

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

We never miss the water until the well runs dry. Similarly, I suppose, we would not appreciate our freedom until we lost it. Certainly in Britain we enjoy a very high degree of liberty: freedom of speech: freedom of the person: freedom of the press: freedom of worship: and freedom of political persuasion, etc. etc. Most of us have never experienced thralldom and can only imagine what it must be like. However Jackie Mann, just released from two-and-a-half years incarceration in Lebanon, by Islamic extremists, has just been describing, on T.V., what it feels like to be free. Mr. Mann, who is 77 years of age, was not only imprisoned for over two years as an innocent hostage, but was cruelly treated by his captors and physically assaulted. He was not allowed to see anything or anyone during his imprisonment: (when anyone came into his cell, his head was covered); and thus he was kept in darkness, chained by a three-foot length of chain to a radiator lying on a hard floor. It is difficult to comprehend the minds of men who would treat a frail and elderly man in such a barbaric fashion: indeed it is difficult to plumb the minds of men at all who would take innocent people off the streets and turn them into political hostages; subjecting them and their relatives, to years of physical and mental torture. It is even more difficult to understand the mentality of such men when we remember that they are members of the Islamic religion, so meticulous and thorough in all its 'holy' observances, and praying to Allah five times every day (with great fervour) "to be shown the straight path", a phrase which each Muslim recites 34 times every day. The hostage-taking and other vicious practices of the Ayatollahs (such as passing a death sentence upon an Islamic author) surely must reflect badly upon the religion of the Muslims, and make them the very last community of people we would want to associate with.

LIBERTY

LIBERTY is one of those soul-inspiring words. It is a grand word describing an even grander concept, and is to be regularly found in the quotations of great statesmen (especially USA Presidents). It has been the noble rallying cry at one time or other, (and still is) in the history of most nations: but it is also true to say that it has aroused many a rabble. In a very advanced, well-informed and sophisticated world, one would imagine that man would enjoy the very optimum of freedom, but this is very far from the case and in nearly every corner of the globe men and women are currently held in brutal confinement by smaller versions of Hitler, and many languish and rot to lonely deaths as captives, or political prisoners of some kind. "Man's inhumanity to man" knows no bounds, and never seems to improve with the passage of time. The demolition of the Berlin Wall: the rending of the Iron Curtain and the liberation of

the entire Eastern Bloc has greatly improved the situation, and with the incredible renunciation of Communism, overnight, in Russia, the people are now able to contemplate real freedom of action and speech, and for the first time, make known their real opinions and thoughts as to their present quality of life. The joy of such new-found liberty is plainly evident; and to be seen even in the very faces of the longsuffering people. "Liberty" is also so highly prized that men would give, and have given, their very lives in its cause; deeming it better to be dead than in chains and servitude. The annals of history of Britain (and Scotland) abound with the names of the illustrious dead, having died for freedom, and great numbers of wars have been fought ostensibly, and perhaps actually, for the grand old cause of liberty.

As we can imagine, the scriptures have much to say about liberty: both physical and spiritual. Paul, (in 1 Tim. 2:2) said, **"I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for ALL MEN, For Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."** Thus it is God's will that all men are allowed to live quietly and peaceably. Can we imagine Jesus presiding over a situation whereby His apostles were allowed to take local hostages to further their own purposes, and treat them in the despicable way in which Jackie Mann was treated: surely this illustrates just one of the many differences between Christ and the Ayatollahs. Jesus came into the world not to take hostages **BUT TO RELEASE THEM:** not to make prisoners but **TO FREE THEM.** Paul described the Christians at Colosse as having been **DELIVERED**, by Christ, **from the powers of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.**

THE GREAT DELIVERER

Christ is the great Deliverer: the great Liberator. Jesus came to **set us free:** free from a great variety of things. The early disciples were **not free** from persecution, torture and even death, but they were more than conquerors over these things, in their new-found freedom. The scriptures not only refer to liberty and freedom, however, but also to the antithesis of both: **BONDAGE.** Using the allegory of Sarah and Hagar (the freewoman and the bondwoman) Paul could say (to the Jews who would have dragged the Mosaic Law back, and into Christianity) **"So then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ has made us FREE, and be not again entangled with the yoke of BONDAGE."** (Gal.5:1). The law of Moses had been nailed to the cross, out of the way, but there were men then, as there are men today, who would bring it back again. As we can see, Paul in the above quotation contrasts this word **"LIBERTY"** with **Bondage:** and describes Liberty as coming to us through Christ and His gospel: and **Bondage** as coming through the Law of Moses. We might think **"Bondage"** a rather harsh term as a description of Moses' Law, but Paul uses it when comparing the Law with the Gospel; such is the magnitude of the difference. **Christ Liberates:** men would enslave us if we were foolish enough to listen to them. Christ's role as a Deliverer was, of course, prophesied in the O.T. and one of the best examples is, perhaps, in Isaiah (61:1) where the prophet says, referring to Christ, **"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim LIBERTY to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God: To comfort all that mourn."** Luke tells us that Jesus read that prophecy in the synagogue in Nazareth one day, and said, **"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,"** and we know that Jesus was not given to exaggeration. And so, Jesus came, inter alia, to proclaim **LIBERTY** to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Thus, if any person

finds himself, or herself, in any kind of moral or spiritual captivity in these days, there is no need to continue therein, for Jesus came into the world specifically to extricate us from such enslavement.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

