

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 124

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Brother Russell Gregory

Brother Jeff Hadley

Brother E. Turney

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## Editorial

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

Thank you for your letters, three of which I quote at length.

Brother Phil Parry writes:

“The chapter five section from Turney’s “The Two Sons of God” was very interesting reading and also revealed a man of humble spirit yet great knowledge, understanding and insight into the Word of God much in advance of his contemporaries in that same sphere. Though giving him all credit for this, our Brethren and Sisters and friends to whom we communicate, should not assume that we think he was correct in all he believed and gave expression to in his writings, but we do think he was nearer to the Truth of Apostolic times, at the final stages of his writings than when he contended against Robert Roberts in its defence, i.e. “The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints.” Turney got to the stage where he was forced to reject the view that natural death was the penalty Adam incurred by sin which indicates that there is no such thing as being past the investigation stage in regard to the inspired Word of God - it is for us to search and dig deep for its hidden Truth and Wisdom and treasure. I find it therefore understandable, though unfortunate, that Turney still retained the ideas of John Thomas and Robert Roberts on judgement of people in the spiritual relationship of men such as the Apostle Paul, previous to their glorification at the coming of Christ whether in the dust of the earth or alive and remaining unto that time. The almost fanatical adherence of the views of John Thomas and Robert Roberts on the judgement of those in Christ and His at His coming, preceding incorruptibility, seems to have taken root in Turney's mind and clouded his vision when reading 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, for here Paul says nothing about a judgement nor of the all who are Christ's being changed. Those who are changed are those in Christ at His coming - this happens in the “twinkling of an eye” when the voice of the Archangel and Trumpet of God causes the dead in Christ to rise from the dust incorruptible - there is' no mention of the latter being changed either after judgement or before.

The same Apostle confirms this harmony of teaching in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 - 18. It is positive teaching on the resurrection and glorification of those who are Christ's at His coming, and not a judgement to determine who will be worthy of change to incorruptibility and ever be with the Lord.

Apart from -this one lapse from the true words of the teaching of Paul I find Turney's conception of the spiritual values gained, and to be gained from the inspired Word of God, most enlightening. My comments arise from page 11 and the last paragraph where also his words “deprived him of life,” should have been phrased as follows, “depriving him of the right to life.” (Adam was not deprived of literal life in the day he sinned, but lived 930 years by virtue of Redemption.)”

**Brother and Sister Linggood also write upon this matter:**

“While reading the instalment from the “Two Sons of God” in the last Circular Letter I noticed a passage which I had overlooked before, on page 11, paragraph 6 where the author says that Adam “gratified the flesh and received the wages of sin” thus implying that his natural death was sin's wages. It is clear that E. Turney had not seen the difference between the two deaths as we are warned in the preface to his book.” (See C.L. No. 119, January 1990, page 13).

**While upon the subject of Revelation 19 verses 11 to 16 Brother and Sister Linggood write:**

“We have studied your further remarks but are still convinced those verses depict Christ Himself, who else could be the Word of God? The Old Testament kings of Israel went out to battle ahead of their armies. Christ will be King of Israel, “King of Kings,” compare verse 15 with Psalm 2:9. The only thing we are not quite clear on is whether the army following Christ is the Saints, or converted Israel. With regard to the much quoted Hebrews 1:9 I don't think it is significant in this question because it denotes status rather than location. There is a contrast made between the status of Angels and that of the Son. He will still be at God's right-hand when He reigns in the Millennium and in the fullest sense His enemies will not be His footstool until the end of the thousand years, when Gog and death itself will be destroyed though the enemies will be subdued, of course, during that time.

**And Brother Phil Parry writes:**

“On the matter of Revelation 19:11-16, I am inclined to agree with your father the late O.E.H.Gregory in view of the fact that the destruction of human life was never a principle in the teaching or conduct of Jesus, and if the characters of His servants are to be developed upon His example then to go forth and destroy would be a complete reversal and change of character and attitude, though it would be right for God to use His Angels for that purpose. Brother “X” inclined to this view when a Christadelphian, believing that Jesus would remain at the right hand of the Father until the opposition to His principles of righteousness was removed. Psalm 110:3, the day of Christ's power being when He sits in the throne of His glory. This Brother had plenty of opposition because it was not general Christadelphian views. I find there is a lot of Christadelphian generalised views and theories to be discarded from our minds, especially the latter part of your father's view of the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy which you have quoted. I am not alone in my doubts of such a Temple being built, nor of the errors in some of Sulley's views on the sons of Zadok being a section of the glorified Saints administering in the capacity of priests, seeing it is said of the sons of Zadok, “they shall not wear any garment that causes sweat.” A glorified saint would not sweat, so that theory is unacceptable in any case.

If the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands - and seeketh people to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth< and that this great theme runs through the whole of Scripture, with the material patterns pointing forward to such an ultimate finale, why revert to that which has been done away in Christ – the blood of bulls and goats which could never take away sin? Samuel reminded

King Saul that “obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Would not a temple of Ezekiel's prophecy nullify most of what is demonstrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10? Also in 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 and Ephesians 2:18 - 22?

