

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## A MANY SPLENDURED THING

Have you ever wondered, as I have, why the N.T. has so much to say about the **Kingdom of God**, and also so much to say about the **church** and that the two terms run concurrently through the N.T.? The **church** is mentioned about 100 times: the K. of Heaven about 20 times; the K. of God about 60 times and **His** (Christ's) **Kingdom** about 40 times. Because of this, some religious groups believe that the church and the Kingdom are two quite separate institutions (although I do not suppose that they consider the K. of God, the K. of H. and the K. of Christ to be three different institutions). Certainly it is a fact that, whereas the K. of God, (K. of H.), is spoken of constantly in the four gospels, the church is mentioned **only once** (apart from Matt. 18:17) and is **never** referred to by Mark, Luke or John. Matthew, alone, quotes Jesus as saying (with reference to Peter's statement) "upon this rock I will build **My church** . . ." Did this puzzle the disciples and did they ponder what this church might be and what relationship it might have to the K. of God? We shall never know. Our pre-millennialist friends explain all this by alleging that when Jesus came to the earth (the first time) to establish His kingdom He was totally rejected (indeed crucified) by the Jews (His own received Him not) and so God, as an after-thought, introduced the Church (as a stop-gap) until Jesus returns (the second time) to set up His kingdom on earth and rule, on David's throne, in Jerusalem. The church, they say, was not prophesied in the O.T. and thus was not in the original plan. Jesus, therefore, had to change His 'programme' and, quite unexpectedly, began to conceal His message in parables.

Is there any real substance to such claims? What sayeth the scriptures?

### MANY FACETS

In the first place, most serious Bible students will have an instant revulsion at any talk of an omnipotent God having 'second thoughts' or of having to scramble about for a 'stop-gap' because Jews thwarted His eternal purposes. In the second place, it is extremely easy to show from the scriptures that Christ's Kingdom did come into being at Pentecost. As for the church not being mentioned in the O.T., or not being part of God's original plan, we need only read Paul's contradictions of any such claim. For example, in Eph. 3:1-11, Paul asserts that the manifold wisdom of God previously concealed in the past is now made known by the **church** "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (see also I Cor. 2:7). The church, (like the gospel itself) was ordained before the foundation of the world. As for the parables: it was certainly predicted in the O.T. that Jesus would use parables (Matt. 13:35, Ps. 78:2) and clearly was no 'after-thought.'

Are the church and the K. of God two separate institutions: just because differing

terminology is used? Or is 'church' and 'kingdom' merely two alternative ways of looking at the same institution? Surely the latter is the case and surely the word of God confirms this. Indeed it seems to be a pronounced feature of the N.T. writings that quite often the same object, or person, is viewed and described from contrasting standpoints. Even when Jesus, Himself, is being described, the Holy Spirit is not content merely to describe Him as a **King**, or as the Head. True, He is described as King, and Yes, He is described as Head over His church, but He is seen also from many other vantage points. He is also said to be Prophet; a Judge; a Mediator; a Shepherd; an Advocate; a Prince; a Captain; a Redeemer; a Priest; an Apostle; a Saviour; and Messiah. These in no way exhaust the list and many other designations, such as Heir, Door, Rock, Teacher, Truth, Branch, Bread, Lamb, True-vine, Light, could be added. Obviously these varied appellations do not suggest a plurality of persons but rather that these are the various attributes and functions of the same person.

Even the early disciples of Jesus are accorded similar treatment and although it was quite a long time before they were honoured by the term 'Christian' (firstly at Antioch—Acts 11:26) they were commonly referred to as believers; as disciples; as brethren; as servants; as soldiers; as labourers; as stewards; as watchmen; as sheep; as heirs; as salt; as vessels; as witnesses; as little children; as ambassadors; as priests and so on.

In view of all this we should readily grasp the fact that the N.T. habitually does not restrict itself (when describing that which it cares to describe) and we should not be at all surprised that 'church' and 'kingdom' are both employed to describe the same Divine institution.

#### IS LIKE UNTO . . .

I suppose common-sense, itself, should tell us that very often, some things can not be adequately described by just one word or even a few. Could we describe ourselves in one word? To teach this lesson the late (and highly esteemed) brother Will Steele (in our Bible Study group) used to make us select a member of the class and list all the adjectives necessary to give a complete description. How then could Jesus have been described in one word? He was King; but He was more: He was Prophet: but He was more: He was Saviour: but yet He was more; and so we have, (as listed above) a formidable array of His many titles and attributes. After all, how can we describe the indescribable or define the indefinable?

By the same token, how could the kingdom, or church, possibly be described, or defined adequately in but one way. Jesus acknowledged such an impossibility and spoke many parables to try and describe the many and varied characteristics of the Kingdom. In Matthew 13, alone, there are several parables which all begin with the words, "the Kingdom of heaven is like unto . . ." Apparently mere adjectives could not do justice to the complexity and profundity of the K. of God and necessitated the lessons rampant and rich in those wonderful parables (earthly stories with heavenly meaning). Each parable highlights some particular aspect of the kingdom and when we remember that Jesus favoured us with about 40 parables we can appreciate the absurdity of any man thinking that the reign of Christ can be described with a few adjectives, or one analogy. The term 'Kingdom' comes from the Greek *basileia* which, I am informed, means 'reign' and rarely means 'territory.' Accordingly 'Kingdom of God' means the 'reign of God,' not over square miles of earth and sea, but in the hearts of men and women. The Kingdom God "is within you" (Luke 17:20).

