

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

Vol. 64 No. 8

AUGUST, 1997

BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE?

According to the newspapers this morning the Primus of the Episcopal Church Of Scotland, the "Most Reverend" Richard Holloway, has been hitting the headlines again. Readers may recall that, in August 1993, he described the Bible as "a big problem; difficult to figure out; a book which kept women in chains; and which contains as much dross as gold, and as much out-of-date nonsense as enduring wisdom." Also, in 1995, speaking at Strathclyde University, Glasgow, he is reported to have described the Bible as "a male-centred patriarchal creature out of its time" and that because it was outdated we would have "to engage in debates about the best moral systems; to identify where changes could be made, where things could be abandoned and where we should overturn old ways." Such is the Bishop's opinion of God's word. Earlier that year the Bishop had again raised eyebrows in his church, in seeming to condone adultery, by saying that "since God had given us our promiscuous genes it would be wrong for the Church to condemn people who had followed their instincts."

Bishop Holloway, head of a Church 57,000 strong, has again hit the headlines on account of his appeal to the Anglican Church to consider ordaining clergy who are homosexual, and to recognise gay marriages. He accuses his church of behaving "like the head prefect of an authoritarian school rather than the poet of God's love". He draws a parallel between the recognition of homosexuals and the ordination of women priests, and says that, whereas at one time, "women priests were impossible and even anti-biblical, now we have got them." Similarly, and ultimately, the Bishop says that recognition of homosexuality will come in the Church and so "the church should bow to the inevitable". He also maintains that "the Church should seek forgiveness from the homosexual community for its authoritarian attitude", and that just "as persecuted homosexuals are drawn to Jesus there can be little doubt that He would be drawn to them." The Bishop is publishing a book entitled "*Dancing On The Edge*" in September.

A POPULAR PRACTICE

I only refer to these outbursts of the Bishop to inform anyone, who may still be naive enough not to know how things are shaping up *in the religious world*, on the question of homosexuality.

Certainly *in the secular world* homosexuality is making great strides. Just a few weeks ago, a new Labour M.P., Ben Bradshaw, obtained a pass which will give his homosexual partner access to the House Of Commons and many of its privileges. The new Heritage Secretary is committed to removing Clause 28 so that children once again can be indoctrinated with gay propaganda. Our new Home Secretary has promised a

free vote on reducing the age of consent to 16 years: (some now want it reduced to 10 years). Last week our new government signed up to the gay amendment of the European Treaty. Over the past few weeks we have been reading of lesbians seeking artificial insemination from gay men; and gay man seeking surrogate mothers (as if children were a commodity); and recently a High Court Judge overruled the claim of a child's natural mother so that the child could be adopted by a woman living with a lesbian partner. In the secular world this is how things are rapidly moving: and, lamentably, the religious world is being urged (by certain Bishops and others) not to resist the trend but to join it.

BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE?

The Bishop uses the analogy that whereas his Church at one time opposed women priests; they now accept them; and *with the passage of time*, the Church would similarly accept homosexuality. In this he is probably right. It's frightening to think that TIME has this capacity to transform, merely by its passage, things which were wrong and evil, into things which are right and good. Give a man something which is hard to accept (even impossible to accept) and leave it with him for a year or two: eventually he will accept it. This has been the case in recent years, with divorce, abortion, and homosexuality, and will, in the future be the case with euthanasia, incest and many other abhorrent practices. The truth is, of course, that the passage of a million years will never make homosexuality anything other than what it has always been: a heinous abomination. Thus beware the passage of time. Even in the Churches of Christ, time has made some things acceptable which previously would not have been.

The Bishop also feels that his Church should, "bow to the inevitable," and accept a homosexual clergy. This seems a strange attitude from men pledged to fight evil and preach only that which is God's truth. Paul's call to Christians was **"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."** Thus Paul could not agree with the Bishop.

Again, the Bishop says that ". . . it is true that Jesus would be drawn to homosexuals", and this is true. Jesus is drawn to all sinners: and indeed came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus would be happy to accept homosexuals, but only *after* they had repented and given up the practice. Jesus certainly never said what the Bishop says, "Let's accept homosexuality and bow to the inevitable".

AN EVEN MORE PROGRESSIVE BISHOP

The Bishop has his dissenters but also his supporters and Bishop Michael Hare-Duke, (of the same Church), has been causing a sensation by admitting that he has gone a bit further than Bishop Holloway, and has *already* been ordaining homosexuals into the ministry. He said, "We have been ordaining them for years. A person's sexuality is not the issue, it is their personality that counts. I have ordained homosexuals as did the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and other Bishops." Bishop Hare-Duke describes his critics as "fascists" who "fear change and resist it by trying to find particular texts from the Bible." He also thinks that "the need to consider other people's sexuality implies insecurity about one's own sexuality" and that "we now have an anxiety about a new label - the gay label".