An old Christadelphian for whom I had great respect, expressed to me his own opinion that the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy would have materialised if the covenanted people had been faithful to that covenant, and would have been the means of introducing the Gentiles to God, as Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, “We know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews,” The Gentiles could only enter the bond of the covenant through acceptance of that covenant, in other words become adopted Jews through circumcision and belief in One God and His Laws. Some pose the question, “If God knew that the Temple of Ezekiel would not be built, why go to the trouble of shewing it to Ezekiel?” We might counter this question with another; “If the Jews had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, in what way could His sacrificial death be accomplished seeing it was essential for the Redemption and taking away of the sin of the whole world seeing that the way has to be open for their acceptance of the promised Messiah' The fact of prophetic utterance that the Jews of Christ's day, in general would reject Him and crucify Him, did not mean there was

no way they could have accepted Him. They could not be condemned if they had no other option than to fulfil the scriptures, there would bound to have been a Divine way out of such a situation.

Some of these subjects would be well worth our attention, so perhaps someone might be persuaded to write on them, as we all seem to assume things as we have been led to believe in the past. Anyway, I have expressed what I think and hope to find out more, if possible, on these subjects.”

**Brother and Sister Linggood write:**

“With regard to the second death, it will undoubtedly be judicial, but, as you say, there are still some things we shall not fully realise until nearer the end, but we are, of course, expected to be diligent in “rightly dividing the word of truth.”

**And finally I quote from a letter from Brother Harold Dawson:**

“May I suggest that a word goes to all inviting contributions to the Circular Letters, in addition to questions under the “Chat Section,” and that all who wish to write and answer any questions, so that several answers are printed to stimulate discussion constructively, to promote a feeling of belonging, and that we are encouraged to underline the existence of the Nazarene Fellowship by being part of it's voice. It is most difficult for you, Russell, to have enough material each month; or for one or two to be the “speakers”. All should be aware of this.”

Ray, Eileen and I have been giving some further thought to Revelation 19:11-16 and wonder why it has never occurred to us before that the rider of the white horse is neither Elijah nor Jesus Christ but the Archangel Michael, for it was the Archangel who went before the armies of Israel in Joshua's day and doubtless on other occasions during Israel's history: e.g. 2 Kings 3:16 - 25, etc., etc.. We agree with the comments of Brother Phil regarding the teachings of Jesus Christ and the development of our characters upon that teaching and one quotation came to mind where James and John asked “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said. Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”

Maybe it will take us some time to know what manner of spirit we are of!

With sincere love to all in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Russell

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## Jesus said.....

## No. 12.

“The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”  
John 5:25.

The disciple to whom Jesus said “Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead” understood the figure of speech which He used. There is no reason to suppose the disciple's father was already dead and awaiting burial (Matthew 8:22); rather did the disciple understand that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” (Acts 4:12), and that before-hand, those Mho were to be saved were considered dead, i.e. dead in trespasses and sins.

Therefore Jesus preached to these dead, and those who heard and believed “passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24). According to this metonymy all are dead unless and until they hear and believe the gospel message, which proclaims that “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

The Old Testament uses similar figures of speech. Ezekiel saw in vision, a valley of dry bones (chapter 37), and was told “Prophesy upon these bones and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord....” This prophecy concerning Israel is in the course of being fulfilled in our time. The breath of life to

be given them is their conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ when Elijah “first come, and restore all things.” (Matthew 17:11).

Daniel chapter 12 also applies to this time; “And at that time shall Michael stand up... And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake (to a realisation of who their Messiah is), some (those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord) to everlasting life, and some (those who reject Him) to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament (in the preaching of the Everlasting Gospel) and they that turn many to righteousness, “(the 'many' being the converts to that Gospel) as the stars for ever and ever.”

John 5:28 and 29 can be understood in a similar way.

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## NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLES

To define a miracle as a wonder is insufficient. The whole course of nature is wonderful revealing the hand of God, the Organiser and Controller of all things. Paul makes this point in his letter to the Romans; “for the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.” When we study nature we are amazed at its complexity, the development of a seed to fruition, is as marvellous as any miracle.

A miracle is not a greater manifestation of the power of God but it is certainly different. The everyday process of nature constantly touches our lives but we do not pause and contemplate this as a miracle wrought by the hand of the Almighty. These processes are nonetheless experiences that affect us all, as Jesus said, “He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and the unjust.”

When we consider a miracle it is something other than the everyday wonders around us, for miracles are not explicable by the laws of nature as known to man, but it is a power used by God to attain certain ends. A miracle is a particular revelation to a specific end, to a person or group of persons; it is a means whereby God demonstrates His power and His love to those willing to observe and hear.

A study of the life of Jesus reveals to us the power of the Almighty made manifest. His very conception was a miracle brought about by the power of the Almighty - “and the angel said unto her, fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.” And Mary was bewildered, “How shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

No other man could claim that his birth and the manner of it was planned and written about centuries before in the prophets. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.” The name meaning God with us, as the apostle John confirms - “He was the Word made flesh and dwelt among us, in Him was life and the life was the Light of men.” Through His birth Jesus had a power that no other man possessed, a power bestowed on Him by His Almighty Father, that would enable Him to perform miracles. Admittedly, there were miraculous events recorded in the Old Testament and elsewhere in the New Testament, but none of the worthies of old were endowed with power as that bestowed upon the Lord Jesus.

From the Gospels we are made aware that from an early age Jesus had a close-knit relationship with His Father. Who would anticipate that at twelve years old He would be reasoning with the learned elders in the Temple and would reply to His mother's query why he had stayed behind in Jerusalem, “Whist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” A clear indication that His mind was already actively linked with that of His heavenly father.

