

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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## LOVE NOT THE WORLD

It's Wimbledon tennis tournament time again and sadly, even before the quarter-final stage, Pete Sampras has been knocked out of the competition. It would have been nice for him to have won it again.

Many years ago a good brother suggested to me that watching tennis was *worldly*, and although I did not agree, I still remember what he said each time I watch tennis. Watching T.V. can be 'worldly', of course. I suppose it depends upon *what* we watch, *why* we watch and the *amount of valuable time* we spend watching. Instead of *doing* things, we end up merely *watching* things. In a world which is coming a close second to Sodom and Gomorrah, I suppose it is ever timely to consider our position and see if we are becoming more 'worldly' and in danger of being indistinguishable from the world in general. How worldly are we? Paul to the disciples in Rome said, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God**" (12.2). I daresay Paul's call to disciples to present themselves as *living sacrifices* would not be popular everywhere, and neither shall it be today, but such a thing, Paul says, is but a *reasonable* service. He calls upon church members not to be conformed to this world but rather be *transformed*. There is increasing pressure upon us, is there not, in every department of life, to conform to the world's standards. As the world's standards plummet there is always the danger that our standards will take a similar direction. "Well everybody does it" seems to be the current slogan as a good reason for all to comply. "Well everybody 'fiddles' their Income Tax; Everybody looks after 'No. 1'; Everybody 'sleeps around'; Everybody 'gets divorced'; etc., etc." It is, of course, easier to conform than to transform. It is much easier to go with the tide than to swim against it. It is much more popular to be 'one of the lads' than to be 'a stick in the mud'. Those with young children at school will know, much better than I do, of the temptations their children undergo, ranging from bad language to 'birth' pills; from promiscuity to 'glue sniffing'. As Jesus said, "**the world is on the broad road to destruction and many there will be which go in there at,**" and so it behoves us (from time to time) to consider whether our feet are still firmly treading that narrow way which leadeth unto life. Jesus also said, "**Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.**" John said, "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, (the lust of the flesh, and**

the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life) is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). We must 'love not' the world.

### WARNINGS AGAINST WORLDLINESS

If we ever completely succumb to 'worldliness' it will not be in ignorance, for the scriptures abound with solemn warnings against it and there are examples galore of men whose lives have made shipwreck on those same 'worldly' rocks. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." This familiar statement from Jesus should knock the bottom out of worldly ambition, but usually only for a short while. Again Jesus said, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34). Paul urged the Colossians to "Set your affections on things above, not on the things on the earth." Again Paul, in writing to Titus links *ungodliness* with *worldliness* when he says, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." We notice here, too, that the opposite to worldly living is to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present world. *In this present world* indicates that Paul holds no brief for forming Christian communes to avoid the evil world, or to live and learn in a 'Christian Atmosphere,' but would have us rub shoulders with 'all kinds' and survive. The cloistered serenity of the average monastery is not really a great test of steadfastness - honours are only to be won in the 'trenches.' Paul accepted that we had to come into contact, and even keep company with evil people, 'else' says he "ye must needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:10). The apostle James warned that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God" whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4). There is, then, as can be seen from these random examples, no shortage of advice and admonition on the subject.

### WHAT WORLD?

Is it not greatly surprising, when we consider all that is, and has been, said about 'worldlings' and 'worldliness' that the former *never* appears in the N.T. and the latter only twice? One such reference is to the "Worldly sanctuary" of the O.T. (Heb. 9:1) and the other to "worldly lusts" (quoted above Titus 2:12). The word 'worldliness' never appears. What is it about 'the world' that we should 'love not'. Did not God make a wonderful world - a most beautiful and marvellous creation? Why should we be God's enemy if we love the world (that He made)? Obviously the term 'world' is used in varying senses in the scriptures and we must carefully differentiate. When John says, "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world**" he obviously means a different 'world' from the one he mentions (in 3:16) when he said, "**For God so loved the world.**" Again the term 'world' quite often refers to the literal globe, as when Jesus said, "**Go ye unto all the world.**" Clearly we have no reason to hate this amazing orb upon which we live. It would seem therefore, that we can love the planet, (and certainly we ought to love all the people on this planet) but must avoid all the evils of human behaviour and material pursuits.

Thus when John says, "Love not the world" he is talking about 'worldly' affairs such as prosperity, riches, pleasures, pastimes and pursuits which seduce us away from God, and which are obstacles to the cause of Christ. We are *all* as far as I can see, "worldlings" (i.e. 'of the world') and surely most pleasures can only be described as 'worldly' (i.e. 'of the world').

## WHAT IS 'WORLDLINESS'?

Enjoying a meal; listening to good music; reading a book; going for a swim; playing with the children, etc., etc. are all worldly pleasures. What else can they be?

