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Editorial

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

How wonderfully refreshing it is to be able to discuss so freely the various points of view regarding the parables of Jesus Christ.

Most of us left the Christadelphian community because we were not able to discuss the Word of God freely and were told what we should believe, despite our Heavenly Father’s invitation to reason with Him from the Scriptures; a reasoning we were unable to share with those with whom we met. Indeed, it was said to me “Greater minds than yours or mine have worked it out and I accept what they say.” Thereby implying that I should do likewise, but such is the unfortunate position of most in Christendom -- look how many follow what the Papacy has worked out!

Let us, as followers of Jesus Christ, encourage discussion and reasoning - it is the aid to learning and edification for all who seek truth for we see it used throughout the Law and the Prophets and by Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

We must be clear in our minds that what we mean by reasoning and discussion is a detailed examination of the subject to hand. There is no place here for controversy, which is “a war of opinions” and which so often leads to ill feeling and perhaps acrimony. Rather let us discuss and reason together with amiability, courtesy and kindness. As Brother Phil Parry expresses it in his letter in the “Chat Section” “This should be done in the spirit of Christ and on the basis of love and respect for the Word of God and one another.”

The Gulf War may be over but the troubles continue in the region. A year ago Kuwait was the wealthiest nation per capita in the world. Massive oil revenues provided a generous welfare state and the most modern hospitals equipped with all the latest techniques available with no expenses spared. I understand that there was no taxation of the people and anything that was desired was purchased. One might say that this was the nearest to paradise that man could provide for himself.

And where is Kuwait? It is very near to the paradise where God placed Adam and Eve some 6,000 years ago, eastward in Eden where the rivers Euphrates and Tigris (Hiddekel) ran. (Genesis 2:4-14). Adam and Eve lost their paradise too, but God has promised more blessings to the faithful than our minds can conceive, though in measure they have been revealed “to those that love Him” and now, in our day, these promises are soon to be realised, for what is happening in the Middle East will culminate sooner or later in the establishment of Christ’s reign from Jerusalem. One understanding fact of Ezekiel’s prophecy (Ezekiel 38:4) is that Gog of the land of Magog has been turned back from his expansion into Asia (Afghanistan) and Europe and will shortly be seeking agreements with Persia (i.e. Iran - which is now one of the most powerful military forces in the Middle East), Ethiopia, and Libya in preparation for their sweep across Israel as Iraq

swept across Kuwait in August of last year. And what can the Western powers do or say in answer to this invasion but to ask “Art thou come to take a spoil...?” ‘Ezekiel 38:13) for there will be insufficient armed forces available to withstand such an onslaught. But the outcome of this invasion is in the hands of God for He will destroy many armies as described in Ezekiel 38:18-23.

There are a multitude of prophecies which relate to this time for this I believe is the beginning of God’s judgements in the earth and a fearful time for all mankind. However, even in this time of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world” (Matthew 24:21), God has promised that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21).

It may be that we, by the grace of God, shall be taken out of the world before these events take place for we are exhorted to “pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” (Luke 21:36). May this indeed be our very great joy.

In this issue we have a chapter from Dr Edersheim’s book “The Temple - its’ Ministry and Services as they were at the Time of Jesus Christ.” While we do not hold entirely to all the views of Dr Edersheim it was felt that there is so much of interest in his book that it was well worth including it to give us a good historical background to New Testament times.

With Sincere Love to all, in the Master’s service, Brother Russell Gregory.

Heaven and Earth

The sceptic often points to verses in the Bible which on their face seem to justify his or her rejection of the truth as seen in the Scriptures, such as 2 Kings 2:11, John 3:13, Acts 2:34. At face value it may seem that the latter of these quotations is in contradiction of the former. But as we know, the Scriptures do not contradict themselves, for when careful thought is given to the above quotations they fall in line with each other.

Our late Brother Howells of Australia, who now sleeps in Jesus, mentioned the matter in a letter he and Sister Howells sent to Brother Moore some years ago, the gist of which is seen in the Circular Letter No 48 or November 1983, at which time I made a number of notes. Let me now just quote from the Scriptures, 2 Kings 2:11:- “...behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and they parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

John 3:13:- “...and no man hath ascended up to heaven....”

Acts 2:34:- “For David is not ascended into the heavens....”

In giving thought to the matter of faithful men and women of the Bible we thought of Enoch, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and David among many others, but where was the heaven spoken of in the case of Elijah? We note that the sons of the prophets wanted to go and find Elijah where he had gone, and with reluctance Elisha said “send;” see verse 17 of 2 Kings 2.

As far as mankind in general sees things there is only heaven and earth. We revert to Scripture - Genesis 1:1:- “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Again, from Genesis 28:12:- “... and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

From earth to heaven, but let it be noted it were angels, not humans who were leaving the earth or heaven. We know that mankind in his natural state, comes from the dust of the ground as did Adam, our forerunner, as stated in Genesis chapter 2 when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and then man

became a living soul. God, having created the heavens and earth, had a purpose to fill the earth with His Glory. Until the time arrives for this to be fully achieved, Adam having been created a natural being, was given a duty to care for God's creation and obey his Creator. God had provided a suitable habitat; atmosphere, environmental surroundings to suit a natural life which He brought about when He gave Adam the breath of life. Not only was man from the earth, but all the other wonders of creation as recorded in Genesis are shown to have a relation to the earth. The sun and moon each had their place, lights in the firmament to give light upon the earth. The birds of the air, they fly above the earth, the seas which are part of this earth we are told brought forth abundantly. God created great whales and the same seas contain small fish and creatures in abundance. They all abound to the majesty of God. Many insects and creatures live in the earth, and from the earth come great tress, some for food, some for building and heating.

Sad to say, man was not satisfied for long with the earth as God's provision for his natural life. Men soon wanted more than just his immediate surroundings. And they are no better today with their modern science and increased knowledge for they want something more than God in His wisdom has seen fit to provide for them in their day to day habitat.

But there is something more provided for mankind if they will seek it, but very few are willing to as it will not enhance their ego. "Seek and ye shall find" the fullness of God's love in giving His Son, and the Son's love in giving His life for fallen man. Adam and Eve wanted more than God had given them; there was one prohibition, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 2:17:- "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it" and Genesis 3:3:- "...God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Oh, they desired knowledge and it was within the tree, but it was not for them to partake of it and along came the serpent of temptation and they fell for its wiles, touched and partook of the fruit. True, it gave them knowledge, they saw that they were naked (physically) and sought a covering from this nakedness from among the leaves of the trees. But, as we all know, the real nakedness was before God for they had disobeyed Him and God was not concerned merely with their physical nakedness, for they were as He had created them and placed them in Eden.

To my mind if it had been fit for humans to have full knowledge of all things, God would not have placed a prohibition order as it were. The day of full understanding lay ahead and all the accepted ones (the saints) will be revealed in the Kingdom of God when established on earth. Here I would like to refer to Psalm 115:16, also the words of Jesus:-

"The Heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men."

Luke 11:2:- "When ye pray say, Our Father which art in heaven... Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

Without question the day will come when God's will shall be the order and practice of the day on this earth, as today it is done in heaven.

We now see Adam and Eve cast out of Eden, but still on the earth. They must have wandered about seeking a site to establish themselves, for we know they could not return to Eden. God's decree to be fruitful and multiply still had to be complied with. But sadly they were now sinners and it brought forth tragic results, for they were no longer at one with God. Cain was born and later Abel, whom Cain killed in his jealousy. In due course Seth was born, as we see from Genesis 4:26, but, sad to say, the rot had set in (as the worldly saying is). It appears as mankind multiplied in numbers, so did wickedness with the result recorded in Genesis 6:5:- "And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth." All, however, was not lost. There was still one family who still believed and had faith in God and His promises.

Verse 8:- "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord... Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God."

