

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

In today's copy of the "Times" there is a report describing the recent arrest and detention of three members of the "Faith Ministries" in the city of York on a charge of "aggressive preaching". "Faith Ministries" is a Leeds-based group formed some ten years ago with a present membership of a hundred. Apparently their purpose is to preach the O.T. "as it is written and having no truck with modern interpretations". It transpires that about 6 months ago "the Lord told them" to go out into the streets and call upon the people to repent. Teams were sent to various parts of Yorkshire and then the Lord specifically asked a team to go to York. The three arrested in York, had, allegedly been shouting at the top of their voices and had excited a large crowd which gathered and which began to throw eggs at the preachers. In order to avoid a serious public affray the police deemed it wise to arrest the preachers and they were detained in custody for 48 hours. Their trial will be on a date yet to be fixed. The charge was "behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace" (sounds a bit like Paul's missionary journeys).

Whatever we may think of the apparently clumsy, unwise and even misguided manner in which the three preachers went about their mammoth task, we must at least give them due credit for making some attempt at getting the people of York to repent. Mind you, if the "Faith Ministries" believe in only preaching from the O.T., one wonders what the people of York were being asked "to turn" to. Nevertheless, full marks for the general purpose of the missionaries, for, if the world needs anything today, it needs a call to repentance.

WHAT KIND OF CHANGE?

"Repentance" comes from the Greek *matanoeo* which means "to perceive afterwards": i.e. *meta* (meaning "afterwards") and *neo* (meaning "to perceive"). This is in contrast with the Greek *pronoeeo* which means "to perceive beforehand." Thus we are wiser after the event, and may decide not to repeat a previous mistake: i.e. we may repent our actions. (It should always be kept in mind that some things, regretted after the event, can not be undone: e.g. Esau's birthright bargain could not be recalled. It was a loss quite irretrievable although Esau sought to repent of it with tears.)

All that glitters is not gold, and similarly, all regret is not necessarily repentance. Many changes of heart are due entirely to motives of self-interest. Even Dick Whittington, of nursery-rhyme fame turned back for completely selfish reasons. Indeed a moment's honest reflection will convince most of us that nearly all of our changes of mind are, at the end of the day, based upon self-interest. Similarly much of the heartache and regret which besets mankind is self-centred and has little to do with sorrow for sin. Self-pity was never remotely akin to repentance and we should never confuse the two. Even where there is real sorrow for sin, and true Godly sorrow; this is not repentance but only something which *leads to repentance*. Repentance is not regret, and is not sorrow for sin: it is A CHANGE OF MIND. Clearly it does not refer to any-old-kind of change of mind, but a change of mind that

whereas we walk contrary to God, from henceforth we would turn, do a U-turn, and thereafter seek to walk in harmony with God. Repentance refers to *the resolve* to change. For instance Judas was overcome with sorrow and remorse for his part in the betrayal and death of Jesus, but his sorrow did not lead him to repentance - rather it led him to suicide. Paul draws a valuable distinction for us between regret and repentance in II Cor. 7:8 where he says, in reference to his 1st epistle, "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent (regret R.V.), though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a Godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." We see then that Paul sent an epistle to Corinth; after he sent it he regretted sending it; but later this regret vanished when he heard that the epistle had been received in the proper spirit and had made the Corinthians truly sorry for what had passed. But mainly he was pleased because their sorrow was of a Godly nature and had *led them to* repentance. As he says, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation; but the sorrow of this world leadeth unto death!" The sorrow and regret of Judas, and the world generally, leadeth not into repentance but unto death. Thus repentance is not the sorrow and regret *which leads us to a change of will, attitude or volition, but is the actual change.*

NOT JUST ANY OLD CHANGE OF MIND

Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change of action, but not just a change of action. It must of necessity relate to a change of action *for the better*, and not just for the better, but towards a better relationship *between man and his Maker*. Any disbeliever or agnostic could obviously have a change of mind, and could resolve to improve upon his life but this would not, or would not necessarily, be repentance. Repentance can only be directed towards God and comes only as a result of preaching. Jesus predicted that, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and; behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matt. 12:41). God expected the men of Nineveh to repent *at the preaching of Jonah* (which places some heavy responsibility upon the preacher) and they did. Jesus commissioned his apostles finally by saying, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47). And so repentance must be brought about by *the preaching* of the gospel of Christ. The apostle Peter having preached, and his message having received a proper response from the hearers, commanded that the people "Repent and be baptised." Three thousand were baptised the same day and this surely indicates that as these people had had little time to reform their lives the term 'Repentance' referred to *a resolve to change*. Is it proper for us to send candidates (for baptism) away to reform their lives before they come seeking baptism - as John the Baptist seems to have done? The only thing which seemed to 'hinder' the Ethiopian eunuch from being baptised was the necessity to affirm that he believed with all his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ. He certainly didn't have much time to put his life in order. And so repentance emerges from the preaching of the gospel, and any change which emerges from repentance must be for the better, and must relate to our new relationship with God. Just as faith is based upon facts and that which is true, repentance is based upon deeds and that which is right or wrong. Faith involves a change from ignorance (or error) to enlightenment, and repentance involves a change from evil to goodness. Thus repentance is *for sinners*. Did not Jesus say, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Repentance in sinners is a disposition to forsake their sins and to serve God, or as the writer to the Hebrews puts it "repentance from dead works to serve the true and living God."

Obviously, repentance is only valid in the context of turning away from evil and embracing the good. It also implies not only an acknowledgement of previous sin, but a sorrowful reflection upon it and a strong resolution to forsake it. In short, repentance looks backward at evil and looks forward towards good and God. It is a decision to be done with sin and to live for Christ.

REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION

'Conversion' or '*convert*' is from the Latin prefix *Con* (together) and *verte* (Latin *vertere*, meaning "to turn"). *Introvert* means to turn inside. *subvert* means to turn under: *invert* means to turn upside down: *revert* means to turn back; *advert* means to turn to: *pervert* means to turn away; and so on. "Convert" thus means "to turn together" and envisages the idea that while of a journey someone arrests our passage, pointing out to us that we are going in a wrong direction and that disaster awaits us if we continue. This someone says to us, "Come with me, I'll show you the way" and so we make a U-turn in the company of this gracious benefactor - Christ, of course. This is precisely what happened to Paul on the Damascus road. Indeed, Paul, describing his own conversion to Agrippa says "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. But showed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles (What?) that they should repent and TURN to God, and do WORKS meet for repentance" (Acts 26:19).

Paul scarcely mentions repentance in all his writings, but of course he dealt, most of the time with Gentiles who, unlike the Jews, had never enjoyed a special relationship with God, and therefore did not require to be called upon to return to a God they had previously forsaken. Thus, rather than being called upon to "return" to God they were called upon to "turn" to God; i.e. forsake their idols and "turn" to Christ. Paul's own "conversion" was not a call from a life of vice to a life of virtue; for obviously Paul had always been a Godly man. Indeed Paul considered that he was being most zealous towards God in his persecution of this new 'sect', and so his conversion was not giving up of idols, but rather that a "turning" from ignorance to faith in Jesus of Nazareth.

THE PROPER CONSEQUENCES

Similarly we sometimes confuse repentance with the *consequences* of repentance. Repentance leads to a reformed life, if repentance is indeed present, but the reformed life is but the consequence of repentance. The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:23) washed the stripes of Paul and Silas and thus is truly referred to as *an evidence* of his repentance. Later, in Acts 26:20, Paul states that he declared to the Gentiles that "that they should repent and turn to God, *doing works worthy of repentance.*" Likewise (in Matt. 3:7) John the Baptist, when he saw the many Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, asked them to "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" or good works as evidence of their professed repentance. 'Repentance,' then, is neither Godly sorrow, nor is it good works but it *lies exactly between the two*. Godly sorrow leads us to A CHANGE OF MIND and good works is the eventual outcome and benefit of that change of mind. As previously indicated the CHANGE OF MIND must relate to God and relate to moving from a worse position to a better. Lancelot Oliver once suggested that a good way of remembering this distinction is to regard Godly sorrow as the *roots* of a tree, Repentance as the *trunk* of the tree, and good works as the *branches* and fruit of the tree.

And so sorrow for sin is not repentance but simply leads us to the point of repentance. After all, the road leading into a town is not the town, but if we follow the road we will assuredly reach the town. Repentance is more than sorrow for sin, but less than reformation. Indeed it springs from sorrow for sin and leads on to reformation. Repentance must appear early in the convert's experience and obviously precedes baptism, conversion and general Christian conduct.

IMPORTANCE

It must be scarcely necessary to comment on the importance of such a resolve. Surely it must constitute the most vitally important decision that any man, or woman, can make. Indeed, Jesus, commenting upon the news brought to Him regarding the slain Galileans, and those eighteen persons killed when the tower of Siloam fell, said ". . . Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5). Many lessons are extracted from the parable of the Prodigal Son but most of them hinge upon the son 'Coming to himself' and RESOLVING to return to his father. The young man was disgusted with his state, especially when he thought

of how things might have been, and resolved at that very point to change; i.e. "to turn" from his previous mode of conduct to something much better. When he gave voice to that determination and said, "I will arise," a condition of repentance had surely been reached.

Paul in Rom. 2:4 referring to God's goodness, forbearance and long-suffering states that these are designed to lead men to repentance, but those of hard and impenitent hearts who fail to recognise that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" are, in fact, treasuring up against themselves disaster on God's day of wrath and righteous judgement. Indeed it is for this cause, says Peter, that our Lord tarries in heaven for he says "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise (to return) as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that *all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). Thus the importance is clear, if we repent not we shall perish. If salvation is union and harmony with God then a change of will is evidently necessary. Thus the scriptures require from us only that which is vitally needful, i.e. to REPENT and TURN.

The people of York threw eggs at the "Faith Ministries," with what justification we know not, but I suppose that the mob who stoned Paul "to death" at Lystra did so with the same type of resentment: i.e. being charged with sin and a need to reform. Nevertheless, even the most non-religious person in the community today will readily agree that our present world is strikingly similar to Sodom and Gomorrah, and that large-scale reformation is so obviously called for. "Repent and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity will not be your ruin . . . make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O House of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn to yourselves and live (Ezek.18:30).

Why will we die indeed.

EDITOR.

"NEITHER GIVE PLACE TO THE DEVIL"

In the middle of writing about all sorts of sin, Paul exhorts, "Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Now for this to have meaning, seven things must be true.

(1) There must be a devil. (2) The devil must be able to have a place in our hearts and lives. (3) He must want that place. (4) He must try to get it. (5) Before he can get it, we must give it to him. (6) We must be able to choose to give it to him or keep it from him. (7) There must be a likelihood that we will choose to give to him.

Take away any of these points, and the statement as it stands would be quite inane. Let us take a closer look at these seven implications.

THERE IS A DEVIL

The devil is not much believed in today - the better for his purposes. A lot of people would remove the devil from this verse. Now I do not mind being traditional to the point of using a text. But I do not wish to be traditional to the point of misusing one. So let us look at the argument of those who would take the devil out of this verse. The Greek word for *devil* is *diabolos* (from which our word *diabolical* derives). But *diabolos* is also the usual Greek word for *slanderer*. Martin Luther rendered this verse. "Give the slanderer no place in your life."

