

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## AN UNNECESSARY COMMAND

ABOUT two years ago, or so, in connection with my employment, I had occasion to inspect some structural alterations which had been carried out on a large church building belonging to the Elim Pentecostal Church. Included in the renovations was the construction of a very modern baptistry, obviously at great expense, and I remarked to the person who was conducting me around how gratifying this was to see and how important baptism must be to them. A discussion on the subject naturally ensued and upon taking my leave I was given a very well produced tract entitled "Why Water Baptism". The tract had sub-headings entitled "Sprinkling or Baptism by immersion"; "Baptism by Immersion – The only Mode in Apostolic Days"; "Scriptural Proof that Baptism means immersion"; "Conditions for Receiving the Ordinance"; "Baptism – A Command" and after reading all the material relating to these sub-headings I had to agree with almost all that was said. The next sub-heading however was a bit of a come-down; "*Baptism – Not Necessary to Salvation*". The following was the text below the sub-heading:– "There is no Scripture whatever for this error called baptismal regeneration. We are saved by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:9) not the waters of baptism. But it is necessary to obedience. Do you want to obey the Lord? Then follow Him by going through the waters of baptism."

The expression of these sentiments on baptism are fairly typical of many of the religious denominations and most of us will have had many similar such experiences but I never cease to be amazed at the way men come over very strongly for baptism for the wrong reasons. To my simple mind the tract was criminally misleading to the seeker after truth and so I wrote to the Elim Publications Board at the London Headquarters on February, 1974, expressing my feelings in as mild a fashion as possible. The tract was written by a Mr. C.J.E. Kingston and I asked him to explain his, to me, contradictory statement that baptism was necessary to be obedient to God but not necessary for salvation. After all, if baptism is necessary to be obedient to God it is necessary to salvation – for only those obedient to God will receive salvation. Seeing that Mr. Kingston could find no scripture whatever to justify the error called baptismal regeneration I suggested the following to him and asked for his comments:–

John's baptism was for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Matt. 3:6) and so is Christ's baptism (see Acts 2:38).

Baptism is a condition of salvation (Mark 16:16)

Baptism is for the washing away of sins (Acts 22:16)

Baptism frees us from sin (Rom. 6:3,7,17,18)

Baptism saves us – the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

Baptism a necessary ingredient in us being born again (John 3:5)

Baptism puts us into Christ – this is how we put on Christ (Gal. 3:27)

Mr. Kingston replied a week or two later and I am sorry that space does not allow me to print the entire text of his answer – suffice to say that, to me, it was most unsatisfactory. A clue to his thinking on the subject of baptism may, however, be apparent in his definition of “Baptismal Regeneration” bearing in mind that he said in the tract that he could find no scriptural justification for the error called baptismal regeneration – I quote, “Mr. Gardiner, it seems to me, has misunderstood what is meant by the term ‘Baptismal Regeneration’. By this term I refer to the dogma that a child, by the waters of baptism, is thereby regenerated and made a member of Christ’s church, irrespective of any consent by himself or repentance on his part. The Book of Common Prayer in its order for baptism, after the child has been baptised. says, ‘Seeing now... that this child is regenerated and grafted into Christ’s church let us give thanks...’ Thus when I said, ‘There is no scripture whatever for ‘baptismal regeneration’ these words must be understood to refer to the teaching that regeneration can be obtained by the sprinkling of a few drops of water upon a young child, or for that matter by an adult being baptised by total immersion if such baptism is not preceded by true repentance and faith in Christ...’ Wonder what gave Mr. Kingston the impression that that’s what I thought ‘Baptismal regeneration’ meant. Mr. Kingston is of course right when he says that there is no scriptural backing for *that conception of* ‘Baptismal Regeneration’ but Mr. Kingston is wrong when he says that there is no scriptural justification for ‘Baptismal Regeneration’

Mr Kingston also briefly commented upon Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:3,4 and John 3:5 and a fair summary might be that notwithstanding these scriptures we are saved only by the grace of God; not works: we are saved by the blood of Christ and the “rite of baptism cannot free us from sin”.

I replied to Mr. Kingston on the 4th April, 1974, and raised many points with him upon the subject of *New Testament* baptismal regeneration. I also took the opportunity of pointing out that men are saved by the grace of God but not only by the grace of God. Men are saved by faith but not only by faith, Man is saved by the Blood of Christ but he is also saved by his own repentance. Men are saved by baptism but not by baptism alone.