We know well the result, except for Noah and his family the flood came and destroyed all living creatures other than those safely in the ark with Noah. After the flood with the saving of a few of mankind

and other creatures very soon the human race we again see man's desires (not God's) to establish a name and a city - we have details in scripture. To this end we have that incident, the building of the tower of Babel, to reach from earth to heaven. The object of which was to be one of the means to keep them together so long as they could see this tower they were not scattered too far away from each other. We have similar things today. Those of us who have travelled about during the course of earning a living used to look for certain outstanding objects which informed us we were approaching certain towns or cities, e.g. as the city of Salisbury, Canterbury, Lincoln, Chesterfield, etc., their church spires, and even local villages, Queniborough, near where I live has a very tall church spire, which can be seen from miles away. We see in Genesis 11:1:- "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech... as they journeyed... they found a plain and they dwelt there." Verse 4, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth."

The purpose of God was that after the disaster of earlier events as recorded in Genesis was that the earth should be replenished, this may give us a thought for those who are keen on vegetation or tree growing; here was something man could do. By cultivation of God's gift to man, the earth could again bring forth abundantly. The physical building of the tower was an accomplishment in those days without the many modern aids as we see on modern building sites. But who knows? Remember Ecclesiastes 9:9 and 10, but God who created man knew of his capability but even so it was not to be used to defy his Maker; man had to be stopped with this building. In the same chapter we quoted earlier. Genesis 11 we read from verse 5,6, and 8:- "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said... now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do... So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence... and they left off to build the city."

With the building being stopped we are again reminded of the two great features of God's creation: the heaven and the earth, with the great gulf of the atmosphere between them. But man has still not learnt his abode is the earth in his natural state. Not heaven. This was brought to our notice early in 1986 when we saw, many of us, on T.V. that event known as the "shuttle disaster" which took place during man's attempt to leave the earth and prepare for more ambitious things. Here I quote the words of the then president of the U.S.A. "The state programme will continue; our dreams of the stars and beyond is the determined aim of America and her people to establish a city outside earth."

Let me briefly remind you of the many pieces of equipment men use to enable them to leave the surface of the earth with its atmosphere which is suitable to their constitution as provided for them by God. Again we are reminded of the words of Psalm 115:16; "The earth hath He given to the children of men." If man wishes to ascend towards heaven, or descend to greater depths than the surface he has to have pressurised conditions. Think back to 1989 to when a plane windscreen came adrift, the pilot almost lost his life. High in the air it is necessary to have special suits and additional oxygen. For those who go deep compression chambers are used and on their return to the surface they have to be acclimatised before they can walk the earth again and be free from what is known as the 'bends,' which, I see as having to return to the condition men were/when first God placed Adam and Eve on the earth. Mankind is a creature from the earth and the earth at creation was his abode. Speaking of heaven, the I.S.B.E. (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia) says:- "Heaven often refers to the space immediately enveloping the earth as we know it, wherein a number of natural phenomena are seen or appear to come from..." among these are:- Rain; Genesis 7:4. Dew; Deuteronomy 33:13. Cloud; Genesis 9:13. Frost and Ice; Job 38:29. Hail; Joshua 10:11. Snow; Isaiah 55:10. Thunder; I Samuel 2:10; Wind; Jeremiah 10:13. All these are seen or heard from the earth, man's natural abode. Heaven also denotes outer space where the lights and stars are located. "Heaven is God's throne and the earth is His footstool." Matthew 5:34,35.

Noah, in his day, was provided by God with full instructions for the building of an ark for the saving of a righteous man and his family while the rest of all living upon earth perished. Today we have a safe ark available, again the provision of God in a wicked and perverse generation. Today's sure ark of salvation is seen in Jesus Christ the Son of God. Let us remain in Him faithfully and we shall not perish, for when the storms of God's judgements are over and as it were the wicked have been destroyed, the ark will rest upon an earth about to be filled with the glory of the Lord. Those who are in the ark with Jesus will have their nature changed from flesh and blood to flesh and spirit. Then, I feel, there will be no restrictions of movement.

I must now draw to a close, though these comments have been rather drawn out, but we cannot add to the written word concerning Enoch as stated in Genesis 5:24 where we read:-

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” The expression “walked with God” denotes a devout life; lived in close communion with God. Speaking of Enoch the writer of the Hebrews in chapter 11 and verse 5, introduces another word - “translated,” or moved to another place, which is the meaning of the word, that he should not see death. Along with Enoch we have others mentioned in the Hebrews as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, from the Old Testament. For no man shall see God and live. Moses was hid in the cleft of a rock; and from the New Testament we know of others who saw the glory of Christ, but shall say in a restricted form. Paul before his conversion was so stunned by the glory of Jesus that it left him blind. Stephen saw the glory of God and Christ, but so enraged were his persecutors that they stoned him and laid his clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Brother Harvey Linggood.

Jesus said...

No. 16.

“Ye are the salt of the earth...”

Matthew 5:13.

Apart from being essential to life, salt has been used since the earliest times either for seasoning or preserving food. As a condiment it gives relish to food, and as a preservative it keeps good that which is already good and needless to say, it cannot improve food which has begun to deteriorate. Salt was, and still is used for cleansing wounds and so aiding the healing process. Of itself it cannot heal but it prevents the spread of disease and infection, and not only in wounds but it appears to have been used in large quantities to prevent plagues as when Shechem was destroyed and sown with salt. (Judges 9:45).

In the Orient salt was considered symbolic of constancy and fidelity and was used to ratify agreements, while in the Scriptures we read in Leviticus of salt being an essential element in Israel's meat offerings. “And every oblation of thy meat-offering shall thou season with salt, neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.” (Leviticus 2:13). In the book of Numbers, chapter 18, verse 19, and in 2 Chronicles chapter 13, verse 5 we see that a “Covenant of salt” is long-term and binding, emphasising the permanence of the agreement entered into.

When Jesus said “Ye are the salt of the earth” He no doubt had all these things in mind; how that we, as far as our influence extends, can help keep good that which is already good, that we can be a cleansing influence to aid the healing of a ‘wounded spirit,’ and we can add savour to the lives of others by encouragement to follow in His paths.

Paul writes in his letter to the Romans (chapter 12, verse 1) “I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” And Jesus said “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.” (Mark 9:50).

“CHAT SECTION”

Answers by Brother Harold Dawson

Continuing our discussion on the parables of Jesus Christ, Brother Phil Parry writes:-

“Thank you for your views and comments in the Circular Letter January/February 1991. I agree readers should see these letters and essays on the parables as a desire by the writers to be helpful and constructive as you suggest, but I am afraid they may be having the opposite effect, especially when some writers are interpreting some parables to mean that the Apostate Churches of modern Christendom is a “likeness” of the Kingdom of Heaven, which I am sure Jesus never intended should be the result of His teaching. Some years ago, in the Circular Letter, I stressed that the Kingdom of Heaven could not be likened unto the “leaven” of false doctrine and traditions of men entering into the true Church of Christ causing it to be fully “leavened” and leaving the whole lump of corruption such as Christendom. This would mean that there is no Kingdom of Heaven once the whole is completely leavened in this way.

“I see no reason why Jesus should be tied down as it were, to using leaven in the way it is mostly used in Scripture, as an evil influence. We must not ignore His use of the word “Likeness.” Paul used it in defining the difference between Christ’s relationship as a man of flesh and blood, and the relationship of all in the loins of Adam when he sinned. The nature of Christ was the same as all men but the ownership was different - He was a new begettal - a new life direct from God, - man’s was Adamic life through the line of Adamic fertilisation. The flesh was the same in quality but it was not the same in regard to ownership, thus, says Paul, He was a “likeness” of Sin’s flesh but He was not Sin’s flesh, or flesh belonging to Sin, but flesh belonging to God. There are certain people who have been led to believe that because the flesh of Jesus was the same quality as their own supposedly sinful, condemned nature, that He Himself must also be under that same condemnation. But nowhere in Scripture does it say that the flesh and blood nature of Adam and his posterity was condemned through his sin, but that it had placed them in a different relationship to God by Adam’s transgression of God’s Law - the flesh was never any different, only the ownership in the legal sense - though physically, as Paul says, “In Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28. Paul says, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God,” yet Jesus was in the flesh and He pleased God. Again the word “likeness” comes to the rescue. Jesus was not in the flesh related to Sin, but in a “likeness” of it. Again Paul says to believers, “But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be...” Therefore now, by adoption and grace, though they be in the Spirit, they are still in the “likeness” of Sin’s flesh as to its quality. If Paul uses “The Flesh” as a reference to those in the alienated position, and the “Spirit” as a reference to those reconciled to God, why should not Jesus use the working of the substance of “leaven” as a “likeness” of the working of His Spirit Word in bringing to an ultimate completion of the Kingdom of Heaven?

