

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 134

## January/February 1992

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## Editorial

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

On page 5 of the last Circular Letter I wrote, "The little I know of the Strickler and Bell 'variants' gives me no desire to pursue their understanding any further, unless perhaps to convince their followers of the better way." However, I confess to expressing an unfounded opinion regarding John Bell, for shortly after sending out the Circular Letter I came across a pamphlet written by a Christadelphian, G. F. Lake in 1924, the purpose of which was to show how "many are deceived by misleading statements of John Bell that the nature of Christ was the same as that of His brethren." And he continues by saying that "the real point of John Bell's teaching is that neither in Christ nor in His brethren was their sinful flesh." G. F. Lake then goes on to quote many statements made by John Bell and here are a small selection of those given:-

"How can the mind conceive of a defiled nature?"

"Moral defilement is not inherent."

"They teach that human nature has sin in the flesh by inheritance from Adam."

"Thus it was that the Christ was so defiled by nature that He had to offer for His own sin, which He in common with all mankind was tainted with by generation, although He was perfectly sinless."

"We would dearly like to organise a crusade against the fastening of such a slur upon the Bible as to say it teaches or allows for an unclean or defiled Christ."

"Unwise words which make Adam a physically defiled man by moral transgression and so passing on to his progeny the imagined uncleanness of his body."

"Jesus was without any personal physical taint."

"Jesus never offered any sacrifice for His human nature."

"This damnable theory of an unclean Christ."

It will be seen from the above that John Bell held the same views as ourselves. I believe all the above quotations were taken from "The Shield" magazine from between 1904 and 1924 and I wonder if anyone has any copies of this magazine they would be willing to send me? I would be most grateful to receive any - in any condition.

I wish to thank Brother Horace Taylor for drawing attention to the statement implying that Adam remained faithful all his life. On page 2 of the last Circular Letter under the heading of "Jesus said..." I wrote that "By remaining faithful he now sleeps in death..." meaning that by remaining faithful he would now be sleeping in death. Sorry for the ambiguity. We, of course, hope Adam remained faithful for the rest of his life.

Also with reference to the same article, Brother Phil Parry made the point that it is not correct to say that "all not under covenant relationship die a natural death," (Heading No. 2.), for some have died violent deaths - in warfare, or accidental, by time and chance.

Yes, Phil is right of course and I ought to have expressed myself more fully.

World events continue to move on apace and the superpowers have good cause to be greatly concerned with the developments in the Middle East. The Muslim powers are seizing every opportunity to obtain any and all types of military weapons and equipment and are hoping soon to become 'Nuclear' Powers. This, linked with the hatred of Muslims for the Jews bodes ill for Israel.

With the break-up of the U.S.S.R. the Islamic Republics bordering on Iran and Turkey are now freed to give their allegiance to their Islamic brethren and it seems to me that the Northern Confederacy that is to overthrow Israel may well consist of these nations aided and abetted by Libya and Ethiopia as mentioned in Ezekiel 38. [On the accompanying map I have numbered the possible areas of the places referred to in Ezekiel's prophecy.](#)

With Sincere Love to all, in the Master's Service,

Russell Gregory

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## **“BY MAN CAME DEATH - WHAT DEATH?”**

### **FOREWORD**

Through discussion and correspondence during the past few weeks on the events in Eden I was moved to write the following article in an effort to make things more clear seeing that law is the important basis on which to understand the subject of Sin and Death, as revealed to Paul and passed on in the preaching of the Gospel in all its aspects. Adam and Eve were already subject to the laws of their physical nature, but this could not develop their characters without test and trial of the intellectual faculties they possessed above the ordinary animal creation - a test to show and prove their appreciation and respect for a great Creator and develop a spiritual mind in harmony with Him. This first honour they lost by disobedience and it was granted to another Son who would please Him in all things and prove that His creation was not in vain but would prosper. It would appear that for Adam and Eve to have any further part in God's Plan, redemption and reconciliation was necessary, not only for them but all who had been alienated from God by their sin.

The booklet, "My Life for The Sheep" by E.Brady and F.J.Pearce is a reply to an article in the Christadelphian magazine by W.F.Barling entitled "Redemption in Christ." Barling viewed the condemnation of Adam and Eve as a physical implantation and bias to sin which was not in their nature before their transgression and it therefore changed their nature into a slow process of decay and compulsive sin ending in a return to the ground. On what was said to the serpent Barling confines himself to about four lines, but in the development of the curse on Adam and Eve four columns are scarcely sufficient. However, the four lines contain the admission that "the words addressed to the serpent may be metaphorical." He realises that there are serious objections to the literal physical application of the curse upon the serpent for dust is not literally the food of serpents, they probably never did walk upright and discuss the pros and cons of Divine law; hence he will admit that the words are metaphorical. Yet in the same context, when it comes to Adam and Eve, there is in his mind no question of a metaphorical application; a physical change is essential to his theory and a physical change there must be. This is the Doctrine of Original Sin and defiled flesh from Apostate Rome.

## **“BY MAN CAME DEATH” - WHAT DEATH?**

Dear Brethren and Sisters, There was a time when for a period of 17 years I thought I knew the Truth as taught by Jesus and His disciples and Apostles, but I must confess that there were matters of doctrine and teaching in the scriptures that I did not fully understand, but I still took for granted that my teachers and associates of that period held and taught what was termed the essential and fundamental doctrine necessary for salvation.

Now were it not for certain advice and warnings to take heed to what the scriptures reveal and state, and not everything written or taught by the precept of men who considered they had the revealed Truth and were beyond the investigation stage, I might not have even considered there was another side to the coin and that there were others who had passed through the same stage and to whom by God’s Grace the other side of the coin had been shown. How many of us would have realised that alienation from God through Adam’s sin was a legal and moral position and not a physical state of condemnation? That it was a state or position by imputation or constitution, and not through anything we had committed by breach of Law not having been born, and that we through the second Federal Head and His righteousness and Atoning blood, might be reconciled to God? Did not the majority of us, if not all, believe that Romans chapter five was the teaching of “physical condemnation” and return to the ground, as introduced by the false teaching of a Pope in opposition to what Paul’s teaching conveys in the true and legal sense he explains?

I thank God I am wise now to the Apostles teaching of the Federal Principle which Romans chapter five makes things so clear which at one time seemed confusing. For example, as to why in my view a Just God could pass a sentence of death on all men before they were even born, or in fact, cause them to be compulsive sinners by implanting in their reproductive nature a bias and inclination to sin so that there could be no injustice in their death by whatever means. My associates for the seventeen year period mentioned above, taught and believed this theory as a basis of their faith which had been handed down from a man who would not accept the correction and invitation spoken of in Revelation 3:16 - 18.

Does this mean that I should not listen to or take notice of what other men have learned from the teaching of the scriptures when possibly and probably it has been revealed to them by the Spirit? When Philip questioned the Ethiopian Eunuch “Understandest thou what thou readest?” the answer from him was “How can I except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:29). It appears God had determined that a man who understood by the gift of the Spirit, the meaning of Isaiah 53, should guide this humble and God-fearing Eunuch into the understanding of why His Son, Jesus Christ died on Calvary’s tree.

It was given to all the Apostles and disciples of Christ to understand this means of redemption and reconciliation, and to preach it to all who would listen; they had the ability to explain it more so than perhaps a persistent daily reader of the Bible of our modern time with so much confusion of theories and falsehoods of religion to cloud the mind from the simplicity of the teachings of Christ and the Apostles.

Having had my attention drawn to opposing views to the apostate doctrine of Original Sin held by my associates, I was able to understand far more clearly the Book of Genesis and the subsequent history of man and God’s dealings with him through the introduction of religion in which is involved its main reason, and that being A) Alienation by Sin, B) Redemption and Reconciliation through Sacrificial Death, C) Probation by faith and continuance in well doing, and D) The Hope of eternal Life with Jesus and His Father in a New Creation of things wherein dwelleth Righteousness. I am thankful for the men God used in the removal of my confusion on some points of doctrine, as He had also used others for them in the same way. He used men to translate His Word into our language through the ability they possessed (I would not presume they were completely guided by the Holy Spirit because they were not all united and agreed as would be the case of Holy Spirit guidance) and we must admit to other versions of translations and must therefore be discriminate in whatever we read. Sufficient is revealed for our salvation. Paul has been used to reveal the Federal position concerning “In Adam” and “In Christ” through his epistle to the Romans, it remains for us to understand it first, and then accept it as a revelation.