I suggested that Mr. Kingston should carefully and consciously qualify his statements in future for men are saved by, at least, the following:—

God (1 Tim. 4:10)	By trust (Rom. 8:24)
Christ (Matt. 1:21)	By words (Acts 11:4 ; Jas. 1:21)
By His life (Rom. 5:10)	By obedience (1 Peter 4:17)
By His death (Rom. 5:10)	By calling on Lord’s name (Acts 2:21)
By His blood (Rom. 5:9)	By repentance (Acts 2:38)
By the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1)	By baptism (Mark 16:16 ; 1 Peter 3:21)
By grace (Eph. 2:8)	By ourselves (Acts 2:48)
By Faith (Rom. 5:1)	By endurance (Matt. 10:22)
By works (Jas. 2:24)	

How can any genuine and reasonable Bible student select any particular one item from the above list and exclude all the others? I again asked Mr. Kingston to comment on 1 Peter 3:1 “...baptism doth also now *save us...*” and reconcile it with his own contention that baptism does *not* also now save us – also comment upon Acts 22:16 and explain why Paul was instructed to arise and be baptised and wash away his sins, if baptism could play no part in such a cleansing. To date I have had several letters from the Director of Publications at the London Headquarters hinting that a reply may yet come from Mr. Kingston but I am still hopefully waiting. Meanwhile many hundreds of searchers after the truth throughout the country are reading the attractive little coloured tract “Why Water Baptism”.

The only reason I mention this incident at all is that it is so typical, and our younger members should be warned about the kind of attitude to expect from the religious world outside. This doctrine of ‘only believe’ is so widely held and preached among the ‘evangelical’ denominational bodies in this country that it must surely be one of the greatest triumphs of Satan and the greatest stumbling block to the preaching of the true gospel of Christ.

One final thought – the evident reluctance of Mr. Kingston to defend the statements he professes to believe. A conviction which is not worth defending must surely not be worth holding. Surely we should always be ready for a defence of the gospel and keen always to give an answer for the hope that lies within us. In fact we should *welcome a challenge* to what we believe, or hold dear, and be quick to uphold and defend it no matter what the cost. After all, history recounts that fact that men of courage have suffered torture and even physical death for what they believe, let alone defend it in print. Can any of the readers of the "S.S." explain how it would be possible to reconcile the two sub-headings in the tract viz. "Baptism – A Command" and "Baptism – Not Necessary to Salvation" and how it is possible to ignore a 'command' of God and yet be saved? Is this then what might be described as *an unnecessary command?*

EDITOR

## “AS 'THERS SEE US”

THE following article is reproduced, without comment, from the August issue of the "Firm Foundation". At least now we know for sure what our brethren across the Atlantic really think of us. Ed.

### “THE CHURCH IN GREAT BRITAIN”

WE recently had the pleasure of preaching in a "Campaign" in Birmingham, England, in which a team of personal workers recruited by Vurel Vick and directed by Emmett Channel were engaged. Birmingham is a city of more than a million with another two million in the environs. The church there is 150 years old, and once numbered 600 members with 12 elders. Then apostasy took its toll. At the bottom of the decline eight souls remained. A remnant was rescued by the late John Allen Hudson in his efforts of 1937. As the churches went further into the apostasies of the 'co-operation', only two infinitesimally small churches were saved, of which Birmingham was one. Allen Daniel preaches there, and is doing a remarkable job.

Desiring to 'have some fruit among you also', and to become better acquainted with British brethren, we made the trip. The church of some 70 members was strengthened and a number were baptized, but one of the serendipities was the inspiration and increase in confidence experienced by the workers. They will be worth more for the kingdom for the rest of their lives.

The church is in a state of unrest throughout Britain. They believe different things and their practices may vary from city to city. Brethren are fragmented because they are suspicious of each other. Some hold to a past they cannot give up, which includes such practices as mutual ministry, and one cup, while others, swinging to the other extreme, engage in almost open membership. In some places the church is growing, in others it is shrinking. We now have some 70 congregations in Great Britain, and a dearth of preachers.