It must be understood that Jesus is not saying that the Kingdom of God is the false doctrine and wickedness usually associated in Scripture with the use of leaven, but that His teaching worked in the people into whose hearts it entered (the three measures of meal), not all people, and when that teaching had finished its course of working in the similar way leaven works in the meal, the Kingdom of Heaven would be the result; if not, then we who profess to be Christ’s are merely members of the great Apostasy, wholly leavened by its doctrine, with no remnant whatsoever of the True Church remaining. To me this unacceptable. Surely the outcome of all the parables is the Kingdom of Heaven, in whichever way its process of growth may happen, thus I am forced to reject some of the views put forward; though I admit I could be mistaken on my suggested (not dogmatic) view of the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, but the answer which evades me at present is to the question if the wheat denotes believers in this present dispensation growing among the tares, who then are the servants of the householder taking stock of the wheat and tares in the field and reporting the position to the Householder? Again, in this parable there is wheat to be gathered into the householder’s barn, but in Brother Russell’s interpretation of the parable of the leaven there cannot be anything left but tares, sown by the woman as “the leaven of false doctrine.” I wonder, is this what Brother Russell means in the parable of the mustard seed, on page 8 of the C.L. where he says, “Again we have a picture of man bringing to failure the Kingdom of God, replacing faith in the true gospel with faith in something monstrous. When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth? Possibly He may not” Here again, I myself fail to accept that man can bring to failure the Kingdom of God, but this is what Brother Russell is implying in the parables of the leaven and also the mustard seed.

Incidentally, while on the subject of the Kingdom of God, I myself am of the opinion that there is a difference to be drawn between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven but this is too great a subject to deal with at this stage.

I think also that before anyone ventures further on the explanation of the other three parables suggested, we should clear up, if possible, the difficulties that have arisen so far. This should be done in the spirit of Christ and on the basis of Love and respect for the Word of God, and one another.

Just one observation I have to make on what was otherwise a good article by Brother Leo, page 3, last paragraph, where he says, "And God has never tempted anyone above that which he is able to bear." Now although it is recorded in Genesis 22:1 that God did tempt Abraham, the apostle James states that God tempts no man (James 1:13). What Brother Leo should have quoted is Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "God will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear..." I am sure Brother Leo will understand this friendly correction.

I appreciate your remarks, Brother Harold, on the Middle East and the events that will lead up to Christ's establishment of His Kingdom on earth when He sits on the throne of His glory. I took particular note of your reference concerning God's promise to Abraham and his seed, "To thee (and thy seed) will I give the land" not to the descendants of Hagar. "In thee shall thy seed be called" of which seed was Christ, and if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promises of God." I hope you can see that even the descendants of Hagar were not excluded from the promises if they voluntarily accepted the covenant of promise through the seed to which the land was first promised. (Genesis 15:18). This covenant was never fulfilled to the extent of the land mentioned (from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates), not even to the children of Egypt, and in regard to Abraham, God gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on. The matter of fulfilment of inheritance of the land in a temporal sense was conditional to the natural children of Israel. God set before them the blessing and the curse, for as long as they lived their natural existence, but the promise to the true Abrahamic seed was everlasting life (see Romans chapter 4) by faith, not through the Law. Contemporary Israel now in the land as a political entity is in no better position than the descendants of Hagar in regard to the Abrahamic covenant confirmed in the blood of Christ, as Paul says in Galatians 4:22-31, both are in bondage, but the way to freedom in Christ is open to both. It is not for us to boast (only in the Lord) but to strive at all times to make our calling and election sure.

Yours in this Hope of Israel, Brother Phil and Sister Rene.

* * *

I have received the following queries from Brother Leo Dreifuss:

"This query concerns Jesus' parable in Matthew 22:2-14, about a king making a marriage for his son, and the invited guests not turning up, all making their excuses, etc., etc. The first part seems straight forward. The first invitation represents God's kingdom call to the Jewish nation by the prophets and last of all, by His Son, Jesus. They rejected Christ and ill-treated and killed many prophets. In the end of that age the Jewish nation was dispossessed and dispersed among the Gentiles. The second invitation represents the Gospel call to the Gentiles by the Apostles. All and sundry accepted, but many were unfaithful and fell away. But what about the one who turned up without a wedding garment and was rejected for this reason? I honestly don't know whom he represents. Comments invited."

In reply to Brother Leo's enquiry my comments are as follows: The parable of the "Wedding Invitation" is a very interesting one, and has deep implications because it relates to the Salvation wrought for us all through the sacrifice of Christ.

God made His offer of Salvation originally to the House of Israel, who were represented by the 'Tree' to which Jesus came - His hands outstretched to bless and seeking fruit - but the 'Tree' was devoid of fruit. This represented the rejection of Jesus by His own people - and the hatred and treachery He received at their hands. The Book of Hosea is an account of God's desired 'love affair' He sought with Israel His chosen

people - and before whom He placed blessings and cursings - Life or death - and the exhortation to “Choose life” by keeping His ways and Laws and recognising their Messiah, Jesus, when He came to the House of Israel - God’s Tree.

For envy and jealousy, the Jewish leaders betrayed Jesus, and Jesus, knowing this would happen and that “their house was left unto them desolate.” It has indeed been so, and when the Jewish leaders said “His blood be upon us and our children” it has been so. Now, however Israel are back in the Land, and the stage is rapidly being set for the time when Israel shall “look on Him whom they pierced and mourn.”

So the first part of the parable relates to the refusal of the relatives to come to the wedding. And as Paul (under inspiration) said, “Behold I go to the Gentiles”, so the good-man of the house told his servants to bring in strangers rather than have no one at the wedding. This was done, and the ‘stranger-guests’ sat down at the Wedding celebration feast. We then read that one of these guests was questioned and made to feel embarrassed, that he wore no wedding garment - (or perhaps) and was untidy or dirty and dusty in appearance - and this ‘stranger-guest’ was rendered speechless. In the ordinary way this is quite understandable but it does have a significant meaning.

A parable, of course, is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, and the vital link is that Paul did go to the Gentiles, and to them conveyed the “Good News of the Kingdom of God” He taught about the atoning work and mission of Jesus Christ, which was and is able to be likened to an invitation to a special event, like a wedding, the coming unity of Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, with His Church, the redeemed saints in the coming Kingdom - the New Jerusalem, which the Book of Revelation explains will come down from heaven. Jesus is the New Jerusalem. The “Wedding garment” that the stranger-guest lacked is in the spiritual sense - faith, consistent life before God, and Baptism by total immersion - a symbolic dying of the death forever we have earned from Adam, and of course, belief in God’s word, and humility before God until the end of our natural life. We enter God’s Kingdom - if we do - on God’s terms, not our own. And so don the “Wedding Garment” Jesus provided. We do not earn salvation by works - but our own works do come into it. Near the end of Revelation Jesus declares “Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his works shall be.” Salvation is by grace, not by works - lest any should boast - and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. So our works relate to our future ‘status’ in God’s Kingdom - but they do not basically save us - Jesus has done that through His Atoning Sacrifice and God for us through Grace.

To go into the Wedding, is for relations not strangers, and the “Wedding Garment” is provided by Christ. Hopefully we are related to Jesus Christ our Lord, and on His terms.

