

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE

Last month's article was about a prevalent false doctrine ("once saved always saved"). This article will try to emphasise the necessity of "sound doctrine". I once heard a preacher say from his pulpit that fellowship and goodwill were far more important than doctrine, and yet Jesus told us that two can't walk together unless they be agreed, and a house divided cannot stand. And nearly all religious division is rooted in doctrine. The epistles of the N.T. stress the need for sound doctrine because nothing is more calculated to wreak havoc in the Church than false doctrine. We may think we have problems today, but the early Church was under constant pressure from false teachers; even from within the Church, and from Judaising Christians bent on dragging parts of the law into Christianity. At first, the Church grew like wildfire but Satan's strategy of "throwing a spanner into the works" by encouraging false doctrine, was very effective. It resulted in more time and energy being spent in trying to oppose those false teachings, and much less time spent in preaching the gospel. We need only look at the religious world of today, with all its various denominational bodies, to realise that much more time is spent in preserving a particular religious identity, than in actually preaching the gospel of Christ to the lost.

### ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE

First of all, let it be said that there is nothing sinister about the word "doctrine" or "indoctrinate" as long as we are indoctrinated by the truth, of course. "Doctrine" simply means "teaching" and particularly *the subject matter* of that which is taught, and can apply to politics, science, philosophy, etc. as well as to religion. Indeed, whereas the KJV refers to "doctrine" the RV mainly employs the word "teaching" throughout the N.T. The word "doctrine" and "doctor" both come from the Latin "*docere*" meaning "to teacher". A teacher of doctrine was, therefore, a doctor: e.g. Gamaliel was a teacher or "doctor of the law" (Acts 5:34) and Jesus, after being lost, was found by His parents in conversation "with the doctors".

We must take serious account of *the origin* of the doctrine. In Acts 2:42 we read that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine," and the apostles were later charged with "having filled all Jerusalem with their doctrine" but, of course, the doctrine did not *originate* with the apostles: they merely embraced it and spread it. Nor, for that matter, did the doctrine originate with Jesus. He said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me." (John 7:16). And so, the true doctrine originated with God Himself and obviously those who meddle with it live dangerously. There are those who seem to think that God was incapable of devising a doctrine which would be age-lasting, and so feel obliged to bring it "up-to-date" and "tailor" it to suit the various

modern attitudes to religion, and, of course, they do so at their great peril. It is true that Paul urged Christians, by their honesty and good works, to "*adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*" (Titus 2:10) but this invitation to "adorn" the doctrine is a far cry from trying to adapt it, or to alter it, or embroider it, or amend it, or to add to it, or to subtract from it. We meddle with God if we meddle with His doctrine.

#### OF WHAT DOES THE DOCTRINE CONSIST?

Firstly, it consists of *the scriptures*. Paul says, "All scripture given by the inspiration of God is profitable **FOR DOCTRINE**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness . . ." (2 Tim. 3:16).

The doctrine also includes *the gospel*: i.e. that which frees us from sin. Paul said to the Christians at Rome, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart **THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE** which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17). The gospel consists of facts to be believed, and commands to be obeyed. All these are embraced in the doctrine.

The doctrine includes *all the words of Christ*. We read that the people were "astonished at His doctrine" (Matt. 7:28). This included the *parables* - "And He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them **IN HIS DOCTRINE, Harken, a sower went forth to sow . . .**" (Mark 4:2) Paul said to Timothy, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to **THE DOCTRINE** which is according to Godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. 6:3). This verse describes the bad influences with which Timothy would have to deal.

It should be noted that Paul recognised a difference between "milk" and "strong meat" as far as doctrine was concerned. Indeed he exhorts the Corinthian brethren to try and wean themselves off their milk diet and graduate to some maturity on the strong meat of the doctrine. First principles had been grasped: the foundations had been laid, and these brethren were expected to move onwards and upwards in Christian growth. Paul says, "Therefore, leaving **THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST**, let us go on to perfection, **NOT LAYING AGAIN THE FOUNDATION** of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement. And this will we do if God permits." (Heb. 6:1). This interesting passage mentions some of the foundation stones: repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement: but Paul wanted progress beyond these.

#### CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TO THE DOCTRINE

It's surely no calumny to say that the religious world in general, and the clergy in particular, have a fairly loose approach to God's word. Was Jesus similarly "laid back" with regard to His doctrine? I think not. For instance, He warned His disciples against the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees". "Take heed", said Jesus, "and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees". Because the disciples were puzzled by this, Jesus explained that He was referring to the **DOCTRINE** of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Of this doctrine they were to beware. There is, of course, an affinity between leaven and false doctrine. A little quantity of either will work away quietly, but surely, in accomplishing its purpose. And so here we have Jesus counselling His followers to be wary and very watchful with regard to the various doctrines which may be offered to them. (Matt. 16:12).

In another instance Jesus is even more specific. When falsely accused by the Scribes of breaking the law of Moses, His reply was swift: "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition"? Jesus then went on to illustrate the, sometimes ingenious, way in which they tried to circumvent God's commandments, but assured them that God was not fooled. He then applied the words of Isaiah to them (honouring God with lips but hearts a long way off) and ended by saying "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for DOCTRINES the commandments of men". As we look around the religious world today we cannot fail to see that the commandments of God have been, to a very large degree, entirely replaced by the commandments of men. Jesus said, that in such cases men worship in vain.

