

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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The Great White Throne.

KEEPING to our purpose, as stated in our last issue, to write on the last things, we here write on The Great White Throne. We have written on 'If a man die, shall he live again?' The inspired Word declares, 'It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.' A graphic description of that judgment is given in Revelation 20:11-15. Innumerable expositions of the Book of Revelation have been given; it has been a happy hunting ground for fanciful theorists and would-be prophets. It is admitted by all that it is written in figurative, symbolic language. Then it must be interpreted in harmony with plain New Testament statements, and not contradictory to any of them.

The real title of the book is given in chapter 1:1: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ': the revealing, unveiling of Jesus, the Christ. That title might be applied to the whole New Testament Scriptures. It is true that Jesus can be found in the whole Bible. But in the Old Testament He is often concealed behind types and shadows, while in the New Testament He is clearly revealed. His person, His plan of salvation, His precepts and promises, His plan of campaign, are seen in the New Testament. In the last book of the Bible are set forth the final judgment and the Christian's home in glory.

The Throne of Judgment.

'I saw a great white throne.' Great, because of its authority, white because of its purity, unstained by a single act of injustice. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus we see how earth's judgments are reversed. Now 'the last shall be first, and the first last.' Our Lord assured us that He will vindicate, do justice to, His chosen ones, though from the human standpoint He seems slow in taking action on their behalf. In this world, it often seems that the ungodly prosper, and the honest Christian has to fight poverty and opposition.

'Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.'

The Judge.

'And him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.' In chapter 6:14-17, men great and small are depicted crying to the mountains and rocks: 'Fall

on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?’

‘The wrath of the Lamb,’ what a paradox! Hide us from the face of Him who was ‘despised and rejected of men.’ This is the One who claimed that ‘the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man’ (John 5:27). Paul told those philosophers at Athens that God ‘hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead’ (Acts 17:31). He sits there as a righteous Judge of all.

‘O Saviour Christ, Thou too art man;
Thou has been troubled, tempted, tried:
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide.’

Those Judged.

‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God . . . and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them.’ If the resurrections named in earlier part of Revelation 20 are literal resurrections of saints and sinners, where does the vast throng described above come from? Is it possible to better describe a general resurrection than in language quoted above? The Lord Himself said: ‘When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations’ (Matt. 25:31-32). Paul declares, ‘We [including himself] must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad’ (2 Cor. 5:10).

Attempts are made to show that Christians will not appear there. We are told that the Greek word *Bema*, translated ‘judgment seat,’ means an award seat; and that believers will appear there to receive rewards for service rendered. But the same word is used of the judgment seat of Pilate, Festus, and Cæsar (see Matt. 27:19, Acts 25:6-10). Paul in Romans 14:10, wrote: ‘We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,’ and adds, ‘So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’

The standard of Judgment.

‘The books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.’

The Book of the Law. Of those living under the old covenant Jesus said: ‘There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?’ (John 5:45-47). That is a poser for higher critics who deny that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible.

The New Testament Scriptures. Jesus said: ‘He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’ (John 12:48). That includes the testimony and teaching of His inspired ambassadors, to whom He promised the Holy Spirit to teach them all things, and to guide them into all the truth; and to whose words we are indebted for all we know of the person, plan and promises of the Christ of God.

The Book of Life. Paul wrote of some of his fellow-labourers, ‘whose names are in the book of life’; and he declared that ‘the church of the

first-born are written [enrolled] in heaven' (Phil. 4:3, Heb. 12:23). The book of life is God's register of His family in Christ Jesus.

What of those who have never heard?

Some have not heard either the law or the gospel. Paul deals with their case in his epistle to the Romans. 'For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.' He shows that all have some standard, 'their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or also excusing one another' (Rom. 2:12-16). Jesus told the Jews that 'the men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here' (Matt. 12:41). So-called 'scholars' say that the story of Jonah is 'just fable and drama'; but Jesus testifies that Jonah was a real historical character; that he preached to the Ninevites; that they repented under his preaching; and that in the day of judgment they will witness against those who had greater privileges and opportunities. The Scriptures make clear that we shall all be held responsible for the light, knowledge, and opportunities, that were ours. [Personally, we feel responsible not only for what we know, but having God's Book constantly near us, for what we might know.]

The doom of rejectors.

'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.' In modern preaching, we do not hear much about the fire; we are told it is just figurative for the remorse that sinners will feel. But there are some sinners so hardened that they feel no remorse. In that case the greatest sinners will get off the easiest. It is significant that not only in the parable of the wheat and tares, but also in His explanation of it, the Lord spoke of fire. The tares are 'cast into a furnace of fire,' where is 'wailing and gnashing of teeth.' Paul declares that 'them that knoweth not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord' (2 Thess. 1:8-9). In the Book of Revelation we read of 'the second death.'

Some of the old-time preachers used to say: 'Those born once will die twice; but those twice born will only die once.' Jesus said, 'Ye must be born again, and 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Paul wrote: '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. 3:27-28). Having entered into God's family in God's appointed way, we have the assurance that our names are written in the Book of Life. Then we must make sure that by our faithfulness to our Lord and His Word our name is kept there. It is written: 'He that overcometh [endureth to the end] . . . I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father, and before his angels' (Rev. 3:5).

'O may we stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled,
And hear the Judge pronounce our name,
With blessings on our head!'

EDITOR.

Mining Disasters.

OUR readers well know of the terrible disasters at coal mines in Ayrshire and Creswell, in which a large number of miners were killed.

We have been asked to open a fund for help of dependents of these. We willingly do so, and hope there will be a generous response. It is difficult to realise what these disasters have meant in such a large number of homes.

Will those who desire to help please send contributions to W. Steele, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian.

If you wish your contribution to go to Ayrshire or Creswell fund please state which when sending.

