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In this issue:-

Page 1. Editorial	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 2. The Atonement	Brother Ernest Brady
Page 4. Ye are My Witnesses, saith the Lord	Brother E.H.Linggood
Page 6. Have a Vision	Brother Eric Moore
Page 7. The Ground	Brother S. Simmonds
Page 11. What it will be like in the Kingdom of God.	Brother Leo Dreifuss
Page 12. Jesus said. No. 1 of a series	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 13. He that Received His Testimony hath set to His Seal that God is True -	Brother Phil Parry
Page 15. Some notes of A.D.Norris Circa 1958	

Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sister Edith Howells, of Yarrawonga, Australia, sends Loving Greetings to all.

All who have written this month seem to be going on much as usual, and like all of us, are looking forward to the return of our Lord and the Kingdom age. One correspondent wrote, "The world situation is both frightening and encouraging" and I am sure we all agree, for we are fast approaching the time of great tribulation when the very existence of life on earth is threatened and to which Jesus refers in the 24th chapter of Matthew; and encouraging for "we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless... Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen." 2 Peter 3:13,14 & 18.

Russell Gregory

The Atonement

John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" and the apostle Paul "we have before proved both Jew and Gentile that they are all under sin." It is evident that Jesus did not take away the sins we still commit, and Paul's words cannot apply to character because a person of moral goodness is as much "under sin" as the worst sinner. The truth is that the whole human family is estranged from God because of sin.

Adam was created at the beginning a man of flesh and blood with the same corruptible nature as all other living creatures. In order to develop character he was placed under a law requiring obedience. He transgressed and incurred the penalty of sin. The account in Genesis is almost universally misunderstood and it is believed that sin made man corruptible and his eventual natural death the punishment. But what actually happened proves that this is not so. He had been warned that in the day he sinned he would surely die, yet he lived on for more than 900 years. What is the explanation? Did God change His mind? If we look up all the other instances of the same expression as that in Genesis 2:17 (e.g. 1 Kings 2:37-42) we find that it implies an inflicted death on the day of the crime. Similarly, every instance of the punishment of presumptuous sin was a judicial execution (c.f. Genesis 29:7). This is what Adam incurred but it is clear that he was not put to death; but how could he possibly escape if God was not to be untrue to His word? The explanation is the

plan of redemption whereby Adam died in law, but under a typical sacrifice his life was spared - he was delivered as Isaac was when Abraham was about to kill him - and he lived to become the father of the human race. God did not change His mind, but He made it possible in His own wisdom to open to man the hope of regaining, by faith, what had been lost by disobedience.

In Romans 5:19 the apostle Paul shows how God has chosen to regard all men as involved in the Sin of Adam. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." They were not made sinners in the sense of being created evil, or obliged by their nature to become sinful; the meaning is that we are legally classified as sinners in a similar way to that which we are by law citizens of the country in which we are born. The sentence of death incurred by Adam 'passes upon' all his descendants, since all who share his life would have perished in him if he had been put to death on the day of his sin. So that Adam is not only the man from whom we are all descended, but he is also appointed the federal head of all who are under the reign of Sin. This is the relationship of being "in Adam" and its vital importance is because if we remain in it, that is, unredeemed, we are inescapably destined to receive the wages of sin.

Sin is literally the transgression of the law and one has to know that a law exists before, in justice, one can be held guilty under it, so that those who are ignorant of God and His purpose are not accountable. But sin is also personified as a king, or master, holding man in bondage, and the reason for this is given in Galatians 3:22, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

The meaning is that God has appointed a second federal head, Jesus Christ, and the only way we can demonstrate that we have the faith which will make us acceptable to God is to recognise that our relationship, by birth to the first Adam by which we are in bondage under sin, can only be changed by getting ourselves out of Adam and into Christ. To do this we have to believe and obey, dying in baptism a symbolic death to our former life and being re-born by faith as children of God.

Law is the basis of the Divine Plan. It is God's will that we should not perish but have everlasting life, even though by our own efforts we cannot earn it. He wishes to be merciful and to show His love towards us, but He will not do so at the expense of the supremacy of law. So there is a double problem - to show mercy, and at the same time uphold a just law which must condemn sin - and it is solved in a wonderful way by the sacrifice of Christ. Many sincere believers think that we can be saved by the simple exercise of unconditional forgiveness, and they regard His death as no more than a martyrdom, but this can never happen because it would not establish the high principles of justice and law which must prevail and which must be recognised by all those who wish to please Him.