If it were not for Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, the Gentiles would have had little idea of God’s dealings with all men in general on the Federal Principle, for we see from Genesis to Malachi that His main dealings were with the direct descendants of Adam, Noah, Abraham and the twelve Patriarchs with their

tribes. But we do see in the promises to Abraham the blessing of all nations through a special singular Seed (the Messiah), blessings that the Law of Moses could not disannul or make the promises of non effect, for indeed it had it's roots in the Word of God to Eve, Genesis 3:15, but a reading of Genesis alone, without the revealed mystery (secret) through Jesus and the Apostles, especially Paul, would leave us in ignorance of the Federal Principle in God's Plan of Redemption and Salvation through His Only Begotten Son Jesus laying down His life; which was shown first in type in Eden and finally in substance on the Tree at Calvary. Having made this clear we should be able to follow Paul's teaching and reasoning on the Federal Principle and the wonderful way God chose to involve all men in His Plan on the principle of individual belief and faith and without any self-justification on man's part. God having given all men natural life and the prospect of life more abundantly both through the merits of His Son's sacrifice.

Thus on this subject in Romans 5 Paul points us to the record of Adam in Genesis of whose creation from the dust of the earth we are informed, and of the specific commandment he must observe, or lose his life if disobedient. The doctrine of predestination in the New Testament Epistles and the fact we are alive, indicates to us in retrospect that God intended to spare Adam's life but He did not indicate this fact to Adam before he sinned, nor did it make part of the serpent's statement true "Ye shall not surely die," for if we understand Romans 5 we shall detect by logical reasoning that Adam died when he broke the Law. You may ask, "In what way and by what reasoning can you say this?" Fair enough. Turn to Romans 5:15 and you will read, "For if through the offence of one many be dead..." I ask, "How were the many dead, and when?" The answer is, "They were dead when once the offence was committed." "And how were they dead?" "They were in the loins of Adam when he sinned." "How then did Adam die?" "He died by Law, his life was in forfeit to the Law, and its claim was hanging over him, therefore if Adam met the claim physically he and all in his loins would have perished.

If therefore in this legal position the many unborn were dead then we must conclude legally that Adam was dead, but how, we might ask, could predestination work if Adam were to be put to death, and consequently all who were predestined? The Apostle said, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world," (Acts 15:18). How was God's Plan to replenish the earth with people who would reciprocate His attributes, to become a success? The answer was already in His foreknowledge and Plan, - a new man who would justify His condemnation of Adam's sin in a likeness of the same Adamic nature in which sin was committed, and would lay down his own natural life instead of the life which Adam had forfeited by disobedience. This was demonstrated and typified in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and referred to in Revelation 13:8, and by which Adam's sin, classified and referred to by John the Baptist as "The sin of the world," was remitted and taken away. If this did not refer to a lamb from which the covering of the coats of skins for Adam and Eve were obtained by blood-shedding, then for whom could it have been slain, seeing that it was by Adam that sin entered the world and the death by sin?

If the penalty of sin is considered to have been experienced when Adam died 930 years later, then all men who die in the same manner experience the same penalty and as a consequence they all perish, seeing they have had no substitute to redeem or ransom them from the power and bondage of sin. I repeat, "The death by sin" which passed upon Adam, passed upon all men, and in Adam's case if the condemnation and penalty was a process of decay and a return to dust, then this condemnation was upon him for 930 years and he would have died a sinner unredeemed and unforgiven.

What then of his posterity? Can it be proved in Genesis in clear statement that any of Adam's posterity were subjects of Redemption to the exclusion of Adam? Were they not all imputed to be in the same position as he, so that one substitutional death could justify all on the principle of faith? To be "In Adam" is to be in him when he sinned, not after he was clothed with the skin covering. Such a covering becomes an individual matter on the principle of faith in God's provision, and we all reach a similar position through enlightenment, and in acknowledgement we die symbolically into the death of Christ by baptism and are regarded to have "passed from death to life," which can only be in the legal sense, seeing it is the same flesh and blood nature that rises from the water. "In Adam" is not therefore a term used by Paul as being in a physical sense, but a legal, for if we are "in Adam," when we die a natural death, then we cannot be "in Christ," seeing we have not passed out of the legal state of death passed upon Adam and on all men. What does Paul mean by the statement, "As in Adam all die. Even so in Christ shall all be made alive"? Is he not teaching a legal fact of the federal principle that when men become enlightened to the fact as members of the "Adam body" when he sinned, that the sentence of death also hung over them by imputation and in order to

remove that legal sentence they must take advantage of the means provided which is to die unto the death that came by Adam's sin? And is not this taught first in the death of the typical lamb and finally in the death of Christ, the antitypical? Thus meaning that only those enlightened are "In Adam," and they constitute the "All" that die in order to be "In Christ," and partake of the promised benefits of that position. Other-wise if we choose to accept that all "In Adam" are his physical descendants and die for that reason, it could also be said that this is, and has been the case with all "in Christ" up to the present time; but Paul does not say that all "in Christ" die, so what is the position? The position is a legal and moral one as is so for example in the case of Abraham. All his descendants are not regarded by God as Abraham's seed and children of the promises. See Romans 9:6 - 8. This is almost the identical teaching Paul uses in Romans 5 concerning Adam. So that if the condemnation was of Adamic flesh, and descent from it, then all who rise from baptism are still in that flesh and blood nature and still in Adam. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Yes, and he is still flesh and blood though he has died, and righteousness is reigning over him, unto eternal life, hopefully. Romans 5:20 - 22.

My personal opinion is that Adam and Eve were redeemed and set on course for a new probation which would end in the limits of their natural and corruptible state in which they were created as will all animal creation. Their probation was not meant to be easy, the sorrow for Eve in bringing forth children was to be increased among other factors; this does not mean that birth would have been painless before, otherwise sorrow in bringing forth could not be multiplied, neither conception. However, none of these factors prove the Original-Sin doctrine of "changed flesh," for did not God intercede in the case of Sarai Abraham's wife and also other women who were barren, without altering their flesh and blood nature? In Adam's case also labour was increased and it does not mean he could not sweat before, or that he could not previously experience pain for did not God have to cause a deep sleep upon him for the extraction of the rib in Eve's creation? Thorns and thistles were sent to plague him, and I would say these were not literal but figurative in the form of ungodly men. But I believe that if Adam remained faithful there was hope of a future life for him.

We also, in the same position, are up against literal and figurative thorns and thistles in our probation walk, but it is meant to mould our characters to fit us for the future life we hope to share. "Think not" said Jesus, "that I come to send peace on earth..." Matthew 10:34-39. I must confess that I have no proof that Adam was faithful to the end, therefore I cannot presume that he will rise incorruptible, but if he does it will be for him, as I hope for us, by the Love, Grace and Mercy of God in the Gift of His Only Begotten Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 1 John 3:14. It is the moral and legal, not the physical that governs the position.

Brother Phil Parry.

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## Jesus said...

## No. 20.

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." Matthew 19:17.

In the previous verse we read of the rich man addressing Jesus as "Good Master" and by His reply was Jesus saying either He was not good, or that He was God?

At no time did Jesus say or imply in anyway that He was not good, and neither did He say He was God. He said:-

"I am the Light of the world;" "I am the Bread of Life;" "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am;" "I am the True Vine;" Jesus claimed that only through Him could any have eternal life;

He claimed to be King; He claimed to be God's Temple. He said He was the Son of God. He was the Good Samaritan and there is nothing but good in all Jesus' attributes, and claims.

The Apostle said "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). It is in His perfect righteousness and goodness that we are able to stand before His Father.

Jesus wasn't saying to the rich man that he was wrong to call him good but that he was right, for Jesus was complementing him on his great perception. Here, standing before Him was a God-fearing man desirous of eternal life, who had respect for the Law and kept it, who saw in Jesus His God-likeness, or godliness. Even Philip asked Jesus "Shew us the Father" to which Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And just a day or two before this request of Philip's Jesus had declared to the Jews, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones to stone Him. Jesus answered and said, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (John 10:30-33).

Of course Jesus never boasted of His goodness but neither did He ever suggest it was less than perfect. He had the acclaim of His Father at His baptism and again at the transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

It is not that Jesus claimed to be God but that even as His Father is good so He, being one with His Father, is good also.