Those of us old enough to remember the liberation of France, and the other European countries during the Second World War, well remember the deliriums of ecstasy, and the frenzied scenes of happy delight, which swept along with the pace of the liberating armies: and will, perhaps, have noticed the virtual absence of such enthusiasm amongst the Jews when Jesus, The Deliverer, came into the world. This chilly lack of enthusiasm persists, in general terms, even until now and indeed men actually resent the suggestion that they are in any kind of servitude, or require to be delivered. Most of the time the 'man in the street' perceives himself as 'his own man' pursuing his own destiny and, in fact having a great time. Before a man consults a doctor he has to be convinced that he is really sick: (there are exceptions): and today the world at large seems entirely unaware that they are subject to any spiritual tyranny. Most could hardly care less. And so we must convince men and women that we are all sinners: and that **the wages of sin is eternal death**. We must acquaint men and women with the fact that, by sin, we have alienated ourselves from God, our Maker, and whilst in such condition we are albeit unconsciously, in the clutches of the devil. Political tyranny, men will readily recognise and admit, but few will concede spiritual tyranny, or that man has to be saved from himself, and from Satan. When Jesus announced to the Jews, **"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** He raised a great many hackles amongst the Jews and howls of resentment. They quickly pointed out that, being Abraham's seed, **"they had never been in bondage to any man"**. Although this assertion was not quite true it gave Jesus the opportunity to inform them, and us, that man could well be in servitude without being aware of it, and, in fact, those who sin (whether Abraham's offspring or not) are in bondage to the devil: servants of Satan, viz. **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."** (John 8:34). We are, therefore, the bondmen of whom-so-ever we obey, whether God or the devil. It requires no great stretch of the senses to notice that presently, the world is almost entirely in the grip of the forces of darkness and requires release.

FREE — FROM WHAT?

When we observe the corruption, greed and violence which abounds in the world we may well wonder what can possibly save it? Can some political system or a benign dictator change the behaviour of men, on a permanent basis? It used to be said that if we improve housing conditions, and give a man three square meals a day, he will be a much better person, but that theory has by now been proved a fallacy. Can science, education or philosophy make any inroads into the world's ills? It seems not. For centuries now, the best brains throughout the world have applied themselves to the problem of making the world a better and happier place, but as social and economic conditions improve, the morality of man remains the same : with a tendency to corruption and wickedness. The Social Reformers have failed (and still fail) to take into account that little word "evil" and the power of the devil in our lives. Jesus declared to His disciples (and the world) **"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free"** "Truth" is, of course, that philosophical will-o-the-wisp which has intrigued and eluded mankind in all ages, exemplified, perhaps, in the question from Pilate, "What is truth?" The real and eternal answer to that question lies, of course, in John 17:17 where Jesus, referring to God's word, says **"THY WORD IS TRUTH"**. And so God's word, and in particular Christ's gospel, is the only thing in the world that can truly liberate men. Sociologists search here and there, and everywhere, for the lasting

panacea for a sick world, and all the time the answer lies in the teachings of Christ. Just for a start, think of the transformation that would take place overnight, in the world if all men were to **do unto others** as they would that others should do unto them.

The Truth will make us free: from what? It certainly did not free the early disciples from poverty, hunger, persecution, or even ill-health and untimely death. Nor did it seem to free them immediately from temptation and the propensity to sin, but it certainly did make them better people: people who were non-violent, bent upon loving not only their neighbour but their enemies, and committed to a pursuit of the fruit of the Spirit; love; joy; peace; longsuffering; gentleness; goodness; faith, meekness and temperance. These virtues are not always prominently seen in our lives but we strive towards them, and in doing so gradually break the strangle-hold the devil has had over us. Increasingly we become less and less the servants of sin, but participate, more and more, in the liberty where-with Christ has made us free. We may not be free from the ability, and disposition, to sin (“**if we say we have no sin the truth is not in us**”) but we are “made free” from the consequences, guilt and penalty of sin. Christ came to release us not only from bondage to the Mosaic law and servitude to the devil, but also free us from the sting, and victory, of death and the grave. These basic freedoms in the spiritual world, while not inconsiderable in themselves, lead, in turn, to myriads of other blessings: all by-products of God’s eternal word.

THE RANSOM PRICE

We have not, at this time, considered the **cost** of the freedom that Jesus brought. The price paid for the release of Jackie Mann has not been made public but we can depend upon it that some form of political, or financial, inducement had to be made available to the captors of Mr. Mann. A ransom price, in some form, will almost certainly have been paid. Likewise in our rescue, as hostages to the devil, a terrible price was levied. The apostle Peter says that we were “**not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold**” . . . **But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot**”. (I Peter 1:18). Paul said that Jesus “**gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works**.” (Titus 2:13). Matthew says, “**Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life A RANSOM for many**.” This consideration of the ransom-price paid for our freedom, opens up quite another aspect altogether of our release from bondage (and could well form the subject of some future article) but suffice, for the present, to say that the enormity of the price paid (God’s only Son) must surely reflect greatly upon the **importance** God attaches to mans’ eternal welfare, and the awesome danger from which he “**must be saved**”

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

“Let her glean even among the sheaves.” Ruth 2:15

Called Out

“Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light”

1 Peter 2:9 (R.V.)

Put Off Thy Shoes

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

Exodus 3:5 (R.V.)

The Importance of the Lord’s Church

Caesarea Philippi. Could we call this another beginning. An unfolding of a plan. A little band of called-out disciples.?

My Church

“Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:13-18 (R.V.)

Living Stones

“unto whom coming, a living stone rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious. Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Because it is contained in scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.