Convention at Bristol

'A REAL success.' 'An inspiring time.' 'We ought to have more of these meetings.' 'Well worth the effort.' These were a few of the comments given by various brethren who attended the yearly convention held this year in the meeting place, St. John's Lane, Bedminster. There was only one criticism offered concerning the whole week-end, and that was given by a visiting speaker—'It was too short.'

Over one hundred and ten brethren, and friends from 'a airts,' including Scotland, Wales, Birmingham, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Notts., were present. Birmingham was especially well represented with about thirty brethren from Summer Lane and the same number from Priestley Road. We thank them for their loyal support.

Bro. F. Wills (chairman) gave a warm welcome to all, and to visiting brethren a gesture to 'make yourselves at home.' Included in the chairman's brief, but pointed remarks, was the earnest wish that all would be spiritually refreshed, and strengthened by the messages and fellowship. A sincere hope was also expressed by Bro. Wills that friends present would test all the statements made by the speakers with the New Testament.

The theme, 'The Church' in its various aspects, was admirably dealt with by Bren. A. Winstanley, E. McDonald, and F. Day. All present were not left in doubt as to the 'Aim,' 'Greatness,' and 'Strength' of the Church. Space allows only a few points in their addresses to be mentioned.

Bro. Winstanley.

Aim of the Church should be: (1) Sanctification. Not as misunderstood by many as a mere set of negatives, but separation, and a pursuit of righteous motives, and Godly living. (2) Indoctrination. All members should be educational in God's training college. The Church's aim should be an educated membership. (3) Evangelisation. The Church is the 'pillar and ground of the truth.' Therefore its responsibility is high, and great. All should endeavour to spread the Gospel.

Bro. E. McDonald.

The greatness of the Church. After explaining the meaning of the word 'greatness,' he showed that the Church was outstanding because (1) it had a great appeal for all. Societies only had an appeal for certain classes, but the Church met all the conditions of all men everywhere, rich and poor alike. (2) It had a great work to do. Christ is the Head and the Church must always seek to glorify Him—this is a great work. (3) It has a great future. The salvation of the Church is not complete, she must keep herself pure, and lovely, that she may enjoy the glorious future Christ has prepared for her.

Bro. F. C. Day.

The Strength of the Church consisted of (1) Rock foundation: Jesus Christ; (2) a sound construction: the New Testament; (3) unifying force: the bond of love; (4) a purpose: the habitation of God; (5) purity: sin and God cannot dwell together; (6) movability: Always going on—progressive.

After such a feast of spiritual food, the sisters of the Church at Bedminster provided the Convention with a delightful and well-prepared tea, that made the days of rationing seem like a bad dream.

Bro. Limb Senr., presided over the evening Gospel meeting, with A. Gardiner and W. Steele as speakers. Both of these brethren spoke well, giving addresses which were persuasive and convicting. Bro. Gardiner's remarks were based on the Transfiguration of Christ, and Bro. Steele's on 1 Cor. 15:22, 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' A vote of thanks was expressed by the chairman on behalf of all the visiting brethren, and thus brought to a close a day long to be remembered, especially by the Church at Bedminster.

On the following Lord's Day, many of the visiting brethren met with the Church at the Breaking of Bread. Bro. R. McDonald kindly exhorted the Church with a well-delivered talk on 'Workers together with God.' Bren. A. Winstanley and A. Gardiner spoke to the Lord's Day School in the afternoon, and thrilled over one hundred and twenty children with messages and choruses.

In the evening, we had the unusual experience of seeing over seventy present at the Gospel meeting, many non-members were present. Once again Bro. A. Winstanley addressed the meeting, and gave a stirring, convincing, and heart-searching message, which we feel had an effect on many unbelievers.

The Church is grateful and indebted to all these brethren who helped during the Lord's Day, and expresses the earnest hope that all who attended the Convention during the week-end were richly benefited.

A. ALLAN.

(Written by request, on behalf of the Church at Bedminster, Bristol.)

Co-operation with our American Brethren.

The Right Approach.

AS far as many here in Britain are concerned, the main obstacle in the way of full co-operation with our American brethren seems to be on the question of certain differences between us. In later articles, I wish to discuss some of these differences in detail, but for the moment I would merely set forth some general principles which I believe, if borne in mind, will enable us to see things in a clearer light. These apply to whatever aspect of the problem we are discussing.

A matter is not necessarily right because it is British, and wrong because it is American, or vice versa. Too often, in the past, our reaction against certain teachings or concepts which may have been new to us has been, 'This is an American idea,' as if that fact alone, if true, was sufficient to condemn it. That spirit is divisive, and is erecting again the barriers of nationality which have been done away in Christ. In considering any

new concept or thought the question is not so much its source, where it has come from, but is it Scriptural? or it is profitable to the work of the Lord?

The Truth is not all on one side. We well know that in so many aspects of life, there are very few issues that could be regarded as cases of plain black and white. There is a great deal of grey, a mixture of truth and error. So in this case. On the British side, undoubtedly, we have some very clear conceptions of certain truths which our American brethren would do well to learn, but on the other hand we must not overlook the fact that there are many things in which we would do well to learn from them, in regard to truths that we do not sufficiently emphasise or that we have overlooked altogether. The question of co-operation will be solved when we have each learned, with the Word of God in hand, to take the good from each other, thereby contributing to the good of the Cause as a whole.

That there is a difference in environment and historical background between us, which often quite unconsciously affects our way of thinking. Our American brother may be as perfectly Scriptural as we are on any issue, but sometimes he sees it from a different viewpoint due to this difference in background. He also uses different terms which are liable to be and indeed, in the past, have been misunderstood. The use of the term 'minister' is a case in point. To speak of one individual as 'The Minister,' and confine that term to him alone is, I believe, an error, but to apply the term 'minister' to a preacher or any other servant of the Lord is perfectly Scriptural. We often avoid the term because it is so abused by the denominations of this country, but to conclude that it is similarly abused in the States, and therefore those of our brethren who use it are no better than one-man pastors, is completely unjustified. We are forming a judgment based on our own background and environment, instead of first seeking to understand theirs. I hope to say more on this point in a later article.

