

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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BE YE READY

Another Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh has come and gone, and once again I was not invited. Naturally to be specifically invited by Her Majesty the Queen to such a function is deemed a great honour and highly prized among the "upper crust", and more especially to those aspiring to such ranks. What a flutter of excitement is caused in the more lowly households on the occasion of such an invitation, and what a flurry of preparation is set in motion - the expensive suit with grey tile hat on the male side, and the exclusive dress creation from Paris on the other side. Perhaps also a new car for the pompous entry - it would never do to roll up in the old Volkswagen.

Think of the excitement *you* might experience by personal invitation from the Queen and the expensive preparations in which *you* might engage. Yet God invites us into His heavenly kingdom and in many quarters it doesn't even ruffle a hair; but might cause a yawn.

When we come to consider the matter, I suppose the bulk of our lifetime is spent *making preparations*. The process starts early in life when as children we prepare at school for the time when we shall leave school and will have to have qualifications for a job. In adulthood we prepare for old age with pension funds. We prepare for the possibility of sickness and death with insurance policies. In summer we prepare for winter and vice versa; the farmer prepares his land; the fishermen his nets; the surgeon prepares his theatre; the builder prepares his site; the captain prepares his ship; the lawyer prepares his brief and so on, and so on.

Men are continually preparing, sometimes for journeys, and quite often preparing for meetings and interviews. Nonetheless, men seem to give scant attention to preparing for the greatest journey of all time, and the greatest interview they will ever experience - the journey into eternity and the meeting with their Maker.

WHY PREPARE?

(1) The reason *why* we should prepare to meet our Maker (and prepare for our journey into eternity) is because such a meeting and such a journey is *inevitable*. No matter how important we may be, or how rich we might be, "we shall all assuredly stand before the Judgement Seat of God". The rich (like the late Howard Hughes) can escape meeting those they wish to avoid, or pay others to meet them, but "As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God". (Rom. 14:11).

(2) Upon the account we give to God will depend our eternal destiny. Upon it will depend where we spend eternity - whether with Christ in Heaven, or with the devil and

his angels in Hell. When God drew back the curtain a little from the prophecy of the Book of Revelation, John the apostle said that he "saw the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of fire.""

To the unbiased reader of average intelligence these should be extremely compelling reasons for preparing to meet God.

WHEN SHOULD WE PREPARE?

We should be preparing **now** for there shall be no second opportunities in the world to come. The greatest device of Satan has been to convince mankind of the "Second Chance" syndrome. Life has always seemed, to me, to be a testing ground or like an examination paper. Once we have completed an examination paper and handed it in to the examiner it is too late to change it. I remember leaving an examination-hall, in Edinburgh, with a colleague after sitting, what was to me, a fairly important examination, and as we conversed about the difficulties of the question-paper my colleague realised that he had completely misinterpreted one of the questions, and had given entirely the wrong answer. I assured him it was too late to do anything about it, but he was now so upset and worried that he insisted on running back and explaining his error to the invigilator. Predictably, the invigilator smiled good humouredly, but steered him out of the room assuring him that it was much "too late" now. After this life is over it will be too late to prepare to meet God. If we have blotted our copy book (or botched our examination paper) now is the time to get a clean sheet and to start again **"Now is the day of salvation; Now is the accepted time."**

The scriptures, which form our sole source of knowledge of God do not even hint at the possibility of a "second chance" - (rather the reverse). By the time we die all opportunity for preparations will have completely gone.

"It is appointed unto man once to die; then the judgement" - so says the inspired writer of Hebrews (9:27). The educationalists may be thinking of doing away with examinations but God isn't, and an examination would be little short of a farce if the "second chance" doctrine had any substance. We must prepare now or not at all.

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE

For many this might be the "crunch" question. The genuine seeker after truth would seem to derive little help from the religious world. If one was to consult a dozen of the places of worship to be found on any High Street, of any town here, one would receive as many differing answers. Some might even advise the enquirer that no preparations at all are required, because Jesus "did it all" on the cross. Where are we to find the answer? How can we be sure? May I suggest to any enquirer that the only safe guide is the New Testament. The New Testament has no traditions to maintain and has no vested interest of its own: it contains only the writings of God's Holy Son and His inspired apostles. **"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"** (Is. 8:20).

Few, however, would deny that in preparing to meet God we should endeavour to be reconciled unto God **now**. Nor would any deny that we require to be reconciled to God because our sins have separated us from God. We must enter into fellowship with God **now**. We must be reconciled to God **now**. God sent His Son into the world to bring us back (reconciled) to God. Indeed **"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"** (2 Cor. 5:19). In preparing to meet God we cannot, therefore, afford to ignore the Saviour, Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul averred that **"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: of**

whom I am chief." (1 Tim. 1:15). If we all, like Paul, consider ourselves to be *chief of sinners*, we shall do well. If we believe, like Paul, that Christ came into the world to save sinners (like us) we shall do even better.

