

# *The* **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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## LET'S BLAME THE SYSTEM

WE occasionally hear men staunchly affirm, with a certain pride, that they never argue about politics or religion, despite the obvious fact that the former directly affects their present human existence and the latter will determine their eternal destiny. Some of these same men, however, would argue, and even come to blows, over such inconsequential matters as football. A few days ago, Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark, made the headlines in the morning papers when he made a startling attack on his Archbishop, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the communist newspaper "The Morning Star". Dr Stockwood, known for many years as the 'Red Dean' is apparently not only able to argue about politics and religion but somehow also manages to mix and reconcile the two, i.e. be a 'Christian' and a communist at the same time. The occasion for the attack had been supplied by the issuing of a pastoral letter by the Archbishop of Canterbury two weeks previously carrying a "save the nation" theme and offering the Archbishop's panacea for Britain's many and varied ills. Dr Stockwood, in his stern criticism of the Archbishop's pastoral letter made, I believe, more than a few very valid points and certainly was near the truth when he said that a communist government, were it to come to Britain, would clean up London's west end overnight: however to replace one imperfect political system with an equally unsatisfactory one is not really progress. Dr. Stockwood's main criticism, however, was that the Archbishop's recipe for improvement overlooked one most vital point - i.e. "That a man's character is partly, if not largely, determined by his surroundings". This of course is very fundamental communistic dogma and has been the basic ingredient for much of history's political upheaval and revolution - and still is. Any communist will explain, if asked, that a man is evil only because of his living conditions - improve and prosper his physical and material conditions and you will have better men (morally speaking). Since communism doesn't allow of a God they can't admit to there being a devil and without a devil it is difficult to explain the obvious wickedness of man - thus 'living conditions' is given as the reason.

Is it true that a man's character (and consequently his actions) is largely determined by his surroundings? At first sight the idea has a certain attraction to it and looks so obviously true yet upon deeper reflection it reveals itself as being an utter fallacy. Some of us have lived long enough to have had the answer demonstrated before our eyes. For years criminologists, social workers and politicians have been saying that once we got rid of the appalling conditions prevailing in the slums of some of our large cities, such as Glasgow and Liverpool, the crime rate would fall and social problems would diminish - man would regain his self-respect. Well, over the years enough of the slums have been removed and enough new estates have been built with

modern, clean and spacious living accommodation, to prove to us that crime figures have not gone down but have risen. Better living conditions and more prosperous times do not make man morally better they merely allow men, of evil disposition, to be more selective and sophisticated in their pursuit of wrongdoing. For confirmation of this we need only to look at the countries of the world which have the highest standard of material living, such as the U.S.A. and Sweden, to see that man's physical surroundings, prosperous though they may be, do not reduce crime, violence, corruption or irrationality. On the other hand Dr. Stockwood says that a communist government would clean up our permissive society in a very few days and he is probably right, but how would it accomplish it? After all, almost anything could be accomplished with the use of fixed bayonets or machine-guns, and men risk death daily at the checkpoints of Europe trying to escape from such a society. No political system can or ever will be able to sublimate the moral fibre and spiritual condition of mankind and all the 'Geneva Conventions' that men may add signature to will not make any difference.

The truth is that it is doubtful if man has changed in character in the slightest degree since the Garden of Eden. Take away all of man's modern gimmickry and scientific progress and, morally, you have a being unchanged through all the centuries since the dawn of time. Man is still as kind as he was at Creation and also he is still as stubborn, greedy, and cruel as he was then. Man is a contradiction of good and evil and good living conditions do not really enter into the question. In point of fact it would seem that adverse living conditions, such as we saw during the last war, can bring the best out of people. A comradeship grew up amongst the people of the nations involved in the war which is certainly absent in prosperous times.

