

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

According to this morning's newspapers, all those who drive expensive cars are likely to have them stolen and be murdered in the process. Just yesterday a young Estate Agent was stabbed to death as thieves drove away in his £20,000 car. "Carjacking" is now so commonplace that the Home Secretary threatens(?) to increase prison sentences for this crime. Unfortunately prisons are so cramped that last week the Home Secretary proposed allowing most prisoners to keep on their jobs and be locked up only in the evenings and weekends. The country is in a mess. Violence is rampant, and we have muggings, fraud, robberies, burglaries, rapes, vandalism, drug addiction, drunkenness, suicides, child abuse, childhood pregnancies, doctors being assaulted, teachers being assaulted, school bullying and truancies etc., etc. Carjacking is just another addition to the list. A Godless country? Certainly difficult to think of it as a "Christian" country. Perhaps not quite a godless country, however. It has a god, it seems, but unfortunately a god described by Paul as, "The God of this world". Yes, the world is hurtling along the broad road to destruction, no doubt, partly, I suppose, to the inadequacy of the gospel preaching, but partly also to the blinkering effect of the cunning devices of the devil. Paul said, "**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost. In whom THE GOD OF THIS WORLD hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them**" (2 Cor. 4:4)

We never hear much mention of the Devil today, not even from the pulpits, and such a mention would, in any case, merely cause derisive laughter, but the reality is no joke, and if the world can't see the Devil, it can certainly see his handiwork.

Just as, in the minds of the general public, the Holy Spirit is thought to be an *influence* for good, so the Devil is thought to be the bad *influence* behind all evil deeds and actions. However, from the Bible we learn that just as the Holy Spirit is a personality, so is Satan, the Devil.

One can, perhaps, understand *the general public* having a hazy notion of these things, but when Bishops and the clergy (products of Universities and other seats of 'learning') deny the existence of the Devil then we must indeed question the fitness of some 'religious' 'seats of learning'. It is a simple matter to short-circuit the whole controversy of the subject (if indeed there be any real controversy) by referring to the way in which the Devil was regarded by Jesus and His apostles. Did they regard him as an *influence*; did they regard him as a figure of fun; did they take him very seriously indeed; did they regard him as a very real personality; did they regard him merely as a

simple personification of our own evil passions and tendencies? What saith the scriptures?

THE DEVIL IN THE O.T.

The terms "*Satan*" and "*the Devil*" are used fairly interchangeably for the same person. 'Satan' refers to his role as 'adversary or accuser' in the former case, and his diabolical works in the latter. The Devil is from the Greek *diabolus* (from which, of course, our English word 'diabolical' comes). The primary meaning of the Hebrew word being 'Adversary or Accuser' it is thus used to describe the actions of the "Angel of the Lord" in meeting Balaam (Nu. 22:22). However in later books (Chron., Job, Zechariah) Satan becomes a definite spiritual being. In 1 Kings 22:22 the "**Lying Spirit**" who engaged to put false words in the mouths of the prophets of Ahab performs somewhat the same function of that performed by Satan in later times. (There are still prophets speaking very false words.) 1 Kings 22 is well worth another read. It seems, however, to be the book of Job where Satan is more plainly encountered where, amongst the "**Sons of God**" he appears. An account of his recent activities is demanded by God, and then he is asked to consider God's servant Job. Satan as the 'accuser' attributes Job's loyalty merely to be self-interest — "**Does Job serve God for naught?**" there seems little in this account to suggest that Satan is *a mere influence*. The same characteristic (adversary; accuser) appears in Zechariah (2:16; 3:1) where we see "Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him". A like view meets us in the imprecations of Ps.109 (v.6) in the words, "Let Satan stand at his right hand". We have a further glimpse of the character and purposes of Satan on 1 Chron. 21 (where Satan provokes David into the sin of numbering Israel).

Thus, even in the O.T. Satan emerges as a real person; and one of very considerable power, arraigning himself as the enemy of God and mankind; God the meanwhile utilising his activities for purposes of God's own (e.g. allowing him to subject poor Job to terrible suffering that Job's true loyalty might be made known to the world in general, and to Satan in particular.)

THE DEVIL IN THE N.T.

In the N.T. it will be noticed that the translators have frequently translated Satan into the Greek *diabolus* "the accuser"; his function being by no means restricted to *mere accusation*. In the parable of the tares, for instance, Satan is described as *the one who introduced evil into the world* and all evil persons are his children. It was inevitable that Jesus had to have an encounter with Satan before He could enter upon His work and so "**He was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the Devil**" (Matt. 4:19). In the parable of the sower the Devil is rightly described as bringing to perpetual ruin Christ's work of healing and reformation; and when the seed of the gospel is sown in human hearts "**Then cometh the devil**". On the return of the 70 disciples from successfully spreading the kingdom of God, Jesus declared that He beheld "**Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven**" The 70 had had victories over Satanic power but these were merely precursors of greater victories to come. (Luke 10:18). At that last evening, when Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples before He suffered, "**Satan entered into Judas**" to betray Him. The powers and desire of the Devil to wreak a whole repertoire of evil and destruction on the earth are thus completely boundless. With this the apostles agree. Peter declares that it was Satan who prompted the lie of Ananias (Acts 5:3). It was Satan that hindered Paul when he would visit the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:18). The sinner in Corinth was "**delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh**" a statement which brings out the idea that Satan inflicts disease; supported by our