With maturity this divine power expanded and strengthened testifying that He himself was the greatest of all miracles. The full power to perform miracles was given Him when he arose from the waters at His baptism, for the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove.

The miracles related in the Gospels are attributed to our Lord but it is recorded] that the Apostles were also endowed with this power, for in Matthew 10 we read,

“He called unto Him the twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast out and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.”

These twelve Jesus sent forth charging them, saying, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, and cast out devils.”

Miracles can be grouped under several headings. Those of healing (physical, mental and spiritual); those of control over nature; and the raising of the dead.

“Jesus went about Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”

One of the earliest miracles recorded was that of curing Simon's wife's mother of a fever. Jesus, we are told, stood over her and rebuked the fever and it immediately left her and she was well enough to arise and minister unto them. Understandably, this event was soon broadcast far and wide and by that evening many that were sick and ailing were brought before our Lord, and He healed them. When Jesus saw the multitude of those who were sick. He was moved with compassion for they were distressed, they were scattered like sheep without a shepherd.

Throughout the Gospels we continually come across the term that our Lord was moved with compassion. In this day and age a great number suffer ill-health and deprivation, and how much worse it must have been in our Lord's time considering the lack of medical knowledge.

These miraculous healings were used as a sign by Jesus when the disciples of John the Baptist came to Him asking, “Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another? Jesus answered them. Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.”

Jesus on a number of occasions restored the sight to the blind; a condition which is somewhat endemic in a country of flies, dust and sand. One of these events is recorded by the apostle John, “As He passed by He saw a man blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him saying. Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?” It was a strongly held belief among the Jews that there was a definite connection between health and virtue. Disease was regarded as a judgement sent from God directly, or by means of others as witness, Deuteronomy chapter 32, in the song of Moses to the Israelites, “See now that I, even I am He. And there is no God with Me. I kill and make alive. I have wounded and I heal. There is none that can deliver out of My hand.” Under these circumstances healing was treated as a token of divine forgiveness. Our Lord dispelled this idea for “neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” Having spoken these words He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle- and anointed the eyes of the blind man. No doubt at this point those who observed the act would expect the blind man to see, having witnessed many healings prior to this. But more was required by Jesus - a trusting faith by the recipient. “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, and he went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

We have evidence of the power of faith in the story of the woman suffering from an issue of blood, a complaint that had baffled physicians for twelve years. She contrived to just touch the hem of Jesus' garment firmly believing that she would be healed, and was so. Jesus, aware that power had gone from Him, asked who had touched Him and being confronted with the woman, said, “Daughter, thy faith has made thee whole.” From this miracle it is clear that just being in contact with our Lord was not sufficient; there had to be a strong conviction on the part of the toucher that it would be beneficial.

This faith does not necessarily have to be shown by the one who is ill as is made clear in the account of the healing of the nobleman's son, and of the centurion's servant. In each case the subject of healing was completely unaware of the request made on their behalf. The centurion showed exceptional faith in approaching Jesus, reasoning that as he himself held authority over others, Jesus, with His power and authority could heal with a word. He marvelled that a none-Jew should have such faith, exceeding that shown by the Jews themselves, and in the self-same hour the centurion's servant was healed.

One of the curses of the Middle East was the wasting disease, leprosy, and two instances are recorded of Jesus healing sufferers. It was considered a living death with the body slowly rotting away, and at this time there was no known cure. In the book of numbers we find that the children of Israel were commanded to put out of the camp every leper. Indeed, in Leviticus, a whole chapter is devoted to the plague of leprosy and the person having the disease was considered unclean, and would only be allowed back after a priest had confirmed that the leprosy had left them. The priest also had to make a sin-offering and atonement before the person would be considered clean. Therefore, for Jesus to cure the leprosy was indeed significant. Here was a man able to heal one of the most dread diseases; a disease chosen by God to remind men of their estrangement from Him,

We note that the cleansed man was instructed by Jesus to show himself to the priest, thus fulfilling the Law, "And He charged the leper to tell no man, but go thy way and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded." Later in the Gospel we have related the healing of the ten lepers, again, after healing them, Jesus gave the same instruction, but it appeared that only one returned glorifying God, and he a Samaritan, one looked down upon by the Jews. From a later verse there is a suggestion that there was a further cleansing, for the other nine were certainly healed of their affliction, but for this man there was a cleansing of his sins, for Jesus said, "Arise and go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole."

Mental diseases were ailments that were not understood and sufferers were considered to be possessed of an evil spirit. When Jesus healed the man in the synagogue in Capernaum the onlookers were astounded. Who was this man who had power over evil spirits? "And amazement came upon all, and they spake together one with another saying. What word is this, for with authority and power he commanded the unclean spirit to come out."

The insane man in Luke's gospel displayed all the symptoms now associated with paranoia, a feeling of persecution, exceptional strength, self-injury and casting off of clothes. A frightening experience for those who observed. For the record says that he had to be bound in fetters and chains and kept under guard, partly, no doubt, for his own safety but also for protection of those with whom he might come into contact.

Exactly why in the case of the Gadarene maniac Jesus should cause the swine to be destroyed in the sea does not seem clear. Was it to convince the victim that what he believed were evil spirits had left him, or to convince those who were travelling with our Lord.