What can we make of such views.? Surely the Bishop knows that the "gay label" is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a *new* label. It is an extremely *old* label and goes back to the dawn of time, and to the Genesis. Neither is it a "gay label"; it is a "sodomy" label, although those clergymen studiously avoid using the term. The Bishop, apart from referring to his critics as "fascists" seems surprised that such critics "would

try to find particular texts from the Bible". Where else but in the Bible would we expect to find guidance on *any question*, let alone the matter of homosexuality? And if the Bishop thinks that a controversy over homosexuality exists should not he, too, be looking for particular texts in the Bible? Is he not highly paid for presiding over *Biblical matters*? Indeed, if the Bishop was to consult his Bible on the subject he would surely discover that such texts are not difficult to find: indeed a few of them will be quoted in the next sub-heading.

On the point expressed by the Bishop that "it's not a person's sexuality that counts but their personality" it's difficult to see how the latter is not affected by the former, and it's not a view that a rapist's victim would share. Nor was it a view that God seemed to share when He poured fire and brimstone down upon all those sodomite cities. Jesus too, seemed to think that a person's sexuality mattered when He told the woman to "Go and sin no more" and when He said that even to look, with lust, upon a woman was equal to the deed.

"PARTICULAR TEXTS" IN THE O.T.

Bishop Hare-Duke seems rather peeved that his critics would "try to find particular texts in the Bible", but surely this is the most obvious thing to do. **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."** (Is. 8:20) And what does God's testimony say on the subject?

The KJV, having been printed in 1611, does not employ the word homosexuality but modern versions do. The KJV does, however, talk of men **"who are abusers of themselves with mankind"** (1 Cor. 6:9) and **"them that defile themselves with mankind"** (1 Tim. 1:10) and so, far from regarding homosexuality as natural and healthy, regards it as abuse and defilement. The RSV uses the term **"sexual pervert"** (1 Cor. 6:9) and **"sodomites"** (1 Tim. 1:10).

Away back in the Book of Leviticus God charged that a man **"shall not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is an abomination. Neither shall thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith."** (18:22,23). This verse as I say, puts homosexuality on a par with bestiality. Again (in 20:18) God repeats the charge and adds the penalty, **"If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with womankind, both of them hath committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them."** Thus, with God, homosexuality is not natural and healthy, gay or trendy, but vile, obscene, abominable and worthy of death. There were no mitigating circumstances and those found together were put to death.

Notwithstanding God's unequivocal prohibition of the practice, the children of Israel had a long and varied association with sodomy. In 1 Kings 14:24 mention is made of the fact that in Rehoboam's reign, in Judah, **"The people provoked God above all that their fathers had done. For they built them high places and images and groves on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."** These "Sodomites in the land" were tolerated until the 20th year of Jeroboam's reign, when Asa became king. **"And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and did as his father, David. And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and he removed all the idols that his father had made."** (1 Kings 15:9-12). And so King Asa got rid of all the homosexuals but they soon crept back and it was left to Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, to get rid of **"the remnant of the Sodomites which remained in the days of his father Asa: and he took them out of the land"**. (1 King 22:46). Notwithstanding these thorough purges it is remarkable to read that when King Josiah came to the throne of Judah the

people had reverted to full-scale idolatry. Josiah spent his entire reign in restoring the written law, demolishing the groves, idols, and high places, altars and other paraphernalia of idolatry, **"And broke down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the House of the Lord, where the women wove the hangings for the groves."** (2 Kings 23:7). And so these male prostitutes (used in idolatry) were not only back in the land, but occupied housing given specially to them to be conveniently next door to the very temple. The clergy of today may smile benignly upon homosexuality but God condemned it and the good kings of Israel and Judah rooted it out.

In addition to anything else, we note, above, that Asa, Jehoshaphat and Josiah **"did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord"** by ridding the land of sodomites. Logically it would surely follow that what the Bishop proposes is diametrically opposed to **"what is right in the eyes of the Lord"**.

"PARTICULAR TEXTS" IN THE N.T.

Homosexuals tell us that Jesus never condemned homosexuality (just because He never actually mentioned it as such). Of course by the same token, Jesus never mentioned incest, or bestiality, or rape, or a dozen other things, but He did, however, condemn sin, and homosexuality is a sin. Jesus did mention, more than once, Sodom and Gomorrah and how God **"rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all"** (Luke 17:29) and it seems fairly certain that Jesus knew why the sodomites had been destroyed in this way.

Paul says. **"But we know the law is good if a man use it lawfully, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, of manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine."** (1 Tim. 1:8-10). Those that **"defile themselves with mankind"** are clearly included in that long catalogue of sins.

Another "particular text" could be 1 Cor. 6:9-11 which says, **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven? BE NOT DECEIVED; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: but ye are WASHED, but ye are SANCTIFIED, but ye are JUSTIFIED in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."** Again, **"abusers of themselves with mankind"** are on this list and their only hope is to repent of it, to be *washed* (by immersion in baptism) and thereafter to *sanctify* themselves (give themselves into God's service) so that God might *justify* them. Bishops should be calling upon homosexuals to repent of their evil practice: not advocating that God should accept it.

Jude (6,7), talking about the wrath of God upon evil deeds, includes a reference to Sodom and says, **"even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."** And so Jude tells us that the ashes of Sodom are meant to be *a reminder* to us of God's *wrath* at sodomy, not of God's tolerance. The apostle Peter says much the same he reminds us of how God **"turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that should after live ungodly. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked"**. (2 Peter 2:6). Lot was vexed with the filthy conduct of the sodomites whereas the Bishops

seem to want to accept them as Christian clergymen: and recognise the "marriage" of two persons of the same gender.

