

*Dis. Steven*

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## The Present Crisis.

HISTORY does repeat itself, and it is no strange thing with which we are faced. Departure and degeneration have been common to all ages, peoples, and movements. Israel's history supplies many illustrations of apostasy by the majority, with ever a small loyal minority, 'jealous for the Lord,' and 'valiant for the truth.'

Israel's troubles were largely the result of mixing with and desiring to be like the surrounding nations. They had not long started on the pilgrim journey from Egypt's bondage to Canaan's freedom, when, urged on by the 'mixed multitude'—the little leaven that leavened the whole lump—they despised the food sent down from heaven and longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt.

When Moses was on the mount in communion with God, and did not appear as speedily as they expected, again they manifested that their hearts were still towards Egypt, by persuading Aaron to make the golden calf. Later, dissatisfied with Divine government, they desired an earthly king like other nations. All through their history in their contact with surrounding nations, instead of proving the salt to season and savour them, they allowed themselves to be so influenced by associations, habits, and customs, that often their distinctiveness as God's chosen people was lost.

Finally, the salt lost its savour, was cast out, and trodden under foot of men.

The Jew and Jerusalem are a standing warning against apostasy, which is not confined to the old dispensation, but has worked havoc in the new, and is still seen in fatal operation.

What a glorious picture is presented in the Acts of Apostles of the primitive Church, in its simplicity and power. Church historians of all parties bear witness to the simplicity of the worship, ordinances, ministry, and methods of those first and best days. Does anyone doubt that the Church depicted in the New Testament is according to the mind of God?

Without any religious buildings, altars, spires, priests (as a class) or ecclesiastical machinery; with civil and ecclesiastical powers, the world, the flesh, and the Devil, all hostile, persecuting unto death; armed only with the sword of the Spirit, fearing to mar the power of the message with 'wisdom of words,' they triumphed everywhere, 'turned the world upside down,' and brought myriads of souls into captivity to the obedience of the Christ. Moved by the Spirit of God, the Apostles predicted a time of fearful departure and degeneracy, when men would 'arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves,' bringing in 'destructive



heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them with his blood;' when many would 'depart from the faith,' and growing tired of sound doctrine would 'accumulate teachers to suit themselves and tickle their own fancies, and will give up listening to the truth and turn to myths' (Moffatt's Translation).

The 'mystery of lawlessness'—the leaven already working in apostolic times—produced such an apostasy from the faith that it would be impossible to imagine anything more in contrast to the New Testament picture. The apostasy is according to the mind of man, and, like Israel's, the result of copying and desiring to stand well with the outside world, which hated and crucified Christ, and still hates His loyal-hearted followers. 'The Churches vied in magnificence with palaces, and the robes and pomp of service, imitating imperial splendour, eclipsed paganism itself, with mitres, tiaras, tapers, crosiers, and processions . . . These meretricious ornaments concealed beneath them all the spirit of the world—pride, luxury, covetousness, contention, malignity, and every evil word and work. Heresy and schism abounded, and wickedness of every kind, like a flood, deluged the Christian world, whilst the heads of the Church—more engaged in controversy, and a thousand times more jealous about securing and increasing their own wealth and pre-eminence than presenting examples of humility, patience, deadness to the world, and heavenly-mindedness—were, like gladiators, armed in all their Councils, and affected imperial power and pomp in the greater dioceses.' (Haweis, English Church Historian).

Many heroic souls endeavoured to stand against the surging tide of apostasy, and paid the price in martyrdom. Noble men like Wickliffe, Luther, and Wesley, sought to reform the Church from within, and created almost numberless sects, purer in doctrine and life, yet practising much for which the only authority is found at Rome.

Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and many others saw that the real remedy was not to be found in reformation but in restoration. They saw that there could be no compromise with Rome, but the whole rubbish with which priestly hands had covered the 'one foundation' must be cleared away, and a new start made on the ground upon which the Church of Christ stood at the beginning. Their aim and desire was to restore the Church according to the New Testament pattern, to speak where the Scriptures speak, to be silent where they are silent, and to plead for the union of all Christians on the Lordship of Jesus, and the absolute authority of His Word. These are surely principles which, if adhered to, must result in complete restoration: and it is difficult to understand how any real Christian could raise any objection to them. Yet the Restoration Movement was, and is still, opposed by many who should have helped. But God was with it, and its spread caused its advocates to share the feelings of the emancipated captives, 'We were like them that dream . . . the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' (Ps. cxxvi.)

In our own land, to say nothing of others, a large number of Churches have been established, from which many have carried the message to regions beyond, and the whole religious community has been influenced by the restoration plea. What was said by a writer in the *New York Independent* is largely true here, too: 'There is no religious body in the United States, whether it would confess it or not, that has not been modified in both spirit and teaching by the influence of Alexander Campbell.'

But it seems the common lot of every movement that succeeding generations manifest less enthusiasm for the original position and plea, lose sight of the glorious vision that inspired the pioneers to herculean self-sacrificing labours, and manifest a desire to leave the old paths, and become like and popular



with other bodies around them. Compromise is more fatal than the fiercest opposition. A striking, but seemingly soon forgotten, object lesson is supplied by the attempt to hasten progress in this land by the introduction of American methods. The failure of that costly campaign supplies the best answer to most of these things which are now forced on the Churches.

*We have reached a serious crisis.* The Restoration Movement is being undermined. The issue is between an indefectible or defectible Bible. Nay more, a defectible Bible means a defectible Christ, for He endorsed it, and if He was mistaken or ignorant—'We are of all men most miserable.'

*Everything is at stake.* Instead of the Bible being the standard, it is to be tested by science and history, and only accepted where in harmony with them. Science and learning, 'falsely so-called,' corrupt the early Church, and are still producing apostasy, error and division. Those who talk of a defectible Bible can give us no standard to take its place. They leave us to drift, as many who

have accepted their views have drifted, on to the rocks of infidelity. *How long will the Churches remain silent and inactive?* 'Rags of Popery,' Romish terms and phrases, are paraded before us, such as would have roused our fathers to resist even unto blood, and many are either so blind or indifferent that if the Pope appeared on some platform it is difficult to believe a protest would be raised. These things left unchecked can only result in completely wrecking the most glorious movement seen since the introduction of Christianity. The responsibility for this will lie not only on those who introduce these foreign and divisive elements, but also on those who silently permit them.