When we come to the account of the epileptic child we find it recorded that, despite the power bestowed upon them, the disciples were unable to cure him, and the father, in despair, turns to Jesus. This weakness upon the part of the disciples appears to have raised doubts as to the Lord's ability to cure his son signified by his cry "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus turns this around; there must be faith on the part of those who sought help. "If thou canst, all things are possible to him that believeth." It is obvious, I think, that this father had approached the disciples firmly convinced they were able to cure his son, and upon their inability to help, his faith had wavered, but Jesus, with His words, rekindled this faith. "I believe, cried the father. "Help thou mine unbelief." And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit.

From the numerous occasions recorded that Jesus rebuked, or cast out devils, it would be easy to assume that they actually exist, but with the lack of present-day clinical knowledge, one can easily understand their common belief in demons.

Jesus, as we know from the parables, always used the everyday scene in His teaching and possibly rather than point out their folly of belief in demons, did not disabuse them but demonstrated clearly His

authority and supremacy by His acts. "If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."

It was when Jesus performed spiritual healing that He incurred the wrath of His enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees. They were present in the room when the man, sick of the palsy, was lowered through the roof by his friends. Jesus observing their act of faith directed His words to the sick man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The man had not spoken but it could be that our Lord was conscious that this sickness was the consequence of sin, and to cure the physical disease and not remove the sin would be of little effect. The scribes were instantly alert. "Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but one, even God?" Those in authority would not accept that Jesus was sent by God and here was an opportunity to trap Him, for here He was claiming to forgive sins, and look, the sick man still lay on his bed with no obvious signs that his sins had been forgiven. Jesus was fully aware of their thoughts; He commanded the man to arise and walk, attesting to the fact that He had the right and the power to operate in regions where there was no visible proof.

Also in Luke's gospel we have the details of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed them with an expensive ointment whilst He sat at table with Simon the Pharisee. Simon, observing this fact, communed within himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner." Our Lord aware of these thoughts, used the example of the two debtors, one owing little and the other far more, who were forgiven their debts. Receiving the answer that the debtor who owed most would be the most grateful, used the example to emphasise the point that He was fully aware that the woman was a sinner, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loveth much." Once again the on-lookers were amazed, "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?"

This forgiving of sins occurs on another occasion when Jesus visits the pool of Bethesda where among the many sick lay a man who was crippled and unable to help himself. Jesus, seeing him, had compassion upon him and instructed him to arise, take up his bed and walk. This the man did and in so doing enraged the Jews, for the healing took place on the Sabbath day. Later in the day Jesus found this man in the Temple giving thanks, and spoke to him, "Behold thou art whole, sin no more, lest worse things come upon thee." From these words it appears that his illness had been brought about directly due to his sins.

From these three miracles we draw the conclusion that in some cases the physical illness can be attributed to some sin of the afflicted. All illness cannot be the direct outcome of sin. By these miracles Jesus demonstrated His power to overcome the affects of sin and it is our faith in this power that leads us into the waters of baptism, thereby opening the way to the Kingdom of God. For we are reminded of the voice of one crying in the wilderness "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Jesus undertook other miracles that demonstrated His power over nature and His ability to use creative energy. The first group of these include walking on the water, stilling the storm, and the withering of the fig tree. Under creative energy comes the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, the turning of water into wine and the two amazing draughts of fish.

These miracles, with His many others, place Him on a plane of tremendous authority. How true were the words recorded in Matthew's gospel, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father."

Christ's first recorded miracle was the turning of water into wine, an event that reads as though our Lord was loathe to perform it. It is rather interesting to consider the action of His mother, what indication or knowledge did she have that He would be able or prepared to undertake such an act? Admittedly she was fully aware that He was the Son of the Almighty, but up to this stage in the narrative there was nothing that would indicate that He had the spiritual power. The two miracles of the feeding of the four thousand and of the five thousand come into a similar category, namely, making much out of seemingly very little. Here again Christ had at hand basic materials as in His first miracle, for there was water, on these occasions bread and fishes. With,; these materials at His disposal He was able to satisfy the many hungry mouths and still have a quantity left over. The five thousand who were fed and satisfied were so impressed by this miracle that they were ready to take Him by force and crown Him King. A King He would be but in His Father's good time, and we read that He quietly withdrew.

Jesus demonstrated His power over the elements when crossing the Sea of Galilee with His disciples. Sleeping in the stern of the boat while His disciples watched the storm grow until their faith wavered and they began to panic. "Lord, save us or we perish." A quiet word and the winds and waves subsided, and Jesus' immediate chiding of His disciples because of their fear. A lesson to be learned here, however strong our faith may be, circumstances can push us into a corner from which there appears to be no escape, but if we turn to our Lord He is willing and able to uplift us and help us out of our predicament.

With the miracle of the walking on the water we have the disciples endeavouring to cross the Sea of Galilee but the winds were increasing and frustrating their efforts to make progress. On this occasion they had no Lord at hand to call on but we read that Jesus perceived their distress and approached them walking on the sea. "Their confidence quickly returns and Peter, impetuous as usual, offers to walk out and meet His Lord only to have misgivings after a few steps and begins to sink. Once again lack of faith was evident, and once again they were admonished. "O ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

This point of the need for faith is again emphasised when Christ cursed the fig tree. The tree had done no wrong, so why castigate it and cause it to wither? The answer is in the following verse, "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to this fig tree but even if one shall say unto this mountain. Be ye taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done." This quote is almost a repetition of one recorded in an earlier chapter, when the disciples were unable to cure the epileptic boy and queried "Why could we not cast it out?" Jesus replied, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain. Remove hence to yonder place and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Christ was aware that He would shortly be leaving them and knew that only by developing their faith would they be able to continue in the path of righteousness, hence His constant stressing of the need for faith and of its power.