For you therefore which believe is the preciousness: but for such made the head of the corner;” and, A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.”

I Peter 2: 4-8 (R.V.)

We Quote – J. H. Jowett

“Apart from Christ there can be no social cohesion. The Word of God proclaims it, and history confirms it. Every preposition seems to have been exhausted by the Word of God in emphasising the necessity of a fundamental relationship with Christ “in Christ,” “through Christ,” “by Christ,” “with Christ,” “unto Christ.” In every conceivable way Christ is proclaimed as the all-essential. In seeking to create societies we have therefore got to reckon with the Christ. We cannot ignore Him. He will not be ignored. We either use Him or we fall over Him. We use Him and rise into strength, or we neglect Him and stumble into ruin. We either make Him the “head of the corner,” or He becomes our “stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.”

Rooted and Grounded

“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.”

Ephesians 3: 17-19 (R.V.)

We Quote – F.C. Day

“Paul writes in I Cor. 10-13: ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them which are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ Divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised into the name of Paul?’ Here then, so early, do we get condemnation of the sin of sectarianism. If it is not right to be named after Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos, it cannot be right to be named after Luther, Wesley, Swendenborg, Campbell, or any other, be he never so godly a saint.

We are not left to choose ourselves. Spirit-inspired men, guided into all the truth, have recorded for us the mind of Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Romans: “All the churches of Christ salute you,” and what better term could be found? If Jesus Christ builds the Church – what other name could the Church bear? Again, what name applies to the individuals who are builded into the habitation of God in the Spirit?”

We Quote – David King

“To the Bible then, without any merely human law or creed, let us give ourselves up. That which cannot be proved from Scripture let us abandon – that which can be thus proved, let us retain, or, if departed from, restore. Let us seek the ‘Old Paths where the Good Way is,’ Knowing that there are the approbation of God, rest to our souls, and blessings of humanity at large. Let our aim be to go on to perfection, and under the Divine blessing, to make Christians – not Episcopalians, Independents, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, but Christians.”

Broken Fences

Besides the sects noted above, the Churches of Christ, need to come before the throne of our heavenly Father in penitence for division caused by the introduction of the ‘Cup Question’ first in Scotland in 1957.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the fence, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

Ezekiel 22: 30 (R.V.)

I thank my heavenly Father for the mighty men of God that I have had the great privilege of knowing who have suffered much for their stand for the “OLD PATHS”.

LEONARD MORGAN.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Dear Editor,

With the October issue of the “S.S.” to hand, I must beg space to answer your comments on Luke 21:24, and Romans 11:25.

It may surprise you to know that I agree with practically everything you have written in the August Editorial, “The Land of Promise”. My request arose not from what you have said in that article, but rather from what you have not said, coupled with various statements about the signs of the times and the coming of the Lord in the September issue, 1990.

In order to avoid misconception I must also state categorically that I do NOT believe (a) in any “millennial Theory”, (b) that the Jews will be saved in this dispensation by any other means than the gospel. (c) that the Jews were to return to Jerusalem as Christians, (d) that ALL Jews will be converted to the Christian faith, (e) that EVERY Jew will return to Jerusalem or Palestine, (f) that the Lord will reign upon a throne in Jerusalem, (g) that the temple and priesthood of the Old Covenant will be restored.

My contention is simply (I) that the Lord predicted that Jerusalem would be taken and occupied by Gentile nations for an indefinitely long period (called the times of the Gentiles) at the end of which, the city would again be taken and occupied by the Jews as such, and that this is a sign of the Lord’s near coming. (II) That in the near future, large numbers of Jews will embrace the Christian faith and acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ.

Your statement in “Domesday Scenario” (Sept. 1990) was that, “. . . a serious study of Matt. 24, (Mk. 13, Lu. 21) . . . shall find that the events predicted . . . refer NOT to the end of the world . . . but to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple”. Hence my request for you to comment on Luke 21:24, and Rom. 11:25.

I note that whereas you have concentrated and written to some extent on Rom. 11:25, there are comparatively few comments of your own on Luke 21:24 apart from the statement, “These words of Jesus refer to the sacking of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Romans” from which I understand you to mean that they refer EXCLUSIVELY to the fall of Jerusalem, as has been expressed recently in other comments on this chapter in the “S.S.” on the grounds that v. 32 states, **“This generation shall not pass away . . . till ALL be fulfilled.”**

Anyone who holds that view is faced with a tremendous task in fitting all the predictions in Luke 21 into the facts of history about the fall of Jerusalem. It has been admitted that this idea is fraught with difficulties. Just how great these difficulties are will be appreciated when one attempts to answer the following questions with a plain YES or NO.

In that generation:-

(1) Was there a coming of the Son of Man? (2) Did the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven? (3) Did the tribes of earth MOURN? and if so, WHY? (4) Did they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory? (5) Did the disciples' redemption draw near when Jerusalem fell? (6) Did the kingdom of God draw near when Jerusalem fell? We shall see that there is yet another question which remains to be answered.

It is never wise to study any passage of Scripture in isolation, especially when there are parallel passages to it. Hence Bro. Walter Crosthwaite's timely advice, to examine every relevant passage of Scripture.

The statement, "**This generation shall not pass till ALL be fulfilled**" Luke 21:32, occurs AFTER "**The angels gathering the elect . . .**" Matt. 24:34, Mk. 13:30. I doubt whether anyone would question that this prediction refers to the coming of Christ to gather His people at the resurrection of the dead and the end of the world. The burning question now is, (7) Did the angels gather the elect from the four winds, etc. at the fall of Jerusalem?