* * *

The second query from Brother Leo concerns immortality. He writes:

“It crossed my mind only recently concerning the immortality of the angels. According to Luke 20:36, the angels don’t die, so they must be immortal. But according to Paul’s epistle to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:16) God only hath immortality. How can you reconcile these two statements? Of course, God bestowed immortality on His Son, when He rose from the dead, and will bestow it on us after the resurrection. But I am concerned about the state of things now. Comments invited, please.”

The answer to this query is offered as follows:- God indeed only hath immortality but it is His prerogative to ‘give’ to others also. No one else can. The angels are immortal and are already part of the realm of Heaven and part of the present God-family.

Jesus Christ is the first-fruit of them that slept for He was a physical man and capable of Sin, yet He kept God’s law perfectly. As Son of Mary, and uncondemned in nature as Son of God, born of the Holy Spirit, is now at the right-hand of God, and has been endowed with immortality by God, His Father whence Jesus will come again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords - and as He is immortal, ‘Lion of the Tribe of Judah’, God declares to us “That eye hath not seen nor ear heard the things that God has prepared for those that love Him...” Those things will include the “Gift of immortality” endowed upon the saints by the redeemed Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the time of restitution of all things.” At the end of the Millennial 1,000 year reign of Christ, Jesus will give up the corrected kingdoms of men (this world) to God

Himself. The world will then be inhabited with the immortalised saints (saved ones), and God will be “all in all.” Thus the inspired words of Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:16) that God only hath immortality means that God is the only source of immortality, and through Christ His intention from the beginning was to people the world with His saints.

This life is a testing time - we choose whom we serve. God does not force us into His Kingdom. We make the answer now, but once baptised and changed in mind towards God and His word, then Grace operates in our lives. By grace are we saved and not by works lest any should boast, and this grace is not of our-selves, it is the gift of God.

Referring again to the parables of Jesus, Sister Evelyn Linggood writes:

“It cannot be that these parables refer to the future Kingdom of God both for the reasons Brother Russell stated on pages 11 and 12 of the last Circular Letter and also the fact that Jesus stated re the parables of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:40) “...so shall it be at the end of this world (or age),” not the millennial age. Brother Russell’s point, too, about the nation of Israel being the first Kingdom of Heaven is true being established by God and under His law, and Jesus said to the religious leaders “The Kingdom of Heaven should be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” but after a righteous beginning this also for the most part fell into corruption. It is doubtful, I think, that the disciples fully understood these parables although they said they did at the time, but later would do so when the Holy Spirit brought all things to their remembrance, as with the many other sayings of Jesus which had not been fully understood at the time.

The parable of the Pearl of Great Price lends itself to more than one interpretation and one day we shall know without a doubt what our Lord meant to convey.

Sister Linggood continues on the theme of the Gulf War which was still continuing at the time she wrote her letter:-

“It seems many think this war will end in Armageddon but according to Revelation 19 that is to be fought after the fall of Babylon and after the Marriage of the Lamb, and as I see it, the Gogian war precedes these events and before this Israel is said to be “dwelling safely.” Sidney Clementson, in his book “The Day Approaches” thought there would be an Arab-Israeli conflict which would result in a peace treaty between the two peoples bringing about the “Peace and Safety” conditions of 1 Thessalonians 5:3. If he is right this could be the beginning of that conflict and then the “sudden destruction” of the Gogian war after which Israel will be converted - what are left of them - the remnant to be saved. See Romans 11:25-27.

* * *

In a further letter Brother Phil Parry writes:-

“I would like to express an independent view by one who, though holding some of the erroneous theories of the Anglican Church, was shrewd enough to perceive that in Romans chapter 7 Paul could not have been speaking of himself as a converted Christian, but either impersonating himself in his unregenerated state before baptism, or the state of a Jew under the Law in the same state of unregeneration. On the strength of this he can be relied upon to give his view of the parable of the leaven as in the following - ‘On the nature and effects of the leaven, see the note on Exodus 12:8. As the property of leaven is to change, or assimilate to its own nature the meal or dough with which it is mixed; so the property of the grace of Christ is to change the whole soul into its own likeness: and God intends that this principle should continue in the soul till all is leavened, till the whole bear the image of the heavenly, as it before bore the image of the earthly. Both these parables (Mustard Seed and Leaven) are prophetic, and were intended to shew, principally, how, from very small beginnings, the Gospel of Christ should pervade all the nations of the world, and fill them with righteousness and true holiness. Verse 34. All these things spake Jesus in parables. Christ descends from divine mysteries to parables, in order to excite us to raise our minds, from and through natural things, to the great God, and the operation of His grace and Spirit. Divine things cannot be taught to man but through the medium of earthly things. If God should speak to us in that language which is peculiar to heaven, clothing those ideas which angelic minds form, how little should we comprehend of the things thus described? How great is our privilege in being thus taught! Heavenly things, in the parables of

Christ, assume to themselves a body, and thus render themselves palpable.’ Adam Clarke. LL.D F.A.S. 1817.

Now if as has been stated in the Circular Letter No. 128 on page 8, bottom paragraph, “The Mother of Harlots introduced leaven into the Gospel of Christ centuries ago... and is there one single true doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church? And is there one single sect or denomination that has not retained at least one of these doctrines? Surely we see the whole leavened, for man has corrupted God’s way until people no longer know right from wrong.” This is exactly what I said would be the result, if the parable referred to the Church of Christ fully leavened with false doctrine. How can any community profess to be the true remnant of the early Church with Christ as the Head? My whole argument is that if leaven is the equivalent of false doctrine, malice and wickedness, infusing itself into the True Church of Christ until the whole is leavened, what is left for Christ to accept at His coming? How can there be any left of that class whom Paul says will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air?

Compiled by Brother Harold Dawson

The Temple. Its Ministry and Services.

A First View of Jerusalem, and of the Temple.

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.” Luke 19:41.

In every age, the memory of Jerusalem has stirred the deepest feelings. Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans turn to it with reverent affection. It almost seems as if in some sense each could call it his ‘happy home,’ the ‘name ever dear’ to him. For our holiest thoughts of the past, and our happiest hopes for the future connect themselves with “the city of our God.” We know from many passages of the Old Testament, but especially from the Book of Psalms, with what ardent longing the exiles from Palestine looked towards it; and during the long centuries of dispersion and cruel persecution, up to this day, the same aspirations have breathed in almost every service of the synagogue, and in none more earnestly than in that of the paschal night, which to us is for ever associated with the death of our Saviour. It is this one grand presence there of “the desire of all nations,” which has for ever cast a hallowed light round Jerusalem and the Temple and given fulfilment to the prophecy - “Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isaiah 2:3. (See note below). His feet have trodden the busy streets of Jerusalem, and the shady recesses of the Mount of Olives; His figure has “filled with glory” the Temple and its services; His person has given meaning to the land and the people; and the decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem has been for the life of all nations. These facts can never be past - they are eternally present; not only to our faith, but also to our hope; for He “shall so come in like manner” as the “men of Galilee” had on Mount Olivet “seen Him go into heaven.”

But our memories of Jerusalem stretch far back beyond these scenes. In the distance of a remote antiquity we read of Melchisedek, the typical priest-king of Salem, who went out to meet Abraham, the ancestor of the Hebrew race, and blessed him. A little later, and this same Abraham was coming up from Hebron on his mournful journey, to offer up his only son. A few miles south of the city, the road by which he travelled climbs the top of a high promontory, that juts into the Kedron valley. From this spot, through the cleft of the mountains which the Kedron has made its course, one object rose up straight before him. It was Moriah, the Mount on which the sacrifice of Isaac was to be offered. Here Solomon afterwards built the Temple. For over Mount Moriah David had seen the hand of the destroying angel stayed, probably just above where afterwards from the large altar of burnt-offering the smoke of countless sacrifices rose day by day. On the opposite hill of Zion, separated only by a ravine from Moriah, stood the city and the palace of David, and close by the site of the Temple the tower of David. After that period an ever-shifting historical panorama passes before our view, unchanging only in this, that, amidst all the varying events, Jerusalem

remains the one centre of interest and attraction, till we come to that Presence which has made it, even in its desolateness, "Hephzibah," "sought out," "a city not forsaken." Isaiah 62:4.