We have dealt with the miracle of healing the sick by Jesus, whether in body or mind, and His control over natural phenomena, but now move on to the miracles of raising the dead. There are three cases recorded, each case taking place under widely differing circumstances. The first, a young man, the only son of a widow. This came about by a 'chance' meeting as He entered the city of Nain. He observed a cortege carrying a body to a place of burial. From the narrative it appears that without being told, Jesus was aware that the woman was a widow and that the death of her son placed her in dire straits. For we read that He had compassion on her and said unto her, "Weep not" and touching the bier commanded "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." and handed the young man back to his mother. The widow had made no appeal to Jesus; it was quite possible that she did not know who He was, but our Lord took this opportunity to turn a sorrowful occasion into one of Joy and happiness

The witnesses to this event were filled with awe at this demonstration of the power that Jesus exercised, and proclaimed that a great prophet was risen among them and spread abroad an account of His power.

On the second occasion, a ruler of the Temple, one named Jairus, approached Jesus and besought Him to heal his daughter who was extremely sick. So great was his faith in the Lord's ability that he asked only that He should lay His hands upon her and she would be cured. Although we know that our Lord had the power to cure with a word, as He had the centurion's servant; on this occasion He started towards the ruler's house only to be met by a messenger saying the damsel was now dead and not to trouble further. There now came a test of Jairus's faith; he had been firmly convinced Jesus could cure her illness but raise her from the dead? "Only believe, and she shall be made whole." Much to the man's credit his faith was strong enough and Jesus entered his house.

A number of times in the scriptures death is referred to as sleep and our Lord uses this terminology on this occasion telling those who wept that she was not dead but sleeping. To those who are raised, death is but a deep sleep. Because of the scorn of those in the house Jesus turned out all but the girl's parents and three of His disciples, Peter James and John. Taking the girl by the hand He ordered her to arise and straightway commanded that she be given something to eat.



Realising that news of this event would spread rapidly and no doubt reach the ears of the Pharisees and Temple rulers, and that it could easily provoke them into action against Him, He charged Jairus and his wife to tell no man of the event they had witnessed. Despite this precaution it is reported in Matthew's gospel that the fame thereof went abroad into all the land.

Jesus had compassion for all that were sick and suffering, but the most poignant event recorded in John's gospel record was when the news was brought Him from His friends, Mary and Martha "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." A simple statement of fact. It was inconceivable to the sisters that Jesus should not immediately respond and heal their brother. Despite their plea Jesus delayed another two days for He said "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." Jesus must have had full knowledge by delaying this amount of time would ensure Lazarus's death. If He had travelled as soon as He received the request. He would no doubt have arrived in time to heal His sick friend, thereby denying Himself the opportunity of working the greatest miracle of all.

The disciples were no doubt relieved that Jesus had not immediately travelled to Bethany in Judea for the attitude of the Jews in authority had hardened and they feared for His life. Imagine their surprise when, after tarrying two days He informed them that they were going up to Bethany; "our friend Lazarus sleepeth but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." There is no evidence that any message had been received that Lazarus had died, but Jesus was obviously aware of the fact.

We can imagine the reaction of the sisters when news was brought of their Lord's approach and Martha, sorrowfully hurried out to meet Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." His rejoinder was, "I am the resurrection and the life." Her sister Mary hearing that Jesus was near also hurried forth and coming to Jesus used the same words as Martha. Approaching the tomb where their brother had been laid to rest, Jesus, no doubt overcome by the mourning gathering of friends that were there and their lack of understanding of His power, wept with them. Undeterred by Martha's plea not to open the tomb, for their brother had been dead four days, Jesus had the stone removed and lifting His eyes to heaven and praying to His Father, said, "Father, I thank Thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." He then commanded Lazarus to come forth and immediately he came out of the tomb still wrapped in his burial clothes. An outstanding miracle - to raise to life one who had been dead four days and all were aware that by this time decay had set in. Many who observed this miracle believed upon Jesus, but others, their minds closed to the power of the Lord, hurried away to the Pharisees and rulers.

In these miracles of raising the dead Jesus had demonstrated that it was possible to pass from death through to life. Yet despite this evidence the people failed to comprehend the references He made to His own death and resurrection.

Viewed in perspective, the miracles of Jesus wonderful as they were, belong to a sphere of action and experience which could be comprehended to a certain extent from the human point of view. They demonstrated a power to dispel evil on the level of present human experience. On no occasion was there an attempt on our Lord's part to do works which were outside the realm of human understanding. The sick and maimed restored to health, the storm calmed, the dead raised to normal existence, Jesus worked His miracles within the range of earthly possibility.

All these pale into insignificance when we come to consider His own resurrection and ascension for it set the seal of God's approval on all that Jesus was and all that he did. It was God's acceptance of the atonement and the vindication of His Son. It demonstrated the power of the almighty and His love for His creation.

Jesus, by virtue of His resurrection, is the Lord of Life, raised to the right-hand of God Almighty and head of the Church He has purchased with His own blood. It was for this cause that He was made like unto His brethren, tempted in all points like them, yet without sin. The Lamb without blemish. Redemption was assured, Jesus, by the grace of His Father tasted death for all men. Even before His death He confidently asserted "therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment I received from my Father."