Britain, like all of Europe, is a 'hard field'. Less than 3% of the people attend any religious communion at all. The people are extremely materialistic. They are completely disgusted with organized religion and especially feel that the denominational churches have nothing to offer. They have suffered from war, from shortages, from privation and hard work. They seldom smile. One doesn't battle denominational error in Britain. He battles apathy, hopelessness, materialism and total atheism. 75% of those baptized fall away, but then, they are a part of a nation in which only 3% attend anyway. Some fall away because of the exclusiveness of the fellowship and some simply because they do not see the need for attendance.

The churches are all small and suffer from lack of teaching and leadership, but the trend is slowly changing. The Birmingham church has sent out eight members in the past five years to work with other churches. It might have been more profitable to keep them all together and train them to build self-propagating churches by development of leadership. Then the congregation could really be of help to others. In many cases American workers have come to Britain with no plan and inadequate support, and have worked a few months and have gone home. Britain could use three or four dozen good elders who know how to plan the strategy for building churches and converting people. Since there is no language barrier, elders might consider going to this mission field where they are as badly needed as preachers are. We have urged only

preachers to go into mission fields. How about elders going? They would at least be in a better position to understand preachers' problems in England.

The brightest works, of course, are in new towns among young people. Too often, out of deference to small and unproductive works, we have stood back when we ought to have pushed ahead. In some places new converts are being encouraged to start meeting in their homes, and some have moved the furniture out of one room and installed a pulpit and pews. As they outgrow that arrangement, this totally indigenous church will fulfill its mission in the community.

There is a small preacher school in Northern Ireland, run by Joe Nisbet, which is doing a good job in Belfast, Irish preachers who will stay in Ireland and preach the gospel rather than come to America to preach for American churches are being trained there. This school should be encouraged and strengthened. It doesn't make sense to us to send a whole group of missionaries to another country at great expense to convert and train preachers to preach to American churches. A common language makes it easy for Americans to work in Britain, but it also makes it easy to drain Britain of the preaching talent which it has and which is so badly needed there.

There are a number of cities in Britain of over one million, with no church. Why not pick out one of these cities and set yourself to the long and arduous task of finally planting the church there? A good way to start might be to insert ads in the local paper and begin a correspondence program. This could be done in advance of any public effort, and for pennies compared with a preaching program. We would like to see some church, or some dedicated sister for that matter, undertake the experiment. We believe it would pay off.

## IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

"They may say the devil has never lived,  
They may say the devil is gone,  
But simple people would like to know  
Who carries the business on?"

### PERFECT SAFETY — "IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES" Psalm 23:5

IT would be true to say, I feel sure, that some people do not like this picture of David, having a good feast in the presence of his enemies. In the old days it is said that "the conquerors would celebrate their victory by a feast. In order to enhance their savage glee, they would bring into the banqueting hall, and chain to the pillars, leading captives taken from the enemy. And there the conquerors sat, and feasted, and drank confusion to their enemies, the enemies meantime tugging at their chains and gnashing their teeth in impotent rage". That picture offends, they would say, because our Heavenly Father is a God of love, and the thought of David gloating over his enemies, does not seem to fit their reasoning. But could there not be another explanation? Of course there is. It is quite possible today for the children of God, to have a glorious feast in the presence of their enemies. David said:— "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies". As one who believes the scriptures to be inspired of God, and are profitable for my learning, I will accept David's affirmation at its face value, and seek to edify myself with its lessons. We have no need whatever, to speculate on the enemies of the one who kept his father's sheep, but we do need to get to grips with our own, God's children can be as dogmatic as this man, and say with all clarity'— "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies". We wrote at length on the prepared table, in last month's issue of the Scripture Standard, this month we will concentrate on the phrase, "In the presence of mine enemies".

That we are living in a mad world, is an understatement, hell seems to be let loose, the world, the flesh, and the devil, are on the rampage. The empire of evil is prevalent and at its head is the arch-enemy of the human soul, and the word of God says of him, "the great dragon... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world". Revelation 12:9. We must never underestimate our adversary, and it will help us greatly, if we get to know our enemy better. Let us keep this thought fore-most in our minds at this moment, the Devil is after our souls, and remember they are very precious. Jesus said: "And fear not them which kill the

body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" Matthew 10:28. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" Matt. 16:26. Our souls constitute a battle ground, and the opponents are our arch-enemy and God. Forget the picture of the devil, with horns and a black cloak, floating about from place to place – but be on your guard, he is very much alive, and if you are in any doubt, read the morning newspapers. If you have any further doubts, let the searchlight of God, examine your own life, that slave of Christ, the Apostle Paul was under no delusions, listen to these words:– "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ...O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:18,19,24. No hiding of the sharp flint, no covering up of the true facts, he knew the power of the Devil, but thanks be to God, he also knew who had the answer to his problems. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. SO then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" Romans 7:25.