Lord's saying of the woman "**whom Satan hath bound, Lo! these eighteen years**"; and Paul's regarding the "**thorn in the flesh**" as a "**messenger of Satan sent to buffet him**". This view allies itself with a large number of scripture passages which appear to imply that this physical world is largely under the dominion of Satan. In the temptation of Jesus, Satan offered Him "**all the kingdoms of the world**" (Matt. 4:8) and in a parallel passage Satan claims that this power was "**delivered unto him**" (Luke 4:6). Indeed, our Lord's answer implies the reality of this offer and the correctness of this claim. In the gospel of John, Satan is repeatedly referred to as "**the prince of this world**", and Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians (2:2) calls Satan "**the prince of the power of the air**". In the Revelation Satan, under various forms, is more prominent than elsewhere in scripture and has angels under him who are his emissaries - a view implied in Matt. 9:34; 12:24 & Eph. 6:12. Indeed in the Revelation he is represented as having at one time dwelt in heaven and from thence been expelled. These facts are all quite inconsistent with Satan being a *mere influence*. Additionally, the persecutions upon the Church are due to the directions of Satan and all heretical doctrines and immoral practices are looked upon as the "**depths of Satan**". The devil is certainly not a matter for levity, or amusement and he must be treated with a healthy respect. Even "**Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.**" (Jude 9).

Thus the N.T. view of Satan is essentially the same as that of the O.T. although there is in the N.T. a better definition given to his character, his power and his far-reaching resources.

SATAN'S DEVICES

Paul was continually concerned about the spiritual health of the Church members lest the coming of the devil would destroy their faith and rob them of their reward. Those outside the Church did not interest the devil for he had them already in his grasp. Paul's worry was "**Lest Satan should get the advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.**" (2 Cor. 2:11). Thus it is that the devil does not appear to us ugly, or repulsive, but rather something beautiful and very attractive. The common caricature of the devil is, of course, as something rather hideous with hoofs, horns, tail and a pitchfork. This is far from the truth, as we well know, for if he were ugly he would have a much lesser number of followers. Satan is master of disguises and comes in all forms. Paul warned against "**false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**". (2 Cor. 11:14). Only the putting on of "**the whole armour of God**" can enable us "**to stand against the wiles of the devil**". The devil is not crude or clumsy but very sophisticated and *full of wiles*. Satan uses even our friends and family as stalking horses behind which to hide and seduce us away from the truth. Peter, whose love for Jesus would have tempted Him to detour the cross was sharply reprimanded with, "**Get thee behind me Satan**". Satan is fully and actively employed in setting snares for the unwary, and even for the wary. Paul warns Timothy on three separate occasions about the "**snares of the devil**" and offers instruction to those trapped "**that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him, at his will.**" (Tim. 2:26). He is as effective and merciless as a lion on the rampage (a roaring lion) and yet as subtle and devious as a slithering serpent. He encourages us into sin *gradually* and comes to us under the guise of friendship. He always gives us plausible, and even 'laudable' reasons for things he suggests that we do, and calms our qualms; as with Eve "**Thou shalt not surely die**".

Satan paints in false colours and is the master of camouflage. He was the originator of the stratagem of term-switching and calls sin *mistakes* or *faults*; drunkenness he calls *weakness*; religious zeal he calls *fanaticism*; conviction of truth he calls *bigotry*; meekness as *weakness*; peaceableness as *cowardice*; 'living-in-sin' he calls '*sleeping together*'. Satan has successfully thwarted the impact of the gospel by *counterfeiting* the teaching of the apostles with the commandments of men, by *causing divisions* amongst the disciples of Christ and by *corrupting* God's holy ordinances (of Baptism and the Lord's Table). He is the author of doubt and despair, as Paul says (2 Cor. 4:4) **"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"**. When we look around we can see for ourselves the frightening efficiency with which the devil has accomplished his task of blinding men's minds to the truth. Even those within the Church are very vulnerable and caused Paul to say, **"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."** (2 Cor. 11:3).

Perhaps the devil's greatest strategy is to encourage procrastination and to convince us that there is plenty of time. It is said that the devil once held a conference with his junior demons and discussed the best way of hindering the spread of the gospel. Various suggestions were made. Some suggested discrediting the claims of Jesus to Sonship of God, but the devil rejected this and said that Jesus' works and miracles proved His Sonship. Others suggested a denial of the resurrection and the spreading of a 'swoon' theory but this also Satan rejected as being unequal to meet the evidence of the N.T. which clearly supported the resurrection and the witnesses who saw Him. There are indeed so many 'infallible proofs' in the N.T. of all of Christ's claims that it was difficult to know what to discredit. Finally someone made a suggestion which the devil pounced upon with great enthusiasm. The suggestion was that man should be persuaded that there was *no hurry* in these matters, and that people should be encouraged to think a *little longer* about taking such a serious step as becoming a follower of Jesus. Given time, said the devil, most of them will take so long that they will be attracted in other directions and never take the step to Jesus. In this way millions would die *still thinking about it*. This, surely, is why Jesus said, *"Now is the day of salvation"*. It is the devil who says *"Perhaps, tomorrow"*.