For forty days after His resurrection Jesus made a number of appearances to His disciples, with many proofs, settling their doubts and instilling in their minds the necessity for His death, “then He opened their minds that they might understand the scriptures. Thus it is written that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name unto all nations.”

On the mountain in Galilee, Jesus appeared to the disciples saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” The miracle of His resurrection is a pledge and earnest of the harvest to follow, the gathering together of the redeemed, clothed upon by immortality. By His resurrection it was proved that righteousness was linked to life, and that what God had designed and created would reach its glorious climax.

On Christ's second coming the resurrection of the dead and the manifestation of the saints in glory are followed by the establishment of the Kingdom, when all things will be brought into subjection to Christ the King. “For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet, the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Then cometh the end when He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

May God grant in His mercy that we may be participators when these great miracles are enacted, for we shall see our Lord in all His Glory. “Beloved now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be, we know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Brother Jeff Hadley.

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## THE TWO SONS OF GOD

### Chapter Six

#### A Precious Promise

As Jesus stood in the Temple, asserting and proving His divine authority. He said to the Jews assembled concerning His Father's word: “Ye have not His word abiding in you; for whom He hath sent. Him ye believe not.” John 5:38. No reason could be more cogent, for the works which He did were overwhelming proof that He was sent by God; “for no man,” remarked Nicodemus, “can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.”

After this direct charge of having let slip the word, the Lord continued, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.” Verses 39 and 40.

It would appear from this that the Jews did believe that in their Scriptures, that is, what we call the Old Testament, there was to them a promise of eternal life; and in this belief they were perfectly scriptural. David had said, “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness,” Daniel had declared that “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” And the Saviour refuted the doctrine of the Sadducees, who, while denying a future life, professed to believe Moses' writings, by shewing that Moses at the burning bush was taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Luke 20:37.

Some sects among the Jews in Christ's day had no faith in the doctrine of a life after the present; of these, as just mentioned, were the Sadducees, who denied resurrection, the existence of angels, and spirits: but the Pharisees, the leading sect, "confessed both." Many of them too had borrowed from the Greeks the notion of intermediate existence, which they managed to hold together with the teaching of the Scriptures that eternal life was promised therein. We often find no difficulty in fostering and publishing contradictory doctrines.

Jesus requests them to pause; He acknowledges their admission of life in the Scriptures; but points out that they were looking in the wrong direction to obtain it. It would seem that they either expected life to be given them, apart from any particular person at an appointed time, or that they thought they had it inhering in their mortal bodies. At all events they were disposed to expect it from any quarter rather than from Him who was speaking to them. This was the ground of Jesus' complaint: "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." If the Jews did not see clearly that eternal life was to come to them through Messiah, that ignorance would as effectually hinder them, as would the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus desired them to learn that the precious promise, yes, all the promises were in Him and that out of Him they could receive nothing. The promise was not to seeds as of many, but as of one. He it was who should first receive life and then be the dispenser of it to all who should come to Him. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" - verily that eternal "rest" which yet "remaineth for the people of God."

Modern Christianity on this point is as visionary and worthless as the faith of the old pagan philosophers. Men may feel offended to hear it, but in reality what better is it than the belief in the transmigration of souls? According to that doctrine the soul would ultimately re-inhabit its body, but instead of sending it meantime to heaven, for which there is no scripture warrant, the Pagans occupied the interval by pretending that the departed spirit would pass from beast to beast, from bird to bird, or from fish to fish. We may smile pitifully at this notion; but hundreds of scholars have demonstrated that it would be quite as defensible from the Word of God as the idea of the spirit ascending to heaven. Protestants ridicule and abhor the popish dogma of purgatory for souls; but if the matter be brought calmly to the proof by the Word of God, it would be found no easier to establish the proposition that the soul goes to heaven at death, than that it goes into purgatory. To the fancy the former is pleasing, and the latter painful; but both alike are not to be found in the Bible; from the standpoint of scripture truth, therefore, they are equally unworthy of credit.

The only life man now enjoys is animal life, which is enjoyed in common by all the animal kingdom. In this respect alone "man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; as one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, all go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Such is the plain unflattering language of the Holy Oracles.

But to man God has been pleased to give a great and precious promise. "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." The gospel is the "high calling," and "the prize" of it is "in Jesus Christ." The prize is not already in the possession of all men by nature; it is at the end of the race - "the race for life." Christ has run the race and received the prize. He now holds it in His own right, ready to bestow it upon all who "run so as to obtain." He will not give it until the race is run by all who are to enter the lists, so that those who win "may be glorified together." This is the custom among men. After the contest is finished the successful competitors are called together, and the judge distributes the prizes according to merit. "They do it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible." The day of award is a time of great rejoicing for the victors, and a disappointment and ignominy for the vanquished. So Christ has declared that He "will come again," and "then will He reward every man according to his works;" the victorious will "sing aloud," yea, "shout for joy," while the rejected, clothed with shame and distracted with anguish, will cry out for the rocks and hills to fall upon them and hide them for ever from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne.