We must avoid drawing conclusions from inadequate evidence. Generally speaking, we have three main sources of information in regard to our American brethren, namely: the events of the past, the writings of the present, and the fruit of the discussions with those brethren who have visited us. It is needful that we analyse these.

Judging the situation in the States to-day on what has happened in the past is a sure way to fall into error. The situation has changed completely to what it was twenty-five to thirty or more years ago. The brethren with whom we are now in touch to-day have nothing in common with those preachers from the States who visited this country between the years 1870 to 1917 and caused such havoc in the work over here. They were thoroughly digressive, one-man pastors, open communionists, Modernists, and almost everything that they should not be. The British brethren rightly protested against them, and for many years refused to associate with them. As many will know, foremost in protesting was the respected editor of this paper, our Brother Crosthwaite, and we must thank God for his courage and leadership which did much to stem the tide of digression that threatened to overwhelm us at that time. But we must not forget that the loyal brethren in the States would alike condemn those preachers. Indeed, at that time, they themselves, led by stalwarts on their side like David Lipscombe, were also fighting those same digressives. In fact, the situation there fifty years ago was much the same as it is here at the present time, with the smaller loyal group protesting against, and withdrawing from the digressives.

The second source of information is the literature of various kinds which is sent over here. But even this source is liable to confuse if we

do not try to realise as far as possible all that is involved. Especially is this so in picking on the writings of one group criticising that of another group, and, because it suits our way of thinking, considering that we have the answer to the problem. It may not be so, for when we look into the background of some of these issues they appear in a different light altogether. Our writings and comments on the American situation have sometimes exhibited muddled thinking because of this failure to differentiate between one group and another.

Broadly speaking, there are two main groups in the States which have emerged from the Restoration Movement there. On the one hand there are the loyal brethren, that is, those that take a sound view of the Scriptures. On the other hand, there is the Disciple or Christian Church group, which is quite a separate movement and represents the digressives. With the latter groups, our brethren in the Co-operation are associated. Each group, however, is itself divided. Among the loyal brethren, by far the largest group is that which is sometimes referred to as the 'College brethren.' Some of the smaller groups are 'Anti-Sunday School brethren,' the 'Pre-millenniumists,' and the 'Anti-College brethren.' This latter group is itself divided into three camps. All of these parties, and others, have their own publications, and it is as well to bear in mind their particular viewpoints when reading their literature. On the digressive side, there are also a number of groups, but they can roughly be divided into three main parties. In the first place there is the conservative element, some of whom differ very little from the loyal brethren, the main issue being that of the instrument. Then there is the 'middle-of-the-road' group, and lastly the Modernists. The latter party have become so liberal that they are one of the most Modernistic bodies in the States. Many of their Churches will admit anyone into their membership on any condition they choose, and practically all traces of the work of Restoration have disappeared. Some have gone over completely to the Congregationalists and formed the Congregational Christian Church.

The third channel of information is the knowledge we have gleaned from discussions with the brethren from the States who have visited us over here in this country. Now I believe that our American brethren have done a good work in enlightening us on the general situation over there, but even so, we must realise that this source of information is not entirely foolproof. One must always appreciate that it is sometimes a very difficult thing for the people of one country to put over precisely an idea to the people of another country without being liable to be misunderstood, especially if the people to whom they are talking are not always at one with them. I found this so on my visit to America. I would express an idea in terms and phrases which were familiar enough to me, but were not always so to my hearers, and unless I was very careful the effect produced was very different to that which I desired. Our American brethren visiting us here must have also felt that limitation, and therefore if some of us have felt, in questioning them, that their answers have left doubt, let us realise that it is not due to their inability or evasiveness, but due to the difficulty in overcoming this human factor. But, whatever the case, beware of drawing rash conclusions, for to form harsh judgments on such limited evidence is to close the mind altogether, and therefore be unable to see anything in its true perspective.

With these broad principles in mind, let us examine the whole problem candidly, openly, not seeking to justify any party or faction, but desiring only to uphold the Word of Truth in all things.

L. H. CHANNING.

Is Baptism a pre-requisite to Church Fellowship?

TO the child of God there is no communion more sweet than that which he enjoys when partaking of the memorial feast. He realises in the ordinance his union with the family of God, and feels his sympathies enlarged towards his brethren on earth, with whom he naturally desires to be in oneness of heart. But just here the large-hearted disciple is sometimes perplexed, as to whom he should welcome to unite with him in showing forth the death of his once crucified but now risen Lord and Saviour. Certain there are whom he has no difficulty in recognising as members of the one Body, the Church, inasmuch as they have in points complied with the requirements of Christ. In the case of others, however, he may experience some doubt, since he believes them to be earnest seekers of the kingdom of his Father, so far as their knowledge of His will has guided them; but he knows that they have not observed all His commands and ordinances. Under such circumstances he is sometimes led to enquire: Is baptism a pre-requisite to admission into Church fellowship; or may the privilege of observing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper be lawfully and scripturally extended to those who, though serving the Lord as far as they have apprehended His will, have nevertheless not observed the ordinance of baptism? The question is one that in view of all the bearings of the case, may be very legitimately entertained, provided that it be ever remembered that the answer thereto cannot be based upon feeling, however strong, but must rest on the authority of Holy Writ.