It follows that NOT EVERY prediction in those passages relates to ALL that would be fulfilled in that generation. To what then does the "ALL" in Luke 21:32 refer? For the answer to that question we shall again take Bro. Crosthwaite's advice and examine the context more carefully. Jerusalem being compassed with armies is predicted in Luke 21:20 followed by the Lord's warning to Christians who would be in and about Jerusalem, and He says, "**These be the DAYS OF VENGEANCE that ALL things . . . WHICH ARE WRITTEN . . . may be fulfilled.**" From that statement from the Lord's own lips, we understand that it was the things WHICH WERE WRITTEN that would be fulfilled in the DAY OF VENGEANCE. That reference is to the fall of Jerusalem and the calamities which accompanied it. The prediction refers to things which were written AT THE TIME THIS PREDICTION WAS MADE. But where, and by whom were these things WRITTEN? The Lord again gives the answer in Matt. 24:15, Mk. 13:14 "**When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by DANIEL the prophet . . .**" Luke 21:20, "**When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies . . .**"

Once it has been established that the "ALL" being fulfilled cannot refer to the gathering of the elect, and Luke 21:32 is connected with v.23, the idea that every prediction in these passages must refer EXCLUSIVELY to the fall of Jerusalem is shown to be a fallacy.

Some fancy ideas have been advanced about the impact of the word "until". It should be evident that whether "some activity" is signified or not must depend upon the context in which the word occurs. For example, if I say, "I shall not be addicted to smoking or drink until the day I die", I trust it will be understood that I shall not be addicted to these vices at any time in my lifetime. But if I say, "I shall not prune my roses until February," then everyone will know that I intend to prune them in that month of the year.

I do not think anyone reading 2 Sam. 6:23 will get the impression that Michal died in childbirth, or the like. It simply means that she never ever did have children. Heb. 10:9 refers to ". . . the gifts and sacrifices of the law, which stood only in . . . carnal ordinances . . . imposed UNTIL the time of reformation." I think everyone will understand that they would no longer be imposed after the time of reformation.

Evidently, a CHANGE would occur at that time. Something else would take their place. Acts 3:21-23 tell us that heaven has received Jesus . . . UNTIL . . . the time of restitution, and that in that day, every soul which will not hear His voice shall be destroyed from among the people. At best, the suggestions about this word “until” amounts to a “not always”, and in Luke 21:24, to a “might not”. But evidently, it may on occasion, and ‘it might’.

Luke 21:24, The people falling by the edge of the sword, being led away captive, and Jerusalem being trodden down of the Gentiles refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Those were the days of vengeance in which all things which were written by Daniel were fulfilled. But being trodden down by the Gentiles means that the city was taken by military force and ruled by Gentiles. That “treading down” did not end in 70 A.D. The city has been occupied and ruled by Gentile nations for many centuries. Romans till 614, Persians till 637, Arabs till 1099, the “Crusaders” till 1187, the Moslems recovered the city and held it till 1517 when the Turks took and held it until British troops entered it in 1917. Britain was granted the mandate of Palestine by the League of Nations in 1922, since when many Jews have returned to settle in Palestine. The State of Israel has now been established and has received universal recognition as such.

The Arabs attacked the Jews in 1967 with the intention of driving them into the sea. The Jews fought back and took Jerusalem at a time when it was said that it was POLITICALLY impossible for them to repossess the city.

Jerusalem was therefore “trodden down of the Gentiles” from 70 A.D. to 1967. These are not matters of opinion, but of actual historic fact.

The fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles is closely allied to predictions of the Lord’s coming in Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

I intend to deal with Romans 11:25 in a later article.

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Bro. Wood’s article above, contained a ‘table’ of quotations from Matt., Mark & Luke which I have omitted as being impracticable from the printer’s point of view. This does no damage to the points Bro. Wood makes, which, basically, are threefold:-

(1) That Christ’s words in Matt. 24:34 (& Luke 21:32) i.e. “**This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.**” are modified by Luke 21:22, i.e. “**For these be the days of vengeance, that all things WHICH ARE WRITTEN may be fulfilled**”, and thus the phrase “all these things” (Matt. 24:34) are limited to “**the things written**” concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:22) and does not refer to the end of the world. Readers can make up their own minds as to whether they share that view.

(2) Bro. Wood believes that “The Time Of The Gentiles” ended about 25 years ago (1967) and again, readers can decide whether they share that view.

(3) Bro. Wood says that I made “comparatively few comments” on Luke 21:24 in my article. This is true and the reason is that Luke, himself, says **nothing** about the fortunes of Jerusalem, ‘after’ “The times of the Gentiles.” If the scriptures tell us nothing about this, any human speculation is fairly worthless. I’m sure that if God had wanted us to know about it, He would have revealed it. This will not stop the speculation, of course.

In any case, Jerusalem is not, as Bro. Wood seems to suggest, fully in the control of the Jews, and I doubt if it ever will be. The fact is that Jerusalem is currently the seat of many religions and is the 3rd Holy City of ISLAM, ranking only behind Mecca and Medina. It has a very strong Islamic presence in the city, and the very large

Islamic Mosque of Omar (or Dome of the Rock) built away back in 600 A.D. This Mosque contains the rock regarded by Mohammedans as the scene of Mohammed's ascent to heaven (just as the Jews regard the rock as the one of Isaac's sacrifice) and the Moslems will never give up the city or the Mosque. Indeed, if the Jews had full control of the city, what would be gained? They can only live there and worship there: and they already do that. What could they do with the city other than that? They might try to rebuild 'the Temple' (something they have surprisingly never tried in 2,000 years albeit they have the skill and the money) but what advantage would that be in the gospel age? To talk of real-estate is surely alien to the 'Kingdom of God' (a kingdom entirely spiritual.)