Kindness and goodness blossom best, by reason of their very nature, in sad and bad times. By contrast, does anyone suggest that living conditions largely (or slightly) influenced Adolf Hitler's monstrous and barbaric cruelty in consigning about six million Jews to the gas chambers? Changing a man's life-style will not change the man (for long). If the Archbishop wants the country (or indeed the world) to be cleaned up then it will only be done through the gospel of Christ. Man requires to be reformed - this is done only through the gospel. Man must be transformed (from the old to become a new creature-) this can be done only through Christ and His gospel. Man must be translated (from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son) and this can only be done through the gospel of God. Man must be born again (born of water and the spirit) and this can only be accomplished through the waters of baptism in obedience to the gospel of Christ. It is not within man to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23) and the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. Man makes no progress in politics because the blind are leading the blind and both are falling into the ditch, Left to his own devices man, in every century has created his own version of Sodom and Gomorrah. As the poet Burn's says, "Man's inhumanity to man has made countless thousands mourn". Man has not really improved since the days of Sodom and Gomorrah and in fact the present state of the world is not entirely unlike the condition of those two cities, notwithstanding the fact that modern man is supposed to be more 'civilised' than before. One would have imagined that Dr. Stockwood, being a 'man of the cloth', would have known that political systems and sanctions will never make men mend their ways and that a 'better world' will only be achieved when all men have been truly reconciled to their Maker - then they will be also truly reconciled to each other. When all men come to the foot of the cross of Christ they will find that they are together, and not only truly together but truly equal. Self-interest must give way to obedience to God if man is to improve and just think, the world *can* really be transformed overnight if every man did as God suggests and loved his neighbour as much as he loves himself.

EDITOR

## BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH

A person entering the old Tabernacle or Temple would immediately have been impressed by the display of precious metals, coloured hangings, fine workmanship and orderliness, and the feeling that the presence of God was there. Today, with so many of us worshipping in houses or

hired halls, it is harder for the visitor to understand the presence of the Lord, which must be conveyed by the attitude of the worshippers. It does not help when a church has to meet, as happened once, after a hall had been let the night before for secular purposes, in surroundings resembling a brewer's warehouse.

**We should have reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28)**

We used to be taught at school that to sit still, keep quiet and pay attention was the respect due to a mere earthly teacher. Now there is a growing lack of respect for authority in the world, which is creeping into the church. Even adults sometimes stroll in and out of a meeting, or smoke just outside the door, while children have been allowed to bring noisy animals inside. Without reverence, the meeting simply becomes a commonplace gathering, behaviour is casual, the Lord's Supper hurried through and not properly understood, everyone more or less unprepared and reluctant to take part, and members become spiritually weak. We read in the Bible that whenever people saw a vision of the Lord or of angels, they were struck with fear and trembling. Yet we believe that the Lord is present where two or three are gathered together in His name, and we do not act as if it were true.

**We should have no respect of persons (James 2:1-4)**

There are other forms of discrimination besides that of rich and poor. In one church, which has since joined the denominations, it was the custom to welcome visiting members at some length, but not even to mention strangers who were not members. Some visitors have even heard themselves prayed for as "these outsiders". Acute embarrassment and discouragement can be caused to a church by unfortunate slips of the tongue, which may be remembered and quoted for years.

Our visitors should not have reason to complain that "no one spoke to me", but it is also a mistake to go to the other extreme and make them conspicuous. One young man was asked to stand up and give his name before a whole assembly, and an elderly lady was once exhorted to be baptised outdoors rather than indoors, as this might attract a crowd of spectators; neither became christians. Our own experience should teach us how best to welcome others.

**We should be able to be understood (1 Cor. 14).**

A few years ago, the men of a certain congregation offered to pay one of their number, who was not the most capable speaker, a small fee if he would undertake to preach all the sermons, but he refused. When Christians begin to regard their responsibilities as chores in this way, there is no one too young, no one too inexperienced to be asked to edify the church, sometimes without warning. One visiting member was asked to read from the Bible, without prior notice; not liking to explain that he was almost unable to read, he stumbled through a difficult passage as best he could, but that was his first and last visit to that particular church. It follows from this situation that unsuitable people can easily become full-time workers, which does nothing to raise the standards of teaching and behaviour.

1 Cor. 14 actually calls for Christians to speak in a language understood by the people, but perhaps we may extend the meaning to cover, besides preaching, praying and singing, the neglected art of clear reading aloud, which most people could do well and which would help our general standards of clarity and intelligibility. At present, for instance, the word "leper" is sometimes rendered as "leopard", to the perplexity of the uninstructed.

The chapter also explains that a number of brethren taking turns will carry more weight than one, and convince the hearer, so there is a real advantage in everyone contributing something.

