

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 118

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### In this Issue:-

Page 1. Editorial	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 2. Thoughts on Jehoshaphat, King of Israel	Brother Leo Dreifuss
Page 4. "Jesus said...." No. 6.	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 4. Chat Section	Brother Harold Dawson
Page 7. The Sacrificial Principle in Redemption	Brother Ernest Brady
Page 11. The Usage of "Muth Temuth" and "B'yom"	Compiled
Page 13. Great and Precious Promises	Brother O. E. H. Gregory

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## Editorial

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

World events are moving fast and one wonders day by day if there is much more to take place before the Elect are called away to "ever be with the Lord."

As I see it, most churches are far removed from the truth of Bible teaching with few looking for Jesus' second coming. When He first came Israel did not accept Him and they were rejected. When Jesus comes again the churches, like Israel of old, may not accept Him either! But the Elect are to be first taken away to be with Jesus. Then His first appearance will be to the Jews, for "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25), and then the Jews, upon 'seeing' again, will preach the Everlasting Gospel.

From your letters:

In reference to last months C.L. one Brother wrote,

"I found it hard to understand how it could contain a letter from Brother Phil Parry saying one thing in his letter plus an eight page article from him saying the opposite!"

While Brother Phil himself wrote,

"It was quite a surprise that my article "If the Blind Lead the Blind" was included in view of my remarks on page 2 about leaving them (the Christadelphians) alone to their own pursuits, etc. It did appear that it was a contradiction of my views printed on page 2, but I had taken the view that you may have included it as a final appeal to truth and reason before severing contact directly with Christadelphians through our magazine... Of course there was no date on my article so it gave some the impression that I had written it only a few weeks ago whereas it would have been years but I cannot remember how many.... Perhaps your timing was faulty.

Perhaps my timing was faulty. I could have held over Brother Phil's letter until this month but I didn't think it necessary. I am sorry and apologies to all concerned. In my simplicity I believed everyone would understand that the articles for the C.L. are selected, typed out, proof read and mistakes corrected well before the Editorial is written. In fact, the Editorial is a last minute dash which by which time it is far too late to consider replacing any article.

Brother Phil Parry also writes concerning his article "If the Blind Lead the Blind" -

“It appears that I made a few grammatical errors which conveyed to the reader something I had not intended. Quote: “The Nazarene Fellowship believe Jesus was of the same nature as Adam when created.” One Brother understood me to mean here that Jesus was created, not begotten and, I admit, that in leaving out the word “was” prior to “when created” I could have given that impression.

“Another criticism from what I said on page 13 paragraph 4, Quote: “in John 10:18 Jesus is not talking of a command of God to lay down His life, He is speaking of the power to lay it down....” The commandment Jesus received of His Father was not one compelling Him to die on the Cross but that certain benefits and ideals were contained in that word that should not portray Jesus dying under compulsion or threat, but in the cause of the redemption and reconciliation of mankind - “It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief...” (Isaiah 53). This was so because Jesus was willing to be subjected to the death required for the redemption... “Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). Isaiah 53:11,12 puts the Seal of God’s approval on this statement of Jesus, and it also shows what a wealth of knowledge, understanding and appreciation is derived from Christ’s use of the phrase, “This commandment.” A few examples of this are to be found in Psalm 119: 86, 151, 46-47, 129-131. There are many more which do not suggest compulsion but delight.”

In last month’s Editorial I asked for your views on whether or not we should leave the Christadelphians alone to their own pursuits as suggested by Brother Phil Parry. Here are two replies:

1) “We agree with Brother Phil’s suggestion not to confine our work to the Christadelphians who, for the most part are satisfied with what they have got, and even say so.”

While on a related point this same correspondent continues,

“We like the idea of dealing with each aspect of our beliefs in simple terms - it would be nice to be able to give a friend to read and I think that is a need which would be appreciated by most.”

2) “Many members in Christadelphian meetings do believe in the substitution explanation of the Atonement... I agree with the comment that the Nazarene Fellowship should think beyond the Christadelphian body, but it is easier said than done as it is only therein that the Nazarene Fellowship is likely to be effective... We must keep the Christadelphians in mind; we have a duty to do so.”

I know there are one or two more letters on the way regarding this matter and they will be included in next months C.L. If you have a point you wish to make we look forward to hearing from you.

Russell Gregory.

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## Thoughts On Jehoshaphat, King Of Israel

This king stands out as one from whom we can learn quite a lot of what to do, and not to do. As a whole he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but he did one great wrong, and this twice, in that he joined himself to the sinful kingdom of Israel, first to Ahab, and later to Ahab’s son Abijah. When we read through his history in the second book of Chronicles we find that he made a good start in the Lord. We read that he followed the example of David, and not that of Ahab, his contemporary, king of Israel. He did not worship Baal, and things went well for him, he was respected by the neighbouring countries who traded with Judah, and there was a time of national well-being.

