

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

The question Jesus asked of his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" is still relevant today. Recently a member of the sect known as Jehovah's Witness (falsely so called) attended our Bible Study at Haddington, and this same question soon came up. Peter's inspired answer to Christ's enquiry was, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus was the Son of God: indeed he was God's only Son; the only begotten of the Father. Most of us can readily understand the humanity of Jesus, and can easily grasp that He was physically very similar to any other human being, but we find it much more difficult to cope with the fact that although Christ was truly man, He was just as truly God. Human wisdom demands that Jesus be either man or God, but not both at the same time. This intellectual limitation of man is illustrated somewhat in the 'trick' question we sometimes get from J.W.'s i.e. "If Christ was God, then who was running the world during the three days and nights Christ spent in the tomb?"

The true identity of Jesus has, of course, been a subject of debate from the very time of Christ's question (above) and certainly amongst the Jews a long time before that. All kinds of religious groups have, down the corridors of time, challenged the deity of Christ, including the Ebionites, Gnostics, Arians, Socinians, Humanitarians and Unitarians, etc. The apostle Paul talks of two types of mystery likely to confront us. The first was "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7) i.e. man claiming to be God (thought to refer to the Papal claim to be the "Holy Father" or "Lord God the Pope"). The second was "the mystery of Godliness" i.e. God manifest in the flesh: (God becoming man). Indeed, Paul described the latter as a "great mystery" and said, "And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16). If God's manifestation in the flesh (God becoming man) was part of a mystery Paul found hard to fully grasp, there is, I suppose, some excuse for us lesser mortals, if we also find it a thing hard to be understood.

THEOS: THE GREEK WORD FOR JEHOVAH

Vine, in his Expository Dictionary of the N.T. not only reminds us that the Greeks were polytheistic, recognising a multiplicity of gods, but goes on to explain that a god or deity was described by the Greek word **Theos**. "Hence", as Vine says, "the word **Theos** was appropriated by the Jews, and retained by the Christians, to denote the one true God." He also informs us that, "in the Septuagint **Theos** translates (with few exceptions) the Hebrew words for God, viz. **Elohim** and **Jehovah**, the former indicating

God's power and pre-eminence; the latter His unoriginated, immutable, eternal and self sustained existence."

The SEPTUAGINT was, of course, a translation of the O.T. into the Greek encouraged by the popularity and generality of the Greek language just prior to N.T. times, and from the fact that, then, many Jews spoke mainly in Greek. "Septuagint" (Latin: *Septuaginta* meaning seventy) was the rather unimaginative name given to the translation because it was said to have been accomplished by 70 scribes in 70 days (72 men actually: 6 from each of the 12 Jewish tribes). It is often referred to by the Roman numerals for 70, viz. LXX. So here we have Vine saying that all the Hebrew words for God in the O.T. (Elohim and Jehovah) are in the LXX, translated by the Greek word *Theos*. A brief look at any Lexicon confirms this, and from a quick count in Young's Concordance it seems that God is rendered *Theos* about 4,100 times in the O.T., and about 1,250 times in the N.T. I mention these figures only to suggest that when *Theos* is encountered in John 1:1 there is no justification for the sudden rendering of it as "a god" by J.W.'s New World Translation (and Emphatic Diaglot) when it is elsewhere consistently rendered so many thousands of times as "God."

DEITY OF CHRIST (O.T.)

Who was Jesus? Was he actually God, or just a 'revelation' of God, or a creation of God, or a reflection of God? The O.T. has many notable prophecies on the subject but we have only space for one or two. Isaiah (7:14) predicted "**Therefore the Lord (Jehovah) Himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Immanuel.**" Some years ago a Jewish Rabbi in a written answer to some of my questions, tried to say that the Hebrew word for "virgin" in this verse denoted "a young married woman!" I replied that the whole point of the verse was that God would give the world a sign: in that a virgin would give birth, and that "a young married woman" giving birth would not be much of a sign: it happens somewhere every minute of the day. This man-child was to be called "Immanuel" and when the fulfilment of the prophecy unfolded in the N.T. we read, "**Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.**" (Matt. 1:22). If we remember that there is only one true and living God: then Jesus was that God: albeit He was with us. God said, "**I am He, before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord and beside Me there is no Saviour.**" (Isa. 43:11).

Another very telling prediction from Isaiah is in 9:6 - "**For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**" Here Jehovah God reveals His firm intention to appear in the world in human form. Isaiah emphasises the obvious importance of this child and describes Him, inter alia, as THE MIGHTY GOD and THE EVERLASTING FATHER. J.W.'s and others who believe that Christ was merely a creature of God, claim that there is no article in the Hebrew here and try to destroy the force of this passage by describing Christ not as "The Mighty God" but as "a mighty god." The authors of "Jehovah of the Watchtower" and others, refute this contention and show that, with or without the article, "The mighty God" is the correct translation, and quote similar passages: viz. "**Jacob shall return . . . unto the Mighty God**" (Isa. 10:21) and ". . . the Great, The Mighty, The Lord of Hosts is His name." (Jer. 32:18). In any event, quite apart from the Hebrew language, plain logic tells us that if Jesus could be described as "a mighty god" it would infer that there are other "Mighty Gods" and we know that there is only one Mighty God. And how many "Everlasting Fathers" are there? Jesus was the Son predicted by Isaiah and was "The Mighty God" and "The Everlasting Father"; in short Jesus was Jehovah God.