**We should not forsake the assembly (Heb. 10:25)**

A young man, who explained that his father was a preacher in another country, once called to enquire about the local church, as he was staying in the district for six months. Upon learning the size, etc. of the congregation, he never once attended the meetings. When the church called on him, he was out at a youth club.

It seems we can be very much involved with the social activities of the church, and yet not spend much time thinking about God, our Saviour, or eternal life, so that when we are called upon to be faithful in very different circumstances, we must ask ourselves what our real motives are. Therefore the membership figures are not the whole story.

#### Reverence is not formality (Matt. 6:7)

In our anxiety to avoid formality, which mainly consists of regularly saying a set form of words, we may only succeed in being ill-prepared and falling into repetitions of our own. Reverence, on the other hand, would encourage us to spend more time considering how best to use all our talents in the service of Jesus.

Miss R. M. PAYNE, Reading, Berks.

## IT IS MY PSALM — IS IT YOURS ?

“Was there ever kindest shepherd  
Half so gentle, half so sweet,  
As the Saviour who would have us  
Come and gather round His feet?”

#### PERFECT ATTENTION — “THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL” Psalm 23:5

WE do not need to stretch our imagination too far, in trying to picture the scene of the shepherd, leading his flock, at the end of the day, to the sheepfold. It may be that by this time, he would be tired and weary, having once more searched for those green pastures, and still waters for his flock. Now he guides them to the place of safety for the night.

W. M. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book*, tells us something about the sheepfolds:—“Owing to the wild wadies covered with dense forests of oak and underwood, the country above us has ever been a favourite range for sheep and goats. Those low, flat buildings out on the sheltered side of the valley are sheepfolds. They are called *Marah*, and, when the nights are cold, the flocks are shut up in them, but in ordinary weather they are merely kept within the yard. It is to this place of safety that the faithful shepherd leads his sheep, and we can picture him, standing by the door of the sheepfold, anxious to examine each one as they enter the fold, to see if any have suffered any cuts, bruises, or broken limbs. David in all probability had actually had the experience of some of his flock wandering away, into unfenced fields, perhaps some caught in the thickets or bushy trees, or hurt by the wolves. No doubt, “the keeper of the sheep”, had opened a “surgery” on the mountain, and in the valley, on more than one occasion. and had used this precious oil, to bring about restoration. Imagine then, yet again, the writer of our Psalm, standing by the door of the sheepfold, musing, as I have examined each of my flock, and lovingly sought out, those who have been bruised and battered, and have anointed them with oil, so the Lord has done the same for me, so he with conviction affirms:—  
“THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL”.

Take note, my brother, my sister, of the personal pronoun, and I think we can say truthfully, David was not selfish, in his approach to his Lord. He had a unique relationship with the one, who was his Shepherd, so with a ring of confidence he asserts “Thou anointest MY...head with oil,” and that of course meant he had PERSONAL...PERFECT...ATTENTION.

It is wonderful to know that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16. It is said that a speaker was addressing a number of street arabs in the east of London, and wishing to know how far they knew the meaning of the word “Whosoever”, he asked them the question. A young lad replied, “let 'em all come”. Is it not true to say that the arms of the Lord Jesus are open to all who will come and accept His terms of discipleship, and submit to His authority? “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” Matthew 11:28-30. How true — He loves

in the lump... "Whosoever", "let 'em all come", "all". But there is for me, something more glorious, for I can say with that slave of Christ, the Apostle Paul, speaking of the Lord Jesus, he said:— "who loved me, and gave himself for me" Galatians 2:20. I am not lost in the "Whosoever", I am not merged in the multitudes so that He does not see me as an individual. "He calleth His own sheep by name" John 10:3. Praise God, the Lord Jesus know my name, and not only sees me as I am, but as I can be, and that goes for every child of God, and for every sinful man who will give their hearts and wills to Him: PERSONAL...PERFECT ATTENTION... "THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL".