In the letters to the churches (in the Book of Revelation), God in His letter to the church at Pergamos (Chap. 2) praised them in some things but also had a few things against them, especially in the matter of false doctrine. Apparently there were at Pergamos, "... those that hold the doctrine of Balaam" and also those "... that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans," and these things, said God, "I hate". In short, God is very observant and notices all attempts to pervert His doctrine. God is not tolerant in this regard, but hates all forms of false teaching.

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE APOSTLES

Paul encountered false teachers all the time and dealt with many of them personally, as, for example, his delivery of *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* into the hands of Satan (1 Tim. 1:20). Paul could not, however, be in two places at the one time and had to send representatives to churches he could not reach. For example, Paul instructed Timothy to deal with some of the disorders in the church at Ephesus, and likewise instructed Titus to "set in order things that were wanting" in the churches in Crete. We are not surprised to learn that much of the disorder in the various churches was because of false teachers and a corrupted doctrine. Indeed, Paul at the very outset, in his commission to Timothy mentions doctrine. He says, "I besought thee to abide still in Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach NO OTHER DOCTRINE; neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than Godly edifying which is in the faith: so do." (1 Tim. 1:3). Clearly some of the false teaching stemmed from fables and myths and from endless speculations upon lines of ancestry and genealogy i.e. things of no real concern in a Christian context, but which resulted in much argument and dispute.

In Chapter 4 of the same epistle Paul refers to doctrine no less than four times, and warns Timothy that "... the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and THE DOCTRINE OF DEMONS, speaking lies, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats" (v.1). These "latter times" had evidently come, and some were being seduced away from the truth, were departing from the faith and were embracing the doctrines of demons. Apparently these doctrines were based upon lies and included opposition to marriage and the banishment of certain foods. Thus Timothy is commissioned to refresh the memories of the brethren relative to sound doctrine and Paul adds, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things thou shalt be a good minister, nourished up in the words of faith and GOOD DOCTRINE, whereunto thou hast attained." (v.6).

In verse 13 of the same chapter, Paul instructs Timothy thus, "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to DOCTRINE", and in verse 16 he says, "Take heed to thyself and UNTO THE DOCTRINE, continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." The importance of the doctrine of God is that it can save all those that hear it. The same can certainly not be said for the myriads of false doctrines. Hence Paul's constant preoccupation with the

purity of the doctrine.

In the closing chapter of this first epistle Paul warns, "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ **AND TO THE DOCTRINE** which is according to Godliness. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." We can gradually build up a picture of the things with which Timothy had to contend, and a rough idea of the babble and clamour created by false teachers. They were proud and considered themselves intellectuals albeit they were really quite ignorant ("knowing nothing"), and their various speculations and disputes resulted in strifes, envying, evil suppositions, envy, perversity and avarice. Small wonder that Timothy and Titus were commissioned to "stop the mouths" of such men.

Some seven years later, Paul wrote a second letter to Timothy, urging him, once again, to "Preach the word, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering **AND DOCTRINE**. For the time will come when they will not endure **SOUND DOCTRINE** but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn their ears away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Today there are still those with itching ears who seek out the teachers most likely to tell them the things they want to hear.

Paul's instructions to **TITUS** were similar. Paul said, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Titus 1:5). Once again a pure doctrine was paramount. Paul said, "But speak thou the things which become **SOUND DOCTRINE**" (Titus 2:1) and in verse 7 says, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works, in **DOCTRINE** showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity." As instructed, Titus ordained elders in all the cities and even the elders had to be qualified to uphold sound doctrine. Paul said that an elder must, "Hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may **BY SOUND DOCTRINE** convict the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." (Titus 1:9). Again we get a glimpse of what was happening in the churches. False teachers "especially they of the circumcision", the Jewish Christians, were leading astray whole households, teaching things they ought not (for money), and behaving in a vain and unruly manner.

Elsewhere, Paul urged the Hebrews to "Be not carried about with divers and **STRANGE DOCTRINES**" (Heb. 13:9) and to the Ephesians he expressed the hope that they would ". . . henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, with **EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE**, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14). False teachers were not often motivated by innocent ignorance it seems, and are described here as cool and calculating fraudsters, "lying in wait" for their victims.

### CONCLUSION

From all this (all that has gone before) it would be difficult not to understand that God does not tolerate false doctrine, or to agree with the preacher who said that fellowship and goodwill are far more important than doctrine. God does not look kindly upon a corrupted doctrine or upon false teachers and prophets. As we have seen, even in N.T. times, and even in the very lifetime of the actual apostles, only thirty years from the birth of the Church, evil forces, orchestrated by the devil, were hard at work to frustrate the work of Christ and the saving of souls. Clearly, the most effective and

successful satanic strategy was to corrupt the gospel message, divide the Church, and set the members at odds, spreading doubt, discord and dismay. Enjoying historical hindsight, we can see that the Church did digress, and has, in fact, been in a state of divergence ever since. As Paul predicted to the elders of Ephesus, grievous wolves did enter the Church, and did not spare the flock, and men, from their own number, did arise speaking perverse things, and did draw away disciples after them.