There is nothing spiritual about ham and eggs but they are very enjoyable. Thus, in my view, most pleasures are 'worldly' but some are legitimate and allowable, and some are unwholesome and are to be avoided. I believe it is impossible to define the boundaries of 'worldliness' and each person must ultimately decide for themselves what is, and what is not, included. It will vary with regard to *our geographical part of the world* and it will vary with reference to *the century* in which we live. For instance it was shameful in the Victorian era to see a lady's ankle but if we objected to that now we would be thought very strange. African natives, by contrast, have never had such a problem and were running around innocently wearing nothing but a string of beads, until missionaries tried to force them to wear clothes. Then they had problems. "Why should we wear clothes" they wondered? Thus our definition of 'worldliness' will depend upon *our geography, our century, our social environment and our knowledge of God's word*. In the past, and even now, ignorance and bigotry pronounce many things wrong which are harmless. On the other hand, carelessness and laxity permit many things which are by no means innocent. In some parts of the USA mixed bathing is frowned upon but nowhere in Britain that I know of. Now in Britain we have beaches allocated to nude bathing and while this might shock us today it may be 'normal' in the next century (or before). In some parts of Scotland the idea of a 'Christian Sabbath' (contradiction in terms?) prevails and it would be regarded as shocking and very worldly to buy from a shop on a Sunday in these areas - but it varies from place to place. Some believe it wrong to have to work on a Sunday but do not mind the 'bus driver driving them to church on that day'. When I was a young person the concept of 'worldliness' then consisted mainly of smoking, drinking, frequenting cinemas, attending dances, going to opera or theatrical plays. Some went farther and would not watch football, play snooker, or play cards even 'in fun'.

## ALL THINGS RICHLY TO ENJOY

If it's wrong to play cards we then wonder if it's right to play draughts, or chess or even monopoly. Also, if it is wrong to *watch* football, is it not wrong to *play* football, (or bowls, or tennis, or even 'I spy'). Clearly we have to know *why* certain pursuits are to be eschewed and *the general principles* which apply. There is also the question of setting a bad example to others who are, perhaps weaker than ourselves. Paul (in Rom. 14) refers to those who regard some days as special (even holy) and some who don't; some who may eat all things and some who refuse. "**Let every man be persuaded in his own mind**" says Paul (v. 5) "**For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself**" (v. 7) i.e. we all have an influence on others, for good or evil. There is also an impression which circulates that we should feel guilty if we are enjoying ourselves and that there is something slightly suspect about laughter and merriment. A century ago, 'on the Lord's Sabbath' it was all a question of black suits and dresses, long faces and whispered conversation, with the obvious impression that there was a strong connection between misery and godliness. God is not a kill-joy. Paul (in 1 Tim. 6:17) charges those who are wealthy in this world, not to trust in their uncertain riches but to trust "**in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy . . .**" God actually gives us *all things that we might enjoy them*, and so God sanctions 'enjoyment.' Paul (in v.14 of Rom. previously referred to) said, "**I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**" Most things have a use, a proper function

and purpose, and are not unclean in themselves. It is the *abuse* of such things that render them *worldly* or evil. For instance, *sex and marriage* have a very proper (and vital) place in the world but are abused by men. There is nothing wrong with *money* - it is *the love* of money which lies at the root of all evil. There is nothing wrong with *ambition* provided it does not lead us away from God. *Progress* is admirable provided it is in the right direction. There is nothing objectionable about many forms of *dancing* - but Greek men dancing together is one thing - dimly lit 'discos' are quite another. *Drugs* are extremely helpful to mankind (indeed our National Health Service spends billions on them) but *the abuse* of drugs is our growing problem. *Leisure-time* is essential to our well-being but again can be abused and squandered. Even *alcohol* has important industrial and medicinal uses but sadly is grossly misused by mankind. And so we go on, proving the truth of Paul's words "That nothing is unclean of itself." *Moving pictures* are a brilliant invention, ideal for teaching and communication, but are used mainly to satisfy commercial interests with films portraying violence, sadism, horror and immorality. *Even wisdom* (something the early disciples prayed for) can be of a 'worldly' species and serve only to make us 'worldly-wise.' Nothing, therefore, is unclean of itself - it is what men do with the things, that make them good or evil, and we must analyse each on its own merits.

#### 'FRUITS' PROVIDE THE CLUE

Since it is so difficult to define the boundaries of 'worldliness' perhaps the best strategy is to examine *the likely fruits* of any particular course of action and, in this way, identify that which is worldly. Jesus recommended this line of enquiry, did He not, when He said that good and evil can be recognised by its fruits. This, I believe, is the best basic rule. We must anticipate the end-result of any proposed practice, or course of action, and assess the fruits thereof, (bearing in mind the affect on others). Sadly, Paul records, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed into Thessalonica." Think of all the former church members who have "so loved the world" that they have departed, and abandoned the Church. Thus worldliness *leads to apostasy*. As in the parable of the sower "*the cares of this world*," and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word and Christians become unfruitful. Thus worldliness *leads to unfruitfulness*. And so we could go on enumerating the evil fruit of 'worldliness.' Certain broad questions we must be ever asking ourselves:-

- (1) Do I frequent *places* in which I would be ashamed for Jesus to find me?
- (2) Are all my *actions* always in harmony with God's word?
- (3) Do my *words* (and conversations) edify the hearer?
- (4) Are my *thoughts* (motives or desires) worthy of Jesus?
- (5) Am I *fruitful in every good work* or do I squander time?
- (6) Do I set an *example* worthy of copy?
- (7) Am I motivated by self-interest and material considerations?

In short, am I *conforming to this world* or am I being transformed in a renewal of mind? Answers to questions such as above, and the fruits of our activity, will help us to identify the presence of any 'worldliness' in our lives.