To the casual observer, it may appear at first sight as though the enquiry presented a difficulty of no ordinary character; little reflection, however, is needed to disabuse the mind of this idea, and to lead the candid enquirer to the inevitable conclusion that baptism is an indispensable pre-requisite to the admission of any individual into Church fellowship. Few points, indeed, are there that are more unmistakeably set forth in the pages of Holy Writ. It matters not in what light we regard the question, we find the answer the same in every instance, even though we reason out the point from the order of the Lord's commission to His ambassadors, from the practice of His apostles in the execution of their commission; or from the nature and import of the ordinances themselves. In all these cases, it will be shown indisputably: first, that baptism must precede admission into Church membership; and second, that those, only, who have been thus admitted into Christ's Body are privileged to observe this ordinance of His Church. Let us view the subject briefly from the standpoints indicated.

First, that the order of the Lord's commission to His apostles proves conclusively that only such as are baptised are privileged to fellowship in His Church. In proof, it is but requisite to cite the commission: 'Go ye, therefore, and teach [disciple] all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

In this passage, containing the authority for the dissemination of the gospel, in all lands and for all time, we have three distinct duties imposed upon those who go forth to proclaim the glad tidings in the name of Jesus. First, they were to teach or disciple 'every creature' in 'all nations.' Next, they were to baptise such as believed the gospel, repented of their sins, and confessed their faith in Jesus as 'the Son of the living God.' Those who had thus complied with the requirements of the gospel were, by virtue of that obedience, resulting from their faith, made members of the Church;

and having put on Christ by baptism into His death, and having been born of water and Spirit, they became members of His family and joint heirs with Him. Lastly, the servants of the Lord are commissioned to teach those who have been thus 'discipled' and 'baptised'—and only these—all things that Christ, their Master, has enjoined.

Now, it must be apparent to every reader that the observance of the Lord's Supper is pre-eminently among those things which have been thus enjoined, and is consequently among those things which are to be the subject of instruction to all brought into the Church. Now, it clearly follows that if those brought into the Church are to be instructed to observe this ordinance, then those not so situated are not privileged to observe the institution. It is to be remembered, that all the commands of Christianity are positive and not negative, and, consequently, the fact that the observance of the ordinance by those not baptised is not specifically forbidden proves nothing in favour of their line of conduct.

The clear and necessary inference from the passage is, that only such as had been discipled were to be baptised, and such only as had been thus immersed were to be instructed to observe the things commanded by Christ, among which things is obviously the observance of the Lord's Supper. Further, it is to be remembered that all the members of Christ's Body on earth (the Church) are to be cleansed and sanctified with the washing of water according to the Word (Eph. 5:21). In this passage, the reference is unmistakably to the inductive ordinance of Christ's Church—baptism, which is, therefore, in a sense the door through which each believer is admitted into the Church. Neither must the fact be lost sight of, that the Church on earth is a unit, 'one Body' (Eph. 4:4-6), composed of individuals who have been '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 walk in newness of life; for if we have been planted together in the similitude of his death, we shall be also in the similitude of his resurrection' (Rom. 6:4, 5). Now, it is apparent, from the reasoning of the apostle in this passage, that in baptism into the similitude of Christ's death, the repentant sinner buries the body of his carnal nature in the tomb of water, just as the mortal body of Jesus descended into the tomb, and that, as a consequence, he is raised together with his Master in the similitude of His resurrection—that is to say, he is raised into newness of life a spiritual man in Christ Jesus.

Second. The practice of the apostles in carrying out their commission, confirms the necessary inference derived from the commission. From the day of Pentecost downwards we find that in every recorded case of conversion the steps indicated by Jesus were observed by the apostles with the most scrupulous exactness. Never in all the range of the New Testament do we find any unbaptised person admitted into the Church. Equally certain is it that we never find an individual not thus made a member of the Church partaking of the emblems of His death and passion. In each recorded case, from the first to the last, the same order is invariably preserved. They first preached the gospel, urging its claims upon their hearers; they baptised such as believed; and these they added to the Church and instructed in the commands of Jesus and in the requirements of His religion. Seeing, then, that this is so, we are forced to the conclusion that this is the only authorised and Divine order with regard to this subject; and we are compelled to affirm that all those who alter or interfere with this arrangement are marring God's plan.

Lastly. The nature of the ordinances prove conclusively that only such as are members of Christ's family are privileged to partake at His Table. It will be freely admitted that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is within the Church, and that the repast is provided for the refreshment

of the members of family. Now, if this be so, it follows that as baptism is the means by which the repentant are born into the kingdom of heaven—they cannot feast therein till such time as they have been born into that kingdom. This being so, it of course follows that, just as in the natural life a child can have no part or lot in the family circle, nor can it be a partaker of the privileges of that circle, till it has been born into the world; in like manner, none are authorised to enjoy the blessings and privileges of Christ's kingdom on earth, save only such as have been born thereto in baptism, which must therefore of necessity, precede every other act connected with the manifestation of spiritual life by the individual member of Christ's Body.

Since in all these three particulars it is obvious that baptism is designed in the Divine order to precede the observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and since nowhere in Holy Writ is the Church enjoined, or even by inference permitted, to receive any individual into the participation of the blessings and privileges of Christ's Body except such as have been brought thereinto by being baptised into Christ, we fail to apprehend even the shadow of an argument in justification of such a line of procedure. On the contrary, we apprehend that the arguments against such a course are, in their nature and from their number, unanswerable and unmistakable; and we are forced to the conclusion that any who should err upon this point would be led into transgression of the commands of the Divine Governor, either through a culpable ignorance of His statutes or through a wilful disregard of the teaching of the Statute Book of the kingdom and a deliberate setting aside of a condition imposed by Divine authority in the constitution of the heavenly kingdom.