In all we read of Jesus in all the Scriptures let us see Him as our Good Master and be ever thankful to Him for being so.

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## **"CHAT SECTION"**

**Compiled by Brother Harold Dawson**

I have received this quite excellent study from Brother Phil Parry and I do thank him most sincerely both on my own behalf but also on behalf of the "Chat Section" of the Circular Letters, for all the work he has put into it. The supportive analysis also underlines the correctness of the Nazarene Fellowship's stance regarding the nature of Christ, the nature of man, and the true meaning of the sacrifice of Christ.

It remains a great sadness to me that the Christadelphian body see Jesus Christ "as condemned as those He came to save."

I hesitate really to add further to the careful analysis Brother Phil sets forth, but I do so as briefly as possible, to perhaps 'sum up' and add the basic view I have come to realise as the years have gone by, about these important matters relating, as they do, to life and death and beyond.

1. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ will happen to save humanity, including Israel of the flesh, from total annihilation when the awesome weapons produced through nuclear physics are used by Islamic nations to eliminate Israel. Only recently with the break up of the U.S.S.R. have we learned of the tremendous danger that has emerged as the bankrupt states of that Union may sell, and probably will, their nuclear arsenal to the Arab nations who are unstable generally and especially in their hatred of Israel. We are yet to see such developments, but gradually, piece by piece the stage is being set for the showdown between the kingdoms of this world. For those, however, who have confidence in the promises of God need not worry themselves, as to times and signs, for what will be will be and God needs no help from us to conclude His work with humanity. The coming of Christ is no more than the rest of our natural lifetime away; we have made our choice, Jesus is our Captain and our Saviour, and He knows His sheep – weak and wilful though we may be. I believe that we can rest assured of our relationship to Jesus and that our faith and baptism is

known at the Throne of Grace, and He says to us, Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. “Fear not little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”

2. Corruptible and Mortal. The article by A and L Wilson follows this “Chat Section” and Brother Phil Parry’s study of it is included here, which I found extremely interesting and I personally agree with him. It cannot be sin to exist but God says to us “Keep the commandments” and it is sin to break God’s Laws. This is common sense really, and the idea that sin was implanted, or a bias to sin was implanted, is unscriptural. We are what God created in Eden; it was not our nature that changed but our relationship to God. The damage through Adam’s choice to be disobedient was repaired by and through the Sacrifice of Christ, who gave Himself as the sin-offering once and for all. He showed us a human being, capable of sin, keeping to the end the 10 commandments, and brought to the Cross that degree of righteousness that constituted Him as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. So we are in a state of Grace, but we must strive to always remember whose we are and whom we serve. We are no longer our own but have been bought with the precious blood of Christ. Of course Jesus knows our weaknesses and failings – we are saved by and through the legal and federal principle of the Just for the unjust. Having passed from legal condemnation to legal justification, let us thank God who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Brother Harold Dawson.

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**Brother Phil Parry writes:**

The article, “Corruptible and Mortal” by A and L Wilson deals with the meaning of the terms which in our modern times and conversation have tended to become synonymous terms, so confusing the physical with the legal.

In the foreword to my article “By Man Came Death” I have referred to our booklet “My Life For The Sheep” by E. Brady and F. J. Pearce, in which they also mention the fact, and to them the apparent misuse of both these terms, and I quote from page 10 as follows, “Fred Barling uses the word ‘mortal’ as if it were synonymous with ‘corruptible,’ but there is good evidence and the fact is acknowledged by Dr Thomas, that primarily it has a legal meaning, i.e., subject to death by law, legally dead or sentence of death. Thus a man might be corruptible (capable of dying) but not mortal (destined to die) or he might be both,” unquote. Can we not see therefore, that Adam at creation was corruptible but not mortal by sin?

In reading 1 Corinthians 15, it is wise to keep these terms in mind. In my view it would be unwise to believe that death is not swallowed up in victory until after the resurrection of the first fruits, this would coincide with the false teaching that redemption is not a present state of the person baptised and in Christ. It was Jesus who swallowed up “the Death” that came by Sin, the sting of death, by taking away its power, so that Paul could issue the challenge, “O Death where is thy sting? O Grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law”. On the surface this would seem paradoxical, for if a man kept the law he would appear to be righteous, but the fact is that the law shewed a man to be firstly in need of redemption and reconciliation from his alienated position before works of the law by faith could count for righteousness. It was the Law that showed men to be under the dominion of the Sin and the Death that came by Adam, so that Paul was able to say, “The strength of sin is the Law.” In other words, remove the power of the sting and Death has no more dominion and the grave is insignificant. Is not this what Jesus accomplished for us? (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Of course we must continue our walk in newness of life and work out our salvation with fear and trembling and in striving to make our calling and election sure by following the example set by our new Master/ and we can then say at the end of our life of probation, “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I myself view matters that it is now, during our probationary span, this corruptible must “put on” incorruption and this mortal must “put on” immortality, not in the physical sense but in the moral and legal sense, by not allowing sin to have any more dominion. “Let not sin reign in your mortal body.” See Rom. 6:11-23 and Romans 7:4-10.

In his work "Anastasis," I recall Dr Thomas commenting upon the state of the physical dead. That they were dissolved mainly into the dust of Sheol.' "How then" he asks, "can they put on incorruption and immortality if they consist only as dust?" Unquote. He reasons that they must be re-created into corruptible bodies first, before they can be in a position to put on incorruption and immortality. He fails to see that Paul is stressing and emphasising the fact it must be done previous to natural death, but it is also a fact that the faithful who sleep in Christ and those who are alive and remaining unto His coming, are powerless to raise themselves incorruptible or to change themselves in the twinkling of an eye to that same nature. At that time they cannot be said to be putting on any thing, they are already in possession of a glorious body through the Power of God. We know of course that Dr Thomas was trying to explain his theory of appearance at the judgement seat of Christ for the approval of a change to incorruptibility, which destroys Paul's teaching of 1 Corinthians 15.

I think our late Brethren shared Paul's views of putting on the whole armour of God. I commend to your reading the following that you may draw your own conclusions from the Spirit Word of Paul who exhorted the Romans

"Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. But put ye on the Lord Jesus and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:12-14. Job 29:14. Ephesians 4:20, Colossians 3:1-15.

Some will not agree perhaps with all this article, but I am sure Isaiah 25:8 applies to believers now, and will apply when God intervenes again in the earth, through His Son. May it be soon.

Brother Phil Parry.

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In the last issue of the C/L Brother Leo Dreifuss asked for comments and opinions regarding the burning of the weapons referred to in Ezekiel 39:9,10. No one has written in with their views and here I can only express my opinion.

It is my opinion the "peace and safety" cry is still future and Ezekiel 38 and 39 portrays part of the destruction, i.e., the 3rd world war - when another attempt is made to eliminate modern day Israel from off the face of the earth. With massive changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union one can but ponder if she is Gog of Magog, after all; and that Gog is a conglomerate of nations including Turkey, France and Germany to name but a few.

However, whoever they are doesn't really matter, and the political scenario can change very quickly. The host that comes against tiny Israel is destined to be destroyed by the power of God, and the conflict, in my opinion, will precipitate the return of Christ as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." We see the reference to the seven year burning of weapons as part of the total failure of mighty but mortal enemies of Israel and Christ to succeed in their quest to eliminate Israel who at present are God's witnesses rather than God's people.

At the time of Israel's deliverance from the Gogian hosts they will realise suddenly that they are wrong, so wrong to reject Jesus who was their Messiah all along, and they will look on their returned King and mourn that they dared to pierce His body and murder Him as they did, and say, "His blood be upon us and on our children" (and how it has indeed been!). The Millennium will commence and the work of cleansing the land will have to be done.

The descriptions of weapons are poetic and is couched in terms of wood because spears, bows and shields were wooden at the time of Ezekiel's prophecy. What matters really is that however militarily equipped, the destruction of the Gogian host will be total. It amounts really to a victory of good over evil; and the glorified saints with an enlightened Israel will serve Christ in His divinely directed Kingdom – not only during the thousand years, but for ever.



Salvation will not be automatic just because a Jew is a Jew; it will be bestowed on the basis of faith and change of heart, and perhaps other requirements that will be made by the returned Christ.

Mankind, generally, is not going to work out his own salvation – but there are many that are legally covered through grace here and now, and will be recognised by Jesus on His return, be they alive or raised in the category of the dead in Christ being raised first – at His coming.