We need to remind ourselves that we are fighting a personal Devil.

#### ONE WHO CAN TALK:–

"Yea hath God said" Genesis 3:1

"Doth Job fear God for nought? Job 1:9

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread"

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"

"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" Matt.4:3,6,9,

#### ONE WHO IS A MURDERER AND A LIAR:–

Jesus said:– "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" John 8:44.

#### ONE WHO IS A DECEIVER:–

Paul said:– "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" 2 Cor. 2:11. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" Eph. 6:11.

#### ONE WHO IS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT:–

Paul said:– "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" 2Cor.11:14.

#### ONE WHO GOES ABOUT AS A ROARING LION:–

Peter said:– "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" 1 Peter 5:8.

#### ONE WHO IS A SINNER:–

John said:– "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" 1 John 3:8.

#### ONE WHO HAS THE POWER TO TAKE AWAY THE WORD:–

Jesus said:– "And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts" Mark 4:15.

#### ONE WHO HAS THE POWER TO SIFT YOU AS WHEAT:–

The Lord said:– Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat". Luke 22:31.

#### ONE WHO HAS POWER TO BLIND THE MINDS:–

Paul said:– "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, less the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" 2 Cor. 4:4.

**ONE WHO HAS POWER TO BUFFET THE CHILD OF GOD:—**

Paul said:— “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 2 Cor. 12:7.

**ONE WHO HAS POWER TO HINDER THE WORK OF THE SAINTS OF GOD:—**

Paul said:— “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” 1 Thess. 2:18.

**PERFECT SAFETY — “IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES” Psalm 23:5**

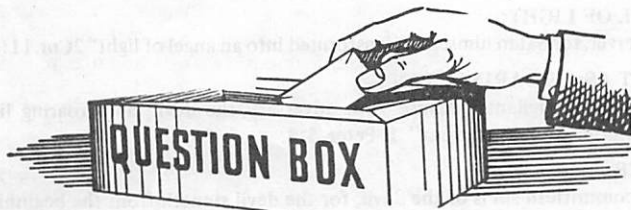
My brother, my sister, do not be discouraged by the power of your enemy and mine, and bear this in mind, the fiery darts of the Devil will be aimed at you... yes you. He is not troubled about those who are already his, and I have no doubt that what he holds, he likes to keep. He is not concerned about the killer, the bomber, the alcoholic, the drug addict, the confirmed gambler, the filthy tongue of the sordid story-teller, those who attack and rob the old folks, the blasphemer — they belong to him. The word of God says:— The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9. Take courage, the word defeat was not in the vocabulary of the Lord Jesus, it was to be victory, victory, victory, all the way. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”. “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God”. “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve”. Then the devil leaveth him. Matt. 4:4,7,10,11. The triumph was to be the Lord's. “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” John 12:31,32. He slew death by dying, so the writer of the Hebrews said:— “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” Hebrews 2:14. How can we have complete victory over the Devil, the solution surely is given to us by the Apostle James chapter 4 verse 7. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”.

SUBMIT ..... RESIST  
 SUBMIT TO GOD.. ..... resist the devil.

And the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

This month's exercise: Read Ephesians 6:10-24 and learn by heart James 4:7.

LEONARD MORGAN.




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Conducted by  
 Alf Marsden

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**COULD you please comment on the relationship between baptism and the church?**

IN the N.T., the Greek word EKKLESIA, translated church, means a 'called out' group, or 'assembly' — not necessarily a religious one. Applied to christians, the ones who are 'called out' are said to be 'in Christ' and so they comprise the church. In its universal aspect, EKKLESIA is applied to the body of Christ, for in Eph. 1:22,23 we read, "And (God) hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all".

So in our study we have to learn something about the ones who are 'called out', for they will be 'in Christ', and consequently members of 'his body' which is 'the church'.