So far we have desired to show that Christ, in His commission, made baptism a pre-requisite to Church fellowship; that the apostles so understood their commission, and being guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they, by their example, teach that in all cases the individual believer must be baptised before he is added to the Church; and that he must be added to the Church before he is privileged to observe its memorial institution. And, therefore, as an inevitable conclusion, he must be baptised before he is privileged to observe the Lord's memorial feast; and lastly, that from the nature and purpose of the two ordinances themselves, baptism must of necessity, precede the observance of the Lord's Supper. If these points have been sustained, then the position that baptism is a Divinely ordained pre-requisite to Church fellowship has been maintained by three-fold argument, based on the very highest evidence, embracing as it does: 1, the Divine precept; 2, the Apostolic practice; and 3, the strongest possible necessary inference.

From the Treasurer.

Subscriptions, etc. Another year is rapidly closing. Will readers everywhere and agents, kindly send along to me any monies due without further request. This will save a lot of my time, and expense to the 'S.S.' Readers in U.S.A. may send along Dollar Bills or International Money Orders. These are the best ways to remit. Payments, orders, changes of address, etc., should be sent to me **AND NOT TO THE EDITOR**, as is so often done.

A. L. FRITH.

COMING EVENT

Summer Lane Church, Birmingham.—Eighty-fifth anniversary meetings on Saturday, November 4th. Tea at 4 o'clock onwards. Social meeting commencing at 5.45. Speakers: Bro. W. E. Mills (Leamington) and Evangelist A. E. Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells). Bro. Winstanley will be serving us all day on the Lord's Day. A profitable and enjoyable time is anticipated. We want as many as possible to share it.

FRED C. DAY

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Until further notice: Bro. and Sis. A. E. Winstanley, 185 Upper Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

CORRESPONDENCE

HOW FAR SHOULD WOMEN BE SILENT IN THE CHURCH?

I have no desire to prolong this discussion, but in view of the fact that I have been the subject of much adverse criticism, perhaps I may be allowed a final word.

I have read very carefully and with much interest all the correspondence upon the subject, comparing same with what is written in the N.T., but find little cause to withdraw anything I have written, or suppose to have written. Much as I would like to agree with my dear friend and brother upon the question at issue, as I do upon most other matters, I am bound in sincerity to say that I believe the simple and natural interpretation of 1 Cor. 14: 34-36, and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 teaches us that women should not teach or preach in the assemblies of the Church where brethren are present, 'but should learn in silence with all subjection.' Further, I believe that the Scriptures already named, particularly 1 Tim. 2:11-15, teaches by implication that women should not take the lead in the giving out of a hymn, or the reading of the Scriptures. I do not mind in the least being called a 'die-hard,' but knowing Bren. Barker and Frith, as I do, I could not prevent a slight ripple upon reading the inscription, and immediately some well-known words of the Master flashed to my mind.

If Bro. Frith will again read my previous letters upon the subject he will not find one single reference to sisters praying. True, the only exception I made was in singing; but it has been my personal belief now, for a good number of years, that the teaching given in 1 Cor. 11:1-10 lays down conditions which should govern women when praying, thereby implying that it is permissible for sisters to take part in the public prayers of the Church—I have even gone as far as to invite sisters to do so. However, I know that it is not the generally accepted belief of many whose opinions we value, neither, as far as my knowledge goes, the practice of the Churches. Hence, I did not choose to express myself on this point, believing it to be a debatable question. The sister referred to by Bro. Frith, whose memory I greatly revere, impressed me much during the early years of my Christian life, and her saintly prayers made a lasting impression upon my mind. This sister, however, prayed only at the prayer meetings and in the home, and was always very particular to have her head covered when doing so.

With regard to Bro. Frith's question concerning prophesying, Acts 2:17 and 21:8-9. It is my view that those named,

as expressly stated in the first passage, were inspired by God, there then will be an evident propriety that they should publicly proclaim His will, and not till then.

I should be sorry wilfully to do my brother any injustice, and am not conscious of doing so, as I think a careful reading of his previous letter will prove. But when he goes on to say, 'Even so, Bro. J. cannot find any thing against it in the N.T. There is no prohibition whatsoever,' etc., completely mystifies me. Surely Bro. Frith is not wishing to imply that, if there is no precise statement in Holy Writ forbidding such a practice of this, that, and the other we are justified in practising same? I am persuaded *not*, as this would be a short cut to sectarianism, and a denial of our plea, and is the very argument used by people of various sects. A great many things could be introduced in our worship and service if this argument held good. The fact that in most Churches during the past years, and in the faithful Churches to-day, it is not the general practice for sisters to give out hymns, and read the Scriptures, is further evidence that it is not regarded as being according to N.T. teaching.

W. B. JEPSON

THE AMERICAN SCENE

Dear Editor.—I wish to thank Bro. Ferguson for his letter in October "S.S." I heartily disagree with his main contention therein: that there can be no point at all in discussing issues with our brethren in America; but I am glad that he has written, for I am willing to give careful consideration to any conviction sincerely held by any of my brethren.

I know that Bro. Ferguson has had long experience in the Christian life and I respect him for it. However, I respectfully suggest that he is wrong in suggesting that we cannot learn from Christians in the United States. He calls 'venturesome and speculative' my statement that 'Christians here and abroad can, and must, learn from one another.' None the less, I insist that my statement is true. Readers will note that I have said nothing in my articles about co-operation between the saints here and across the Atlantic. Bro. Channing has plunged headlong into that big issue and I await with interest his conclusions. I do insist, however, that it is folly to assume that the Churches in this country have nothing to learn. The weakness of Bro. Ferguson's contention is surely obvious in this; he seems to assume that differences cease to exist if we shut our eyes to them. He says: 'Let us not imagine for a moment that by discussing the questions of organs, ministers and

individual cups, that all the problems will be solved, for there will crop up a greater number of problems and, as often happens, chaos and confusion, instead of a unified Church.' I insist that our only hope of realising the unity he has in mind is not by refusing to admit that differences exist—but by studying them with open minds in the light of God's Word. That applies whether the differences are between members of the Church in this country and that—or simply between us over here. Surely Bro. Ferguson knows that brethren here differ on the question of women's work, ordination by the laying on of hands, and participation in carnal warfare. Other "issues" could be named. Let us use one of these as an example. Some of us conscientiously believe that a Christian cannot be a soldier. Others just as conscientiously believe that he can. Both sides cannot be right. One side has a lot to learn, surely. How can we ever hope to achieve unity on this subject? By a willingness to approach the Word with honest minds, and thereby to test everything advanced. That applies to anything taught by Churches here or abroad.