EDITOR.

GLORY?

We live in a country that values its past glory? A visit to the museums in Edinburgh Castle will remind us of the military glories of bygone ages. Medals for valour, tattered flags from great battles, mementoes of great victories, all the nostalgia of Glory. Perhaps to the Christians it speaks more clearly of a world that knows not God or His way to glory.

What does the Bible say to us today about glory? Glory is very much a biblical word, one commonly used by us, but could we easily describe what the Bible means when it uses this word?

Jesus in His great prayer to His Father, which is recorded in John's Gospel chapter 17, used the word several times. These words of prayer were uttered in the upper room in the last few peaceful moments Jesus had with his disciples before He crossed the brook Kedron to go to the Garden of Gethsemane. He prays briefly for himself in the opening verses and then the rest of His prayer is devoted to the needs of His disciples and those who should believe through their word. His prayer for himself is, that He might receive the "**glory he had previously had with His Father**" before creation. It seems strange that the meek and holy Jesus should be so concerned with glory that He mentions it five times in the first five verses. Perhaps His concept of glory and our concept are different. His desire to have the glory which He had had in the presence of God points us in the right direction for an understanding of what real glory is. Real glory has to do with the presence of God.

If we cast our mind back to the Exodus from Egypt, the people led by Moses were out in the wilderness. The security of Egypt was left behind and they were going they knew not where. Who would provide for them in this wilderness? Moses? Aaron? So they complained about their plight. They had lost courage, lost their faith and most of all they had lost sight of God. In Exodus 16:10 we read, "**It came to pass as Aaron spoke unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel that they looked towards the wilderness and behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.**" The glory (presence) of God was testified by the cloud. Its daily presence was a constant reminder that God was with them. Glory has to do with God's presence.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai from the presence of God the Apostle Paul remarks, "**that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance.**" 2 Cor. 3:7. Moses had been with God and his face shone with the glory of that encounter.

The writer to the Hebrews says of Jesus that He was "**the brightness of His (God's) Glory**" Heb.1:3. Jesus said of himself that "**he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**". If we wish to see God we look to Jesus Christ, to His life and work, for He is the very brightness of the glory of God.

Jesus prays for Glory on the cross when he says. "**the hour is come, Glorify Thy Son.**" We could be forgiven for wondering where the glory was in such a cruel and

savage way of death. Indeed Paul quotes from Deuteronomy when he says to the Galatian Christians, “**cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree**”. Crucifixion was degrading and humiliating and intended to be just that. But Calvary and everything associated with it have been glorified by the presence of God. There was manifested to all men, the great love of God for the human race. The centurion present at the cross recognised the presence of God and was moved to exclaim, “**truly this man was the Son of God**”. Today we can sing the hymn. “In the cross of Christ I glory.” In Jesus Christ we see God reconciling the world to Himself at Calvary. In His life He demonstrated the presence of God and in His death He displayed the glory of God’s saving power.

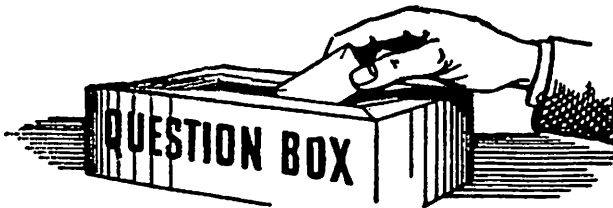
Later in the 17th Chapter of John’s Gospel Jesus prays that His disciples might be sanctified as they are sent out into the world. Then he prays for those who should believe through the work of the disciples that they might be united even as He and His Father are one.

Here we see the confidence of Jesus in His disciples and those who should follow. No question in His mind that they would not succeed, but rather the confidence that the work would prosper and grow down the ages. This faithful service of the disciples is to be the glory of Christ. In Jn. 17:10 He says, “**and I am glorified in them**”. Paul in Gal. 3:21 says, “**unto Him be glory in the Church ... throughout all ages**”. This is the work of the Church in every age to so worship, preach and live that Christ is glorified in our lives. Perhaps, like the Jews of old, we get lost in the wilderness of life and lose sight of God and His glory. Sometimes we get discouraged and lose heart because the task seems too big and the resources too few. Remember that Jesus entrusted His work to eleven trembling fearful, disciples who had a world to convert.

If we seek glory it will be found in the beauty of holiness, in the sanctified life. Glory will only be found in the presence of God. His presence in our lives setting us apart to His service.

Finally, Jesus prays in verse 24 that His followers, “**be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory**”. If we have received the glory of the presence of God in our lives Jesus is praying that we might also be with Him through eternity and share in His everlasting glory. What a glorious hope.

J.K. Kneller, Tranent.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“If the Kingdom of Heaven is the same institution as the Church why should two different descriptions be used. Was ‘Kingdom of God’ an inadequate expression, or is there a vital difference between ‘Kingdom of God’ and Church of Christ?”

I am not too sure what the phrase ‘different descriptions’ means, or whether the phrase should be ‘different titles’; however, I think the gist of the question is fairly clear. Nor am I being offensive about the use of the word ‘inadequate’ when I say that so far as God is concerned, I would appear to be very bold indeed if I thought that any expression of His which is revealed in His Word, was inadequate. There must be a reason for the various terms, titles, expressions - call them what you will - and we shall attempt to find that reason if possible.