#### CONCLUSION

Worldliness does not consist solely in doing certain things, or in being in certain places. It is *an attitude* or view of life. It is *a state of mind*. For instance a person may be in the midst of a 'worldly' atmosphere and yet not feel at home there, but inwardly revolting against the place and impatient to be gone. Then again, one may in a thoroughly 'spiritual atmosphere,' in a church building and engaged in the worship of God, and yet not be in harmony with the occasion but far away in mind and spirit

(singing hymns but thinking of that dress in the shop window or that promotion in the office). Jesus, we recall, found this outlook in the temple and had to cleanse it from its worldly commercialism. The House of Prayer had become a den of thieves. Indeed the Jews furnish us with a profitable object-lesson of how the very elect of God readily spurned their unique position, and copied the heathenish peoples surrounding them, enthusiastically bowing down to the golden calf of idolatry and worldliness. There is always a danger that we could do the same today. The world is indeed evil and we must try never to conform to it. It would be easy to do so but we must resist the temptation and busy ourselves in God's service. There is more to life than tennis, certainly. There is more to life than fame, ambition, popularity and riches. Even millionaires must leave every penny behind. I don't suppose that character can be rightfully judged by single or isolated deeds, either good or bad. It is *the trend* of one's life that determines his destiny. When men and women are engrossed by the material things of life, then, however punctual their formal religion, they are 'worldly.' Conversely, those men and women who, despite their weaknesses and many mistakes still take seriously the teachings of Jesus; they are spiritual. After all, we have no abiding city here but are merely pilgrims passing through.

EDITOR.

### THE RICH - (James 5:1-6)

In James 5:1, the writer says, "**Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.**" If those addressed had learned their lesson of old time, these verses would never have been penned. James appears to be talking about rich, unbelieving Jews. Their fathers before them were guilty of some of the same sins. "**Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail. Saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?**" (Amos 8:4,5,6). Look at the problems that existed then and you can see the same in the day of James. They took advantage of the needy and made the land of the poor not to produce as it normally would. They were interested in cheating with the weights of all they sold. They made the ephah small, the money great, and the weighing devices wrong. When the land of the poor would not produce as it should, the rich could go in and buy them and their land for a pittance. They would have the needy ready to be bought for the price of a pair of shoes and would sell chaff for wheat.

The problem was greater, if possible, when Micah wrote. He told of judges or "**the heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money . . .**" (Micah 3:11). All of these things were done for the love of money and the things that it could buy. Malachi, the last Old Testament Minor Prophet wrote, "**Will a man rob God? Yet ye hath robbed me. But ye say wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation**" (Malachi 3:8,9).

#### NOT RICH TOWARD GOD

Jesus taught much regarding this same problem. One occasion was the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "**Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and**

where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19,20). The rich farmer had the same problem that is spoken of in our text. His ground produced an abundance, and he thought that the thing that he had to do was to tear down his old barns and build newer ones so he could store up all that he produced. He would then say to his soul that it had plenty and had enough laid up for several years to come (cf. Luke 12:16-20). The Lord had other plans for him and said, "**So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God**" (Luke 12:21). This farmer's soul was required of him that night.

**Judas** also put material things before godliness. He sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. **Ananias and Sapphira** had this same disposition toward wealth. They lied about their possessions and died the same day. With these illustrations in mind, we are ready to go back to our text to understand it better.

The prophets and Christ had taught great lessons on the evils of the love of money. But, the people of our text had not learned those lessons. So the very thing that they had striven for, riches, were now corrupted and, one of the signs of wealth, their costly garments, was now moth-eaten. Isn't this exactly the teaching of both the Old and New Testaments? Look back at the statements of Christ in Matthew 6 and hear Him say again, ". . . **where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt . . .**" (v. 19). Look at what the moths had done in James 5 verse 2. Don't stop there but rather go one to James 5 verse 3, and you will see that their money, gold and silver, was "**cankered,**" and was also rusty. The rich farmer of Luke 12 had to give an account that night, and in James 3, the people, are told that they had, "**Heaped treasure together for the last days.**"

#### THERE IS A JUDGMENT

What awaited them also awaits us . . . namely, the judgment. Finally, there is the payday for all such actions taken by them and us. Can't you see how the scales that weighed the ephah and made it short; the scales that caused the shekel to be greater; the deceit of the balances that were used; the poor that were lined up who had been bought for silver; the needy who had been bought for a pair of shoes; and the judges, priests and prophets who had great desire for reward? See the picture? Beside them are those of James' day. Rust was a witness against them. The field workers who were underpaid, or not paid at all, cried out against them as witnesses. They are reminded of all the pleasure that they had lived on earth. Their hearts had been nourished as if there had been a great slaughter. They had killed the just, but there was the payday for the rich. They would now receive their just reward. Money did not make them wrong, but **the improper use of wealth** did corrupt them. Attitude regarding possessions is very important in this lesson. We must be rich toward God and our fellowman who is needy, poor and distressed. Surely none of us would want this list of witnesses line up against us.

H. D. DAVIDSON.

## THE RESURRECTION BODY OF CHRIST

The apostles, as we today, not only had to combat those who wanted to destroy the Church, they had to war with those who wanted to improve the Church. There were those, later called gnostics (from *gnosis*, i.e. knowledge), who had deeply drunk from Greek Philosophy, and tried to foist that philosophy on Christianity. They taught that only spirit is good, and that matter, especially flesh, was evil. They denied that God became flesh (the incarnation), and some went so far as to teach that Jesus only seemed to have a body of flesh (Docetism or Seemism). In their gnostic gospels they would say that if you tried to touch Him you feel nothing, and that when He walked He left no

footprints. The apostle John refutes all this: John 1:14, John 1:1-4; 1 John 4:2,3, and all ought to know it wrong. But the old error has been partially revived in recent times by the Jehovah's Witnesses. In their doctrine book *MAKE SURE OF ALL THINGS* (p. 55), they say "Jesus was resurrected as a spirit creature. Appearances after the resurrection were materializations - not always with identical bodies."