Under the supreme law of a righteous God a man who is a sinner does not deserve to live, he has forfeited his life, which means that the death which came by sin is not so much a punishment as a debt. A sinner owes that which he cannot pay without perishing; he owes his life. The basis of The Atonement is that if someone else could be found with the means to pay the debt, and providing the supreme authority sanctions the transaction, the sinner might be freed from his debt while at the same time the justness of the law is upheld. God brought Jesus into the world for this purpose.

When Jesus submitted Himself to the death of the Cross, He made Himself the sin-bearer, translating into reality the deliverance from the dead foreshadowed in Eden when Adam was covered by skins of animals slain. His death was therefore an exact substitutionary sacrifice, not to appease the wrath of God by the infliction of undeserved punishment on the innocent in order that the guilty might escape; this would have been an injustice; but Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to the condemnation passed upon Him by wicked men, because He saw Himself as paying the price of their redemption. He was wholly good and innocent; there was no cause of death in Him as even Pilate clearly recognised. But what Jesus knew was that He alone could pay the price of their deliverance. Why He alone?

This brings us to the other vital factor in the Atonement which God had kept concealed from the beginning - the fact that the Redeemer was to be His own Son. Most Christians believe what is revealed in the Gospels about His origin, but they do not understand its true significance.

Born of a woman,. He was the same natural flesh and blood as all other men, but as He was begotten by the Holy Spirit His life was not a continuation of the Adam-life but a new life direct from God. He was therefore born outside the state of captivity, not under the reign of sin but free, and therefore in a position to purchase the release of those who were enslaved. Jesus said (Matthew 20:28) that He came to give His life a ransom (*lutron*) for many; the word '*lutron*' means a price paid. The apostle Paul also wrote (Galatians 4:5) that Christ was sent to redeem (*exagorazo*) and this word means to acquire out of the forum, in the same way as slaves were bought, or prisoners ransomed. So this is how Christ redeemed mankind. We have been purchased out of bondage, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a price. It is a figurative transaction, but it was completed by a literal price, the life of Jesus which He laid down for us on the Cross.

If Jesus had not proved Himself personally sinless. He could not have offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, because a sacrifice had to be perfect and unblemished before sin could be laid upon it. But, even though He had been sinless, if He had been the son of a human father it would have been impossible for Him to meet the legal claim of sin because His life would not have been His own to give; He would have been in the same hopeless condition as all in Adam.

Therefore, being the Son of God and having proved Himself obedient under temptation He was legally free and morally perfect. Though He could have claimed a kind of equality with God, He humbled Himself (Philippians 2:5-8) and became obedient unto death, suffering what was due to sinners, giving Himself the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.

The purpose of God in Christ is unique in history, in what it reveals of His mercy and love and in the logical perfection with which it meets man's needs, enlightens his mind and gives him hope. It spans the ages from the moment when God said

"Let there be light" to the infinite future when He will declare "Behold, I make all things new." These are indeed things which even the angels desired to look into. Today they are open to us and they show the way to eternal life.

Brother Ernest Brady.

"Ye Are My Witnesses" saith The Lord

Isaiah 40:10.

These thoughts are the result of an article entitled "The Miracle of Israel" which appeared in the Judah Magazine published by the Mount Zion Reporter during last year. The author of the article is a Jew who accepts Jesus Christ as his Messiah and belongs to a congregation in Israel who are broadly termed Christian Jews by most, but are not accepted by the Orthodox or Reformed Rabbi.

The article commences, "The cause of the rise and fall of nations is the subject for historians to analyse and explain." One feels this is not the case if we accept the Scriptures, for in Deuteronomy 31:8 we are given to understand that God divided the nations their inheritance, and in Daniel 4:17 we are told the Most High giveth them to whomsoever He wills.

Now let us look to modern Israel and their relation to being witnesses to God. Many and varied are the views held regarding the return of Jews to the Land of their forefathers, in the past known as Palestine. The 7th Day Adventists, from talks with one of their ministers, feel the Jews have no future in the land, they had their opportunity when Christ first came to earth but they rejected their Messiah, leaving them with no future prospects.

Look again at Deuteronomy, this time at the well known chapter 28. Here we have the blessings and curses in great detail. It was because of Israel's failure to keep God's laws and statutes that they were cast out of the land and dispersed among the nations where they have remained for so many centuries without finding any permanent resting place (how often have we heard the phrase 'the wandering Jew?'). Here we again have the witness brought before us, in verse 65, "among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest..." This causes us to see why Israel is so determined to keep Israel today as their own country. No doubt God has allowed their present regathering, but this is not the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, for we know today they are only there for their own material ends, they are there by their might and not in the least have they returned for the glory of God.