Most translators put "devil." Yet the possibility of an alternative rendering to my text made me consider throwing this article out of the window. But there are so many other verses - in this lesson we note several - from which the devil cannot be removed. How could one best sum up in one sentence their teaching? What could be more comprehensive than "Do not give place to the devil?" So my text, if it is not in Ephesians 4:27, is still in principle, scriptural.

Satan, the devil, is not, as some people say, a figure of speech personifying evil. Whilst figures of speech are used with reference to Satan, "as a roaring lion" for example. Satan himself is not a figure of speech. After all, it would be singularly unusual to have a figure of

speech referring to a figure of speech.

In the field of evidences, Satan has strewn possibly more clues to his existence than even God has.

Many people have silly ideas about what Satan is like. Does that prove there is no Satan? Many people have silly ideas about what God is like. Which does not prove there is no God. I seriously doubt that people really believe that the devil is "a bloke with horns and a pitchfork in a hot place down under the ground." If anyone is so stupid as to believe he is like that, it just proves they have weird ideas about what the devil is like. It does not prove that the real devil, an intelligent, cognizant, operative, leading spirit, is a figment of the imagination. Albeit unlike people sometimes imagine him to be, the devil exists.

THE DEVIL CAN HAVE A PLACE IN OUR LIVES

What would be the point in saying "Neither give place to the devil," and would it matter much that there was a devil, if he could not have a place in our lives?

In 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul presents the possibility of Satan "getting an advantage of us," "For we are not ignorant" writes Paul, "of his devices." Yes Satan has wiles - ways and means of getting a place in our lives.

THE DEVIL WANTS A PLACE IN OUR LIVES

Would it matter much that there is a devil, or that he could have a place in our lives . . . Would there be any point in saying, "Neither give place to the devil," if he did not want that place? Not only *can* he have it; he *wants* to have it.

Peter said in his first letter, 5:8 "The devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

THE DEVIL TRIES TO GET A PLACE IN OUR LIVES

What the devil wants, the devil tries to get. Otherwise, it would be of little concern to us that he wants a place in our lives. If the devil can teach us anything good, it is that if we want something, we ought to do something about getting it. He does. He doesn't sit about just wishing. He does his best (or worst) to get a place in our lives.

As witness the story of Job (Job 2:1-7). To have a place in Job's life, Satan went to considerable trouble, even to getting an interview with God. I should imagine that if anything is distasteful to Satan, an interview with God is. But he did it, to get a place in one man's life.

THE DEVIL CANNOT GET A PLACE IN OUR LIVES UNLESS WE GIVE IT TO HIM

What would be the point in saying, "Neither give place to the devil" if he could take it whether we gave it or not? Unless we give Satan a place, he cannot get near us. James says "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

WE DO NOT HAVE TO GIVE THE DEVIL A PLACE IN OUR LIVES

The last point would not be a point, if we had no choice, if we *had* to give Satan a place, whether we liked it or not.

But we do not have to give place to the devil. We can be turned from his power. His power can be turned from us. Part of Paul's commission was "to turn men from the power of Satan unto God" Acts 26:18. So it must be possible to keep from giving the devil a place in our lives.

WE WILL GIVE THE DEVIL A PLACE IN OUR LIVES IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL

There would be no point in saying, "Neither give place to the devil" and none of the facts we have considered would matter at all, if there was no likelihood that we would give place to the devil. This is why I do not hold the "once in grace always in grace" view. It invalidates every proposition we have stated so far, and makes our text pointless.

In 2 Timothy 2:26, Paul speaks of people who were once in grace, but are now in the snare of the devil, taken captive by him at his will (and, of course, at theirs). The devil lays snares for us, and it is an easy thing to become trapped. WE must be careful. Peter, calling the devil a roaring lion, warns us to, "Be vigilant, be alert."

THE POPULAR "GOSPEL"

There are actually two popular gospels being preached today: the first is the gospel of false "love" and the second is the gospel of "no sin."

The first is founded on all of chapter 4 of First John and, is fortified and reinforced by isolating vs. 8 "God is love."

The second is based on the first, and is fortified and conceived by the use of John 3:16.

The gospel of "love" as preached by those who blindly ignore, or even worse, deliberately overlook *the conditions* of this "love" demand nothing from their hearers. This gospel commands nothing, condemns no one, requires no further study and proclaims "just let Jesus come into your heart". Blood and sacrifice are not even mentioned.

The second declares that there is no longer any "sin" for did not Jesus die for all? Isn't everyone going to be saved if they "just let Jesus come into their heart?"

This is the popular gospel, this is the exciting gospel, this is the gospel that makes no demands on you, you do not have to make a choice. You can love everyone and everything and anything. There is no blame attached to anyone for anything. Did not Satan make you do it? He is to blame and Jesus died for all so there is no longer any sin. Sin is only attached to Satan.

This is the blind gospel of "love" which neither defines the object, nor the subject, of love. It never questions our belief and therefore never causes any discomfort to anyone. It is the great catch-all of blissful ignorance. It allows for personal choice of moral conduct without condemning. No one is to be judged, and no judgement calls are necessary for all is love.

IS GOD'S LOVE UNCONDITIONAL?

Strangely enough those who preach and teach this are taking advantage of "love", for the true meaning of biblical "love" starts with patience - 1st Cor. 13:4 - and since God is love (and He is) these people take advantage of His patience while He gives them time to reconsider their point of view.

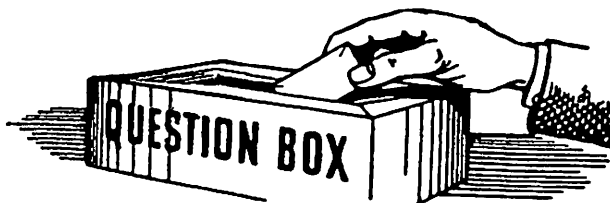
God has given man the capacity to practise love, and, at the same time, He gives man the freedom to choose to refuse to practise it. The loving God of the Bible places demands on men and fixes responsibilities.