SATAN IS POWERFUL BUT NOT OMNIPOTENT

Satan's days, like our own, are numbered. Satan's power extends only to our death. One of the reasons for Jesus becoming 'flesh' was that He might die, and in death, **"destroy him that had the power of death that is, the devil. And deliver them (us) who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage"**. (Heb.2:15). And so the good news is that the works of the devil are destined for ultimate destruction. John says, **"He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil: (1 John 3:8)**. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, but meanwhile He gives His followers sufficient power to cope with Satan until that time of ultimate destruction shall come. For instance Paul could promise that if we put on the whole armour of God we shall be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Indeed the devil is cunning but those prepared with this armour (loins girt with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit; being prayerful and watchful with all perseverance) can circumvent his wiles and parry his devices.

Thus Satan, far from being a *mere influence*, is a very real and powerful spiritual being, unleashing himself upon the world and dedicated to every evil purpose and the complete frustration of man's redemption. Satan may desire to have believers **"that he may sift them as wheat"** but this trial also works experience, hope, patience and every grace. His persecution of the Church but purifies it from its dross, and burns up its chaff. We can rejoice therefore that Satan's days are numbered and that eventually he shall suffer the same fate as all those he has seduced. In the meantime however we must be diligent to recognise his approach, and to counter his devices. **"Put on herefore, the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"**. (Eph 6:11-13).

EDITOR

THE BIBLE (part 2)

There are also many famous sayings from the New Testament Scriptures. *"The salt of the earth"* (Matthew 5:13); *"Turn...the other cheek"* (Matthew 5:39); *"Let not your left hand know what your right hand does"* (Matthew 6:3); *"No man can serve two masters"* (Matthew 6:24); *"Judge not, that you be not judged"* (Matthew 7:1); *"Neither cast you your pearls before swine"* (Matthew 7:6); *"Wolves...in sheep's clothing"* (Matthew 7:15); *"You shall know them by their fruits"* (Matthew 7:16); *"Fell by the way side"* (Matthew 13:4); *"A prophet is not without honour save in his own country"* (Matthew 13:57); *"Blind leaders of the blind"* (Matthew 15:14); *"Signs of the times"* (Matthew 16:3); *"The eleventh hour"* (Matthew 20:9); *"Chosen few"* (Matthew 20:16); *"A den of thieves"* (Matthew 21:13); *"Wars and rumours of wars"* (Matthew 24:6); *"Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41); *"For all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword"* (Matthew 26:52); *"Washed his hands"* (Matthew 27:24); *"If a house be divided against itself that house cannot stand"* (Mark 3:25); *"No room...in the inn"* (Luke 2:7); *"Fell among thieves"* (Luke 10:30); *"He passed by on the other side"* (Luke 10:31) *"No respecter of persons"* (Acts 10:34); *"No mean city"* (Acts 21:39) *"A law unto themselves"* (Romans 2:14); *"The wages of sin"* (Romans 6:23); *"The powers that be"* (Romans 13:1); *"All things to all men"* (1 Corinthians 9:22); *"Suffer fools gladly"* (2 Corinthians 11:19); *"A thorn in the flesh"* (2 Corinthians 12:7); *"Old wives' fables"* (1 Timothy 4:7); *"The love of money is the root of all evil"* (1 Timothy 6:10); *"Strong meat"* (Hebrews 5:12); *"Labour of love"* (Hebrews 6:10); *"The patience of Job"* (James 5:11); *"Cover the multitude of sins"* (1 Peter 4:8); *"Clear as crystal"* (Revelation 22:1).

Many writers have used phrases from the Bible as titles for their books. John Steinbeck, for example, published the following works: *Cup of Gold*, *To a God Unknown*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *East of Eden*. The Bible has always been a great source for English writers.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are 3,340 people mentioned in the Bible. Jesus, of course, is the one most mentioned. He is followed by David, Moses, Jacob, Aaron, Solomon, Joseph, Abraham, Ephraim and Benjamin. Moses is found in 32 different books, David in 29, Abraham in 26 and Isaiah in 20. The most mentioned woman in the Bible is Sarah, followed by

Rachel. John, Paul and Peter are the most mentioned men in the New Testament Scriptures. The woman most mentioned in the N.T. is Mary Magdalene.

The most mentioned animals in the Bible are sheep. These are followed by lambs, lions, oxen, rams, horses, bullocks, asses, goats and camels. The most mentioned crops are: corn, figs, olives, wheat, grapes, barley, pomegranates, raisins, apples and beans.

The longest names of people and places in the Bible are as follows: Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah's son), Bashanhavothjair (an alternative name of Argob), Chepharhaammonai (an Ammonite settlement), Chusharishathaim (king of Mesopotamia), Kibrothhattaavah (a desert encampment of the Israelites), Selahammahlekoth (a stronghold in Maon), Abelbethmaachah (a town near Damascus), Almondiblathaim (a stopping-place for the Israelites) Apharsathehites (an Assyrian nomadic group), Merodachbaladan (an Assyrian king), Hepkathazzurin (a battlefield), Ramathaimzophin (a town where Samuel was born), Tiglathpilneser (an Assyrian king) and Zaphnathpaaneah (a name given to Joseph by Pharaoh). I think many Biblical names are off-putting to a lot of people, but all readers should persevere and perhaps learn the meaning of each name.

SOME QUOTES

At this point, I should like to give you some quotes on the Bible, which I have noted during my thirty-five years of studying the great book.

"The Bible is a book not fearful of examination; it fears not criticism of its contents, nor investigation into its sources because it is of God and of God thus eternal."

"The Bible speaks of man as he is, and as he ought to be; not as he is physically, astronomically, geologically, politically, or metaphysically; but as he is and ought to be, morally and religiously" (Alexander Campbell).