A witness must be a living and active person who has had knowledge or experience of the matter being considered, or has taken part in it. At any enquiry or court hearing there has to be brought forward evidence, this can be of various types such as circumstantial, and exhibit, or a witness. In this latter a witness has to be alive, which gives us reason why the Jew as known today survives despite all attempts to reduce them in numbers, or even annihilate them. If we go to the early chapters of Exodus we find Pharaoh was very worried saying "The children of Israel are now mightier than we", yet the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied, we read. Coming to more recent days, during the 1920's and 30's, in this country, Oswald Mosley was on the scene with his followers known as the Black Shirts, were very anti-Semitic as, still more recently we had Hitler who would like to have seen the Jews annihilated as today, across the Atlantic, would the Ku-Klux-Klan. Until recent weeks it was the constant cry of the leaders of the P.L.O. to drive modern Israel out of the land and into the sea, and take back the city of Jerusalem from Israel. The P.L.O. leaders would on no account recognise

the State of Israel. But suddenly there has been a change; we are speaking of Yasser Arafat, who is now prepared to allow recognition. Why, we may ask? They are still God's witnesses. Not only are we told that Israel of old, or the Jews, are God's witnesses but in Zachariah we are informed "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. For behold I will shake mine hand upon them and they shall be a spoil to their servants..."

Modern Israeli leaders remind us very much of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. We hear them speak as though they had a right to much of the land now under their occupation because in the Old Testament most of the land was then part of Judah and Israel, even until the Roman occupation. When the Jews came to John to be baptised he said to them, that is, the scribes and Pharisees, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves. We have Abraham to our fathers; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matthew 3:8).

The same claim could even be made of the Palestinians, and maybe some other Arab nations of today, for were not both Ishmael and Isaac in Abraham's loins?

Romans 9:7 and 8, "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall they be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of promise are counted for the seed."

Many individuals come to mind who witnessed for God. Of the twelve apostles, all were Jews, only one is mentioned with anything to indicate anything different, Simon the Canaanite, who, in all probability may have been a proselyte. Now just a few thoughts concerning one, perhaps the greatest, witness in the New Testament for God - the Apostle Paul.

Acts 22:3,4, "I am verily a man which am a Jew... brought up... at the feet of Gamaliel... according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God as ye all are this day."

It was while exercising this zeal, on the way to Damascus, that Saul was halted by none other than Jesus Christ and the record in Acts gives us the details of his appointment as a special witness. Paul was told to make contact with Ananias, who in turn was told by the Lord, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel."

Paul faithfully witnessed as we see from 2 Corinthians 11:22-27, and as recorded in 2 Timothy 4:7 & 8. He had fought a good fight (or, faithfully witnessed) henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness; and not for him only.

Galatians 3:27-29, "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ... and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Finally, let us in our day witness to God and His Son, Christ Jesus according to our gifts. 1 Corinthians 12.

Genesis 25:23, "... two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger... the elder shall serve the younger."

Here are the ancestors of Jew and Arab.

Brother E.H.Linggood.

Have A Vision

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we read in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Whilst we do not live under the law the fact still remains that without a vision we would perish. The vision we must have, is what we are going to do with our lives.

Jesus had a vision, and we are told "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...". Hebrews 12:2. We, too, can do likewise if we keep at the front of our minds the wonderful promises that have been given. Paul wrote, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13 & 14.

We must be followers of Him also, and in this matter it may help to write down the vision, as Habakkuk was commanded to do, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2. However, no matter how vivid our vision, nor however much we feel that if we reveal it to others they are sure to be moved, it could be that the actions they take would be opposite to what we would hope or expect. Joseph had a vision to which his brethren took a great dislike - Genesis 37:5-7. That vision was for an appointed time (like ours) and was sure. Abram's vision (Genesis 15:1-3) took time and he tried to make it come to pass in his own way instead of waiting; this, too, can be a warning for us. Proverbs tells us that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" but goes on to say "but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life." Oh, for that day of our desire!

We well remember that because of their sin, Adam and Eve were kept from the tree of life, but we through Christ Jesus can be partakers of it. "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life." Revelation 2:7. How then, brethren, shall we build up our desire? We are told "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psalm 37:4. The best way we have of obtaining anything is through prayer; "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11: 24. There is here no maybe; "ye shall have them."

Our vision, then, is sure. It cannot fail for "this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, he that hath the Son hath life." 1 John 4:11 & 12.

What a glorious vision! And to help us to fully comprehend that day let us read again of Peter, James and John's vision in Matthew 17:1-9:- "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt,

let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

Brother Eric Moore.

The Ground

It is absolutely essential at the very commencement to get a correct outlook and a true view in a study of any Biblical subject. If we do not get a good foundation upon which to build then our edifice will be as weak as its own foundation may be, and liable to collapse at any time.