'In these days none can be neutral,  
Each will yield to some control.  
Zion needs to know her soldiers,  
Form in line and call the roll.'

*Brethren, line up to the old paths,  
and save the Restoration Movement.*

—Written by Editor of S.S. in 1926,  
but just as applicable to-day.

## A Voice from the Bible: The Tabernacle and the Church.

By CHARLES ABERCROMBIE

BRO. C. ABERCROMBIE was one of our pioneer preachers. He was Schoolmaster at Drumclair in the parish of Slamannan, Stirlingshire. In early life he was associated with the Baptists. He was brought into contact with Bro. Thomas Hughes Milner, of Edinburgh, and learning the Way of God more perfectly, he commenced to do the work of an evangelist. He laboured incessantly; and the Slamannan group of Churches in some measure owe their existence to his labours and that of such faithful colleagues and successors as Alexander Brown and James

Anderson. Bro. Abercrombie fell asleep in Jesus in U.S.A., on February 14th, 1900.

The address following shows the kind of preaching which proved so effective in those days, and is so much needed to-day. The address is abridged.—Editor 'S.S.'

The text is, 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.' (Hebrews viii. 5). After describing the setting up of the Tabernacle, its divisions, and furniture, Bro. Abercrombie proceeds:



What did the sanctuary or outer division of the tabernacle prefigure? We are led to the answer to this inquiry by considering two things: 1. That it was near, very near, to the holiest of all; separated therefrom by a veil; no other apartment intervened between the two, only a veil. 2. It was situated between the court and the holiest of all.

Again we ask, what occupies on earth the nearest place to heaven but the Church of Jesus Christ: nothing is so near to heaven as the Church. There is but a veil, that is all, between it and heaven. The sanctuary, we consider, represented the Church for the reason now given; but, again, it was farther from the court than it was from the holiest of all. Between it and the court stood the laver and the altar, and the intervening spaces. In like manner, the Church is farther from the world than it is from heaven or where Jesus is. Between the world and the Church stand several things which shall be considered in the proper place, whereas there is but one thing between the Church and Christ.

That the sanctuary represented the Church seems evident from—1. The name it bore. Christ's Church is no less a sanctuary or holy thing. It has been cleansed by Him who alone can make clean. It is therefore holy. 2. But again, by the things which were within, it represented the Church. What did the golden altar of incense signify if not the prayers of saints (Rev. v. 8; viii. 3, 4)? What the golden candlestick, if not the light or knowledge which has been communicated to the Church by Him who said, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?' and again, addressing His disciples He said, 'You are the light of the world.' And yet again, the seven golden candlesticks are the seven Churches (Rev. i. 20), because, doubtless, of the light or knowledge which peculiarly belongs to those who have been regenerated, viz., the Church of Jesus Christ.

What was represented by the table and the shewbread will appear at one glance. What but 'the table of the Lord' (Cor. x. 21)? On the table in the sanctuary there were twelve loaves, one for each tribe of Israel. On the Lord's table there is but one; because, while it was necessary then to have twelve, there is no need for twelve now. All has been unified in Christ. His one body has been given for the twelve tribes of Israel, and for the countless tribes of Gentiles, that He might unite them all under Himself. The loaf of the New Testament, representing the body of Christ, was prefigured by the bread of the sanctuary.

But, observe, this table was *in* the sanctuary. So, the Lord's table is *in* the Church, not outside of it, but in it. But again, the priests (and none other were legally permitted) before entering, had to attend to two things: 1. They must first be at the altar, of which we have already spoken. It stood in the court, ready for use at all times by the people. The priests were ready to attend upon them also, to kill their offering and make atonement for them. Now, what did this prefigure? What but the Cross of Christ, and Himself the slain Lamb. As the altar was ever ready to receive the victim that might be brought to be slaughtered for the sins of the offerer, so the Cross of Christ ever stands out before the eye of the unsaved that he might thereby find peace to his troubled soul. No person can enter the Church of Christ who has not first been at the Cross. The Jew came to the altar with an animal, he confessed his sins on its head, it was accepted for him, and he was forgiven. So he who would enter the Church must come through the slain Lamb. The priests were ready to attend upon everyone who came to the altar; but to the Cross of Christ 'the Spirit and the bride say, Come.' You are invited. We come to this altar, and to forgiveness through the blood of this nobler sacrifice.

Do you desire to enter God's house, the Church of Christ, that you may be comparatively far from the world, and near, very near to Jesus? Then behold Him who died for you: trust yourself entirely to Him. He died for you, but rose again, and, high priest of the Christian age, He intercedes for all who come unto God by Him. You know you are a sinner—your own conscience, enlightened by the Word, tells you that you are. Come, then, confess your sins to God, lay your hands, so to speak, on the head of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose blood was shed for the remission of sins, in the full assurance of receiving a complete pardon, a pardon more complete than was ever enjoyed by the worshipping Israelite. To them there was a remembrance of sins every year; but if you accept this remedy, if you commit your whole being to Jesus, your sins and your iniquities God will *remember no more* (Heb. x. 16-18). Yes, you say, I will, I perceive clearly how it is:

'I'll lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God;  
He bears them all, and frees us  
From the accursed load.'

He died for me: I am therefore free—free to accept Him as my Saviour—free to follow Him, and so be free from all my sins. Oh that this were the hearty resolution of all who may read this paper!