Small wonder that Bishop Hare-Duke has little interest in those who are "trying to find particular texts in the Bible." The above texts certainly are not on the side of the Bishop.

CONCLUSION

Space has gone but what more is there to say.? Homosexuality is being pushed and promoted at alarming speed in newspapers and particularly on T.V. but cries for its acceptance by "men of the cloth", and particularly by a man from whom the country might expect a lead, bodes ill for the future.

The practice of sodomy is unnatural, defiling, depraved, disgusting, obscene, repugnant, vile, degrading, dissolute, debase, indecent and hideously evil. Sodomy is utterly condemned not only throughout the O.T. but also the N.T. and Sodom is mentioned by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah; by Christ, Paul, Peter, Jude and John (in the Revelation) and so it is not a thing of the past. Paul says that "**It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret**". Obviously this article is far from uplifting, but amidst all the sympathetic noises we hear in support of a "better understanding" of homosexuality I thought it necessary to remind readers how despicable and heinous the practice is, in the eyes of God. Sodomy ever remains an abomination in the eyes of God, and worthy of death. Nothing has changed: homosexuality is completely, and utterly, an outrage to God, and so are all those who engage in it.

(I will send a copy of this article to Bishop Holloway and let readers know of any response.)

EDITOR

THE BODY IN ACTION

Someone has well observed that every congregation of the Lord's people can be described in one of two ways: it is either "Germinal" or "Terminal". The meaning of that observation is readily clear. Some congregations are "germinal" in that they are busy sowing the seed, the seed is germinating and growth is the result. All congregations that are not busy in this way are "terminal" in that they are dead or dying. Stagnation results in decay and death.

A profitable exercise for every congregation is to "take stock" from time to time and ask, "What direction are we headed in numerically?" and "What direction are we headed in spiritually"?

The purpose of this article is to deal with the subject of Church growth, and specifically growth from the standpoint of the Church as a body.

THE CHURCH AND GROWTH

Let us first establish three points relative to church growth. **First, the Church can grow!** To deny this is to deny the power of the Gospel. The Bible everywhere teaches the possibility of growth. The example of the early Church illustrates this point. Not only did the young Church grow in Jerusalem (where you might expect that it would) but it also grew dramatically in heathen lands amidst pagan populations wherever the Gospel was preached! **Second, the church should grow!** There are valid reasons why it ought to. Christianity has something unique to offer the world. In a troubled world it offers peace; in a sinful world it offers forgiveness; in a doubtful world it offers faith;

and in a lost world it offers salvation! **Third, the church must grow!** The individual members who make up the Church are required to grow (See I Peter 2:2, II Peter 3:18, Hebrews 5:12-14 etc). In the same way, individual congregations are expected to grow, and thus, the brotherhood at large. The marching orders of the Master ("go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature") if obeyed, would result in growth!

STEPS TOWARD GROWTH

How can this growth be realized? **First in order to grow we must want to grow!** We often tell our children, "If you want to do it badly enough, you can do it"! As individuals and as congregations we must want to grow. **Second, in order to grow we must decide to grow!** Here we are referring to firm resolve steadfast determination, and a commitment to the things that make for growth. Growth rarely, if ever, happens accidentally - it demands foresight. It has been said, "no one ever plans to fail, but we often fail to plan". Another has remarked, "We aim at nothing and achieve it with remarkable accuracy"! We must decide that we will grow. **Third in order to grow we must work!** Consider this equation: Planing + Preparation - Effort = Failure. We know that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). The work involved here will include personal effort and prayer. Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me . . ." Can we do less?

THE CHURCH AS A BODY

Let us now consider specifically how the Church should grow as a body. First, remember that a body is a unit. As a unit, it is composed of many parts and each of those individual parts has its own place to fill and its own contribution to make. Paul takes up this argument in detail in Romans 12:4-5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another". Along this same line in I Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul, makes it clear that each individual part of the body has need of all the other parts for its own wellbeing. The functioning of the body as a whole relies on the successful efforts of each individual part. In Ephesians 4:16 Paul shows the effectiveness of all of this by saying, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, cause growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love".

This "growth of the body" may well include increase in two major areas of concern, namely, numerical growth and spiritual growth. As the whole body functions smoothly and each part makes its contribution, evangelizing will result and new souls will be brought into the body. Further, the individual members within the body will develop and mature spiritually.

WHEN BODILY GROWTH IS POSSIBLE

How then, in a practical sense, is this "bodily growth" possible for the Church? **First**, let it be said that bodily growth can only be realized when all individual members are lovingly in subjection to the head, even Christ. Just as the human brain controls and directs the activity of the body in its every function, so too as Head of the Church, Christ controls and directs the body. Any rebellion against or deviation from His control can only result in the dwarfing of growth or death altogether!