Things began to go wrong when he joined himself to Ahab, king of Israel. Now, making a covenant with the sinful nations around them was prohibited by the Law of Moses. Why Jehoshaphat allied himself with this God despising king we do not know, but we do know the consequences. This foolish act nearly cost him his life. Now we are all acquainted with the history. Reading between the lines Jehoshaphat

must have felt some unease in his conscience. He wanted to enquire at the word of the Lord. Ahab gathered together some four hundred prophets of Baal. Jehoshaphat, not satisfied with this, insisted on a prophet of God being consulted, whereupon they called one named Micaiah, the son of Imlah. Now he uttered a stern warning that the prophets of Baal were lying, that God had put a lying spirit into them, and that the battle would end in disaster. This should have been a grave warning to Jehoshaphat but he insisted on going on with his ill-conceived plan. We don't know why, but perhaps for fear of looking a fool by withdrawing. But then followed something even more puzzling. Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes." Anybody with a little common sense can see what Ahab was after. He was a great coward, wanting Jehoshaphat to risk his life for him - in Ahab's stead. Surely Jehoshaphat had the intelligence to see through this wicked scheme, but he insisted on going on with it. And the consequences we know: he nearly lost his life but for God's last minute, or rather perhaps last second intervention. And consider Ahab; he knew that the outcome of this battle would be an unhappy one, or should have known. He had ample warning. This would be the reason for his disguising himself, but it was God's will that he should die for his many sins, and when God wills something, man's efforts to resist are of no avail. His disguise did not save him.

Returning to Jehoshaphat, this was no doubt a sharp lesson to him about being unequally yoked with the unbeliever. And it was rammed home to him even more severely when on his return to Jerusalem he received a sharp rebuke from the prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, for helping the ungodly, and loving them that hate the Lord. However, the prophet also mentioned some good things found in him, and for a while Jehoshaphat did right.

Then come the time when the Moabites, Amorites and others invaded the land.

On this occasion Jehoshaphat did the right thing. He put his trust in the Lord, and God answered him. And what was God's instruction? Simply, "set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you..." And so it came to pass. The Lord sent ambushments into the enemy camp and it all ended in great confusion with them all fighting each other. Very true, "if God be for us who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). This was certainly as easy win for Jehoshaphat's army. And a similar thing happened some 160 or 170 years later when under Hezekiah there was a similar threat from the Assyrian army. Again, what Judah had to do was precisely nothing, for when they woke up in the morning they were all dead corpses. And, we read, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him," (Psalm 34:7) and this applies to us if only we ask help of God in time of danger or other crisis.

But when we come to the rather ignominious end of Jehoshaphat's life once more he joined himself to a godless king of Israel; this time Ahab's son, Ahaziah. Yet again Jehoshaphat had to suffer a divine rebuke by a prophet. On this occasion the navy of ships which they jointly made were broken up. He should never have taken part in making them. Now, what amazes me is that after that first disastrous association with Ahab that so nearly cost him his life, and after he had learned during the Moabith invasion how God protected those who trusted Him, he yet again struck up a friendship with Israel's king. This is hard to believe, yet Jehoshaphat had also his good points we must not overlook. The puzzle about his second association with Israel however, remains, and will probably only be resolved when we shall meet him, as we hope, in the kingdom of God

Meanwhile let us go back to what I said at the start, of what we can learn from this king's life history. What to do, and what not to do. Starting with the second, do not be unequally yoked with the unbeliever. Of course we live among people who know not the truth, we trade with them and by any means, let us be friendly and helpful, ready to give a good answer for the hope that is in us, as opportunity arises. But know the limit - no partnerships, in marriage or in business. As for the first, what to do, there is no need to say anything but trust in God and put all our problems and difficulties to Him in prayer. He will do the rest, not necessarily by a spectacular intervention but just by guiding us. Always remember Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

Brother Leo Dreifuss.

## Jesus said.....

## No. 6.

“If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus said unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” John 13:8.

If ever there was one word which could describe Christianity, that word must be “forgiveness”, and this is here the subject of conversation between Jesus and His disciples.

Two words were used for “wash” in this record; the Greek word “*nipito*”, which is used for everyday washing as in Matthew 6:17, “But when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash (*nipito*) thy face... “; and the word “*louo*”, which is usually used for “bathing” as in Hebrews 10:22, “Let us draw near... having... our bodies washed (*louo*) with pure water,” and again, in Revelation 1:5, “Unto him that loved us and washed (*louo*) us from our sins in his blood...”

If we insert the corresponding words into the conversation we find that Jesus is saying “He that is bathed (*louo*) needeth not save to wash (*nipito*) his feet, but is clean every whit.”