Nearly every town has a river passing through it, and the water is usually so badly contaminated that fish could not survive in it. Looking down on the river from a bridge, one is very likely to see all kinds of rubbish in the water: a rusting pram; a bicycle wheel; an old mattress; a supermarket trolley; a few plastic sacks of garbage, etc. etc. and the river is subjected to this kind of pollution all the way to the sea. If, however, we were to trace the river to its source, high up in the hills, we would be amazed to see how fresh, pure and clear it is as it bubbles from the ground. Likewise, when God's revelation came down from heaven, and came from the lips of Christ and His inspired apostles, it was just as fresh and crystal-clear as any mountain stream. But, sadly, just like the polluting of our rivers, each generation of men has ruined the gospel's purity, and by adding to it and subtracting from it, has contrived to render it almost unrecognisable from the original.

Unlike the members of the early Church, we now all have the good fortune to possess a copy of God's sacred word, and we can "try the spirits", and can recognise false doctrines by placing them alongside that which has been revealed. The duty Paul placed upon Timothy and Titus is now the duty of all of us i.e. to expose and to oppose all forms of false teaching and **"to contend earnestly for the faith, once and for all delivered to the saints."** With honesty and good works men can certainly **"adorn"** the doctrine of God, but just as certainly face the wrath of God if they try to embroider it, alter it or adapt it. **"Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them for in so doing thou wilt both save thyself and them that hear thee."** (1 Tim 4:16).

EDITOR.

## EVOLUTION - SOME FACTS TO CONSIDER

The *theory* of evolution continues to be a hindrance to faith, being widely quoted in all kinds of connections. This theory first appeared at a time when the history of mankind seemed to be all progress, and it was possible to believe that we were getting better and better by our own efforts, and therefore to imagine that this process stretched back to an immensely distant past. It is a very clever theory and early efforts to dismiss it with ridicule rather than reason were ineffective. Then some religious people tried to show that it did not really contradict the Bible, for was not that book all about progress, too?

In fact it is not, for the scriptures show the history of man as being a catastrophic decline into wickedness before the flood, Gen. 6:5, and any improvement since as being very limited and temporary. At the end of a century which has probably seen more people killed in wars than ever before in history, it is now not so easy to believe in steady progress. But the evolutionist cannot explain wickedness at all. It undermines his theory, for should not man be getting better all the time?

Human progress mainly consists of collecting facts, but mankind can also forget. It is admitted by historians that many ancient manufacturing processes are no longer understood. Also, when isolated groups of people are found living in what are called "stone age" conditions today, it could be that they have simply forgotten many skills that their ancestors once had. The episode of the Tower of Babel tells us that the earliest people were not nomads who lived by hunting, as the evolutionist would tell us. They

were for the most part agriculturalists and city dwellers, anxious to keep together until God scattered them. Abraham left a city and went to live in tents, and Lot left a city and went to live in a cave, and many others could have done the same.

Any teaching which is handed down by word of mouth becomes corrupted as the generations pass. Thus the scriptures began to be written down very early, as a means to bring mankind back to the right path. At one time the Jews lost their book of the law, 2 Kings 22:8, and a great reformation was needed when it was rediscovered. The same thing happened to the Church during the centuries when the Bible was not available to ordinary people.

### ABSTRACT NOTION OF GOD?

A typical book on world history from the evolution standpoint says about the Jewish nation, "They were to be the first people to arrive at an abstract notion of God and to forbid his representation by images." By "arrive at" the author probably means to suggest that they invented the idea. According to the scriptures, however, the Jews were not the most progressive nation of the time, but the most old-fashioned. All the other nations had made for themselves idols of wood and stone, silver and gold, and even the Hebrews progressed in that direction at intervals; for example in Exodus 32:4 where they worshipped the golden calf. The Jews had not "arrived at" the idea of monotheism, for it was known by Adam and Eve, and also by Noah and his family, and all the human race is descended from them. It was the other peoples who had departed from the idea of one God, and the prophets struggled to keep the Israelites from going the same way.

In Rom. 1:21-23 Paul describes the heathen in this way: **"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."**

In fact there are a number of basic beliefs among all branches of the human race, which could well indicate a common origin from Adam and Eve, and later from the family of Noah, and the things which must have been known to them, allowing for inevitable changes for the worse.

Perhaps the most striking fact is that valuable and beautiful artefacts are found buried in graves in many parts of the world, intended for use in some future life. These indicate a profound belief in immortality, although in a physical rather than a spiritual state, because naturally the relatives of the deceased would have been tempted to keep such fine objects for themselves. When the children of Israel asked Moses, in Ex. 14:11 **"Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"** they were referring to the fact that the Egyptians bestowed enormous care upon richly furnished tombs and the careful preservation of dead bodies by embalming. Did so many nations in remote places all invent the same expectation of some kind or resurrection for themselves? This would be far harder to believe than that the idea came from common ancestors descended from Noah and his sons.