As to the exact order of events we must all wait and see to a large extent and I would not dogmatise over the prerogative that belongs to Jesus Christ Himself.

I hope the foregoing has answered your question to some extent. We can and must leave things to God, for Jesus said. Of that day, knoweth no man, not even the angles. May we have therefore a place and part in the age when God makes up His jewels.

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### **And finally, Brother and Sister Linggood write concerning the subject of mortal and corruptible:-**

“It seems the terms incorruptible and immortal and their opposites are likely to be debated for some time yet. We have looked up the words mortal and corruptible in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia and they agree with Young’s Concordance - the terms corrupt or corruption refer to decay whether of an organic or moral nature, and mortal means perishable, subject to death or ‘dying’ and man was created that way (before, he broke the law) . Certainly the believer is legally and morally justified by faith now and has “passed from (the sentence of) death to (hope of) life.” In 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 Paul is speaking of the change of nature which will be the realisation of that hope for the believers who abide in Christ, but there will be some who fall away and will come into judgement, as the Scriptures teach; so eternal life is still a matter of hope and not a present possession as some appear to teach and it is interesting to note the number of times the word ‘hope’ is used in the epistles in connection with eternal life.”

Brother Harvey ‘and Sister Evelyn Linggood.

Thank you for your letters and all correspondence is welcome. Sincerely your Brother in the One Hope,

Brother Harold Dawson.

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## **MORTAL AND IMMORTAL**

Lexicons transmit the meaning attached to these words up to ‘date of issue,’ and where known, the origin of same. Different shades of meaning are given to the words as a result of ‘local’ usage, which, in time, became universal and by such, words often are given a meaning the very opposite to that originally meant. Examples: - the word “let” originally meant ‘to hinder,’ but has since been employed as meaning ‘permit’ (See also ‘scan’ and ‘apology’ etc.).

There is so much in 1 Corinthians 15 in common in the natural and physical sphere, that the term ‘mortal’ (originally restricted to the legal, spiritual sphere) has since been employed to describe the natural man, and thus confusion has ensued re the doctrine pertaining to such in Scripture, which Scripture rather enhances, employing the natural as a simile and basis for the spiritual.

As the result of the above, the term ‘mortal’ has now two distinct meanings, one legal, the other physical. The legal is gleaned from the Scriptures; the physical from lexicons and current thought.

### **Derivation and Source of the Term ‘Mortal.’**

It came to us from the Latin and French zones and predicated dead or death states.

Latin: Mortalis, mors, mortis - Death. French: Mort - Death.

English: Mort-al (noun) - Dead person. Mort-al (adj.) Stats, of death. Subject to death.

Mort-gage (N) F. Mort - Dead, Gage - a pledge - Dead pledge.

Mort-main (N) F. Mort - Dead, Main - hand.

L. Mors, mortis - death. Manus - hand. Dead hand.

Mort-ally (adj) unto death. F. & L. Mors - Death, Facie - I make.

Mort-ify (V) L. Mortifico - I mortify. I make death - put to death.

Mort-ified (P) - Made dead. Mort-ification (N) Death of parts.

Mort-ifier (N) - One who puts to death. Mort-ality (N) death (and frequent death).

Mort-uary (N) L. Mortuus - One dead. Place of the dead.

Im-mortal (adj) L. Not subject to death. Im-mortalise (V) - Render not subject to death. Im-mortalised (PP) - Rendered not subject to death. Im-mortalising (PA) - Exempting from death. Im-mortality (N) - Immortal existence, not subject to death. Im-mort-ally (AD) - Exempted from death.

With these definitions before us, let us take up the Scriptures, and apply them legally, i.e., according to the Law of God.

In Romans 6:11, we are advised to “Reckon ourselves as dead (mortal).” Dead unto what? The answer is, “Dead” indeed unto sin. Romans 6:2, 11 and 1 Peter 2:24. “Dead to the law” Romans 7:4. Now note, “through the law, (Galatians 2:19) which was itself “the ministration of death,” (2 Corinthians 3:7) even “the letter that killeth.” (2 Corinthians 3:6). On what principle if not on the federal principle? Is it not for Adam’s sin, and is not this Adamic mortality? (Romans 5:12,19). Can you deny that such persons were rendered “subject to death per law (mort-al, adj.) and in submitting to this ordinance of God rendered dead persons per law (mort-al, noun)? Is not this mortality a legal affair and strictly so?

When does their legal mortality (Death) occur? When they reckon themselves dead (mortal). Is burial prescribed? Yes, in the waters of baptism (Romans 6:4), in the cloud and in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:2) into Moses.

What are they said to do when they submit to this form of doctrine? They are said to “put on” Christ (Galatians 3:27). The sacrificial covering provided by God in Eden for Adam’s Sin (Genesis 3:21, 22, 8. John 1:29, Exodus 12:13. Revelation 13:8, etc.).

Hence Paul says “This mortal (person under sentence of death”- subject to death per law) must “put on” (in the appointed way) Immortality - not subject to death per law, not under sentence of death (Romans 6:14, Ephesians 2:5,8) which then renders the person immortal according to the Law of God. Now this person now immortal, is still corruptible, and this is possible from two sources also, viz Mentally and Physically, and as the Scriptures say: “First that which is natural then that which is spiritual.” We will first consider the Physical man.

### **Corruptible:**

All but the uninitiated will agree Adam was created corruptible - subject to the laws governing his physical organism, which even in Scripture is termed a “Natural man,” in which sphere “man has no pre-eminence above the beast, as one dieth, even so dieth the other” (Ecclesiastes 3:19,20) , i.e., as a result of natural physical decay. This natural death, as revealed in Genesis 3:19: “Because thou hast done this.” Adam, if obedient, might have escaped, but where, then, had been that glorious display of mercy and love? (John 1:29 & 3:16).

Now it is generally understood that Genesis 3:19 contain the death sentence for Adam for his sin, but if the reader will just glance once more at the sentence, commencing at verse 17, he may notice it is in the light of a prediction, telling Adam the result of the curse upon the (Adamic) ground, which curse is now introduced, introducing with it that much misunderstood federal principle in relation to Adam and his sin (Romans 5) which was done for his sake (or benefit), i.e. that he might have a few of his seed saved thereby; foretelling the result of misconception concerning this inclusion in his sin and the way from under this curse,

thus:- “Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee” (couched in figure, as a guide the Egyptians (doctrines) were described as “Pricking briars”). Numbers 33:55 etc., Ezekiel 28:24, Judges 2:3, Psalm 106.

The Jews are an example and our proof of this. They were natural physically corruptible persons and when put under the Mosaic Law they were thereby federally legally sentenced to death for the sin (which was per the ordinances legally described as “transgression of Law”) which they themselves did not commit, for the law itself was “the ministration of condemnation and of death” rendering them ‘Hors de combat’ (Romans 3:9) before they could commence works of law to establish their own righteousness by works of law, hence by works of law (alone) shall no flesh be justified (in expecting to escape death per law) . Hence being the ministration of condemnation and of death as a sentence, it is “Scripture (that) hath shut up together or concluded all under (Adam’s) sin (on a federal principle) that God might (through the one act or same means) have mercy upon all” Galatians 3:22 who respond; as He literally did in Eden, where the only possible ‘universal salvation’ occurred, by saving Adam, through Christ and His sacrifice.

Now Paul shows us that man is mentally corruptible, for he said he “feared lest their minds should be corrupted (as Eve’s) from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. 2 Corinthians 11:3). This is mental corruption.

As the phrase ‘put on’ indicates a legal procedure in the case of the mortal, we suggest that it is also the case in connection with the ‘putting on’ of incorruption, for we have the victory over this death by belief in the Truth.

Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; hence when we submit to baptism, then is fulfilled the saying “Death is swallowed up in victory” which God gives us; for then we pass from death unto (sentence of) life. Prior to this mental “putting on” the mind was (and still is in other sections) corruptible, but, by understanding and receiving the truth they ‘put on’ incorruption, the uncorrupted Word of God. But Paul shows them something further - a mystery - something concealed viz. that it is not complete here, for they are to be physically changed, and with the dead who are asleep in Christ, rendered physically incorruptible.

It is this reference to the physical that sends some adrift, but the fact that to “put on” indicates a prescribed form of doctrine, should enable us to keep it in its proper niche. If incorruption here does not apply to the Word of Truth, then I am at a loss to understand the figure employed, for I perceive no such simile in the transformation of the corruptible substance to incorruptibility.