So it is evident that he who is washed (*louo*) has entered into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ, baptized into Him, redeemed by Him, and has been cleansed from all sin and become a “new creation” in Him. Nevertheless, it is necessary that he seek daily forgiveness, the washing of the feet, on his walk to the Kingdom and such forgiveness is conditional upon his forgiving others who trespass against him symbolised by the washing of one another’s feet, for, Jesus said, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.” Matthew 6:15. “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done.” John 13:14,15.

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## CHAT SECTION

This month three questions are raised regarding the raising of the dead, the mark of the beast, and the keeping of the Sabbath.

### **The first query comes from a Sister who writes:**

“I can’t see the reason for raising some from the dead to die again. God says He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. When a sinner is dead is it not sufficient to leave him dead? A short period of consciousness before dying again does not seem to fit in with God’s ways.”

### **Answer:**

I believe the sector the questioner refers to are those who hear and reject the Gospel call during the Millennial reign of Christ of a thousand years. It should firstly be born in mind that all who die, in Christ or not, are not aware of the intervening time, so living again after being dead is like the next moment, and to pass away again is to oblivion. So time, from the point of view of this sector does not really come into it.

To say that anything does not seem to fit in with God’s ways is to not recognise all the factors in the equation.

Again, “can the clay ask the Potter, Why makest me thus?” It is true that God has declared that “He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked” but if the wicked (classed as such) choose to ignore when

having heard the Gospel, the means of escape from eternal death, then they have made their choice and must accept the outcome.

In Revelation we read “that the rest of the dead lived not again until the end of the thousand years.” This is to give all who did not hear the Gospel down the ages the chance to hear and understand it - and choose or reject it. This vast sector will have their chance.

Our individual experience of life can be likened to a tug of war between good (eternal life) and evil (eternal death) and thanks be the provision God has made through Christ that it is up to us who wins. We have free will.

The questioner, with reverence, I know, questions the consistency of God. From Genesis chapter one, the beginning, God has had an exercise with humanity. I believe the period of time from our reckoning has been six thousand years - four thousand from Adam to Christ and two thousand from Christ to the year 2,000 AD. During this time the exhortation is declared “this is the way, walk ye in it.” What way? The ten commandments amplified by Love (The sacrifice and ministry of Christ). Did not Jesus say to His disciples, “Will ye also go away?” but our answer is theirs. “Lord, to whom shall we turn?” Yes, we have everything to gain by accepting Christ and absolutely nothing to lose. We, and the disciples, realised it and are in full agreement. So let us not only recognise the abiding Love of God but also His patience; and that patience is not everlasting with this fleshly scene of man. For when God is all in all the fleshly scene will be over, ended, finished. The curse will be removed from the earth. Eden will be restored, and the believing mortals will have put on immortality and the corruptible will be corruptible no more. Man will have had his chance. It’s later than you think.

Brother Harold Dawson.

### **The second question:**

“Who, or what is the Mark of the Beast referred to in Revelation 13:17 and elsewhere?”

### **Answer:**

I believe it is those who are and regard themselves as “anti-Christ” both now and those who have lived down the centuries with such an attitude, and those who oppose Christ at His coming, and living during the Millennial reign of Christ during the thousand years.

We know that Jesus came to the “Fig Tree” (Israel) and found no fruit thereon. This represents the treatment He received at the hands of His own people. The “Tree” was cursed and Jesus said that their house was left unto them as desolate and that blessings would go to those bringing forth the fruits of righteousness instead of to them.

In retrospect Israel chose to wear “the mark of the beast”, but of course, not all of them. And salvation is an individual thing. We can recall also the “Marriage” when the family did not arrive, the sidemen were told to go out and bring in strangers to the wedding. One stranger was upbraided for not having a wedding (suitable) apparel and was speechless, and understandably so. But this parable is brilliant in its perception of the treatment “politically” Jesus has received from the world. The “nub” though, is the significance of the wedding apparel, for it is again the difference between Life and Death (eternally) and a strict demarcation between being for Christ and for bearing the mark of the beast. The wedding apparel is faith and baptism, i.e. being associated by adoption with the faith and righteousness that Jesus had and, of course, His substitutionary death on the Cross for us.

But what do so many say? “I was baptised as a baby, and I was confirmed. All that about baptism is not necessary - the “church” says so and they ought to know!” In other words they seek God’s Kingdom (if they do) on their own terms, not on what Jesus says - and the risk of this – the sector in God’s estimation, that they place themselves.

When in despair, Paul said “I go to the Gentiles”, the Gentile received their great chance and so it is all a question of whose side we are on - both intellectually and spiritually - the choice is ours, until it really will be too late. But of one thing we can be sure and take comfort – the Lord knows those that are His.

Brother Harold Dawson.

**Question number three:**

“We read in Exodus 31:16 “that the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant.” We are spiritual Israel, aren’t we? How can we thrust it aside as not counting? I’m confused - can you help?”