The Kingdom of God

To refer to someone as king implies also a kingdom. The king’s domain is the

kingdom. The kingdom consists of some territorially defined area on earth occupied by peoples over whom the king 'reigns'. As an example we know that God reigned over His chosen people, the nation of Israel; the people, however, rebelled against the rule of God and demanded an earthly king, and so Saul was appointed king. We can say, I suppose, that even in the face of rebellion God did not relinquish His Kingdom, but **allowed** earthly kings to administer the Kingdom for Him; in 1 Chron. 28:5 we read, **"And of all my sons he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel"**. Nor should we assume that the dominion of God was confined to the nation of Israel. When Daniel interrupted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar concerning the Great Tree (Dan. 4) and foretold the temporary demise of the king, he ended by saying, **"till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"**. Therefore, bearing in mind His universal sovereignty, it is also true to say that the sphere of God's rule will be, at any time and in any place, where such rule is acknowledged. In the sense of the universal rule of God, 'subject' rebellion will not nullify His authority, nor will it affect His power to rule: He will decide the final consummation of all things.

The Rule of Christ

That Jesus, the Christ of God, **does** 'rule' and 'reign' over people is not in question, or shouldn't be. When the angel appeared to Mary and told her about the impending birth of Jesus, the scripture reads, **"He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end"** (Luke 1:31-33). Jesus, however, as many would teach, would not limit Himself to any earthly throne of David. On one occasion He said to the Pharisees, **"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"** (Matt. 22:41-46). Even though Jesus did not deny His Davidic descent, He wanted the Pharisees to know that He was not interested in filling the literal throne of David on earth in any millennial period; His throne was to be in Heaven at the side of His Father, and He was to reign over a Kingdom which was to be world-wide in scope, and spiritual in its nature. Paul makes this clear in 1 Cor. 15:23-28, when he says, **"But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet"**.

Christ is now King, for He has a Kingdom. When writing to the Colossian Christians Paul said, **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"** (Coll. 1:13-19). You will notice that it is **'God's dear Son'** who reigns over the Kingdom, and those who are in the Kingdom are there because they have been 'redeemed by His blood' and consequently have had 'their sins forgiven'. Who are the subjects of this King?

The Church

It was in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi that Jesus asked His disciples, **"Whom say ye that I am"?**, and Peter gave the inspired answer, **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"**. On this grand confession Jesus said that He would build His Church (Matt. 16:13-19). On the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus, Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, telling the people to repent, be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would then receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand people obeyed, and on that day the Church was born.

Was this Church a Kingdom? Yes indeed, as we said above in the passage from Colossians. Remember, these Christians at Colosse had obeyed the same Gospel as preached by Peter at Pentecost; consequently, they were in the Church; therefore according to Paul they were in the Kingdom. So the Kingdom of God's dear Son is the Church. It is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. (Read the whole of Col. chapter 1).

It was God who gave Jesus all power and authority to establish the Kingdom (Matt. 28:16-20). He also allows Jesus to reign over the Kingdom, but as the 1 Cor. 15 passage (quoted above) shows, Jesus will eventually 'deliver up' the Kingdom to God, the Father. At that time Jesus will have put down all rule and all authority and power. Paul explains it like this, "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him (God), then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under Him (Christ) that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:27,28). Therefore I conclude that because all events, the Church included, were 'according to the determinate council and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2:23) then the Church can be rightly called the Kingdom of God; it can also be called the Church of God as well as the Church of Christ; it can also rightly be called (as we have seen) 'the Kingdom of God's dear Son'. I would also like to make a personal comment here. There seems to have been a tendency lately for some brethren not to use the title 'Church of Christ' saying that it could imply, as they put it, 'a sect among sects'. I hold no brief for that; the Lord shed His blood for the Church and He said it was His Church; it is, therefore, the Church of Christ, and neither I or anyone else has any scriptural warrant for saying otherwise.

Conclusion

What a glorious Saviour we have, and what a privilege it is to be in His Kingdom. We can say with Paul, "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). He was received up into glory when "he had purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). There He reigns as King and Priest, and there He will reign, interceding on our behalf, until the last enemy, death, is destroyed.

Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, Kingdom of God's Dear Son, the Church; they are all mentioned in the Bible. The Kingdom, in whatever aspect we view it, is the home of the spiritually re-born in accordance with the Gospel. The reader will understand, of course, that what I have said is the faintest scratch on so vast and deep a subject.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,
Winstanley, Wigan, WN3 6ES.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Dec. 1	1 Kings 16:21-33	Revelation 2:18-29
Dec. 8	Isaiah 22:15-25	Revelation 3:1-13
Dec. 15	Ezekiel 33: 7-20	Revelation 3:14-22
Dec. 22	Ezekiel 1	Revelation 4
Dec. 29	Genesis 49: 1-12	Revelation 5

THYATIRA

Thyatira was located about twenty-five miles inland south-east of Pergamum. It was a Macedonian colony and in the Roman period was, as Pliny the

elder called it, "a city of no first-rate dignity".

This city was famous for its trade-guilds. There were unions of clothiers, bakers, tanners, potters, linen-workers, wool-merchants, slave traders, copper-smiths and dyers. When Paul preached at Philippi, he converted a woman from Thyatira named Lydia, who was a seller of purple (Acts 16:14).