The physical change is a fitting climax to the work of God who created man corruptible for the natural sphere, with a view to His ultimate creation of them incorruptible to redound to the glory and honour of God their Maker and Redeemer.

A. & L. Wilson.

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The following is for your earnest consideration from the Emphatic Diaglott. Romans 5:18, “Therefore indeed as through one offence, sentence came on all men to condemnation; so also, through one righteous act (not the many acts of Jesus’ life), sentence came on all men to justification of life.”

Read also verse 19, re “constituted.” Is it physical or legal? Galatians 2:19,

Besides, “I through Law died by Law, so that I might live by God.” Can you consider the foregoing in any sense other than the legal? I have been as brief as I possibly could owing to your letter calling for the answering of so much. You are at liberty to print all you receive from us.

Remember:

Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

We are bought with a price.

The Just for the unjust.

That no man... calleth Jesus accursed.

That if natural death was the sentence, then the death of Christ by crucifixion was in vain.  
That without the shedding of blood there is no remission.  
If corruption was the price Jesus did not pay it.  
There is... now no condemnation... in Christ Jesus.

A Brief Summary:

The thoughts arising out of the notes on Mortal and Immortal in this reply letter are greatly strengthened by the consideration of the words. Can they be applied to God or Christ? We say they are legal terms, and never refer to God nor His Son, in Scripture. You will probably say this is untrue, and I quote 1 Timothy 1:17, which reads, "Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God," also, "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Timothy 1:10.

The following is the Emphatic Diaglott appendix:-

"Immortal" - deathless; does not occur once in the original, and only once even in the common version, 1 Timothy 1:17, where it ought to be rendered "incorruptible." It applied to God.

The R. V. and the E. D. read "incorruptible" in each place and therefore prove the physical, and not the legal.

As the term 'mortal' means "subject to death" (legal per law), this cannot apply to Jesus as He was legally free from the sentence passed upon all in Adam though He was physically the same. The term 'immortal' can only be applied to Him in this sense. The "fall" which necessitated Jesus being legally free is ample proof (in the absence of any scripture) as to the change being physical. The fall was moral - legal. The "change" was of relationship. This never applied to Christ.

The other places where the word 'immortality' occurs are 1 Corinthians 15:53,54; Romans 2:7, (each apply to man, not to God nor Christ), and is rendered "incorruptibility" in the Emphatic Diaglott, and in the R.V. "incorruptible," while in 1 Timothy 6:16 is the only place where the word is applied to God, and is rendered in the Emphatic Diaglott text as "deathlessness." As all others are rendered "incorruptible," and that God was never subject to death - legally nor physically, the text must be understood as physical, underived and Possessor of all things.

Look at these terms from the legal standpoint and there will be no need to ponder over the difficulty of having a physically condemned Christ, and a morally sinless Christ.

Dear Reader, give the foregoing subject your due consideration and may the supposed difficult subject of Jesus Christ and Him crucified appear to you in all its simplicity.

A. & L. Wilson.  
B.

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Extracts from

## **THE DEVIL AND HELL OF THE BIBLE**

### **Introduction**

When we think of fundamental Christian religion as accepted by the average church, we think of God and His opponent, the devil. Our subconscious mind, if educated by traditional beliefs, divides creation into three parts; heaven, world, and hell; heaven the dominion of God, world the dominion of man, and hell the realm of the devil.

Various religious groups and individuals accept these traditions at various levels of seriousness. But as God-fearing men and women desiring to know the truth of the Bible, we cannot accept a belief merely because it belongs to tradition. We must have evidence, Bible evidence.

We invite you to investigate with us the meaning of the terms devil and hell, as these words are used in the Bible. Who or what is the devil? a person or a principle, a being or a spirit, a fallen angel or a vicious monster? And what of hell? Where is it? What is it? Who is there? Who is destined for its torments?

It is our conviction that the devil and hell of theology do not exist. The devil is not a spirit, not an influence, not a force, not a personality, not a natural or supernatural being, but simply a term applied to evil men and women as they perform acts of evil. Devil is the name that the Bible assigns to any agent of evil, anyone who opposes God and His will.

Why do we believe this?

Let us investigate:

## **WHO IS THE DEVIL?**

Is there a devil, a real being with an individual personality? If so, who created him, and why does an all-powerful God of righteousness and love permit him to exist? Or is the devil a spirit of evil influence, a force that continually inspires evil and devises mischief? (Could such an influence exist without personality?).

Exactly who or what is the devil?

Many persons through the ages have pondered these questions, and many answers have been offered. Some believe that the devil is a hideous-looking horned creature whose cloven hoofs and spiked tail assist him in presiding over the torture of the wicked dead. Others believe him to be some unidentified agent of evil whose chief business is to defame God, attack righteous men, and stir up evil men against God. Others believe him to be a disobedient fallen angel who long ago was cast out of heaven because of his rebellion against God. Still others hold to a rather vague feeling that the devil is a personality or a spirit of evil or a demon, continually opposing God and all that is good.

But we are convinced that none of these views is correct, and that none of them is wholly and solely Bible-supported. How does the Bible use the term devil? Jesus addressed His apostles: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6-70) - not one of you is possessed with a devil but "one of you is a devil." On another occasion Jesus spoke similarly to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me." (Matthew 16:23).

## **The Source of Evil**

What, according to the Bible, is the source of evil if it is not the workings of a literal devil?

Jesus strikes at the very root of the matter: Evil proceeds from the depths of the human heart. The evil thought allowed to conceive and bring forth sin is the defiling agent to mankind. "For from within, out of the heart (or mind) of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). These are the words of Jesus, and the language is too plain to be mistaken. How can you or I claim to be pure in heart unless we put away all these thirteen evils which Jesus said defile the man? When we have put away these evils, we have killed the only devil that we need to fear.

James the servant of God was close enough to the source of divine knowledge to have known what he was talking about, and he declared: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is

finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). The merciful God never tempts any man to evil. And He never created a devil to lure us away. The writer witnesses that he never once experienced any such influence in his entire life. “Every man” - no exceptions - “every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” Here is a devil that is present in every human being.

The man who steals does so because he lusts to possess that which does not belong to him. The liar lies because it is to his interest to suppress the truth. He wants to save his face, to hide his true identity lest the facts about him be disclosed and his reputation be caused to suffer. The proud man or woman is proud because self-importance is natural, and he or she does not make the necessary effort to control it.

It is the development of an uncontrollable taste for intoxicating liquor that brings the alcoholic to a state of degradation almost worse than death itself, and not the influence of a personal devil that operates against the man’s will. The immoral man is immoral because he lacks self-control. It is easier for him to give way to his base passions than to banish them. Lust conceives and brings forth sin, but in every case it is the offender himself who is the culprit. And the same is true of anger, malice, jealousy, envy, sensitiveness, and every other sin that defiles.

### **The Doctrine of Demons**

Where did belief in a devil such as is accepted by popular theology originate? The answer is simple: in the imagination of man himself. From more than seven thousand years of human history on this planet have emerged a multitude of ideas, superstitions, and philosophies. Men have thought and dreamed, rationalized and reasoned, feared and imagined. By nature men crave security and fear harm.

To satisfy his cravings and explain his fears, primitive man early developed polytheistic faiths which included spirits and demons and devils of every description. He thought of every healthful breeze, every green tree, every solid rock, every rain-filled cloud as being possessed with a living spirit that blessed him; sometimes he called it “god” and worshiped it. The lightning that shattered his home or set fire to his forest, or flood that destroyed his crops, or the disease that threatened his life, all were evil spirits, or demons, or devils, spirits to be ameliorated - if possible - or charmed, or driven off.

Firm belief in demons and devils has been current in every society. Among the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians, superstition was rife; the demonic world was so prolific that its inhabitants were divided into classes, or orders, according to the imagined power of each.

From the most ancient times the spirit world lay very near to the average Chinaman. Good and evil spirits were objects of religious worship or superstitious fear. Egypt had such a vast array of demons and spirits, it is said, that a definition of each was impossible - every object and every being was possessed with some kind of “demon” or “demons.”

The Celtic people (early inhabitants of Great Britain) combined beneficent and maleficent dispositions in their demons, which were magical in their behaviour and supernatural in their endowments. The influence of such demons, it was thought, could be resisted by enticing them with piety and virtue.