The only way that the popular teaching of the false "love" can have the success that it enjoys is for men to ignore the Bible and rely on the "doctrines of men." If anyone is curious enough, he can read for himself the passages that follow those which form the foundation of this false teaching (1st John 4:8) and by reading all of chapters 4 and 5 see the clear teaching of *obedience, as a condition* of God's love. Then looking at the very words of Jesus Himself in Mark 16:15-16 they could see what exactly is meant by "obedience."

By deliberately isolating chapter four of 1st John those who teach, and those who believe the false teachers, have violated one of the explicit warnings contained in the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19, 2nd John 9-11, Prov. 30:6). Remove a chapter or verse, and build a concept on it by ignoring the context, is certainly "taking away" from the book and then building a false doctrine around it is certainly "adding to the word."

Compromising the truth and embracing all kinds of denominational practices are what the teachers of this doctrine advocate under the banner of "love." Beware.

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Conducted by
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"John says, 'If we say we have no sin we lie.' He also says, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil' (1st John 3:8). What, therefore, is meant by 'committeth sin' in this context, and how can we be 'without blemish' as per 2 Pet. 3:14?"

In 1st John 1:8 we read, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Before however, we can say anything meaningful we must examine all aspects of the question.

SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENTS AND REASONING

In the Roman letter, Paul has some very telling arguments. In 5:12 we read, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Again in Rom. 3:10,23 Paul says "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one" . . . "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Let us try to understand each point which is made.

"Sin entered into the world." Now if I 'enter' a room, I must be 'outside' the room before I can enter it. It is quite obvious that Paul in Rom. 5 is referring us to the Garden of Eden, because he mentions "Adam's transgression." It is equally obvious that God did not make Adam a sinful person; everything that God made was good; it couldn't be otherwise. Therefore we can only conclude that Satan, in rebellion against God, had transgressed God's law; God had decreed this as SIN. Satan, and those angels who followed him, had been banished from Heaven. Hence, he 'entered' the garden from some other place, intent on mischief against God's Creation. So entered death also, and death passed upon all men.

God's word is truth. Therefore, if the Bible says that all have sinned - both Jew and Gentile - then we can see the force of the scriptural argument in John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Truth says that all are sinners, and until people can rid themselves of self-deception, and acknowledge this fact, then they will never be saved. We shall also need to see how this teaching affects those sinners who "have been saved by grace."

We must also try to understand that it was 'sin' that entered into the world, not 'sins.' I know this may be looked upon as a fine distinction, but I am looking at Satan and equating him wholly and completely as SIN. He entered the world of God's Creation and he has never left it since. The pervading powers of darkness, evil, and ultimate death are the hall-marks of his presence. Peter says that "he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We often say that the world is a dark and evil place; think what it would have been like if the Eternal Light had never entered the hearts and minds of mankind. Try to think of what Hell is like in the abyss of darkness, and then, dear Christian, try to put 'sinning' into perspective.

"HE THAT COMMITTETH SIN"

The verb 'to commit' is a Transitive Verb, i.e. it needs an object in order to make its meaning clear; in this case the object is sin. One meaning of the verb 'to commit' is 'to perpetrate'; a secondary meaning is to perpetrate such actions as will place us in a hazardous situation. If we perpetrate acts of sin, then so far as God is concerned such acts will place us in an extremely hazardous situation relative to Him.

Any act of sin which we may commit can be done in one of two ways; either *ignorantly* or *with knowledge*. In English law, ignorance of the law is not a defence. So far as God's law is concerned (and I am not speaking of the law of Moses) I feel sure that ignorance of His revealed will cannot help us very much. If we are serious about doing God's will, then

we shall study it in order to do it; if we are incapable of studying it, then that should be taken care of by the teaching ministry of the Church. In any case, we should not be ignorant of what God would have us do because we are more interested in other things, or even indolent in studying the scriptures. If, on the other hand, we commit sin with knowledge, then this would seem to be a deliberate act of rebellion against God. Furthermore, if I know what I ought to do, and fail to do it, then again I could lapse into a sinful state. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." There will be few excuses for sin when we stand before God.

MISSING THE POINT

We must not, however, miss the cardinal point that John makes with regard to all this. In 1 John 2:1 he says, "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (but read on). Is it possible for this desirable state of affairs to happen as we grow into Christian maturity? Why does the Holy Spirit through John say it if it is not possible? Many Christians have this strange idea that spiritually, in the mind, they can progress to spiritual maturity, but simply because their spirits are encapsulated in flesh, the flesh must automatically go on sinning. What did Paul mean when he said, "I buffet my body daily, and bring it into subjection lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He knew that the body could be kept in control, indeed had to be. Furthermore, what is the Holy Spirit doing in our lives? If we go on sinning in the flesh, are we not 'quenching' Him?

What is the whole burden of John's teaching? Surely it is love; love of Christ, love of the truth, love of the brethren. But how can we love Christ if we are not intent in doing His will? How can we love the truth if we are not really concerned as to what the truth is? How can we love the brethren if we are envious, and cling to bitter disputes of the past? Brethren, we need to grow. We should reach the stage in our Christian lives when the advocacy of Christ regarding our sins is required less and less. I have heard some Christians say that they sin dozens of times every day. It is impertinent of me to ask, "Why?" Make no mistake, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." 'Of' is a preposition indicating, among other things, 'cause and agency.' It is Satan who is the prime cause of sin, and when we go sinning we are acting as his agents. We, supposedly the executive arm of God's will on earth, acting as agents for the one who was responsible for the ignominious death of God's dear Son! How do we have the temerity to seek the advocacy of Christ and yet continue to engage ourselves in the sin which put Him on the Cross? Either we are extremely naive, or we have not begun to understand the depths of the love of our Heavenly Father and His Christ.