DEITY OF CHRIST (N.T.)

Again we must restrict our attention to only one or two of the many passages which stress the deity of Jesus. One of the best attestations must surely be John 1:1 which says, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."** "In the beginning" refers to pre-creation: "the Word (Logos)" refers to Christ; and the verse states that Christ was not only with God, but "was God." Again, because this verse deals a fatal blow to any suggestion that Jesus was merely created by God, the J.W. New World Translation renders the Word not as "God" but as "a god." And again this strategy is based upon the alleged premise that as any article in the Greek is omitted, it is permissible to render *Theos* as "a god". Reputable Greek scholars repudiate this liberty with the Greek, and Vine describes it as "entirely misleading". It is also worth mentioning the inconsistency of the New World Translation in that in the dozens of other similar passages (i.e. where the article is absent in the Greek: Matt. 5:9; 6:24; Luke 1:35,78; 2:40; John 1:6,12,13,18; 3:2,21; 9:16,33, etc.) they translate *Theos* as "God" thus reserving "a God" exclusively for John 1:1, where it is vital to sustain their erroneous portrayal of Christ. John says that Christ was not only "with God", in the beginning, but "was God": co-equal and co-eternal. Vine says, "The Word" was "not part of the Divine nature, but of the whole Deity." Paul said that Christ **"thought it not robbery to be equal with God."** (Phil. 2:6).

In a discourse to the Jews, Jesus once remarked that those who observed His sayings would never die. This incurred the wrath of his hearers, who accused him of having a devil for, they said, Abraham and the prophets had all obeyed God yet were dead. Jesus replied, **"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast thou seen Abraham. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was I AM."** (John 8:57). The Jews thereupon attempted to stone Him for 'blasphemy': i.e. claiming to be the I AM. They knew, of course, that only God was the great I AM. In Ex. 3:14 when Moses, on being sent forth as God's representative, asked God what name he should give when the people asked God's name, we read, **"And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel I AM hath sent me unto you."** Jehovah God claimed to be the I AM (not I was, or I will be) and Jesus claimed to be the I AM before Abraham's time. And there is only one I AM. The great I AM was also "the first and the last." In Isa. 44:6 we read **"Thus sayeth the Lord, the king of Israel, and His Redeemer the Lord of hosts, I AM the first and I AM the last, and beside Me there is no God."** In Rev. 1:8 & 21:6 it is said of Christ **"I AM the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."** Jesus was "the Almighty."

THE GODHEAD

Whereas we often hear the words 'deity' and 'divinity' being used almost interchangeably, we must recognise that there is a difference. Deity refers to God Himself; divinity refers to **attributes or characteristics** of God. *Theos* as already mentioned, is used extensively to denote God; but *Theios* is used of the **attributes** of God. For instance, in 2 Peter 1:3 we read of God's "divine" power, and also that men might be partakers of the "divine" nature. But there is yet another word *Theotes* which is used of God, and is translated "Godhead" in the KJV. The Godhead is not a subject we hear commented on very often, but the word, as I understand it, simply means deity (if that can be called simple). The word "deity" is from the Latin and does not appear in the KJV but occurs in some of the later versions, e.g. RV, RSV, NEB, etc. The word "Godhead" occurs three times in the KJV, but as mentioned, is twice rendered 'deity' or 'divinity' in these more modern versions. Indeed the first two

occasions refer to divinity rather than deity and come from **Theiotes**. The first is in Acts 17:29 where Paul, preaching to the Athenians on Mars Hill says, "**Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think the GODHEAD is like unto gold, or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device.**" Certainly if complex beings like men are God's offspring, it would be strange to imagine that God, or the Godhead, could be carved from metal, wood or stone. The second mention is in Rom. 1:20 where Paul says, "**For the invincible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and GODHEAD, so that they are without excuse.**" Again the attributes of God (His divinity) surround us and we are **without excuse** if we, like the fool, say there is no God. A similar thought is, I suppose, in Ps. 19:1 where we are recommended to look at nature and the heavens to see the handiwork of God.

The third, and best known, instance, is in Col. 2:9 where Paul asserts that ". . . **in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily.**" The Greek this time is **Thotes** which means not divinity but deity. Paul's language here is quite unrestrained and means, quite categorically that in Christ dwells or reposes deity in **all its fulness**. In other words Christ was not divine but deity; not a creation of God but God Himself; and all this "bodily", i.e. while tabernacled in human form. "Bodily" occurs only twice elsewhere: i.e. where the Spirit appeared in "bodily" shape, and where Paul seems not to attach much value to the "bodily" exercise. **Theotes** occurs only this once and Vine defines it as "the divine essence of Godhood, the Personality of God." Alexander Campbell said "'The fulness of the Deity', or Godhead, indicates all divine excellency – all perfections of God. 'The **Fulness**' of that divine nature is contrasted with an **empty** and deceitful philosophy (v.8), and the term **bodily**, superadded, shows that God is in Christ, not as He was in the tabernacle or temple, typically, but substantially, literally and truly."

Vine's use of "**Godhood**" as an expression of "Godhead" might make the term more comprehensible. Certainly manhood, motherhood, nationhood and brotherhood etc., all conjure up the attributes we would expect, and look for, in such states.