If we commence our study on a false basis then our whole structure of reasoning and understanding will be wrong, and will lead to all sorts of surmising which will inevitably arise as we go on studying the Bible. For, in such a case contradictions will certainly present themselves to our mind and we shall soon be floundering about in a sea of doubt and uncertainty as to what is the real truth concerning the subject we have in mind.

Again, we must always remember that the Bible is an Eastern Book and must be read and studied in its original setting. Hardly anyone gives a thought to this who lives in the Western Hemisphere, and in present day so called civilisation one's ideas and thoughts are almost in a totally opposite direction to those given in the Bible.

And yet again, it is generally forgotten that the Bible is a “Spiritual Book.” That is to say it is spiritual in the sense that it is a God given book, wholly inspired and infallible in its original setting, and must be interpreted by itself alone and not by any other private interpretation, never mind how learned a person may be. Often it is the case that the more “learned” a person is the more likely it is that he or she may be wrong in their own interpretation. And this applies not only to doctors of divinity etc., but also to those who think they cannot be wrong because of their own continuous study of the Bible.

Modern theologians really have little or no idea of what is meant by the term “A Spiritual Book.” They immediately fly in thought to fantastic ideas of “ghosts” “Phantoms” and such like idiotic fancies, including “immortal souls.” This really is nonsense. The spiritual maxim is, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 1:18. And it is upon reason that, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” But to come to an understanding of the way in which God does this, is to commence at the beginning of the history of man - as revealed in the Bible - and read and study the whole plan of God right through.

There are many phrases of study.

We now consider briefly one of them, which is brought to our notice in Genesis 3:17, namely, THE GROUND. In considering this we must try to remember that, in Scripture, the natural order of things is used to portray a spiritual order. So Jesus thus used many natural illustrations in His addresses to the people to bring home a Spiritual Truth. Many such illustrations will readily come to mind.

There are other Truths which it is necessary to keep in mind also. One such is, in the words of Jesus Christ, “The flesh profiteth nothing.” The LIFE of God is spiritual, not natural. In the present natural life, we must imbibe spiritual ideas if we eventually wish to attain to that Eternal Life, in the Kingdom of God. That Life will be in “A body of spirit - so to speak - but the body will be literal enough. Jesus is now possessed of such a body.

We go to Genesis 3:17, where we read of God's decree to Adam after his sin, or transgression of God's law. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Now we believe these words to teach a truth other than the simple natural one as it would appear at first sight. We know this is generally taken to mean that God cursed the whole literal ground (or earth) because of Adam's sin and so the whole of the human race have been penalised thus, in their tilling of the ground (literal). Well, if this is correct, how can we square it with the oft repeated declaration given in His own Word that God is just? We have hard work to so blend in agreement such an action with justice. We note too, the Word says the ground was cursed for Adam's sake. Now, if this be so, how can we read it literally? It should read "Cursed is the ground because of thee, or, because of thy sin." If we do a thing for somebody's sake it is generally meant for their good, and not for their punishment. Yet this passage of Scripture is supposed to mean to refer to the whole human race, and their "having to suffer" for Adam's sin - as we have heard it expressed often. This cannot be true: but, for a moment, let us suppose that it were even true. Turn to Genesis 5:29 where we have a very strange declaration concerning Noah, son of Lamech - when we read in the light of the common understanding of Genesis 3:17 as referring to the literal ground. One cannot make any sense out of it. "Because of the 'ground' which the Lord hath cursed." With such an idea as that the word 'ground' refers to the literal earth only, the passage is an enigma.

God's words after the flood, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," - and the reason why not follows. The point here is that even if the literal ground was cursed at Adam's fall, in the manner believed by almost all Christendom, it is evident that it only lasted until the time of the flood and came to an end with Noah. The whole race, barring Noah and his family, were blotted out by the flood. If we say the cursing of the ground in Genesis 3:17 is literal and has so to be applied, then Genesis 8:21 is also literal and we must believe that the curse was removed after the flood.

But we believe there is a better way to interpret these things. We believe they should be applied in a spiritual way, and so we try to let the Bible interpret its own meaning, by referring to its own allusions to the term 'ground.'

In Amos 8:11 we read of a famine. Now we can understand what a famine (literal) means. No bread. No food. Starvation, suffering, death. But Amos's famine is not a literal one, in the sense that we generally understand the word famine to mean. Yet Amos' famine certainly means starvation and death (spiritual). We read in verse 13 of the fainting for thirst, following the famine of the word of God. This much then, we learn. That natural terms such as famine, hunger, thirst and very many others, are not always to be applied literally, but only as the context allows, which is often in a spiritual sense.