**Answer:**

I hope so. Firstly who said to you that we should thrust the Sabbath aside as not counting? I am, of course, not asking for any name. Yes we are, though perhaps unworthy. Spiritual Israel in our walk before the Lord until our pilgrimage is over we must keep to the best of our ability the ten commandments which Jesus did perfectly - amplified by the important extra dimension of Love. Love for God and Love for those we come into daily contact with; whoever they may be. This means respect, compassion and to be helpful if necessary, as we can be.

Every day therefore is a Sabbath for us in a state of Grace, through the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus said by way of explanation that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. In Genesis God declared that by the “sweat of our brow” for most of our lifetime, we should eat bread, and so originally a day was set aside for the “rest” that man needs, and we read also that God rested after the sixth day creation and here was the foundation of the Sabbath as a specific day. Under Judaism Saturday was that day (not Sunday), the switch to Sunday came very early on in the Church’s history and had nothing to do with Christianity but rather a compromise towards nations of Sun worshippers who became nominal members of the Church and brought in all their pagan practices.

Under Judaism there were numerous Sabbaths or Feast days, not to be confused with the weekly Sabbath (Friday sunset till Saturday sunset - the Jewish day). As far as the day itself therefore the Sabbath is Saturday, but God knows those who are His and it is a personal choice and decision now that we have been baptised in Christ, truly discerning the Lord’s body and the price paid for our redemption. Our spirit of worship is from the heart to acknowledge God in all our ways and believe in Him as Creator of all things and Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith. And this applies everyday, especially if circumstances find us in a state of isolation from others of like precious faith. We are all alone, even in a crowd but God and His Son are never more than a prayer away.

I hope these thoughts will indeed be an answer to the questioner for we are not today members of wandering Israel after the flesh.

Brother Harold Dawson,

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## **The Sacrificial Principle in Redemption**

**The Problem.** Those who read the Bible and recognise that it is the Word of God intended for our enlightenment, have no doubt that Jesus really lived on earth and died on the Cross as related in the Gospels. Nor do they imagine that what happened to Him was mere misfortune, for they know that it had been foretold by Jewish prophets whose writings are in the Old Testament and were quoted by Jesus Himself, but they do not understand why His death was in the purpose of God. Very early in His ministry Jesus told His disciples plainly ‘that it would be His fate to fall into the hands of enemies and be killed and

although they did not understand Him, it is clear that Jesus Himself saw His death as a sacrifice which He would make on behalf of His friends. How did He know this? What does it mean and why did He make no attempt to avoid the awful ordeal He saw before Him?

No believer can doubt that His death was in some way essential to salvation and yet no one appears really to know why it was necessary. It is true to say that amongst all the many sects of Christianity there is not one whose creed gives a clear explanation or can tell how it accomplished its purpose. What is the mysterious connection between Jesus dying on the Cross and our salvation? Is it not strange to Christians, who differ on so many things, are all agreed that we who believe are in some sense saved by the suffering of an innocent man and yet none can show any causal connection between the two things? These are the kind of questions which all thoughtful people ask but to which no reasoned answers are given by the Churches.

The nearest to an explanation is the view that Jesus was an example of a man faithful unto death; that He died as a martyr, proving His faith and trust in His Father so complete that He went to His death to declare it. There is some truth in this but it is clearly quite inadequate. He was indeed faithful unto death, but He was not unique in this. Many Christian believers have endured the most dreadful deaths for their faith, but none are regarded as having sacrificed themselves for others as the scriptures represent Jesus to have done. There have been many examples of heroic people who have lost their lives in saving others, but none of them are paralleled with the death of Jesus or their sacrifice regarded as having any redemptive value. Why it is that Jesus could say that he came “to give His life a ransom for many”? What was the unique factor in His death which makes it different from all others?

The purpose of this outline is to give the answer to these questions and show where there is an adequate explanation to be found. It is not on the surface, nor in the propositions of a creed but it is there for those who have the eyes to see and the desire to know and while its roots go to the depths of revealed truth it is not so profound that an ordinary simple believer cannot grasp it. One should not be frightened off on the pretext that the subject is too deep - it is not so and we are intended to understand; that is the purpose of the Bible. All that is required is a humble teachable spirit and a willingness to unlearn one or two of the dogmas we have inherited from the past.

**Man in Nature.** The foundation fact of the Christian revelation is that man is a corruptible creature with a similar physical nature to all animal species. This is confirmed by everything we learn from science and experience. Made in the image of God means that man has the capacity to reason and a freewill. We can choose to do good things or evil; we can seek to find God and we can hope for a better life, but we are not ‘immortal souls’ nor anything more than natural creatures with a limited span of life. (Genesis 2:7). The ultimate purpose of God with this part of creation is to bring the earth into a state of perfection inhabited by an immortal population under the reign of Jesus Christ, in fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham. The selection of –those people who are chosen to have part in this future age of glory has been going on throughout the history of the race, in antediluvian times, during all Jewish history, and since the advent of Christ, through the Gospel. These are the ones spoken of in Hebrews who “all died in faith, not having received the promises”, but their names are recorded in “The Book of Life” and when Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of God they will be raised to life again with immortality and with those who are still living changed to incorruptible nature, will be the heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Thessalonians 4).