CONCLUSION

We are often asked by J.W.'s and others, to justify the 'Trinity' but it should be remembered that the word is not in the Bible but was coined by theologians to represent the three 'personalities' of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This might be a good subject for a future article, But the purpose of this brief article has been to warn anyone, not already aware, of the Arian-type doctrine around us today. Arius and his followers (around 320 AD) in the church in Alexandria, advanced the teaching that Christ was simply a created being, inferior to God the Father in nature and dignity; though the first and noblest of all created beings. This caused great unrest and disunity, and the doctrine has never really died. Here, even in the 20th Century, we have J.W.'s, and others, serving up the same, Christ dishonouring dogma, without much alteration. Space has gone and unfortunately curtailed much additional evidence to Christ's undoubted deity, but there is no doubt that Christ was creator, not creature: and His existence pre-dated all creation. Paul says, (Col. 1:16) "**For by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.**" This, in any language, comprises a fairly comprehensive display of limitless creative power: power which belongs only to God Himself. Yes, Jesus was "The Son of God" but long before that He was "The Word of God", and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Great is the mystery of godliness: (God was manifest in the flesh.).

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

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

CALLED OUT

"Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter 2:9 (R.V.)

MASTER

"Master, speak ! Though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart;
Master, speak ! for oh, Thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart,
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak ! and make me blest indeed."

WE QUOTE - F.C. DAY

"When I realise it was my sin helped to crown him with thorns, and to bring about His death on Calvary, I am brought very low in repentance. Jesus assured those who were following Him and listening to His teaching, **'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'** (Luke 13:3 & 5). I hear the good news. I believe it, because its testimony is incontrovertible, I repent. I cannot keep it to myself, so I confess before witnesses my belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and my Saviour: for, says Paul (Romans 10:10) **'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'** Jesus Himself says: **'Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.'** (Matthew 10:32,33). Before He returned to glory, Jesus gathered His ambassadors about Him and said: **'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'** Mark gives the great commission as: **'Go ye, therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.'** (Mark 16:15,16)."

WE QUOTE - J. GRINSTEAD

"THE ONE DIVINELY ORDAINED PLAN OF SALVATION FOR THIS DISPENSATION. So simple, so safe, and yet so little understood that when set forth in the very words of Christ and His Apostles, it sounds as strange to so many of our religious friends as did the words "Jesus and the Resurrection" to the gossipers of Athens.

Faith in the living Christ - repentance towards God and baptism into the death of Jesus for the remission of sins - is the one plan which it is our duty and privilege to proclaim, expound and defend. And when charged with heresy, we are quite content to say with Paul, **"After the way that THEY call heresy, so worship we the God of our Father."**

In setting forth this plan of salvation; after having proclaimed the great truth concerning sacrifice for sin, resurrection from the dead, and the glorification of Jesus of Nazareth, we know that we are putting our hearers a plan of salvation which they can understand".

WE QUOTE - ALEXANDER MACLAREN

"The name Christian suggest that the clear impression made by our character, as well as by our words, should be that we belong to Jesus Christ. He should manifestly

be the centre and the guide, the impulse and the pattern, the strength and reward, of our lives. We are Christians. That should be plain for all to see, whether we speak or be silent.

In our service for God, what we do depends largely upon what we are. What we are depends upon what we receive. What we receive depends on the depth and constancy of our communion with God."

NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT

"The hardest, the severest, the last lesson which man has to learn upon this earth, is submission to the will of God. It is the hardest lesson, because to our blinded eyesight it often seems a cruel will. It is a severe lesson, because it can only be taught by the blighting of much that has been most dear. It is the last lesson, because when a man has learned that, he is fit to be transplanted from a world of wilfulness, to a world in which ones Will alone is loved, and only one is done. All that saintly experience ever had to teach, resolves itself into this, the lesson how to say affectionally '**Not as I will, But as Thou wilt.**'"

F.W. ROBERTSON

EXHIBIT THE MIND OF CHRIST

"True manhood does not consist in the development of a fine physique, or of a brilliant mentality, or in the pursuit of heroic ambitions. It lies in the nobleness of soul at peace with God, seeking in all things to please Him, and to possess and exhibit the mind of Christ. . . .

On the Mount of Transfiguration the apostle lifted up their eyes and saw no man but Jesus only. All our efforts to extend the kingdom of God will fail except as we exalt the matchless character and spotless life of Jesus, and attract men to him. The perfect life must begin in the Son of God. It can have no other origin.

'**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.**' Perfection is a relative term. 'A thing is perfect when it precisely and fully meets what is reasonably required and expected of it'.

The machine is perfect which, to the extent of its power, does the work for which it was constructed. In like manner the Christian attains unto perfection when his life measures up to the standard which is in Christ Jesus – when he performs all that is reasonably required and expected of him."

H.G. HARWARD.

Selected by LEONARD MORGAN.

GOD'S WILL: AND MAN'S DESIRE

From the beginning God has made known His will to man and man has decided he knows better than God.

There is today a great persuasion to investigate and decide for oneself instead of listening to experienced teachers. Educationalists teach this way now; God does not teach in this way and therein lies the difference. God gives perfect instruction and we should listen and act accordingly.

The will of God and the desires of men are clearly seen to disagree when we consider the statistics of divorce and re-marriage. What has God decreed in this matter?

Commentators as far back as Shammah and Hillel have disagreed on this by putting their own interpretations on what they read. I believe every action of a Christian must be motivated by the question "What is the will of God here?", strengthened by a desire to do that will.