"The Bible is to the intellectual and moral world of man what the sun is to the planets in our solar system - the fountain and source of light and life, spiritual and eternal" (Alexander Campbell).

"Whence but from Heaven,
 Could men unskilled in arts,
 In several ages born, in several parts,
 Weave such agreeing truths?
 Or how or why
 Should they conspire to cheat us with a lie?"

"O never on this Holy Book,
 With careless, cold indifference look;
 'Tis God's own word; and they who read,
 With prayerful hearts and reverend heed,
 Shall gain from each unfolding page
 A blessing from their heritage.

If thou art rich in things of Earth,
 Learn here thy wealth is little worth.
 If thou art poor, this precious mine
 Hath countless treasures, make them thine.
 Dost thou lack wisdom, look therein,
 And surely thou shalt wisdom win,
 Wisdom to guide thee on the road,
 Which leads, through faith in Christ, to God".

"How can a book which is about men whose means of transport were limited to horses and camels (or feet) over land, and wind in sails or oars across the sea, have anything to say to men who get to the moon? The trouble with this attitude is that it concentrates on surface differences. If we concentrate on clothes, or customs, or travel, we shall see ourselves as totally different from the men and women we read about in the Bible, and conclude that the Bible cannot say anything useful today. But, in fact, similarities between the Bible characters and ourselves are enormous. The problems they faced were basically our problems - cost of living, war and peace, getting on with other people, and so on. We find in the Bible people who fell in love, people who hated, people who were anxious and afraid, people who worked, people who laughed and cried, people who fell ill, people who grew old, people who died. The Bible is about men and women like that, and activities like that. It deals with the 'constants' in human life, and deals with them in a profound way. It was a book for the first century. It is a book for the twentieth century. It is a book for all ages" (John Young).

"In the poorest cottage in the land there is one Book wherein for thousands of years the spirit of man has found light and nourishment and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him" (Thomas Carlyle).

"In regard to the great Book, I have only this to say: that it is the best gift which God has given to man" (Abraham Lincoln).

"There never was found, in any age of the world, either religion or law, that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible" (Francis Bacon).

"For more than a thousand years the Bible, collectively taken, has gone hand in hand with civilisation, science, law - in short, with the moral and intellectual civilisation of the species, always supporting and often leading the way" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge).

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible" (George Washington).

"The Bible is the chart of history. It affords a panoramic view of the whole course of events from the creation and fall of man, to the final judgement, and the inauguration of the new heaven and the new earth. It give us, not events only, but their moral character tracing the motives of the various factors of the drama, as well as the results of their actions. Events are shown in relation to their causes and their effects, and the judgement of God as to their character is revealed. Without the Bible, history would be a spectacle of unknown rivers flowing from unknown sources to unknown seas; but under its guidance we can trace the complex currents to their springs and see the end from the beginning" (Dr. Grattan Guinness).

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IAN S. DAVIDSON, Motherwell.

BE NOT AFRAID

In the midst of a storm Jesus told the disciples:

"It is I: be not afraid."

When they *willingly* received His words they received *immediate* relief (John 6:20-21). In the pressing throes of our own stormy seas we need an anchor for the soul. It is tragic to contemplate what fear will do to an individual. The Greek word for fear is "phobos," from which we derive a familiar clinical term *phobia*. Fear produced a score of suicides when the stock market panic came in 1929. Fear will cause an experienced hunter to have "freeze" or a strong man to quiver at the sight of a mouse. Worst of all,

fear will rob us of the peace we ought to possess as children of God. We are living in an era filled with many anxieties. It is reassuring to be able to shelter ourselves within the loving arms of the Almighty. Christians need never worry even when the world situation darkens. Things will not get any worse then during the Neronian persecutions and the dark hours of Domitian's reign. Yet, the powerful triumph of the valiant Christians of that first century speaks volumes to us today. Like Moses, we should not fear the wrath of the king (Hebrew 11:27). Should even death surround us we will not walk that valley alone (Psalms 23:4). Carnal powers may destroy the body, but they are unable to erase our spiritual being (Matthew 10:28). Therefore we exclaim with David in Psalm 27:1:

“The Lord is my light: whom shall I fear.”

FAITHFULNESS

Being faithful to our Redeemer in the very face of death will result in a glorious reward (Revelation 2:10, 14:13). Let us never forget that the way of Christ is worth living for and, if needs be, dying for. These words have no meaning for the luke-warm members of the Church, but for those dedicated to holding forth the banner of Truth, they convey a thrilling hope. When war clouds threaten and earthly empires crumble, beloved brethren, be not afraid!

When personal problems seem to overwhelm you, release those burdens into the care of **“the God of all comfort”** (II Corinthians 1:3-4). He has not given unto us the spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:7). The Greek word in this text for fear refers to “timidity”. We are supplied with boldness from the Lord Jesus Christ to sustain every need. There is even an avenue of escape available when temptation comes our way (I Corinthians 10:13). Our Lord intercedes on our behalf before the throne of Glory (I John 2:1) because He cares for us. Are all of these blessings being used by us as we journey in this pilgrim land? Back in the Old Testament we read that Jehovah had a controversy with His people. They were heirs of Israel's riches but such gifts were bestowed upon them in vain. Due to such foolish behaviour the Lord, who wanted to be their solicitor, was forced to be their judge (Micah, Chapters 6 and 7). If we, today, overlook the peace which Christianity bestows, we will meet with the chaotic existence of the people of Micah's day. Why not turn loose your hidden fears and restless burdens and cling to the gracious provisions of the Lord?