The congregation is commended for its works, love, service, faith and patience (2:19). Of her works, a most interesting statement is made: "... and the

last to be more than the first" (2:19). Every church should be labouring to the end. However, one of the things God had against the Thyatiran saints was that they had tolerated the false prophetess Jezebel. (There is undoubtedly an allusion here to the infamous Jezebel of the Old Testament (2 Kings 9). Whoever this evil woman was, she had had an opportunity to repent, but did not (2:21). God's judgement was, therefore, to follow.

SARDIS

Sardis was one of the oldest cities of Asia Minor and had been at one time the capital of Lydia. Croesus (ruled 560-546 B.C.) was probably the most famous of the Lydian kings and was regarded as one of the wealthiest men in history. Cyrus the Persian captured Sardis. Later it came into the Roman orbit. Twice the city fell by its enemies scaling the precipitous cliffs and surprising the citizens. Is it any wonder then that the congregation is told to be watchful?" (3:2-3).

Sardis was the dead church (3:1). As a consequence, it appears that the members had no internal or external problems. The Book of Life is mentioned (3:5). Actually, it is found in a number of passages in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27; 22:19). John speaks of white clothing (3:4-5). White, of course, is a symbol of purity and victory.

PHILADELPHIA

The word Philadelphia in the Greek means literally "brotherly love." The city was built by Attalus Philadelphus or named after him by his brother Eumenes in the second century B.C. According to R. C. Trench: "No city of Asia Minor suffered more, or so much, from violent and often-recurring earthquakes." Philadelphia was known as the "City of the Open Door." It was also remarkable for the number of its temples and religious festivals.

The Philadelphian congregation was a faithful congregation. They had kept God's word despite everything (3:8,10), and because of this God promised that he would keep them "from the hour of

temptation." So the keeper became the kept. We read: "**Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temples of my God and he shall go no more out . . .**" (3:12). How comforting these words must have been to a people often rushing out to escape the consequences of earthquakes!

The new Jerusalem is mentioned (3:12). There is more detailed information on this heavenly city later on in the book.

LAODICEA

Laodicea was located in the fertile valley of the Lycus River, a tributary of the Meander River, which flowed into the coast of Miletus. The city is also found in the Colossian letter (2:1; 4:13, 15, 16) and is associated with Colossae, which was ten miles east, and with Hierapolis, which was six miles north. Laodicea may be the best known of the seven churches of Revelation.

The city was founded by the Seleucid Antiochus II in the third century B.C. and called after his wife Laodicea. Because of its strategic position, Laodicea became an extremely prosperous commercial centre, especially under Roman rule. When destroyed by a disastrous earthquake in A.D. 60, it could afford to dispense with aid from Nero. It was an important centre of banking and exchange. Its distinctive products included garments of glossy black wool and it was a medical centre noted for ophthalmology (thus the reference to anointing their eyes with eye-salve [3:18]).

Laodicea was the lukewarm congregation, with the result that God said: "**I will spue you out of my mouth**" (3:16). One of the most famous statements in the Bible was addressed to it: "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me**" (3:20). Robert Wallace Orr has pointed out: "The wonderful announcement is not addressed to the church but to **any one**, that is, to the individual. The church's self-sufficient pride makes it impossible for Christ to

reign there, but he waits patiently to indwell each soul of man which is in any real sense opened to Him”.

JOHN'S VISION OF GOD'S THRONE

Revelation chapter 4 gives a wonderful picture of God's throne in heaven. The twenty-four elders or ancients (4:4,10) constitute God's senate and are a special group of angels. They are mentioned throughout the book of Revelation. The “four beasts” (4:6-9) or living creatures are also celestial beings and are “an exalted order of angelic beings the immediate guardians of the throne”, as Robert H. Mounce has described them in his commentary. The latter are also mentioned in the books of Ezekiel (ch. 1) and Isaiah (ch. 6). We read that they were like a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle. There was a tradition in ancient times that the mightiest among birds is the eagle, the mightiest among domestic animals is the ox, the mightiest among wild animals is the lion, the mightiest of them all is man.

The seven spirits of God are mentioned in this chapter (4:5). Of course, there is only one Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4) and the seven spirits refer, I think, to the seven functions of this personality of the Godhood in creation, revelation, incarnation, inspiration, confirmation, incorporation and transformation.

One of the great verses of the Bible is found in this portion: “**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: For Thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created**”. (4:11). Dear reader, that includes you and me. If we are not living to please Almighty God, then we have missed the whole point of our existence.

THE SCROLL WITH SEVEN SEALS

This particular scroll was written “**within and on the backside**” (5:1), which was an unusual occurrence. It showed the importance of the message. No one but Jesus could break the seals and open the scroll. (If He had not done so then the book of Revelation would

have gone no further.) We read: “**And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the scroll, neither to look thereon. And one of the ancients said unto me (John), Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9), the root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose the seven seals thereof**”(5:4,5).

Jesus is described as a Lamb in this chapter. We must remember that this has nothing to do with His meekness, but everything to do with His sacrificial love. (The Lion is the Lamb, is one of the many paradoxes of the Bible.) He had seven horns (perfect power) and seven eyes (perfect knowledge). In other words, He was omnipotent and omniscient.

The four living creatures are described as having “**golden vials (bowls) full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints**” (5:8). The next time you pray to your Father, fellow Christian, think of what happens to your prayer when it reaches heaven.

Angels are fascinating beings. Of course, they were created by God for His own purpose. It is impossible to number them. The statement at Jesus' crucifixion comes to mind: “**Do you not think that I cannot now pray to my Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**” (Matthew 26:53).

Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell.