Another thing still claims a moment's attention: not only had the priests to be at the altar before entering the sanctuary, but they must, after being at the altar, *wash* in the laver which we have seen stood between the altar and the tabernacle. This they were commanded to observe on pain of death (Exod. xxx. 20). Now, what was prefigured by this, but the 'bath of regeneration' (Titus iii, 5, M'Knight) that is, the ordinance of baptism. The laver stood between the altar and the tabernacle, so baptism stands between the Cross and the Church. The priests who would enter the tabernacle could not do so until they had washed. So those who

would enter Christ's Church cannot until they have submitted to baptism. To this agrees the teaching of Christ to Nicodemus (John iii.), the commission to His disciples, and the teaching of the apostles. In John iii. Jesus teaches the necessity of knowledge, divine knowledge, in these words—'Except a man be born again (rather *from above* margin reading) *he cannot see* the kingdom of God;' and again, 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot *enter* the kingdom of God.' That the Saviour meant baptism by these words there can be no doubt to the reader who will accept the divine interpretation of this saying, given by the Apostle on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 36-47). Jesus says, in the commission to convert the nations (Mark xvi. 15, 16), 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'

Here we have the exact arrangement observed in the tabernacle times. 1st. The object of faith (corresponding with the altar); Christ—who died, yea, rather, who is risen again. 2nd. The bath (corresponding with the laver) in which the believer is baptized. 3d. The blessing of salvation peculiar to those who are, in truth, members of Christ's congregation (corresponding with the sanctuary) for all who are in the Church of Christ are saved. And all who are in the Church of Christ have entered it by faith and baptism.

How simple is heaven's plain unencumbered plan! Why was God so careful to state how he would have all things so placed while yet the tabernacle stood? Plainly, that cause and effect should not be confounded, and that we, who live in the gospel age may learn God's order of salvation. If that tabernacle prefigured the present dispensation—and who can doubt it?—is He less careful of logical order now than He was then? He has given us, on whom the ends of the world have come, a pattern of His Church as certain as He gave a pattern of the tabernacle to Moses. This pattern is



given us in the Church at Jerusalem, of which an account is given in the second chapter of the Acts of Apostles, where it is said, 'they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added about three thousand souls; and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers' and in praising God.'

If He has so graciously given us a model, we may rest assured that He still commands everything to be done according to the pattern; and further, we may feel equally sure that He will visit every transgressor of the divine arrangement with His severe displeasure. But do men follow that model Church? Are Churches now formed upon that plan? Do the formers of modern Churches consult that divine order? Unhesitatingly we affirm that they have changed the pattern, reversed and so confounded that beautiful order—beautiful because it has God for its author—so conspicuous in the Acts of Apostles and in the letters to the Churches. As a general rule, a basin or plate now stands instead of the laver before the altar—the Cross of Christ; whereas God commanded a laver, not a basin or plate to be placed, not before, but between the altar and the tabernacle—the Cross and the Church. Moreover, He intended it for believers alone; but now men carry *little babies* to what they have substituted for the laver; and so have laid aside that without which it is impossible to please God, namely faith—for babies cannot believe. These little ones are permitted to grow up under the soul-destroying delusion, that they are Christians, because they—as their parents believe, and as their religious teachers have taught them to believe—have been baptised. Thus it has come to pass that instead of Churches being composed of believing saved ones, they are made up of such only as are of the earth, earthly—men and women who have not passed from death to life, but

who are dead in trespasses and in sins.

All this comes of not observing that order which God has commanded. Not the laver first, but the altar; not baptism first, but faith in the Son of God, without which it is impossible to please Him. Again, some attend, as they say, to the order, so far as faith is concerned. They say that they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but affirm that baptism in water, the laver, is a thing of no importance, and so omit it altogether. These, be it noticed, do not believe in 'infant baptism,' and so have not the excuse—meagre though that excuse be—which those have who do believe therein. These sit down at the Lord's table unwashed, after having been, as they say, at the altar—the Cross of Christ—and by their disobedience dishonour the Lord's ordinance, and subject themselves to His severe displeasure. But again, others who have been, as they say at the altar—the Cross—and have washed in the laver, been baptized, and so in a condition to enter the Church, and eat scripturally of the memorial loaf, have joined with the unbaptized in their unholy desecration of the Lord's command, and by so doing given occasion to the faithful to consider them not the friends, but the enemies, of the truth. In all this they practically disregard the injunction of the Lord, and set aside the pattern which has been preserved for their use and guidance in the way of salvation.

In conclusion, we would offer a word of exhortation to those who have so revered the word of the Lord as to lend, in the first place, an ear to His call. You were not long ago rebels in heart against the only Lord God. You were then in all likelihood, like thousands more, fancying that you might, after all—that is at death—obtain favour of God, notwithstanding that you had been unreconciled to Him; or it may be that you were then thinking but little, if anything at all, of the dread realities of the resurrection morn.



But God, who is rich in mercy, called you to reflection. You heard Him. You learned your need. You were led to understand the way of salvation. You have perceived in Jesus an almighty deliverer. You have been won by His love in dying for you. You rejoice in His victory over death. You gladly consent to His universal Lordship. You have confessed Him as the rock of your salvation, and from day to day you tell His praises in grateful song. You have entered the sanctuary—by His cross, and through the laver. You are now feeding on the bread He has provided for you in His own house. How near you are to Himself! *If you continue in His Church*—the nearest place to heaven on earth—He shall raise the veil, and disclose to your admiring eyes the dazzling glories of the holy, holy place, and the unspeakable grandeur and beauty with which your Lord is invested. You shall also hear His sweet voice calling you to the bliss prepared for you and for all who look for His reappearing. 'For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words' (1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

Again, you who have been deluded by the allurements of this world and the doctrines of false teachers so as to misapply the instructions of Jesus and His apostles, be admonished to think. Think of the fitness of the book to lead you right. Make it from this time henceforth the guide of your lives. Turn from the vagaries of foolish men. Turn from an apostate Church, whose leaders presumptuously style themselves 'ambassadors for Christ,'

who 'have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant' (Isaiah xxiv. 5). Destruction is coming upon all such; and you, if you turn not, shall be involved with them in their ruin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty' (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18).

