Him faithfully, whether alive or sleeping in Him, be caught up to be forever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv.).

7. SCRIPTURAL NAMES FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE.

Lutheran means a follower of Luther, Wesleyan a follower of Wesley, Christian a follower of Christ. While thankful for the work accomplished by Luther, Wesley, and others, Christ is to us 'the chiefest among ten thousand,' His 'name is above every name,' and therefore we prefer to bear His name, and to be known as Christians. (Acts xi. 26; xxvi. 28; 1 Peter iv. 16) If it was wrong to say, 'I am of Paul, I of Apollos,' it must be wrong to bear

the/names of human leaders now. As Churches we are 'Churches of Christ,' (Rom. xvi. 16); 'of God,' (Acts xx. 28); 'of the saints,' (1 Cor. xiv. 33.)

Our great desire is that as individuals and Churches, we may 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,' and may be instrumental in leading others, through the truth which alone can make free,' unto the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

G. H. HUDSON.

War.

'EZ fer war, I call it murder,—
There you hev it plain an' flat:
I don't want to go no furdur
Than my Testyment fer that.

Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you.

Wut's the use o' meetin' goin'
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go amowin'
Feller-men like oats an' rye ?

I dunno but wut it's pooty
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—
But it's cur'us Christian dooty
This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

Call me coward, call me traiter,
Just ez suits your mean idees,—
Here I stand a tyrant-hater,
An' the friend o' God an' Peace !'

J. R. LOWELL.

Queries.

AN anonymous letter, bearing Plymouth postmark and enclosing queries, has been received. Will brethren please note that, in all cases, the name of the writer (not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith) must accompany articles, letters, queries, etc. If the 'Bro. in Christ' will send his name and address, the matter will receive attention. In no case shall we deal with anonymous letters.

Notes on Hebrews

WITH the wonderful review of the heroes of faith of Old Testament history, the argument of the letter practically closes. The opening verse of chap. xi. has been termed a definition of faith, and sceptics have asked how faith, in any sense, could be the substance of things hoped for or evidence of things not seen. We sometimes say, 'knowledge is power.' Knowledge is not a definition of power, nor power a definition of knowledge. What is meant is that knowledge brings or gives power. So it is with faith. Faith bring assurance of things hoped for, and gives substance to things not seen. The division into 'saving' faith and other kinds of faith is not warranted in Scripture or common sense. It is the acceptance of the statement of someone—whether God or man. Faith is dependent not so much upon the thing said as upon the one who says it.

Recalling that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, we see there must have been instructions from God in every case. This must have been so—to take one instance—in the case of Cain and Abel as to the offering which God required, else that of Abel could not have been by faith; it would, of necessity, have been, in each case, a matter of opinion. That there was such testimony is evident from the original narrative, where God condescends to argue with the disobedient and angry Cain (Gen. iv. 7). If you do well (i.e., *vigilil*) shall you not be accepted, and if you do not well (*right*) the sin lies at your door. Behind all the motives that actuated those mentioned in Hfeb. xi. lay the commands of God. Faith was shewn in the response to that command (whether the hearer understood the reason of it or not), and implicit obedience to the command was the only means of blessing.

The 'witnesses' of xii. 1 are those heroes of faith already mentioned. A witness is one who gives evidence or bears testimony. They bore testimony to the worth of God's Word and to its sustaining power under the most adverse conditions.

The remainder of the letter consists mainly of exhortations to faithful continuance in well-doing.

A foot-note in the A. V. says the letter was 'written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.' How unworthy of serious notice

such notes are, can be judged from the fact revealed in the closing verses of the letter, where it is stated that Timothy had been liberated but had not arrived yet. How he could have written the letter under such circumstances is a mystery indeed.

J. SCOLLER.

Bible Readings.

OLD TESTAMENT.

Deut, xxxiii THE BOOK OF THE LAW having been completed, Moses' 'song' is one of warning to the tribes assembled to hear the last words from that great servant of God. Last words are usually treasured, and well it would have been for Israel had those warn-ings been heeded.

Moses and Aaron (Num. xx. 12-13) had been forewarned that they should not lead the people into the promised land. Now God calls Moses to ascend 'Nebo's lonely mountain,' that he might behold afar off this land to which he had for so long been leading the people. What must have been the thoughts of this old servant of God, who had borne the burden of the wilderness journey, now that his work on earth is ended, that his feet can never tread the promised land, and that another must complete his task?