[It is interesting to note that the parables seem to give little support to those of a pre-millennial bent. If, for example, we look at the parable of the tares we shall see that the field represented the world; the good seed represented the children of the kingdom; the tares represented the children of the wicked one; the enemy (who sowed the tares) was the devil; the harvest was the end of the world and the reapers were

**God's angels.** These angels at the harvest (end of the world) would **gather out of the Kingdom** all things that offend and do iniquity. Thus the kingdom exists now; will continue until harvest (end of the world) and this leaves no room for a 1,000 years reign. Christ's reign is now.]

### OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

In the one place in the gospels (apart from Matt. 18:17) where the **church** is mentioned, we notice that Jesus also mentions the **kingdom** and draws no distinction between them; but rather runs them together. Jesus said to Peter, (Matt. 16:18) "And upon this rock I will build **my church** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the **Kingdom of heaven** . . ." These keys, given to Peter (and other apostles) were figurative keys and were representative of authority in the Church insofar as declaring the terms of entry into the kingdom was concerned, the form of worship and behaviour within it. Peter (and the other apostles) used those keys on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when the K. of H. came with power and the church was established. The kingdom and the church until Pentecost were spoken of as yet future but, from Pentecost onwards are referred to as being realities. Thus Jesus mentions the church and the kingdom, literally in the same breath, and appears to consider them as synonymous.

We ought to notice, however, as ought our pre-millennial friends, that the N.T. does not confine itself solely to using the terms of **church** and **kingdom**, but indulges in **other descriptive language**. For instance, we are invited to regard God's people as a household — the **HOUSEHOLD OF GOD** (Eph. 2:19) where the family feature of the church is emphasised. God is the Father, Christ is the Son, Christians are His brethren. Christians are born into God's family by the new birth, are heirs with Christ; wear the family name; and receive Fatherly provision, protection and correction. Paul (in I Tim. 3:15) says that the 'House of God' is the 'Church of God.'

Again the N.T. suggests that the church is not only the Household of God but the **TEMPLE of God** i.e. the place where God meets those that worship Him. God does not dwell in temples made with hands (literal buildings) but in people (Acts 7:48 and I Cor. 3:16). The literal temples of the past (tabernacle, Solomon's temple, Herod the Great's temple) are indeed gone and the new, spiritual, temple is built up with spiritual stones, held together with the mortar of God's love. It is built on the spiritual foundation of Christ and the apostles, Jesus being the chief corner-stone "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22). Peter adds, "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:5). And so God has a kingdom, a church, a household and a temple and these are not different institutions but merely alternative ways of looking at the same thing. Nor does this exhaust the list. There is also the concept of the **VINEYARD of the Lord**. God is the governor, we are the labourers and we must sow the seed of the kingdom and produce the fruit. One sows and another waters but God gives the increase. Those who work during the heat of the day will receive due wages, and reward, at the end of the day (end of the world). The kingdom is also likened unto a **SHEEPFOLD** where Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep. Those who hear His voice are His flock and as they follow Him He provides pasture and protection. John (in Chap. 10) reflects this analogy and when Jesus said, "I am the Door," He was in fact, referring to the **door of the Sheepfold**. Jesus also said that those who would come into the Sheep-fold must come in by the Door, for those who sought to climb up some other way were thieves and robbers. The kingdom of God is also likened unto **THE BODY of Christ** with many 'members' (joints, sinews, organs) all under the control

of the head — even Christ. The church is also likened to the **BRIDE of Christ** and doubtless readers may be able to think of other similies used in God's word.

### CONCLUSION

There is clearly no conflict or friction between those various concepts of the gospel age. Those who are in the kingdom are in the church and vice versa. Whether we see the church from the standpoint of a kingdom, or a household, or a Temple, or a Sheepfold, or a Vineyard it matters not. They are but various facets of the same glorious gem. It is true that the faithful will 'receive' and 'inherit' the kingdom after the Judgement, but this merely means that **the kingdom will be transferred** from the earth to the heavens, to the heavenly Jerusalem, for we have no abiding city here. Jesus advises men to "lay up for themselves, treasures in heaven" — in the 'place' (many mansions) He has gone ahead to prepare. Paul reminded the Christians at Colosse of "the hope that is laid up for them in heaven." Peter assured the Christians (scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia) that they could look forward to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." And so the Kingdom of Heaven, although beginning at Pentecost, will assuredly culminate in heaven — its final dominion. I have tried to show, that, given the difficulty of fully describing what is virtually indescribable, the N.T. does resort to many similitudes: yet describes but one great institution, the church, or the kingdom. Paul confirms this when he states, "There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through you all and in you all." Eph. 4:5. There is but one.

EDITOR.

## GLEANINGS

*"Let her glean even among the sheaves." Ruth 2: 15*

### SHALL I, BY DOING THIS, MISS A BLESSING?

If I were to say anything about the questions of casuistry by which some good people are perplexed in relation to the manner of observing Sunday, it would not be with the intention of discussing them, but to show that they ought never to be raised at all. It is a direct inversion of the whole idea and theory of the Day to ask, What common things may I do upon it and yet be blameless? The true question for every Christian man is, How far is it possible for me to escape from the common cares and common joys of my ordinary life, and how completely can I dwell, for one day in the week at least, in a fairer world than this, breathe a purer air, and rejoice in the light of a Diviner heaven? The observance of the Sunday as a religious institution is a question of privilege, not of duty.