Do you believe on the Lord Jesus? Then remain no longer in the 'court'—the world—but enter the fold of Jesus by faith, repentance, and baptism. For says the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the Apostle, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins' (Acts ii. 38). Then shall you be a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that you should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; to which blessings you have no claim nor can enjoy them while you remain in the outer court—in the world, out of the Church—so strikingly prefigured by the tabernacle in the wilderness.

There is only one Church—no more than one. It is called 'the Church of God' (Acts xx. 28); 'the Church of Christ' (Rom. xvi. 16). Any other name than this is unauthorised by God—is therefore human, and so of the earth, earthly. Those who adhere to Churches which have the names of their founders, or of their distinctive creeds, are not in the Church of Christ and of God. They are, therefore, in the 'court'—that is, they are in the world—that world which shall be destroyed: for thus it is written, 'the earth also, and the works therein, shall be burned up' (2 Pet. iii. 10). All who would be safe now, and at the reappearing of Christ, are exhorted to disconnect themselves from every human organisation, and to enter 'the Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in heaven' (Heb. xii. 23).



This may subject you to many trials; nevertheless, you are counselled to remember that 'the friendship of the world is enmity with God' (James iv. 4). Do you ask, How shall I know that I am in the true Church, and not in another? The answer is, 'Search the Scriptures.' What do they teach? The man, the woman, that is born of water and of the Spirit, is in the Church of Christ: none else—for, said Jesus, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom'—or Church—'of God.'

*Has your heart been turned to God by faith in Jesus? Are you reformed? Make sure of this. Have you been baptized since faith and reformation? If not, you are not in the Church of Christ, whatever you may think to the contrary notwithstanding. Remember the position of the altar, the laver, and the sanctuary. See how completely that order is observed in the New Testament—viz., Christ first, and faith in Him; baptism second; and then, but not till then, the Church, and all the blessings peculiar to it.*

## The Old House at Cox Lane.

A Church of Christ was meeting at Cox Lane, near Chester, 130 years ago.

SOME people think little of house or of home,  
But o'er the wide world they continually roam.  
They hesitate not to cross o'er the deep,  
Or lie in a tent on the desert to sleep;  
But I stay at home and never complain,  
For I love my old home—my home in Cox Lane.

The old house in which I contentedly dwell,  
Was the home of my birth, and my father's as well;  
It was grandfather's home in years long past,  
And fondly I hope 'twill be mine to the last;  
For I am sure it would cause me the greatest of pain  
To leave my old home—my home at Cox Lane.

It was here the Reformers, that brave little band,  
Against isms and schisms did first make a stand;  
And creeds and opinions and names after man  
Were all laid aside for God's divine plan.  
And every Lord's Day, in language most plain,  
The Gospel was preached in my home at Cox Lane.

Then week after week, as Lord's Day came round,  
The people came flocking to hear the glad sound;  
To sit at the table of Jesus our King,  
To remember His death and His praises to sing.

And strength to go onward we all seemed to gain  
In attending those meetings we held at Cox Lane.

Edward Gibson and Ann came there from the Wood,  
Peter Thomas and Mary, and Jane if she could;  
John Davies and Nanny, and also John Allen,  
And Ledsham was sure to be there from Trevalyn;  
Samuel Gillam and Betsy, through sunshine and rain,  
Would come to the meetings we held at Cox Lane.

Edward Evans and Sally, regardless of weather,  
Would come to Cox Lane on the Lord's Day together;  
Thomas Jones, from Poulton, would come with his brother,  
Miss Chapman, from Gresford, along with her mother;  
Sometimes there were more than the house would contain,  
When the meetings were held in my home at Cox Lane.

Our late Brother John, whose name we hold dear,  
Would come in his turn to speak for us here;  
To build up the Faith for which we contend,  
Or to speak of the unfading crown at the end;  
And much precious fruit shows it was not in vain:  
That labour of love in my home at Cox Lane.



How he loved to get out to the old rustic seat,  
 If he felt in the meeting oppressed by the heat;  
 And there by the gate, in the shade of the trees,  
 Would sit and enjoy the soft cooling breeze;  
 Sometimes by his side an old friend might remain,  
 To talk of those meetings we held at Cox Lane.

Now his labour is ended. He has entered his rest,  
 With the Saviour to dwell in the Realms of the Blest,  
 Ever more to enjoy in those mansions above,  
 A glorious reward for his labour of love.  
 Though great is our loss, far greater his gain—  
 And his memory, how dear to us all at Cox Lane.

Then Hyatt and Stephen came preaching the Word,  
 Unfurling the banner of Jesus our Lord;  
 And showing enquirers 'tis God's divine way.  
 To pardon all those who believe and obey;  
 And Jenkins or Hill the same truth would explain,  
 Whenever they preached in my home at Cox Lane.

But now, of late years, in a Chapel we meet,  
 That strangers who come may all find a seat;  
 And the speakers we have are good men and true—  
 Unfolding most clearly the truth to our view;  
 Yet, I humbly confess, that I always retain,  
 More love for those meetings we held at Cox Lane.

Here, then, I would stay in the home that I love,  
 Until I am called to my home up above;  
 Here patiently wait till the Saviour sees best  
 To take me away to His heavenly rest,  
 And then I shall have no grief to sustain,  
 In leaving my earthly home at Cox Lane.

CHARLES THOMAS.

Fear is entirely based on a consideration of some possible, personal, evil consequence coming down upon me from the clear sky above me. Love is based upon the forgetfulness of self altogether. The very essence of love is that it looks away from self and to another.

Gospel Broadcast.

## The Book of Books.

HERE is an item of news which deserves wider publicity. Recently Selfridge and Company sold 10,000 copies of a beautifully bound Bible in six weeks. The demand so increased that the firm gave another order for 100,000 copies. This is said to be the biggest single order ever placed. Of it the Manager wrote: 'There is only one Book in the world of which any business firm would dare order 100,000 copies.'

*Joyful News.*

## Conference.

TRANENT, EAST LOTHIAN,  
 SCOTLAND.

Saturday, September 20th.