Now to study this error, let us look at a few interesting passages.

#### JOHN 20:17

Here you will recall that Mary has been startled by the resurrected Jesus. But strangely, the very first thing Jesus says is "**Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended unto the Father.**" So, some assume, Jesus didn't want her know He was only a materialization without substance. That's why He forbade her to touch Him.

Yet that is not at all the case. In the original, the word for "touch" is *hapto*, Vine, in his Greek dictionary, says *hapto* can mean to cling to, to lay hold of, John 20:17. But *touch* is a present imperative in Greek, which means the act was already continuing and in progress. That is why Lenski, Williams, Moffatt, and the NASB all translate it, "**Stop clinging to Me.**" She actually was already touching Him! He was not trying to hide the nature of His body. In fact, that she was in the act of clinging to Him showed that He had a material body. But let us look at another.

#### JOHN 20:26

This is the appearance where Thomas ceases to doubt the resurrection. It says, "Jesus cometh the doors being shut, and stood in the midst," "See," some argue. "His body had no substance, so He simply walked through the shut door." A better idea, however, is that there was a miracle of the door rather than a dematerialization of His body. We have an example of such a miracle in Acts 12:1-11. When the angel awakened Peter in prison, the chains simply fell off his hands. But more than that, when they came to the iron gate which led to the city, the gate "**opened to them of its own accord**" (Acts 12:10). God didn't dematerialize the body of Peter, He simply had a locked door to open and locked chains fall off his wrists.

This is a better interpretation also because of what happened in John 20. Jesus said to Thomas "**Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing**" (John 20:27). He would not invite Thomas to touch a phantom, a spectre in a vision which had no substance. In fact, Thomas is invited to touch Jesus to show that Jesus had real flesh and bone body.

#### LUKE 24:13 ff AND MARK 16:12

In the first scripture, two walking on the way to Emmaus meet and talk with Jesus about the resurrection. Jesus interprets scripture for them, but they do not recognise Him. Finally when they break bread to eat they recognise Him and He vanishes from their sight. But the context here clearly argues how could such be. It says in Luke 24:16 "**But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.**" It was a miracle of the eye, rather than an apparition, or some shade of a real body.

But what of Mark 16:12 which says, "**and after these things He was manifested in another form unto two of them, as they walked . . .**" Vine says the word form (Greek *morphe*) in Mark 16:12 refers to "the particular ways in which the Lord manifested Himself" (Vol. 11, p.124 of *EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS*). We believe he is right, and that the different way or manner He appeared unto them was by holding their eyes where they could not recognise Him and later could not see Him.

#### REFLECTIONS

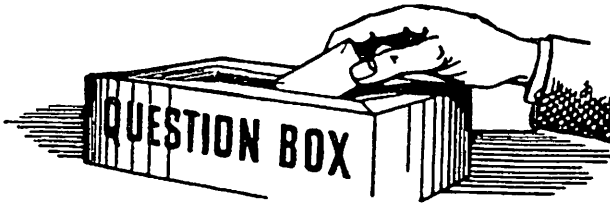
Before we close, let us make a few observations. The meaning of the word

resurrection (*anastasis*) is "a rising up." It is from *ana* (up), and *histemi* (to cause to stand). In Christ's case it assumes a death has been experienced. Too, the soul of Jesus did not die. Jesus said, "**Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit**" (Luke 23:46). For death to be conquered, the body had to be delivered. We needed a bodily resurrection, or there would simply be no resurrection. But the phenomenal growth of the early Church is attributed to faith in His resurrection. A resurrection was central to His teaching (John 2:19-22; Luke 9:22; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 16:21; Matt. 20:18,19). The gospels make a point that it really happened, citing at least ten appearances.

### CONCLUSION

No, Jesus' body was real. It was the fleshy body which disappeared from the tomb. The women took hold of His feet (Matt. 28:9). He Himself said, "**See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having**" (Luke 24:39,40). That settles it for me.

J. MOFFAT




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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*"Visits to various congregations reveals that they do not always use the same hymn book - (which some of them call 'the song-book,' after the American fashion)*

*Does it matter which book we use? And does it matter which hymns - or songs - we sing in our worship?"*

I am happy to have the opportunity of saying something on this subject, because it relates to an aspect of our worship that has given me personal concern as I have shared the worship of a number of our congregations. Let me deal very briefly with the first part of the question.

#### *Does it matter which book we use?*

There is no scriptural rule requiring congregations to use the same hymnbook.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing in the scriptures to say that it is essential to use any book whatsoever! I have been present in services overseas where brothers and sisters did not possess hymnbooks, but sang with enthusiasm the hymns and songs they had learned off by heart.

Older readers will remember that even in the British churches, because our earliest hymnbooks did not contain music, congregations had to be taught the appropriate tunes by some capable 'precentor' - (now often called the 'song-leader').

A hymnbook - (and I must point out that I feel comfortable using the term with which I was brought up in churches of Christ) - is merely an expedient. It is a tool that enables us to worship God more conveniently. If congregations used the same book, the most important advantage this would offer, would probably be that we could all learn to sing the same tunes in the same way! As we have visited sister congregations, many of us have discovered this sometimes does not happen! (Of course, the reason for this may be that there are often differences in the way a particular tune is written in different hymnbooks).