Bro. Ferguson mentions the 'Disciples' denomination. I think I made it clear that my visit was not to congregations of that body, but to Churches of Christ. He asks, 'What could we learn from the "Disciples" if they are wrong in teaching and practice but error?' I suggest to him that the 'Disciples' believe and teach some things that are Scriptural. Is a thing wrong simply because it is taught by a denomination, and right simply because it is taught by a Church of Christ? Surely not, for there are truths whereon Churches of Christ and certain denominations are agreed. Whether any teaching be right or wrong must be decided not by whether 'we' or 'they' teach it—but whether or not it be substantiated by the testimony of the Word. How can this be determined save by frank discussion and candid examination?

Our brother further writes: 'The use of the word "Christian" becomes vague and meaningless when applied to all the worldly religious and irreligious societies whether they are framing or following human organisations . . .' To that I say 'Amen!'—I never so use the word 'Christian.' I am opposed to any human society existing to do the work of the Church. I believe that the N.T. teaches that the Church alone is adequate for every purpose God has appointed, and that man cannot improve upon the divine arrangement. But I fail to see how this would substantiate the claim that we cannot learn anything from Christians elsewhere.

I quote again: 'I trust that Bro. Winstanley will give scant attention to

those people and their modern ideas of theological teaching and devote his energies to the spread of the truth among the various communities where his work lies.' May I say that 'theology' is defined as 'the science which treats of God, and of man's duty to Him'? As a preacher of the Gospel I am vitally concerned about that. I am willing to consider carefully what any Christian advances as a part of the Scripture teaching about God and man's relation to Him. As to devoting my energies to the spread of the truth—I have been trying to do that ever since I became a child of God. While I live I shall continue to do so, God helping me. Whenever I meet honest opposition to what I believe I shall not seek to avoid it, but shall test it by the revealed Word of God. If I am right in any position I hold, investigation will confirm my faith. If I am wrong, investigation will reveal this—and the sooner I know it the better.

May I in all kindness, suggest that Bro. Ferguson's letter is a denial of his own contention, that we should avoid discussion with those with whom we differ? He differs with what I wrote and hastens to present his views to me. Why does he do this? Surely because he wishes to convince me that I am wrong, and because he expects me to study what he says alongside the N.T. Let that attitude prevail among us. When honest discussion is repressed error flourishes and truth is hidden. Let us heed the exhortation of the apostle, and 'prove all things, hold fast that which is good.'

A. E. WINSTANLEY

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- November 5th: Acts 24:24 to 25:12;
Psalm 27.
November 12th: Acts 25:13 to 27;
Matthew 10:16 to 23.
November 19th: Acts 26:1 to 18;
Galatians 1.
November 26: Acts 26:19 to 32;
Deuteronomy 30:11 to 20.

Paul's Private Interviews with Felix.—Felix knew somewhat of the new faith. Probably the secret agents of the government had investigated it as the police in our day would investigate any new political or religious propaganda—in order to discover whether it was of a treasonable character. But he had never come face to face with one of its foremost preachers. His wife, Drusilla, was perhaps also interested. He was a cruel and unscrupulous ruler. She was a renegade so far as the Jewish religion

was concerned. We would we had Paul's power to reason—and it would do us good to have his points brought home to us too. Neither righteousness nor self-control (a better translation than "temperance," which has attained a limited meaning) are sufficiently emphasised, and the judgment to come is overlooked in much of to-day's thinking and preaching. We cannot tell to what extent the "communing" with Paul affected Felix. History records that the Jews made charges against him before the Emperor which would have brought him disgrace and probably death had it not been for personal influences at work on his behalf. Anticipating the accusations, he "left Paul in bonds," but while it seemed possible he would get some gain out of treating Paul well—and perhaps as a concession to justice—he allowed him considerable liberty. This must have been a great blessing to Paul for how could such a great soul have borne with patience such long confinement? The answer is the same as ours should be, "By the grace of God I am what I am." We can be sure the care of all the churches was upon his soul, and the time was spent as the divine providence had intended. We remember Moses was forty years in 'the backside of the desert.'

Paul before Festus.—The new governor brought new hope to the enemies of Paul. They lost no time in pursuing their plan for assassination. It does seem that they had given up all hope of getting the Roman authority to condemn him or to hand him over to them. The repentent thief said of Christ 'This man hath done nothing amiss'; Festus said of Paul, 'If there is anything amiss in this man, let them (the Jews) accuse him.' If Festus had studied the case he would have known about the plot two years before and would have known that murder was intended, and there seemed to be both weakness and strength in his attitude—weakness in wanting to do the Jews a favour regardless of justice, and strength to refuse just to do exactly what they asked at once. We should perhaps give him the benefit of the doubt, and suppose ignorance of the plot, or confidence that Roman vigilance would circumvent it. Paul knew too well the character of his foes, and the desperate determination with which they would act, to suppose any just decision or good purpose would be served by giving consent to the suggestion. He therefore took the only course left—the right of every Roman citizen (and the elementary right of every man and woman) to be judged as justly as possible. Only centuries of endeavour and sacrifice, mostly by lovers of God (and lovers therefore of their fellows) have brought British law to its present high standard, though it still has its defects.

The bulk of mankind under Roman domination were slaves and had practically no rights at all.