Secondly, growth will only come when the body remains healthy and strong. If the body is weak and sickly mere survival is about all that can be hoped for. Once again the comparison between the human physical body and the Church is evident. In order for a human being to remain healthy and strong certain conditions must be met. There must be a healthy environment, plenty of nourishing food, and an ample supply of physical

exercise. In the very same way, the Church as the body can only thrive and grow (numerically and spiritually) if those same conditions are met. Individual members of the body must seek a healthy environment by avoiding the pollution of the world. We are to "come out from among them and be separate", remembering that "evil companionships corrupt good morals". There is a constant and unending demand for good nourishing food. We must "desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). Study, prayer and meditation are nourishing sources of such sustenance. Finally, growth of the body demands ample exercise. Paul says ". . . exercise yourself rather to godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:7-8). Brethren, are we "Germinal" or "Terminal"?

R. MILLER

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

Christians have a noble calling. They enjoy every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, including redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, reconciliation with the Father, and incorporation into the very household of God. But with this noble calling there comes also responsibility, the responsibility of leading a life "worthy of the calling", of maintaining the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1,3).

The Spirit desires unity. About that there can be no doubt. He puts us together into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13). He recorded Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20,21) and Paul's appeal to the same end (I Corinthians 1:10).

The Spirit does not want just a show of unity; He wants actual unity "in the bond of peace". "An outward unity, which does not secure peace, cannot be the unity of the Spirit" (B.W. Johnson). In Ephesians 4:1-7 we learn that this unity desired by the Spirit consists of (1) proper attitudes or disposition, and (2) the common acceptance of basic truths. How can men be united with God and at the same time with one another? Here is the answer.

THE ATTITUDES NECESSARY

The unity of the Spirit cannot be obtained apart from proper attitudes. How sad that in many congregations, while there may be doctrinal agreement, there is also present a meanness of disposition which precludes any real peace and unity. The antidote is found in the characteristics listed in Ephesians 4:2.

(1) **Lowliness.** Personal pride and selfish ambition are a common cause of division and bickering within the Church. We need a strong dose of humility. We must learn to "outdo one another in showing honour", not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think (Romans 12:3,10).

(2) **Meekness.** A spirit of meekness is a spirit of teachableness and gentleness. The meek person is self-controlled because he is God-controlled. It should be understood that meekness is not to be equated with weakness, or with failure to be firm on matters of importance. The meek person will be firm when it is necessary to do so, but will be known generally as open, reasonable, controlled and gentle.

(3) **Patience and forbearance borne out of love.** Yes, we need to be willing to "put up with" one another to "make allowances" for one another, for we all have shortcomings which annoy and irritate others. Love, a true desire for the welfare of our brother, will help us to be patient and forbearing.

Attitudes are important, and we must work on them if we would worship and work together in peace. "Not a few genuine, but crotchety, believers have no sense of proportion or perspective. . . Personal tastes and predilections and likes and dislikes have no business to intercept feelings of brotherly kindness" (E.K. Simpson). "If we cannot live peacefully with other followers of the Lord, how can we bring peace and reconciliation to the world?" (Bob Hendren).

TRUTHS HELD IN COMMON

It is generally held today that if we have a spirit of humility, gentleness, patience and love then we have all that is necessary for true unity. The idea is that if we have love among men, then doctrine, belief and practice do not matter. But that is not God's judgement in the matter! The unity of the Spirit involves both right attitudes and commonly held truth. After all, it is truth which makes us free (John 8:32); it is the one who does the will of the Father who enters the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). Unity among men which does not involve unity with the Father and the Son is not the unity of the Spirit! "Truth is the first thing: Those who reach it, will at last reach unity, because truth is one; while those who seek unity as the first thing, may purchase it at the sacrifice of truth, and so of the soul itself."

Paul lists seven fundamentals which are possessed by those who maintain the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:4-6):

(1) **One body.** This body is identified as the Church, over which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22,23); the one body in which we find our reconciliation to God (Ephesians 2:16); a holy temple which is the dwelling place of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:21,22). The people of God in Christ are one, purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28). This is a worldwide brotherhood, not to be divided into warring denominations and competing sects.

(2) **One Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is the seal and guarantee of our redemption, strengthener of the Christian indweller of the body. The Holy Spirit provides unity of revelation. He is the Author of the Bible, being the revealer and confirmer of truth (II Peter 1:19-21; John 14:26; Hebrews 2:3,4; I Corinthians 2:12,13). No unity is possible unless there is mutual respect for the inspiration of the Scriptures and thus agreement on the authority of the Bible.

(3) **One hope.** The one body, indwelt by the one Spirit, has a common goal, a unified desire to "ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

(4) **One Lord.** Jesus is the Master, both Lord and Christ, head over all things for the Church (Ephesians 1:20-23). Unity outside of the one Lord is hopeless, for without Him there is no salvation (Acts 4:12).

(5) **One faith.** There is one authoritative doctrine or faith upon which individual faith is based. The one body holds firmly to the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), the pattern of sound words (II Timothy 1:13), the gospel which is not to be changed (Galatians 1:8,9). Where there are many faiths there is a denial of the unity of the Spirit.