WITHOUT BLEMISH

2 Peter 3:14 says, "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." What are the things we are looking for according to Peter? We look for the day of the Lord, the promise of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In short, we are looking for that eternal abode to which all faithful saints are bound.

Therefore, Peter gives a warning. If you are *really* looking for such things, and trying to hasten their coming, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. To be 'diligent' means on our part unremitting work toward the objective. With such an objective in view, there will be no time, nor inclination, to follow the devious wiles of Satan. We shall have our eyes fixed firmly on the Lord and the goal before us. It will not be just a few prayers and an intermittent reading of the word, but a burning desire to really know Him, not just to know something about Him; it will be love casting out all fear of failure. Be assured of this; Satan will wage an unremitting war against our faith until the very day we die; we can survive this war only if we diligently seek Christ, and do our utmost to avoid sin. He will see to it that any blemish which comes our way inadvertently will be removed by His advocacy. May the Lord bless us in our search for purity in Christ.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden,

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A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER

I find it impossible in the space available, to do justice to the memory of my father and to pay tribute to his life and times. This maybe will have to come much later when I have read his large collection of diaries, and will then understand the enormity of what he has achieved in his 91 years for the Master.

My father was one of seven children born to Edward and Mary Morgan. My grandfather was a miner, he came up from the Welsh coal-fields because of their demise, to live in Hindley, and there met his wife.

In studying the family tree my father came across his namesake Leonard Morgan who was a master builder in a little village called Cinderford on the border of Shropshire. It was he who had built many of the Baptist Churches in the area and was highly regarded by his peers.

On coming to Hindley and starting their large family, my grandfather informed his wife to go into Hindley and find a Baptist Church for the children.

She met a sister of the Church of Christ in Argyle Street and here my father and his family later found their spiritual home.

It was here that he poured all his energy over the years and has served the Church at Hindley as an Elder for many years.

My father's one dread was that he would have to follow his brother's example and go down the mine to earn his living. His father, knowing his fears, said that he didn't need to follow his footsteps.

His first job was selling newspapers in Hindley and later went to work for a local grocer called Seymor Meads as a traveller.

He much later started up Morgan's Grocers (over 65 years ago).

He was a very successful business man, he had a flair for buying and selling.

In all his dealings he was the most honest man I have ever met. At stocktaking every sheet of paper had to be counted, every box accounted for. With my father there was NO Tax fiddling and no underhand dealing.

However, it is not by business that my father will be remembered, but his love of the Lord; and the Lord's Church was his entire Life in Total.

Time and space is not available to recount all his work in tracts (such as "Revival") "Thought For The Week," his work for the "Scripture Standard," and his "brain child" "The Hindley Bible School" which I recall was a logistics nightmare yet was his greatest success. Time will not allow to tell of all the preaching appointments he took (well over 60 congregations) and all the souls who were saved by his ministry. My father was an avid record keeper, everything was recorded in diaries and books, a historian's delight in years to come.

My father's daily routine was Bible and hymn book, all his books were heavily marked. His favourite authors were Frances Ridley Havergal, G.Y. Tickle, Bonner, Tom Kemp. From these, and the word of God, my father drew his strength.

My father's wish was only to be remembered in two ways: "That he kept the faith." This was his life-times quest of finding the truth and passing it on to others. So it was to The Church of Christ that he devoted all his life.

His spiritual mentors were Walter Crosthwaite, Walter Jepson, F.C. Day, Gill Cross and many hundreds of brethren in this country and overseas who were and influence in his life. He was a reader of books, he loved the writings of Campbell, J.H. Jowett, King, Crosthwaite, Lancelot Oliver, Lloyd Jones.

He was passionate of the position of The Churches of Christ. Anything that would destroy the harmony and unity of the body was defended at all costs. He said to me years later that the one mistake he made which he regretted, was the ending of the committee system, that had worked so well for the Churches in the early 1990's. Not that he agreed with the committee principle; he opposed it, but that much worse things were to happen to

the Churches in later years mainly from across the water. So his life-time's work was to keep the faith; because of this he invested time and money in young brethren from Hindley, brother Albert Winstanley, Frank Worgan, and the late brother Tom Kemp to name but a few.

His other wish was that it could be said of him "That he went about doing good." My father was a very private man in his good deeds, he was no Ra-Ra man, he didn't let his left hand know what his right hand gave away. But his doing good was not just giving money, but rather giving his time which, to my father was more precious than money. In and around Hindley he is remembered, more for his sheer acts of kindness. His work for "prisoners-aid" and the hundreds of people who received his little sheet every week, given to them by an old man in his 90's ploughing up their path brought tears to their eyes. Those who have never heard of the Gospel have seen it preached in the life of Leonard Morgan.

In all this he has had the support over the years, of two wonderful Christian wives. Sister Elizabeth Jess gave me a little verse that Edward quoted at brother David Dougal's funeral, she thought that it summed up my father's life :

"How many were succoured on his journey,
Helped by his words, or prayers, we may not know
Still this we read . . . words of excelling grandeur,
He "walked with God" while yet he walked below."

May the memory of Leonard Morgan bring each one of you a blessing.

JOHN MORGAN.

TREASURER'S REPORT

It was apparent early in 1996 that we would only just have sufficient funds to cover our costs throughout the year without an increase in subscription rates. Unfortunately a rise in printing in June coupled to an increase of postal rates in July left no option but to raise the rate in September.

Subscriptions were down on the previous year but an increase in gifts, partly in response to the shortage of funds, compensated for this.

Two items under the Expenditure heading require mentioning. The Reading Cards were paid for in December 1995 and so do not appear in this Balance Sheet and as no new stationery was required in 1996 this is also shown as a nil entry.