But the size, shape, colour, or cost of a hymnbook, does not matter, nor is a congregation identified by the hymnbook it uses. What *does* matter is that the hymns



the book contains should express scriptural ideas and be of a lyrical and musical quality, which marks them out as suitable for use in our worship. This leads me to the next point.

*Does it matter what we sing?*

It certainly does! I am strongly tempted, at this point, to express my personal opinion about the trivial and inconsequential 'songs' which, in these days, are being used in some places. I will, however, restrict myself to the observation, that many modern songs possess very little to commend them in the way of musical or literary quality. A glance at the dates of their composition, usually found at the bottom of the page, will reveal that many have been written within the last forty or fifty years, for use in some 'clap-happy' gathering, where the congregational 'feel-good factor' appears to be more important than that God should be praised.

If the best that a song has to offer is that has a 'beat' that is just not good enough.

As Christians we should make a point in our worship, of offering to our God our very best. I do not believe that our congregational praise should amount to little more than a rollicking singsong, where tunes are chosen because they 'go with a swing.'

And, before anyone labels me an 'old-fashioned fuddy-duddy,' let me say that I am well aware of the fact that there are some excellent modern hymns. But I would argue that they are greatly outnumbered by this nation's rich heritage of earlier hymns and tunes.

Sadly, however, these tend either to be overlooked or forgotten; or, perhaps the truth is that congregations are not sufficiently interested to take the trouble to learn them.

I suggest it is here, in the matter of appropriate choice of hymns, that those who lead our praise bear a special responsibility. Hymns or songs can either make or mar a service, and it should be the concern of those who lead to ensure that what they invite the congregation to sing is appropriate to the occasion. The atmosphere and the spiritual quality of a service may be spoiled by an inappropriate selection of hymns, whilst, conversely, a good choice may be an inspiring and elevating aid to worship.

I can recall an occasion when the brother leading a Lord's Day morning service invited us to sing, as the first hymn, *'The day Thou gavest Lord is ended.'* It was obviously one of his favourites. A good hymn - but utterly inappropriate at the time.

*Our Lord's Example*

On the night in which He instituted the Supper, Jesus Himself sang the praise of God, with His disciples. Matt. 26:30, KJV, reads. *"And when they had sung an hymn . . ."*

Allow me to point out that they did not sing a 'hymn.' The Greek text says, *"after hymning,"* and, without question, this refers to the fact that, in the Upper Room, the Lord and His disciples sang that group of ancient psalms which is known as 'the Hallel,' still traditionally used by Jews in connection with the Passover celebration.

These are psalms 113 to 118, and they are called the 'Hallel' because each one begins with the word *'Hallelujah.'*

These special psalms, sung by the Lord, celebrated the deliverance of God's ancient people from the Bondage of Egypt. It is surely appropriate, therefore, as we meet around the Table to share the Feast, which He personally instituted, that we should also sing songs that fit the occasion, and which express our own thankfulness, gratitude, praise, joy and commitment, as we consider the immense cost of our salvation.

*To be continued. . . .*

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## AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO'S BIGGEST BLUNDER

*His New Theology - Irresistible Grace - ref. Eph. 2:8.*

### THE ERROR

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8 was Augustine of Hippo's proof-text for his new doctrine of "irresistible" faith. He denied the free-will of man, claiming that faith was given by God, even to babies, at baptism. He came to believe that faith was coerced into babies when they were 'baptised.'

He relied on a Latin translation of the scriptures which read similarly to the Authorised Version rendering: "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.**" From this he reasoned that the word "that" referred to the word 'faith' therefore faith has to be given by God, man is unable to exercise faith of his own freewill.

This new doctrine, called "the doctrine of irresistible grace" or "the doctrine of irresistible faith," came to be known as "*The New Theology.*" Except for one or two heretical sects, like the Gnostics and the Manichaeans, early Christian writers acknowledged that men and angels had freewill. Any new doctrine arising after the passing of the Apostles was considered spurious.

Augustine's new theology has permeated almost the whole of the Western Christendom. There is hardly a sect or denomination whose tenets are not tarnished with it. In Roman Catholicism it is seen in the "baptismal regeneration" of babes. Calvin's refined version of the doctrine is seen, to greater and lesser degree, in most Protestant and evangelical movements.

### THE BLUNDER

Augustine was reluctant to consult the original languages to see if they differed from the Latin version that he used. Even if he had only an elementary knowledge of New Testament Greek grammar, if he had consulted the original text, it would have been obvious to him that the word "that" cannot refer to the word "faith." Had he done that, Christendom would have been spared a doctrine which, with all its ramifications, has plagued virtually the whole of the West. Paul was not saying that faith is a gift.

### THE GREEK OF EPHESIANS 2:8

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" AV.**

In Greek, as in English, all nouns and pronouns are male, or female, or neuter. Unlike English, the gender of inanimate objects and of abstract nouns can be male, or female, or neuter.

The word "this" ("that" in the AV) is a demonstrative pronoun. The ends of Greek demonstrative pronouns change according to whether they are referring to male, or female, or neuter objects / abstract ideas. The word for "this" has a neuter ending. In this verse there are two nouns: "faith" and "grace." Could the word "this" be referring to one of these? To do that, the word "this" must be the same gender as the word it refers to.