Origin of the name. The Rabbis have a curious conceit about the origin of the name Jerusalem, which is commonly taken to mean, 'the foundation,' 'the abode,' or 'the inheritance of peace.' They make it a compound of Jireh and Shalem, and say that Abraham called it "Jehovah-Jireh," while Shem had named it Shalem, but that God combined the two into Jireh-Shalem, Jerushalaim, or Jerusalem. There was certainly something peculiar in the choice of Palestine to be the country of the chosen people, as well as of Jerusalem to be its capital. The political importance of the land must be judged from its situation rather than its size.

Lying midway between the east and the west, and placed between the great military monarchies, first of Egypt and Assyria, and then of Rome and the East, it naturally became the battlefield of the nations and the highway of the world. As for Jerusalem, its situation was entirely unique. Pitched on a height of about 2,610 feet above the level of the sea, its climate was more healthy, equable, and temperate than that of any other part of the country. From the top of Mount Olivet an unrivalled view of the most interesting localities in the land might be obtained. To the east the eye would wander over the intervening plains to Jericho, mark the tortuous windings of Jordan, and the sullen grey of the Dead Sea, finally resting on Pisgah and the mountains of Moab and Ammon. To the south, you might see beyond "the king's garden," as far as the grey tops of "the hill-country of Judea." Westwards, the view would be arrested by the mountains of Bether (Song of Solomon 2:17), whilst the haze in the distant horizon marked the line of the Great Sea. To the north, such well-known localities met the eye as Mizpeh, Gibeon, Ajalon, Michmash, Ramah, and Anathoth. But above all, just at your feet, the Holy City would lie in all her magnificence, like "a bride adorned for her husband."

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King... Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks/ consider her palaces." If this could be said of Jerusalem even in the humbler days of her native monarchy, it was emphatically true at the time when Jesus beheld the city, after Herod the Great had adorned it with his wonted splendour. As the pilgrim bands came up from all parts of the country to the great feasts, they must have stood enthralled when its beauty first burst upon their gaze. Not merely remembrances of the past, or the sacred associations connected with the present, but the grandeur of the scene before them must have kindled their admiration into enthusiasm. For Jerusalem was a city of palaces, and right royally enthroned as none other. Placed on an eminence higher than the immediate neighbourhood, it was cut off and isolated by deep valleys on all sides but one, giving it the appearance of an immense natural fortress. All round it, on three sides, like a natural fosse, ran the deep ravines of the Valley of Hinnom and of the Black Valley, or Kedron, which merged to the south of the city, descending in such steep declivity that where the two meet is 670 feet below the point whence each had started. Only on the north-west was the city, as it were, bound to the mainland. And as if to give it yet more the character of a series of fortress-islands, a deep natural cleft - the Tyropoeon - ran south and north right through the middle of the city, then turned sharply westwards, separating Mount Zion from Mount Acra. Similarly, Acra was divided from Mount Moriah, and the latter again by an artificial valley from Bezetha, or the New Town. Sheer up from these encircling ravines rose the city of marble and cedar covered palaces. Up that middle cleft, down in the valley, and along the slopes of the hills, crept the busy town, with its streets, markets, and bazaars. But alone, and isolated in its grandeur, stood the Temple Mount. Terrace upon terrace its courts rose, till, high above the city, within the enclosure of marble cloisters, cedar-roofed and richly ornamented, the Temple itself stood out a mass of snowy marble and of gold, glittering in the sunlight against the half-encircling green background of Olivet. In all his wanderings the Jew had not seen a city like his own Jerusalem. Not Antioch in Asia, not even imperial Rome herself, excelled it in architectural splendour. Nor has there been, either in ancient or modern times, a sacred building equal to the Temple, whether for situation or magnificence? nor yet have there been festive throngs like those joyous hundreds of thousands who, with their hymns of praise, crowded towards the city on the eve of the Passover. No wonder that the song burst from the lips of those pilgrims:

"Still stand our feet within thy gates, Jerusalem!
Jerusalem, ah! thou art built as a city joined companion-like together"
Psalm 122:2,3.

From whatever side the pilgrim might approach the city, the first impression must have been solemn and deep. But a special surprise awaited those who came, whether from Jericho or from Galilee, by the well-

known road that led over the Mount of Olives. From the south, beyond royal Bethlehem - from the west, descending over the heights of Beth-horon - or from the north, journeying along the mountains of Ephraim, they would have seen the city first vaguely looming in the grey distance, till, gradually approaching, they had become familiar with its outlines. It was far otherwise from the east. A turn in the road, and the city, hitherto entirely hid from view, would burst upon them suddenly, closely, and to most marked advantage. It was by this road Jesus made His triumphal entry from Bethany on the week of His Crucifixion. Up from 'the house of dates' the broad, rough road wound round the shoulder of Olivet. Thither the wondering crowd from Bethany followed Him, and there the praising multitude from the city met Him. They had come up that same Olivet, so familiar to them all. For did it not seem almost to form part of the city itself, shutting it off like a screen from the desert land that descended beyond to Jordan and the Dead Sea?

The Mount of Olives. From the Temple Mount to the western base of Olivet, it was not more than 100 or 200 yards straight across, though, of course, the distance to the summit was much greater, say about half a mile. By the nearest pathway it was only 918 yards from the city gate to the principal summit. Olivet was always fresh and green, even in earliest spring or during parched summer the coolest, the pleasantest, the most sheltered walk about Jerusalem. For across this road the Temple and its mountain flung their broad shadows, and luxuriant foliage spread a leafy canopy overhead. They were not gardens, in the ordinary Western sense, through which one passed, far less orchards; but something peculiar to those climes, where Nature everywhere strews with lavish hand her flowers, and makes her gardens - where the garden bursts into the orchard, and the orchard stretches into the field, till, high up, olive and fig mingle with the darker cypress and pine. The stony road up Olivet wound along terraces covered with olives, whose silver and dark green leaves rustled in the breeze. Here gigantic gnarled fig trees twisted themselves out of rocky soil; there clusters of palms raised their knotty stems high up into waving plumed tufts, or spread, bush-like, from the ground, the rich-coloured fruit bursting in clusters from the pod. Then there were groves of myrtle, pines, tall stately cypresses, and on the summit itself two gigantic cedars. To these shady retreats the inhabitants would often come from Jerusalem to take pleasure or to meditate, and there one of their most celebrated Rabbis was at one time wont in preference to teach. Thither, also, Christ with His disciples often resorted.

Coming from Bethany the city would be for some time completely hidden from view by the intervening ridge of Olivet. But a sudden turn in the road, where 'the descent of the Mount of Olives' begins, all at once a first glimpse of Jerusalem is caught, and that quite close at hand. True, the configuration of Olivet on the right would still hide the Temple and most part of the city; but across Ophel, the busy suburb of the priests, the eye might range to Mount Zion, and rapidly climb its height to where Herod's palace covered the site once occupied by that of David. A few intervening steps of descent, where the view of the city has again been lost, and the pilgrim would hurry on to that ledge of rock. What a panorama over which to roam with hungry eagerness! At one glance he would see before him the whole city, its valleys and hills, its walls and towers, its palaces and streets, and its magnificent Temple - almost like a vision from another world. There could be no difficulty in making out the general features of the scene. Altogether the city was only thirty-three stadia, or about four English miles, in circumference. Within this compass dwelt a population of 600,000 (according to Tacitus), but, according to the Jewish historian, amounting at the time of the Passover to between two and three millions, or about equal to that of London.