Isa lxxv 5-13 The whole chapter is a protest against formality

and unspiritual ceremonial in the service of God; Men would erect temples of stone, while the only acceptable and worthy service is that of humble, contrite, reverent spirits. Is there not a foreshadowing of the building of the Temple of Herod? David was not allowed to build a temple to God, because he was a man of war; the Samaritans were not permitted to have any part in rebuilding of the Temple after the return from captivity. How could it be possible that the sacrilegious hands of a man like Herod, who also built

heathen shrines, should build a temple acceptable in the sight of God? Little wonder that the prophet foresees, under the circumstances, abominations, delusions, fears. The call is to hear the Word of the Lord, and to look forward to a spiritual deliverance that shall fill Jerusalem with children of obedience, while a fiery indignation will consume the adversaries.

Psalm The theme of this psalm is just what might have been
lv11

called forth through David's flight from Saul, and his dwelling in the cave (i Sam. xxiv.). David rises to a high confidence, in God's power and willingness to save him from his calamities. His faith bade him take 'refuge in the shadow of his wings.' Had not he been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be king over Israel? What had been foreshadowed in that act, He was abundantly able to fulfil; and David ascribes glory to God (5 and 11). The latter part of the psalm forms also the opening of Psalm cviii.

Gen xi The previous chapter records the connection between the races of the then known world. These are seen to be still nomads, moving from place to place as pasturage of their cattle required. Shinar is probably Chaldea. The sun is sufficiently warm to bake bricks. Here some advance is seen in the fact of burning bricks.. The proposal to build a tower was not literally for the purpose of 'reaching heaven.' This is merely a figure of speech. It is used by the unfaithful spies to describe the walls of the cities of Canaan (Deut. i. 28).

It might have been intended as combined rebellion against God's command of dispersion (i. 28). Nimrod's efforts in this direction were later successful (x. 10-12.). Their purpose here is frustrated by the confusion of language; and the name Babel is conferred on the place..

There is a marvellous spiritual parallel in those who promulgate creeds (a human invention to reach heaven). The Babel produced has been of more serious consequence to the world than its ancient type.

NEW TESTAMENT.

John xvi 1-15 The Saviour, knowing what "reception His apostles would have from the world assures them

of the coming of the Holy Spirit, as Advocate, to convict the world, of sin, viz: that of putting to death the Lord of Glory, as the result of unbelief; of righteousness—not their righteousness, but of Him who alone did righteously—this to be proved by His ascension to the Father. His rising and ascension will speak powerfully of His sinlessness. It is inconceivable that God should raise from the dead, or translate to heaven, a deceiver or impostor. Of Judgment, John xii. 31 says, 'Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' Jesus, by His death and resurrection, has triumphed over death and him who had the power of death. The resurrection is the assurance of judgment (Acts xvii. 31).

The Holy Spirit will guide *them* (the Apostles) into ALL TRUTH. .

John xvi The 'little while' which they should not behold Him fore-tells His death and burial. The 'little while' to succeed this is the forty days during which Jesus tarried with His apostles, after resurrection. The going away would fill them with sorrow, while the world, would rejoice, yet the resurrection would be to them an abiding joy. Hitherto they had asked nothing in His name. This destroys the argument for using what is usually called the Lord's prayer. However often or fervently it may have been uttered, it had not been 'in Jesus' name.' Now they *must* ask in His Name. Their belief would be rudely disturbed,

when alone in the trials of Gethsemane, before Pilate, etc., all would have forsaken Him. The words He had spoken were an encouragement to faithfulness in the dark days that would almost destroy their faith. What a wonderful assurance characterised the Saviour in this gloomiest hour, 'I have overcome the world.'

John 17 Here pre-eminently is the Lord's prayer; That in Matt

vi. was the disciples' prayer. The Saviour prays (a) for Himself; (b) for His apostles, for their unity and sanctity in the truth to be proclaimed to the world; (c) for those who should believe on Him through the apostles' preaching—that they also might be one, to the end that the world might believe on Him. This prayer, answered for a short period after Pentecost, has been thwarted for centuries; and judging purely from a human standpoint seems impossible of realization in a world constituted as this is. Yet the assurance is given that God hath heard and will answer. Constant striving must be maintained to accomplish this most necessary and desirable of all Christian conditions.

Eph 1 Paul's visit to Ephesus is recorded (Acts xix.) and his

warning to the Elders of that Church (Acts xx.). To elucidate the Apostle's meaning here, one must note the use of 'us' in verses 3-12; and 'ye' in 13-14. In writing a letter no one would use these words and apply them to the same people. Neither did the Apostle. The 'we' and 'us' are the apostles and prophets of that day. It is they who were 'chosen,' 'foreordained' according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.' It is wholly erroneous to apply such statements to all Christians. It had no application to the Ephesians who are not referred to till the thirteenth verse and what is said of them is

that they heard the word of truth, believed, and were sealed with the Spirit. The 'mystery' of verse nine is that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (iii. 4-6). The chief declaration in the chapter which makes this possible is that God hath given Jesus to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. This figure emphasizes the essential unity for which the Saviour prayed (John xvii. 21).