Have you ever considered how many individuals our Lord dealt with, shall we mention a few:— Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman, the Nobleman, the Impotent Man, the Leper, Matthew, the Man with the Palsy, the Man with a Withered Hand, the Demoniac, Jarius, the Woman who touched the hem of His Garment, the Syrochenaean Woman, the Boy in the Valley, the Condemned Woman, the Lawyer, the Man Born Blind, Martha, Mary, The Young Ruler, Zacchaeus, Bartimaeus. the Widow at the Treasury, the Dying Thief, Mary of Magdala, Thomas... Again, I suggest you send up a prayer to the good Shepherd, and request still another walk to the "green pastures", to the "pastures of tender grass", and then once more to the "still waters", "the waters of quietness". There in quiet meditation read over one at a time, the accounts of the Bible characters, and watch the great Physician at work. Notice how he dealt with each one, entering into their problems and wonderfully brought healing to many, and gave advice, which, if taken, would bring the abundant life, perfect peace, unutterable joy. Praise God, the Lord Jesus is still able and willing to deal with our problems, great or small, so why not decide here and now, to allow Him to help you. This morning I had the joy of watching a sparrow have a good feed, from bread that had already been thrown out, Well you may say there is nothing strange in that. But this sparrow was special, because it was standing on one leg, and one was left wondering what had happened to the other. But this we can say - our heavenly Father knows:— "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" Matthew 10:29-31. Do you believe those glorious truths?

"THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL". PERSONAL ... PERFECT ... ATTENTION.

William Jones said:— "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be important". You are ... or can be ...important. He knows your innermost thoughts, desires, aspirations, yearnings, for a deeper and fuller life. He can meet that need. You can have peace within, you can have the inner glow of a quiet joy, these things can be yours, if you unconditionally surrender your life to the Lord Jesus. Oh, the glory of this blessed fact, He sees us at our worst, and loves us with His best. Bring your depression, faint-heart, doubts, fears, anxieties, frustrations, want of courage, lack of confidence, self-distrust, and allow the Shepherd to anoint you with the oil of the Grace, Love, Peace, Joy, and Power of God.

THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE GRACE ... LOVE ... PEACE ... JOY ... AND POWER OF GOD.

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" Isaiah 61:1-3. Give Him your ashes...your mourning...your heaviness, and get from Him, Beauty ... Joy ...Praise. Then if you are one of God's children, come to the mercy seat:—

"There is a place where Jesus sheds  
The oil of gladness on our heads,  
A place than all besides more sweet;  
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat".

Talk over your problems to Him, and if you are still Bruised, Battered, Bleeding, through walking over the mountain, and through the valley, listen as He speaks to you through His word. **THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.**

"And he said unto me My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" 2 Corinthians 12:9.

**THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE LOVE OF GOD.**

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" 1 John 3:1.

**THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE PEACE OF GOD.**

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:7.

**THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE JOY OF GOD**

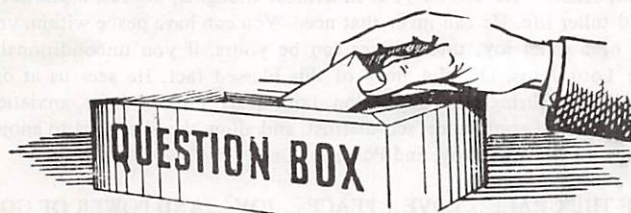
"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. A-men" Jude 24:25.

**THE ANOINTING OIL OF THE POWER OF GOD**

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" Isaiah 40:28-31. I pray that the time spent at the mercy-seat, will be for His glory, and that you have seen Him, as "the altogether lovely one", "the fairest among ten thousand". And may the Lord's richest blessing be your portion.

This months exercise: Read over the accounts of some of the Bible Characters mentioned, and learn by heart the two verses of the Hymns quoted.

LEONARD MORGAN.




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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WOULD you please comment on Rom. 8:22,23 as I find this passage a little difficult to understand. Does Paul include animals, plants, fish, etc., when he says, "the whole creation groaneth?"

I would like to thank the questioner for directing our minds to the eighth chapter of the Roman letter. I have always thought that this part of the letter moves along like a Beethoven symphony. The arguments move along sweetly and clearly, thought succeeding thought, until we are led to the crashing crescendo, so majestic that it is almost too much for the mind to bear. But there, my emotions are running away with me. Let us turn to the task at hand.