The Walls. The first feature to attract attention would be the city walls, at the time of Christ only two in number. The first, or old wall, began at the north-western angle of Zion, at the tower of Hippicus, and ran along the northern brow of Zion, where it crossed the cleft, and joined the western colonnade of the Temple at the 'Council-house.' It also enclosed Zion along the west and the south, and was continued eastward around Ophel, till it merged in the south-eastern angle of the Temple. Thus the first wall would defend Zion, Ophel, and, along with the Temple walls, Moriah also. The second wall, which commenced at a gate in the first wall, called 'Gennath' ran first north, and then east, so as to enclose Acra, and terminated at the Tower of Antonia. Thus the whole of the old city and the Temple were sufficiently protected.

The Tower of Antonia. This tower was placed at the north-western angle of the Temple, midway between the castle of the same name and the Temple. With the former it communicated by a double set of cloisters, with the latter by a subterranean passage into the Temple itself, and also by cloisters and stairs descending into the northern and western porches of the Court of the Gentiles. Some of the most glorious traditions in Jewish history were connected with this castle, for there had been the ancient "armoury of David," the palace of Hezekiah and of Nehemiah, and the fortress of the Maccabees. But in the days of Christ Antonia was

occupied by a hated Roman garrison, which kept watch over Israel, even in its sanctuary. In fact, the Tower of Antonia overlooked and commanded the Temple, so that a detachment of soldiers could at any time rush down to quell a riot, as on the occasion when the Jews almost killed Paul. (Acts 21:31). The city walls were further defended by towers - sixty in the first, and forty in the" second wall. Most prominent among them were Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, close by each other, to the north-west of Zion - all compactly built of immense marble blocks, square, strongly fortified, and surmounted by buildings defended by battlements and turrets. They were built by Herod, and named after the friend and brother he had lost in battle, and the wife whom his jealousy had killed.

The Four Hills. If the pilgrim scanned the city more closely, he would observe that it was built on four hills. Of these, the western, or ancient Zion, was the highest, rising about 200 feet above Moriah, though still 100 feet lower than the Mount of Olives. To the north and the east, opposite Zion, and divided from it by the deep Tyropoeon Valley, were the crescent shaped Acra and Moriah, the latter with Ophel as its southern outrunner. Up and down the slopes of Acra the Lower City crept. Finally, the fourth hill, Bezetha (from bezaion, marshy ground), the New Town, rose north of the Temple Mount and of Acra, and was separated from them by an artificial valley. The streets, which, as in all Eastern cities, were narrow, were paved with white marble. A somewhat elevated footway ran along for the use of those who had newly been purified in the Temple, while the rest walked in the roadway below. The streets derived their names mostly from the gates to which they led, or from the various bazaars. Thus there were 'Water-street,' 'Fish- street,' 'East-street,' etc. The 'Timber Bazaar' and the 'Tailors' were in the New City; the Grand Upper Market on Mount Zion. Then there were the 'Wool' and the 'Braziers' Bazaar;' 'Baker-street,' 'Butcher-street,' 'Strangers street,' and many others similarly named. Nor would it have been difficult to identify the most prominent buildings in the city. At the north-western angle of Mount Zion, the ancient Salem and Jebus, on the site of the castle of David, was the grand palace of Herod, generally occupied by the Roman procurators during ' their temporary sojourn in Jerusalem. It stood high up, just within shelter of the great towers which Herod had reared - a marvel of splendour, of whose extent, strength, height, rooms, towers, roofs, porticoes, courts, and adjacent gardens Josephus speaks in such terms of admiration.

The High Priest's Palace. At the opposite or north-eastern corner of Mount Zion was the palace of the High Priest. Being built on the slope of the hill, there was under the principal apartments a lower story, with a porch in front, so that we can understand how on that eventful night Peter was "beneath in the palace." (Mark 14:66). Beyond it, probably on the slope of Acra, was the Repository of the Archives, and on the other side of the cleft, abutting on the Temple, with which it was probably connected by a colonnade, the Council Chamber of the Sanhedrim. Following the eastern brow of Mount Zion, south of the High Priest's palace, and opposite the Temple, was the immense Xystus, which probably extended into the Tyropoeon. Whatever may have been its original purpose, it was afterwards used as a place of public meetings, where, on great occasions, the populace was harangued. Here Peter probably addressed the three thousand convert; on the day of Pentecost when the multitude had hurried thither from the Temple on hearing "the mighty rushing sound." The Xystus was surrounded by a covered colonnade. Behind it was the palace of Agrippa, the ancient palace of David and of the Maccabees, and again, in the rear of it, that of Bernice. On Acra stood afterwards the palaces of certain foreign princes, such as those of Queen Helena, King Monobasus, and other proselytes. In this quarter or even beyond it to the north-west, one would naturally look for the Theatre and the Amphitheatre, which, being so essentially un-Jewish, must have been located as far as possible from the Temple. The space around the Temple was no doubt kept clear of buildings. On the south-eastern corner behind it was the great Sheep Market, and to the south of it the Hippodrome. Originally, "the king's house by the horse-gate," built by Solomon, and the royal stables, had occupied the southern area of the Temple Mount, where Herod afterwards built the 'Royal Porch.' For the Temple of Solomon was 300 feet shorter, from north to south, than that of Herod. Transversely, between Xystus and the Fish Gate, lay the quarter of Maktesh, (Zephaniah 1:10,11), occupied by various bazaars, chiefly connected with the Temple. Lastly, south of the Temple, but on the same hill, was Ophel, the crowded suburb of the priests.

In this hasty survey of the city no notice has been taken of the magnificent monuments and pillars erected in various parts of Jerusalem, nor of its synagogues, of which tradition fixes the number at from 460 to 480; nor of many public buildings; nor yet of such sacred spots as the Pool of Siloam, or that of Bethesda, on which the memory loves to dwell. In sharp contrast to all this beauty and magnificence must have been the great walls and towers, and the detached forts, which guarded either the Temple or access to the various hills on which the city rose, such as Millo, Ophel, and others. Of these the highest and strongest was the L-

shaped Tower of Antonia, which rose to a height of 105 feet, being itself reared on a rock 75 feet high. Indeed, the towers and the castle of Antonia, with its squares, outbuildings, and colonnades, must have looked almost like a small town, on its rocky height. Beyond the city, numerous large gates opened everywhere into the country, upon the slopes and crests of hills covered by delicious gardens and dotted with beautiful villas.

The Shushan Gate. Such must have been a first view of Jerusalem, as beheld from the Mount of Olives, on which we are supposed to have taken stand. If Jewish tradition on the subject may be trusted, a gate opened upon this Mount of Olives through the eastern wall of the Temple. It is called "the Shushan Gate," from the sculptured representation over it of the city to which so many Jewish memories attached. From this gate an arched roadway, by which the priests brought out the 'red heifer,' and on the Day of Atonement the Scapegoat, is said to have conducted to the Mount of Olives. Near the spot where the red heifer was burned were extensive lavatories, and booths for the sale of articles needed for various purifications. Up a crest, on one of the most commanding elevations, was the Lunar Station, whence, by fire signals, the advent of each new moon was telegraphed from hill to hill into far countries. If Jewish tradition may further be trusted, there was also an unused gate in the Temple towards the north - Tedi or Tere - and two gates towards the south. We know for certain of only a subterranean passage which led from the fortress Antonia on the north-west angle of the Temple into the Temple Court, and of the cloisters with stairs descending into the porches, by one of which the chief captain Lysias rushed to the rescue of

Paul, when nearly killed by the infuriated multitude. Dismissing all doubtful questions, we are sure that at any rate five gates opened into the outer Temple enclosure or Court of the Gentiles - one from the south, and four and these the principal - from the west. That southern gate was double, and must have chiefly served the convenience of the priests. Coming from Ophel, they would pass through its gigantic archway and vestibule (40 feet each way), and then by a double tunnel nearly 200 feet long, whence they emerged at a flight of steps leading straight up from the Court of the Gentiles into that of the priests, close to the spot where they would officiate.