(6) **One baptism.** This is the means by which the penitent believer enters Christ, contacting His saving blood, joining Him in death, burial and resurrection (Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4). The basic meaning of the word "baptize" in the original Greek, plus its usage in New Testament contexts, shows clearly that the one baptism is immersion. It is faith's response to Jesus as Redeemer, securing the forgiveness of sins He purchased on the cross (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

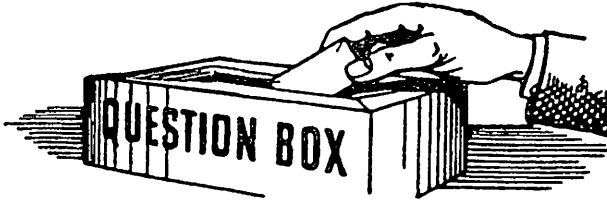
(7) **One God and Father of all.** The One who loved us and planned our salvation. The ultimate source of unity. The final and absolute authority (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

We can only be one as we have one supreme object of affection.

None of the above elements stand alone. *Attitude and action, disposition and belief, the grace of God and the response of man,* must be partners if there is to be the unity of the Spirit. And the *grace of Christ* must be present to make possible that which purely human efforts could never achieve (Ephesians 4:7).

"Father, help us to make every effort to seek and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

W. HART



Conducted by
Ian S. Davidson

"How did Satan come about and what is his end?"

Satan is a created being. If he were not then he would be God and this, of course, is absurd. I like this question because early last year in Motherwell I undertook a special study of Satan and we attempted to examine every passage in the Old and New Testament Scriptures where he is mentioned. These references helped us to understand him better, which is no bad thing.

God created Satan, but, I hasten to add, not as Satan. Personally, I see him as a fallen angel or even an archangel, who had rebelled against God in heaven and was, therefore, driven out. The Scriptures are clear on this matter. **"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him . . . for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night"** (Revelation 12:7-10). Thus is an important passage in many respects. I like the fact that, for one thing, many of his titles are quoted therein.

ANGELS

Angels are created beings. Jesus Himself was involved in their creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). The latter passage in the Authorised Version speaks of **"thrones or dominions or principalities or powers"** and I agree with some commentators that these terms have reference to different grades of angels known to the Jews as archangels, angels, seraphim and cherubim. But when were they, including Satan before he rebelled, created? John C. Whitcomb Jr in his book *The Early Earth* has written: **"The third heaven was populated with hundreds of millions of angelic beings (Daniel 7:10), each one a 'son of God' in the sense of a direct creation by God (cf. Job 1:6) and therefore perfect in all their ways (Exekiel 28:15). They must have been created at the very beginning of the first of creation for Job 38:6,7 tells of their singing and of their shout of joy at the creation of the earth. That they did not exist before the first day is indicated by Colossians 1:16 (which tells us that Christ created all invisible as well as visible thrones, dominions, principalities and powers in the heavens as well as upon the earth) in the light of Exodus 20:11 ('in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is')."**

PRIDE

What got into Satan in leading the rebellion in heaven? I think Paul in his first epistle to Timothy gives us the answer. We read in his comments on the qualifications of an elder: **"He ought not to be a new convert, for fear he should be blinded with pride and come under the same condemnation as the devil"** (3:6, Weymouth). Pride - that is what led to his downfall. No wonder it is often said: "Pride comes before a fall". C.S. Lewis once described Pride as "The Great Sin". He also pointed out that "pride always means enmity - it is enmity". I think this great thinker was right on both counts.

The trouble is that he led other angels to destruction. Another important passage on our theme is 2 Peter 2:4: **"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . ."** "Cast down to hell" is the Greek verb *tartaroo*, which signifies to consign to Tartarus. Tartarus is where all the fallen angles, excluding Satan, are right now. These, I believe, are the demons, which are so frequently mentioned in the gospel records, where they are also described as "evil spirits". Satan is not in Tartarus. In Job 2 we read: **"And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From roaming through the earth and going to and fro in it'"** (2).

SATAN - A PERSONALITY

In dealing with Satan, we are not dealing with an evil force, but an evil personality. He is real. He can think and speak and act. He is a cunning foe and Christians should never underestimate him. He is associated with lies, deception, temptation, etc. John said that **"the devil sinned from the beginning"** (I John 3:8) and Jesus once remarked that **"he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in truth, because there is no truth in him . . . for he is a liar and the father of it"** (John 8:44). The bottom line is that Satan is always hostile to God and to God's people.

Daniel Defoe once wrote a book entitled *"The History of the Devil"*. I once tried to study it in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, but the librarians could not find it. In any event, Defoe wrote a more famous work entitled *"Robinson Crusoe"*, which I have in my own library. In it, there is a famous discussion between Crusoe and Friday. We read: **"Well", says Friday, 'but you say God is so strong, so great; is he not much strong, much might as the devil?' 'Yes, yes,' says I, 'Friday, God is stronger than the devil: God is above the devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our feet, and enable us to resist his temptation and quench his fiery darts'. 'But,' says he again, 'if God much stronger, much might as the wicked devil, why God no kill the devil, so make him no more do wicked?' I was greatly surprised at this question . . ."**

A lot of people wish things were different. But the reality is that Satan is a reality and his wicked influence is seen and felt everywhere. I have got simply to accept things as they are. When I was born into this world he was already here doing his darksome deeds through sinful mankind. Like me he is a product of creation. He was created good, but he became bad through his own volition. There is a war on an it is good versus evil, light versus darkness, God versus Satan. All of us are involved whether we like it or not.