### SACRIFICE - MARRIAGE - LANGUAGE

Then again, there is the widespread idea of making a sacrifice to atone for sins and shortcomings or to give thanks. Noah made a sacrifice as soon as he was able to leave the ark, and Abraham built an altar in those places where he stayed. But already in the second generation of men, Gen. 4:3, Cain tried to change the requirements of the sacrifice to suit himself, bringing the fruit of the ground. In Jer. 7:18 the Jews were making cakes to the queen of heaven. Worse changes were made, and we read in 2 Kings 3:27 of the king of Moab, **"Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall."** Even the

Jews at times sacrificed their children to Molech, 2 Kings 23:10. Many more examples of human or other kinds of sacrifice have occurred all around the world. But why should so many nations have decided that their idols required some sort of sacrifice, when giving up some part of one's possessions is not a very attractive idea? Here is another custom which could have been handed down from the beginning.

Most nations have also recognised a form of marriage. In the beginning, as quoted by Jesus, Matt. 19:8, it was a permanent union between one man and one woman. Noah and his three sons apparently had one wife each, Gen. 7:13. In Gen. 4:19, it is recorded of one of Cain's descendants, "**Lamech took unto him two wives**" which was presumably a new development, but the scriptures contain examples of the jealousy and rivalry caused by polygamy. While there have been many strange marriage customs around the world, it was usually recognised that there should be some kind of permanent family structure.

To the evolutionist and atheist, the religious rites of all nations are quite inexplicable. They did not serve any useful purpose in helping people to survive. They usually say that people were formerly very ignorant and invented these things, and we have now learned that supernatural beings do not exist. But this does not fit the evolutionist's time scale at all, for he holds the theory that a few million years ought to elapse before any great changes would appear in human abilities and understanding. The evolutionist would tell us that language began with rudimentary sounds and single words, but this was not so, because the first human beings were able to talk with God. The Bible tells us, Gen. 2:19, that Adam was given the task of finding names for all the beasts and birds. How many thousand names did he have to decide on and remember? It was no mean feat and called for a good command of language. Also in the first few generations there were musicians and metal workers, Gen. 4:21-22, so the folk who believed so strongly in a future life were no way behind ourselves in intelligence.

In Gen. 11:1 we learn that the earth was of one speech. After sin entered the world, they showed a desire to waste their time on vast building projects, Gen 11:4. Here we may imagine their descendants obtained the idea for building such monuments as the pyramids and Stonehenge. In Gen. 11:6, God saw that "**nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do**" and stopped them co-operating by confounding their language. In fact languages do exhibit some similarities, which point to a common ancestry, and they still tend to develop dialects and grow apart.

#### (ETERNAL) LIFE EXPECTANCY

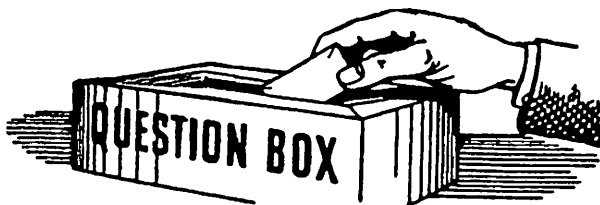
There are rash predictions being made by scientists about human immortality on earth, made possible by overcoming illness, growing new body parts to replace those that age, and the production of "designer babies" to order by rearranging genes. One reason for the current concern about the environment of our planet is a lack of faith in any other kind of existence. Scientists have spent an enormous amount of money exploring space, and have found only inhospitable conditions, including planets covered in ice, toxic gases or active volcanoes. They are convinced that some primitive form of life must be found out there, which would provide evidence for the theory of evolution, and might even allow human beings to colonise space at some remote time when the earth becomes overcrowded or uninhabitable. They can believe in a theory like this, although they have no facts to support it, but the one thing they cannot accept is that man has a soul. However, the Bible is quite clear that man was given dominion over all the earth, Gen. 1:26, but not of the heavens, and there is no way yet found in which man can live outside of the earth's atmosphere, except by taking all his requirements of air, water, food, etc. with him.

How can the evolutionist explain why folk are so keen to live for ever, that they talk of medical science being able to defeat the ageing process? The resulting senility and

overcrowding of the population would work against their selection theory. Surely it is because human beings would have been immortal except for Adam and Eve's disobedience, and none of us are reconciled to the idea of going out of existence. But according to the scriptures the first human beings were turned out of the Garden of Eden lest they should eat of the tree of life and live for ever, Gen. 3:22, and a sudden and unforeseen end to the world is foretold in 2 Peter 3:10.

Thankfully there have always been a few faithful Christians who have seen the need to return to the scriptures, in order to reverse mankind's decline into ignorance and sin. Our message is to go forward by going back. We also look forward to progress, but not by evolution. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." 1 Cor. 15:50 "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. 15:52. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2:9.

R.M. PAYNE




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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*The following question comes from a congregation which, in its Bible study, has been looking at Genesis 1; 1-2.*

*"Did God create the heavens and the earth millions of years ago and let them become 'Without form and void'. Then, the Spirit of God moved, and we have the world today?"*

*There then follows a second question:*

*"We wondered how Dinosaurs fit into Creation, if we do not have the millions of years".*

A question along similar lines came in about two years ago, but, since it is possible that some of the readers of the "S.S." missed the answer I gave then, we shall look at the passage again.