When we consider the weekly Rest as a social and moral institution, the case is somewhat different. There are innumerable reasons which make it desirable to have a break in the world's business at least one day in seven. Physical health suffers and the vigour of the body declines without it. When in the fierce heat of the first French Revolution it was determined to abolish every trace and memorial of the Christian Faith in France, the revolutionists still felt that it was necessary to provide for a regular interval of Rest, and they therefore appointed a week of ten days with a regularly recurring holiday. After twelve years' experience, they abandoned the week of ten days and returned to the older and more kindly custom of resting one day in seven. The institution is so invaluable to the physical well-being of nations, that to break it down by engaging in unnecessary business, or by unnecessary travelling, or by encouraging exciting public amusements, is not so much a religious as a social offence.

It has its intellectual uses, even though as is too often the case, the day is spent

in intellectual idleness. Mere rest renews the vigour of the brain.

It is also a check on that feverish and insane devotion to secular business which is one of the most serious perils to the moral life of our own country. There are too many people in England on whose gravestones the French epitaph might be written, "He was born a man and died a grocer." Apart altogether from the higher relationships of man, it is for the interest of the nation that tradesmen, manufacturers, and merchants should find the doors of their shops, their works, and their counting-houses, locked and barred against them during one day in seven, and that for twenty-four hours they should be emancipated, by a compulsory law, from the bondage which they love too well, and should be compelled to spend their time with their children and friends.

As a social institution, the Sunday imposes upon us an obligation to keep it as free as possible from ordinary work; but as a religious institution it does not so much impose obligation as offer privilege. The great question we have to ask, in relation to any possible infraction of its religious sanctions, is not, Shall I, by doing this, break a law? but, Shall I, by doing this miss a blessing? Everything will fall into its right place and every question will receive its true answer, if we once seize the true idea of the Day. It is a Day to rejoice in: a Day not of bondage but of freedom, not of gloom but of gladness: a Day in which we declare that we are not merely merchants, mechanics, shopkeepers and lawyers, but men — children of God and heirs of immortality; a Day in which we assert our position as the rulers and lords of the material universe, and refuse to be in thralldom to it, and in which we claim to be the citizens of an invisible and Divine commonwealth. It perpetuates the memory not of our rescue from slavery in Egypt but of a still nobler redemption. It bears witness to the Resurrection of Christ, and to our resurrection with Him — it is "an Easter Day in every week." It reminds us, not of the completion of the Old Creation but of the commencement of the New, in which, at last, the sins and sorrows which have marred and desolated the fair beauty of this world shall be known no more, but in which the glory of God shall be man's inheritance, because in the life of man the life of God shall be perfectly manifested; and in this weekly Rest, which has not been imposed upon us by any external law but has been demanded and won by an inward spiritual instinct, we anticipate the blessedness of the new Heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell — the everlasting Sabbath of the regenerate and glorified sons of God.

R. W. DALE

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

## HISTORY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN MALAWI

### Part 1 — 1906-1930.

The first preacher of the Church of Christ in Malawi (then Nyasaland) was Brother Elaton Kundago. Bro. Kundago went from Nyasaland to take a job in South Africa, and became a member of the Church of Christ there in 1906. Soon after he returned to Nyasaland and began preaching at Chikunda in Blantyre near the old mission station of Pastor Joseph Booth.

Mr. Booth, a pastor from Australia, worked in various denominations at different times and established a number of different missions and denominations in Nyasaland. When he was deported by the Nyasaland government some time between 1902 and 1904, he was with the Seventh Day Adventists. He was never a member of the Church of Christ. But in 1906 he wrote to brethren of the Church of Christ in Britain urging them to send missionaries to Nyasaland. When they declined, Booth appealed to the elders of the Church of Christ in Cape Town, South Africa. They in turn sent two brethren to Nyasaland, George Hills and George Hubert Hollis, who was later

nicknamed "Kamoto" ("Little Fire") by the Africans in Nyasaland. Bro. Pondani in his history tells us that Bro. Kundago and his converts also appealed for the missionaries to be sent. It may be that Bro. Kundago knew them while in South Africa.

The two missionaries arrived in Nyasaland in 1907. They stayed in Blantyre. Late in the year Bro. Hills heard that his wife was ill back at home. Both men returned to South Africa intending to bring their wives to Nyasaland. But Bro. Hills failed to return to Nyasaland because his wife remained sick and died in 1909. Bro. Hollis returned with his wife and lived at Blantyre. Bro. Kundago was interpreter and translator for Bro. Hollis. At this time a mission station was soon established at Namiwawa southeast of Zomba. At first Bro. Hollis visited Namiwawa from Blantyre, but in 1910 began to live at Namiwawa.

At Zomba there were three African men who held office in the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian Church). They were George Masangano, Frederick Singano Khonde, and Ronald Kaundo. Masangano writes that he himself was a deacon. He was also a head foreman in the work of the government in Zomba. Khonde was a foreman in the Government Press. Bro. Elaton Kundago knew Masangano and wrote him a letter explaining baptism by immersion as practiced in the scriptures. Among other scriptures he cited I Corinthians 6:2, Matthew 3:16 and Acts 22:16. Masangano and his two friends were convinced about scriptural baptism. Masangano writes that he went to Chikunda and after studying for two or three days was baptised by Bro. Kundago on November 28th 1907. Then Bro. Masangano went to Zomba and baptised Khonde and Kaundo. At the same time Bro. Masangano began preaching.

In his history, Bro. Masangano tells us that in December, 1907, he was called by the elders of the Church of Scotland so that they might ask him what he was preaching. He tells of going to the Church of Scotland school where he found 300 people waiting. He told them what he had learned about scriptural baptism in the Church of Christ. The people asked him for scriptural witness and he gave them Matthew 3: 13 17. They all were amazed and agreed that the scriptures teach baptism by immersion. Bro. Masangano goes on to say that after he slept that night, seventy people came to him the next morning wanting baptism by immersion. Bro. Masangano sent forty of them to Blantyre to be baptized by Bro. Kundago, and Bro. Kundago came to Zomba and baptised the remaining thirty.