This report is a very brief comment on the magazine's financial standing. If anyone would like further clarification I would be willing to answer any points raised.

BALANCE SHEET FOR 1996

Income		Expenditure	
Bank account 1/1/96	£659.24	Printing	£4,108.00
Bank Interest	27.56	Postage	779.87
Subscriptions	2,309.59	Reading Cards	0.00
Gifts	<u>2,848.70</u>	Sundries	<u>0.00</u>
	<u>5,185.85</u>		4,887.87
		Bank account 31/12/96	<u>957.22</u>
	<u>£5,845.09</u>		<u>£5,845.09</u>

J.K. Kneller (Treasurer).

I have examined the books, receipts, etc. and find them to be correct and in good order.

J. H. Currie (Auditor) 3rd February, 1997.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 6 Ezra 8:15-23 Mark 9:14-32
 April 13 Isaiah 66:12-24 Mark 9:33-50
 April 20 Deut. 23:15-24:4 Mark 10:1-16
 April 27 Proverbs 11:4-28 Mark 10:17-31

THE HEALING OF A DEMONIC SON

I watched a television programme the other night featuring Sir Walter Scott. It mentioned his interest in witchcraft and demonology. In fact, Scott wrote a book in 1830 entitled *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, which a lot of people do not know about. Demons feature quite strongly in the gospel records and demonology is a subject which should not be overlooked by the Biblical student, although it often is. One reason this difficult subject tends to be neglected is because of the lack of good material on it.

It must be remembered that there is only one devil, but there are many demons. What precisely were the demons? Walter Bauer described them as "... independent beings who occupy a position somewhere between the human and the divine." W.E. Vine has written: "A demon, signified, among pagan Greeks, an inferior deity, whether good or bad. In the N.T. it denotes an evil spirit." Flavius Josephus said: "Demons are the spirits of wicked men, who enter into living men and destroy them, unless they are so happy as to meet with speedy relief." Philo declared "The soul of the dead men are called demons". Justin Martyr argued: "Those who are seized and tormented by the souls of the dead, whom all call demons and madmen. Alexander Campbell in his famous essay on the subject concurred with most of the above. He rejected the view that demons were fallen angels. Personally, I used to see Campbell's way, but I now take the view that demons were fallen angels; who possessed certain human beings in circumstances about which I am not absolutely clear. This change of mind follows further studies. (I do not agree with Campbell on everything!). Let it be emphasised that demons were "evil spirits" and Jesus had

power over them, as can be seen in this case (9:14-29). The apostles too had been gifted this power, but it had to be used properly. They asked the question: "Why could not we cast him out?" (9:28). Jesus replied: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (9:29). I take from it the Lord's statement that there were different kinds of demons and proper preparation was required for each case.

WHOEVER IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US

We read: "And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out demons in your name and he follows not us: and we forbade him, because he follows not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he who is not against us is on our part" (9:38-39). The trouble with these verses is that we tend to read them with twentieth century glasses and apply some of the words to the modern religious scene, which confuses and disturbs us. Please note that a genuine miracle was being performed by this individual which showed that God's power was not limited to the apostles or those known to the apostles. The man was a true disciple. I take great comfort from the fact that God knows those who are His. This has always been the case.

SPIRITUAL SURGERY

Jesus in chapter nine went on to speak powerful words on cutting off sources of temptation (43-48). The margin of my Bible reads "Spiritual Surgery." I think this is a good heading. One writer has put it this way: "It is worth any sacrifice and any discipline and any self-denial to do the will of God." I know a lot of folks who think they can be easy-osey about the demands of Jesus. They could not be more wrong! His words in this passage alone prove them wrong. Dear reader, eternal life is in the question and joy through eternity. Determine, therefore, to banish all sin from your life. Whatever offends, cut it out!

DIVORCE

Marriage is a divine institution. It was designed by a beneficent Creator for the

propagation, perpetuity, protection and happiness of the race made in His own image. I have recorded these comments in my "Marriage" folder. "Marriage is founded in nature, reason and religion." "Marriage enables parents to recognise their children, and children their parents." "On the altar of matrimony are woven all the cords of affection, all the ligaments and bands that cement society." "Destroy marriage and you destroy the happiness of man and the safety of the race." "Marriage is honourable in all and, as for purity, earth knows no purer, no holier state than that of holy wedlock."

Marriage is a covenant and divorce is the breaking of that covenant. Some people say that divorce is of itself a sin. Personally, I do not see it that way. Many innocent parties have been involved in divorce proceedings. But I wish to point out that divorce was never in the original plans of God. We read: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he (Moses) wrote you this precept" (10:5). God intended marriage to be an indissoluble union until death. What a different world it would be if everyone saw it God's way!

Divorce is one thing; divorce *and remarriage* quite another. Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commits adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another; she commits adultery" (10:1-12). Heth and Wenham in their book *Jesus and Divorce* wrote: "Jesus did not come to lay down a new 'law' on His disciples, one too strict for them to bear. He gave them a moral standard which, by God's grace, He expected His disciples to fulfil. He said that one of the distinguishing characteristics of His disciples is that they do not remarry after divorce. Christ came to give freedom, not for divorce and remarriage, but for marriage in its creational design . . . if one thing or another leads to the tragedy of divorce, Christ's disciple has available that grace which is needed to remain single or be reconciled."

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Riches are one thing; trusting in riches, quite another. Jesus saw into the heart of this young man and detected the major problem in his life. Thus He said in love: "One thing you lack: go your way, sell whatsoever you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (10:21). Tragically, he did not do as the Master commanded. What use his earthly riches now?