### (1) THE 'GAP' THEORY

We should notice exactly what **Genesis 1:1** tells us.

It does *not* tell us that God created the heavens and the earth, and then allowed them to 'become without form and void'. Instead, we have a complete sentence making a positive and emphatic statement about their origin. It states, simply and clearly, that the 'heavens and the earths,' - an expression representing everything that exists - were *created by God*. That is how they came into being.

The word '*created*' is the significant word, because '*bara*', used in this chapter, means '*to bring into existence something which has not previously existed*'. Furthermore in the scriptures it is used 33 times for 'create' and is used exclusively of the actions of God. There are just two occasions where, in the A.V., it has been rendered 'make', but even there it would have been more accurately translated 'create', (see **Num. 16:30**, and **Psalm 89:47**). In fact, modern translations have replaced it with 'create'.

'*Create*' is very different from the word '*made*'. One can '*make*' a thing out of pre-existent material, but God first '*created*' the matter - brought the 'building blocks' into



existence, so to speak - and began to produce the ordered system which we know as *'the heavens and the earth'*.

Notice, also, that God created this material *'in the beginning'*, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that, before this, matter did not exist. The phrase, *'in the beginning'*, has even been called *'the dateless date'*, because it is impossible to go farther back than *'the beginning'*.

Verse 2 then tells us that, at the time of its creation, *the material*, to which God Himself later gave the name *'Earth'*, (see v.10), was, as described in the Hebrew text, *'tohu wa bohu'* - (an interesting play on words!). The A.V. translated this as *'without form and void'* and both words mean *'empty'*, and describe their state of *'emptiness'*.

How long God allowed this state of emptiness to continue - or *if* He allowed it to continue at all - we cannot say. There is nothing in the Bible that will permit us to be dogmatic on the matter. But, in order to account for the fossil record, and, especially, to make room for the Dinosaurs mentioned in the question, attempts have been made to fix a gap of millions of years between verses 1 and 2.

Sometimes, in order to prevent the Bible from being called *'unscientific'*, clever religious people have gone out of their way to accommodate the scientists; or, at the very least, they have tried to *'harmonize'* the Bible and *'Science'*.

We have a case in point before us right now.

Thomas Chalmers, was a very gifted Scottish clergyman, born in 1780, who is probably best remembered as the man who was largely responsible for the founding of the *'Free Church of Scotland'*.

Dr. Chalmers was a great orator, a mathematician and a chemist. And, as a writer he produced a work entitled *'Institutes of Theology'* which ran to 34 volumes!

In his attempts to reconcile the Biblical account of Creation with what was claimed to be *'science'*, he produced the *'Catastrophe Theory'*, which assumed that, in the time-gap which he assumed should be placed between verse 1 and 2, there had been an *earlier* *'Creation'*, which had been destroyed by some sort of disaster destroying all life - including the Dinosaurs which he thought roamed the earth at that time. According to the theory, it was this *'catastrophe'* which, besides killing the dinosaurs, also produced the fossils.

Well, since there is no mention of anything like this in the Bible, how did Thomas Chalmers support his theory?

1. He did it by going to the 2nd verse of Gen. 1, *'and the earth was without form and void'*, and *altering the translation*.

He said that the world *'was'* which, in Hebrew, is *'havah'*, should really be *'hayah'*, which means *'became'*. With Dr. Chalmers' alteration the verse comes out as, *'the earth became waste and empty'*.

Unfortunately for his theory, there is *no linguistic evidence or authority* for making this change in the text, and it is rejected by biblical scholars.

Linguistically, the word *'was'*, in the 2nd verse, is a *'substantive'* and expresses time. In other words, it refers to all the time during which the *'Earth'* existed as a formless mass.

2. Dr. Chalmers also turned to verse 28, which, in the A.V., reads, *'replenish' the 'earth'*, and he took this to mean, *'re-fill'*, That is, *'fill the earth again'*.

But the Hebrew word *'male'* does not mean *'fill again'*. It means *'fill up'*. God commanded those whom he had created to *'Be fruitful and multiply and fill up the earth'*. God commanded the first human beings to populate the planet which he had prepared for them to occupy.

Still no evidence for the *'Catastrophe Theory'*!

3. Dr. Chalmers sought support from Isaiah 45:18, which tells us that God *'created*

*the heavens and formed the earth'*. He pointed out that the verse continues to say that God *'did not create it a chaos'*. But the good doctor should have continued with the rest of that verse; *'He formed it to be inhabited'*. Bear in mind that Isaiah had not heard of Dr. Chalmers' theory! The prophet, speaking on behalf of God, is referring to the earth on which we live today. God did not create it to remain empty (*'tohu'*). This, of course, is backed up by **Gen. 1:28**.

### (2) WHAT ABOUT THE DINOSAURS?

If there was no 'former creation' during which Dinosaurs roamed the earth, when did they exist?

Well, **Gen. 1:21** offers us something to think about.

On the fourth day God created *'great sea monsters'*, R.S.V. Here the Hebrew word used is *'tannin'*, which describes any *'long'* creature, and refers to sea monsters, dragons, serpents, and lizards.