Even the reasoning Greeks tempered their rationalism with superstition, believing that at death the soul of man went to the heavenly Elysium, but the “shade” went to the underworld, where it lived in shadowy, semi-conscious existence. The ghosts of the dead, they believed, tragically sought vengeance on the living. One had to pass their tombs in silence or attract their fury. Illness and insanity were explained as demonic possession.

Aristotle believed that all men have demons which accompany them during the whole period of their mortal existence. The Stoics were firmly convinced of the reality of demons which, having like passions with men, and responding to their desires and fears, superintended and directed their fortunes.

Outstanding in demonology was the faith of the Persians. They thought of the world as controlled by a dual power of good and evil. These opposing forces were engaged in constant warfare until the last millennial cycles of the world preceding a day of judgement when perfect man shall, by the aid of the

heavenly hosts, overcome the power of evil for ever. The Persians conceived of these present forces of evil as under the leadership of their creator Ahriman, who brought them forth to wage war against heaven and earth. These demons, equal in activity to the divine forces created by the power of good, were thought of as spirits or bodiless agents who gathered as aides about the standard of Ahriman and formed the council of hell.

The Romans regarded the spirits as helpful to mankind if correctly approached and held in honour; but they feared the larvae, a species of ghosts, for they were the souls of wicked men and now wandered about at night in the dreaded form of spectres.

Where, then, is the source of belief in demons or devils? Not in the Bible, but in paganism.

It seems ridiculously inconsistent to suppose that a God of infinite wisdom would stoop to such nonsense as to ask His children to believe in demons or evil spirits. But in the early centuries following the ministry of Christ, the belief crept into the Christian church as it apostatized from the teachings of Jesus. And today nearly all major religious groups hold some form of this belief. Leading commentators all take for granted the existence of demons or a devil.

### **The Devil of Christendom**

Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics informs us in part: "The earliest Fathers of the Church, acquainted with the angelology and demonology of Scripture and of Jewish apocalyptic literature, all affirm or imply the existence of spirits good and evil... Opposition to Gnostic speculation led earlier writers to insist on the fact that angels and demons were created beings, while some writers refuse to allow to the former any part in the work of creation... The earlier writers more usually identified the "sons of God" with angels... The legend of the fall of the angels, and the person of Satan especially, led later writers to indulge in speculation as to the problem of evil and the relation of evil spirits to God. It would appear that the majority at least of later writers held the view that angels were capable of sinning, being possessed, like men of free will." (We will discuss the capability of the angels to sin in a later chapter.)

The idea of the devil was founded not in the Bible but in the thinking of such as Alexandrian writers as Clement, and Origen. And in the second century, Justin Martyr forged the legend (suggested to him by Genesis 6:2) that Satan and his devils were once good angels, who had been deposed for having committed carnal sins with the daughters of men. Justin called them '*angeli fornicatores*.'

John Milton, the blind poet and theologian, in his epic "Paradise Lost," formed into symbolic poetry the thinking of the Protestant world in the seventeenth century, picturing a war in the high courts of heaven where dwells the Almighty; and from which once pure, bright angels were ejected and cast to earth where they have henceforth waged a mighty conflict against God and man.

What was the source of this belief? Let us repeat: not the Bible, but paganism. Persians, Romans, Teutonics, Tibetans, Jains, Japanese, Indians, Moslems, and almost any ancient people you can mention - all recognized spirits or powers of evil.

But the Bible does not.

### **Modern Beliefs in Devils**

Even today, the Catholic Church, together with many Protestant denominations, believe at least nominally in the existence of a devil. We quote from The New Library of Catholic Knowledge, Volume 1, "Preparing the Way," by M.E.Odell:

"Intelligent beings created by God have only two fundamental choices: They choose to love God and serve him... or they can turn away from God and aim only at pleasing themselves. In the latter case they cut themselves off from his goodness and love and therefore they become evil. The good, bright glorious angels who deliberately turned away

from God became hideous and evil spirits, and Lucifer, the light-bearer as he was called, became Satan, the worst of them all.”

Even the Radio Church of God believes in a literal devil. We quote from the Plain Truth, April 1968:

“There was a super-archangel, a cherub named Lucifer, created with great knowledge, wisdom, beauty, trained at the very seat of God’s Throne of the Government of the Universe. Thoroughly trained... Lucifer was placed on a throne in Eden, on this earth, to administer the Government of God over angels who then populated this earth. Under God’s Government, the earth was filled with happiness, abundance, joy. But this Lucifer allowed himself to be filled with vanity, envy of God’s supremacy as Ruler of the whole Universe, and a self-centred desire to get, take, have. He organized a rebellion. A third of the angels followed him. They swept on up to attack Almighty God on His Throne in heaven - to seize Power over the Universe. But God’s Power is supreme. Lucifer and his angels ‘fell’ back down to the earth. Lucifer was renamed Satan, and his angels became demons.”

Where is the Bible evidence for such a tale? Would a reasonable God expect us to believe that?

Other religious persons and groups define the devil less literally, as a symbol or representative power of evil; but their beliefs are often confused and inconsistent. For example, they give to a symbolic devil or power of evil physical, human or beastly qualities and abilities, i.e., the devil tempts, the devil defiles, the devil lures into sin. How could a spirit or influence or unembodied personality have any of these abilities?

No such inconsistencies are the product of the Divine Mind. Let us go to the Bible for the invariable truth of the subject.

Megiddo Church

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## **THE SEVEN SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

### **As Shown in Matthew’s Gospel**

Before we explain these parables let us take note of some of the things Jesus has to say which will help us to get a right understanding.

He says of the things He was telling them “that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” (Matthew 13:17). And Peter says, “the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desired to look into.” This gives us a reason why we should look for the new doctrine in some of these parables.

When Jesus had given all seven parables He asked His disciples if they understood and they said yes - to which Jesus replied “Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. The disciples did not know this new doctrine as yet. The Jews understood that their kingdom was God’s Kingdom, with laws given them by God, and they were expecting their Messiah to come and reign as King. In the psalms we read, “Thy Kingdom hath no end at all” and we believe this means what it says - it has existed and an aspect of it exists today, and when Jesus returns the Kingdom of God will fill the whole earth with God’s Glory.



When Jesus says “the Kingdom of Heaven is like” in these parables. He is telling us what it would be like while He is away.

In a few chapters before He gave these secrets; He had been telling His disciples things that would take the place of the law, no doubt you will remember Him saying, “It hath been said . . . but I say unto you” and it shows us many things that would happen when the new doctrine was accepted by the first Christians.

In the first parable Jesus is seen sowing the seed, and it concerns the new teaching, for “when anyone heareth the word and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which is sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside.”

Jesus has told us that the wicked ones are the fowls of the air, or the birds mentioned in three of these parables.

He that receiveth seed into good ground is he that understandeth and bringeth forth fruit some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold; which shows us clearly the need for understanding this new doctrine. It is explained to us very fully by Paul in his epistle to the Romans. Paul also tells us that he did not receive this doctrine from any man, but by a revelation from Jesus Christ.

The second parable says the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way... the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants want to know if they shall go and gather up the tares, but their Lord said Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to bum them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

It was not long after the apostles had preached the doctrine of the Cross that men arose and sowed tares among the wheat. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, tells us of false doctrines and unworthy practises in the church. He also calls to their memory how that Christ died for their sins, and had risen again for their justification. He feared his teaching had been in vain. “If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain ... ye are yet in your sins.”

The third parable shows the Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest of all herbs, which suggests healing power. The first time herbs are mentioned is in Exodus 12, when the children of Israel were about to leave Egypt. They were told to roast lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This we know refers to Jesus - whose doctrine has healing power. He is also the first of a new creation, and those who become a new creation in Him will one day fill the earth with His Glory. As in the last parable, birds come - and lodge in the branches. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians, tells us how they were corrupting the church, for Paul says, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” “For I received it from Christ.”