**“Hold Thou my hand! So weak I am and helpless,
I dare not take one step without Thy aid;
Hold Thou my hand! For then, O Loving Saviour,
No dread of ill shall make my soul afraid.”**

CHRIST HELP US

Because of the constant help of our Redeemer none of us should be afraid of the challenge of Christianity. Some delay their obedience to the Lord for fear they would not be able to live up to His demands. The one-talent man in Matthew 25 is typical of many in our times who are too fearful to try. What happiness they rob themselves of due to their unfortunate viewpoint. This same spirit animates members of the body of Christ who lack the courage to practise church discipline, manifest love toward those who persecute them or to live sacrificially in service unto the Master. It takes courage to be a Christian. The **“fearful and unbelieving”** will be lost (Revelation 21:8). But Jesus has promised His faithful followers:

“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

The world is filled with folk who are afraid of a five letter word - TODAY. Having

misspent *yesterday* and pushing aside responsibility until *tomorrow* their morbid refusal to face *today* results in wasted motion and endless strife. Many souls are being lost today while we sit at the drawing board scaling bombastic "ten year plans for the congregation."

TODAY

Today I will not waste my time, because the minutes I wasted yesterday are as lost a vanished thought.

Today I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

Today I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow I may be wanted, and I must not be found lacking.

Today I am determined to do things I should do. I firmly determine to stop doing the things I should not do.

Today I begin by doing, and not wasting my time. In one week I will be miles beyond the person I am today.

Today I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make success with what material I have.

Today I will stop saying, "If I had time", for I never will never "find time" for anything. If I want time, I must make it.

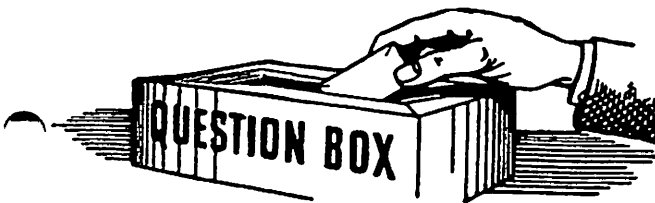
Today I will act towards other people as though this might be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow.

When death draws near and thoughts of the Judgement Day arise, we need not be fearful. Notice the majestic beauty and power in I John 4:17-18. "... that we may have boldness in the day of judgement...there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. The world will not comprehend the peace we treasure in our hearts nor the eager anticipation with which we view eternity. Whatever comes, the saints of God remember those precious words. "**It is I, Be Not Afraid**"

If you do not share in the hope that Christians have, let me appeal to you in the impelling language of Hosea:

"It is time to seek the Lord."

J. RAMSEY.



Conducted by
Frank Worgan

This month I wish to deal with two questions which, as many of you will readily recognize, are closely connected. One question concerns the origin of the 'Christadelphian' movement, and the other to a doctrine sometimes encountered during a discussion with members of this body.

1. A brother asks, "*When and how did the Christadelphian Church come into existence?*"

The answer to his question, necessarily condensed because of the limited space at our disposal, is that the founder of the Christadelphian movement was a physician, Dr. John Thomas, who was born in England in 1805 and who died in the United States in March 1871.

Origins.

Dr Thomas emigrated from London to America in 1832, when he was 27 years of age, but whilst there he did not practise medicine, choosing instead to become a 'gentleman farmer'.

At that time, he had no religious background and no religious affiliation, but he met Br. Walter Scott, one of the early evangelists of the so-called 'Restoration Movement', with whom he studied for a period of three months and who afterwards baptized him.

During the next 20 years Dr Thomas remained in fellowship with the Church in the United States and was regarded as a very acceptable preacher, visiting churches of Christ in the British Isles on three occasions.

It was whilst he was preaching in the United States that it became known that Dr. Thomas was teaching what were regarded as unscriptural, and therefore, unacceptable doctrines.

Doctrines.

Here are a few examples of his teaching, now accepted by 'Christadelphians'.

1. **How Creation occurred.** God created everything *'out of Himself'*.
2. **The Nature of the Holy Spirit.** A rejection of belief in the personality of the Holy Spirit, and an assertion that the Holy Spirit is merely a *'force'* or *'influence' exerted by God*. - like *'holy electricity'*, as his faithful lieutenant and successor, Robert Roberts, expressed it in his own book, "*Christendom astray from the Bible*", p.95.
3. **The Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.** The assertion that the Saviour had no real existence prior to His birth in Bethlehem and that, as the *'logos'*, He was merely an idea or a thought in the mind of God; thus His pre-existence and deity is denied.
4. **The nature of Satan.** A denial of the existence of a personal Devil. Satan is just a *'personification of sin among human beings.'*
5. **The Sacrifice of Christ.** He did not die as our substitute, but as our *'representative'*.
6. **The Kingdom.** Does not yet exist, but will be established on Earth at some future date.
7. **The Nature of the Kingdom.** A version of pre-millennial doctrine, with Christ reigning from Jerusalem, which is to be the capital of the Theocracy.
8. **The Future of Israel.** There will be a miraculous mass-conversion of the nation of Israel, prior to the return of Christ.
9. **Heaven.** No one will go to Heaven. There is no promise of Heaven in the scriptures. The people of God will remain on Earth.
10. **The Fate of the wicked.** The wicked are to be annihilated. They will merely cease to exist.

History.