The Greek word for "faith" is a feminine noun, not neuter. So "this" cannot be referring to "faith." This distinction is not apparent in the Latin or English. We do not alter the ends of the words "this" or "that" to show whether they refer to masculine, or feminine, or neuter objects.

Now God's grace is free and the verse emphasises that whatever "this" happens to be - it is a gift. So could 'this' be referring to "grace"? The answer has again got to be, no, because the Greek word for grace is also feminine. So to what does "this" refer?

Some think that "this" must have an antecedent. An antecedent is a word in a

sentence that comes before a relative pronoun to which the relative pronoun relates. For example in the sentence: "This is the house which John built "which" is a relative pronoun that refers back to "the house." However, in Ephesians 2:8 the word "this" is not a relative pronoun - It is a demonstrative pronoun. Now demonstrative pronouns do not have antecedents. So "this" does not grammatically relate to any word in that sentence. The plot thickens. To what, then, does "this" refer?

### SALVATION NOT FROM OUR EFFORTS

A demonstrative pronoun demonstrates - for example when someone points at something and says "Can you see that"? - But in written work, as here, the object or idea is inferred in the context. So what is the idea being portrayed in the context of this verse? It is telling us how our salvation is achieved. It was not by our efforts that our salvation, and the things accompanying our salvation, were made possible; God achieved it through Christ Jesus. Verses 4 to 10. It follows that "this" is referring to *the manner* in which salvation is procured. Salvation is not attained by our efforts - it is given by God.

There is a Greek abstract noun for the means by which salvation is achieved. It is *soterion*. This is a neuter adjectival noun, translated "salvation" (in the AV of Luke 2:30, 3:6, Acts 28:28. Eph. 6:17 and Titus 2:11). In Luke 2:30 Simeon saw, in baby Jesus, God's means of procuring salvation. So it is appropriate that "this" has a neuter ending since it is also referring to the means by which our salvation is achieved.

So what is Paul saying? Bear in mind that the word "grace" simply means favour and the type of "faith" referred to here is *implicit trust* in God through the Lord Jesus, not the shallow faith denounced by James (James 2:14 to 24).

In verse 8, Paul is telling us that God, being favourably disposed towards us, saved us because we had put our total trust in Him. Moreover, we did not achieve our salvation for ourselves - God freely procured our salvation (and that through Christ Jesus v. 7). So there is no merit on our part.

### AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO - THE MAN

Augustine (AD 354 - 430), a Berber of North Africa who became a Bishop in the church in Hippo, is to be distinguished from the Papal emissary Augustine, a monk who, in AD 596, was sent by Pope Gregory to bring the British churches under the See of the Roman church.

Although Augustine of Hippo was brought up by his mother to be a Christian, for a while he became a Manichaeon. This could have influenced his development of thought. Initially, Augustine acknowledged that man had freewill but later developed the kindred doctrines of "irresistible faith," "predestination" and "original sin." This led him to justify the persecution of those of different persuasions, a thing he had abhorred in his early years.

### RECOMMENDED READING

*God's Strategy in Human History* - Roger T. Forester & Paul Marston.

*Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up* - David W. Bercot.

ALAN ASHURST.

## COMPLACENCY

Brethren it appears that the Church is in the doldrums. Perhaps it is because many of the membership fail to give of their full capacity. The many gifts given unto them are not used. Sad, but true, if we be honest with self. I came across a statement the other day and it gave me much food for thought. It was this, "Today there are many in the

churches being rocked to sleep in the devil's cradle of complacency." Again sad but nevertheless true.

Many believers have become complacent with their lot in life and have stopped "diligently" pursuing the things of God . . . no longer on fire to accomplish more for God's kingdom. The spirit is dampened; the fire is almost out; the striving stopped. Would you agree with this? Much has become common-place and taken for granted. Saved and secure, so why bother . . . no extended effort, no striving. If sitting back and relaxing, resting on past laurels; it's wrong. It's time that the Church moved forward with everything that's in it, to do what God has told us to do. Time is short, we live in the last days perhaps. It seems that many are enjoying what God has given them, while the rest of the world is perishing. Surely that's not right. We can't afford to sit down and pat ourselves on the back, and say, "We've got it made."

Beloved, we should always be striving toward the mark of the high calling in God. As Christians, we thank God for all the benefits afforded us. And rightly so. We should share the joy and comfort acquired. God commissioned the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the gospel to a world that's lost and dying . . . it's time to wake up and obey that divine commission and to do something with the knowledge gained from the word of God. We need to spread the news of Christ, of God, the word, the Church. The enemy, Satan, knows that he cannot destroy the Church from the outside. He tries to move in with complacency, and lull the Church to sleep. We need to wake up and be alert to his wiles.

Beloved we must take time to be holy. We must work at being a Christian. We must keep **and share** the faith. It is expected of us. Apathy, complacency, the sit-back attitude, and the like, are all tools of Satan. Be alert, awake, alive to what is happening. The master expects His Church, the individual, the Christian; to witness, to worship, to fellowship and to work, for Christ and Church all, brethren, to the saving of souls.