**The Called**

When we speak about 'the called' we must appreciate that they are called by someone. It is God who calls, and hence the call is a divine call. Way back in Jeremiah we read, "I have sent

also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other Gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me" (Jer. 35:15). In this case God's call was ineffective, but you can see the basic ingredients of the call:—

- a) it is divine in origin
- b) it asks for a return from sin
- c) it is a call to repentance
- d) it presupposes obedience
- e) it promises a better state

In the N.T., God's call is centred in Christ, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). This was written "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (v.2). They (the church) were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and they were saints by calling. They had responded to that call by they themselves calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul taught the Romans that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12,13). He then enlarges on this theme and states that the call comes through the gospel and that the gospel must be obeyed (vv 15,16). Therefore, we can say that the 'called out' are those who have responded to God's initiative and have obeyed the gospel.

Obedience is essential to belief. It is not sufficient to give mental assent only to the gospel; This is a mistake that so many people have made and are still making. In his letter to Rome, Paul said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:16,17). What was the teaching which had been delivered? Paul makes this clear in his first letter to Corinth, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-5). This, he says, was the gospel which they had received, and where in they stood (v.1). We can rest assured that the gospel as preached to Rome would have been the same as that preached to Corinth.

#### In Christ

We have now seen that 'the call' is the gospel, and therefore implicit in our 'calling on the name of the Lord' is the fact that we are willing to be obedient to the gospel, and the basic ingredients of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In his letter to Rome, Paul establishes a remarkable relationship between baptism and the gospel. "Know ye not", he says, "that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should rise to walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:3-5).

From this we can see that the one who is baptised is totally identified with Christ in all of the ingredients of the gospel. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. As Paul taught the Galatians, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26,27). Therefore, not only is the christian one of the 'called out', but by his obedience to the gospel in baptism he is now 'in Christ' and a new creature.

#### His Body – The Church

We only need to take one more step to see the full integration of baptism and the church. Again in Paul's first letter to Corinth he says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor. 12:

12-14). By using the metaphor of the physical body, Paul is telling us that the spiritual 'body of Christ' has many members. The baptised believer is one of those 'many members' being 'in Christ'.

Paul then goes on to expand the metaphor until he leads us to the relationship we are seeking. In verse 27 he says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church"... etc. You see how precisely he identifies the body of Christ with the Church. You see how intimately baptism is related to the church.

### Summary

Well, we have had to delve a little deeply in order to answer our question, but I think the study has been worthwhile because we have learned some fundamental truths.

- 1 There is only one Church mentioned in the N.T. and that is the Church that Jesus initiated and which came into being in the 1st century A.D. This means that there must be a big question mark against the many denominations which have sprung from that church which started at Pentecost.
- 2 If that Church can be identified, which of course it can be by its doctrine and practice, then it is impossible for that church to be fragmented across many religious groups.
- 3 Baptism (immersion into Christ) brings us into that Church and thenceforth we should remain in that Church, loving Christ by keeping his commandments, and fruit-bearing.
- 4 If we have been immersed and we are in another religious group then we are trying to achieve the impossible. We have been baptised into His church and yet we are trying to receive sustenance away from him. I know how difficult it is to break away from friends and relatives, I was a Methodist some 25 years ago, but we do it because he made the supreme sacrifice for us and he wants us to be 'in him' fully and completely.

I trust that what we have said will be of some help to the questioner, and to others who find themselves in similar circumstances.

(All questions please to brother Alf Marsden, 377 Billinge Road, Highfield, Wigan).

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

DECEMBER 1975

7—Zech. 4	Revelation 11
14—Micah 4	Revelation 12
21—Daniel 7:1-12	Revelation 13
28—Daniel 7:13-28	Revelation 14

### HEAVENLY ASSURANCE

We will look first at certain heavenly pictures.

When the seventh angel sounded (11:15-19) rejoicing and worship filled heaven. The final victory was now assured. God's purposes would be consummated. Earth's kingdoms could no longer reign in unrighteousness. Jesus was taking over. Reward is assured to the prophets, the saints and all without distinction who reverence God. To John and to all, the Holy of Holies comes into full view — "We shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Upon the devil's defeat and expulsion from heaven (12:7-12) the heavenly creatures are called upon to rejoice, and there was also victory on earth in spite of the presence of the Devil our brethren overcame "by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony".