Turn to Job 5:6. Eliphaz says, "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." But both affliction and trouble does if Genesis 3:17 is applied to the literal ground. There must be another application of the word ground, then. In turning to Jeremiah 4:3 we read "Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns." Now, literally, this would be foolish to do. But it is not meant in a literal sense, as we gather from the next verse, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart." The ground then, means the Israelites themselves, living men and women who were fallow (uncultivated in mind, unsown with God's word and law, without crop, unfruitful) . "Fallow ground."

Then we well remember the parables of Jesus as given in Matthew 13:8; Luke 8:8. In explanation thereof Jesus told His listeners in Luke 8:11, "The seed is the Word of God." Verse 15, "The good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it...." Here then, we get the key for Genesis 3:17 re the ground. There is good ground and bad ground (literally) so there is when applied to human beings as Jesus applies it here. By the way, there are readers of Scripture who deny that anyone can have a good heart. This is because they misapply other Scripture, as Jeremiah 17:9.

In Mark 4, after reading the parable of the Sower, we read, verse 26, "So is the Kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground"

The Word (seed) is sown in a person's heart and mind (ground) and either brings forth fruit (in that ground) or else the seed becomes abortive. The advice given by Hosea, 10:12, "sow to yourselves in

righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.”

So we arrive at a fair comprehension of what the word ground stands for in Genesis 3:17. Ground (literal) is made up of dust, clay, etc. So Israel, as a living people, were called clay by Jeremiah in his illustration of the potter and clay. See Chapter 18:6, and Romans 9:21-22.

Going back to Genesis 3:17, we again read the words, “cursed is the ground for thy sake”. Really, Adam himself was ground, dust, clay animated; verse 19, “Out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art.” Yes Adam was ground right enough and not very good ground either, although created very good; literally, as were all other things that were created. His mind was drawn away from God. He became fallow ground, as regards the Word of God. Adam was soon to see the result of this, his literal seed brought sorrow to him. Think of Cain, his firstborn, he became a murderer. Truly, thorn and thistle did the ground (living beings from his own bowels) bring forth to him. See Judges 2:2-3; Numbers 33:55. Shall we consider just briefly, the literal aspect of the curse of the ground given us in Genesis 3:17. “Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” We are quite at liberty to believe that thorns and thistles existed before the curse. This is only reasonable. It was all a matter of application to Adam. “To thee” we read. But we believe that the thorns and thistles, and all weeds too, did not interfere with Adam’s cultivation of the literal ground whilst in Eden. Even thorns and thistles and weeds of all sorts have their place in the economy of nature. A weed, of any kind, is only out of place and becomes a pest when it is out of its original setting. A definition of a weed, in so far as a farmer is concerned is “A plant whose growth interferes with that of the crop to which the soil for the time being is devoted.” We certainly do not believe that the Creator made a special creation of thorns and thistles, weeds (so called) of all kinds, animals and birds, etc. in wrath and anger, to cause the curse to come about.

We believe that the curse, as we read it, as applied in the literal sense was brought about by Adam himself and has since been aggravated very much by his posterity. How was this brought about? Simply by upsetting the balance of nature. When we look at and consider the beauty seen in even a much despised weed of the field, we cannot believe that it is of itself a curse. When we consider too, plant life, bird, animal and insect life, we wonder at the beauty and glory exhibited therein. Now, it is by and through man himself that pests are made, to a great degree. He, by his own interference with nature’s laws have upset nature’s wonderful balancing system. He has almost exterminated certain kinds of birds and animals which nature (God’s nature) intended to do their work in keeping the balance of nature intact and in proper working order. Even weeds have a great work to do in their use as herbal medicines for man and beast, and as food for birds, etc. Think of man’s methods of manuring the ground and the resultant distribution of weeds and insects upon it. We cannot attempt to go into any detail in this interesting study, but we have given an idea as to how man himself is responsible for the curse of the ground in any literal application of it.

In the Spiritual sense it is essential to understand why the ground was cursed for Adam’s sake. In other words, why the Adamic (human) ground was put under the curse for his sake. Adam was created very good, literally. Genesis 1:31. He disobeyed God when put to the test and thus became “bad ground”. His mind was drawn away from God by his own lust (desire) and enticed. Not by a supernatural devil of popular superstition but by the promptings of his own carnal mind. See James 1:13. It was the mind of Adam and Eve that reasoned in opposition to God’s commands. See 2 Corinthians 11:3. Adam became alienated from God by his actions and therefore without hope of the Eternal Life which God held out. He cut himself off and therefore all his posterity. He Sold himself - and the human race of which he was the Federal Head - to Sin and became Sin’s possession. The curse, then, was alienation from hope of eternal life. When Adam saw and understood the consequences of his sin - given to him by God in Genesis 3:17 to 19, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake,” etc., he must have realised his own worthiness to die, and God’s mercy in sparing his life.