ANDREW P. SHARP, Newtongrange.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sept. 2	Psalm 78:1-8	Matthew 22:1-22
Sept. 9	Deut. 25:1-10	Matthew 22:23-46
Sept. 16	Proverbs 26:12-28	Matthew 23:1-26
Sept. 23	2 Chronicles 24:1-22	Matthew 23:27-39
Sept. 30	Daniel 9:17-27	Matthew 24:1-22

### PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

"This parable has its groundwork in the Old Testament (Exodus 24:11; Zephaniah 1:7,8), and it entered into the circle of Jewish expectations that the Messiah's kingdom should be ushered in by a glorious festival. Our Lord Himself (Luke 22:18,30) uses this image. It is true that the marriage is spoken of there, and at Revelation 19:7, as not taking place till the end of the present age,

while here the Lord speaks of it as present; but we must keep in mind how distinct were the espousals and the actual marriage in the East, and contemplate His first coming as the time of His espousals, while not till His second coming will He lead home His bride". (R.C. Trench). We read: "**But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city**" (22:7). Could these words refer to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70?

We also read of a universal call. "**Go you therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage**" (9). This verse should be considered in the light of 21:43: "**Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth**

the fruits thereof". The new society would consist of Jewish and Gentile disciples. Only those who wore the appropriate garment would be blessed. Anyone not properly attired would be condemned (11-14). (Details of the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9) should also be read in conjunction with these verses in Matthew's record.)

#### HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED?

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection (22:23). This Jewish party was so named because the adherents claimed to be descended from Zadok, who was the high priest at the time of David and Solomon. The party consisted of the wealthy aristocratic families who controlled the office of the high priest. "They rejected belief in angels and resurrection, but they were not liberal rationalists. Rather, they were arch-conservatives, who observed the law of the Books of Moses (Pentateuch) and who rejected later interpretations of the law, the 'oral law'" (Edwin Yamauchi).

Jesus pointed out to them that resurrection from the dead meant a new order of existence, not the resumption of former conditions of biological life and reproduction. "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (30). The Sadducees thought they had the matter all worked out, but they were in error, "not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (29). The Pharisees were delighted that the Master had silenced them (34). Obviously, there was no love lost between the two groups. They have now passed into history, but the truth they heard from Jesus has outlasted them. The Truth goes marching on!

#### AN EXAMPLE TO BE AVOIDED

Jesus said something very interesting about the Pharisees which is often overlooked. "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not" (23:3). Albert Barnes has written: "The interpretation which

they give to the law is in the main correct, but their lives do not correspond with their teaching". Tragically, they were place-seekers, title-seekers and generally a people filled with worldly ambition. They loved the externals of religion, but gave little attention to the heart. Many of them were, quite simply, proud, haughty and arrogant. They needed a lesson in humility and Jesus gave them one.

Jesus led by example. There is no longer greater example than personal example and Jesus is our example in all things. He showed to all that the way to glory was the way of humility. Jesus Himself was free from all worldly pride. Consider the following: Of Appearance - Isaiah 53:2, "He has no form or comeliness". Of Worldly Success - Isaiah 53:3, "He is despised and rejected of men". Of Reputation - Matthew 2:23, "He shall be called a Nazarene". Of Riches - Matthew 8:20, "He has no where to lay His head". Of Rank - Matthew 13:55, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Of Kingship - John 13:5, "He washed the disciples' feet".

#### LAMENT FOR THE PHARISEES AND THE SCRIBES

Jesus described the Pharisees and the scribes as "hypocrites". It is a word with an interesting history. Originally, a *hupokrites* meant simply a "play-actor". But gradually the word changed in meaning (as many words do!) William Barclay has written: "The *hupokrites* is the man who goes in for the play-acting goodness. . . He is the man who, in the very name of religion, breaks God's laws . . . He is the man who hides an evil heart under a cloak of piety . . . He in the end becomes blind . . . He is the man, who in the cause of religion, seduces others from the right way. He persuades others to listen to him instead of God . . . In the end he is the man who is under the condemnation of God".

This section of Scriptures (23:13-33) is a section full of woes. Of course, the Pharisees and the scribes hated Jesus for

what He said. But it had to be said because it was the truth. The Truth gave them the truth, but, tragically, they did not see it. There is none so blind as he who will not see! Verse 23 is a key verse: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy and faith: these ye ought to have done and not leave the other undone"**. In other words, they paid more attention to the minutiae. They should have heeded the words of Micah, who wrote: **". . . and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God"** (6:8).

#### LAMENT FOR JERUSALEM

Once I wrote a letter to F.F. Bruce regarding my future visits to Carthage and Jerusalem in 1990. In response he wrote: **"You will certainly find Carthage a very interesting place to visit; but nothing can quite come up to Jerusalem!"**

What a city! What a history!

Jesus, of course, foresaw its destruction by the Romans. Of this event, He spoke thus to His disciples: **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"** (24:21). It pained Jesus to speak these prophetic words. Jerusalem was the centre of the Jewish world. She was the city of David and the city of the temple of God. She was the city outside of which the Messiah was to be crucified. Jesus loved her people and worked to save them. Thanks be to God that His sacrifice was not just for the citizens of Jerusalem, but also for those in Athens, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, London, Paris, New York, etc. In other words, Jesus died for everyone, for all time.

I like the fact Jesus, after His resurrection, told His disciples: **". . . and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name**

**among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"** (Luke 24:47).

#### MATTHEW CHAPTER 24

This chapter of fifty-one verses is arguably one of the most difficult chapters of any contained in the gospel records. There are as many interpretations as commentaries on it! In fact, the parallel passages are found in Mark 13 and Luke 21. I have studied this chapter frequently. I have attended meetings when the chapter was exclusively the subject for discussion and debate. I have even received letters about my comments on it in the past. Obviously, not everyone agrees with my understanding of it. I tend to see it as James Macknight, the famous Biblical scholar, saw it.