The representative army of Israel victorious in their striving against sin (14:1-5) are seen on Mount Zion (the spiritual sanctuary), rejoicing in their redemption and singing a new song to the accompaniment of heavenly music. They bear the Father's name and are the firstfruits of the harvest of the gospel.

### Past, Present and Future

Last month we brought our historical notes to the year 1453 at which time the vision in chapter 9 was fulfilled. Chapter 10 presents an angel with a universal message ("sea" and "earth" v.2) in the form of a BOOK to be revealed to peoples, nations, tongues and kings (v. 11). It was sweet to the mouth but bitter in the belly. Seven thunders fulminated against



it but were ignored. Promise of final completion of God's purposes is emphatically given (vv. 6&7).

Receiving the BOOK John is required to prophesy further, and is given a reed to measure the inner sanctuary — to assess the extent of the true church — but not to include the outer courts. The plan of the Jewish temple is in view as a figure. Whereas the whole temple stood for God's worship. His very presence was in the Holy of Holies. The vision tells that all but the innermost part would be trodden under heathen domination for 1260 years, mentioned several times under differing descriptions (42 months; 3½ years; time, times and half a time), as also by Daniel. During this time two witnesses will be at work in deep sorrow. They are identified with two olive trees and two lampstands, lamps kept alight by the supply of oil during the period. The oil of the Spirit of God through His Word.

Now the apostasy was already at work while Paul wrote 2 Thess. 2:7, and while John wrote his letters, but only by gradual infiltration did it reach its final stages. The power of the gospel exercised such a tremendous influence in the heathen Empire of Rome that a revolution developed throughout its territory by which heathen idol-worship was abolished. This only came about through the faithfulness of the church under all kinds of persecution as we have already indicated in last month's notes. Chapter 11 gives us in summary the oppression of the true people of God ("the holy city" v.2), the release of their witness and its consummation.

The revelation now returns to a highly symbolic story of the history of the church for we cannot but regard the woman as representing Israel bearing the Messiah, and subsequently the true people of God. We think of Jesus as being born into godly relationships. Zacharias and Elizabeth represented faithful behaviour under the law, Joseph was a righteous man, Mary, "the handmaid of the Lord", Simeon was waiting to see the salvation of God, Anna was a deeply consecrated person. The red dragon now appears representing a spiritual power hostile to the church. He would have destroyed the Saviour at birth through his agent Herod, and did by entering the heart of Judas bring about the sacrifice of Christ. So his purpose was defeated by the resurrection, resulting in our salvation. Thus baulked he

continued and continues his war against all who love and serve the Saviour. He is God's enemy and ours.

We expect to find the church "in the wilderness" hidden away, for a period of 1260 years, and this does accord with history. The question as to exact dating remains in doubt, judging by the varied interpretations of the most learned commentators, but its general application is beyond doubt. At the time of Constantine as the church gained power in the world it seems to have lost its spiritual purity. It was being dominated by worldly rather than heavenly ambitions.

There can be little doubt that the beast, which was the instrument of the dragon with seven heads, ten horns and crowns was the heathen Roman Empire. At the time when, Christianity began its course, men were required to offer incense to the Emperor as God. This surely answers the description "name of blasphemy" (13:1). The forces of this empire were used as stated last month to destroy Christianity unsuccessfully but the Devil's tactics changed and the favour of the worldly power brought about an apostasy represented by the beast (13:11) with two horns like a lamb but the voice of a dragon. The power exercised among the churches by the Bishops of Rome seems to have culminated in secular as well as spiritual authority being passed to the Bishops who had become Popes. The kings of European countries became vassals of the Pope, a condition we may illustrate by the case of King John of England who was forced to become "the Pope's vassal".

The period of this domination appears to have begun about the time of the fall of the old Empire, 476, and to have lasted until the times of Wycliffe, Luther, Tyndale, Huss and numerous other noble souls who worked to give the Bible to the people. They brought about changes in all the nations of Europe, which have reduced the power and influence of the Papacy. There was also a time when war under Napoleon broke the papal authority, and the Pope was compelled to crown him emperor of the French. Perhaps this event would fill the picture in 11:13 for the foundations were shaken which had seemed so firm. The outcome of the work of the witnesses appeared to be in doubt for a time when severest persecution was brought to bear, but the blood of the martyrs again proved to be the seed of the church. For long years the Pope ruled

through legates, cardinals and priests including the Inquisition when a cruelty only matched by Mohammedans, Vandals and Turks was exercised by the church of Rome in a vain endeavour to stamp out all opposition. It has perhaps been forgotten that some 40 million people perished in this time. The people were held in a condition of ignorance and poverty. War and pestilence decimated the population of the continent from time to time. A corrupt clergy working hand in glove with the rich and powerful have brought about the misunderstanding that "religion is the dope of the people". The Protestant reformation has at least opened up the Word of God, and the gospel is being preached as never before all over the world, save where the communist reign of force and terror has gained domination,