SATAN'S END

Crusoe eventually pointed out: **"God will at last punish him severely; he is reserved for the judgement"**. How true! Satan's days are numbered. Christ's victory is assured. Jesus said during His ministry: **"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angles . . ."** (Matthew 25:41). John wrote: **"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophets are,**

and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). Friday wondered about the possibility of Satan repenting. It is not going to happen! That's the end of it.

But could a rebellion ever take place again in heaven after the judgement and when all the righteous have been received into glory? The answer, in short, is No. Speaking of the eternal city, John declared: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 20:27). His word is good enough for me.

THE SAINTS AND THE DEVIL

Why did Jesus come into the world? I complete 1 John 3:8: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil". V-Day is still to take place, but D-Day has already happened through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Satan's end is now just a matter of time. All saints, therefore, should remain strong in their work of faith, labour of love and patience of hope in the Lord Christ Jesus. As Peter put it: "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may desire: whom resist steadfast in the faith . . ." (I Peter 2:8,9).

IAN S. DAVIDSON

(Ian will, D.V., provide one further "Q.B." in the September issue. Thereafter "Q.B." will be conducted by brother Frank Worgan, hopefully in the October issue. Brother Worgan has kindly consented to take over "Q.B." but is moving house from Stockport to the Glasgow area, and will obviously require time to recover from the move. Questions can, and should, therefore, be sent to his new address: viz. 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston, Johnstone, Renfrewshire, PA6.)

RIGHTLY HANDLING THE SCRIPTURES

(Timothy 2:15)

We have entitled this lesson as above, because the Greek word "orthotomeo" which is translated in the King's version **rightly dividing**," which means "cutting straight, rightly treating, rightly handling, or applying".

The Amplified New Testament puts it this way: "**Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed correctly analyzing and accurately dividing-rightly skilfully teaching the word of God.**" Or as the ASV puts it "**handling aright.**"

There was no written Bible for more than 2500 years of the world's history.

After it began to be written, it was 1600 years on being completed. The Bible, - the divine revelation from God, was written by about 40 inspired men who lived in different times, and various parts of the world.

The New Testament part of the Bible is especially for us, who are living in these last days; but the "**things written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.**"

There are three Dispensations of religion taught in the Bible:

- (1) The Patriarchal - a family religion, lasted 2500 years.
- (2) The Jewish - a national religion, lasted 1500 years.
- (3) The Christian religion, a world-wide, universal religion, has lasted nearly 2000 years; The scriptures are made up of three kinds of sentences: 1. Facts to believe, 2. Commands to obey, 3. Promises to hope for.

The Bible contains three kinds of literature: History, Law and Prophecy. The Jewish law of the Old Testament served its purpose and has been abolished. The

Prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament. We should read the Old Testament primarily for its historical value. The primary function of the Old Testament is to produce faith in God, to prophesy of Christ and the future developments, and give the history of the beginning of all things John 14:1, Heb. 9:27; and John 5:39.

The Bible reveals three Kingdoms: 1. Of Nature, we enter a fleshly birth, 2. Of Grace (the Church) by new birth John 3:5, and 3. Of Glory, We enter by a resurrection birth from the grave.

Under each dispensation of religion God required *faith and obedience*.

The fleshly law of Moses was a temporary law, given 430 years after God made the promise to Abraham, which served the Jewish nation as a schoolmaster, till Christ (the promised seed) and great teacher should come.

Christ, having fulfilled the law, abolished it and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

CHRIST'S COMMISSION TO THE APOSTLES

Christ, after having selected the twelve apostles, put in three and a half years training them, gave the great commission, and had them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were empowered from above, by the overwhelming baptism of the Holy Spirit. Then they began carrying out the great commission.

According to Matthew's account of the gospel, **the great commission contained three commands:** (a) To teach or make disciples of all nations, (b) Baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and (c) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" Matt. 28:19,20.

We can not please God, nor come to him without faith Heb. 11:6. We must not only believe in God; but in his Son Jesus Christ as well. John 14:1.

The Old Testament properly studied will lead one to believe in God. The first four books of the New Testament leads us to believe in Christ. The four books teach us one gospel. John 20:30,31. Read John 3:16. Faith comes by (reading) hearing or listening of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). But faith alone, as some believe, will not save us, for faith without works is dead. James 2:17.

If faith alone would save; then the great commission at Matthew 28:19 would read, **"teach or disciple all nations,"** and instead of having 27 books in the New Testament, we would just have four: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Acts, the 5th book of the New Testament, shows how the apostles, after being empowered by the Holy Spirit, carried out the great commission.

The commission required more than faith alone. **It required four things:** faith, repentance, confession and baptism. The first five books of the New Testament, if learned and given heed to, will save the world from past sins, and carries out the first two parts of the great commission.

If when a person is saved from past sins, God makes them sin-proof by some so-called sanctification, as some teach, we would have only the first five books of the New Testament.

But since there is a third part to the great commission: **"teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you."** We have other books or epistles in the New Testament: Romans to Jude.