In 1838 brother Water Scott and other leading brethren requested Dr. Thomas not to propagate these personal opinions, and to this he agreed. But it soon became evident that he was still spreading the unwelcome views, in spite of his promise. This brought him into further conflict with the Church in the United States, and at 42 years of age, in 1847, he repudiated both his baptism and his connection with the Church. When he published this repudiation in his magazine, "*Herald of the Future Age*", he declared that he had *'never been a Christian'*, and he was, therefore, disfellowshipped by the congregations among whom he had previously travelled.

In 1848 Dr. Thomas came to England and, through the influence of the church in London, succeeded in gaining access to the British churches of Christ, who had been given to understand that he was a brother in good standing with the churches in

America.

However, by the time he returned to London, towards the end of his visit, news had been received which revealed that he was certainly *not* in fellowship with the American brethren, yet, when he was questioned on this matter he denied that he had been disfellowshipped. In other words, he lied.

Eventually, when deception was no longer possible, Dr. Thomas tried to justify his dishonesty, claiming that he *'had received nothing from the British churches except a little bread and wine, for which his contributions had more than amply repaid!'*

Thomas's Church.

In 1849, no longer in fellowship with churches of Christ on either side of the Atlantic, he set up his own church in Birmingham, (England), assisted by Robert Roberts, who also became the editor of the new church's magazine, "*The Christadelphian*".

At first, he called his followers, '*The Antipas*', claiming that this was '*a symbolic name for all those who do not deny the faith, but hold fast to the Spirit's name*'. This name was later changed to '*Christadelphians*', a name which he coined himself.

I might add that the name does not mean what he apparently intended it to mean, which was, '*Brothers of Christ*'. The latin suffix, '*ians*', turns the name into '*Followers of...a brother of Christ*'. (Compare '*Christ ians*', Acts 11:26).

Dr. Thomas died in 1871, and was buried in Brooklyn, N.Y. He had planned to move back permanently to England and had returned to the U.S., from a visit to England, in order to make preparations for this move, but died before his intention could be realized.

The leadership of the organisation then fell into the hands of Roberts, his understudy and collaborator, who was born in Aberdeen in 1839. Roberts himself died in a hotel in San Francisco 1898 and was buried by the side of his master in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn.

Note. Brother David King, who had contact with John Thomas during his visits to London, wrote a tract entitled "*The History and Mystery of Christadelphianism*". I regret that my own copy has 'gone astray', but anyone who can come obtain a copy of this tract will find it very informative.

2. This serves as an introduction to the second question recently sent to me by a sister in the Church, which asks:-

"If everyone born into the world has an immortal soul, why does Jesus offer eternal life to those who believe in Him?"

You will realize, I am sure, see that the question relates to doctrine no. 10 in the list I have already presented. On p.24 of his book, Robert Roberts states that, in the scriptures, '*of the doctrine of the immorality of the soul there is not the slightest mention*'.

The Nature of the Soul.

Well, this does not surprise me, because the term, '*immortal soul*' is not found in the scriptures. In fact, the expression is an example of tautology, that is, of saying the same thing in different words. We do not speak of '*wet raindrops*', or '*red rubies*', because raindrops *are* wet, and rubies *are* red. *Wetness and redness* are the essential characteristics of raindrops and rubies respectively. Similarly, it is superfluous to use the word *immortal* when speaking about the soul, because in the scriptures immortality is shown to be the very nature of the soul.

'Life' and 'Destruction'

Our sister calls my attention to eleven New Testament passages, in which 'eternal life' occurs 7 times, '*immortality*' three times and '*life*' 1 time, all of which clearly

show 'life' to be the eternal destiny of the faithful. The matter is summed up in her reference to 1st John 5:11-12, which states, 'He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son shall not see life.'

The destiny of the righteous is eternal life, whilst the fate of the wicked is eternal death, and the difference between the final destinies of the believing and unbelieving is explained in 2nd Thess. 1:7-10, where we read that when Christ returns, He will 'be glorified in His saints and marvelled at in all those who believe, whilst those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel, shall 'suffer the punishment of eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power'.

Contrary to what Dr Thomas thought, the word 'olethros', which has been translated as 'destruction', does not mean 'annihilation'. According to the recognised authorities, Moulton and Milligan, in the first century the word was used to speak of 'ruin; the loss of all that gives worth to life'.

Their destruction is 'from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might'.

This eternal state of the wicked is also described in the scriptures as 'the second death'. Unfortunately, the meaning of the word 'thanatos' - 'death', - is also often misunderstood. It does not mean 'cessation of existence'. It means 'separation'. For example, when he was separated from his father, the prodigal was said to be 'dead' Luke. 15:24.

Similarly, physical death is the separation of the soul - the true personality - from the body. Hence Paul speaks of being 'absent from the body', but 'at home with the Lord'. 2nd Cor. 5:1-9.

The 'second death' is eternal separation from the Presence of God.

Conclusion.

Therefore, the answer to sister's question is that when the Lord Jesus offers eternal life to those who believe in Him, He is promising that those who follow Him shall live eternally in the Presence of God, whilst those who reject His offer of salvation must, of necessity, be banished eternally from His Presence. He tells us, that when He sits on His throne of judgement, some will 'go away into eternal - aionios - punishment, but the righteous into - aionios - eternal life' (Matt. 25:31-46).

Consequently, the question at issue is not, whether or not the wicked continue to exist after the death of the body, but the *quality* of that existence.