Let us look for God's will on this matter and not for "legal loopholes" to satisfy the desires of men. Gen. 2:7, tells of the making of man and vv.18-25 of the making of woman and v.24, the first instruction on how they were to behave. Man did not

listen and obey and in due course the prophet Malachi warns God's people that they have dishonoured God by neglect, apostasy and divorce (note divorce is grouped with two other very serious subjects) and in Malachi 2:16, he reveals that **"God hates putting away."** I wonder if there ever was a time when putting away and marrying again was as common as it is today, and this without counting the number who are shackled up. Adultery has become so common as to be socially acceptable. What is the will of God in this? (The Lord hates putting away).

Coming to the disagreements within the Church of Christ on divorce and remarriage, men usually turn to Matthew 5, or Matthew 19, take a few words out of context and declare all their troubles over. Let us look at Jesus' teaching. In Matthew 19, Jesus reiterates God's instructions then in v.6, he tells us: **"What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."** Note the question in v.3, is described as a tempting question. What is the will of God here? From here Jesus leaves them to decide whether Moses had indeed given them liberty to put asunder what God hath joined together or had they tried to make the law of Moses do something it could not do consistently with the law of God. He then gives the reason: because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed under pressure the putting away of your wives; he goes on to say that from the beginning it was not so, that is to say, Moses gave no positive command in the case; he could not make a law in direct opposition to the law of God. After this Jesus explains the sequence of events when people divorce. They cause adultery by marrying another (unless fornication is already there then it is not the divorce that causes the adultery, the adultery being fait accompli). So we see in the first place, divorce is not in God's plan for man and wife. As with Moses, Jesus does not give a positive command in the case; he leaves us to ponder the question, "What is the will of God here?" Where can we look for the answer? The apostle Paul reminds what has been said: **"And unto the married I command, Yet not I but the Lord. Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife."** 1 Cor.7:10,11. The temptation is for man to so look at words to find "legal loopholes" so called to satisfy his desires. What do we know that will help us to do the will of God?

We know that:

- a) God hates putting away Mal. 2:16.
- b) A man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife Matt. 19:5.
- c) What God hath joined together let not man put asunder. Matt 19:6.
- d) A woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive. Rom. 7:2,3.

From this information we should be able to get a satisfactory idea of the will of God.

Is it not significant too that Paul finds it necessary to specify in 1 Cor. 7:39, that widows may remarry, if all are free to marry?

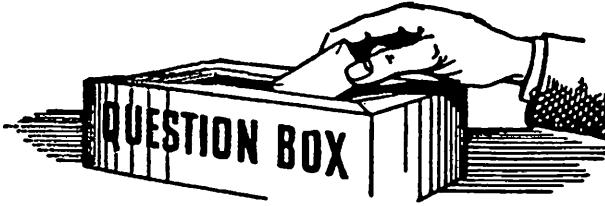
Another hurdle arises for those who would divorce. How does one set about the procedure for getting a divorce? See a solicitor and accept the ruling of the non-Christian court regarding the property, children, etc. Yet 1 Cor. 6:1-8, forbids Christians to go to law before the unjust. As James says, **"My brethren, these things ought not so to be."** What is the will of God here?

Mark chapter 6, and John the Baptist see fit to challenge Herod Antipas about his association with Herodias his half-brother Philip's wife who was living with him; so we too should speak out when the occasion demands it, nevertheless we must do this in love, feeling sad that it would appear that our brethren are growing up lacking sound teaching. Divorce and remarriage have grown by leaps and bounds in recent years and have now leaped into the Church.

God hates putting away, and it is man's desire against the will of God that brings about divorce. If only we would always ask ourselves, what is the will of God here?,

and have a burning desire to do it we would surely avoid causing God a great deal of grief and ourselves an even greater amount of trouble.

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Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“During an Election, is it right for a Christian to vote for a candidate who is a self-confessed atheist?”

This question has arisen, I suppose, because of statements made during the recent General Election in April of this year. As far as I know, it is not obligatory for a parliamentary candidate to declare his religious beliefs or inclinations, but it does seem strange to me that if a Member of Parliament is a representative of the Monarch and the Monarch is the Defender of the Faith, and that faith pre-supposes God as its Head, then surely an M.P. should at least make some pretensions about belief in God. However, my reasoning may be faulty, and in any case what I have said may not affect the import of the question. We shall need to attack this question on one or two fronts, see where it leads, and then draw our conclusions.

SCRIPTURAL GUIDANCE

We needn't go into the question as to whether voting is endorsed in the Scriptures; Bro. James dealt with that in his editorial in the April issue. It is quite evident from the Roman letter that good government is desired by God, and that Christians should obey such government; Paul says, **“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God”** (Rom. 13:1, but read up to v.7). The reader will recall that when Jesus was up before Pilate, and Pilate told Jesus that he had power to crucify him or release him, Jesus answered, **“Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except that it were given thee from above”** (John 19:10,11). These statements indicate to us that the real power is **‘from above’** i.e., from God. Governments and leaders of nations seem to forget that their power is a **delegated** power from God for the purpose of doing good concerning His Creation, and of punishing evil-doers. Consequently Christians should always discern when **earthly** laws (by governments, etc.) conflict with God's law (as revealed in His word, the Bible), and being **‘new creatures’** in Christ Jesus should follow, as far as humanly possible, God's law by which they are governed from above. Similarly, of course, they are bound to follow Paul's directive, **“Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour”** (Rom 13:7). You will recall that the scribes and chief priests tried to trap Jesus, **“Is it lawful for us to give tribute (Gk. PHOROS) unto Caesar or no?”** Tribute money was that paid by a subject nation. On the other hand, custom (Gk. TELOS) was tax for support of local government (See Matt. 17:24-27). In both cases the answers of Jesus indicated that Christians should comply and **pay their dues** when required to do so by earthly authority. Christians today, of course, should also be law abiding citizens and **pay their taxes**, etc., onerous though these may be at times.

