

## The Night Baptism

The date was June 15, 1875 in Eddington, England. Young James was 11 years-old and not yet baptized. His father vowed that if James survived his recent life-threatening illness that the ordinance would not be put off any longer. He would baptize James immediately, and now the time had come. The baptism had to be done at night though as some of the local residents were very much against the Church and would disrupt the ordinance. Shortly before midnight, James' father went out and surveyed the area near the Kennet River bridge where the service was to be performed. There was no one about. He went back one more time, just to be sure that all was safe. Then James accompanied his father out to the mill race that ran parallel to the Kennet River.

His father entered the water and took James by the hand. Just then James said, “we were veritably horror-stricken by a combined shriek, yell, scream, howl— I know not how to describe the awful noise—such as none of us had ever heard. It seemed to be a combination of every fiendish [cry] we could conceive of. I remember how I trembled at the awful manifestation, which had about it the sharpness and volume of a thunderclap followed by an angry roar, which died away as a hopeless groan. The fearsome sound seemed to come from a point not more than fifty yards from us, near the end of the great bridge. The night was one of bright starlight, and we could have seen anyone on the bridge which was built of white stone with low walls....Father, who was also trembling...asked me if I was too frightened to be baptized; I was too much terrified to speak, so I answered by stepping into the water. I was baptized.”

After the baptism James said his father looked again around the bridge. There was no one there. Moreover, no one in the small community seemed to have heard “that blood-curdling shriek” But, James said, “we heard it, [and] we shall never forget it.”

The greater the effort we make to do the right thing, the greater the power of that Evil One to stop us. And by the way, James was Elder James E. Talmage who wrote *Jesus the Christ*.