But to join the great crowd of worshippers we have to enter the city itself. Turning our back on Mount Zion, we now face eastwards to Mount Moriah. Though we look towards the four principal entrances to the Temple, yet what we see within those walls on the highest of the terraces is not the front but the back of the sanctuary. It is curious how tradition is here in the most palpable error in turning to the east in worship. The Holy Place itself faced eastwards, and was approached from the east; but most assuredly the ministering priests and the worshippers looked not towards the east, but towards the west.

The Temple Plateau. This had been artificially levelled at immense labour and cost, and enlarged by gigantic substructures. The latter served also partly for the purpose of purification, as otherwise there might have been some dead body beneath, which, however great the distance from the surface, would, unless air had intervened, have, according to tradition, defiled the whole place above. As enlarged by Herod the Great, the Temple area occupied an elongated square of from 925 to 950 feet and upwards. Roughly calculating it at about 1,000 feet, this would give an extent more than one-half greater than the length of St Peter's at Rome, which measures 613 feet, and nearly double our own St Paul's, whose extreme length is 52015 feet. And then we must bear in mind that the Temple plateau was not merely about 1,000 feet in length, but a square of nearly 1,000 feet! It was not, however, in the centre of this square, but towards the north-west, that the Temple itself and its special courts were placed. Nor, as already hinted, were they all on a level, but rose terrace upon terrace, till the sacred edifice itself was reached, its porch protruding, 'shoulder-like,' on either side - perhaps rising into two flanking towers - and covering the Holy and Most Holy Places. Thus must the 'golden fane' have been clearly visible from all parts; the smoke of its sacrifices slowly curling up against the blue eastern sky, and the music of its services wafted across the busy city, while the sunlight glittered on its gilt roofs, or shone from its pavement of tessellated marble, or threw great shadows on Olivet behind.

Fables of the Rabbis. Assuredly, when the Rabbis thought of their city in her glory, they might well say: 'The world is like an eye. The ocean surrounding the world is the white of the eye; its black is the world itself; the pupil is Jerusalem; but the image within the pupil is the sanctuary.' In their sorrow and loneliness they have written many fabled things of Jerusalem, of which some may here find a place, to show with what halo of reverence they surrounded the loving memories of the past. Jerusalem, they say, belonged to no tribe in particular - it was all Israel's. And this is in great measure literally true; for even afterwards, when ancient

Jebus became the capital of the land, the boundary line between Judah and Benjamin ran right through the middle of the city and the Temple; so that, according to Jewish tradition, the porch and the sanctuary itself were in Benjamin, and the Temple courts and altar in Judah. In Jerusalem no house might be hired. The houses belonged as it were to all; for they must all be thrown open, in free-hearted hospitality, to the pilgrim-brethren that came up to the feast. Never had any one failed to find in Jerusalem the means of celebrating the paschal festivities, nor yet had any lacked a bed on which to rest. Never did serpent or scorpion hurt within her precincts; never did fire desolate her streets, nor ruin occur. No ban ever rested on the Holy City. It was levitically more sacred than other cities, since there alone the paschal lamb, the thank-offerings, and the second tithes might be eaten. Hence they carefully guarded against all possibility of pollution. No dead body might remain in the city overnight; no sepulchres were there, except those of the house of David and of the prophetess Huldah. Not even domestic fowls might be kept, nor vegetable gardens be planted, lest the smell of decaying vegetation should defile the air; nor yet furnaces be built, for fear of smoke. Never had adverse accident interrupted the services of the sanctuary, nor profaned the offerings. Never had rain extinguished the fire of the altar, nor contrary wind driven back the smoke of the sacrifices; nor yet, however great the crowd of worshippers, had any failed for room to bow down and worship the God of Israel!

Thus far the Rabbis. All the more impressive is their own admission and their lament - so significant as viewed in the light of the Gospel: 'For three years and a half abode the Shechinah' (or visible Divine presence) 'on the Mount of Olives, waiting whether Israel would repent, and calling upon them, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." And when all was in vain, the 'Shechinah returned to its own place.'

The Shechinah has returned to its own place! Both the city and the Temple have been laid 'even with the ground,' because Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation. (Luke 19:44). "They have laid Jerusalem in heaps." (Psalm 79:1). "The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street." (Lamentations 4:1). All this, and much more, did the Saviour, the rightful King of Israel, see in the near future, when He beheld the city, and wept over it. And now we must search very deep down, sinking the shaft from 60 to over 125 feet through the rubbish of accumulated ruins, before reaching at last the ancient foundations. And there, close by where once the royal bridge spanned the deep chasm and led from the city of David into the royal porch of the Temple, is "the Jews' Wailing Place," where the mourning heirs to all this desolation reverently embrace the fallen stones, and weep unavailing tears - unavailing because the present is as the past, and because what brought that judgement and sorrow is unrecognised, unrepented, unremoved. Yet - "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The Watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night. If ye will inquire, inquire! Return, come."

Extract from "The Temple - its Ministry and Services at the Time of Jesus Christ" - by Dr Edersheim.

THE TWO SONS OF GOD

Chapter Eleven

The Son of God Before and After His Anointing.

It has been alleged that the word 'Christos' signifies 'anointing spirit' as well as a person 'anointed,' therefore the Christ existed as a person distinct from the Father before Jesus was born, and in the conception of Christ the anointing spirit, or 'christos,' became the anointed One.

Let us take the statement about the import of the word 'christos' first. It is said to denote both 'anointing' and 'anointed;' but there is no authority for this double meaning. The most part of our readers will understand the matter better by a simple illustration. Anointing is the act of pouring oil upon; it is therefore a process, or a doing of something. Anointed is the act finished, and signifies that the person or thing has had oil poured on him or it. This person or thing is then called 'the anointed;' that is, the person or thing which has been poured upon. The word 'anointed' therefore defines a certain person or thing, but the

word 'anointing' denotes the act of pouring, or that which is used, as the anointing oil. But if we say that 'christos,' or 'anointed,' means also the 'anointing' (spirit), then we make out that the oil for anointing and the object anointed therewith are the same; which is to make out what is not true, but what is absurd.

Now, the term 'christos' is a Greek word, and its meaning is 'anointed.' If 'a' is prefixed it signifies 'an anointed one;' if 'the' is prefixed it designates 'the anointed one,' that is, some particular anointed one. When 'christos' is joined to the name Jesus, it shews that Jesus was an anointed one; but when as is the case in Scripture, 'the' is put before it, then it defines that Jesus is the anointed one distinct from all others.

Inasmuch as no person can be styled an anointed one before his anointing has taken place, it follows that it would be incorrect thus to describe any one before that event, and the question to which that gives rise is this, When was Jesus anointed, or when did Jesus become the Christ? which is the same thing.

Herod enquired where the Christ should be born; but that compromises no more than where shall He be born, who is to be the Christ, or who is to be the anointed? In the same way it may be asked, Where should the King of the Jews be born? Jesus is said to be born King of the Jews, but as a matter of fact, He is not King of the Jews yet, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years. When He takes His seat on the throne of His father David, and reigns over the house of Israel, then, and not till then, will He be in reality the King of the Jews. This is exactly the case with regard to His anointing. Peter says, "He was made both Lord and Christ;" but it is impossible that He could be Christ before He was made so, equally impossible is it that He was so before He was anointed. Jesus was born the Christ elect; He was born the King elect of the Jews and of the Gentiles; but He was neither born the Christ in fact, nor the King in fact, unless we can prove that He was anointed as soon as He was born, and that as soon as He was born He was reigning as a King. A man nominated for member of Parliament, when the election is over, and he has a majority of votes, is not there and actually a member of Parliament. He is a member elect, but not until he has entered the House and taken the oaths and his seat, is he a member in reality.

Jesus bears three titles - prophet, priest, and king. To these we may add a fourth, a sacrifice. Was He born a prophet; born a sacrifice; born a priest? No. Yet He was born each of these elect. He has become three of them in fact, namely, prophet, sacrifice, and priest, but not the fourth, for He is not yet King. We now repeat the question: When was the Son of God anointed? If we answer at birth, where is the proof? Look a moment at Jesus as a Saviour. Was He born a Saviour, that is, was He a Saviour the moment He was born? His parents were commanded to name Him Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." He was then born to be a Saviour.