I once did a special study on riches, wealth, poverty, etc. It opened my eyes to a lot of things, especially the dire poverty in the Third World. I recall a number of statements. "Riches can deaden faith." "Wealth is always a subordinate good." "Poverty and suffering are not inherently good. They are tragic distortions of God's good creation." "Riches can encourage a false independence." "Jesus was not opposed to wealth in itself, but only insofar as it becomes an obstacle to respond to God." "This is why the poor are blessed. They do not have the stumbling block in making a response to the kingdom." "There are values in this world far beyond money. There are things which have no price and there are precious things that money can't buy." "The gospel offered so much to the poor and demanded so much from the rich." "If all that a man has to meet life with is wealth, he is poor indeed."

Dear reader, think of Jesus Himself. Where was His palace and where were all His worldly riches? As ever, He is an example to all.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. What was the cave bought by Abraham for a burial place?
2. Where in Egypt did Jacob and his sons settle?
3. Who was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron?"

4. How old was Moses when he died?
5. Who was the prophet that rebuked David?
6. Which Persian King allowed the Jews to return to their land?
7. Who, according to Acts, was the second martyr?
8. What type of tree did Jesus cause to wither?
9. Who was a seller of purple?
10. What was Paul's native city?

RUTH COLES OFF TO P.N.G.

Due to a Post Office error all recent mail for Ruth Coles has been "Returned to Sender" albeit she does not leave for Papua New Guinea until 26th February. Ruth hopes to be in P.N.G. for the next three years or so and we wish her well and God's speed.

Her address will be:

P.O. Box 1827
Mount Hagen
Western Highlands Province
Papua New Guinea.

(ED.)

MANY THANKS

Rene, John and Jeniffer and family would like to thank all the readers of *The Scripture Standard* for your prayers cards and letters during the loss of a much loved husband, father and grandfather.

The wider loss is that of the brotherhood, particularly the brethren at Hindley, but also the saints of God scattered around the world which benefited from his life.

As was said by many who wrote to us "A giant of a man has fallen". The work or shall I say the labour of love done by my father will never be known this side of eternity.

We would like to thank you all for the encouraging letters and cards that have helped us come to terms with his death.

His life has touched thousands of people, and hundreds have come to know the Master through his life and his masterful

sermons.

We pray that his memory will live on in your lives for years to come, and that his love and enthusiasm for His Lord will encourage us all to greater efforts for the Master.

Many I add a little Postscript.

It is to inform the Churches, that for the moment The "Thought For The Week" has finished with the death of my father. It may be, at some time in the future, that we will do a rerun. If any brethren or Churches would like any back numbers please feel free to contact us.

JOHN MORGAN.

BOUND VOLUME 1994-96

There are some changes to the present Bound Volume as follows:

1. A simple index of the contents has been included at the back of the book. The index is in two parts. The first list is of articles etc. and has the **author's name** in alphabetical order. The second part lists personal news items and has the **subject's name** in alphabetical order. I hope you find this helpful when you use the book.
2. Volume Numbers are not shown on the spine of this book. In the July 1994 issue the Volume No. was changed in error from 63 to 62 and this was not noticed and was not corrected. Volume numbers would either have clashed with the previous volume or not been representative of the contents. I have therefore omitted them.
3. The cost of each copy is £15.50 + p&p where applicable.

JOHN KNELLER.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Kirkcaldy: Rejoice with us. We have two new brothers in the Lord. On the 25th July, 1996, Steven Burke was baptised by Mike Heinemier in the sea at Kinghorn. On

December 29th, 1996, Bill Wilson was also baptised. Please remember these brethren in your prayers that they may grow in Christ.

RUTH MOYES.

Stretford, Manchester: A young Muslim man, Sayed Mohammad Amjad, recently came to England earnestly searching for answers to questions he had about Jesus Christ. He had left his country, having been turned out of his father's house because of his desire to be a Christian.

He consulted a Catholic priest who invited a fellow-countryman who to talk to him. This man knew of our work and suggested to the priest that Amjad should meet me. Amjad and I studied the word of God together and on Sunday evening, the 9th of February 1997, he was baptised into Christ. Having committed himself to Jesus it could be risky for him to return to his own country. Wherever he is he will have problems. He has a lot to unlearn and learn but is very keen to be a useful servant of the Lord.

Please rejoice with us in the Lord, and at the same time pray for Amjad's spiritual growth, in faith and spiritual strength and for his personal safety and well-being.

We are grateful to the brothers and sisters at Hindley for allowing us to use the baptistry and for their hospitality.

GRETCHEN ASHURST

From the Church in Stretford

*(Formerly the church in
Bramhall Green)*

OBITUARY

Newtongrange: At the time of going to print word has just been received of the sad passing of our highly esteemed brother John Wilson after a long and trying illness. A proper obituary will appear next month D.V.

(ED.)

Tunbridge Wells: Eva Nellie Venn (*formerly Lawrence*) 1904 - 1997.

Eva was the last of the founder members of the Church meeting at Cambrian

Road, Tunbridge Wells. With her late husband Chris Lawrence and several others they left Commercial Road and began meeting in Tinker's Chapel in Silverdale Road. Eva was always in her place at meetings and faithful to her Lord in daily living. She was an example to all who knew her. Though Eva had no children of her own, children were part of her life, becoming 'mother' to many. Her hospitality extended to both old and young. In 1977 Eva married the late Leslie Venn of Kentish Town. On December 8th she met with us around the table of the Lord for the last time, entering into hospital for surgery on the 18th December. On 25th January she died in Pembury hospital. A service of thanksgiving was held in our building on February 5th attended by a large number of friends and 'family'. We especially miss her rich soprano voice, for she loved to make melody with her heart to the Lord. Brother Albert Winstanley sent a fitting appreciation of her.