We conclude with the thought that as the worshippers of the beast receive a mark in their right hand and on their forehead, so Christians must bear the mark of Jesus in their work and their thought. R.B. SCOTT

### THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING :-

THIS old adage has many applications. Few of us can tell what anything is really like until we sample it. After we have done so, then, and only then, can we give a valid opinion of its worth or a fair criticism of its lack of merit. For a number of years I have heard about 'Camp Heatherbell'. At first without the least interest, even veiled opposition, due, maybe to associations; falling into the condemnation of Nicodemus, when he asked, "Doth our law judge a man before it hear him?" In this attitude I have been the loser, for the experience of a week at the camp - this year - has been 'good eating'.

The camp was started by our late brother Will Steele and designed to cater for boys and girls, both christians and friends, between the ages of ten and twenty years. It is essentially for the young folk with a minimum of adults. This year there were eleven, nine Scots and two English. Brothers Robert Hughes, Kirkcaldy; and Alan Brunton, Blackburn, Lancs., are the very able administrators and there were about seventy children. Without exception everyone had a wonderful time.

The Lord's day saw us gather together to remember Jesus in His own way. A simple service which was intelligible to the youngest

present, yet so arranged that all received a blessing. When the time came to break the loaf all the christians stood while the bread and cup were passed round and likewise with the collection. It was the ultimate in decency and order without giving offence to those out of the Christ. In the evening an easily understood Gospel message laid the facts before one and all without dramatics or emotionalism.

Throughout the week there was a morning and evening devotional period followed in the mornings, Monday to Friday, with classes from 10.30 to 11.30. The theme was 'Heroes of the Faith'. Recreational activities were in the capable hands of Tony Tyson, a young brother from Blackburn in Lancashire. He did a grand job with games and sports, a swimming gala and cross country runs and even a ghost walk on the last evening. Behaviour among the campers was excellent with our two mighty 'Administrators' in full control.

No one who has tasted of this 'Pudding' can be anything but delighted. There was a Company of The Boys Brigade sharing the Glengonner Site with Camp Heatherbell. Their officers were greatly impressed by the demeanour of us christians as we mingled with them in the adult Common Room. We had several interesting talks on spiritual things; who knows what might result. Perhaps we might sum up the whole effort in the words of one of the younger brothers, he said, "It's the best holiday I've ever had". A sentiment echoed by everyone as they look forward to the 24th July 1976 and another Camp Heatherbell. PAUL JONES.

### STRIKE AN 'A' FOR ME

Jack Exum

LONG before TV made its debut, radio was the old standby. In fact, for many households, it was the sole source of outside entertainment.

There's the story told of the old sheep-herder in North Dakota, living miles from the nearest town or neighbour, who listened to a national station beamed out of New York. Being alone, those evening programs were just about the only thing he had to look forward to each day. This was his stage and theatre all rolled into one.

He wrote the station a letter and his request was probably the most unique and unusual one they had ever received. Seems he used to play the violin as a youth, and one night while

sifting through some old belongings in the attic, he ran across his old violin. It had been many years since he had pressed it to his chin. Wiping away the dust and cleaning the bow, he began the initial effort to re-tune it. His letter read in part... "The violin is way out of tune and there's no way to tune it without some help. I wonder if on the next musical broadcast, you could pause long enough to strike an 'a' for me".

At first the manager of the station laughed, but then he thought of the loneliness of being alone, and the frustration of one with a violin out of tune. A decision was made — the request was to be honoured.

Right in the middle of the next presentation of the New York Philharmonic, the conductor paused, and directed his remarks to the old shepherd. Then an 'A' was sounded and held for a full thirty seconds. All this was done just so that one old man could play "in tune" again.