Bro. Masangano says he was then called to account by a missionary of the Church of Scotland. At the mission he found seven church elders assembled for the discussion. They wanted to know why he had been immersed and asked him many questions. He told them that in their church they had not baptised him but had only sprinkled a little water on his head. He said other things in which they were offended and they began to beat him.

Later Bro. Masangano left government employment and began full time work as a preacher supported by the brethren in England. Others of the African brethren at Namiwawa were also supported. In those days Bro. Elaton Kundago began to "fall into the snare of the devil." Bro. Pondani's account tells us that when the British brethren began to send the support money for the Namiwawa preachers through Bro. Masangano instead of Bro. Kundago, Kundago became jealous and began to drink and do other wrong things. He then went to Tanzania where he was charged with adultery and killed himself along with the woman.

Other missionaries came from Britain to work with Bro. Hollis at Namiwawa. A lady missionary, Mary Bannister arrived on June 5th 1912. Bro. and Sister Henry Philpott came in November, 1913. Leaders of other church missions were offended because Bro. Hollis would not work in fellowship with them. The government was offended in him because he would not accept the guns and ammunition the government was distributing to Europeans after war broke out with Germany in 1914. Hollis said,

"My work is not to kill people but to save them." But Bro. Philpott accepted the arms.

The missionaries and all the members of the Church of Christ came into trouble when John Chilembwe, leader of the Providence Industrial Mission (Baptist), led an uprising against the Nyasaland government in 1915. The government thought the Church of Christ brethren had agreed with the Providence Industrial Mission about the uprising. The Church of Christ missionaries were detained for seven weeks in Zomba. Then Bro. Hollis was deported and the other missionaries left in 1917, the church having been banned since 1915. Brethren Masangano, Khonde and Kaundo were imprisoned and other brethren were executed. Masangano and Khonde each received a seven year sentence.

Bro. Hollis was deported because he had had previous knowledge of the plot and had not reported it (he explained that he had not taken the reports seriously). The government suspected the African leaders in the Church of Christ because they were close friends of the leaders of the Providence Industrial Mission, and both churches practised immersion. But although some former leaders of the Church of Christ aided Chilembwe in the uprising, the missionaries and their African fellow-leaders within the Church of Christ did not. Bro. Masangano told this writer that on the night before the uprising and its killings, he pleaded with Chilembwe not to carry out his plans. Bro. Khonde also pleaded with him. Bro. Masangano said he could not report the plans to the government lest he have Chilembwe's blood on his hands.

The Church of Christ was banned by the government from 1915 to 1924, but the brethren continued to meet in secret for worship and baptized converts in the streams at night. The leaders directed the work from prison, and baptized people and led worship within the prison. Bro. Frederick Khonde petitioned the government in 1920 and again in 1924 to lift the ban on the church. At first the government refused, but finally agreed on May 27th, 1924. Frederick Khonde, George Masangano and Ronald Kaundo all signed a pledge to obey the government. The church was required to file a quarterly report of its activities and to consult government about the location and establishment of new congregations in the villages. The location of Namiwawa Mission was shifted one mile. In those days, Masangano, Khonde and Kaundo, together with Peter Chakama and others, were the best known preachers in the Church of Christ work.

The Nyasaland brethren appealed to the Churches of Christ in Britain for other missionaries to be sent. In 1929 the Baptist Industrial Mission closed their work at Gowa Mission in Ntcheu District and handed the mission site over to the British Churches of Christ. This may have helped influence the decision of the British Churches of Christ to send Bro. Ernest Gray. Gray arrived in Nyasaland in 1929 or 1930. Previous to sending Bro. Gray, many of the Churches of Christ in Britain had become more liberal doctrinally and were probably parallel to the Disciples of Christ in America. Therefore Bro. Gray believed in fellowship and co-operation with many denominations. He said the brethren should receive into membership without re-baptism persons who had been sprinkled by the Presbyterians. He also instituted a long catechismal period so that some people had to study a year or more before qualifying for baptism. It is said that he also wanted to perform all baptisms himself.

These things offended Masangano, Khonde, Kaundo and other African brethren. Bro. Gray told them that if he didn't co-operate with other churches, the colonial government would send him home. The brethren answered, "Then it is better that you go." According to Masangano, Bro. Gray replied, "I have come with money to help your work. If I leave, you will remain in need." But the brethren answered, "We don't want money but to obey the Lord." Bro. Masangano also says that when the "Federation of Churches" in Britain heard of this, they sent an appeal to the governor of Nyasaland to imprison the African leaders, but the governor refused.

(Concluding Part Next Month).

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## “CHAT WITH AN OLD-PATHER”

It saddened me to read the article published under the title *Chat With An Old Pather* in the July issue of *The Scripture Standard*. Is this fine publication going to be used to batter to death brethren who may have come to different conclusions from a study of God’s word? Are we going to brand as “modernist” all of those fine brothers and sisters who gave up their livelihood to study at the Corby Bible School?