Festus consults Agrippa.—The courtesy visit of Agrippa II and his sister, Bernice, was an opportunity for Festus to investigate the case of Paul. Agrippa was another of the Herod family, grandson of the murderer, Herod the Great (Matthew 2:16) and had been given kingship over parts of Palestine. Like the other members of his family, his morals were none too good, but he would be helpful to a Roman on a Jewish question. Obviously, Festus must make out a case for judgment by Caesar.

The Assembly of the Court.—The Lord told Paul that he would be a witness for Him before kings (Acts 9:15—through Ananias first probably), and now is the fulfilment. Earthly kings have their pomp and show. The witness of the King of Kings was manacled as a prisoner. Festus introduced the matter so that the purpose of the council might be known, and that he might get the information he wanted. We comment that it must still have seemed unreasonable (verse 27) to keep a man prisoner when he was innocent of any crime known as such in Roman law.

Paul's Defence before Agrippa.—Paul's speech is probably not reported verbatim but, if it is, it remains a model of clear statement of facts and reasonable appeal. We are so glad that we have three records of Paul's conversion in addition to his comments in his letters. His manner of introduction shows his anxiety to get his message into the mind of the king at least. Had he adopted a hostile and critical attitude his case would have been prejudiced if it had been allowed to be heard. The first point is to call attention to his own earlier attitude towards the new Faith to demonstrate the greatness of the force which had moved him into an absolutely opposite attitude. Resurrection gave proof that Jesus was the fulfilment of the promise of the Messiah. The Old Testament is full of miraculous revelation of God, so a revelation like that given to Paul would only be surprising because the later history of the Jews had not provided any, not because it was unlikely or out of harmony with Law, Psalms and Prophets. The emphasis upon God's command in relation to the Gentiles would explain to a Jew the hostile attitude of Paul's own countrymen. Up to the point at which Festus interrupted, Paul had reasoned up to the truth of the resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, and the conformity of these with the Law of Moses and the Prophets.

Agrippa's verdict.—We wonder why Festus, a Gentile, should interrupt the apostle. Had the facts of God, revela-

tion, Christ and forgiveness struck home to his mind in application to his own life? The sight of a righteous man and his words can unwittingly bring home a conviction of sin. It must have been an unusual thing for a prisoner to make such a defence and then to put so direct a question to his judge. We are somewhat reluctantly compelled to regard the Revised Version as giving the correct interpretation of Agrippa's answer. It was in contempt (expressed, but perhaps with not so easy a conscience) that he said, 'You expect to make me a Christian (a name probably used generally in a contemptuous sense) with just such a speech—you had better think again.' Paul concluded with a comment that did perhaps reach some heart. But, at least, the verdict was a very clear 'Not guilty.' We do not always wish it so, yet must realise that God had for Paul through his further imprisonment and sufferings—remember all those mentioned in his second letter to Corinth (ch. 11) had already been borne—more blessing to give, more work to do more glory to reveal.

R. B. SCOTT

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COMING EVENTS

Tunbridge Wells, Silverdale Road.—Anniversary meeting on Saturday, November 11th, the Lord willing. Tea, 4.30 p.m. Meeting 6 o'clock. Chairman: Bro. Fred Gillett. Speakers: Bren. R. Limb and A. E. Winstanley. All visitors warmly welcome.

HYMN BOOKS WANTED.

I should be glad to receive copies of the 1908 HYMN BOOK, especially large print, although copies of the smaller type will be welcome. There must be many copies about up and down the country. These are urgently needed in Churches known to me. If YOU, dear reader, have an odd copy will you kindly send it? There may be Churches with copies in their cupboards which could be spared also.

A. L. FRITH.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Leven, Crossroads.—Bro. J. W. Davidson, 4 Sandy Brae, Kennoway, Fife.

Tranent, East Lothian.—Bro. D. Scott, 4 Co-operative Buildings, Haddington Road, Tranent, East Lothian.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Bristol, Bedminster. It was our joy to witness on Lord's Day, October 1st, the immersion of two elderly Sisters. Mrs Harris, a member of the Church of England all her life, although crippled, having to walk with a stick, when she was brought to see the way of the Lord more perfectly, determined to follow her Lord through the waters of baptism. Likewise Miss Williams, who has been associated with the Salvation Army all her life. These two, separated by extremes of religious thought and practice, have been brought together in Christ their Lord. A practical demonstration of the way and means of bringing about Christian unity. May they be an inspiration to many others to do likewise.

F. W. WILLS.

Hindley.—We are glad to report another successful anniversary, held Saturday and Lord's Day, September 16th and 17th. Bren. Walter Crosthwaite and Albert Winstanley shared the ministry of the Word. We are most grateful for the many fine thoughts given; we feel sure the Church benefitted and was edified. Meetings were well attended, brethren from the district rallying round on the Saturday, and also at the open-air meeting on Lord's Day evening in

Wigan. Our good times continued the week following, when Robert Brown responded to the appeal made by Bro. Frank Worgan. He was immersed the same hour of the night. We feel sure our brother will be a great asset to the cause here, and we pray that, through his influence and life, others may be constrained to accept the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Lord. We humbly thank God for another victory and press on encouraged.

L. MORGAN

Ilkeston.—Our six months' evangelistic effort with Bro. A. E. Winstanley, ending September last, has resulted in the immersion of two more—a girl from the Sunday School and a young woman who has attended our meetings almost from the commencement of the mission. Both were immersed on October 4th. This brings our recent additions to ten.

We are indeed grateful for the faithful and efficient labours of Bro. Winstanley and also Bro. Ralph Limb, who has so ably assisted him. Besides the work of preaching indoor and outdoor, much teaching has been given to the Church, which we trust will continue to bear fruit. Much time has also been given to house-to-house distribution of literature and many good contacts have been made. Another good piece of work Bro. Winstanley has done, is the inauguration and direction of a 'Men's Training Class.' This is already resulting in a more efficient public ministry. The very willing efforts by our brethren Winstanley and Limb and also Sis. Limb in Sunday School and Sunshine Corner have been very helpful and encouraging.