People have different views about the literalness of the Bible account of creation but there is no dispute that the teaching underlying the Genesis story is that when man first became conscious of himself as a person he had the innocence of a child. To develop character he had to learn to distinguish right from wrong and he needed the experience of good and evil and for this reason he was placed under a simple law requiring obedience. When he disobeyed he incurred the sentence of death (Genesis 2:17) and deserved to die. This was not, as Christians have generally believed, a sentence to natural death implying that he commenced to decline towards dissolution, but a legal condemnation to judicial execution. If this had been carried out, he would have perished and the human race would have ended there and then, but his life was spared and he became the progenitor of the family of man to which we belong. But he and his offspring were now in a changed relationship to God, signified by the expulsion from Eden and barring from the Tree of Life - alienated by sin. The so called Christian doctrine of the Fall, involving the theory

that human nature was changed to a defiled condition which makes men sinful, is as mythical as the immortality of the soul. Original Sin is an invention and no part of the Christian religion. If it were true, then it would mean that God is responsible for all the evil in the world, since only He could have made us sinful in our nature.

The symbolism of Genesis therefore (e.g. 3:17-24) teaches the first lesson in religion, that those who disobey God's just laws do not deserve to live. But it also shows us that our Creator is a loving God and will be to us a merciful Father, not willing that we should die as sinners but rather that we should live by faith - meaning that there is open to us, by belief in the Gospel, a way to attain to a better life which we could not obtain by perfectness even if we could succeed in living a perfect life. The object and the scope of this faith is defined by our understanding of what Jesus meant when He said, "I lay down my life for my sheep."

The vital element in the faith which makes a true believer is realisation of our unworthiness and need of mercy - the Bible term is repentance. This is why the prayer "God be merciful to me a sinner" was heard and the other not. The ceremonial sacrifice involving bloodshed, first offered when Adam was clothed with skins, a type of forgiveness, is not a thing familiar to Western people, but it was appointed as the only way of approach to God. This was not because He takes any pleasure in the killing of innocent creatures, but because the ritual required the exercise of that faith in which His sovereign authority is acknowledged.

**Sacrifice in Principle.** When a Hebrew brought an unblemished lamb as a sin-offering and its life was ended by the shedding of its blood, it was a practical demonstration of his recognition that in strict justice he himself deserved to die, because he had transgressed some point of the Law. But when he made the appropriate sacrifice and confessed his guilt, he was saved from the penalty he had incurred (Numbers 9:14) and the life of his sin-offering was accepted instead of his own. This is the principle underlying the law of sacrifice and it provides the key to an understanding of the great sacrifice of Christ which it foreshadowed.

Referring to sacrifices in the Mosaic system, the Epistle to the Hebrews (10:1-4) says, "it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin," and the reason is evident. The life of an animal was not the equivalent of the life of a man and while it was accepted to obtain remission of personal sins, no offering of a lamb could give effective deliverance from an indebtedness in which the life of the whole race had been lost by the disobedience in the beginning. The many ceremonial offerings made under the law and the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were primarily part of the educational process of Israel and their purpose was to lead them to Christ, but they were of no efficacy to remove the constitutional alienation by which - for the very special purpose of making it possible for sinners to be saved - all men are regarded as in Adam. That is why it says that for salvation it needed a "better sacrifice than these" and "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9).

When John the Baptist said of Jesus "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world", he was not referring to the general sinfulness of mankind, for this is clearly still very much with us. What Jesus took away on behalf of those who accept Him as their Saviour, is that "condemnation" by which we are all alienated from our Father in Heaven and legally dead even while we are physically living.

The life which was lost by sin was that life breathed into Adam when he became a living soul and although, reprieved from death he was able to pass on his physical life to his offspring, they were nevertheless born in the legally dead state and doomed to perish. Hope was only possible in the mercy of God and this was shown when Jesus declared the purpose of His coming into the world in the words of John 3:16, "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."

**Ransom.** What exactly did Jesus mean by His life a ransom for many? One definitive statement which throws light on this is in the Apostle Paul's farewell to the church at Ephesus. "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock... which he hath purchased with his own blood." How were they purchased and how

could His blood be the price? The answer is in the law of redemption set out in 25th Leviticus and other places. These provided that an inheritance lost by reason of the poverty or misfortune of its owner, or a person sold into bondage could be redeemed by the payment of ransom money. In Israel, a near kinsman had not only the right, but a duty towards his brother, if he had the means, to buy back his freedom. The principle, on a national scale, was established by the requirement that every adult person and every firstborn domestic animal was to be ransomed for a fixed price or put to death. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel... to make an atonement for your souls." (Leviticus 30:15). Thus the Mosaic Law, in which our Christian religion has its roots, makes the recognition of man's alienated state an issue of life and death.