GHANA REPORT

In last month's report I mentioned that earlier in the year I had sent three sets of E.M. Zerr commentaries which had only been partly received and 200 sets of Bible Correspondence courses had not been received. I am pleased to report some more parcels have now arrived. The supplier did not have the entire order in stock and sent parcels when parts of the order became available.

There is sad news in this report. Sister Elizabeth Wilson's 13-year-old son died, 3 years after being knocked down by a car while on a bicycle. He died as a result of his injuries.

On the 23rd September another £1350 was sent out to Ghana. This was for Building and Medical aid. This was sent at a good time as I received a letter from Brother Bill the next day with a balance sheet showing where the £5159 which we have sent him since he went to Ghana had been used. The Building fund was completely used up.

As I was preparing this report I received a letter from Brother Edward Okyere Agtei, in Odumasai, a preacher of the Gospel and he has asked me to extend "our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this appeal for their love and feeling they have for the Lord's work, Matt. 25:40. Bill is doing hard work here, he is indispensable, he has been travelling and distributing medical aid to the congregations continually, may the Lord bless him."

I also received a letter from Bill saying that although he can stay in Ghana until February, his return air ticket expires on 25th January but the last flight out will be on Monday 20th January, 1992.

The response to the appeal is going well, particularly in the areas of Medical Aid and Gospel work. If anyone, or any church would like to assist in the Building Fund for meeting places which are all in various stages of construction I am sure it would be very much appreciated. Please send crossed cheques to "Graeme Pearson Ghana Appeal" to 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 0DU. Tel: (0383) 728624.

P.S. I would like to thank all those who gave to the collection at Newtongrange Social: the amount collected for Ghana was £136.52.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Slamannan District: The Quarterly Mutual Benefit Meeting was held in the meeting-house at Haddington on 14th September, 1991, when a goodly company met to discuss the question, "In what ways could we say that Satan ap-

pears as an Angel of Light"? (2 Cor. 11:14). Bro Harry McGinn was in the Chair and the speakers were James Sinclair and Mark Plain, both from Tranent. As usual an hour's discussion followed the speakers and many interesting points were brought out. This all took place after an excellent tea and a very rich time of fellowship. Our thanks go to all those behind the scenes and the good sisters who did all the home-baking.

God-willing, the next meeting will be on Sat. 7th December when the subject will be "A common complaint today is that there are so many interpretations of the Bible: why should I believe yours." The Chairman will be Peter Sneddon, Dennyloanhead, and the speakers Harry McGinn, New Cumnock, and James R. Gardiner, Haddington.

Harry McGinn (Sec.).

Kentish Town, London: On Sunday September 22nd. Kwaku and Kwama Egyiri were baptized into Christ. We rejoice greatly over their decision to follow the Lord, and pray that they will grow in their knowledge and love for Him. Kwaku and Kwame are the sons of our Brother Mark who has worshipped with us for a number of years. His sons and daughter, Amma, joined him in this country in August. Amma, is already a Christian. We pray God's blessing on them all in their new life here.

On Saturday, October 5th we had our 120th anniversary of the opening of the church building. We had a great time of fellowship with folk from other congregations, and friends Bro. Philip Partington from Cleveleys brought us four very helpful instructive and encouraging lessons over the weekend. We thank him very much and pray that his visit was as much a blessing to him as it was to us. We also thank those who travelled considerable distances to be with us. What a blessing to belong to the Christian family!

Dorothy J. Proud (Sec.).

Newtongrange: Our Annual Social was held in the Meeting place on Saturday 12th October.

Members came from all over Scotland, with a sprinkling from south of the border, and indeed a Brother James Orton from America. Quite a number of friends joined us also, adding up to almost 100 at the gathering, the church thanks them all for being with us.

Bro. Jack Nisbet opened the meeting in prayer and thanks-giving. Hymns were sung by Sisters May Wilson, Slamannan, Grace Coventry Newtongrange, Joanne Mould Kirkcaldy, while Sister McDonald Kirkcaldy, recited and Bro. Harry McGinn sang hymns also.

Our speakers were Bro. David Ferguson, Easthouses, who spoke on "Happiness" and Bro. Ian Davidson, Motherwell on "Patience". They both gave excellent addresses which left the audience with a great deal of food for thought. The chairman for the day was Bro. Joe Currie.

Bro. Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline, closed the Social in prayer and benediction.

The church was most appreciative of all the churches who notified us of the numbers who would be attending so that our catering arrangements were greatly simplified. A grand time of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Joe Currie,
Secretary/Treasurer.

OBITUARY

KUMBA :Cameroon. The sad news here is that Bro. D.N. Elangwe died in November, 1990. The "Scripture Standard" has been coming here in his name ever since. There are no missionaries in Cameroon, and we do not have anywhere to get tracts, Bibles or anything else for evangelising. I will be grateful if you will continue to send the "Scripture Standard" to the above congregation.

The Church in Cameroon is very poor so we need missionaries. For myself I need personal support. Thank you very much for your kindness.

A.T. Martins,
Kumba Town Church of Christ,
P.O. Box 121, Cameroon,
West Africa.

(Some readers may remember that in 1964-66 we, through the Cameroons Evangelisation Fund, sent help to Bro. D.N. Elangwe, including a large printing press. We are sorry to hear of his passing. Ed.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bro. & Sister John B. Wilson formerly of 40 Herd Green, Knightsbridge West, Livingston, West Lothian, have now moved to 31 Inshes Brae, Westhill, INVERNESS IV1 2AX. Tel.: (0463) 791104.

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