We must realise that the import of this teaching is that earthly powers are ordained of God to exercise authority **for the good** of His Creation. Nowhere is it stated or

implied that God condones evil acts perpetrated by such powers or governments. It is very likely that Paul's teaching was given when Nero was ruling in Rome, and history records what sort of man he was. Earthly rulers are given **delegated authority** by God to rule; that means that they are **accountable** to God for **their** stewardship, just as we all are for ours, no matter what sphere of operation we are engaged in. So what about the Christian's responsibility in the electing of governments of the day?

EXERCISING THE FRANCHISE

I have known prominent teachers in the Church who have taught that Christians **should not** vote. They have taken the view that they are 'pilgrims' who are simply 'passing through' this world to the land of promise and consequently they are 'not of this world', and therefore have no useful purpose to serve in helping to elect earthly governments. There may be those today who would uphold that view but I must say that I am not one of such. I say this because of what I consider to be important reasons.

The right of citizens in this country to have a say in who shall govern them is a right which has been dearly bought and which, in my opinion, too many people neglect. I believe it is wrong for Christians to think that they cannot be influenced by other people, and that they in turn **cannot** and **ought not** to exert **their** influence on others. Even though we may consider ourselves to be pilgrims heading for a **better** land, that is no reason for not trying to make this land through which we pass a better land because we have journeyed through it. The right to choose leaders who will legislate for conditions which will make **our** lives more influential toward others must not be neglected.

The right to choose is embodied in the Bible, and I believe it is also important in the secular society. It is a safeguard against such anti-social systems as totalitarianism and despotism. Christians rightly live under the autocratic rule of God, but we realise that it is an autocracy which is benign; this is not always so in secular societies. We in this country today do not realise what it is like to live under tyrannical and despotic regimes, where freedom of expression is forcibly denied and the promotion of Christianity and other religions is forbidden. Our own intelligence and observations should at least guide us into choosing those who support and would enhance our democratic way of life; surely it is better to live in a society where we have freedom to express the Gospel without hindrance or persecution. We should not leave it to **others** to bring about the conditions which we would pray for. I am sure I am not being unchristian when I say I would rather live and work **without** persecution than with it. If persecution **does** come, then we are taught to endure, but I believe we would be foolish to **encourage** it. Sensible choice is possible, but what sort of people should we choose?

CHRISTIAN OR ATHEIST

Some professing Christians have gone into government, both national and local, with the express intention of bringing Christian values to bear for the benefit of either nation or community of which they may be part. The idea may be good, but I believe the ultimate result is doomed to failure. Why do I say this? Well, because government, whether national or local, does not **appear** to operate along strictly Christian or ethical lines on many occasions. There are less-than-open arrangements, deals, pacts, intrigues, with other bodies which the Christian – seeking to exercise the purity of the Christian ethic – would find it impossible to live with (remember how the **authorities** of the day intrigued against Jesus and His Apostles). Furthermore, when a person reaches the higher echelons of government, pressures are brought to bear which to the Christian must inevitably become **unbearable**. They are wooed, feted, wined-and-dined, so making fidelity to Christian principles extremely difficult, if not impossible. In addition to that, the media, together with scandal-columnists, would be ready to pounce upon the slightest misdemeanour. The only **perfect** man was crucified on a

cross at Calvary; I fear the Christian entering the public arena in the area of government would suffer a similar fate, metaphorically speaking.

But should a Christian vote for an atheist, the questioner asks? I think the question pre-supposes that an atheist must of necessity be a poor administrator and a down-right rogue. I believe this not to be the case, because I know some people who are self-confessed atheists but whose moral code of conduct is impeccable. Such people, of course, we would classify as sinners, but again most people who have not obeyed the Gospel as we understand it are still able to differentiate between right and wrong; to show compassion and understanding and, in general, to act in a perfectly acceptable way socially and morally. The behaviour and conduct of people should be self-regulatory, i.e. it should be monitored from two sources; external and internal by self-evaluation; what other people think about us and what we think about ourselves. When a person, atheist or otherwise, cares little for what other people think about him, then that person is not worthy of anyone's trust, and I certainly would not select him in any voting situation. If a candidate professes Christianity, of whatever colour, then my Christian conditioning would make me want to vote for such a person. If, however, all the candidates open to my selection professed no religious convictions (or anti-christian convictions) but seemed otherwise to be good, law-abiding, morally sound, and compassionate, I see no reason, if I want to vote, why I should not vote for one of them (even though such an one might be an atheist).