The Testimony concerning His anointing is on this wise. After John had baptised Jesus, "one of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." What was it that this one heard John speak? "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him, and I knew him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." At this time then, according to John, the: Son of God was anointed, or "made Christ." The Spirit which John saw descending rested upon Him, and was the power of all His miracles. It remained with Him until He was crucified; it returned to Him at His resurrection, and transformed His corruptible into an incorruptible body.

Again, "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, were gathered together." Acts 4:27. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power;" Acts 10:38. This is declared in the previous verse to be "after the baptism which John preached," so that the anointing of "the holy child" does not mean that Jesus was a child when He was anointed; and the text also shews that He did not require to be made holy by baptism, for as a child He was holy, whereas at baptism, "He began to be about 30 years old." This wonderful anointing was not to purify or cleanse, but to invest Him with almost boundless power. Before His anointing He had wrought no mighty work. The first display at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, where He turned about 18 firkins of water into good wine. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."

Having proved that Jesus was not anointed before John baptized Him, we will anticipate an objection in this shape. If Jesus was not Christ before He was baptized, what difference was there between Him and John, or any other man? Does not this idea somewhat lower Jesus? We answer there was a mighty difference, neither is Jesus degraded at all.

Jesus was the Son of God, not merely a son, for He was the only begotten; John was the son of Zecharias. John possessed the Spirit, yet he “did no miracle.” The prophets wrought many miracles; they had Spirit powers; but what were they? Simply sons of men; slaves set in high authority. Their deeds had no redeeming force, nor could have, had they been ever so much greater. Their works terminated with themselves; they had no power over death. Thus it was, and must be, with every servant; not so with the well beloved Son.

The Father educated the Son, and cherished Him. At an early age the child knew that He was “about His Father’s business.” But in all this there was no entrance into public life, no anointing for mighty acts. This was the school of probation for the after exalted official dignity. Jesus was the free born intended for the work of deliverance; prepared under Divine tuition for the ensuing scheme. He was the reality of the typical priest when clothed. Aaron as a private personage could not enter the holy, address Israel, receive offerings, &c. All this appertained to him as high priest, enrobed in garments of holiness and beauty. What he was thus adorned, Jesus became in Himself. The Jews could see Aaron’s robes, but they could not see the Spirit vestments enwrapping the Son of God. His deeds amazed and vexed them, but His aspect had nothing new or strange. Here was the enigma. Unable to trace His utterances and His works to the predictions of the prophets, and through them to the eternal God, they beheld Him and spoke of Him as an ordinary man. Hence their opposition, and their questions, intelligible enough from their point of view. Thou art not fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham. He replied, I am before Abraham. Now identified with the Father; now one with Him; now no longer speaking of Himself; now thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, because the wondrous gifts had been bestowed not usurped. He said, ‘I and my Father are one. I came down from Heaven. I am from above, ye are from beneath.’

While enjoying all this, He was truly rich, not to allude to His future wealth, but in temporals poor, without where to sleep. He must now consent to be stripped of His honour and emoluments. Once the mortal crown fell back; once He glided through the savage mob and went His way. Now He must lay down His strength, consent to be shorn of the locks of power, led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. Voluntarily He becomes again the plain man Jesus of Nazareth, though begotten Son of God. Once He was a helpless babe carried off in hasty flight by father and mother to escape the devouring sword, now He must consent to be cut off, give Himself a victim for others.

This done, He lay still in death, the dread silence of the tomb was not broken for three days. The poverty of the grave devoured Him. All this was for sinners! Early in the morning, before the sun had lit the sky with amber rays, while it was cold and “yet dark,” seraphic fire shone upon a rocky cave, the ponderous gate of stone moved lightly by omnipotence, and the murdered Son of God awoke to an eternal morning. He rose up painless and refreshed from three days’ dreamless sleep, emerged from the sepulchre, left His angelic guards to answer the tearful women; walked leisurely in the garden of the kind rich man, and was mistaken for the gardener. What had He left behind! What was there not before! Who can word the thoughts and feelings of that first resurrection hour!

The Enmity Slain.

The words which form the foundation of this article are written in Ephesians 2:15 & 16: - “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity - having slain the enmity.” That which Paul calls “the enmity,” he, in the same place, explains to signify the Law of Moses, “even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Here is a somewhat singular title for a great and wise law, - “the enmity.” This word generally stands for a bad feeling, and as such is strongly denounced by the apostles. Paul styled the law “the enmity” because it was the apparent occasion of enmity between Jews and Gentiles, not because there was anything really prejudicial in the law itself. No, “the law was holy, just, and good.” This employment of one term for another, of a bad name, so to speak, for a good thing, - because that good thing misused brings about what is bad, is similar to Paul’s use of the word “sin” when he means the “desires” that lead to sin.

It will be observed also that Paul speaks as though “the enmity” were in Christ’s flesh, for he says, “having abolished in His flesh the enmity.” But enmity in a literal sense, especially that which existed between Jews and Gentiles in consequence of “the law,” had no place in the flesh of Jesus. But how, some will ask, could that be abolished in His flesh, which was not in it? As they also ask, How could sin be condemned in the flesh, if there were no sin there? A little reflection on the expressions will produce an appropriate answer. The text like many more needs some other words to be understood. For example, to preach the Kingdom of God means to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God; where to complete the sense it is necessary to understand the phrase “the gospel of” to be intended. Even so in this case. “Having abolished in or by the slaying of His flesh the enmity;” in other words, having fulfilled the law in all its requirements and taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross, so that it may no longer be the cause of enmity between the two peoples.

The slaying of the enmity had for its object the making “in Himself,” i.e., Christ, “of twain,” or of two branches of “the old man,” “one new man, so making peace.” This opens up to mankind a vast and glorious prospect; it declares the purpose of God through His Son to restore them into one family; to destroy all “enmity;” to establish “on earth peace and goodwill among men.” To this end the Son of God suffered shame, spitting, murder, and was afterwards raised from the dead. It was as though all the malice and fury of human hearts were poured out upon His head, as though He consented to bear in His own body all the anguish of a wrangling, vengeful, sorrow-stricken world, on the condition that having “borne their griefs and carried their sorrows,” they would give each other “the kiss of peace;” be “no longer twain,” but “one new man,” renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

The slaying of the enmity and the breaking down of the middle wall of partition were the results of one and the same great act - the voluntary death of “the just for the unjust.” The design of the Deity was not then, nor is it now, really completed; but that which confirmed the promise of it was achieved. The Jew still stands aloof from the Gentile; he is as much apart as when “the middle wall” separated him from the Gentile in the temple of Jerusalem. He has yet to learn that some of the “heathen” have been grafted into the Israelitish olive tree, and he will be astonished to find that they stand equal in rank with the stars of his nation; he has yet to be taught that “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:34,35. And is not the Gentile also ignorant; is he not a stranger from the covenants of promise; an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; “without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world?” This is, in a universal sense, beyond confutation. The current popular theology has no more relation to a future Israelitish government, with Jesus for its Prince, than had pagan idolatry, except in the matter of using Jesus’ name. The hope of the one was almost identical with the hope of the other;- disembodied existence in perpetual delight, on some distant, unknown sphere! The anticipated occupation of pious pagans was very like that of millions of “good Christians,” as vague as it could possibly be; supposed to consist in “gazing, sitting, and singing themselves away;” “losing themselves in Heaven above.” And all this ethereal, flimsy, spiritual gauze has more charms for the deluded multitude, than the prospect of ruling their fellow-creatures, of which indisputably they have much need; they themselves being made immortal and tangible, like Christ when seen and handled after rising from the grave. What amazing folly! Had not the prophets and apostles so plainly foretold the infatuation it were past belief!

Edward Turney

To be continued...