The next parable is the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal.” This measure, we are told from the original, is a container holding three and a half teahs - this could represent the three and a half years teaching ministry of our Lord. Some of His disciples give it to us when the Spirit brought to their memories things that Jesus taught them, the Spirit making them known to them. If we look up leaven in the Scripture we find it is always used to represent evil. We remember that Jesus told His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, or by their traditions, added to the law and made it void. Also He warned. Beware of the leaven of Herod. We see in this parable the meal representing the true doctrine, and the woman (false church) adding the leaven to it (leaven = wrong doctrine). We can read of this woman in the Revelation; we see her clothed in purple, scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones, having a golden cup full of the abominations of her adulteries and drunken

with the blood of the martyrs - those who gave their lives because of their faith in Jesus. This takes us to the dark middle ages when the false church was at its worst, when Christ's teaching was neglected; false doctrines and practises took its place. The fact that there were martyrs during the dark ages of the church shows that there were those who were acceptable to Jesus. We read of them when "they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and true, wilt Thou not judge them and avenge our blood? And there was given them white robes, and it was said unto them that they should rest awhile until their fellow servants should be killed."

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church we have the 'pure meal' explained – the oneness, perfection only in Christ and through His sacrifice. When Jesus had given these four parables He sent the multitude away and went into the house and after giving the explanation to the parable of the tares He gives three others to the disciples only.

The fifth secret tells us the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field. Now Jesus has told us that the field is the world. When the man has found this treasure, he hides it, "and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" or world. No ordinary man could have bought the world but this man bought the world, with the treasure. We know that Jesus had Riches that no other man could ever possess. He was Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and when God brought Him into the world He said, Let all the angles worship Him. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Jesus was Rich but for our sakes He became poor. He sold all that He had that we, through His poverty might become rich. And Paul has much to tell us about these Riches that are ours when we put on Christ in baptism.

Jesus was not born with this knowledge, that He was the Son of God - this was the treasure He found and hid. At twelve years of age we know He had discovered the fact, though He may not have then known of the sacrifice He was to make. We read, "He returned to Nazareth and grew in knowledge and in favour with God and man." We read that Mary and Joseph understood not these sayings, though Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

To His neighbours and kinsfolk He was, "as was supposed the son of Joseph." We do not know, but it may have been in early manhood that He realised how much it would have cost Him to buy the world. He also realised the need to hide the fact the He was the Son of God; especially hiding it from the Scribes and Pharisees. Nevertheless He told His disciples many things He would not tell others, such as that He had not come to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. From the beginning of His ministry He told those whom He healed to "tell no man," and many times refusing to tell the Scribes and Pharisees things concerning Himself when they asked for a sign from heaven He said, "There shall no sign be given you except the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." This was in parable form, so later they did their evil deed, and Jesus bought the world and we have been Redeemed with His precious blood.

A few days before He was arrested, He took Peter, James and John up into a mountain apart and as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered. His raiment was white and glistening and there talked with Him Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He would accomplish. Then there came a cloud and overshadowed them and a voice out of the cloud said "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." On coming down from the mount He charged His disciples; saying, 'Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead.' There is no doubt in my mind that even the Scribes and Pharisees would not have said "Crucify Him," if they had seen the vision and heard the voice from heaven saying "This is My beloved Son, hear Him."

During His trial Jesus did not defend Himself, even when two false witnesses came forward the High Priest said "Answerest thou nothing?" When Herod questioned Him with many words He answered nothing. And when Pilate said, "Nearest thou not how many witness against thee" Jesus answered never a word and the governor marvelled greatly.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Philippian church, reveals to us the Treasure. Jesus Christ is mentioned 46 times and almost every verse directly or indirectly refers to Him. It also refers to the hiding of

His Sonship for we read, “Who, being in the form of God... made Himself of no reputation, taking upon Him the form of a servant... being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted Him giving Him a name above every name.”

The sixth parable of the Kingdom of heaven tells us of a merchant man seeking goodly pearls and when he had found one of great value he went and sold all that he had and bought it. This parable could apply to any of us. It is applicable to the first disciples who did sell all they had to follow Jesus. Paul said that he counted all things but loss that he might win Christ. No doubt many more did also

Peter tells us in his first epistle that Jesus was a living stone chosen of God and Precious. He, Jesus was also the stone that the builders rejected. We have only to think of the many blessings that are ours today because of this Pearl of Great Price. When we rise children of God, we are “a new creation in Christ Jesus” not under condemnation in Adam. As Jesus was raised from the dead, so we are to walk in newness of life, for we have been justified freely by His Grace and have access to this Grace, in which we now stand. We rejoice in hope of Glory.

In Paul’s letter to the church at Colosse we have an account of the many ways Jesus blesses the believer today. Here we can see how Christ and His Cross has benefited those who believe in Him as their Saviour.

The last parable tells us that the Kingdom of God is like a net cast into the sea and gathered in of every kind, both good and bad. The sea is often spoken of in the Scriptures for peoples, nations, or multitudes, as the voice of many waters. We have also to remember that Jesus told His disciples that He would make them fishers of men. This net cast into the sea went out into all the world. Paul was chosen to be the one to take the Gospel to the Gentiles and he tells us the sound had gone out into all the world. Thessalonica has been called the “Gate-way of the world,” this is the seventh parable, and Thessalonians is Paul’s seventh letter to the seventh church. This in itself is a wonderful fact, for these letters of Paul and these parables and their arrangement as we have them is proof that God intended it to be so.

Sister Maud Warre.

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## Comments on

# “ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS”

## with particular reference to the section of “THE FLESH OF CHRIST”

“ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS” was compiled by Robert Roberts and others, printed and published by F. Walker, who also wrote the Foreword.

### ADAM’S NATURE WHEN CREATED.

Under this heading R. Roberts contradicts scripture from the start of his comments on this subject. He states that the descendants of Adam had a different nature to Adam’s at Creation, and falsely implies that Paul supports such a theory by his quoting of Romans 7:18 - 23, though failing to take into account Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:44 - 49, “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Robert Roberts, in quoting Romans 8:10, “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness,” completely destroys his own reasoning as do the verses that follow.

R. Roberts says, "Consequently as a result of Adam's sin a change had taken place between Adam's former nature in regard to his physical state at Creation." He quotes Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" but here Paul is explaining Adam's legal state, not his physical nature which remained the same from his creation despite his sin. Was there a difference in the animal creation in regard to nature and that of Adam? See Genesis 2:7 which declares Adam to have been created from the dust of the earth, a living soul dependant on the breath of life. Paul says nothing about a change of nature passing upon all men but a legal sentence possible of removal by belief, faith and baptism into the death of Christ, for He, as the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the world (Adam's), and the legal sentence of death that passed upon all men. Not physically, for physical decay was a fact of creation, but the infliction of death was the threatened penalty for disobedience to God.

Roberts states, "Our body is dead or mortal as a result of Adam's sin - the nature having been changed," and he quotes Paul in Romans 8:10 to support this, but it does the opposite. Paul says, in effect, 'The body is dead if Christ be in you, because ye have been crucified with Christ.' And Paul says elsewhere, of himself, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the power of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14). This is the harmony of Paul's teaching - the rightly dividing of the word of God.

The identity of F.R.S. whose initials appears at the conclusion of his answers to various questions, is unknown to me, but in several places he appears to quote either Dr Thomas or R. Roberts. The following is my reply to his answers under the heading on page 201, "The Flesh Of Christ" but first I quote F.R.S:-

"The flesh of Jesus was identical with the flesh of Mary (Galatians 4:4), the flesh of David (Romans 1:3; Acts 2:30), the flesh of Abraham (Matthew 1:1), the flesh of Adam (Luke 3:23 - 38), and the flesh of all those He came to redeem (Hebrews 2:14 - '17; 4:15). Now while Adam had no children born to him while the state of innocence continued, it follows that there is no flesh extant in human form that has not been derived from Adam subsequent to his transgression of the Divine Law, and his inheritance of the initial consequences of his act. His once "very good" and immaculate flesh was now maculate flesh - flesh in which sin now reigned unto death (Romans 5:21). No other flesh was possible of inheritance to I man of woman born. There is but one flesh of man (1 Corinthians 15:39), and this is the sin conditioned and death-stricken flesh of the first transgressor multiplied. It is therefore described as 'Sinful flesh' (Romans 8:3); 'Mortal flesh' (2 Corinthians 4:11); 'Flesh in which dwelleth no good thing' (Romans 7:18); flesh in which 'sin dwelleth' and 'The law of sin' operates in the members (Romans 7:20-25); flesh in which the devil-power of death is active (Hebrews 2:14); flesh characterised by weakness and infirmity (Heb 4:15; 2 Corinthians 4:8); flesh which "profiteth nothing" (John 6:63); flesh in which the 'sentence of death' exists (2 Corinthians 1:9); flesh requiring to be crucified (Galatians 5:24); flesh that listeth against the spirit (Galatians 5:17); flesh that is 'a body of sin' (Col. 2:11); flesh that needs purifying (Hebrews 9:13); flesh of which all the evil that is in the world is predicated (Mark 7:21 - 23; Gal. 5:9 - 21)." - Signed F. R. S.