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

THE DENOMINATIONS

3. - THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(PART 1)

In England the Reformation proceeded much less violently than on the Continent. In the Middle Ages the English Church, though under papal jurisdiction, had never been a very obedient child of the Papacy. She had for centuries expressed a certain independence, witnessed to in her variation of customs and the variety of liturgies, as well as such statutes as *mortmain* and *præmunire*. It did not come as a violent shock, therefore, when Henry VIII, through his scandalous life, was forced to renounce papal allegiance. This was the first break, but it did not mean that England had turned from Catholicism to Protestantism. There were however, reform movements springing from the works of Wycliffe, which had been at work for over two centuries in parts of the country, chiefly the south-east. And further Henry himself ordered in 1538 that the Bible in English be placed in every Parish Church, and men like Cranmer were definitely set for some measure of reform. The spoilation of the monasteries, carried out, not so much as a reform movement as for greed, had also broken the strength of the Roman hold.

The Way of Compromise

With the advent of Edward VI, the influence of the Continental Reformation began to be felt, and in 1549 the first reformed Prayer Book was issued. But this was by no means Protestant enough for the zealots, and in 1552 a revision was issued. This was the most Protestant expression the Church of England ever came to, and in 1559 it was revised in a more Catholic direction. It is this book, issued in the reign of Elizabeth, which was the basis of the final revision in 1662. With all its revisions the mass of the book owes its excellence to the genius of Cranmer's book of 1549. There can be little doubt that Elizabeth aimed at compromise in her 1559 book. She was faced with a peculiarly difficult task. She had, first of all, a party of pro-Roman

Churchmen who wanted to restore Papal Supremacy, but she also had a number of clergy and laity who desired the old religion, though without the Papal Supremacy. Then she had a strong party of middle-of-the-road men who wanted some measure of reform, as well as the Puritans, who wanted the Church of England modelled on that of Geneva. With these difficulties she set herself to mediate between extremes. The thirty-nine Articles are definitely Protestant in their main emphasis, though nothing like so Calvinistic as the Westminster Confession which was produced by the Puritan party in England two generations later. The liturgy, ordinal and rubrics are definitely Catholic. Thus the Church of England has always comprised within herself a High Church party (Now called Anglo-Catholic) and a Protestant party, and both have claimed with some justification that they were being loyal to the Prayer Book. Since that time there has developed a Broad Church party, now expressing its life in the Modern Churchmen's Union. These are the three main groups in the Church of England, and they are held together by the episcopal system and the Prayer Book. It is, I think, a mistake to think that what holds them together is the establishment; for in the same Church in U.S.A., South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, and in Canada, where there is no establishment, the same parties manifest themselves.

Shades of Difference

Within these parties there are again various emphases. The High Church party contains a small minority, but very vociferous, who are pro-Roman and work for the reunion of the Church of England with Rome, delighting to copy modern Roman rites and ceremonies. Then there is a group who cling to pre-Reformation English usage, and another group of Liberal Catholics. The Evangelicals are divided into Liberal Evangelical and extreme Protestants, some of them as extreme as the Plymouth Brethren. Among the parties, the Modern Churchmen and the Evangelicals are more attached to establishment. Some Anglo-Catholics are definite agitators for disestablishment. In this they are suspect, by their Evangelical brethren, of desiring to have more freedom to develop Catholic practices. This may be true of some, but in the main they are animated by the clear distinction which they draw between the *world* and the *Church*. In more recent times there has grown up an understanding between Liberal Evangelicals and Liberal Catholics which bids fair to produce good results.

The Provinces

The Church of England is organised in some eighteen Provinces, each of whom is in communion with the others, but under no control from Canterbury. In some of these the Prayer Book of 1662 is in use, but in others it is not, as for example in Ireland, Scotland, U.S.A., Canada, parts of India, and South Africa. The Scottish Episcopal Church has its own Prayer Book, originating in the seventeenth century and since revised. The 1662 English book is allowed as an alternative. This Scottish Prayer Book has considerably influenced those of U.S.A. and South Africa. It is nearer in spirit to the 1549 Prayer Book and much more in keeping with High Church tradition. The Church of England is represented in most European capitals and some other towns, especially ports, and these communities are under the supervision of the Bishop of Fulham. These several communions, spread over the world, are loosely joined in the Lambeth Conference of Bishops which meets every ten years, but which has no jurisdiction in any of the communions. It has, however, quite naturally, a large measure of moral authority.

Episcopacy

The English Church everywhere is Episcopal and claims to have the Episcopal Succession, a claim which Rome does not allow. The war is waged over the consecration of the Archbishop Parker in the reign of Elizabeth, and it can be regarded as settled

against the Roman objection. But Anglicans differ amongst themselves as to whether Apostolic Succession is merely a matter of order (that is, orderliness), or a matter of Orders (that is, as to whether it is essential to valid ordination). Most Evangelicals and Modernists are content with saying that Episcopal Succession and Episcopacy have value for the Church. Most Anglo-Catholics claim that they are of the *essence* of the Church, making the same claim about them that Roman Catholics make. This is the High Clerical view against the High Church view of the Church. This means that the Anglican Church has three orders of Ministers – Bishops, Priests (Presbyters), and Deacons. But the Diaconate, as in the Roman Church, is not permanent. It is simply a step to the Priesthood. Bishops and Priests only may celebrate Holy Communion and pronounce Absolution, but both lay baptism and lay preaching (with the Bishop's licence) are allowed, and the whole of Matins or Evensong may be taken by a layman, except the Absolution. Many Evangelicals and Modernists regard these restrictions as a matter of order and decency only, but most Anglo-Catholics regard them as a matter of validity.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

July 5	Jer. 11:1-17	Rom. 2:17-29
July 12	Psalms 53:	Rom. 3:1-18
July 19	Psalms 106:1-19	Rom. 3:19-31
July 26	Gen. 15:	Rom. 4:

THE JEW

The word "Jew" comes from a Hebrew word which means "praise" and the true Jew is the man whose life is praiseworthy by God's standard, whose heart is pure in God's sight, whose circumcision is "the inward circumcision of the heart," as F.F. Bruce has once written, "If I were asked to give one reason why I believe the Bible to be true then I would answer 'The Jew', when all the nations of the world had chosen for themselves gods, the God of heaven chose for Himself a nation through which to work out His plans and purposes. Sadly, we have to record that the Jewish nation often let the Almighty down and failed to live up to their responsibilities."