Saturday's Meetings will be held in the Town Hall, Church Street, Tranent.

Afternoon 2 p.m. Evening 6 p.m.

ALL applications for accommodation should be sent immediately to W. Steele, Atholl Dene, Longniddry. Will all those who are expecting to be in Tranent earlier than 2 p.m., please go to the Church of Christ Meeting Place, Lochside Chapel, Tranent?

It would assist our arrangements if all intending to be present—even if only for the Saturday meeting—would write intimating the fact.

We understand parties are arranging to come by motor coaches and would be pleased if organisers of these parties would let us know when they are scheduled to arrive.

TRANENT is reached by S.M.T. buses from St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh.



## Uncontentious Contentions.

OBEEDIENCE to the precept of the Holy Spirit, through Jude, the Apostle, to 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,' requires determination, energy, and zeal, with firm disputation. Passing quietly along, accepting everything for peace sake for fear of opposing some pet idea of one who may push himself forward, to gain notoriety, is not earnest contention. Paul advises 'striving together for the faith of the gospel,' directs Timothy to 'war a good warfare, fight the good fight of faith.' He says of himself, that he 'fought a good fight,' 'not as one that beateth the air.' When the Apostle fought it was no pretence of striking his opponent. He did it 'earnestly,' and effectively. It was not for the purpose of pleasing, by beautiful manouvers, those who were looking on. It was to affect the party he strove with. The Christian to-day has a fight on hand. He has earnest contention before him. What must he fight? The devil, his own lusts, the unbelieving world? Yes all these, but he must contend with more than these. Few men would follow Satan if he came as the adversary of all right, so he appears as a minister of light. His greatest power is in presenting himself as right, and among the right.

The danger from the world asking Christians directly to leave Christ and follow them is very small, but when men who, like Balaam, to obtain a reward, persuade them that it is advisable to combine their efforts, as Balaam taught Balak, that Israel and the Moabites should do, to make them united, in one purpose, for the good of all, then there is real danger.

To make Jude say that he asks the people of the Lord to 'earnestly contend' only against Satan, lusts, and the unreligious world, is a device to lead the mind from an equally great evil, if not a greater one. Jude in this place is not speaking of such contention. He directs contention

against those who are in the Church., and it is 'for the faith once delivered to the saints.' Why does he ask this? He answers, 'For there are certain men crept in unawares.' Had they come in openly to overthrow 'the faith,' their fate would have been soon sealed, and they knew it and so came 'in unawares.'

In substituting something else for the faith they 'were denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.' The brethren, therefore, were warned of their duty to oppose such characters. They 'despise dominion,' wanting a dominion of their own making, one in which good could be done, not confined to the faith of which Christ is the 'author and finisher.'

Jude warns his brethren that they are not to be prevented from contending because some are in a good position, for the angels which kept not their place were cast out. These characters 'feast with you, feeding themselves without fear,' and when there is an advantage to be gained they hold 'men's persons in admiration.'

Kings had a divine right, according to the Pope, while he could use them for his gain, and were admired accordingly. Take the religious world and the same principle prevails. Christians, therefore, have continued contention, not only with those who do not profess, but with those who talk most of things that are lovely, and things that are considered good.

Paul contended with men at Antioch who came from Jerusalem, where Apostles who knew the truth were, and what more powerful argument could be used than that those who so lately were with the Apostles were right. Men with the same principle were at Corinth, and Paul had to contend with them; exposed, and declared they were 'false Apostles,' and like the adversary of man, were 'transformed as the ministers of righteousness.' These



men did not come as enemies but as friends, doing things, and advising things to be done, that were for the advancement of the cause the Christian loved.

Contention is not only with those who try to lead the followers of Christ after themselves for a base purpose, but also with such as are deceived themselves, for Paul tells us that 'evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived,' and James exhorts to be 'doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.'

Men may therefore be deceived. The only safeguard is in receiving the engrafted word or the faith once delivered. The contention must be with all who oppose, add to or subtract from the teaching of Christ, opposing every appearance of evil in the way of innovation. The brethren can rely upon it that all wrong arises out of things that are outside of the Word or not in the faith as Christ gave it. There is little danger of difficulty arising from what the Lord has said. It is from those good things He has not said that differences generally arise, and against which contention is needed.

Christians, you must contend earnestly and oppose even brethren in your actions to sustain the religion of Christ against the assaults of men who deceive or are deceived themselves. Let nothing be accepted but what Christ authorises.—Bible Index.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 John ii. 13 to end of letter

**Love, a necessary mark of God's people (iii. 13 to 24).**—The contrast between Cain and Abel, and the controlling motives of these men are with us now. We must not expect the world's favour because we do right.

We recognise God's love by His sending His Son to die for us. He loved us before this happened. Hatred also be-

comes manifest in due time, its full fruit being murder. We shall know whether we really are God's children by our feelings towards others and our behaviour. Absence of the manifestation saps our confidence, and our hearts condemn us accordingly. Refusal to share the good things of life with those who need, condemns us also. In proportion to the giving of ourselves and our goods we shall have the answering of our prayers, and our confidence in God will increase. Contrast this with James iv. 3.

**False prophets: How to test them (iv. 1 to 6).**—While the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh had a particular bearing on some heresies of that time, it will be readily seen how the whole body of Christian truth is involved. The willingness to hear and obey the apostolic doctrine is the test of all error, now as then. The false prophets get the favour of the world by whittling away, or adding man's ideas to the truth. Even in those days, preachers were leaving the Churches and winning adherents to themselves, so forming sects or denominations; but now the position has become so involved that the 'man-in-the-street' can almost be excused for thinking there must be something basically wrong. His mistake, however, is to listen to men and neglect the Bible.

There are those to-day who claim to have miraculous powers. They must be put to Scriptural test. There were miraculous manifestations in those days bearing a similarity to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The test is the same for both these and the false prophets of ancient times: 'If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' (Isaiah viii. 20.)