In his inspired exposition of the Federal Principle in the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul explains how through the one act of disobedience the many were constituted sinners - not made to be sinful but delivered into the power of SIN, or in the figure he uses, sold into bondage to sin personified as a slave-owner, from which captivity they could only be freed by someone with the necessary price in his own possession to pay the ransom. This is what Jesus did when He gave His life for the life of the world - He purchased us back to God at the cost of His own life which was in the blood that was shed when He died on the Cross - a life for a life. In the terrible mental agony of Gethsemane, knowing what lay before Him, Jesus endured because He realised that He was indeed the Lamb of God, slain prophetically from the foundation of the world. From Moses and the Prophets He had learned that to justify the forbearance of God in passing over sins and to uphold the supremacy of Divine Law, the debt incurred by sin had to be paid and He knew that He alone could pay it and not perish. This is why He answered not a word to His false accusers, but allowed Himself to be crucified bearing a condemnation which was utterly unjust and a penalty He never deserved, in order to cancel, by the forfeit of His own life the liability which sinners could not pay themselves without perishing for ever.

The ransom principle is the only solution compatible with reason to the problem which has troubled Christians for centuries, of why Jesus had to be the Son of God. The only alternative, that it was to endow Him with the power to resist temptation which we lack, is utterly offensive. As a child of Mary, Jesus was a man like other men, a member of the human family and capable of suffering temptation and pain like ourselves, but He was brought into existence by the miracle of the Virgin Birth. Mary bore him, and she supplied the material elements of His being. His flesh and blood, but she did not give Him life. This came direct from the source of all life, by the operation of the Holy Spirit as related in the Gospels. The crucial importance of this lies in the fact that although His mother was a descendant of Adam, Jesus did not belong to the Adamic family of God. His mother was a chosen member of a redeemed people, "the handmaid of the Lord", herself the subject of the ransom paid under the Law, and therefore to speak, as some do, of Jesus inheriting condemnation through her or of His blood defiled by sin, is an offence against reason.

Jesus was human, not divine, but His divine origin constituted Him the only one of the human race whose life had not been forfeited by sin and who therefore had in His possession the price of redemption. He had learned that He was the near-kinsman of His brother who had sold himself into bondage under Sin, and the right of redemption pertained to Him. He alone had the "*anti-lutron*", the ransom, a free unforfeited life, which He could pay if He chose, to redeem Adam and all who are included in him under the federal principle, purchasing them back to God. This, apart from His sinlessness, is the difference between Him and us to which Paul refers when he wrote, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." His riches were His life; our poverty was that we were without God and without hope in the world because of sin.

Those who have sought to explain His death as a vicarious punishment or as the destruction of a sinful nature have done both Him and His Father a grievous wrong. Him because if His death was in any sense necessary for His own deliverance it could not have been a sacrifice en behalf of others, and God because it would be totally unjust to punish the innocent in order that the guilty might go free.

Jesus undoubtedly suffered for sins, as the Apostle Peter says, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," but the principle of The Atonement is not punishment but the redemption of sinners.

The idea that the wrath of God against us was averted by inflicting upon Jesus what we deserved is a mockery of justice and abhorrent in the extreme. Seen as a sacrifice provided by God Himself and voluntarily entered into by Jesus of His own free will, it is indeed a revelation of His love and readiness to forgive and calls forth our love and gratitude.

Some may ask, "If He was not Himself in some way liable to death, why could God require such a sacrifice from Jesus?" The answer is that God never did require it, in the sense of a test of obedience. His purpose required that justice and law should be upheld and if sinners were to be saved a ransom had to be found, and this purpose was entrusted to Jesus, but He was not obliged to obey - it was with Him a free choice. "No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself." (John 10:18). He submitted Himself to the will of His Father because He knew what was at stake. Even at the last hour, impaled on the Cross, He had it in His power to summon a legion of angels to deliver Him; but He endured "for the joy that was set before him" knowing that if His courage failed His Father's plan for His creation would have failed.

**"His Blood be on Us."** As the Gospel accounts show clearly, the plot against Jesus, His trial and crucifixion, were the doing of ordinary human beings acting of their own volition, and as they thought, in their own best national interest. They were perhaps not much worse than their counterparts in the world today, who would be capable of committing the same crime in similar circumstances. It did not need supernatural influence to move them to murderous fury against the man who had made their hypocrisy so obvious, far less the hand of God. The envy and hatred they nurtured in their own hearts was quite sufficient to determine His destruction. It has been recognised that God knew from the beginning what would happen to Jesus, for it was foretold in the promise to Eve of a Seed who should bruise the serpent's head, but God did not bring it about. The events which led to His condemnation were the result of the interaction of human affairs, foreknown in Heaven and made the foundation of the plan of redemption. When the prophet Isaiah says, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" it simply means that He made the deliberate choice to allow His Own Son to suffer, if He could endure, in order to make possible the salvation of the world.