Allow me for a moment to remind you that what you have been reading is a listed description of what constitutes Jesus Christ - a person - a living soul - a body of flesh and blood as viewed and considered by a Christadelphian. F. R. S., the formulator of these quotations from the Scriptures and Gospel narratives, most of them out of context and manipulated to support a rotten prop, could not see that in 35 words he totally destroyed, not only Clause V of their 'Statement of Faith' but all the foregoing, with the exception that Jesus was of the same physical flesh nature as Mary and all other men, which latter we are bound to accept.

I now quote his 35 words:-

"He (Jesus) inherited the nature in which sin was first committed and in which all the processes of its redemption must needs be conducted to perfection, in His own body, as the foundation of all else."

The important facts to consider are: How do these misused texts from Scripture compare with the real Scripture references to the literal flesh and blood body of Jesus? Let me quote some examples, “Flesh in which dwelleth no good thing” To wit, that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. Does F.R.S. consider God to be “no good thing,” co-habiting in flesh in which “sin dwelleth” and the “law of sin” operates in the members? What blasphemy! Again, “Flesh in which the devil-power of death is active.” Were the people who were instrumental in the death of Jesus dwelling, as active agents, in His flesh? Of course not; what utter nonsense to liken the sacrificial death of Christ to the devil destroying himself I

F.R.S. quotes “Flesh which profiteth nothing” but Jesus said “The bread which I , will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world”. Was Jesus speaking truth? Certainly He was; He always did. But not F.R.S. And again, P.R.S. states (2 Corinthians 1:9) “Flesh in which the sentence of death exists” This also is wrested from its context. Paul had been made free from the death which came by sin (Romans 8:1,2) and any reader should realise that he was speaking of the threat of death he and his brethren were under for preaching the Gospel of Christ and the fact that their faith was the answer to any sentence of death imposed by the rulers of darkness.

Another thought comes to mind regarding F.R.S.’s “Devil-power of death” being “active” in the flesh of Jesus. Pilate said to Jesus “Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me were it not given thee from above Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.” (John 19:10,11). Who then, in the case of Jesus, has the power to prevent His death? He that is above all; but obviously “He” is not -the devil active in Christ’s flesh, so we must concede that there was no devil active in Christ for Him to destroy. Again if the purpose of Christ’s death was to destroy the devil, how could it be a sin to deliver Him to Pilate to be crucified? After all, F.R.S. has declared of Christ’s flesh that it needed to be crucified, but Galatians 5:24, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,” does not refer to literal flesh but to the unregenerated old man who has been crucified with Christ by baptism, that the body of sin (or belonging to sin, the Bond-master), might be destroyed, that henceforth no more service should be rendered to sin, for the wages of master sin is death; See Romans 6, for after reading the whole chapter one wonders why F.R.S. should want to make such a statement as “Flesh is a body of sin” and then quote Colossians 2:11 in support, which is clearly not the meaning of Paul. In fact, Paul proves that baptism has not destroyed, with Christ’s death, the literal body of flesh, but ‘the alienated from God’ – servant of sin; “He that is dead is freed from sin.”

F.R.S. has stated much more than I intend to comment on but I cannot ignore his reference to Hebrews 9:13; Mark 7:21 - 23; Galatians 5:9 - 21. We will consider firstly the reference to Hebrews 9:13, bearing in mind that what is stated relates to the conscience and concerns the mode of ‘conscience cleansing,’ not physical flesh; this never changed during the whole of the priestly procedure, and verses 13 and 14 proves this to be so. Not only this, it also demonstrates the vast contrast between animal life-blood and the blood of Christ, but as far as F.R.S. is concerned, the flesh and blood of Christ was far inferior to that of animals because, unlike animals, in his understanding of Jesus, he had flesh that needed purifying - flesh that animal sacrifices could purify but which Jesus could not do for the people after dying for Himself, as F.R.S. says Jesus did to purify Himself, in following the example of the high priest. Hebrews 7:27, “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” The blood of bulls and goats were but provisional types of the true substance which had not yet come - they could not take away sin or they would have ceased to be offered, which proves Jesus to have been superior to the types - not inferior. The writer to the Hebrews demonstrates, if the blood of bulls and goats could sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, or conscience^ in a temporary and provisional manner, how much more would the blood of Jesus, the anti-typical and true substance, who offered Himself without spot to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? According to Hebrews 7:27 it was necessary to have a priest and also two animals, one for the purifying of the priest to make him fit for the office, and one for the priest to offer for the people. Jesus, while on earth, could not be a priest (Hebrews 8:4) but He could be, and was, the sacrificial offering (willingly). He therefore offered Himself first to God without spot, and God delivered Him up freely for us all. (Romans 8:32). Therefore as stated in Hebrews 10:14 “For by one offering He (Jesus) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” But F.R.S. insists that God offered up a polluted-condemned-death stricken-man of flesh. In quoting from Mark 7:21 - 23, he appears blind to verses 20 and 23 where Jesus emphasises that fact that

those things styled as unlawful acts of the man coming from the workings of his unregenerated “mind of the flesh” are the things that defile him, he thinks man is already in a state of defilement due to Adam’s sin and due to God “implanting this physical law of defilement in the flesh of Adam and transmittable to his posterity. Clause V of the Statement of Faith says so. In the light of this it would be a waste of time for God to speak of removing from Israel their “stony hearts” and giving them “hearts of flesh.” See Ezekiel 11:19 - 21.

We should bear in mind we have only one heart, and we can obey from the heart the good doctrine and walk after the spirit, or we can walk in the flesh and commit the works of the flesh that cause defilement. Matthew 12:35, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” James tells us that these evil and good things; blessings and cursings, should not proceed from the same source. How can Clause V be justified making God the Author of changed flesh of defilement of which all the evil that is in the world is predicated? F.R.S. is probably off the scene now and unable to reply, but other advocates of his views can do so if they profess any respect for the flesh God created.

Brother P. Parry.

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## **Soviet sell-offs lead to arms race in Asia** **The Sunday Times – 12<sup>th</sup> January 1992**

THE demise of the former Soviet Union as a military superpower has abruptly turned southern Asia’s capitals into arms bazaars. There merchants from around the world are peddling the detritus of the cold war, including everything from T-72 tanks to widgets for MiG-29s. So great has been the rush to sell off the weapons of the Soviet empire that Western intelligence agencies fear the burgeoning trade could upset the volatile region’s military balance. They are worried that rogue nuclear salesman could help India, Pakistan and Iran with their secret programmes to build atom bombs.

Fears of clandestine nuclear proliferation heightened last week when an Italian judge charged three Hungarians and an Austrian with smuggling a small amount of plutonium into the country from the former-Soviet Union. “With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, you can be certain the illicit trade will increase massively,” said Romano Doice, the magistrate investigating the smuggling. “There are laws for drugs and guns, but not for nuclear components. That has to change.”

On Pakistan’s border, Iran, too, is conducting a multi-billion-pound arms build-up that is fast making it the dominant power in the Gulf. Western intelligence says most of Iran’s new weaponry has come from the Red Army’s vast arsenal, which cash-strapped Russia is selling off for hard currency. These include SU-24 fighter-bombers and MiG-29 fighters. Tehran is reported to have purchased hugely expensive T-72 tanks for as little as £30,000 apiece. US officials say that Tehran’s aircraft purchases are being made in government-to-government deals, but Russian tanks and smaller arms have been sold off to international dealers and made their way to Iran by under-ground routes.

This arms race is causing increased concern in the West. Senator Larry Pressler, main architect of the ban on arms sales to Pakistan, warned last week of the dangers of a nuclear-armed Islamic federation stretching across the region. John Major is also worried about the build-up.

“Mr Major is very concerned about Iran,” said a senior Foreign Office source. “We know that they are re-building their armed forces and that they have been buying a lot of kit from the Russians. The question is, what is all this for? Is it because Iran has wider expansionist ambitions in the region? We know that this regime shares the ambition of the Shah: to make Iran top dog.” Their only hope is that Iran will restrain itself, though nobody is betting on that for long.