



## THE GREAT TROUBLE MAKER

By P. WATKINS

Clearly, *something* is wrong, and *somebody* is to blame. Trouble, and more trouble: that is the human story, and thus it has always been. Many centuries ago Job said that “Man is of few days and full of trouble”, and things have not improved since.

Crime, famine, wickedness, war—civilization is reeling like a drunken man, on the brink of a precipice.

### **The devil of the Bible**

Who is to blame?

The Bible blames the devil, but ...

But the devil of the Bible is *not* the devil of superstition. Those who have little *first-hand* knowledge of the Bible are surprised when it is pointed out that the devil of the Bible is a symbol of sinful human desires.

Consider this passage:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).

Let’s do a spot of hard thinking here. This verse tells us that Jesus came in our nature. Thus he was able to die; and by his death he was able to destroy the devil. So Jesus destroyed the devil by his death. If the devil were a powerful person, this would not make sense. How could Jesus have destroyed a monster by coming in weak human nature, and being tortured to death on a cross?

Think of the devil as human sin, and the problem is solved. We know that our Lord “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

Further, the devil is called, “him that had the power of death”; and the Bible tells us repeatedly that *sin* brings death. Remember, for example: “The wages of sin is death”.

Try this simple experiment. Take a piece of paper and jot down all the Bible facts (they must be *Bible* facts!) you can discover about the devil. Then try to match them with Bible facts about sin. The tie-up should be striking enough to convince you that sinful human desires are the devil of the Bible.

### **Human devil**

So man is the trouble maker after all!

The human mind is full of deceit. People have a great facility for blaming others for their misdeeds. Remember that accident? Was it the stupidity of that other driver, or the irresponsible pedestrian, or had some fathead put the bollard in the wrong place?

Now we are looking at trouble on the massive scale. By greed, folly and sheer wickedness, man has inflicted a deal of un-happiness upon himself. And he proceeds, without batting an eyelid, to push the blame on to a mythical monster. Can you beat it?

### **The cause of war**

The responsibility for wars rests squarely on man’s shoulders. Hear what James says:

“What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war” (James 4:1, 2 R.S.V.).

Of course God could intervene—and the day is not far distant when He will do so. In the meantime, however, He permits man to suffer the consequences of his own wickedness. He lets man punish himself.

“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:21).

### **How it all started**

The Scriptures tell us how the sad story of human sin began. A man named Adam made an unwise decision ...

At this point, people start blaming God. Didn't God know what was going to happen? Couldn't He have prevented it?

Careful here! Man has the power to make decisions: is this a good thing? I have yet to meet the person who would prefer to be without this power.

All right then, the ability to make decisions is a good thing. But man cannot have this ability, and not have it, at the same time. If he has the ability to decide, it follows that he may decide wisely, and he may decide unwisely. And obviously, he must accept the consequences of his decisions.

The tragedy of human history is all man's doing. But God has not forsaken us in our misery:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

You are invited to write:

C.A.L.S., 3 Regent Street, Birmingham, B1 3HG, for a free copy of the booklet:

“Your Adversary the Devil.”

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