Since the word 'dinosaur' comes from *'deino saurus'* and means *'terrible lizard'*, verse 21 has been described as referring to the 'Saurian' age - the age of the lizards.

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word 'saurian' as referring to the *"order of lizards including crocodiles, alligators, and extinct kinds, such as Ichthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus"*.

### THE 'DAY' OF CREATION

Well, perhaps the 'days' of Creation were vast geological periods and not 24 hour days?

Not so! It is true that the word *'yom'* = *'day'*, is used in several ways in the Bible and was used to refer to an indefinite period of time, as, for instance, *'the day of temptation in the wilderness'*. See **Psalms 95:8**, and **Isa. 2:11**.

But, remember that the account of Creation repeatedly says, *'And there was evening and there was morning one day'*. And again, *'So it was evening and there was morning a second day . . .'*

Brother J.B. Rotherham's literal rendering of the Hebrew text gives us this translation.

Again; when the Israelites were commanded to *'remember the Sabbath day'*, they were given a reason. *'For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and the seventh (day) is a Sabbath'*.

The rule to follow when determining the use of the word *'yom'*, is quite simple.

When 'day' is preceded by a number, it must be understood to refer to literal days of 24 hours.

The days of creation were literal 24 hour days, consisting of 'evening and morning'.

And, those who believe in the omnipotence of God, have no difficulty in accepting that the God who said, *'Light be!'* - and there was light!, is also capable of completing the work of creation without resorting to the use of 'vast geological periods'.

(Questions to Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland. PA6 7NZ)

## THE SIN OF MOSES

### THE SIN

As the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt and came to Rephidim, they murmured for water. The Lord told Moses to take his rod and smite the rock in Horeb, and there would be water for the people. Moses did so, and water flowed out of the rock in abundance so there was plenty for the people and their cattle. (As you consider the magnitude of this accomplishment keep in mind that the total watered consisted of 600,000 men, of fighting age and upward, the women, children and the cattle.) Moses

did what God commanded him and God was praised.

About thirty-eight years later, in the wilderness of Zin, the people, again without water, murmured about their need. And God again supplied their needs. But on this occasion instead of telling Moses to smite the rock as before, Moses was told to speak to the rock. We must notice that the people had mightily tried both Moses and Aaron and Moses had plenty of cause to be upset with the people. But Moses' provocation did not, in any way, justify what he did. Moses took his rod in his hand, as the Lord told him to do, but instead of speaking to the rock, he spoke to the people and said "**Shall we fetch water out of this rock for you rebels?**" and he smote the rock twice. Aaron was Moses' accomplice in the sin and the Lord spoke to them: "**Because ye believe me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them**" (Num. 20:12).

#### THE OVERT ACT

The first element of the compound sin of Moses and Aaron was the overt act; the rock was struck instead of being spoken to. We should notice that sin, in order to be sin, does not have to include inherent evil or immorality. There was nothing inherently evil or immoral about striking the rock, yet Moses and Aaron sinned in so doing. When men do that which the Lord has not authorized, or fail to do that which the Lord has commanded, or substitute for that which the Lord has commanded, they have sinned. When Moses and Aaron did what they did in the wilderness of Zin, they stood in rebellion against the commandment of the Lord. When the Lord accused Aaron, he said, "**Ye rebelled against my word.**" And when he accused Moses he said, "**Ye rebelled against my commandment**" (Num. 20:24; 27:12). So, the overt act of striking the rock was the first element of our consideration of this compound sin.

#### UNBELIEF

But even behind this element of their sin was another element; the element of unbelief. The rebellion of Moses and Aaron was caused by unbelief. When the Lord said, "**Because ye believed me not**" (Num. 20:12), he was not accusing Moses and Aaron of not believing in him as God, but the circumstances show that they did not believe the Lord's command with reference to the rock. Had they believed it they would have obeyed it. When Paul raised the question why all men, since they had heard, had not obeyed the gospel, he settled the matter by quoting the prophet, "**For Esaias saith, Lord who hath believed our report?**" (Rom. 10:16). So while we cannot conclude all that went through the mind of Moses and Aaron, we can know that they sinned because of unbelief. They set the Lord's judgement aside and substituted their own. This was rebellion pure and simple. Saul, the first human king of Israel, committed the same sin (See 1 Sam. 15:1-31). Moses and Aaron lost their inheritance in the promised land and Saul lost his kingdom. What an awful price to pay. Men do not have to deny that there is a God, or that Jesus is the Christ, or that the Bible is inspired of God to be unbelievers. To reject anything that God has said is unbelief, and the guilty shall never enter heaven.

#### FAILURE TO SANCTIFY GOD

There is a third element to this compound sin in addition to Moses and Aaron's rebellion and unbelief; their failure to sanctify God in the eyes of the people. Moses and Aaron's rebellion was caused by unbelief and their failure to obey the commandment of the Lord caused them to fail to sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the people. Isaiah said, "The Lord shall be exalted in judgement, and God who is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness (Isa. 5:16). If Moses and Aaron had spoken to the rock, as God told them to do, they would have sanctified God in righteousness. But they rebelled, and in so doing they set their person and their will above God, and thus, did not sanctify God in the eyes of the people. And, so, the Lord said, "**Ye believed me not**

to sanctify me in the eyes of the people." "Ye rebelled against my word." "Ye rebelled against my commandment." Their rebellion failed to sanctify the Lord and showed that they did not believe what the Lord had said about how they were to proceed to fetch water out of the rock.