What is modernism? If modernism is a difference in interpretation of the scriptures, then I am a modernist and so is every one else because none of us see eye-to-eye on everything in the Bible. Therefore, if our good brother from Bristol accuses anyone of modernism because they have come to a different conclusion through a study of the Bible, then he must admit that everyone else in the Bristol congregation are modernists. None of us are infallible, not even the teachers at Corby, but it seems that some brethren act as though they are infallible. Are we going to condemn women for not wearing hats because they may have come to the conclusion that their “hair is a covering”? It saddens me to realise that a Christian woman may love the Lord Jesus deeply and live a good life in service to Him, yet she may be cruelly criticised because she didn’t wear a covering in worship. Who are we to stand in judgement? Having said that, I have seen some poor excuses for hats and head covering.

I am all for unity amongst our brethren, but it is a mistake to confuse unity for conformity. All of us come from different backgrounds with varying intellectual abilities. So all of us have differing mental perceptions about the things we study in scripture. It has always been like that. Paul in his letters had to correct many things, but he still called those to whom he was writing, HIS BRETHREN. He didn’t refer to them as “liberals,” “modernists,” “Woodcockists,” etc.; he just called them his brethren, despite their faults. If anyone thinks that unity equals conformity, then read Romans 14, because that chapter destroys the argument that we must all believe exactly the same things.

The world outside is yearning for Jesus, yet we on the inside are even now engaged in pointless argument about covering, cups, instruments, etc. “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.** Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity,” (Col. 1 3:12-14).

Dearly beloved, all of you are my brethren, whatever views you may hold. I plead that all of us will live, work and worship together in peace, despite the different opinions that may exist among us. There can be unity in diversity, because the love of Jesus has brought us together even though we are all different. With this in mind let us show His love to the world so that many will love Him. If people see us disputing with each other, what impression would that give? No, let us love each other, so that all men will know that we are the disciples of Jesus. (John 13:34,35).

Stephen Woodcock, Longshoot, Wigan.

[Stephen did not enclose any other form of communication with his article and so I do not have his address, but I would like to assure him that I have no intention of allowing anyone to use the “S.S.” to ‘batter anyone to death’ (or indeed to batter them to death). Few religious magazines publish readers’ views or allow free expression. The “S.S.” prints not only readers’ views but quite often the views of those **who do not buy the paper**; and even the views of those who do not disguise their strong hostility to the paper. I have printed Stephen’s article and he didn’t even ask me. Surely all that must be regarded as very fair. The British churches have certainly taken a battering, even in my life-time, but I don’t think the “S.S.” is the culprit. Now that two opposing



views on this matter have been published perhaps the issue can rest there.

Our good brother makes some challenging statements in his article and surely it would be extremely useful if some of our brethren could write some dispassionate and studied articles on this matter of Unity. For instance, articles on "What was the unity Jesus prayed for?" and "Is religious division really inevitable?"; and "Are the scriptures incapable of being commonly understood — and if so, why?"; and "Is Paul asking the impossible in I Cor. 1:10" (i.e. that Christians be undivided, of the same judgement, perfectly joined together in the same mind, and that they all speak the same thing); and "If different interpretations of God's word are inevitable (even normal) should not we extend our love and fellowship to the U.R.C. Christadelphians, Baptist and other denominations?" These are just a few suggestions and I know that they were all dealt with generations ago by the Pioneers and giants in the faith, but surely it would be useful to go over them again. **Let's have the articles.** (Editor.)




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Conducted by  
Alf Marsden

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**"What will happen to people who have never heard the Gospel. It seems unfair that people should be lost if they haven't had a chance to obey the Gospel?"**

This is a very important and emotive subject, and we ought to get one thing clear in our minds at the outset. We are talking about God and His relationship with His creation and consequently, 'fairness' or 'unfairness' do not really enter the argument: the Bible poses the question, "Will not the judge of all the earth do right?" and obviously we mortals must accept that He will. If some are saved and some are lost then we can be assured that such a situation will be according to His righteous judgment. If we cannot accept that God is true and just in **all** His dealings then we are truly standing on spiritual quicksand.

#### Where Do We Start

If we believe that God will eventually 'save' all of His creation then we are guilty of believing as the Universalists do. They believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of **all** men. They argue that whether or not all men know this or believe it, Jesus is their Saviour and the efficacy of His sacrifice is transferred to **all**. One of the proof texts used is Col. 1:20, where Paul says, "And having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." So according to the argument, the blood of Christ covers all men, and all men are saved in spite of themselves.

There are several objections to this. In the first place, what would be the point in evangelising if everyone was going to be saved anyway. Secondly, how do we explain the biblical references to Heaven and Hell, and the teaching regarding the final separation of the 'saved' and the 'lost.' Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13,14). See also Matt. 25:32,46). Thirdly, the bible teaches quite conclusively that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), so what menace would there be in sin if **everyone** was going to be saved to eternal life?

I believe that we can say that Universalism is not a scriptural concept. It is true

to say, as the Bible does, that Jesus by His sacrifice on the Cross created the **potential** for all to be saved, but it is equally true to say that only those who embrace a living faith in Him will experience the **actuality** of salvation. The Colossian passage which we quoted earlier goes on to say . . . “if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col. 1:23). The phrase ‘and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven’ is germane to our question and we shall return to it later.

#### Who is ignorant of the Gospel?

When we discuss a question such as this we tend to think of people in the vastnesses of the jungles of Africa and South America and other such remote places. But they could equally well live in our streets and towns, and probably do. Paul asserts, however, that the Gospel was preached “to every creature which is under heaven,” so how do people remain ignorant?