Stop and think for a moment about the tremendous and far-reaching application this has to life. Many attempt to play life completely out of tune, Others tune their lives to those about them, and while they do play, they harmonize only with those whose instruments are equally out of tune. Others would tune up if only someone would strike an "A" for them. Playing is one thing, playing in tune is another. Playing in harmony with life about is still another.

Here is where it is so important to start with a standard. If you do not, then you will have little time to play for you will constantly be tuning your instruments to the sound of others.

The apostle Paul declared, "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day".

"FIRM FOUNDATION".

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Oxford Street, Brighton:** We have not sent a report before, though you have been good enough to publicize our meetings when notified. However events during July, prompted me to write and let you know how thankful we are for God's blessings in fellowship.

On July 6th & 13th our congregation was doubled by the presence of Bro. & Sis. Sinclair and their son James, from Tranent, and also Bro. & Sis. Moncrief, and Sis. Mary Murdie, from Haddington. These brethren took over the whole of worship and exhortation on both Lord's Day meetings, giving us all a most uplifting spiritual experience which remains with us, encouraging us in our witness for the Lord's work. Bible study on Wednesday, when Bro. W. Murrell brings a group from Tunbridge Wells, to help us, was also given an uplift by the attendance of our Northern brethren", again giving much encouragement. We are deeply grateful and rejoice in the feeling of great blessing that inwardly stirred each of us, in this very happy experience. In addition to this we also had, on the 10th & 17th August, a similar experience when Bro. Harry Holden, with his wife and son, and daughter-in-law, from Blackburn. They also took over our Lord's Day services, giving us a further wonderful experience.

All this was rounded off by Brothers Leslie & Ernest Venn from Kentish Town on August 31st, by their monthly visit to us.

We are more grateful to all these brethren for this fellowship. W.I. ASCOUGH

**Kentish Town:** The church welcomed many visiting brethren and sisters to the Anniversary on Saturday, October 4th, when we enjoyed Brother Murrell's addresses on "What is the Church of Christ?" and "The Past, Present and Future of the Church". It was encouraging to have so many with us on this occasion and we express our appreciation of the fellowship. It was a joy also to witness on Lord's Day morning the confession and baptism of Christine Pearson. R.B. SCOTT

**Newtongrange, Midlothian:** The church which meets here was delighted to witness the baptism of a young lady Jennifer Pow, who has been meeting with us for a period of months.

We thank Jesus and pray that our young sister will be blessed in her service to her Lord and Master, and that her good works may be seen to glorify her Father in Heaven.

JOE CURRIE.

## AN APPRECIATION

Sister Gertrude Hill

I should like to pay a brief tribute to our Sister whose death was announced in the October issue of the 'S.S.' For the past ten years we have kept up fairly regular correspondence with each other and have, on various occasions met and talked with each other. She was a gracious personality with her kindly and happy smile and friendliness. Her conversation was a blessing in itself and her letters, filled with compassion and sympathy, radiated her love for the Lord Jesus Christ. She often expressed her thoughts in Scripture quotations and poetry from her clear memory and, at times, of her own composition. Often she gave expression to the love and peace of God in hymns and spiritual songs. It is difficult to imagine anyone who was not the better for having met her. She remains in my memory and I am sure in the memories of many —both Christians and non-Christians.

"Blest be her memory, and blest  
Her bright example be".

C. MELLING.

## THANKS

ON Behalf of the family, I would like to thank all who have sent letters and cards of sympathy to us since the passing of my father, brother John Banks Kendrick.

For the benefit of other readers, brother Kendrick passed away on the 3rd July, at the age of 82 years. He was laid to rest after a funeral service in the meeting-house at Albert Street, Wigan, when brother John Breakall officiated. As a family we miss him greatly but as members of the family of God we can say, 'love is not changed by death, and nothing is lost, and all in the end is harvest'.

DOROTHY PARKER.

## COMING EVENTS

Blackburn, New Wellington Street,  
Gospel Mission from Oct. 25th to Nov. 2nd.  
Speaker: Bro. L. Daniell (Bristol).  
Meetings:

Sat. 25th Oct. Tea 6p.m. Meeting 7.30p.m.

Sun. 26th Oct. Meeting 6p.m.

Tues., Wed., Thurs., Sat., 7.30 p.m.

Sun. 2nd Nov. 6p.m.

Refreshments on Saturday Meetings.

ALL WELCOME T. Tyson (Sec.)

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