By Jesus' day Jews were involved in a double hatred – the world hated them and they hated the world. As one writer has put it: "No nation ever hated other nations as the Jews did. It is true that some few Jews held that the Jews were meant to be a light to the Gentiles to

lead them to God, but for the most part the Jews were convinced that the fact that they were the chosen nation involved what to them were the equal and the opposite fact that all other nations were rejected nations. At their worst they could say: 'The Gentiles were created by God to be fuel for the fires of hell. The best of serpents crush: the best of the Gentiles kill.' It was even forbidden to give a Gentile mother help in her hour of direst need, because to do so would only have been another Gentile into the World".

Christianity was cradled in such a world. How could it overcome the problem of being in the eyes of the world a Jewish thing and yet having a universal message? William Barclay has written: "Clearly one thing was necessary – a man who could somehow form a bridge between the Jewish and the Greek worlds. Obviously such a man would be hard to find; such a man would be unique; and yet, in the providence of God, the hour produced the man – and that man was Paul."

CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision consists of cutting off part of the foreskin of the male organ of procreation. God ordained circumcision at the time of Abraham. He said to him: "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your

seed after you; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money off any stranger, which is not of your seed . . . And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised that soul shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (Genesis 17:10-14). Alexander Campbell wrote: "This covenant of the flesh marked out and defined the natural descendants of Abraham and gave to the world a full proof of the faithfulness of God, putting it in power of everyone to ascertain how God keeps His covenants of promise with all people. This gave to the descendants of Abraham the title of 'The Circumcision' and beautifully represented the separation of God's people from the children of this world."

Circumcision of the flesh is not found in the Christian system. Mark you, it was a "hot" subject in the early days of the Church and could have been the cause of much division. I am of the opinion that if it were not for the apostle Paul then there could well have developed within God's community a circumcision party and a non-circumcision party. He wrote: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor un-circumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6, NIV).

NONE RIGHTEOUS

Paul quoted from various O.T. passages to show the universality of sin. "There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one" (Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3 NIV). "Their throats are open graves; their ton-

gues practise deceit" (Psalm 5:9). "The poison of vipers is on their lips" (Psalm 140:3). "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness" (Psalm 10:7). "Their feet are swift to shed blood: ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know" (Isaiah 59:7,8) "There is no fear of God in their eyes" (Psalm 36:1).

Paul went onto reveal that the law was given so that men and women would become conscious of sin. Moses E. Laird wrote: "Our very primary knowledge of sin is from law. From law then we learn, theoretically, what sin is, or what acts are sins. By actual personal experience we all know that we have committed these acts, and, therefore, that we are all sinners. Again we have law defining sin. With this law we compare the acts of others and so learn that they are sinners. Thus, from law we learn what sin is; and by comparison, that both we and all others are sinners. Now, law can justify him only who perfectly keeps it, and never breaks it. If law be broken it must condemn. But we have all broken it, broken it without exception, certainly broken it. Truly, therefore, by works of law no one can be justified."

ABRAHAM

Faith is an abstract idea and is very difficult to grasp. Because of that, Paul gave an example of faith embodied in a person. That person was Abraham – the father of the faithful.

It is important to go back and read again the events in the life of Abraham (Genesis 12-25). The Hebrew writer said of him: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out in to a place which he should receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whether he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise; for he looked for a city which

has foundations, whose builder and maker is God . . . By faith Abraham when he was tried offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Hebrews 11:8-10 & 17-19). Abraham holds a unique position in the history of God’s people and is undoubtedly “one of the greats.”

Abraham was considered righteous, not through law, but through faith. A good definition of faith is given in Romans chapter 4, verses 20 to 21: “Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (NIV). (This portion should be compared with Hebrews 11:1, which gives a description of faith, not a definition).

Today, we must have faith in Jesus to be saved. The gospel of Christ consists of seven great facts – the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the burial of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus, the coronation of Jesus and the glorification of Jesus. To emphasise these facts is the task of the Church.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

A TRIBUTE TO Bro. TOM KEMP

“May the brightness of Thy Glory
So shine forth that men may see
Not myself, but Jesus only,
Shining forth to them from me.

Jesus, source of Light Divine,
Shine within this heart of mine.

Tom Kemp 15:11:91

1 Samuel 18:1 “And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.”

The above expresses the relationship the writer had with a beloved brother in the Lord, Tom Kemp.

The passing from this life on Saturday, 18th April, came as a surprise I suppose to the family, and to the brethren of the Church meeting in Hindley. The writer had visited him the day before.

For well over fifty years he has served the church here. Tom was appointed a Deacon of the Church on 7th October, 1945. In 1946, he made known his desire to give himself to do evangelistic service, and the Elders and Deacons discussed the matter, and recommended the Church to engage him for this work.