STARTING WITH A CLEAN SHEET

Albeit our sins have separated us from God we must be reconciled to Him again, and we must enter into a fellowship with God. We must also remember always that God is the potter; we are but the clay - we must, therefore, be reconciled on **God's terms**. So many insist on coming to God on their own terms. To enter into fellowship with God, and remain in it, surely we must *obey* God, *worship* God, and *serve* God. **"He that cometh to God must believe that He is God and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"** (Heb. 11:6). We must therefore diligently seek God - *diligently*: as we would for a lost child. In His relationships with man, God has delegated all authority to Christ, both in heaven and in the earth and thus we can come to God only through Christ. There is absolutely no other way; no other schemes; no other systems; whether by good works or personal sacrifices. **"No man cometh to the Father but by Me,"** said Jesus. With this God concurred when He said **"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Ye Him."** If we truly hear Jesus we shall hear His final instructions to His chosen apostle before He left this world to go to His heavenly Father. **"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned."** (Mark 16:15). You and I are the creatures to whom Jesus charged that the gospel be preached. To be saved, or reconciled, we must believe that gospel and be baptised.

"Baptism" has various meanings today but what Jesus meant by the term was immersion in water for the remission of our sins (see Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:38). Obeying the gospel, believing in Jesus Christ, and having our sins washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16) ensures that we now have that clean sheet with which to start our lives all over again. In our cleansed condition we are now indeed in a fit and prepared state to meet our Maker. We can now, with great confidence, make the journey into eternity when called upon. By reading the exhortations and teachings of the New Testament we shall remain faithful to God, through Christ, and if we fall we can always get up again. John reminds us that if any man sins, he has an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1st John). Indeed, John says that if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, but **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** Thus we can continue in a state of ever preparedness to meet God. The same apostle (John) said: **"And now little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."**

JESUS IS ALSO PREPARING

In being asked to prepare to meet God we should recall that Jesus is also busily engaged in preparations. Before leaving the earth did Jesus not say, **"I go to *prepare* a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also"** (John 14:1-3). And so Jesus is preparing a place for His disciples. But another place is also being prepared. At the Great Assize, when Jesus will judge mankind, and shall separate the sheep from the goats. **"Then shall He say unto those on his left hand, depart from Me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared* for the devil and his angels."** Sadly *two* places are under preparation, indicating that heaven is only for those who feared God

sufficiently to prepare to meet Him - for **"the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom"** (Pr. 9:10).

Let us therefore resolve to prepare to meet our God - to obey His Son, serve and honour Him, worship and adore Him; praise and spread abroad His name. Let us do it now, knowing that if we fail now there shall be no further opportunities. **"Today, if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts."** If you would be thrilled by an invitation from your Queen would you spurn an entreaty from your Maker?

EDITOR.

THE NATURE OF GOD

What is God like? Is Jesus God? How can Jesus and the Father both be God and yet there be only one God? Have you ever wondered about questions such as these? It is not easy to understand about the nature of God. But we can know what the Bible teaches about God, even if it is sometimes hard to understand. Basically, the Bible teaches three facts about the nature of God. They are as follows:

- 1) There is only one God.
- 2) The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
- 3) The Father is not the Son, the Father is not the Holy Spirit, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit.

Let us look briefly at some of the scriptures that show these three facts. **FIRST**, how do we know there is only one God? Well, Deuteronomy 6:4 says, **"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."** And Deuteronomy 4:39 says, **"Know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth beneath; there is no other."** Again in Isaiah 43: 10-11 we read, **"Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord and besides me there is no saviour."** Again God says in Isaiah 44:6, **"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."** And in Isaiah 45:21 he says, **"And there is no other god besides me, righteous God and Saviour; there is none besides me."** Other scriptures which show the same thing are Isaiah 44:8, 45:5, 6, 22; Mark 12:29; I Corinthians 8:4-6; and James 2:19, among others.

SECOND, where are the scriptures where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all called God? The Father is called God in many places. For example, II Peter 1:17 says, **"... he received honour and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"** Jesus is called God in John 1:1, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** He is also called God in Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13, and Hebrews 1:8. The Holy Spirit is called God in Acts 5:3-4. There Peter tells Ananias that when he lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to God.

AND FINALLY, how do we know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not the same? It is because of such passages as John 15:26 where Jesus says, **"But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me."** Other passages that show the same thing are John 6:38; 7:16; 14:28 and I Corinthians 15:27-28.

A SUGGESTED ANALOGY

But many people will say that all three of these facts cannot be true. One denomination teaches that only the first and last are true and therefore Jesus is not God. Another teaches that only the first two are true and that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are just different names for the one God. Still another teaches that only the last two are true

and thus while there is only one Godhead, there are many Gods. But the Bible teaches that all three are true! Yes, that is hard to understand, but it can be understood.

Take the example of the sun. We call the ball of fire that the earth circles "the sun." When light from it comes through the window, we say "the sun" is coming through the window. On a warm day, we may say that "the sun" is hot that day. (1) We call the ball of fire, the radiated light, and the radiated heat, all the sun. (2) The light and heat come out from the ball of fire. (3) The light and heat and ball of fire are not the same. (4) And yet there is only one sun (5) Further, you would not have sun if any of these were missing. We understand this well enough, Now go back and put in those five sentences the word "God" instead of "sun," "Father" instead of "ball of fire," "Son" instead of "light," and "Holy Spirit," instead of "heat." Then you will have what the Bible teaches about God. (1) We call the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all God. (2) The Son, and the Holy Spirit come out from the Father. (3) The Son and Holy Spirit and the Father are not the same. (4) And yet there is only one God. (5) Further, you would not have God if any of these were missing, It is possible to understand something of the nature of God. We do not have to say that part of what the Bible teaches is not true. The Bible is all true, if we are willing to take God's word for what He is like.