In order to make the Bible complete, we have in the New Testament **one book of prophecy**, called Revelation, foretelling the history of the Church or Kingdom of Christ.

It tells of its battles, conflicts and final victory.

We should not go back to the Old Testament to learn a Christian's duties, nor to learn what a sinner should do to be saved.

We should read the Old Testament principally for its historical value, as its law has served its purpose and been abolished, and its prophecies have been fulfilled in Christ, as we learn from the New Testament.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

As a sinner we should not go to the epistles or Revelation to learn the first principles of religion, neither should a Christian go to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John or Acts to learn their duties.

When reading the Bible we should ask ourselves the following questions; Who is talking? To whom are they talking? And what is the condition of the person or persons spoken to? Is it addressed to a Patriarch, a Jew, or a Christian? Is it addressed to a saint or a sinner? Is it addressed to an inspired apostle, or to an uninspired person?

Was it under the first commission to the Jews, or in the time of the great commission of the apostles under the gospel dispensation?

The Bible contains all of God's message to man, for all the ages to come. It is the code of laws by which we will be judged. John 12:48.

We should fear God, and tremble at his living word.

There is danger of **PERVERTING** the gospel, **WRESTING** the **SCRIPTURES**, or **PREACHING A DIFFERENT GOSPEL**, which has caused all of the religious confusion in the world.

At Matt. 22:29 Christ said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

Paul says anyone **PERVERTING THE GOSPEL**, **WRESTING** the scriptures, or preaching **ANOTHER GOSPEL** is anathema, or accursed, whether he be man or angel. (Gal. 1:9).

Now let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "**Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man**" Eccles. 12:13.

G. WHITE

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- Sept 7 Psalm 119:9-24 1 Thessalonians 2:10-20
- Sept 14 Isaiah 35 1 Thessalonians 3
- Sept 21 Job 17 1 Thessalonians 4
- Sept 28 Psalm 5 1 Thessalonians 5

A DIVINE MESSAGE

"Timotheus had been sent, while Paul was still at Athens, to revisit and establish the Church at Thessalonica. The news he brought on his return to Paul caused the latter to write to these beloved converts . . ." (Conybeare and Howson). The letter was, of course, written while Paul was staying at Corinth (Acts 18:1-17).

Paul encouraged them that they should "**walk worthy of God, who has called you unto His kingdom and glory**" (2:12). The word "walk" is from

the Greek *peripateo* and signifies the whole round of the activities of the individual life. The message that Paul delivered to them was a Divine message (2:13). He wrote: ". . . **the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe**" (2:13). "Effectually works" is the Greek verb *energeo*, hence our English word *energise*. Too often I have to take my car to the petrol station to fill her up with fuel. Petrol is what keeps her going. When she runs out of petrol she just sits there! Thankfully, it hasn't happened all that often. God's people will never have an energy problem. Their fuel (the word of God) will always be freely available to those who need it and want it. And remember, without the word you are just not going anywhere!

Paul also referred to the persecution of the saints by the Jews (2:15-16). We read: ". . . **for the wrath is come**

(coming) upon them to the uttermost" (16). Personally, I believe these words have reference to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish system, which took place in A.D. 70.

Paul had been eager to see these brethren again, "but Satan hindered us" (2:18). "The word he uses (*egkoptein*) is the technical word for putting up a road-block calculated to stop an expedition on the march. It is Satan's work to throw obstacles into the Christian's way - and it is our work to surmount them" (Barclay).

TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGING REPORT

Timothy is an important figure in N.T. history. Even two of the epistles in the canon of scriptures are addressed to him. He was especially close to Paul. Timothy was a native of Lystra and was the son of a mixed marriage, his mother being a Jewess and his father a Greek. His mother and grandmother were women of deep faith and from infancy he was well-versed in the Jewish scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15). "He first appears in Luke's narrative when Paul (accompanied by Silas) pays his second visit to Lystra, returning to his Gentile mission-field after the Council of Jerusalem. By this time Timothy could be called a 'disciple . . . the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer' (Acts 16:1); it appears, then that mother and son had come to faith in Christ during Paul's previous visit to Lystra (in company with Barnabas), two or three years previously (Acts 14:6-20)" (Bruce). The mission of Timothy back to Thessalonica was a very responsible one and Paul obviously judged him capable of under-taking it. The good report Paul received from the young man on his return to Corinth prompted the sending of this epistle. Paul remained for eighteen months in Corinth and it appears Timothy stayed with him. Just think how much he learned in that time from his father in the faith.

LIVING TO PLEASE GOD

God's pleasures should be our pleasure. Our lives at all time should be lived to please Him and not ourselves. The world is full of selfishness, but should be full of selflessness. The former produces division, hatred and strife; the latter harmony, love and peace. Sexual immorality was common then and is common in our world today. I know a lot of people who should be ashamed to live and afraid to die. We read: "For God has not called us unto uncleanness but holiness" (4:7). But what precisely is holiness? It is the Greek word *hagiasmos*, which is also translated "sanctification" in the Authorised Version, as can be seen in verses 3 and 4 of this very chapter. The great Richard C. Trench says of *hagios* that "its fundamental idea is separation and, so to speak, consecration and devotion to the service of Deity". Holy people, therefore, not only separate themselves from the defilements of the world, but also strive to share in God's purity. I remember reading somewhere that holiness is not a positive creation, an entity, a substantive existence, nor an attribute like wisdom, power, or goodness. It is a relative attribute. In other words, were there no impurity, there could be no holiness. In contrast with impurity, God, angels and saints are holy beings "But as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conduct; because it is written, Be you holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16).