Ignorance develops through not hearing, and not learning and understanding. I believe that infants and the mentally deficient are in a separate category because they are incapable of learning and understanding so consequently they cannot embrace a living faith. In that case it is difficult to understand how such could be condemned, and I believe God deals with them in a special way. “Ah,” someone will say, “but aren’t the deaf, and people to whom the Gospel has never been preached, in the same category?” I believe not. The deaf can usually read, the blind can usually hear, and Paul says, as we have stated, that the Gospel “was preached to every creature which is under heaven” so there must be traditions of the Christian message in every culture. Furthermore, nature and conscience play an important part in understanding according to Paul. We need to examine his teaching relative to the Gentile experience.

#### The Gentile experience

Paul, in his argument concerning the righteous judgment of God, compares two classes of people, Jews and Gentiles. It is true to say that to the devout Jew the Gentiles were the ‘heathen,’ but Paul makes it clear that so far as God is concerned there is no respect of persons. Concerning the Gentiles he says, “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” (Rom. 2:12). Now this is very important teaching because it means that the ‘heathen’ who sinned outside the Mosaic Law were lost, not because they had sinned against that Law, but because they had not kept the law or the ‘light’ which they had. The Jew, of course, stood or fell by the Mosaic Law.

Paul then keeps on ‘mining’ this important vein of truth, for he goes on, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (Mosaic), do by nature the things contained in the law (Mosaic) these, having not the law (Mosaic), are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law (Mosaic) written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another.” Now this must inevitably mean that the Gentiles had some knowledge of God in their consciences, and whenever they did right they became “a law unto themselves.” Whenever at any point their conduct corresponded to the Mosaic Law, at that point they exhibited the unwritten law which was in their hearts.

Furthermore, you will notice that Paul says that their consciences were all the while ‘accusing’ or ‘excusing’ their conduct. This seems to indicate the facility that all mentally-aware people have, namely, that they know when they are doing right or wrong. The very fact that the conscience operates like this is to make us understand that we are sinners, because we understand that when our conscience disapproves of our actions then to that extent we are not meeting the just requirements of God. There has only ever been one person whose conscience has never troubled Him, and

that was the Lord Himself. He was the only sinless One. As a matter of fact we can say with complete conviction that the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross would have been in vain if people, by their own volition, could at all times have conducted themselves in such a way that they were always acting and thinking according to the Will of God. Such a state we know to be impossible because Paul teaches, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). By nature, 'there is none righteous, no, not one.' When people violate the standard by doing that which they know to be wrong, then they become responsible for their own actions. In fact, they sin.

#### Why are people lost?

There is nothing in God's Word which intimates to me that people are lost merely because they have never heard the Gospel. the condemnation is for **guilt** not for ignorance. The condemnation according to Jesus is that "Light is come into the world, and men loved (preferred) darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). It is clear that if God had to somehow justify the sinner, then the guilt of sin would have to be removed; this He did in Christ Jesus His Son. As Paul puts it in the Roman letter, "that he (God) might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus". A just and righteous God **had** to deal with the guilt attaching to sin, and only the Sinless One could bear that guilt, and so He bore it to the Cross for us.

So where does this leave us relative to our question? It leaves us with the thought that if those who have never heard the Gospel did in fact hear and obey it then they would be saved, but the fact of their not having heard the Gospel does not make them any less sinners; It is not **ignorance** of the Gospel message which makes them sinners; they are sinners because they are **men**, made in the Adamic mould. As long as they remain in their sinful state then they are subject to "wages" of sin whether or not they hear the Gospel.

Answering a question like this one induces in me a state of shock. That shock should, I believe, transmit itself to every Christian. In our efforts to maintain the purity of the Church we have forgotten the impurity of sin in which so many millions of people languish throughout the world. The words of Ezekiel come to mind, "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from it, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 33:8,9).

(All questions, please to:

Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lanc. WN3 6ES)

#### EVANGELIST WANTED

I have been in Malawi, Africa since the year of 1964. I am working in connection with Namikango Mission, in the Bible School and Training Work for the Malawi church workers. I was associated with G.B. Shelburne III, until he left to return to the States in 1980. We came into Malawi without knowing much about the history of the background of the churches of Christ. Since we have been here over a period of time, we have found many groups of the church of Christ. One group is the African Church

of Christ. For a number of years they have elected to work by themselves without an expatriate missionary. They began with the Churches of Christ from England, and later separated with them due to their liberal policy of fellowship with other churches. The last missionary that they remember being with them was a Bro. Phillips. Bro. Peaches Jana has been in the leadership for a number of years and now they wish to begin working with an expatriate missionary again. They desire someone to come and work in Malawi with them.

During May of this this year, two of us sat with two of them to discuss this matter. We asked who they had been working with? But they do not remember the address of those whom they last had contact with. In the course of discussion, it was decided that I write to you to enquire if you know who has been working with a group of the church of Christ called the "African Church of Christ". Past leaders have been Bro. G. Masangano, Bro. F. S. Khone, Bro. R. Kaundo, Bro. T. Chisiyano, and P. Jana and B. Ntulisha.

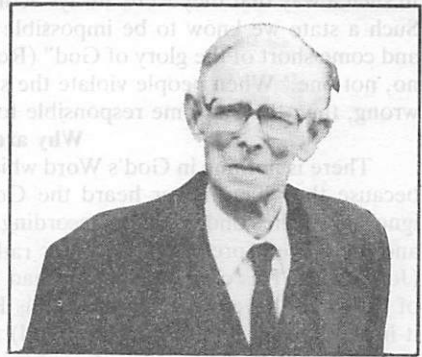
Are you acquainted with this group? Could you respond to their request for someone to work with them here in Malawi?