Men may sin today, as Moses and Aaron sinned. For this reason we are instructed: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever." (1 Peter 4:11).

We implore all men to examine their faith, their hope and their practices to see if there is even one thing in which they are rejecting the word of the Lord as did Moses and Aaron when they sinned before God.

A. ROBERTSON

### TREASURER'S REPORT

I have prepared the following Balance Sheet for your information. It shows that income exceeds expenditure by only £64. This small excess really only exists due to more people than usual subscribing in December for this year and also the generous gifts we regularly receive. The situation will need to be reviewed in the summer to see what action is needed.

If the address label on your Scripture Standard has 'DEC99' in the top line then payment for this year is still due. If you have renewed it will read 'DEC 0' to indicate payment has been received for this year.

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

#### BALANCE SHEET FOR 1999

Income		Expenditure	
Bank account 1/1/99	£889.67	Printing	£4248.00
Subscriptions	£3320.34	Postage	851.09
Bank Interest	24.38	Stationery	19.58
Gifts	<u>1892.30</u>	Reading Cards	<u>54.40</u>
	<u>£6126.69</u>		<u>£5173.07</u>
		Bank account 31/12/99	<u>£6126.69</u>

J. K. Kneller (*Treasurer*)

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

J. H. Currie (*Auditor*), 4/2/2000.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 2	Jer. 50:33-46	Revelation 18:1-20
April 9	Psalms 111	Revelation 18:21 to 19:10
April 16	Ezek. 39:17-29	Revelation 19:11-21
April 23	Daniel 12	Revelation 20
April 30	Isaiah 65:13-25	Revelation 21

### REVELATION 18

In this chapter, we read of the fall of mystical Babylon. The first Babylon had fallen because of her idolatry and wickedness (Isaiah 21:9). Mystical Babylon was to fall for her iniquities (18:5). She was guilty of corruption, spiritual adultery, pride, carnality, deception, persecution, etc. Robert Wallace Orr

makes an interesting point in his book *Victory Pageant*: "The Babylonish spirit, therefore, is not simply one of unfaithfulness to God, as though the attitude to God could be wrong and yet everything else be right. It is also one of calculating materialism, of ostentatious luxury and of callous indifference to the sufferings that may come to others who have to be exploited and pushed aside in the process." G. R. Beasley-Murray has written: "Having portrayed the fate of the harlot-city through the on-slaught of the Antichrist and his allies, John composes a dirge over the city in the style of the doom-songs of the Old Testament prophets . . . The chief quarries to which John has gone for his structure are the prophecies against Babylon in Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 51, and that against Tyre in Ezekiel 26-7, together with significant snatches from the prophecies against Edom in Isaiah 34 and Nineveh in Nahum 3. John's employment of these doom-songs, directed against the tyrannies of former ages, is itself significant in the way he viewed Rome. This city summed up in itself and surpassed the wickedness of the tyrant-powers of the past. Hence in his song which celebrates her desolation he concentrates into one the prophecies against them all." We read: "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (18:20). We are reminded of the words: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30).

#### REVELATION 19

This chapter begins with the Hallelujah chorus. Every time I read it I can hear Handel's famous composition from *The Messiah*. The great harlot had been judged and God had "avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (19:2).

We now read of the "marriage of the Lamb" (19:7). I have always taken it that

this event is yet future. Why then do so many Christians speak of being married to Christ already? I love verses 7 & 8: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." I have attended many weddings and, indeed, have conducted some of them. Without failure, all the brides have come prepared. Each saint also has to be prepared to meet the groom, who is Christ the Lamb of God. What better way is there to describe the union of Christ and His people in heaven than this?

We next read of the rider on a white horse. Of course, the words are of Jesus Himself. He is worthy of such titles as: "Faithful and True" (11); "The Word of God" (13); "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (16). These titles refer to His trustworthy character and His power and authority. "Word of God" is an interesting title. "Word," in Greek, is *Logos* and "God" is *Theos*. That is how we get our English word theology. Personally, I like to tell people that my theology is a person and that He has been seen, among other things, riding a white horse.

The chapter goes on to reveal the victory of the Lamb of God. His weapon is a "sharp sword" (15). We are reminded of the words in the letter to the Hebrews: "For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (4:12). Also, we have Paul's words to the Ephesians: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:17). The destiny

of the beast (mystical Babylon) and the false prophet (Muhammed) is "a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (20). "This is the second death" (20:14).

#### REVELATION 20

We have just celebrated the beginning of a new millennium. We know the word means "a thousand years." A period of a thousand years is mentioned in this chapter (2-4; 6-7). I agree especially with David King on this subject that John's words speak of a metaphorical resurrection from the dead. He writes: "Our friends are clearly wrong in rushing to Rev. xx as though it were the commencement instead of the end of an allegory. The several chapters bring before us two great opposing parties - the one, the Church - the other, the Anti-christian party, including the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. The Church is represented by witnesses who testify through many centuries. The witnesses are not the same persons throughout, but they form the same party, and, therefore, may be spoken of as sleeping or waking, depressed or rising, as the party may be supine or active, crushed down or resuscitated . . . As the first resurrection is the elevation of the party of Christ, consequent upon the suppression of the anti-christian party, the living again of the rest of the dead is the re-elevation, for the little season, of the party of the adversary." There is a lot in this, but I trust David King's words are helpful.