The curse which was put upon the Adamic ground can be individually removed in Christ. He died in the stead of His brother Adam. Herein we see God’s justice and mercy. Justice, in giving His only begotten Son to pay the price due to sin, i.e. violent death - the life of Jesus for the life of Adam. And mercy, in sparing Adam, and therefore the race which has descended from Adam: the human race, and not only so, but holding out to them the hope of eternal life - if they would grasp hold of it - through the willing sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

It was then, through Adam's sin that the race became legally involved in it.

Why was the curse, and how was it for Adam's sake? See Romans 11:32, "For God hath concluded (margin - shut them all up together) them all in unbelief (even as Adam - in Adam) that He might have mercy upon all." Realising his position, then, as 'sold to sin' legally, as a child in Adam, a man can see hope in Christ's redemption (buying back from sin's possession of him), and wonder at God's love and mercy to Adam's race. No wonder Paul breaks out in gratitude as expressed in Romans 11:33-36. See also Romans 3:19.

The Edenic Law brought, legally, all the world under its decree. Every mouth was stopped and made guilty (legally) before God. "For all have sinned (in Adam legally) and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. But - and here we see God's mercy and love shown forth for Adam's sake, also God's righteousness - "the righteousness of God unto all and upon all who will believe." Verses 21 & 22. (Which of course, involves baptism for the remission of sin).

All can be therefore, by so doing, "Justified freely by His favour through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:24-26.

Verse 28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the (Mosaic) law." Justified, by faith in the giving of the life of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin - a willing sacrifice in full payment for the life of Adam.

God knew the end from the beginning. His plan was conceived in Love and Mercy, and not in vengeance and wrath. He commends (recommends - Diaglott) His own love to us because, we being yet sinners in Adam, Christ died for us.

Brother S. Simmonds.

What Will It Be Like In The Kingdom Of God?

The time has come for my attempt at a contribution to this question. Now let me say from the outset that this will not contain a lot of guesswork but only what we can learn from the Bible. And whatever we imagine things to be like, they will probably turn out better, as we gather from 1 Corinthians 2:9, and Isaiah 64:4, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Now starting with towns and cities as we know them. There won't be these huge conglomerations of concrete with large palatial houses on the one hand, and dirty hovels and cardboard boxes for the poor to live in on the other hand. We read in Isaiah 5:8, Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." Now there were cities in ancient Israel; just what they were like I don't know, but they would have been very much smaller than our present day cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, etc., etc. There will be towns (I wouldn't be sure about cities as large as say Manchester) in the Kingdom. Using Isaiah 5:8 as a guide, and also other prophecies where we read that everybody will dwell under his own vine and fig tree, every house will have a garden and field attached to it. This prevents houses from being joined wall to wall, and there being plenty of green in between, there will be a much healthier atmosphere, quite apart from there being no pollution from petrol fumes, which I am sure, won't be allowed.

There will be streets, but not the uniform slabs of concrete and tarmac as we know them today. And concerning transport, this, I am afraid, is much subject to guesswork at the moment. We must distinguish there between those of us who will be found worthy to rule under Christ as kings and priests, and the governed. The former are not likely to need any transport. They, that is as we hope, we can get from place to place as did Philip, who at one moment talked to the Ethiopian eunuch, next moment was at Azotus; or Elijah, who was taken up by the spirit from Elisha and later from somewhere not revealed, wrote a letter to Jehoram, king of Judah. Or, as the risen Lord Himself who, though a physical body was with the disciples in a room one moment and then vanished out of sight.

Now as far as the governed are concerned, there won't be cars, not as we know them, anyway, fouling the atmosphere. In fact, I don't think there will be any oil or coal. (All this may well have been used up in the war or wars at the time of Christ's return or before). We shall be either back to the horse and cart or use some transport of an entire different and novel kind beyond our present imagination transport may or may not use carts on wheels. There is good reason to think that the horse and cart will play some part. We gather so much from Ezekiel 39:9-10, where we read that they shall be seven years burning Gog's weapons. So there will be certainly plenty of wood available.

As for farming, forced farming in narrow hen cages will be out. I visualise the old fashioned farmyards with hens and goats running about. Fertilizers will be provided by healthy horse-muck which can be collected everywhere if there is horse and cart transport.

There won't be any major diseases and no need for the huge drug bills of our day. There maybe, however, for a while, minor illnesses and accidents and therefore a limited need for doctors and nurses. But these will be guided and directed by the Great Healer, and the means employed be more natural than the many drugs with their side effects that cure one thing and cause another trouble.