**More about love (iv. 7 to v. 3).**—The great fact that God is love is an incitement to us to show this holy attribute in our own characters. This is not a mere fleshly fancy for one another, but an abiding attitude of mind. God implants it in us through His own great love for us. He did not wait for a response from sinful man. This is the quality of love required of Christians. It is comparatively easy to love those who love us, but all the earnest entreaty of the Apostle, and our own constant watchfulness of ourselves and encouragement of one another, are urgently needed even to make us love the fellow-members of the body of Christ as we ought! The duty of loving our enemies is not mentioned here. We must surely begin by reproducing heavenly love within the Church, and that will certainly come if we truly love God. The confession of Jesus is a necessary pre-requisite, and that is based upon the apostolic witness.

We know that love puts fear to flight. Perfect love is hardly attainable—whether towards man or God—but in proportion to our love fear is banished.



The emphatic repetition is to impress the necessity of loving heartily and sincerely. The commandment to love our brethren is so clear, that we just cannot be lovers of God (unseen) while we hate (indifference is perhaps regarded as equivalent to hate by the Apostle) our brethren with whom we are in constant touch. Indeed the evidence to our own senses of our true relationship with God is in our relationship with our fellows.

**Faith, testimony, eternal life (v. 4 to 20).**—Obedience to the commandments of God gives us victory over the world—Satan's world. It is faith in the testimony of the Apostles, that is, in Christ, in God and in the Holy Spirit, that makes the victory possible. The simplest explanation of verse six is that the reference to water and blood applies to the baptism and death of Christ. The common witness of Spirit, water and blood is to the Sonship of Jesus. As the R.V. indicates, the most reliable manuscripts and versions omit verse seven and part of verse eight.

A fully established faith in Christ gives abiding satisfaction to the soul, provided, as we have seen, that it is issuing in a life of obedience, consistent therewith. This satisfaction is not just a mystical feeling, but a reasonable confidence in God. The way in which those who accept God grow in grace as they grow in knowledge is a witness equally to themselves as to others that they are indeed Christ's. 'He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his,' is a truth we need often to ponder. Eternal life is the goal—is it not worth every effort?

The comments respecting prayer are a partial repetition of iii. 21, 22. Careful consideration of this letter, with its practical injunctions, will so increase our confidence that our prayers will come into line with God's will, and thus receive answers. In particular, our loving entreaties on behalf of erring brethren will be granted in certain cases. We do not know what the 'sin unto death' is unless it is that hardened condition, following upon continual willing sinning. We have to bear in mind that God does not coerce man. He had his free will, his choice of good or evil, or he would not be man but a machine.

If the statement that the 'new creature in Christ' sinneth not, were intended to be absolute, it would contradict what has immediately preceded. We believe that it means rather 'habitually sinneth not.' We trust in God and although the whole world lies in Satan's power, we are kept, 'by the power of God unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'

**Final warning (v. 21).**—The letter has been full of teaching by contrast: 'We have had light and darkness, truth and falsehood, love and hate, God and the world, Christ and anti-Christ, life and

death, doing righteousness and doing sin, the children of God and the children of the devil, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. . . .' (A. Plummer.) Those addressed by the Apostle are living in an age when idols are in every home, every street, and every town. He probably wrote in Ephesus, which was a hot-bed of idolatry of a degrading and wicked type. Here is a final contrast, then—the true God and idols. It is true that an idol is anything we may put before God, but bear in mind that the thing in view is undoubtedly idolatry with all its attendant evils. The Christian has to stand against the world, including all his companions in many cases. What better final warning could we have from that disciple whom Jesus loved? There is a later and just as important one at the end of the Revelation.

### JOHN'S SECOND LETTER

Unless we take a somewhat fanciful view of this short letter, we must conclude it is addressed from John to a Christian mother. It repeats some of the teaching in the first letter, but adds, in verses nine and eleven an instruction to refuse hospitality to any bringing false doctrine. These verses have a special interest as indicating that some were 'going beyond' the doctrine preached by the Apostles, and thus not abiding in the truth. Our particular contention for New Testament Christianity is in line with the warning here given. To add to as well as to take from the Gospel in its simplicity is a sin against the truth.

It is a matter for rejoicing when we see our children walking in the true way of life (verse four). If we had the outlook of the Apostle, the question would always be one of greatest importance. We are apt to place too great importance on the mental or physical development of our children—to our subsequent sorrow.

R. B. SCOTT.

### CREMATION

Dear Bro. Editor, — Bro. Allan's first paragraph is so ridiculous that comment is useless. He says: 'I find it difficult to prove from Scripture that cremation is wrong.' If I have proved it, never mind the difficulty; but it is not a Scripture subject, so I have nothing to prove. Bro. A. admits Christ's burial was according to custom so that settles my point. As for heathen customs, he is at liberty to follow them to the extreme point of cannibalism where death and burial takes another form as foreign to Scripture as cremation.

The question of burial has nothing to do with the kind of grave nor the different customs of different countries, whether in rock, caves, earth or water,



for Jonah was buried alive in the sea and in the fish prepared for him. 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so must the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'

I never even hinted, let alone suggested, that God ever buried any man in the N.T. That does not rule out that God buried Moses, and as Bro. A. again says, that man performed the act of burial of Jesus and others, then that is a second admission that burial is correct and properly Scriptural.

I am afraid Bro. A. has made a mistake with his reference to 1 Sam. iii. 12, 13. His last paragraph, in keeping with his first one, reminds one of Martha who said to Jesus: 'By this time he stinketh for he hath been dead four days.' Jesus ignored the statement and showed forth the glory of God. So I ignore your vile remarks and finish my correspondence on the subject, that if you care to follow the erring world in all its whims and fancies you will get its loyal support. I prefer to follow the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, who all spoke reverently of the dead and looked upon 'God's Acre' as sacred ground, and I am quite sure that Jesus saw in perfect vision the picture of the final scene when He said: 'Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'

Thanking you, dear editor, for your kind permission to grant me such space.

WILLIAM FERGUSON.