Of all of God's creation, people are very special. For it is they alone who are created in the image of God. In Genesis 1:26-27 we read. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

OBJECTIONS

But someone may object, "I thought you said that people are created in the image of God. That scripture says that man was created in the image of God. It doesn't say that woman was created in the image of God." Oh yes, it does. Notice first of all that it says, "male and female He created them." When it says "man," it does not mean "man" as opposed to "woman"; it means "man" as opposed to the "animals," that is, mankind. The English word "man" means both "a human being" and "a male human being." One word serves for both meanings. But the Greek and Hebrew languages have two words for these two meanings. The Greek word for "human being" is "*anthropos*" and the Hebrew word is "*adam*." The Greek word for "male human being" is "*aner*" and the Hebrew word is "*ish*." (Is it any surprise to you that the first person created, from whom all other people came, was named "Adam," that is, "Man"?) Now the word used in Genesis 1:26-27 is "adam," not "ish." And so we read about man: "let them have dominion." But in verse 28 we find that the ones who are told to have dominion are both the man and woman. All people, both men and women, are in the likeness and image of God. This is why James speaks against cursing "**men, who are made in the likeness of God.**" Is James saying it is permissible to curse women? No, he uses the general word for "human beings," "*anthropoi*." It is wrong to curse either a man or a woman, for all human beings are in the image and likeness of God.

But someone may say, "How can both men and women be in the image of God? Men and women are different." The answer is that the image of God is not a physical thing at all. It is a spiritual thing, for God is a spirit (John 4:24). In Colossians 3:9, 10 we read, "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator." Our new man, or new nature, that we have as Christians, is being made new to be more like the image of God as we learn more. Does this mean that our physical image is being made more like God? No, a Christian's

body just grows older like anybody else's. It is his spirit that is being changed to be more like God. It is the **spirit of man** that was made to be in the image of God. God made man's body from the dust of the earth, but man's spirit came from God himself (Gen. 2:7). God, being a spirit, does not have a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:40).

CONCLUSION

But someone may object, "What about the places in the Old Testament where God appeared to men with a human body, such as Genesis 18:1-33; 32:24-30; Exodus 24:9, 10; 33:17-23; Judges 13:2-33?" Truly, he did appear to men in human form at these times. An all-powerful God can take on whatever shape he wishes. In Exodus 3 he appeared to Moses as a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Such an appearance of God is often called the angel of the Lord, meaning a physical visible manifestation of the Lord, and not merely a special angel who serves God. God himself in his very nature is invisible (Col. 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Hebrews 11:27). This is why the scriptures say that no man has ever seen God (John 1:18; I John 4:12). Men have seen forms that God has taken, but they have never seen God in his very nature. As for such expressions as the hand and arm of God (Acts 2:33; 13:17), they are figures of speech, just as are also the wings and feathers of God (Psalms 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4).

Thus all people are in the image of God, men and women alike. That image is not a physical image, but a spiritual one. But it has been stained by sin, and must be renewed through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let us all decide to obey God and return to his true image.

B. TERRY.

CONSCIENCE

That there is some strange thing called *conscience* associated with man will hardly be denied. Just exactly what that thing is will on the other hand be commonly found in dispute. The power, strength, value and function of the conscience will likewise be differently evaluated by various researchers. As is the case with most problems involving man, the proper solution is found only when one turns to God's word.

Paul makes it plain that the conscience is not equal in all men when he writes: "**When you sin against your brother in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ**" (I Cor. 8:12, NIV). The Christian is committed to the highest possible good both for self and for others. It is important, then, that the conscience of others be given consideration as well as one's own conscience. In order to be able to do this one must know something about the conscience.

Some have been heard to say "I always follow my conscience." Others will say, "If you follow your conscience, you will never go wrong." Is this necessarily so? A careful definition of the word is needed before a reasonable answer can be given.

In the opinion of some the conscience is "the voice of God within" which will unerringly guide one in the right direction. Such folk must sooner or later be disillusioned when they discover they have been wrong and that they have done something harmful to themselves or to someone else.

Conscience has been defined as a "God-given sense of oughtness." Conscience is an inward conviction that there is such a thing as right and wrong. It would appear that man has been given an inborn sense of obligation to do right and to avoid what is wrong as this trait is found in Christian and non-Christian alike. A sense that there is such a thing as right and wrong does not mean that one has a proper sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Several different kinds of conscience are found in Scripture. One can have a weak conscience, a good conscience, a pure conscience, an uneasy conscience, a guilty conscience; or the conscience may be ignorant. Paul readily admits that he persecuted the Church without any qualms of conscience (Acts 26: 9-11). That he was sincere in the whole matter did not change the reality of his being wrong. Paul also speaks of those who have a seared conscience (1 Tim. 4:1,2) and of a defiled or corrupt conscience (Titus 1:15).

