

### God's Word is Spirit

From the foregoing we can see how essential the Word of God is to us. It is the Spirit Word, as taught by Jesus (Jno. 6:63), and the only way we can have this spirit in us is by reading, imbibing, and then manifesting the Word of God in the way we live our lives. How important it was, and is, that the writer to the Hebrews should exhort the believers of his day and ours, "See that ye refuse not Him That speaketh" (Heb. 12:25)! Jesus has spoken, and his words, which are the words God commanded him to speak (Jno. 12:49), have been written down in the New Testament.

Moreover, Jesus is at the very centre of the purpose of the Almighty God, from Genesis to Revelation; therefore when we open the Word of God we learn of Jesus, who is the Word made flesh. May we therefore hearken to the voice of the great Shepherd of the sheep: "Now the God of peace, That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20,21).



## Reviews

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# Christadelphians and litigation\*

John Nicholls

**T**HIS NEW pamphlet on the subject of the disciple of Christ and litigation deals in a very comprehensive way with the principles that should govern our attitude to, and our possible use of, the law of the land in which we live. It also examines some of the modern issues involved in the application of these principles, offering well-reasoned and Scripturally based advice. Although the current issues dealt with are those which touch the Brotherhood in the United Kingdom, ecclesias in other parts of the world come under the same principles, and will find much help by adapting the advice to their particular circumstances.

The booklet is divided into five chapters, each easy to follow and well supported by Scripture. The Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves, and Brother Butler has done us a great service in so skilfully bringing together the relevant passages and basing his own comments clearly on the Word of God.

Chapter 1 deals with the Christian attitude to the law, and is followed by a much longer chapter on the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus, in which the author takes us effortlessly through the Gospels, reminding us of the teaching of our Master on topics such as possessions, redress of

wrongs and forgiveness. Here are some extracts from this chapter:

"We shall find that he gives us no advice whatsoever on ways of preserving our material possessions or standard of living";

"Unlike so many of us, Jesus totally subjugated in himself self-seeking pride, resentment and vengefulness. He was ever ready to forgive men for the evil that they said about him and did to him";

"The Lord laid no claim to any material possessions, and so had nothing to defend. He had no need to have recourse to law to obtain or retain what was rightly his. If we expect advice from the Lord on how to obtain justice in this life we shall be disappointed . . . throughout his teaching, the standards that he faultlessly observed himself he proclaimed

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\* *Dare Any of You . . . Go to Law?*, Cecil Butler. Produced by The Christadelphian on behalf of the Christadelphian Military Service Committee. 36 pages. Price £1.00 plus postage. Available from the Christadelphian Office, 404 Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham B28 8SZ. Tel. 0121 777 6328; email [orders@thechristadelphian.com](mailto:orders@thechristadelphian.com).

with the expectation that his followers would adopt them too. We may not like the degree of self-denial to which these standards lead". He concludes the chapter by comparing the modern way of life with the ideals that our Saviour has set before us:

"The world sets much store on what it calls 'human rights', and enacts all kinds of legislation to preserve them. But Jesus tells his followers that this is not for them, and his words have lost none of their authority with the passage of time. Jesus expects his followers to carry a cross; and the cross that each of us carries for him is the cross of the 'Not I, but Christ' (Gal. 2:20). Our egos are to be struck through, crossed out".

There follows a shorter chapter on the lives and teaching of the apostles, and Brother Butler deals with the apparent problem of the Apostle Paul using his Roman citizenship to his advantage (p. 16). In this chapter, Paul's and Peter's teaching on litigation is explored, and the general practical examples given by the apostles are set out.

Chapter 4 deals with the application to our modern circumstances. Many issues are discussed, and the advice given is well reasoned and Scripturally based. The recovery of debts is clearly a big problem to brothers and sisters in business (it must also have been to our Lord when he worked with Joseph in the carpenter's trade). The use of debt-factoring firms, and the problems faced when disciples are directors of limited companies, or companies where the board consists entirely of Christadelphians, are examined. The case of legal separation, where perhaps a sister with young children has had her husband leave her, is also discussed. The issues of bankruptcy and voluntary liquidation, with

all that can be involved in those situations, are considered.

Another big legal item in the Western world today is the 'compensation culture'. Brother Butler quotes from the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:38,39). He goes on to comment: "If, then, we are not to seek for vengeance upon those who would wilfully do us harm, how much less upon those who harm us by accident with no malice aforethought?".

The increase in claims for such tragic issues as compensation for children who were brain-damaged at birth through negligence are considered. Employment tribunals, and many questions about insurance and insurance claims, are also considered in a very interesting way. Finally, Brother Butler, like many faithful brethren before him, sounds a cautionary note for those disciples who may be tempted to make a career in the legal profession.

Chapter 5 is a short summary of the booklet, with an appropriate exhortation. There are useful subject and Scripture indices at the end. It struck the reviewer that a brief consideration of the cases of Joseph and Daniel in positions of eminence in alien lands and with laws alien to those of the God of Israel might have merited brief consideration. However, this is a valuable addition to the Truth's literature, and the booklet is wholeheartedly recommended to all believers who wish to "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:2) while waiting for the day when "out of Zion shall go forth [God's] law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

### The Testimony website

The Testimony website, [www.testimony-magazine.org](http://www.testimony-magazine.org), now has available the 2002 issues of the magazine in PDF format, and articles may be freely downloaded and printed for readers' use using Acrobat Reader (available free by clicking on the Acrobat Reader button on the **Back issues** page). Search articles using Acrobat's 'Find' facility; underlined links in correspondence take you straight back to the article being discussed; click on To be continued to take you forward to the next article in a series without having to thumb through magazines to find it. Also available on the website: the 2001 issues in PDF format, including the Special Issue "Framed by the Word of God" (Science and the Bible); the July 1996 Special Issue, "Jerusalem", and the June 1997 Special Issue, "Written for our Learning", both in HTML format; the complete set of Basic Bible Principles leaflets; and a link on the **Back issues** page to the Testimony Subject Index for 1981-2000, compiled by Brother Brian Armour, on the Bible Web website.