A man whose head is correctly informed concerning this precious promise, and whose "heart is right in the sight of God," whose words and actions agree with the doctrine and morals of the New Testament, will bum with gratitude and love to God for sending His Son to gain this prize, and also to the Son for offering to give it unto him. Such a man will feel beforehand somewhat of that seraphic fire that touched the prophet's lips; his ecstatic ear will be filled with the triple cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."

## **A Rich Inheritance.**

While the Bible clearly proclaims to man an offer of immortality, it is equally explicit in its promise of a rich inheritance. Those who scorn the idea of this world becoming the domain of the resurrected and immortalised believers in Christ, as though it were at once a material and grovelling desire, ought to reflect whether it is not sanctified by the word of Him who created the earth, and formed it to be inhabited. They ought first to consider how far the word of its Creator and Upholder justifies them despising one of the great works of His hand, and whether they have the authority of Scripture for indulging their hopes for the possession of any other world.

When God made man from the dust He did not raise his thoughts higher than the sphere on which he placed him. He did not inculcate the idea that man's residence was too mean and worthless for his permanent abode, that it was merely a scene of probation, a vale of tears, a dismal thorny path leading up to a sunny, flowery clime. On the contrary, what we know of -the earth by experience, together with the account given, in the book of Creation, of that portion of it where our first parents were located - the garden, the rivers, the gold lying hid beneath - all commend it to its new inhabitants as a rich and desirable abiding place.

Besides, the Creator has not described to man the other orbs that move in bound- less space; except to call them the sun, moon, and stars. They are only spoken of as subservient to our world for heat and light, by day and night. Whether they are inhabited or not He has not told us; neither has He informed us of their structure, size, distance, or composition. All that is known of them in these respects has been gathered from the scientific labours of men, reaching from the present, backwards to the remote ages, when the rudiments of astronomy, were budding on the plains of the Eastern World.

Nearly every Bible allusion to the land of promise is such as to inspire all, who have not seen it, with a strong desire to behold it for themselves. It takes precedence of all others; it is a land of hills and valleys; the most luscious fruits of the earth and the gayest flowers are there; honey drops from its rocks, wine and milk abound o'er its vales, and cedars of a thousand years crown its heights. But, leaving that region, are we at any loss for wealth and beauty in the earth besides? The natural parks of Australia, the broad plains and rivers of Africa, the grandeurs of the far West of the New World, the indescribable charms of Europe, the sublime scenes of Asia, and the laughing isles of ocean - are not these enough to fill man's highest, noblest aspirations?

The earliest promises to the founders of the Israelitish nation imply the permanent inheritance of the earth by man, and specify the unchanging possession of that part of it on which this ancient kingdom stood.

Jacob gathered his sons around his dying bed and told them what should befall them in the last days, and it is manifest from several points in the prophecy, either that the prediction is false, or that the nation who sprang from that patriarch still awaits its complete fulfilment. The sceptre has long departed from Judah, but there has been no gathering of the people under Shiloh's rule. The position assigned to Zebulon does not accord with the history of the past.

Joseph's bow does not now abide in strength, and both he and his anti-type are still separate from their brethren.

The reiterations of the promises in Deuteronomy, or the second law, confirm their first announcement; nor is it reasonably possible, though Moses died and was buried, to exclude him from a share in the inheritance. The circumstances under which he died are purely those of hope. Though his foot was not allowed to cross the Jordan, his eye beheld the beauties of his future home when the prophet like unto himself should be king in Jeshurun. For 4,000 years the curtain of death has hid the glorious spectacle from his view.

The sweet odes of David dwell chiefly on the inheritance to come. He deplored beforehand the trampling of his crown in the dust, but rejoiced also in the prospect of its after and final settlement on the head of his Son and Lord. In his inimitable songs he likens this transcendent Son to all the resuscitating powers of nature; the sun, moon, and stars image forth His life-impacting and illuminating strength, while the

nourishing dew and gentle rain pre-figure His fertilising force of mind. His purifying and gladdening of the world's sin and sorrow-stricken heart.

The poetry of Isaiah soars to its loftiest heights on the theme of the second Eden; he beholds the veil of night lifting before the rising sun; a rich feast of fat things and wines on the lees, well refined, spread before all nations; the wilderness is scented with the rose; the pine, the myrtle, and the box screen the parched face of the desert; while all the animal creation are united in a covenant of peace to one another and to their ruler - man.

The tears of Jeremiah are dried away, as his vision peers through the many scenes which have wrung rivers of blood from the heart of his nation, to that time of great deliverance, purity, and political power. He forgets the sword of the enemy, the ruined and blackened cities, the withered grass, the exhausted brook, the silence of the beasts, and the departure of the birds, when he contemplates the living tide of Israel rolling back again upon its native shores; hears the busy hum of rising cities; the eager voice of new purchasers; witnesses the buying of fields and the subscription of evidences; the re-establishment of religious rights and ceremonies; the reinstatement of the priests; and the mild benign government of the second David.

Ezekiel stands at the mouth of the valley of death. Myriads of bones lie bleaching in the clear hot sun; when, lo, a spirit passes through the vale; the bones move; flesh creeps o'er their length and breadth; a fine skin falls upon these new forms; then they rise and stand erect, emerge from the silent valley, and fill the wondering eye of the world. The prophet turns and spies them as a peaceful flock of sheep resting on their ancient plains, safe under the great Shepherd of the sheep. Their fraternal discord, once stronger than the bars of a castle, is lost in the magic blending of two sticks in the prophet's hand.