DEREK L. DANIELL

Dalmellington: It is with sorrow and sadness we report the passing on Saturday 25th January 1997, of our dear Sister in the Lord, Lizzie Watson, age 86 years, beloved wife of Brother William Black. A dear Mother, Grandmother, and Great Grandmother of the family. Lizzie was a member of the Church at Newtongrange in her early years. After her marriage to William Black she came to live in Dalmellington. She was a faithful member of the Church here until the past eight years when she had to go into hospital through ill health. After coming out of hospital she was cared for at a Nursing Home in Patna, then she was transferred to a Nursing Home at The Glebe, Dalmellington, where she spent the last days of her life. Due to her ill health she was unable to attend the meetings.

Our sympathy and prayers are with Bro. William, family and other relatives at this time.

A Service was held in the Nursing Home conducted by the writer and assisted by Bro. Harry McGinn. At the graveside the writer conducted the Service.

Bro. DAVID CHALMERS

Hindley: During the last year the Church has suffered, through death, the loss of six members.

On the 5th of January 1996 Brother Richard Hunter died in hospital after being poorly at home for several months. Brother Richard was a very quiet man. It was said that "He was Christian man and a true Gentleman". He had a lovely nature; he was inoffensive, patient, and was always willing to help. He was no speaker, but chose to serve in any way his brethren needed him.

On the 25th March 1996 Sister Dorothy Whitton died in the Lord after a long illness. Although our sister was not able to meet with us due to her living outside Wigan, she continued to meet with the Brethren at Longshoot where her son, daughter-in-law and grandson worshipped.

She also had a lovely quiet nature, and always seemed to have a smile on her face despite her difficulties. She had spent a life-time in the Churches of Christ and was very knowledgeable in the Lord's word.

On the 22nd of April 1996 Sister Molly Hunter, the wife of the late Brother Richard died at the ripe old age of 93. She had a wonderful caring nature. Although they had no family of their own, the Hunters adopted all that needed help. The writer likened her to Dorcas in the New Testament, who was known for her good deeds and acts of kindness.

Religion is not just worship, praying etc. but needs to be practical. I feel that just sums up Molly's life. Her memory also will linger on for years to come.

On the 4th of December 1996 Brother James Barker died in the Lord. He was returning from a coffee morning at Longshoot, and was being taken home by Brother and Sister Douglas Melling when he died during the journey home. Brother James had a good name among the brotherhood, he had a lively sense of humour. He was a very friendly person and had a kind and gentle nature.

His daughter Sister Jean Partington, said that in their upbringing he was always a man of integrity and a very just man in his dealings.

On the 5th of December 1996 Sister Nellie Morgan died in Christ after three weeks in hospital. The writer again described her as a virtuous women. She was a woman of character, strong yet gentle in many ways. Her life was spent looking after her husband Ted, and the giving of hospitality to the brethren over the years. One of her qualities was that she was a good listener and had a very generous nature.

If there was just one quality in her that I admired, it was her patience in suffering. She suffered from crippling arthritis and yet you hardly ever heard her complain. The hymn writer wrote "That in the hour of grief or pain - Can lean upon its God."

Her suffering is now over and she too awaits the Resurrection Morn.

On the 6th of January Brother Leonard Morgan fell asleep in Christ. On the day before (being the Lord's Day) he was expressing his desire to be with His Lord "which is far better". The next day he was granted his wish. About one hour before he died he lifted his head off the pillow and opened his eyes wide and looked with sparkling eyes at a point on the ceiling. The writer said "What can you see Pop, can you see the holy city"? I got no reply but it fairly warmed my heart, when one hour later he passed away with his dear Rene holding his hand.

*May the fragrance of his memory
linger on.*

JOHN MORGAN

COMING EVENTS

(A note for your diary)

TRANENT ANNUAL SOCIAL

15th March, 1997

at Loch Centre, Tranent

Details later.

KIRKCALDY ANNUAL SOCIAL

19th April, 1997

at 3.30 p.m.

*Speaker: IAN DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.*

GHANA APPEAL

It's now seven years and eight months since the first visit was made to Ghana to establish this Appeal and I'm thankful for the growth of the Church in that time - almost four fold. Again I express my profound thanks to the donors who have enabled our Ghanaian brethren to achieve this - the combined effort has indeed borne fruit.

The health books have been an excellent investment and I've had letters of appreciation from our brethren concerning these. They will be especially helpful in the more remote villages where many of our brethren live, but are also very useful indeed in the towns and cities. However, health problems still remain which require doctors and hospital services and I earnestly appeal for contribution for this. There are many afflictions such as malaria, river blindness, snake bites, etc., which require professional treatment, as well as long term ailments. A faithful brother in Patriensa has been suffering from painfully, badly swollen feet since long before the Appeal began. Continual treatment has reduced the swelling in one foot and is necessary to control the condition. Although in constant pain, he has a great love and devotion for our Lord, serving as much as he possibly can. His wife suffered extensive weals on her skin which required treatment over a long period.

I have a great love and respect for our Ghanaian brethren and earnestly appeal for the continuation of this vital work, as well as for your prayers.

Please make cheques payable to Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal), and send to G. Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 0DU. Scotland. Tel: (01383) 728624

P.S. Thank you I.M.B. for £50 cheque received on Monday 10th February.

P.P.S. Late news from Western Region: they have received the first solar-powered lamp into their meeting-place which is working well. They are delighted and thank those who contributed. Now they can have evening meetings in their new meeting-place.

BILL COOK

- 10. Tarsus (Acts 22:3).
- 9. Lydia (Acts 16:14).
- 8. Fig (Mathew 21:19).
- 7. James, the brother of John (Acts 12:2)
- 6. Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4).
- 5. Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-14).
- 4. 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7).
- 3. Tubal-cain (Genesis 4:22).
- 2. Land of Goshen (Genesis 47:6).
- 1. Machpelah (Genesis 23:17-20).

ANSWERS

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