#### The Context

In our study of the Bible, we must never lose sight of the fact that the things which we read were not written directly to us. It seems fairly evident that when Paul wrote this letter to Rome he had never visited the Christians there (See Rom. 1:11-14). If we read on, though, to

the end of the chapter, we can see that he knew all about the deplorable state to which people had sunk. In view of this, I believe he found it necessary to:

- 1) remind the Roman christians of the high calling to which God had elevated them, and
- 2) Make them understand that even though living in such a Godless society grieved them, the all-pervading love of God was waiting to bring them home to Himself.

It is with these points in mind that we approach our question.

### The Whole Creation

We need to examine this phrase quite closely because it can mean either,

- 1) every kind of creation that God ever created, or
- 2) one objective part of God's creation.

Creation, in the English language, always signifies the product of the creative act, i.e. the creature. This is also signified by the Greek word *KTISIS*. Hence, in Mark 16:15 we read, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". In the original it reads, "having gone into all the world proclaim the glad tidings to all the creation" (The Englishman's Greek New Testament).

Let us now turn our attention to the phrase, 'the whole'. The word 'whole' is rendered by the Greek word *PAS* and means 'all'. W.E.Vine has it that when 'whole' is used with the article it means the whole of one object.

There is another interesting use of *KTISIS* which is found in Heb. 9:11 when the writer says, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building". The phrase 'not of this building' is rendered in the original 'not of this creation'.

To summarise the foregoing, I think we can say that Jesus did not intend his disciples to preach to animals, trees, fish, reptiles, etc.. Furthermore, the creation that built the earthly tabernacle was the human creation, employing human hands. Therefore, I think we can understand that when Paul refers to the whole creation he means all human creatures.

### Groaning and Travailing

Now that we have reached this point in our study, the remainder of the teaching becomes clear. Paul tells his readers that the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). At this high pinnacle he dismisses the present sufferings as not worthy of consideration when contrasted with the glory which is to be revealed. He echoes the same thoughts in his second letter to Corinth, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 3:17).

Returning to the Roman letter we now find Paul saying, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now". As we read these words we can appreciate what he means. Sin is rampant in the whole of the human creation, and in its train it brings grief, sorrow and pain. The christian living in the midst of this Godless society, is pained by what he knows of the effects of sin and perhaps by his own contact with it. So much so, in fact, that Paul goes on, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23).

Is there a christian who does not fully appreciate the awful depths of sin. Can there be christians who are not waiting for the redemption of the body so that they can be clothed upon with their glorified bodies? I wonder.

### Conclusion

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). It is with these words that Paul brings into full orchestration the majestic finale of divine forbearance, protection and love.

Who can fail to be moved by what follows. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (8:35-37). We shall conquer because Christ conquered.

Then the final accolade of complete assurance. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38,39).

I know that chimpanzees can do many things, but they are not the creation that Paul speaks about. I am aware that the brain of a dolphin is similar in weight to the human brain, but the dolphin could not begin to appreciate the message that was being taught. No, it was written to the human creation, and the human is confronted with the cataclysmic despair of sin on the one hand, and the brilliant conception of life with God on the other.

Why, oh why, will the whole creation continue to groan and travail in pain, with no hope?

Why, oh why, does the church continue to rend itself when there are so many souls to be snatched from sin?

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

## BAPTISM (NEW TESTAMENT STYLE)

It is hoped this article may help those who want to be sure that they have carried out God's will with regard to baptism, and if they haven't, would sincerely desire to do so.

If you don't agree with what I write, please don't reject it out of hand like some of the Thessalonians did with Paul, but examine the Bible passages on baptism for yourselves like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:1-11) and see if what I write is correct. On the other hand I don't want you to believe anything I say, or for that matter what anyone else says, whosoever they may be, preacher, 'priest', or vicar, without examining it for yourselves. When you stand before the great white throne on the day of judgement, you won't be judged on whether you did what I said or on what any other human being said, but on whether you did what Jesus said (Jo:in 12:48). One thing I would like you to know, neither I nor the publishers of this magazine have any vested interest in whether you accept or reject what is written in it, We don't get any money for what we do. We may never know till Judgement Day itself how you react to this teaching, but we do want you to enjoy fellowship with Jesus and to go to heaven. So please consider these things carefully.

The word "baptism" means different things to different people. Some think of an adult being immersed in water. Most think of a baby having water sprinkled or poured on it. People talk of 'baptism by sprinkling', 'baptism by pouring', and 'baptism by immersion'. What Jesus meant by his command to be baptised, needs to be known, before it can be carried out.