THE COMING OF THE LORD

Jesus is coming again to judge the world in righteousness. No one knows the date of His return (5:2). The saints who are alive on the earth will be caught up with the resurrected saints at the last day and will "meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (4:17). Paul goes on to point out that God's people should ever be aware of the Master's return. Watchfulness and sobriety are the key.

Christians are a people of hope. They believe they will meet again their fellow disciples who have long passed on from this scene of time and those bodies have already returned to dust. They believe death is not the end. Jesus proved that, and their trust and hope are in Him. Who better to believe than the one who holds the keys of death and hades? (Revelations 1:18).

NOTABLE STATEMENTS

1 Thessalonians chapter 5 is full of notable statements by the apostle Paul. For example: "And be at peace among yourselves" (13). "Rejoice evermore" (16). "Pray without ceasing" (17). "Quench not the Spirit" (19). "Despise not prophesying" (20). "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (21). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (22). "Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it" (24).

The peace that Jesus brings is a peace that the world cannot give (John 14:27) and is a peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7). To know Jesus is to be at peace. Jesus also brings joy. If Christianity is anything, it is a religion of joy. Of course, His joy is unique. And I am not talking here about something that causes you to fall about laughing. Remember, as my late brother Wardrop often said: "True happiness is no laughing matter". Prayer is vital to the Christian. Indeed, prayer should be an activity which is a constant part of life. What is prayer? It is simply taking life to God. I like what a scholar once wrote: "Prayer is not a way of making use of God; prayer is a way of offering ourselves to God in order that He should be able to make use of us".

The use of the word "quench" in reference to the Spirit is most interesting. It has, of course, to do with fire or flame and means to cause a flame to lose its intensity or to die out. There are three ways to quench a fire: by pouring cold water upon it; by smothering it with non-combustibles;

and by neglecting it. I know a lot of people who were once "on fire" for Jesus, but the flame has long been extinguished. As one writer has commented: "How often men have started out in the livid glow of the Spirit, only to become involved in the affairs of his passing age until the fervour died down and the ardour cooled". The way to stoke the spiritual flame is to study the word. Nothing else stimulates and fires the imagination like gaining new insights into revealed truth. And, brothers and sisters in the Lord, we need one another in this task. Remember, a coal of fire which becomes separated from the ass is soon extinguished and dies out.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. In which month of the Hebrew calendar did the Israelites leave Egypt?
2. Where did Eliezer, Abraham's servant, come from?
3. Where were Achan and his family killed?
4. What did Uzzah touch to evoke God's anger?
5. Who is known as "the weeping prophet"?
6. What was Elijah's home town?
7. What flowed from Christ's side when He was pierced by a spear?
8. In John's vision, who fought the dragon and his angels?
9. Give one word that would sum up the church at Laodicea?
10. Who called the Pharisees "you brood of vipers"?

GHANA APPEAL

As I write this my mind goes back over the years since the appeal was first introduced and the outstanding benefits that have been achieved. Lives have been saved, both physically and

spiritually, and I think of brethren who have been saved through an emergency rush to hospital or by teaching of the gospel.

I can assure brethren that careful consideration goes into the distribution of funds to achieve the maximum benefit, considering the many urgent needs. Our brethren earnestly evangelise neighbouring towns and villages so that the number of congregations has now reached forty nine. Only the limitation of funds hinders them from extending further, but the work goes on. Having lived among them I can vouch for their dive, enthusiasm and self-sacrificing zeal. They are greatly encouraged by the help they receive from overseas brethren and especially the caring love through which it is given.

So much has been achieved, there seems no limit to the harvest which is ready waiting and I implore our readers to continue this effective partnership. The written or spoken word, along with photographs, are so inadequate to describe the needs of the church in Ghana.

I have a great love and respect for our Ghanaian brethren and, although here in Britain, I remain with them in heart and mind.

Please make cheques payable to Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal) and send them to Graeme Pearson, 13

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- 10. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7).
- 9. Lukewarm (Revelation 3:16).
- (Revelation 12:7).
- 8. Michael and his angels
- 7. Blood and water (John 19:34).
- 6. Tishbeh (1 Kings 17:1).
- 5. Jeremiah.
- 4. Ark of God (2 Samuel 6:6-7
- 3. Achor (Joshua 7:24).
- 2. Damascus (Genesis 15:2).
- 1. Abib (Exodus 13:4).

ANSWERS

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PRICE PER COPY— POST PAID FOR ONE YEAR

UNITED KINGDOM.....	£8.50	
OVERSEAS BY SURFACE MAIL.....	£10.00	(\$16.00US or \$20.00Can)
OVERSEAS BY AIR MAIL.....	£14.00	(\$22.00US or \$28.00Can)

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