We must notice that the 'duration' of the 'punishment' is the same as that of the 'life', so that those who deny that the punishment of the wicked is *eternal* must also, logically, deny that life of the redeemed is *eternal*.

(Questions to: Frank Worgan, 5, Gryfebank Way,
Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 7	Exodus 25:31-40	Hebrews 8
April 14	Exodus 24	Hebrews 9:1-22
April 21	Jeremiah 31:23-40	Hebrews 9:23 to 10:18
April 28	Deut. 32:28-43	Hebrews 10:19-39

CHAPTER 8

In this chapter, we have the

following headings: *Priesthood and Promise* (1-7) and *The Old Covenant Superseded* (8-13).

The writer to the Hebrew Christians "now proceeds to relate Christ's high priesthood to the themes of the covenant, sanctuary and sacrifice, with which the Aaronic priesthood was closely bound up" (Bruce). Brother Wardrop at Motherwell often spoke about Types and Shadows. As a young

Christian, I never really knew what he was on about. Now I think I do and I wish he were still here to discuss it with him. Under the Jewish dispensation, the high priest, the priesthood, the sanctuary, the sacrifices, the covenant, etc. foreshadowed what was to come in the Christian age. In other words, the whole Levitical order foreshadowed the spiritual order in the new age. We now see Jesus exercising His high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly one was but a replica. We read: **“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises”** (8:6).

The Old Covenant was superseded by the New Covenant. The New Covenant is better. If it were not, then what was the point of introducing it to replace the old one? The writer quotes a prophecy from the pen of Jeremiah (31:31-34). It is one of the great prophecies of the Bible. All my life I have been trying to understand the real differences between the Law and the dispensation of grace. I'm still working on it. Personally, I think some people have hardly started. I say that because of the many articles I read from brethren and others. Some (not all, of course) reflect legalistic thinking. These people are, in many ways, living BC lives in an AD world. What did Paul write? **“...for you are not under the law, but under grace”** (Romans 6:14). I think Alexander Campbell can help us here: “The Jews were under a government of precepts - we are under a government of principles. Hence all was laid down to them in broad and plain commandments; and the book which contained their worship was a ritual, a manual of religious and moral duties, accurately defined to the utmost conceivable minutiae; insomuch that nothing was left to discretion - nothing to principle.

There is nothing like this in the New Institution. We have no ritual, liturgy, nor manual...Hence it has come to pass, that some societies...have reduced Christianity to a frigid and lifeless skeleton...”

CHAPTER 9

Chapter nine deals with the following: *The Sanctuary Under the Old Covenant* (1-5); *A Temporary Ritual* (6-10); *Christ's Eternal Redemption* (11-14); *The Mediator of the New Covenant* (15-22); *The Perfect Sacrifice* (23-28).

The book of Hebrews is, in many ways, a treatise on the priesthood. We can better understand the priesthood under the New Covenant if we study carefully the priesthood under the Old Covenant. An analysis of the book of Leviticus is a must for all serious students. Chapters 1-7 deal with Sacrifices; chapters 8-10: the Consecration of Aaron's Sons; chapters 11-15: the Laws for Daily Life; chapter 16: the Day of Atonement; chapter 17: Further Regulations on Sacrifice; chapters 18-20: Ethical and Moral Laws; chapters 21-22: Rules for Priests; chapter 23: the Set Feasts; chapter 24: the Oil and Bread to be Set Before the Lord; chapter 25: the Sabbath Year and the Sabbath Jubilee; chapter 26: Promise and Warning, Blessing and Cursing; and chapter 27: Vows and Tithes. I know a lot of people think that going through the book of Leviticus is like going through a desert. But a desert is really an interesting place!

This chapter has a lot to say about blood and sacrifice. What is a sacrifice? It is the solemn and religious infliction of death upon an innocent and unoffending victim, usually by shedding its blood. “Sacrifice, as respects God, is a *propitiation*; as respects *sinners*, it is a *reconciliation*; as respects *sin*, it is an *expiation*; as respects the *saved*, it is a *redemption*” (Campbell). Lambs, goats and calves were sacrificed by the

millions before the gospel age. They all pointed to the real and all sufficient sacrifice that was to come: the sacrifice of the true Lamb of God - Jesus Himself. His sacrifice was the only one that could take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The shedding of His life blood on Calvary's tree was a once and for all sacrifice (9:25). It is a sacrifice that reaches into the very conscience of the sinner (14). The Old Testament was sealed in blood; the New Testament is sealed in blood, but in far greater blood - in the blood of the Son of the Living God, who gave His life as a ransom for all. And remember, **"without shedding of blood is no remission"** (22b).

I like how this chapter closes: **"And it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgement: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation"** (27,28). The Israelites on the Day of Atonement always waited expectantly for the reappearance of the high priest from the holy of holies. The reappearance was proof positive that his sacrifice had been accepted by God. "So our author thinks of Jesus as going into the heavenly holy of holies, to reappear one day in order to confirm finally to His people the salvation which His perfect offering has procured for them" (Bruce).

CHAPTER 10

Chapter ten has the following sub-headings: *The Old Order a Shadow of the Reality* (1-4); *The New Order the Reality* (5-10); *The Enthroned High Priest* (11-18); *Access to God Through the Sacrifice of Christ* (19-25); *Fourth Admonition: The Wilful Sin of Apostasy* (26-31); and *Call to Perseverance* (32-39).