Daniel, in vision, sees the beginning of the golden age. He beholds the great idols of earthly power shattered by the unexpected fall of the mysterious stone; the stone grows into a political mountain and fills the whole earth, which he then observes is subject to the saints and the Ancient of days.

Zephaniah perceives all the peoples of the world serving the Lord with one consent; and Malachi, the last of the watchmen, discerns from his tower a smoke of pure incense ascending steadily up to heaven from the rising to the setting of the sun.

### **A Gracious Offer**

Of these things, namely, life everlasting and the inheritance of the world, the Almighty has made to man a gracious offer. It is a serious fault, and indicates no right acquaintance with the Bible, to allege, as some do, that realistic ideas of man's future are not sustained in the writings of the New Testament, but arise from a too material view of the promises of the Old. Whether we take the concise and simple narratives of the Evangelists, the practical accounts of the Acts of the Apostles, the dense and sometimes intricate arguments of the Epistles/ or the peculiar symbolism of the Apocalypse, there is sufficient plainness of speech to justify the people of God in their hopes of real and solid gifts in the kingdom of the heavens.

If it be proper for Christians to cherish an ethereal prospect, the Jews were certainly false interpreters of those promises under whose influence they departed from Egypt and entered the Holy Land. The rule by which they read the words of Moses is the only rule applicable to the terms of God's gracious offer through Jesus; if the spiritualising of this be justifiable, it could as easily be maintained that the Jews, under the guidance of Moses and Joshua, worked out for themselves a historical result contrary to the intention of Jehovah.

The last message from heaven invites all who thirst to drink of the water of life freely. A blessing is pronounced on them that do God's commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. This city, then a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid; the Holy City, consisting of the holy people, is declared to be the light of the surrounding nations; and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it.

God's tabernacle is with men. The redeemed of all nations, kindreds, and tongues exult in the bliss of immortality, their victory over the Harlot City, and their reign over the nations of the earth. The Lamb who

ascended/ has now descended. He stands on His own Mount Zion, attended by the heavenly hosts, encircled by His blood-washed myriads, whose voice is as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder. The music bursts in heavy peals, rolls now loud, now soft, among distant hills, swells like a river through the vales, and, mingled with its echoes, rises up to heaven and dies away upon the trembling air.

God, in His great mercy, offers this world to man, with endless life to enjoy it The anxious enquiry of the Lord's immediate disciples and the answer He gave them are convincing proof. Solicitous to know what they, who had forsaken all, should receive, Jesus replied without a parable: "Ye who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

During the last forty days of Christ's sojourn amongst men, after He had tasted and -triumphed over the bitterness of death. He discoursed upon the things concerning the kingdom next to be established; and while the cloud hid their ascending Lord from view, the testimony of angels fell on the disciples, assuring them of His return to fulfil His Father's promise. And all their lives this glorious hope burned brightly, fed and attested by the wondrous powers which everywhere confirmed their word.

Peter spent the earlier part of his apostleship in presenting this gracious offer to his own nation, but while lodging at the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea-side at Joppa, he was directed to carry the same invitation to the Gentiles. The beloved physician, Luke, in his last treatise, narrates the story of the visit to the centurion's house in simple and interesting style. For the encouragement of the strangers, Peter avouched that God was no respecter of persons; he reminded them of the good news that had been preached in Jesus' name throughout all Judea; of the fact that he himself was one of those who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead; that it is He who was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead; and that to Him give all the prophets witness. When Peter had fully explained the matter, and his new friends had believed it, the whole work was confirmed by the immediate gift of tongues, followed by individual obedience in the waters of baptism uniting them to Him who had commanded the apostle to go and make to them the gracious offer.

Luke also tells us how Paul travelled through the lesser Asia, Greece, Italy, a large portion of the Mediterranean seaboard, and several of the islands, bearing the glad message of the gift of life and of the world in His name who smote him to the ground while journeying to Damascus. Whether we follow him into the synagogue, to the forum, to the sea-side, or to his own hired house, the great work on which he was engaged, instant both in season and out of season was the exposition of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, urging collaterally the indispensable obligation of a holy life to make disciples meet for the proffered inheritance.

After this extensive tour, when he sent letters to the churches he had formed, the most powerful incentive to reformation of life and to growth in scripture knowledge, was the mercy of God and the love of Christ; the one in giving Him, the other in shedding His own blood to confirm the covenant of the promised possession.

He endeavoured to rouse the disciples at Rome to increased diligence, by reminding them of the confirmation of the covenant in the blood of Jesus, and that their acceptance of God's gracious offer, through Christ, had constituted them joint heirs with Him of life and inheritance. For this he himself had suffered the loss of all things; though a Roman citizen was even bound with a chain like a common slave; yet counted he nothing dear to himself if he might only win the prize.

As he stood before Agrippa he was careful to show that the charge against him had relation to the promise made of God to the Hebrew fathers. In addressing the Galatians, he sought to restore them from their foolishness and bewitchment by arguing that nothing, not even the law of Moses, could disannul the original declaration of God establishing the covenant in the hand of the Seed. But it is not needful to allude to the particular instances in the epistles; they all, more or less, speak with the precision and clearness, showing that life everlasting and this world are in store for the obedient believers of the gospel. "Therefore,

let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollus, or Cephas, 03: the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.” 1 Corinthians 3:21,22.

**Edward Turney.**  
**To be continued...**

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“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.” Psalm 100.