Our work is that of building up the local congregation by holding Bible Schools here at Thondwe (Namikango Mission), and in the villages as well. We have avoided taking the oversight of the Malawi churches since the church has been established over the past years having its own leadership, and the work now is in the stage of church development. We work with this group with Sunday visits, by offering them printed material in the local language and a short Bible School for a week or two. We invite them to attend preachers meetings and other courses of study here on the mission. The work has grown beyond our ability to constantly reach the more than 700 congregations that we try to teach, train, etc. by Sunday visits only. Thus the focus on printed teaching materials, books, monthly publications etc. We cannot become the missionaries of one group of the church here in Malawi.

I wish to hear from you concerning the request of this group of the church of Christ in Malawi.

Lendal Wilks,  
Namikango Mission,  
P.O. Box 13,  
Thondwe, Malawi.  
(I have found no information re the 'African Church of Christ' but anyone interested should contact me or Bro. Wilks.—Ed.)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS



R.B. Scott (Robert Balmain Scott) was 92 yrs. on 4th Jan. this year and has given us "Scripture Readings" every month since 1945 (over 40 yrs.)

Readers will wish to thank him for his long and devoted labour to the "S.S." and wish him every blessing for the future.

Sept. 6	II Kings 5: 1-19	John 9: 1-34
Sept. 13	Izek 34: 1-16	John 9,35 to 10,21
Sept. 20	Lev. 24: 10-23	John 10: 22-42
Sept. 27	Ruth 1	John 11: 1-18

### Born blind and born again

Jesus passed by. Jesus saw him. The disciples saw him, and enquired a reason for the blind birth. Out of these facts a most interesting New Testament chapter faces us, and faced the sceptical Pharisees. In view of the miraculous work of Jesus in that society, their scepticism seems very gratuitous - if not thoroughly unreasonable. Jesus dealt with His disciples' question very summarily. The question is answered by action as well as words. It was so that God should show a sign of power to do the "impossible". Obstinate unbelief tried hard to escape the truth but got no help from parents nor child. He accepted the plain truth. They told him an obvious lie - and remained in blind unbelief. Are we not reminded of Christ's condemnation of His generation and com-

parison with Sodom and Sidon? But many generations and populations stay unconvinced. What a dangerous thing is indifference and unbelief! What a lovely conclusion – HE WORSHIPPED HIM! Can we worship HIM enough?

#### **Blind, and blind again**

How often Jesus exhibited His mighty powers in street, on path, in house, in home, on hillside, by the lake, with the multitudes. While He was not always in the public eye in those years of loving ministry, countless individuals experienced His loving touch, and yet those who surely should have been best, equally with those to whom experiences must have made all the difference to life, remained blind to reality. It is easy, too easy! just to accept plain truth without taking it to heart, Familiarity sometimes blinds perception and sensitiveness. May the Lord keep us from that fatal condition!

#### **The shepherd and his flock**

David meets us watching over his flock, not even counted in his family when anointed by Samuel to his great work as king and national leader. It is fitting that He who came to a pastoral nation to be their king should be the shepherd of Israel, and how great a lesson it is when the features are understood. My memories are of early days when rather bullying shepherds drove sheep and cattle from goods yards to market along the London roads to the local cattle market. When the good shepherd is known to his sheep **individually** and they follow Him gladly to lush pastureland, as pictured in the psalm beloved, through pastures or quiet waters, our thoughts thrill to the thought of the good shepherd who has personal acquaintance and loving relationships. His special and loving care comfort us in times of difficulty. We have the warning against the false leaders who lead astray, and those engaged in trading with money for sake of gain. The good shepherd has laid down His life for them in obedience to the Father. Our needs are known, understood and provided for eternally.

An immeasurable pain has been borne to make an immeasurable sacrifice.

#### **Truth, Unbelievable**

Jesus is the Christ. The Baptist made it quite clear. He is being asked for a declaration which he has already made. His works have also made it clear: and yet Jesus is still being asked the question which He is again asked repeatedly at the trial and by his final judge. He repeats His affirmation still more clearly in Solomon's Porch. They have made their judgement already with hearts, and hands upon stones, withheld only because His time had not come. Does He not make a still more drastic claim: His destiny is within God's supreme will or choice? His enemies are not with Him; meaning they do not believe **THE FATHER**. They do not belong to Him. He claims to have "other sheep" but that makes no difference. His questioners are on one side or the other, and they do seem to recognise this but still do not apparently see the distinction. There is not "my" in the Greek, making Father neutral gender, so "substance," an absolute **ONENESS**, perhaps not comprehensible to us, but certainly beyond human understanding as separate in will or purpose. "I and the Father are **ONE**" – Surely Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

#### **A final sign**

The disciples understood that the decision of their **MASTER** to go to Judea was equal to facing such bitter and powerful enemies that they felt "Let us also go that we may die with Him". They at least realised a grave danger to His life, but we suppose they had not yet taken all He had taught them about what must have seemed to them like defeat. That He should face and bear ultimate death and see his body upon the tree. Peter and John running to view a dead body. It would seem that John did indeed **BELIEVE** the fact when he entered the tomb (20,8). They had retired with Him "beyond Jordan" (10,41), many "believers" resorting to Him there. But now news of Lazarus came

and from thinking of recovery in sleep but being assured it was death. Jesus knew this must be and told them why – for the glory of God (11,4). This must have puzzled them, and the delay seemed unexplained. How finally it was necessary that the mourners from society in Jerusalem should witness so closely and the truth should be known – we repeat KNOWN to the high priestly family – all the details seen and known. Of course, in a sense, such great signs had been witnessed surely by just as many!