To fulfil the Law, God did not give us a second system of law, but He gave us His Son. We are now saved by a Saviour, who is the supreme Prophet,

Priest and King. His sacrifice was a willing sacrifice to save the world. The tragedy is that most of the world does not want to be saved. So many are blinded, deafened and hardened by Satan to the reality, which is that **"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23). All need Jesus. All need salvation.

The people of the Way are encouraged to **"hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering"** (23). They have also to **"consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another..."** (24,25). In other words, Christians need one another in the service of the Master. No one can make it on their own.

Apostasy is a terrible word. Those guilty of apostasy will be condemned and punished by God. A.M. Stibbs in referring to verse 26-31 in his commentary speaks of the consequences of deliberate rebellion. I think "deliberate rebellion" is an appropriate phrase here. These verses, to me, destroy any notion of "once saved always saved". Brethren, we must all be on our guard at all times.

"Perseverance" is a key word for all disciples of Christ. The early saints especially, are a tremendous example to all. They kept right on to the end of the road, no matter the cost. They knew that their reward was in heaven. In other words that suffering was for a while, but splendour was after a while. The writer informs us that they were publicly insulted, persecuted, thrown into prison, had possessions confiscated, etc. Some even resisted unto blood. To them, Christianity was a cause worth living for and a cause worth dying for. Is it the same for us?

IAN S. DAVIDSON,
Motherwell.

TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. He was a mighty man of valour, but a leper.
2. The call to this prophet came when he was among the captives of the river Chebar.
3. He is a one-chapter prophet.
4. Who called herself "a mother in Israel"?
5. Who was Israel's second king?
6. How long did it take Nehemiah and his fellow Israelites to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem?
7. He and his household were baptised by Paul in Corinth.
8. Who first saw the risen Christ?
9. This book contains, among other things, seven letters.
10. Jesus spoke a parable about a tree without fruit. Which tree?

THANKS

Jeanette (Newtongrange) and the family would like to thank all her brothers and sisters in Christ for all the lovely cards, flowers and prayers in the loss of her Mum. Special thanks to Robert and Fay Hughes (Kirkcaldy) for all the love and support they have given over the last eight years since Morris died. It has been a great comfort. "To all who visited and called Mum over the years, she greatly appreciated it. We have a wonderful family in the Lord. Thank you."

*Step by step, prayer by prayer,
The Lord will always get you there.*

COMING EVENTS

**Special Saturday Night Meeting
At KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD**
With Bro. Ernest Makin
16th March, 2002
at 7.00 pm

KIRKCALDY LADIES DAY

18th May 2002
(Details later).

PETERHEAD

(Special Week-ends)
Sat/Sun. 23rd/24th March
Speaker: John Kneller, Tranent.
Sat. 7p.m. (followed by refreshments)
Sun. 11a.m. Breaking of Bread
6p.m. Gospel Meeting

Our Social Weekend

Dates and Times
Saturday 13th April: 3pm and 6 pm
Lords Day 14th April: 10am Bible Study
Speakers: Brothers Mark Hill
(Loughborough)
and Robert Marsden (Wigan)

Gospel Mission

from Sunday 16th June to Sunday 23rd
with no meeting on Monday 17th
Speaker: Bert Ritchie (Coleraine, N.I.)
assisted by the Harding Students

TRANENT

Annual Social
Saturday, 9th March, 2002
Details to follow.

BUCKIE

Annual Social
Saturday, 11th May, 2002
Speaker: Michael Gaunt
Also Guest Speaker
on Sunday, 12th May

ULVERSTON

Meetings led by Jim McGuiggan
15th to 17th March, 2002
Contact:
(for info and numbers
attending for catering purposes)
Martin & Ann Price
(01229) 585345.

GHANA APPEAL

The work of healing, both physical and spiritual, continues in Ghana and we thank our brethren who have donated so generously to enable this to proceed as effectively as it does.

Many ailments can be cured within a reasonable time but some require a period of further treatment.

The sister who refused further hospital treatment because of her inability to clear her existing debt is being helped but needs to attend appointments for some time yet. A sister whose husband died of cancer is left with six children to bring up, one of whom has lost a leg above the knee. Life for that family, as for others, will be difficult.

Your contributions have done much to alleviate such tragedies and the mental stress that these circumstances bring - not only through practical help received, but also the knowledge that other brethren sufficiently care.

As we've mentioned before, our brethren in Ghana are zealous in explaining the gospel to others and the results are encouraging. There are still congregations with uncompleted meeting places and one which purchased the land several years ago is still

struggling to complete the walls. As rainfall in Ghana is extremely heavy, cover during rainy seasons is essential.

We very gratefully acknowledge the anonymous donation of £500.00 received at the end of December 2001.

Those wishing to contribute please make cheques payable to:-

Dennyloanhead Church of Christ Ghana Fund and send to treasurer Mrs. Janet Macdonald, 12 Charles Drive, Larbert, Falkirk, FK5 3HB Stirlingshire. Tel: 01324 562480

WHAT IS IT?

God purposed it - Ephesians 3:11
 Christ died for it - Ephesians 5:25
 His blood purchased it - Acts 20:28
 The saved are added to it - Acts 2:47
 Are you part of it?

1. Naaman (2 Kings 5:1)
2. Ezekiel (1:1)
3. Obadiah
4. Deborah (Judges 5:7)
5. David (2 Samuel 5:4)
6. 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15)
7. Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:16)
8. Mary Magdalene (John 20:1 & 16)
9. Revelation
10. A fig tree (Luke 13:6-9)

ANSWERS

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