A SAFE GUIDE?

It becomes plain that the conscience cannot always be treated as if it were the voice of God within. No infallibility is to be attributed to conscience.

To recognise that the contents of one's conscience is the result of the education and decisions that he has made concerning right conduct is essential. Teaching received from parents, be it good or bad, forms an important part of one's conscience. The thoughts, habits and ideals of those with whom one associates will become a part of an individual conscience. Even the customs of the community are a part of the content of the conscience as are the books one reads, the television and films he watches.

The emphasis cannot be too strong that one's conscience is not an inerrant guide. Anyone will surely recognise the possibility that parents or teachers can teach error. The choosing of associates whose ideals and philosophy are diametrically opposed to what is good is common. The best thinking individual can and will come to faulty conclusions as a result of thinking which is not straight and fully informed.

While it is important to remember that the conscience is not inerrant, one is wise to follow the dictates of his or her best conscience. To fail to do so not only gives one the discomfort of a guilty conscience, but certainly violates a well established rule of Scripture by doing that which he believes to be wrong. (Rom. 14:22,23). Further, one is not likely to have an improved conscience while he violates the God-given control system that presently is working in him.

Those who continually violate the standards they believe to be correct will of necessity lose a sense of God's presence and drift away from God. To repeatedly push aside one's beliefs, whatever they may be, one must either sear his conscience or push God from his mind. In either case the results are disastrous.

GUIDELINES

There are some guidelines that can be helpful in the development of the conscience as one seeks to know what is right and what is wrong. Of course, most important and first is Scripture. Many things are clearly identified as either right or wrong in Scripture. But, when all direct commands are considered, there will still be areas where one will need careful guidance in determining right from wrong. Certain questions should be asked concerning a course of conduct if there is any question about it. 1. What effect will this have upon me personally - both short term and long term? 2. What effect will this have upon others? 3. What effect will this have on the cause of Christ? 4. What effect will this have upon the non-Christian? Clearly, all of these factors must be considered. A careful consideration of each of them will go a long way in arriving at an understanding if one really wants to know the rightness or wrongness of an activity.

Likewise, there are **four tests** concerning moral decisions that can be most helpful in making those decisions. 1. The test of secrecy. Do we want to keep this secret? If so, it is doubtful. 2. The test of publicity. Would we be willing for the public to learn fully of our decision at this point? 3. The test of universality. Would the entire community be uplifted if each person arrived at the same decision? 4. The test of prayer. Can I truly ask God's blessings upon this decision and this course of conduct? These four tests are

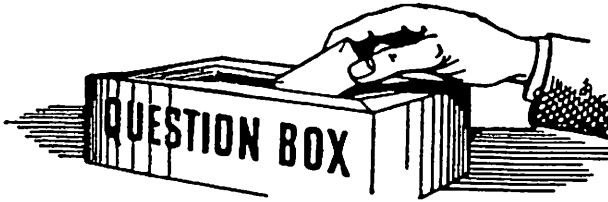
indicative of the fact that the problem is usually not in knowing what is right, but in admitting it to ourselves.

The conscience must be cultivated and we should not assume that just because we have rendered obedience to the gospel we will automatically have a well trained conscience. The Christian life is a journey from the mind of the flesh to the mind of the Spirit and it is a trip that is not completed until we have come to the end of the walk of life.

A renewal of the mind has to take place in the education and development of the conscience (Rom. 12:1,2). This requires that we never be satisfied with the conscience as it now exists, but continually seek to know more of God's will for man. God's will can be found if we are willing to go to His word and accept His will as we find it revealed therein. The real key then to developing a conscience that will serve us as God intended it to serve is the constant, seeking, study of the word of God. There is no substitute for this!

The properly trained conscience is one of our great assets if we will but heed it. If we will allow that guilty conscience to lead us to repentance and surrender to God's will, then it will have served us well.

G. COOK.



Conducted by
Ian S. Davidson

"What really is sin?"

I used to sing the chorus as a child:

*"S-I-N is a very little word
That always spells disaster;
You must leave it very much alone
Or it will become your master."*

A good way to understand sin is to analyse the original Hebrew and Greek words. Both nouns and verbs should be carefully considered. A thorough knowledge of these languages would help, but, nevertheless, there are many works available to assist us in the exercise.

WORDS OF DEFINITION IN THE O.T.

First, there is a group of three Hebrew words which all have the same basic meaning: *chet*, which is used more than thirty times; *chataah*, which occurs around seven times; and *chattath*, which is found about one hundred and seventy times. These words are similar to the Greek word *hamartia* and all of them mean a failure, a missing of the mark. I am reminded here of the comment one time of G.K. Chesterton, the eminent Catholic writer: "Whatever else is true of man, man is not what he was meant to be". Other Hebrew words are: *avon* (about two hundred and twenty times) and is a word associated with guilt; *pesha* (more than eighty times) and has a basic meaning of rebellion; *resha* is a word that describes a state rather than an act. The state it describes is the complete opposite of righteousness.

William Barclay has written: "So then in the Old Testament sin is a failure; sin is perversion; sin is rebellion; sin is the state in which sinning finally leaves a man".