He went to Ulverston for three months training under Bro. Walter Crosthwaite, May–June–July, in 1946.

Churches at Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, Bristol, Tunbridge Wells, Newtongrange and Ince, had his services, then in 1950 he decided to withdraw from the full-time work of Evangelism.

What shall I say of his work as an Elder of this Church at Hindley. I cannot speak too highly of his devoted service over the years, as a Teacher, and Preacher. Our young brethren can testify to the help he has given them, and I also know that some friends who attended our meetings, enjoyed his teaching and preaching. His loyalty to the ‘Old Paths’, is beyond question.

He loved to write to the Scripture Standard, themes that bring happy memories – Open Windows – Resources Within – The Tie That Binds – Sought – Bought – Brought – We Would See Jesus – Jesus Receiveth Sinners – Labourers In The Vineyards – and others.

We have also over thirty tapes of his messages, and the brethren will be pleased to know that he wrote over thirty Hymns.

What shall I say regarding the sufferings he endured during the last few months? He suffered much. Intense, We ask why? One day he said to me, that he had said: "When are you going to stop saying "NO". That does not mean that he had not a deep and abiding faith. The brethren here have marvelled how he still kept his faith.

The funeral service was held on the 22nd April, in our meeting house, and Bro, John Morgan, took the service, and spoke well of the work Tom had done for the Church, John also spoke on the Lord's Day following, in the evening.

We pray that the family will be sustained by the knowledge that he loved them, and that the example of his life will be a source for them to follow.

LEONARD MORGAN.

THE CHURCH IN KIRKCALDY

The church in Kirkcaldy was founded over 200 years ago, however there are practically no records of the church before 1965 in the possession of the church.

From the information which we possess, we know that the church in Kirkcaldy is different from most of the other Churches of Christ in Great Britain in that it evolved from the Restoration Movement in Scotland rather than being established as part of the missionary work of the Church of Christ. It may have been known, at different times, as the Glasties, the Baptist Society of Kirkcaldy; Scotch Baptist Church as well as the Church of Christ.

During the 200 years of its existence that church has met in three different places 'a building in the back of the west side of Kirk Wynd'; Rose Street Chapel and presently in Hayfield Road.

According to our information elders were first appointed on 15th November, 1798. Before the 200th anniversary of that date some of the brethren would

like to compile a short history of the church in Kirkcaldy. Among other things we would like to discover are:—

1. The dates, events, etc., that were the steps to our present position as a Church of Christ.
2. What influence the church had in the establishment of the dozen or so churches that were subsequently founded in the surrounding area, including a second church in Kirkcaldy, and
3. Any special or notable events.

We would appreciate the help of any one who can provide us with information in the form of photographs, documents, books or photocopies of appropriate parts of books or documents. We know that there is information in two books which can help us – 'The Origin and Progress of the Scotch Baptist Churches from Their Rise in 1765 to 1834' published in 1844, author unknown, and 'The History of the British Church of Christ' by Dr. A. Watters.

Please send any information which you feel may be of help to us to:—

Robert Hughes,
115 Chapelhill,
KIRKCALDY.
Fife. KY2 6PZ.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

KIRKCALDY: Our Social was held on 11th April: the speaker being Bro. John Mooney from Livingston. A great day was had by all with the largest attendance for several years (just over 200). My thanks to all those who let us know about numbers: this was, once again a great help. Thanks also to our speaker and the several brethren who sang or did a recitation. Each and every one was appreciated and enjoyed.

Ruth Moyes (Sec.)

BEECH HALL, WIGAN: May I on behalf of the Christians meeting at Beech Hall say how much we appreciated the tribute made to the late Bro. John Partington by Bro. T. Woodhouse. We can only repeat many of those sentiments regarding Bro. John. He was always ready and willing to serve His Lord and Master whenever invited. He freely gave of his time and energy to help us at Beech Hall and he is truly missed in more ways than we realise. He has left many dear memories with us and with other churches he served in this district. We thank God for his life, and his work for the Lord.

Sis. Mrs. Mabel Bruton.

NO ROOM FOR ERROR HERE

When a church or group of people become squeamish about teaching the truth on controversial issues, "because they aren't an issue here," we know with certainty the dragon's teeth seeds of future trouble are being sown. The best way under heaven to prevent error "being taught here" is to teach the truth so firmly and fully in advance that the errorist never has a chance to gain acceptance with false doctrine.

via The Gospel Guardian

GHANA APPEAL

There have been a number of letters sent to me in the past month from Ghana. The needs are greater than the present funds available. In May I sent £1000 to Ghana for Gospel work and Medical Aid. There is only £88.85 now left in the Bank Account. I realise that the Appeal has been very well supported (over £30,000 has now been sent to Ghana) but once again there are three areas of present need. There is a requirement for more Bible correspondence courses, for Medical aid and some church buildings have come to a standstill through lack of money for cement. If any one would like to assist in any of these areas I am sure our Brethren in Ghana would be most grateful. Cheques should be made out to:- Graeme Pearson, (Ghana Appeal) and sent to:- 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. Tel (0383) 728624.

EVALUATION

Poverty asked, "Will it cost too much?"
 Mammon asked, "Will it pay?"
 And Scholarship, "Is the measure wise,
 And are you sure of the way?"
 Statesmanship, "Can we find the time
 To finish before the night?"
 But when the Seeker had heard them all
 He only asked "Is it right?"

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