Finally, there will, I think, be some need for teachers. Christ will teach man His ways, but that requires plenty of teachers under His direction who teach only the true doctrines of God's laws, how mankind fell in Eden, and God's means of redemption, etc., etc.

Other trades and professions: probably farmers, builders and related trades, but all having to follow God's ways. There probably will be some limited use of money as a means of exchange but none of the big speculation of the stock-market.

Well, this is all we can say. It only remains for me to express my wish that we all be worthy of our high calling to the end of our probation. May all this guesswork become reality soon. The world needs the Saviour and the way things are going now, unless He comes soon this planet will be spoiled, to mention only by the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, pollution of the rivers and oceans, and the cutting down of forests.

So let us endeavour to be worthy and so find out for ourselves what the Kingdom will be like.

P.S. All the above refers to the 1000 years reign. Nobody can speculate what happens after.

Brother Leo Dreifuss.

Jesus said...

No. 1.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power... Revelation 20:6.

"Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death... we have been planted together in the likeness of his death... knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him... " Romans 6:3-5.

Jesus Christ died on the Cross and this loving act of His for us resulted in us having only to die symbolically in the waters of baptism; a voluntary and painless death for us to go through, in faith, so that our natural death is but a sleep which cannot hold us, for “we have passed from death into life,” John 5:24, and are freed from “the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2.

In my younger days I used to think this referred to our first death which was our baptism and saved us from a second death, having “passed from death to life”, but this view does not fit all the facts for Revelation 20:6 refers the time of Jesus return to reign over the whole earth when those “dead in Christ” will be raised to life to reign with Him. In God’s judgment there will be some who will be raised to die a second death.

Brother Russell Gregory

He That Received His Testimony Hath Set To His Seal That God Is True

John 3:33.

When we study the word of God with minds eager for light and truth we oftentimes come upon some treasure which had evaded us before. I found this to be so when reading the words of the Master Teacher in John 4:32. The disciples had requested Him to eat and Jesus replied, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” We might ask, “When did God’s work begin, and what stage of that work was Jesus referring to?” It could not be the time when He will have subdued the nations and given up the Kingdom to His Father, Jesus knew this, and retrospectively we know it, but the twelve disciples did not. Yet those disciples were immediately concerned with the Father’s work which Jesus makes clear, in John 17, in declaring that He had given them the word of the true God and manifested His Name unto them and glorified it, This was the work Jesus spoke of and which He had finished, yes, the Father’s work from the beginning and up to that time; but there remained yet another work, that of Jesus Himself - to drink the cup God had given Him, without compulsion to drink it. It was not God’s work to drink of this cup. He was not of human nature whereby life-blood could be shed as the equivalent for the life lost by Adamic sin, therefore this was the work of Jesus alone, for as He said before His crucifixion, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.” On the strength of such a statement by Jesus Himself can it even be suggested or accepted that a compulsory death on the Cross of Calvary was incorporated as a condition of righteousness, with failure to comply making Jesus a sinner? Could Jesus have made such a statement with such apparent injustice in mind? Could Jesus glorify and rightly declare the Name of the Father, the attributes of which were declared to Moses? How indeed could He be able to manifest such a Name to those who believed in Justice, Mercy and Truth, but above all, Love? Yet this is the work His Father had given Him to do and of which He said He had finished.

Now this does not mean that the redemption of mankind was not the work of God, it I most definitely was, and the bringing into the world of His only begotten Son was an important part of that work, and if we cannot grasp the reason for the virgin-birth we will never grasp the true reason for the redemption obtained by Christ’s sacrificial death, for without the virgin-birth there could be no sacrificial death. Thus, Jesus having maintained His integrity as the Son of God and having glorified and manifested His Father’s Name and finished that particular assignment, as a co-worker with Him, as He willingly allowed Himself to be lifted up and crucified, with His last breath He could cry out concerning His own work in the vineyard of witness and suffering, “It is finished.”