It is often possible to tell what a writer means by a word by the way he uses it in a sentence. An outstanding example of a word that has completely changed its meaning within the last 300 years is 'let'. In the Authorised Version Paul is recorded as saying "oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto)" Romans 1:13. It is obvious that "let" in the Authorised Version of 1611 meant "hindered", and that is how it is translated in the Revised Version of 1884. Put the word "hindered" in place of the word "let" and it makes sense to us today.

Carrying out a similar exercise with the word "baptism" we can find out what it meant in New Testament times. Consider Colossians chapter 2 verse 12, "Having been buried with him (i.e. Christ) in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead". Take out the word "baptism" and try each one of these alternative words in turn in its place; sprinkling, pouring, immersion. If the word you put in its place has the same meaning as "baptism" the sentence will still make sense. The thought of being



buried by a sprinkling of water is absurd, and it would take an awful lot of water to bury one by pouring water on them, whereas immersion in water is a kind of burial. You could try the same exercise in Romans chapter 6 verse 4: Acts chapter 8 verses 38-39: and John chapter 3 verse 23. Bible baptism is immersion in water.

#### Why should we be baptised (immersed)?

- (1) If only for the simple reason Jesus commanded it; Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:19. "If you love me ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15 R.V.).
- (2) Because it is for the salvation of the believer Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21.
- (3) It is for forgiveness of the sins of the repentant one, Acts 2:38
- (4) It brings one who has faith into Christ Galatians 3:24-27.
- (5) At baptism the old sinful life is buried and we start a new life Romans chapter 6.

#### Who can be baptised?

Anyone who believes Mark 16:16, and repents Acts 2:38. You must believe that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37).

You will see then that baptism is not intended for babies. They can't believe, and they have no sins to repent of. There are no examples of babies being baptised in the New Testament. They don't need baptism; Jesus said "Suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Nice, pleasant and well-meaning reasons are put forward for performing some sort of ceremony on babies, but however sincerely carried out they are vain, a waste of time. God has not authorised baby sprinkling or baby baptism – so to say over the infant "I baptise thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit" is blasphemy against all three. It is a presumptuous sin, and those who take part in it or condone it by their presence are "partakers with them in their evil deeds", so don't be coerced into having anything to do with "baby baptism".

One of the most damaging effects of "baby baptism" is that when the child grows up it thinks it has done what Jesus asked for, and so God's command is rendered ineffective. Now I know that the majority of people who perform "baby baptism" are very sincere, are not blaspheming wilfully, and really believe with all their heart they are doing God's will. My heart is sad for them because "when the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit".

Have you done what you now know to be true with regard to baptism? Are you a true worshipper in this respect? If not – I pray that you will be. ALLAN ASHURST

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### JANUARY 1976

|                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 4—Deut. 31:30 to 32:12 | Revelation 15 |
| 11—Joel 3:9-21         | Revelation 16 |
| 18—Jeremiah 50:33-46   | Revelation 17 |
| 25—Jeremiah 51:1-19    | Revelation 18 |

### MORE HISTORY

HAVING decided to accept the historical interpretation of this book, we need to follow through into these later chapters with the same thought. To simplify we are setting out a summary of events and passages side by side.

The first seal – 6:1 & 2  
Trajan's victorious Pagan Empire A.D.100

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| The Second seal 6:3 & 4                       |         |
| Civil war in the empire                       | A.D.190 |
| The third seal 6:5 & 6                        |         |
| Consequent famine and hardship                |         |
| The fourth seal 6:7 & 8                       |         |
| Pestilence and wild beasts as well            | A.D.250 |
| The fifth seal 6:9-11                         |         |
| Persecution for 300 years, on and off         |         |
| The sixth seal 6:12-17                        | A.D.319 |
| Revolutionary changes by Constantine          |         |
| The seventh seal 8:1 & 2                      |         |
| Introduction of the Trumpet Angels.           |         |
| Trumpet No. 1 8:7                             | A.D.410 |
| Alaric and the Goths invade the empire        |         |
| Trumpet No. 2 8:8 & 9                         |         |
| The Vandals overrun the land and take the sea | A.D.430 |

We present all the above rather as a suggestion for examination than dogmatic assertion. However most of us cannot give the time or have sufficient knowledge to make firm judgements. Our understanding of the nature of symbolic prophecy is also limited, but much of our comment will bear examination successfully. Any able to give more time at present are referred to books already named, or to "NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL" by Albert Barnes the famous commentator. Many other books are available also.