## C. H. Spurgeon on Withdrawal from Error.

FELLOWSHIP with known and vital error is participation in sin. To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus. During the past month many have put to us the anxious question, 'What shall we do?' To these we have had no answer to give except that each one must act for himself after seeking direction of the Lord. In our own case we intimated our course of action in last month's paper. We retire at once and distinctly from the Baptist Union. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established,

I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my own counsel has been, 'Come ye out from among them.' If I have rejoiced in the loyalty to Christ's truth which has been shown in other courses of action, yet I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation from known evil. At any rate, cost what it may, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not alone our liberty, but our duty. I have raised my protest in the only complete way by coming forth, and I shall be content to abide alone until the day when the Lord shall judge the secrets of all hearts: but it will not seem to me a strange thing if others are found faithful, and if others judge that for them also there is no path but that which is painfully apart from the beaten track.'

In one of his last addresses, Mr. Spurgeon said: 'We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly: but we shall not set up instead of him a horde of little popelings fresh from College. Are these correctors of Scripture infallible? Is it certain that our Bibles are not right, but that the critics must be so? The old silver is to be depreciated, but the German silver, which is put in its place, is to be taken at the value of gold. Stripplings, fresh from reading the last novel, correct the notions of their fathers, who were men of weight and character. Doctrines which produced the godliest generation that ever lived on the face of the earth are scouted as sheer folly.'

History does repeat itself and 'Churches of Christ' have been troubled and rent asunder by similar teaching to that which caused Mr. Spurgeon to withdraw from the Baptist Union. Overdale College is one of a group of colleges which Mr. A. S. Dyer, a former member of the Society of Friends, described as 'a hot-bed of German infidel theology,' and one of the chief text-books is Peake's Commentary, which Mr. Graham Scroggie described as "sodden with infidelity." Mr. Spurgeon's advice should be heeded to-day: "Come ye out from among them."—Editor 'S S.'



## EVANGELIST FUND

AT our last committee meeting, I was asked to convey the best thanks of the committee to all our subscribers for their liberal support in the work of the Gospel.

After a period with Bro. W. Crossthaite, Bro. D. Dougall starts on evangelistic work in September. I am sure he has the best wishes and prayers of all the brethren. Show your interest by supporting him in his work.

R. McDONALD,  
Treasurer.

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## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Capetown, Woodstock.**—We are glad that the Gospel of Christ has again manifested its ancient power, in that on the afternoon of June 22nd, 1947, two candidates, man and wife, confessed the Lord Jesus and were united with Him in baptism. What a wonderful comparison! Not only had they both been joined together naturally in marriage, but have now fulfilled and accomplished that which was and is needful spiritually, of being espoused to Christ. Praise the Lord! This is due to the efforts of our native brethren at Langa.

We pray and trust that with much labouring and witnessing for Christ in spreading the glad tidings, may cause us to enjoy more such seasons of refreshings.

The above service was conducted by our Bro. Kannemeyer, of the Woodstock assembly, and Bro. Gray (also of Woodstock) plainly and simply outlined New Testament baptism and all that it meant to the sinner and his salvation, and is so deceptively counterfeited by 'sprinkling.

Despite it being so practised, the majority of the modern Churches are aware that New Testament baptism is immersion. We, as Christians, having been clothed spiritually with the righteousness of Christ, should faithfully walk in the ways of Christ and await His coming.

T. HARTLE.

**Devonport.**—We rejoice that yet another precious soul has been won for the Lord. On May 10th, a young man made the good confession before many witnesses and was immersed into the Lord Jesus Christ by Bro. A. B. Clarke. We pray that our brother may remain faithful to His cause, and so reap the reward which is laid up for them that love Him.

W. LAKEMAN.

**Hindley, Argyle Street.**—The Church held a mission from Saturday, July 12th, to Lord's Day, July 20th, with meetings every night except Friday. These were very well attended, brethren from Wigan district rallying round with their support, sharing with us rich fellowship, meditating on eternal truths revealed from the precious Word.

Our speaker (Bro. John Allen Hudson, Kansas City, U.S.A.) spared no effort to make the mission a success. It was a joy and a privilege to listen to such well-thought-out messages. As a result, we have been strengthened in our faith. Many friends heard the Gospel preached faithfully, and we are hopeful that the contacts made, will bear fruit before long.

Bro. Will Steele also spoke well for us on the Saturday and Monday evenings.

We thank all brethren who helped in this effort, and go forward greatly encouraged in our work for the Master.

L. MORGAN.



**East Kirkby, Beulah Road.**—The Church has just celebrated the nineteenth anniversary of the opening of the present meeting house. The proceedings (despite all difficulties in obtaining provisions) commenced with the usual cup of tea, to which about one hundred and fifty sat down. This was followed by a rousing social meeting, when addresses were given by Bren. R. McDonald, of Dewsbury, and L. Morgan, of Hindley. Bro. C. N. Hitchens presided.

Our meeting-room was taxed to fullest capacity, and seats had to be requisitioned from a nearby hall. Brethren came to take part from Leicester, Birmingham, Dewsbury, Hindley, Creswell, Ilkeston, and Eastwood. Items of special song were rendered by the Leicester brethren, who have now become a feature of these gatherings; also by our own brethren and sisters. Altogether the meeting was of a most inspiring and helpful character. The addresses delivered by Bro. McDonald, based upon 1 Cor. viii. 6, and Bro. L. Morgan, upon Eph. iii. 10, both instructed and edified us in the Word of the living God, causing much heart searchings. Truly it was a real mountain-top experience.

The special services were continued on Lord's Day, July 27th. The scholars, assisted by a number of brethren and sisters, and ably led by our precentor. Bro. John Longden, sang their special hymns of praise, and repeated their recitations in a very creditable manner. Bro. L. Morgan, in his earnest, characteristic way, gave a suitable address to the young people in the afternoon, and faithfully proclaimed the Gospel in the evening.

Thus we commence another year's witness for Him, greatly cheered and strengthened for the very difficult days that lie ahead. Truly, 'the day of our blessed Lord draweth nigh,' and our prayer is that He may forgive us for our littleness of love and service in the past, and that we may be more mightily used by Him in the salvation of precious souls, and remain faithful to Him against that day.