I have spoken of two stages, but a third stage is still in progress which is found in Isaiah 53:10, “He shall see of his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” (See also Romans 5:18). Continuing Isaiah 53, verse 12, the prophet says and implies that though

numbered with transgressors He was not a transgressor but made intercession for those who were? in the fact of causing His death by false accusation and through envy and ignorance. They killed the Prince of Life. This was His status by birth, but this status alone could not impart Life to others, but as Prince of Life He could say, "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." He was free from Adamic alienation and bondage to "Sin" personified as a Master, having been begotten under the constitution of Righteousness, therefore free to give the equivalent natural life lost by Adam's disobedience, and yet retain His birthright as Son of God and Heir Apparent. The difficulty people have in understanding this is found in not following the words of the Great Preacher in John 4:35, where, if you would read to verse 38, He speaks of other men who have laboured and the disciples having entered into their labours. The obvious teaching of Jesus for the disciples and all who entered and laboured in God's vineyard was to be sure about the men whose labours you were entering into. Who, then, were these men who had laboured and to whom Jesus gave God's seal of approval? Peter gives the answer in Acts 10:42,43, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." That which the prophets had witnessed to was heard and believed by both Jew and Gentile while the degree of their faith and understanding was qualified and accepted by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the speaking with tongues and the glorifying of God being signs to the believing Jews of the circumcision that the Gentiles were also accepted under the new covenant in the blood of Christ. "To him give all the prophets witness." "To him give all the Apostles witness." For they entered into the labours of these other men of whom the writer to the Hebrews (Chapter 11) speaks in commendable words saying, in verse 32, that the time would fail him to tell of Gideon, of Barak, Samson, Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold we count them happy which endure." Jesus tells us through His disciples (John 4) that the field as far as we are concerned is already ripe for harvest, "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true. One soweth and another reapeth." The Apostle Paul takes up this very theme and enlightens us on the meaning of the words of Jesus, "And he that reapeth receiveth wages." Here Paul speaks of a reward irrespective of eternal life, for this latter is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and not something earned as wages. So, in 1 Corinthians 3:5, he exhorts those who had preference of one Apostle from another saying, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: i.e. the Apostles (See Ephesians 2:20) "Ye are God's husbandry (tillage), ye are God's building." Paul continues a declaration of fact and also a very grave warning, "I have laid the foundation (Jesus Christ) and another buildeth thereon, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon - for every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." The writer to the Hebrews commences his discourse with a reference to the wise Master Builder whose plan and foundation was incorporated by His Spirit Word in the prophets and in His Son the chief cornerstone. "God who at sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Hebrews 1:1, God spoke to the prophets, not to us. God spoke to His Son, not to us. His Son spoke to the Apostles, not to us. The Apostles entered into the labours of the prophets and Jesus, and we have the written words of God through them all.

Our belief and faith must be based on God's words through them, and we cannot say, We are of this man's doctrine, or that man's doctrine; far too many professions of holding the Truth of God have been made and forced upon people through misunderstanding, misinterpretation and direction to out of context Bible references and no concrete proof of the truth professed, and no sound basis of truth – merely quicksand. Let us then beware that the other men who have laboured, built on the true foundation (Jesus Christ), otherwise entering into their labours will be of little use to us if it does not abide the fire. We can only test it by the written Spirit Word of God as workmen who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, for if we make the mistake of following men who have confused the physical with the legal, we fall into the ditch with them. "I am the light of the world, follow me, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

May the Lord bless you all and direct your hearts into the patient waiting for Christ, and to know that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord.

Brother Phil Parry.

Did Christ Die for Himself?

While at a Christadelphian Youth Conference over 30 years ago where A. D. Norris was the main speaker for the occasion I asked him why it was that some Christadelphians believed that Jesus Christ had to die for Himself, as I had never believed it necessary?

He was very hard pressed for time but he did, however, kindly jot down the following notes for my consideration: -

SUBSTITUTION implies the offering and acceptance of a value at least as great as that forfeit. It might be

a) A life to God in exchange for our lives. I.e. One dies so that we should not.

BUT WE DO.

b) Everlasting death: One dies so that we should not remain dead. But in that case the offering should remain eternally dead.

JESUS DID NOT.

c) The debt might be supposed owed to a third party. I.e. Not God.

This basically requires a conscious third party. In fact, the Devil.

But, if Christ was offered to the Devil instead of us, the Devil was tricked, for he could not hold Him.

ALTERNATIVE

a) Justice requires death.

b) Flesh must be surrendered.

c) Jesus did b) after a sinless life and so there was no obstacle to His resurrection.

d) We accept the necessity of crucifixion in baptism and enjoy the mediation of a risen Saviour in attempting to live according to our promises.

A. D. Norris.

As a young man I pondered over those notes for weeks and could find nothing in them to convince me that Jesus Christ had to die for Himself. Indeed, A.D.Norris said that "Justice required death" but he gave no reason for the crucifixion of Jesus. I could not help seeing that A.D.Norris had overlooked the fact that we sleep in death as distinct from perishing in death, but in those days I had not yet come across the fact that Jesus gave His natural life in the blood which was shed in place of Adam's natural life; and that Jesus rose in Spirit life. There is no evidence that Jesus ever had His natural life back again. This fact shatters his argument.

Russell.