GREEK WORDS FOR SIN

In the Greek, there are eight main words for sin. First, there is *hamartia* (more than one hundred and seventy times) and is used of an individual act, a state and quality, and of sin as a malign power, which has seized the throne-room of people's hearts. Second, there is *perabasis* (six times) and means transgression. Literally it means a stepping across. God draws a line and man steps across it in disobedience to Him. Man knows it is wrong, but still does it. The third word is *paraptoma*, (more than twenty times), which basically means to slip or stumble over a line. This slip or stumble results from lack of care or watchfulness. The fourth Greek word for sin is *anomia*, the word for lawlessness. *Anomia* implies the enthronement of self and the dethronement of God. *Asebeia* (six times) is the fifth word. It is the opposite of *eusebeia*, which means godliness. So *asebeia* is the word for impiety and ungodliness. The sixth Greek word is *adikia* (twenty-five times). In the A.V. it is translated, for example, "iniquity, unrighteousness, wrong". *Dike* is the accepted standard by which a man ought to live. *Adikia* is the refusal to accept that standard. Think of the number of people in the world today who simply refuse to accept God's standard in the person of His Son, Christ Jesus. The seventh word is *ophielema* (once). It occurs in Matthew 6:12. "**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors**". These words are part of the Lord's prayer, which I uttered most mornings at school assembly for six and a half years. I think I understand them better now. As Edwin Rice has pointed out: "All our failures in duty are debts due to God". *Parakoe* (three times) is the eighth word. It means disobedience or, literally, the deliberate refusal to hear the voice of God. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear.

ASPECTS OF SIN

So, from our study of the Greek terms, we can say that sin is a failure to be what God wants us to be; it is the transgression of His law; it is a stumble through lack of vigilance; it is lawlessness as the result of pride in the heart; it is the irreverence which denies and refuses God the honour and the respect He deserves; it is the refusal to conform to the standard set by God Himself; it is our complete failure of duty to God; it is the refusal to hearken to God's voice. I want to share with you some words of Alexander Campbell on this subject "1) Every sin wounds the affection of our heavenly Father. 2) Insults and dishonours His law and authority in the estimation of His other subjects. 3) Alienates our hearts from Him. 4) Oppresses our conscience with guilt and dread. 5) Severs us from society by its morbid selfishness and disregard for man. 6) Induces to new infractions and habitual violations of right. 7) Subjects us to shame and contempt - our bodies to the dust and our persons to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

Many years ago I produced a special feature on Sin in my magazine "Sound in Faith". I wrote at the time some important statements on the subject. For example, "Sin is imperfection. Who can say I am the perfect husband, the perfect wife, the perfect son, the perfect daughter, etc?" "Sin is saying, 'Not thy will but mine be done' rather than 'Not my will but thine be done'". "Sin is the missing of the target at which life must aim, and which life ought to hit". "Sin is setting self in the middle of the picture". "Sin is the weapon of a master-strategist, who is Satan". "Sin alienates from the life of God". "To Him who knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (James). "All unrighteousness is sin" (John).

MASTER AND SLAVES

The apostle Paul saw sin as a very real power that had seized the hearts of men and women and had left them helpless and hopeless. To him, sin was like a king and people

were the wretched subjects; or sin was like a master and people were the poor slaves. What made sin able to operate within human beings was, quite simply, "the flesh". We have to be careful here. "The flesh" is not the body. A good definition of "the flesh" is man apart from God, the Christless human nature. Calvin once wrote: "Whatever is not in Christ, Paul calls flesh". Paul wrote to the saints in Galatia: **"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"** (6:19-21).

UNIVERSALITY OF SIN AND ITS CURE

Sin is universal. **"There is none righteous, no, not one"** (Psalm 14:1; Romans 3:10). **"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 2:23). Human nature was corrupted at the beginning through the fall of our first parents and all of us have inherited this fallen sinful nature. Agreed, some human beings are worse than others, but the point is that all of us are affected one way or the other and the consequence is dying - spiritually, physically, eternally. But Jesus came to give life and to give it more abundantly (John 10:10). **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"** (I Corinthians 15:22). **"And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit"** (I Corinthians 15:45).

To transform his life the alcoholic must first acknowledge that he is a slave to drink. To transform his life the sinner must first acknowledge that he is a slave to Satan. Of course, it is Jesus who leads us from slavery to freedom. Belief and obedience to Him is vital (Latin *vitalis*, from *vita*, life). John wrote: **". . . but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name"** (20:31). **"But until man in his present preternatural state believes the gospel report of his sins, and submits to Jesus Christ as the only Mediator and Saviour of sinners, it is impossible for him to do any thing absolutely pleasing or acceptable to God"** (Campbell).

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

(All questions, please, to Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston,
Johnstone, Renfrewshire, PA6.)