Many people assume that **"the end"** (3, 6, 13, 14) refers to the end of the world when Jesus returns in judgement. But I see **"the end"** as the end of the Jewish or Mosaic economy. **"By the end of the age, therefore, to happen at His coming, they could mean nothing else but the end of the political economy, or form of government by heathen procurators, which then subsisted . . ."** (Macknight). Verse 14 was already fulfilled by Paul's day. **"If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature who is under heaven . . ."** (Colossians 1:23).

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

#### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. How many books of the Old Testament make up the Pentateuch?
2. For whom did Jonathan have a deep love?
3. Who was the Lord's prophet to Rehoboam?
4. How many men were sent by Joshua to spy on Jericho?
5. How many men were sent initially to attack Ai?

6. Who was the captain of king Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard?
7. How long did Paul stay in Malta?
8. What name did the people of Lystra give to Paul?
9. What does the name *Onesimus* mean?
10. For how many days on earth did Jesus minister after His resurrection?

## OBITUARY

**KIRKCALDY:** On the evening of Tuesday 19th 2001, at Station Court Nursing Home, Kirkcaldy, Annie Moyes (nee Lessels) passed away to be with her Lord in her 95th year.

Annie was born in Kirkcaldy and came into contact with the Church through the family of a Church member. She was added to the Church in March 1934 and served her Lord faithfully for the rest of her life. (67 years)

She was educated in Kirkcaldy and worked at a local Linen Mill until she married John Moyes in 1955 and moved to live in the nearby town of Thornton. She lived there until a few years after John's death in 1977 when she returned to live in Kirkcaldy.

Annie was a happy, smiling, boisterous person, who on occasions would venture, "where angels fear to tread". She was kind-hearted, and loving, known for her "addiction" to Pan Drops (a Scottish variant of Mint Imperials), which she willingly shared with all the church members and visitors. Unfortunately for the last 10 years or so, she has been in declining health and unable to meet with her brethren.

A service of thanksgiving, for her life and witness, was held at Kirkcaldy Crematorium on Friday 22nd June 2001, this was led by Robert Hughes.

## THANKS

I would like to thank everyone for their visits, cards and flowers following Jimmy's death, It was a difficult time for

all of us and your support and prayers were very much appreciated by myself and family.

I have now moved into residential care and can be contacted at this address:-

Elsie Sinclair  
 Florabank Residential Home  
 18 Florabank Road  
 Haddington  
 East Lothian EH41 3LR  
 Phone: 01620 824998

## EVANGELIST WANTED

The Slamannan District of Churches require an evangelist and all interested brethren should apply in writing to the District Secretary:-

Harry McGinn,  
 6 Westpark Drive,  
 New Cumnock,  
 Strathclyde KA18 4LJ.

## COMING EVENTS

### PETERHEAD:

#### Special Weekend:

Saturday 15th Sept. - 7pm  
 Sunday 16th Sept. - 10am, 11am, 6pm.  
*Speaker: G. Gorton*

#### Special Weekend:

Saturday 29th Sept. - 7pm  
 Sunday 30th Sept. - 10am, 11am, 6pm.  
*Speaker: F. Worgan*

#### Special Weekend:

Saturday 6th Oct. - 7pm  
 Sunday 7th Oct. - 10am, 11am, 6pm.  
*Speaker: D. Langdon (Glenrothes)*  
*A warm welcome awaits all.*

### ANNIVERSARY MEETING

**Kentish Town Anniversary Meeting**  
 will, God willing, take place on:-

Saturday 6th October, 2001  
 Afternoon 3pm & Evening 6pm  
 Tea at 4.45pm

*Speaker: John Morgan*  
 (also Speaker on Sunday).

*All welcome.*

**SPECIAL SATURDAY NIGHT MEETING**

**At Kirkby in Ashfield**  
 With Bro. Frank Worgan  
 27th October, 2001  
 at 7.00pm

**KIRKCALDY LADIES DAY**

18th May, 2002  
 (Details later).

**GHANA APPEAL**

Our Ghanaian brethren are pleased to work long and hard in serving the Lord and your donations have enabled them to do this much more effectively.

Having obtained the necessary land a village congregation wants to erect a timber support for a roof for their meetings. This would provide some shelter from the rain which at times is extremely heavy, as well as from the sun. Walls could be added later. As usual, this would be done by the brethren themselves. Can we give them some timber to get started on this?

A brother in the north has been given permission by the appropriate authority to enter prisons and speak to the prisoners. This has not only resulted in conversions among prisoners, but has had a favourable reaction from their relatives. As this outreach is showing good results could we help him to obtain

some gospel literature to make it even more effective?

A brother in a remote area has, over the years, established congregations within a wide area around his own village and has nurtured them all through continual contact. He has given us a list of brethren within that area who are suffering through illness and other disasters. While written descriptions may convey some idea of the need, to actually see such suffering is heartbreaking. With the love of Christ can we help to alleviate some of these cases?

Those wishing to help please make cheques payable to:-

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

1. 5.
2. David (1 Samuel 18:1).
3. Shemah (2 Chronicles 12:5).
4. 2 Joshua 2:1).
5. 3000 (Joshua 7:4).
6. Artioch (Daniel 2:14).
7. 3 months (Acts 28:11).
8. Mercury (Acts 14:12).
9. Useful (Philemon 10).
10. 40 (Acts 1:3).

**ANSWERS**

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