### Certainties

We are convinced that when we properly and fully understand this portion of God's Word, every original word of it will be found true and to have its fulfilment, now or hereafter. This month's readings first present a vision of glory being shared by those who have come victorious through tribulation, having stood firm against tyranny and the influence of the devil and his agents. We, who have hardly had to bear any persecution are yet facing the subtle and less obvious temptations of ease, plenty and prosperity, which have in times past so often led God's people into Apostasy. The readings also present us with a picture of riches and prosperity coming to a terrible end, and irretrievable loss. We are reminded of our Saviour's words "Blessed are ye poor" (Luke 6:20), and there is a clear call to all christians to keep clear (18:4), echoing Paul's instructions "not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The most prominent thought in these chapters is the final destruction of a false system of religion represented by "a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy" (17:3). The beast would seem to stand for the ancient pagan empire, the renewed empire under Constantine (and others) and finally the papal empire continuing to rule the European nations for well over a thousand years, and now largely weakened and despoiled by those powers (17:16). The vials of God's wrath are poured out in succession bringing ultimately but not yet - a consummation of judgement. The fact of the blood of martyrs being found with her and blasphemous claims certainly identify the system, but we must recognise that related systems have also used persecution, and today severe

Trumpet No. 3 8:10 & 11

Attila the Hun invades northern Italy

Trumpet No. 4 8:12

Odoacer completes overthrow of Roman Empire. A.D.476

Trumpet No. 5 9:1-11

Mahomet (5 months - 150 years) A.D.632

Trumpet No. 6 9:13-19

The Turks A.D.1057 to 1453 (396 years)

Trumpet No. 7 11:15

"Then is finished the mystery" (10:7), but before is the vision of the "Book open", and the work of the "two witnessess". It would seem that here is a vision of the progress of the church, and of the spiritual wars in heaven and on earth.

Then are introduced the angels with the vials of God's wrath to complete His just retributions on sinful mankind and the devil and agents, including spiritual Babylon, which is Catholic Rome. We summarise what we feel is the historic aspect of some of the symbolic pictures:-

Vial No. 1 16:2

The first of the steps to removal of the political grip of Rome on Europe. The French Revolution 1790, France having been very much under Catholic domination.

Vial No. 2 16:3

Protestant victory on the seas culminating 1805.

Vial No. 3 16:4

French invasion and war in the northern provinces of Italy where protestants had been persecuted for centuries.

Vial No. 4 16:8

Napoleonic wars all through Europe.

Vial No. 5 16:10

Rome mercilessly sacked by French Republican army, the Pope taken into France to die. The temporal power of the Popes was ended in 1848 - the Vatican City being their only remaining territory.

Vial No. 6 16:12

Here we feel unable to find fulfilment in history and assume therefore that conditions in the world will ultimately reveal a final destruction of apostasy, combined with a final rebellion of apostate materialistic mankind against all true christianity

persecution is being exercised by other powers. Every power which exercises cruelty comes under the same condemnation. Bringing this close home, every heart which cherishes unkind thoughts is under condemnation.

#### The Beast (17:3).

It is not possible in the space we have to do more than hint at the significance of this symbol. The information passed to John identifies it with Rome, the city of seven hills (v.9). The possible explanation of "was, and is not, and shall come" is that different forms of government are indicated but the same great power is administered all through, the last being a continuance in different form, namely religious domination by political power after the empire as such had ceased to exist (476). At least ten kings or governments owed allegiance to the Popes from time to time, and only the reformation brought this to an end. It is still with us in some ways, but is without actual territory or dominion. We have forgotten that it was within the Pope's power to call upon one nation to attack and destroy another, but Elizabeth the first knew it. It still holds sway over the minds of thousands upon thousands of people.

R. B. SCOTT

Hindley; Longshoot, Wigan; Newtown, Wigan; Eastwood, Nottm.; Bristol; Dewsbury; Burnley and Hamilton St, Blackburn came throughout the week to support the gospel, and also visitors were able to hear the word of God proclaimed.