JESUS' ENDORSEMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The history of the earthly ministry of Christ testifies that he endorsed the Old Testament Scriptures. He even endorsed the threefold division of the Old Testament the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. **"These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me"** (Luke 24:44). Hence, Christ endorsed the Pentateuch and the history of the Old Testament; he gave full endorsement to the prophets; he frequently said concerning the prophecies that they **"must needs be fulfilled"**. This could not be truthfully said if the Old Testament was written by uninspired men. Christ fulfilled the prophecies concerning himself; he was the antitype of the types of him in the Old Testament. Frequently

Matthew refers to the birth of Jesus and says that this was done that **"it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet"** (Matt. 1:22).

Christ endorsed David and said that he spoke by the Holy Spirit. **"And Jesus answered and said while he taught in the temple, how say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, the Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool"** (Mark 12: 35-36). Christ then endorsed the Psalms and that which David prophesied. A further endorsement of the Old Testament is observed in that Christ spoke of it as **"the word of God"** (John 10:35). **"If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken"** Christ could not call the Old Testament Scriptures the word of God if they were not inspired. Again, the fact that he came to fulfil the law and the prophets shows that he regarded **"the law and the prophets"** as inspired **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil"** (Matt. 5:17). Again, we have John bearing testimony and saying, **". . . The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"** (Rev. 19:10). Again, Jesus said, **"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"** (John 5:39). The evidence that Jesus endorsed the Old Testament is cumulative; however, we need no further proof of the testimony of Jesus to the inspiration of the Old Testament.

Dr. Harry Rimmer has calculated the number of quotations that Christ used from the Old Testament. **Matthew** contains 1,181 verses; 603 verses are the words of Jesus; this is fifty-one percent of all the verses. Eighty-three of these verses are Old Testament quotations, or fourteen percent of the verses used by Jesus are from the Old Testament. **Mark** contains 609 verses; 275 of these are quotations of Jesus; thus forty-five percent of the verses in Mark are the words of Jesus; thirty-four of these verses, or thirteen percent, are from the Old Testament. **Luke** contains 1,251 verses, of which 570 are the words of Jesus; this is forty-five percent of the verses; forty-two of these verses, or seven percent of his quotations, are from the Old Testament. **John** contains 879 verses; 417 of these, or forty-nine percent are quotations from Jesus, twenty of these quotations of Jesus, or five percent are from the Old Testament. **The four gospels** contain 3,290 verses; and 1,865 of these are the words of Jesus: this is forty-eight percent of all the verses; of his quoted conversation, 179 verses are literally Old Testament words. *Ten percent of the daily conversation of Jesus was Old Testament verses literally quoted.* Truly Jesus endorsed the Old Testament as inspired.

SELECTED.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Oct 5	Zephaniah 3	2 Thessalonians 1
Oct 12	Daniel 7:15-28	2 Thessalonians 2
Oct 19	Proverbs 6:1-11	2 Thessalonians 3
Oct 26	Isaiah 29:13-24	1 Corinthians 1:1-25

2 THESSALONIANS

AUTHOR: the apostle Paul.

DATE: probably about A.D. 52, only a short time after the first epistle.

PURPOSE: mainly to clear up a misconception about the Second Coming.

PLACE: probably Corinth.

THE FUTURE JUDGEMENT

Universal judgement is inescapable (Acts 17:31). Paul in this epistle encourages the saints at Thessalonica to keep the faith despite the persecutions and trials in the knowledge that they who opposed them would one day face the wrath of God. We read: **"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when**

the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them who know not God and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power . . ." (1:7-9). It is clear, plain and simple: God will punish the wicked and reward the righteous. His judgement will be a righteous judgement - and there is no court of appeal! His decision is final. The end is either hell or heaven - and there is no half-way house!

THE GREAT APOSTASY

Paul speaks of deception (2:3). This, of course, is the work of Satan. Deception is his trade-mark. We must remember that Satan at all times is trying to take down as many people with him as possible. Paul saw his task as very much warning the saints because he was not ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Before the coming of Jesus, there would be "a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God . . ." (2:3-4). (Dear Reader, the whole of chapter two should be carefully read to note all that Paul says about this "man of sin".) But the big question is: Who was he? Many suggestions have been offered by commentators. I have noted some of them: Emperor Nero; Emperor Caligula; Titus and the Flavian House; Simon Magus the Gnostic; Mohammed; Luther; Napoleon Bonaparte; the Jewish Nation. I could go on and on. Personally, I see him as the papacy, whose rise best fits the description given by Paul.

Last summer I read Michael Grant's book on Constantine the Great - the first so-called Christian Emperor. He was the

man who grew tired of Rome and established Constantinople as his capital. This action opened the door for the eventual elevation of the bishop of Rome to the position of Universal Father. Paul wrote: "For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way" (2:7, N.I.V.). Albert Barnes has written: ". . . the civil power of Rome was such a restraint, operating to prevent the assumption of the ecclesiastical claims of supremacy which afterwards characterised the papacy, will correspond with all that is necessarily implied in the language".

Apostasy began in the early days of the Church. In many ways, this is no surprise to me. Satan was out to destroy God's body from the beginning. One method he used was to corrupt its system of government. A plurality of bishops (elders) in a single congregation was corrupted to a single bishop with authority over a group of churches. Bishops led to archbishops; archbishops to patriarchs; and patriarchs to a Universal Father or Pope. The perfect system became a corrupted system. Things have never been the same since. The saints' task today is to promote the restoration of the ancient order as revealed in God's word. The systems of men must be rejected.