W. B. JEPSON.

**Glasgow, Hospital Street.**—On Tuesday evening, August 5th, brethren and friends gathered to celebrate Bro. Andrew Gardiner's attainment of eighty-one years. Bro. E. Hendry presided. After hymn and prayer by Bro. A. Morton, a splendid tea, provided by the sisters of the Church, was much enjoyed.

After tea, Bro. Hendry, in well-chosen words, paid honour and respect to Bro. Gardiner, and handed him a monetary gift, wishing him in the name of his brethren and friends many happy returns of the day.

Bro. Gardiner, with a full heart, feelingly accepted the gift with sincere thanks to all. He said when the Church was smaller it was a hard fight to keep the faith, and to keep the Church alive.

Bro. A. H. Odd said we were doing a grand thing in showing kindness to our loved ones while they are still with us.

Bro. D. Dougall spoke of our indebtedness to our elders in the faith. He named some present whose lives and work encouraged younger ones to carry on.

Bro. A. Gardiner, junior, spoke words of esteem for a bold warrior for the faith. He spoke of God's plan, and of the necessity of seeing that we are right with God.

Many present took part with singing and recitations. The meeting was one of the best we have had.

We are now preparing for three months' evangelistic work with Bro. D. Dougall, beginning in September. Our prospects are bright. 'Brethren pray for us,' that many precious souls may be won for Jesus.

A. MORTON.

**Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.**—We are very pleased to report two additions by immersion, on Lord's Day, August 10th. Sheila McDonald and Mrs. Eleanor McDonald, daughter and daughter-in-law of one of our elders, made the good confession and were duly baptised into the ever-blessed name. Sheila has been a very faithful member of our Bible Class, and we are hopeful that the step these two young people have taken may lead others to decide for Christ. Bro. D. Dougall, who was paying us a flying visit, spoke at the baptismal service.

D. MELLIS.

**Kentish Town.** Anniversary Meetings. Saturday, October 4th. Afternoon 3 o'clock; Tea, 5 o'clock; Evening, 6.30. Speakers: A. Gardiner and A. E. Winstanley; Chairman: L. Channing.

**Pennyvenie.**—Change of Secretary: Bro. W. Black, 8 Camlarg Crescent, Dalmellington, Ayrshire.

**Silverdale Hall, Tunbridge Wells.**—The women's meeting held their first outing on July 15th, touring the countryside and visiting Cobtree Zoo, Maidstone. A most enjoyable time was spent in brilliant sunshine. The following Thursday another happy day was spent with the Bible School, travelling to Eastbourne by coach. About 4.30, both parents and scholars partook of a good picnic tea on the beach.

We do thank our heavenly Father for these times of refreshing and enjoyment,

D. GILLET.



## Obituary.

**Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast.**—The Church has been saddened by the death of Mrs. A. M. Forrest, beloved wife of Mr. A. M. Forrest, H.M. Inspector of Schools, an elder of the Church.

Sister Forrest was an unobtrusive, practical Christian, zealous of good works. She will be remembered with gratitude by many lads who were in the Forces, especially for the canteen which she set up in the days of Dunkirk, and also for the welcome which many American boys from sister Churches found in her home.

Deep sympathy is extended to her sorrowing husband, daughter, and sister.

**Slamannan.**—We much regret to record the death of Sister Barbara Harley, who departed this life on July 10th, 1947. Sister Harley had been in a delicate state of health for some time, which prevented her attendance at the meetings for worship. During the latter months of her illness she endured much suffering, borne with great patience. She was interred in Slamannan Cemetery on July 12th, the service in the home and at the graveside being conducted by Bro. A. E. Winstanley. Our deepest sympathy is with her elderly parents. M. NELSON.

**Wigan, Scholes.**—Our sister in Christ, Mrs. Mary Ann Hilton, died on July 18th, at the age of seventy years.

Baptised twenty years ago, Sister Hilton had since then been a faithful and valued member of the Church of Christ. Hers was a genuine conversion, and as soon as she realised her responsibilities to Christ she obeyed Him. Her example was the means of winning many of her family also to the Lord.

Sister Hilton was the mother of a large family, and had a hard life. Her very sufferings were the means of drawing her closer to God and of increasing her love for her Saviour. Whilst on what proved to be her deathbed, she was the means of cheering and comforting many visitors by her bright witness to the

faithfulness of God and her unswerving trust in Him. The present writer will always remember the inspiration he received from speaking and praying with her.

To enter her sickroom seemed to be experiencing a foretaste of heaven. The name of Jesus was ever on her lips, and with deep meaning she would repeat the 23rd Psalm and 'Let not your heart be troubled . . . Truly to her to live was Christ, and to die was gain. Gently, and breathing His holy name in prayer, she fell asleep in Jesus, in full assurance of her awaking in that land where there shall be no more pain and where God shall wipe away all tears.

Our sister was generous of heart, ever ready to help and do good, 'especially to those of the household of faith.' She had a great heart of love and sympathy, and was looked upon, as one brother expressed it, as the mother of us all. She was of particular usefulness in the Sisters' Meeting, where her death will be severely felt. Quiet, unassuming, and humble, she leaves behind her the fragrance of a beautiful and saintly life, and we thank God for every remembrance of her.

We pray for the comfort of God to be given to her husband, her son, and her seven daughters. We take courage from her example and follow in her steps, as she followed Jesus.

**Ulverston, Ford Villa.**—Sister Hornby, wife of our esteemed Bro. William Hornby, after a painful illness, fell asleep in Jesus on Lord's Day, August 3rd. She had been for many years a member of the Church at Lindal-in-Furness. She was a faithful wife and mother. 'She hath done what she could,' and now rests in Jesus.

Bro. Hornby has been a great help to the Church here, and we commend him and his family to the God of all grace and consolation.

The funeral service at Dalton Cemetery, on August 6th, was conducted by Bro. W. Crosthwaite.

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