TONY TYSON

**Hayfield Road, Kirkcaldy:** We have been greatly encouraged in our efforts here by witnessing the baptisms of three ladies on Sunday 26th October. Miss Helen Cameron, Mrs A. Brown, and Mrs Helen Roberts. This following the immersion of Sis. Mrs McCallum in July was indeed a great joy. We trust that they will be blessed and spared to become of great service in the Master's work.

Sis. Brown has been a long regular attender at our meetings and our hearts are full at her decision. Sis. Cameron is the younger daughter of Sis. Cameron (Wood) well known as a member of the church at Pittenweem, and a niece of Sis. Roberts and Bro. John Wood. Sis. Roberts is the wife of Bro. R. S. Roberts (Bob) and daughter-in-law of Bro. and Sis. A. Roberts. Sis. McCallum has been an attender at the Women's meeting for quite a long time.

A. R.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Blackburn, Mill Hill:** On October 18th Brother Roy Renshaw married Sister Racheal White (from Skelsmerdale) about 50 people attended the wedding and everybody was happy to see both Roy and Racheal marry, having both been widowed in these last few years. We all express our joy and good wishes to them both and welcome sister Racheal into the assembly at Mill Hill Blackburn, as she has come to live in Blackburn. Their address is 82 Carlinghurst Rd., Blackburn, Lancs.

On October 25th to November 2nd the church at Mill Hill Blackburn held a short series of meetings. Throughout the week the meetings were very well attended every night, supporting brethren from all parts of the country came to enjoy the fellowship with us, and to hear our Brother Len Daniell, from Bristol, as our speaker for the week. Brethren from

## OBITUARY

**Hamilton Street, Blackburn:** Bro. James Pritt of this assembly passed peacefully to his rest on Nov. 12th 1975 at the age of 54 years. Our brother had patiently suffered a serious illness, bearing pain with great courage and an unshakeable faith. As the time of his departure drew near, Jim looked forward to his heavenly home in full assurance of faith. To be in fellowship with those of like precious faith, singing the songs of Zion and hearing of Jesus the Saviour, was Bro. Pritt's delight. His love was for his Lord, whom he served faithfully and well, and who, according to His promise, has gone to prepare a place for all His disciples.

We commend to our Heavenly Father those who mourn our brothers passing, especially his devoted wife, Sister Doris, and his loving daughter, Sister Norma Layland of the Longshoot, Wigan, assembly. The church at Hamilton Street record with appreciation the work of Bro. Jim amongst them. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant". R. RENSHAW

## AN APPRECIATION

Bro. John Banks Kendrick

I knew our late Brother John Kendrick for approximately 27 years, and during this time I talked with him, discussed with him, argued with him, on many occasions. Personally, I came to respect him for his love for and devotion to the Word of God.

He was of that generation who were growing up at about the turn of the century. Many of them knew the Bible backwards, as he did. They had to, because their scriptural perceptions had to be sharpened in order to engage in the debates and discussions which they had with many religious groups. There was no doubt at all in my mind that he was a keen Bible student, if not a master, and I often longed for the breadth of biblical knowledge which he possessed.

I recall one night walking with him from the Hindley Bible School to his home in Poolstock a distance of some 6 or 7 miles. We talked about the Word as we walked, and so, enthralled was I by the way in which he opened up the Word that I hardly felt my feet touching the ground. Such was his mastery of the Word.

In his later years, he became pre-occupied with a detailed study of the Book of Revelation, particularly as it applied to the Second Coming of the Lord. He wrote a treatise on his study which he made strenuous efforts to have published. It may very well be that he was misunderstood in this effort, but who can malign the efforts of a brother to lead the minds of fellow-Christians into so great and fundamental truths? Better to have made the effort than to have allowed dust to settle on the Word, as so many did, and still do.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to his teaching effectiveness is that fine Christian sister, his daughter Dorothy. Along with her husband Jack, they have continued those principles of Christianity in their own family. Seeing this gave Bro. John a great deal of satisfaction and joy in the later stages of his life.

He is missed. When a forceful personality combines with a great knowledge of any subject, remarkable things tend to happen. John was a remarkable Christian in many ways.

ALF MARSDEN

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