During the last few weeks of the mission we have been much indebted to another visitor, Bro. John Sharples, of Blackburn, for his very fine help and encouragement in all our varied activities. We cannot forget his happy smile and good fellowship as he went in and out amongst us, though sadly crippled, by the aid of his self-propelled vehicle, witnessing for Christ in the street, at the childrens meeting, exhorting the Church on Lord's Day morning, preaching the Gospel in the evening, offering helpful words and presiding at the Men's Training Class, etc.

We are grateful for the good fellowship and efficient help of all our visitors which we now miss so much. Never before have we had so much help and encouragement. May we all find joy in taking this as a challenge to ourselves to do more in the Lord's service, that we may carry on all this good work. Brethren, pray for us,

S. JEPSON

Ince, Wigan. On Friday, October 13th, two young ladies, Margaret Farnworth and Maureen Addis, were added to the Church meeting at Ince.

We wish our brethren to share the joy of this further increase, and to join us in praying that they, along with all those who have been baptised here in recent months, may become established in the Faith.

FRANK WORGAN.

Peterhead.—We are very glad to report that five have been added to the Church in Peterhead, by baptism, during the past month, and three have been restored. The Church has been greatly encouraged and strengthened by Bro. Gardiner's services, his words of encouragement, and exhortations, also in the great work of soul winning for our Lord and Master. The Gospel has been preached very earnestly and faithfully. We in Peterhead deeply appreciate Bro. Gardiner's services. We rejoice together and thank God for the power of the Gospel and pray that many more may be added to the Church of our Lord and Saviour.

A. REID

Slamannan, Stirlingshire.—Lord's Day evening meetings now commence at 6.0 and not 6.30 as heretofore.

Ulverston, Oddfellows Hall. We rejoice to report another addition to the Church here. Mr. Harold Holmes, who has attended our meetings for a considerable time, decided to surrender to the Lord, and was baptised into the Christ on Tuesday, October 10th. We feel that he will be a real help to the cause here. We are grateful to God for this evidence that our labours are not in vain in Him. May our new brother experience much of 'the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.'

Wigan. Albert Street, Newtown.—On October 7th and 8th, the Church held special week-end services. On Saturday about ninety sat down to an excellent tea, provided by the sisters. Bro. Walter Smith presided over the evening service, and a large audience was very appreciative of inspiring messages given by Bren. John Pritt, of Blackburn, and Eric McDonald, of London. We feel that the seed sown will bear fruit in the days that are before us. On Lord's Day, Bro. McDonald exhorted the Church, spoke to the elder scholars in the school, and preached the Gospel in the evening and again preached the Gospel on the market square, with the Church at Hindley. Truly a memorable week-end at which all the Churches in the district were represented. To God be the praise.

W. SMITH

OBITUARY

Blidworth.—Man's great and final enemy (death) has been busy of recent date among the members of the Church here and this record makes a total of four loyal sisters and one brother lost to the Church roll, although we believe they are in the safe keeping of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church at Blidworth represents but a small group of members.

Sis. Sarah Chambers was immersed over forty-three years ago by Bro. Herbert Riley, of Underwood and has continued faithful to the end of the earthly journey; not a sister for public duties, but was an excellent wife and mother. She was ideal in the home and was hospitable and generous in her dealings with Church matters. Many of the preaching brethren will probably recollect the good things she provided at the tea table when it was the practice to stay in the building for the night service. During her career, she was at one time literature agent and sick visitor. After returning from the afternoon meeting at Blidworth on Lord's Day, March 31st, 1943, she was suddenly stricken, and since was almost a helpless cripple, which has been a period of patient endurance for Bro. Chambers and daughter Gwennie, to whom we extend our deep sympathy in the irreparable loss sustained. The mortal remains were interred in Mansfield Cemetery on September 27th in the glorious hope of resurrection to eternal life, after a suitable service at the Mansfield Church, Bro. T. Knighton officiating.

Bro. Chambers and daughter desire to extend their thanks for all messages sent in sympathy. T. KNIGHTON

Peterhead.—It is with deep regret we record the death on August 27th of our Bro. Alex Strachan, in his seventy-fourth year. Bro. Strachan stood firmly for the truth, which was once for all

delivered to the saints; and had no sympathy, either, with doubtful innovations or modernism. Deeply we sympathise with the bereaved family and prayerfully commend them to our Heavenly Father's care. A. REID

Tranent.—Bro. Walter Wilson died on August 29th. He had been with us at the two meetings on Lord's Day, August 27th.

Bro. James Sneddon, Sen., died on September 15th. At the Bible Study on Thursday evening (14th) he led us in singing and seemed in better voice than he had been of recent times. It was evident he was missing the intimate companionship of Bro. Wilson, with whom he had worked with and for the Church at Tranent for many years. He was in the meeting place on the afternoon of September 15th and left to go home for his tea and was asleep in death within one and a half hours.

It will be some time before we get over the feeling that a big gap exists in our members, for these brethren were present at almost every meeting of the Church, with very few absences, due to illness.

The Church has lost two faithful shepherds and I have lost two brethren who on my arrival in this part of the country, some eleven years ago, made me feel so welcome that to work with them became an immediate and lasting pleasure.

Having differing characteristics, as is to be expected in the members of the Body, they had one thing in common, a certain hope that the Lord would come again. Walter often chose G. Rawson's hymn and James would lead us, as we sang:

Until the trump of God be heard,
Until the ancient graves be stirred,
And, with the great commanding word,
The Lord shall come!

O blessed hope! with this elate,
Let not our hearts be desolate
But strong in faith and patience wait
Until He come!

W. STEELE

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