#### Days of trial

We have looked at Jesus in His retirement, viewed those who resorted to Him because of their appreciation of those who did care for Him, so let us see how those so immediately concerned must have thought deeply, and wondered! Why did their noblest and best friend delay coming when it was such an urgent matter? Was it now too late to manifest the love and sympathy expected very quickly? The mourning in those circumstances would be very obvious; friends came from far and near, and this only made the loss harder to bear. We need not doubt great grief, and on those immediately concerned deeply grieving. I must leave my brother to continue, but we see a great difference between the sisters. Martha hurries to meet Jesus; Mary too deeply moved to seek the deeply loved friend. Love and respect are manifest in Martha but here is a touch of grievance. Other persons had been raised from death in our Saviour's wonderful life, so might He not restore the life just then and there? Martha declares her belief in the resurrection, and something more, and the great sign is given!

R.B. Scott.

## NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

**Stretford, Manchester:** Greetings from the church here at Manchester. We

would like to announce the addition of two more souls to the Lord's church here. Marie Segal and her son Adrian (aged 27) were baptized into Christ Jesus on June 6. They had attended the John Clayton lectures last August and have been very happy to find a warm, church family. This brings our potential attendance to a total of 40 with 24 being baptized. The Bible studies are really taking root with every individual here finding ways of expressing and sharing their faith. The numbers are not huge but the gospel is still producing wonderful fruit. The Lord's hand is still with His people. We thank God for the increase.

Arthur Barry, Evangelist.

**Kitwe, Zambia:** Angela and Chester Woodhall made one trip and Chester made a further trip for meetings with various Zaire Church leaders. The consensus was that progress was made. One grouping of Churches of Christ in Zaire with whom the Woodhall family works had 420 baptisms in 1986.

A Bible teaching seminar was held at DILOLO, 16-18 May, on the theme "Life of Christ."

Bro. A. Kathumba,  
Church of Christ,  
P.O. Box 22297,  
Kitwe, Zambia.

**Haddington:** Since opening our church premises for our meetings we have had some visitors. Bro. and sister Bill Mair from Buckie met with us recently, as did bro. and sister Allan Ashurst, from Manchester. Last Sunday we had another enjoyable visit from bro. and sister E. Severson from Burnaby in Canada. They are now 'down south' and we wish them well during the rest of their stay in Britain.

The Mutual Benefit Meeting, will, God willing, be held here on 12th September at 4 p.m. when the subject will be "What does the Bible say about homosexuals and what should be our attitude to aids victims?" Andrew Scobie will be in the chair and the speakers will be Mark Plain, Tranent, and Harry

McGinn, Dalmellington.

Bro. and sister Jack Nisbet will be returning to residence in Haddington from Ulverston, in a few weeks.

P.S. Can anyone supply us with stacking chairs.?

Ruth Nisbet,  
1f Station Court,  
Haddington.

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### COMING EVENTS

**Special Saturday Meetings:** Dates: 22nd & 30th August. 5th September. Time: 6.30 p.m. Place: Meeting-house, Motherwell.

God willing, bro. Ian S. Davidson and bro. Graeme Pearson will give talks on "The Bible".

Many aspects of God's word will be considered. Learn more of the Book of Books. Plan to attend.

### Annual Social

The church at Newtongrange, God willing, intend to hold its Annual Social this year on Saturday 17th October. The venue will be the meeting place. Time 4 p.m. of the clock starting with tea. The chairman of the day will be bro. James Morris (Newtongrange). The speakers will be bro. J. H. Currie (Newtongrange) and bro. D. Scott (Tranent). A fine time of fellowship awaits all who would attend.

Mark your diary brethren, a date not to be missed. Please be with us if you can.

A. P. Sharp. (Sec.)

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### THE CHURCH

The kingdom of God is a society of the best men, working for the best ends, according to the best methods. Its law is one word—loyalty; its gospel one message—love. If you know anything better, live for it; if not, in the name of God and of humanity, carry out Christ's plan.

Many will never see the Christ, save through you. As his plan for humanity is best, if you would show loyalty, if you would show love, you must show his plan.

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### STRANGE INSIGNIA

*"This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."*—Luke 2. 12.

What a strange sign this by which to recognize the King of glory! The shepherds would not find him robed in purple garments, like the child of a prince, but wrapped in swaddling clothes. They would not find him in a palace, but in a stable, with a manger for his cradle. Is it not strange that the very marks and authentication of Messiah's character and mission, by which these shepherds recognized him when they found him, were these tokens of poverty and humiliation? This tell us what empty things are the world's marks of greatness. No one would expect ever to recognize earthly royalty by any such insignia as these. When Christ came, he despised all the badges of rank by which men indicate greatness, and wore the insignia of earthly poverty and meanness. Yet was he less great because he bore not the world's stamp of honour?

True greatness is in the character, never in the circumstances. No matter about wearing a crown; make sure that you have a head worthy of wearing a crown. No matter about the purple; make sure that you have a heart worthy of purple. No matter about a throne to sit on; make sure that your life is regal in its own intrinsic character—that men will recognize the king in you though you toil in the field or mine, or serve in the lowest place.

These strange tokens tell us also of Christ's sympathy with the lowliest phases of life, with the plainest and

poorest of the people. None can say that Christ never came to them. If he had been born in a palace amid splendours, the common people would never have felt that he was their Saviour as they feel now that he is. Christ went down and touched life at its lowest point, that there might be none to whom his mission of love and grace should not reach.

From : 'Come Ye Apart' by J.R. Miller

**ALL I EVER REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN**

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing

and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are still all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

Robert Fulghum.

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