WALKING DISORDER

We read: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother who walks disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). This verse has been used by many to write off many brethren. But what did Paul mean by "walking disorderly?" The context of 2 Thess. 3:6 is so important to our correct understanding of the verse. (Context is always important in interpretation.) The word for disorderly

is *ataktos* and is found in the adverb form in verse 6 and 11 of chapter 3 and verb form in verse 7 of the same chapter. The word had to do with a slack and irresponsible attitude. One commentator has written: "The context clearly shows that Paul used it to designate the idleness into which the brethren had drifted, or lapsed. Having reached the mistaken view that the return of Christ was imminent, they saw no further need for working. They gave up their jobs and decided to live off the other brethren, even prying into their personal affairs and becoming busy-bodies in other men's matters. Paul defines 'disorderly' by showing both what it is and what it is not. In verse 11 he shows that it consists of 'working not at all'. In verses 7 and 8 he demonstrates that he did not behave disorderly because he did not eat any man's food without paying for it, but supported himself by secular labour engaged in by day and by night. To walk disorderly, in this context, is to live in idleness and to sponge off the other brethren".

I CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR: apostle Paul.

CHURCH: founded on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-17).

DATE: probably A.D. 54, during Paul's third missionary journey.

PLACE: probably Ephesus.

PURPOSE: to respond to reports of the Church which had made him uneasy and to address various questions put to him in a letter.

CORINTH: "The Piccadilly Circus of the Mediterranean". Also known as "The Bridge of Greece", "The Lounge of Greece" and "The Vanity Fair" of the ancient world. She was a rich and populous city with one of the greatest commercial trades of the ancient world. She was also a byword for immorality. "To live like a Corinthian" meant to live in a state of drunkenness and debauchery. The city had been rebuilt by

Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. She was a capital city; the metropolis of the Roman province of Achaea; she hosted the biennial Isthmian Games; the temple of Apollo stood here since the 6th century B.C. and the temple of Aphrodite employed one thousand priestesses as ritual prostitutes.

DIVISIONS

The church at Corinth was the most divided church of the New Testament days. Many of the saints boasted that they were of a particular party within the congregation (1:10-13). Some were even of the Paul Party, but the great apostle condemned such hero-worship. He looked to elevate Jesus at all times. The gospel of Christ was his message for the world and the cross was at the heart of the message. A crucified Lord was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1:23). But to all His followers, He was the answer.

They saw in Him the power of God and the wisdom of God (1:24). The saints took comfort in the fact that God's wisdom far exceeded man's wisdom. Paul wrote: "**Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men**" (1:25).

EPISTLES

It is interesting to consider that God chose to reveal a great deal of His mind and will, under the New Covenant, by way of letters, mostly written by the apostle Paul. Why did He do this? Why, for example, did He not give us His word in lecture form? Why not simply a list of do's and don'ts, etc. Brothers and sisters, just think how much we would have missed if the revelation had been given in any other way. Many of the epistles are truly personal and, as a result, we can better identify with the thoughts and sentiments contained therein. Congregations and individuals had much the same problems as we face today and so all the letters strike a chord

for all saints everywhere. The Scriptures are alive for every generation - even the generation at the end of the twentieth century!

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

REPORT FROM RUTH COLES

Dear Brethren,

Greetings from Mt. Hagen, the third largest town in Papua, New Guinea. It is 600 miles by road from Lae and is 6000 feet above sea level. The weather is very nice with cool mornings, warm days, and cold nights. There are lots of flowering trees and shrubs. I think that the rainy season has just begun.

The brethren here are warm and friendly. I have already many friends among the women. I have enjoyed teaching ladies' class every Sunday morning for the past five weeks and will continue until I leave.

Unfortunately my back which gave me so much trouble has not improved. I am often in a lot of pain and have muscle spasms getting in and out of bed. I was able to see an American doctor at a Nazarene Hospital at Kujip which is a forty minute drive from Hagen. He examined me and had an x-ray taken which showed the fracture in one of my vertebrae to be fairly recent. He also said that I was suffering from osteoporosis. All of my vertebrae are quite thin and crumbling. I will see him again next week.

My family and I have decided that it is best for me to return to Scotland for treatment and prognoses of the disease. I am not able to do very much here. Riding in Andy's truck with big wheels is not comfortable for me.

I am trying to be positive and hoping that I will be able to return here, but that is in God's hands.

It is really hard for me to think of

returning home after only four months, and wish that it could have been otherwise. I console myself with the fact that I arrived just at the right time when my Waria brethren needed my help with relief for the destruction caused by the cyclone and fires which devastated the Waria.

I thank you for the wonderful response to my appeal for help in Britain. Tobey Huff and I also appealed for help from brethren in the U.S.A., Australia and Canada.

The brethren in the Waria are doing well. They thank you all for your generous help. Tobey Huff has arranged for me to fly out to Kira airstrip next Tuesday on one of the chartered flights so that I can see the brethren. I cannot walk to the villages but they can walk up to the airstrip to see me. I will only be there for a few hours. Catherine is coming with me. We will have to spend a night in Lae going and coming.