It need hardly be said that no sacrifice could be in itself of any benefit to God and only the response it evokes in us has any virtue. Even those made by Israel came to be an evil stench when they were offered without understanding. In those days, God was terrifying and unapproachable and would be the same to us apart from Christ. As creatures, we cannot even conceive the person, far less the mind of Him who has made all things, who is everywhere present and in all, who is eternal in time and almighty, but He has entered into human affairs in a strange and unique way and it is clearly the intention that we should seek to know why. In His infinite wisdom He has chosen to make our hope of a future life conditional upon acceptance of what in history was simply the wicked murder of a man who was innocent and utterly good, as a sacrifice made by God Himself to save us, and when it comes to light that this man was His only-begotten Son, the Child born to be heir of all things, "My beloved, in whom I am well pleased", God is revealing Himself as a loving Father, and, what no words nor any other means could similarly express, the love He has towards all mankind in all that this was the one He gave in order that we might not perish. Is it not clearly His expectation that we should recognise that He has feelings like ourselves and that He must have suffered in the same way as any father would suffer, only more deeply, in the anguish of His Son? If God could not experience in person the sufferings of Jesus, who can doubt that He suffered in seeing His chosen one, holy and harmless, rejected by men and cruelly put to death? We cannot know how or to what extent One who is God is capable of sorrow, but we can be sure that this is what it is the purpose of the Atonement to make plain, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself and that the cost was very great.

The impact of this knowledge upon our minds is the thing that matters, and the purpose of the writer has been to explain the meaning of the facts and what they tell us about God. When a believer is baptised, it is a symbolic dying and burial which testifies to his faith that Jesus literally died for him, and he is the subject of an immediate change of status, a liberation resulting from a rebirth. He is no longer under Sin and condemnation, but set free; no longer an alien but an adopted child of God. Our salvation therefore has actually happened - it is not something in the doubtful future - we were saved through the love of God when the life blood of Jesus poured from the fatal wounds inflicted by evil men. That is the glory of the true Christian revelation. This is what God wishes us to know and to put our trust in. That is why it is

based upon a scripture principle which is unchangeable - ransom - a transaction in history which can never be altered or reversed. A price, a life, has been paid to redeem us to God, and because it can never be recovered we can have assurance, now and for ever, that living or dead we belong to God, and, weak as we may be and needing to ask forgiveness, if we do not deny Him, He will never deny us. We know that we shall receive Eternal Life when Jesus returns because He died to secure it to us under the promise of God and God cannot break His promise.

Brother Ernest Brady.

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## The Usage of ‘Muth Temuth’

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” *“muth temuth”* Genesis 2:17) was the warning which was given Adam. Some wrongly think that the marginal rendering “dying thou shalt die” is a correct translation of the sense of *“muth temuth,”* and believe that the death that eventually came upon Adam was the one of which he had been warned (and had incurred). The following passages will prove that it was a suddenly inflicted death, and not a process of gradual dying, of which the Elohim warned Adam.

The comparative phrase is *“muth temuth”* and the Authorised Version rendering is underlined. The context of each passage will show that *“muth temuth”* can mean nothing less than an inflicted death, and cannot mean the gradual wearing out process such as Adam actually experienced.

1 Samuel 14:39-44, “For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die... And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shall surely die Jonathan.”

1 Samuel 22:16-18, “And the King said, Thou shalt surely die, Abimelech, thou, and all thy father’s house... And Doeg the Edomite turned and fell upon the priests and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear the ephod.”

Genesis 20:7, “Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.”

2 Kings 1:4, “Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shall surely die. (Also verse 6)... So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken.”

Jeremiah 26:8-19, “...the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shall surely die... Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying. This man is worthy to die... Then spake Jeremiah... if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves... Then said the princes... This man is not worthy to die... Certain of the elders..., spake...saying..., Micah... prophesied... Did Hezekiah put him to death?”

Ezekiel 3:17-21 & 33:8-15. “Son of man... give them warning from Me... When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning... the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand... When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness... and I lay a Stumbling-block before him and he die... If thou warn the righteous man..., and he doth not sin, he shall live... When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right... he shall surely live, he shall not die.”

1 Kings 2:36-46, “Build thou an house in Jerusalem... for... on the day that thou goest out... thou shalt surely die... And it was told Solomon that Shemei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and come again, and the king sent for and called for Shemei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the Lord, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certainty, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die?... So the King commanded Banaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out and fell upon him that he died.”