J. SCULLER.

More Bibles than ever.

NOTHING can slake the thirst of humanity for the life-giving truth and wisdom of the Bible. So much is clear from the wonderful report presented at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society at the Queen's Hall, London. During the past twelve months the huge total of 10,617,470 copies (Bibles, Testaments and 'portions') have been circulated: an increase of 65,186 over the preceding year. The sale of Bibles and Testaments increased by 31,000 and 59,000 respectively. Since its publication two years ago, 817,000 copies of the shilling Bible have been issued, and there continues to be a strong demand for this edition, both at home and abroad. During the year, twelve new versions have been added to the Society's list of languages—including four for Africa, six for Asia, one for America, and one for Europe. The total number now on the Society's list is 667.

Selected.

Conference.

THE next Conference will be held (D.V.) at Morley, on Saturday, Sept. 14th. Brethren are asked to reserve this date. Full particulars in next issue S.S. Bro. H. Baines, 42 Garnett Street, Morley, near Leeds, is acting as Secretary to the local Committee who are making the arrangements.

News.

Blackpool.—In January last) the Sisters met and decided to meet weekly. Sisters Winter, Ives, and Johns were elected president, secretary, and treasurer respectively.

The meetings have been of a devotional character, and have proved most helpful. Recitations, Bible readings, items of praise, and addresses were given, brethren being asked to speak at some of the meetings. Talent was discovered in unexpected quarters. All showed willingness to do something.

On June 19th, the meetings were wound up for the session. It was open meeting, and a good number of brethren and sisters were present. The president spoke briefly, urging that the good work should be continued. The secretary and the treasurer each reported of good work done: service had been rendered in cases of sickness, and gifts made of fruit and flowers.

At this final meeting, various items were rendered: Bible readings, devotional readings, recitations, solos, and duets. The sisters, in unison, sang urging the brethren present to 'wake,' 'watch,' and 'work.' The sisters kindly provided supper afterwards, and a time of real, homely fellowship was experienced.

Not the least value of the meetings has been the drawing of the sisters more closely together. They have got to know each other in a way not known before, and all look forward to another happy session to begin in the autumn.

A.L.F.

Liversedge, Yorks.—During June and July, Bro. R. K. Francis was with the Liversedge Church. We hear of splendid meetings on Lord's Days and weeknights, numbers and interest being well maintained. At the beginning of July, eleven additions were reported by baptism and restoration. The powerful advocacy by Bro. Francis of the claims of the Lord Jesus is rousing the people. We rejoice with Bro. Francis and the Church in these manifestations of the power of the old message, and pray that further good fruit may be gathered. We have memories of a stirring period spent with this Church thirty-three years ago, and of other periods in later years, and are delighted to hear that this is still a fruitful field, and that the brethren are still rallying round the old standard.

EDITOR.

Nyasaland.

WE have heard, with regret, that Bro. Frederick has had to go to Cholo hospital, with foot trouble. Writing from there, he expected to be discharged about the end of May. The stay in hospital does not appear to have been of long duration fortunately. He and Bro. Tabbu Chisiano left Zomba for Mlanje where four converts were baptised, on May 9th. They reached Choto on May 15th, and one was immersed on May 18th. They intended to return to Namiwawa from where Bro. Frederick hoped to make the deferred journey to Fort Manning via Lilongwe about the end of July. Bro. John Malembo, of Dowa, is returning to Namiwawa for a rest and Bro. Mbulaje Catunga may go to Dowa in his place.

It is expected that arrangements will be made for Bro. Ronald to be released for Malokotela, Portugese East Africa, shortly.

Bro. Frederick says please remember us in your prayers and fellowship, and give my Christian wishes and greetings to all the brethren.

w. M. KEMPSTER.

'Millennial Harbinger.'

A FULL set of the *British Millennial Harbinger* has been presented to the Mitchell Library, North Street, Glasgow. This is a Reference Library only, but brethren may consult the various volumes at the Library at any time.

Books Wanted.

Handbook of Christian Evidences. A. Stewart
The Divine Demonstration. H. W. Everest
King and Dradiagh Debate (two copies).
Bible Advocate. Vol. 1896.

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