There have been lots of riots and commotions throughout the country the past few weeks with the election of a new parliament. When the supporters of the loser hear the results, they resort to burning the houses of the supporters of the winning candidate, in some places there have also been a number of killings. It is a violent society especially among non-Christian people.

The Church property is two miles from the town of Mt. Hagen and is within the village of Poimend. There have not been any disturbances here. Since we are right beside the Highland Highway, we have heard the singing and chanting of truck loads of people going up and down the road. Cars with loud speakers blaring messages from "would be" members of Parliament. It will be good when all the results are in and things can settle down again.

I plan to arrive in Edinburgh on the 26th of July and hope to see an Orthopaedic doctor at the Western Hospital soon after. My nephew, Dan

McKenzie and his wife Joan will meet me, and I will stay with them until I know the results of my hospital visit.

It is sad for Andy, Catherine and Celina as Rachel will leave on August 9th to return to America to attend Harding University. Please pray for the work here as Andy is kept so very busy with several small congregations in and around Hagen, plus holding one week Bible schools for men in the churches in all the Highlands. In between time he has fixed up a nice little house for me which is just a short way from the family's house. I hope that I will be able to return to it.

Address in Scotland for Mail is:
C/O Mr. and Mrs. R. Hughes,
115 Chapelhill,
Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 6PZ.

RUTH COLES.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. How many horsemen did king Solomon have?
 2. Who was Joshua's father?
 3. Who killed king Agag at Gilgal?
 4. Which of the ten commandments forbids lying?
 5. On top of which mountain did Aaron die?
 6. Who found Moses floating in the basket?
 7. James compared the tongue to what two objects?
 8. Which book follows Titus?
 9. For how long will Satan be tormented in the lake of fire?
 10. How did Judas commit suicide?
-

CHANGE OF SECRETARY
Secretary of the Church at
Newtongrange is now:-

Robert and Margaret Hunter,
14 McCathie Drive,
Newtongrange, Midlothian,
EH22 4BW.
Telephone: 0131 663 6711

COMING EVENTS

NEWTONGRANGE: The Church at Newtongrange extends a warm welcome to their ANNUAL SOCIAL to be held (D.V.) on Saturday, 4th October, 1997, at 4.00 p.m. The speakers will be Bro. Harry McGinn (New Cumnock) and Bro. Niall Scobbie, (Dennyloanhead). Please let us know by Saturday, 20th September if you can be with us on that day.

MARGARET HUNTER (Sec.).

KIRKCALDY: LADIES DAY on Saturday, 18th April, 1998.

TRIBUTE TO THREE OLD SOLDIERS OF CHRIST

I have learned with much human sorrow of the death of three soldiers of Christ: namely brothers Leonard Morgan, Jack Nisbet and Alf Marsden. I first met these brethren in the early 1970's when I arrived and served in some congregations in Britain. I first met brother Morgan at Eastwood where he and I served the Church at a get-together: and brother Marsden at the same venue where he came to preach. Their words of encouragement sustained me throughout my life in Britain and in my work for the Lord. Nor will I ever forget my days spent with "brother Jack", as we used to address him. Those memories will never fade away until we all meet again. One thing I admired about those three brethren was that they were ever prepared to hold fast to the

faith once delivered to the saints. In spite of all the turbulence they never wavered. Their death is a great loss to the Church in this age. My hope is that their rich example, and their willingness to serve, will be maintained by those of us who have been associated with them. Brothers, I do know that you have fought the good fight: you have run the race set before you and kept the faith, there is, therefore, a crown of righteousness awaiting you on the day that Christ shall return. Rest in peace.

DAVID ARKU MENSAH,
P.O. Box 15887,
Accra, Ghana.

the answer to all problems and I am well aware that there is money going to Africa which is creating problems. (I am not referring to Ghana Appeal Money) Those who have nothing, who have lost their nearest and dearest, I am sure would appreciate whatever we can give and would be encouraged to know that we care. If anyone wishes to know precisely where their gift has been used, that is not a problem and I will be happy to supply the details. Please make cheques payable to Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal), and send to G. Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 0DU, Scotland. Tel: 01383 728624.

GHANA APPEAL

It is now over eighteen months since Bill and I returned from Ghana and we have covered almost every request. To my shame, I have forgotten the widows and orphans which some congregations have and do their best to help. I clearly remember the look in an orphan's eyes in Odumasi-Afrancho because I had not cashed sufficient travellers cheques to help him. I remember also not knowing what to say to a woman who had lost her parents, her husband and children within the space of a few weeks. Money is not

- 10. Hanged himself (Matthew 27:5).
- 9. Forever (Revelation 20:10).
- 8. Philemon.
- 7. Bit, rudder (3:3-4).
- 6. Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:5).
- 5. Hor (Numbers 20:27).
- 4. Ninth (Exodus 20:16).
- 3. Samuel (1 Samuel 15:33).
- 2. Nun (Judges 2:8).
- 1. 12,000 (2 Chronicles 9:25).

ANSWERS

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EDITOR: JAMES R. GARDINER, 70 Avon Street, Motherwell, Lanarkshire, Scotland. ML1 3AB. Telephone: (01698) 264064