Genesis 2:17, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

“*Muth temuth*” and “*B’yom*.”

It is evident that ordinary Biblical usage of the words *Muth temuth* mean a putting to death in a violent manner, and not a dying via the natural channels.

The following quotations should be conclusive:

Genesis 2:17, “Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day (*B’yom*) that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (*Muth temuth*).

1 Kings 2:36,37, “Build thee an house in Jerusalem, for on the day (*B’yom*) thou goest out... thou shalt surely die.”

A more exact parallel could not be desired. Did Solomon and Shemei understand “*Muth temuth*” to mean a natural death, or 930 years to be meant by “*B’yom*”? Of course not. What was meant by “in the day” of Genesis 2:17 was in the literal day.

Genesis 3:5,7, “For God doth know that in the day (*B’yom*) ye eat thereof, then your eyes will be opened. – and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”

Genesis 3:8, “In the cool of the day (*B’yom*)” can only mean that very day. Literal, not metaphorical. In fact, of the many occasions “day” is used in the first three chapters of Genesis, only one can be shown to be used metaphorically - Genesis 2:4, “...in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.”

If the penalty threatened by God was that Adam should become a dying man, it follows that such a threat cannot again be used. However, the threat is used in all the passages cited above.

It is important that we have a right understanding of the usage of the words “*Muth temuth*” and “*B’yom*” as they affect our understanding and appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ.

We ask. Why did Jesus Christ suffer a death of execution if it was not in accordance with the plan of redemption, which plan would have been unnecessary if God had not spared Adam the punishment that was due to him?

We answer. His death by execution was the death due to Adam. The life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11-14) and the shedding of blood necessitates violent death, for in natural death blood is not shed. Violent death includes death, but death does not necessarily include violence,

Compiled.

## Great And Precious Promises

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:29,30.

How say some that “the path is too narrow” or “the way is too difficult”? The invitation is to those who are heavy laden and to whosoever will, and such expressions of complaint do not become those who seek His promises.

None of us have excessive wealth nor suffer extreme poverty, but we all grow weary and feel the need of help and comfort and encouragement. But great and precious promises are made through our Lord Jesus Christ and we can find much comfort in considering them and meditating upon His great and wonderful love, so let us look at those promises contained in the seven letters of Revelation chapters two and three which Jesus Christ sent to the Churches of Asia and to all His friends who strive and have strived in faith to keep His commandments.

The first of these messages contain the promise which meets our greatest need, for our only enemy is death. Revelation 2:7, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Jesus Christ Himself is our Tree of Life for He said “I am that bread of life” and “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which cometh down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:48-51). To take His yoke upon us and to learn of Him is to “eat of this bread... that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”

The second of these promises, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death,” (Revelation 2:11) is that the second death cannot, by the grace of God hold the faithful and though they may sleep in death. God will not suffer them to stay in the grave. They will, like their Saviour, say “Behold I live for evermore” rejoicing in that time when “God will wipe away all tears, and there will be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4).

The third promise to him that overcometh is “to eat of the hidden manna” and to be “given a white stone on which a new name is written.” Our heart’s desire is to be like Christ, in thought and word and deed; that we may be fashioned like unto Him, and, like Paul, “That we may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death:” for “if by any means” we “might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Christ in us is our hope of glory on being presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24).

Revelation 2:26,27, the fourth promise, “He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron... And I will give him the morning star.” Authority will be given to those who have learnt how faithfully to use it to the glory of God. Those who have been faithful in little will be given much when Christ’s own riches are entrusted to them. Jesus is the Morning Star, and the faithful, the Bride of Christ, will shine with Him in glory in the Kingdom of His Father.

“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God.” (Luke 12:8). The next promise of Jesus, Revelation 3:4, is that we should walk with Him in white and “he that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” To be clothed in white raiment is, in this present life, to be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ that we may come to the Father in prayer, and what greater prayer can we ask than “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”? “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” (John 16:24).

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God... and I saw no temple

therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” (Revelation 21:10 & 22). This reference helps us understand the sixth promise “to him that overcometh” for Jesus said “I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (Revelation 3:12). A glorious picture unfolds before us, a scene of beauty, peace and joy, “whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good, are all here together with virtue and praise. We can say with the Psalmist “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” in this life so that we can be a pillar of the Temple in the Kingdom. (Psalm 84:10).

And the seventh promise, Revelation 3:21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Even in this present time Jesus prayed for all who believe “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:21). A greatly privileged position now and underestimated by every one of us. And of the time to come - what a great and precious promise; to share the throne of the God of all creation, the God of heaven and earth. To share eternity, in glory, with Him who died that we might have hope of this glorious opportunity of life for evermore. As Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10).

“When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen. The Lord hath great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.” Psalm 126:1-3. Amen.

Compiled from the notes of the late Brother O. E. H. Gregory