We also read of the final judgment in this chapter. It follows a literal resurrection from the dead of everyone (13). The scene before God's great white throne is set (11). I think the books refer to each one's record of his deeds on earth. The clear indication is that works are important. The phrase ". . . according to their works" is found twice (12,13). However, what matters is that our name is written in the Lamb's book of life (12). Verse 15 could not be plainer: "And whosoever was not found writ-

ten in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." I know my name is recorded in many places. For example, it can be found in the Register of Births in Scotland; the Inland Revenue records; and the Personnel records of the Royal Bank of Scotland - to name but three. But I pray God that Ian S. Davidson's name is also found in "the book of life." If it is, then it is written in red - in the blood of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes my natural birth is recorded, but so also is my spiritual birth. Dear reader, I pray that all our names are in that book of books.

#### REVELATION 21

"By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promises: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker are God" (Hebrews 11:9,10). It is only when we come to the book of Revelation that we read of the spiritual children of Abraham finding their city and dwelling therein. The city is the holy or new Jerusalem (2,10). It is a magnificent and splendid city and like no other on earth. Certainly, the Jerusalem that now is cannot be compared with it. I have visited the earthly Jerusalem. I hope to visit the new and heavenly "city of peace." It is a visit that will last forever.

I would urge all readers to study this chapter most carefully. This should strengthen all of us in our pilgrimage on earth and help keep our eyes focused on our goal, which is the eternal city "descending out of heaven from God . . ." (10). Really, it is all too wonderful for words. The inspired apostle John gives us the best picture anyone could. Inner-city problems are nowhere to be seen in this city because "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie; but they

who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (27). Truly, it is heaven on the new earth!

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

**ALL I EVER NEEDED TO  
KNOW I LEARNED IN  
KINDERGARTEN**

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not the top of graduate school mountain but there in the sand box at nursery school.

These are the the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say your sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work everyday some.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are still all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup - they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned; the biggest word of all: LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all - the whole world - had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock

every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

ROBERT FULGHUM.

**TEST YOUR BIBLICAL  
KNOWLEDGE**

1. With what nation does the book of Obadiah deal?
2. What was the first plague against Egypt?
3. Who were Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun?
4. At what age did Joseph die?
5. The proud and haughty Edomites were compared to what bird?
6. What is the name of the river besides which Ezekiel and the other exiles settled?
7. Name a famous street in Damascus?
8. How many angels did the women encounter at Jesus' tomb?
9. To the Ephesians, Paul called himself an ambassador in what?
10. Lois was the grandmother of whom?

**COMING EVENTS**

**GLENROTHES MEN'S DAY**

On MARCH 11th, 2000

*Second Coming of Christ*

**BUCKIE SOCIAL MEETING**

**D.V. to be held**

On SATURDAY, 29th APRIL, 2000

Speaker: Bro. David Murray, Aberdeen

**TRANENT ANNUAL SOCIAL**

SATURDAY, 11th MARCH, 2000

at 4.00 p.m.

Speakers: Ian S. Davidson, Motherwell  
Douglas Melling, Wigan

**GHANA APPEAL**

In the past month we have heard about new outreach work carried out by brother Wonkyeh Baah-Kwaw near Sekyere Heman where seven souls were added to the Lord's Kingdom.

I continue to receive letters of planned outreach work in the next few months. The work is tireless and the enthusiasm appears to be exhaustless. The income for the Ghana appeal continues to be fairly consistent and I thank everyone who participates in this work for this as it makes my job easier when I can plan ahead. Thank you. Once again all the glasses, clothes and books received in the past month have been sent out to Ghana to villages where we thought they could make best use of them. Thank you for your continued support. 900 Twi Hymn books have now been distributed and received. We actually have a surplus now. (I am sure this will only be temporary).

Please remember the following brethren in your prayers: Christiana Agyeman who is recovering from her operation to remove a goitre from her neck. (Bodwesango) Fred Tamatey, a preacher who is ill suffering stomach ulcers has undergone tests and he awaits the results. We have been greatly

encouraged especially in the last month having received some new contributions and once again we thank everyone who is helping in this appeal.

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

**THE BIBLE CONTAINS:**

- The Mind of God.
- The state of man.
- The doom of sinners.
- The happiness of believers.
- Doctrines which are holy.
- Precepts which are binding.
- Histories which are true.
- Decisions which are immutable.

**ANSWERS**

1. Edom.
2. Water to blood (Exodus 7:14-24)
3. Leading Levite musicians in the days of Solomon 2 Chronicles 5:12)
4. 110 (Genesis 50:26)
5. Eagle (Obadiah 4)
6. Kebar (Ezekiel 1:1)
7. Straight (Acts 9:11)
8. Two (Luke 24:4)
9. Chains or Bonds (Ephesians 6:20).
10. Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5)

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