

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 136

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Editorial

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

We are sorry to report that Sister Muriel Stormont had a nasty fall last November and broke her neck. Her son, Richard, writes, "Her neck has healed now and she has no ill effects from the fall, but she has a severe problem with her balance (this caused the fall) and cannot live alone. She is also very weak because of the long recovery period."

I know some have written to you, Muriel, and I am sure all the Brethren and Sisters would wish me to take this opportunity to send you our Love and Best Wishes. May God bless you and keep you safe in His loving care.

We have also received letters regarding the welfare of others. We hear that Sister Ruth Woodhouse is keeping very well generally since her heart attack but she still has the occasional 'off-day.' Sister Ruth and Brother Leo Dreifuss send their Love to all the Brethren and Sisters. Brother Phil Parry has tried to telephone Brother John Carter, who is in a Residential Home in Scotland. He hasn't been able to speak to John personally, but the staff at the Home assured him that John is quite well. Brother John is now 92. Brother Hayden Price of Abercarn sends his Kind Regards to all the Fellowship, and Brother Phil and Sister Rene have asked that their Kind Thoughts are conveyed to the Brethren and Sisters.

The Conference on the Environment and Development is opening in Rio de Janeiro on the 4th of June with the express aim to confront the great environmental challenges facing the planet – drought, deforestation, erosion, over-fishing, global warming, and many forms of pollution.

The greatest danger of all is presented by the 'population explosion' which has doubled the world's population during the past forty years and could double it again in the next forty. This alone could cancel out any benefit which might be achieved at Rio even supposing all members of the conference could agree on a common course of action.

It is incongruous that scientists can only, and have ever only discovered and experimented with the things which God has created and yet ignore God, leaving Him out of all their considerations. Because of this it will not be long before men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. (Luke 21:26).

"The earth is the Lord's, and all the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas; and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (Psalm 24:1-5).

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

Russell Gregory

“CHAT SECTION”

Compiled by Brother Harold Dawson.

Recently we have had correspondence with a Brother expressing concern regarding a paragraph which appeared in the November/December issue of the Circular Letter (C.L. No. 133), on page two, under the heading of “Jesus said....” First we will quote the paragraph in question:

“Adam sinned but his sin was covered and he was placed under another covenant. By remaining faithful he now sleeps in death, to be raised immortal.”

We will take extracts from our Brother’s letters:

“...Adam showed no faith, failed to believe the commandment given to him, was disobedient..... The Lord God did not record that Adam was placed under another covenant, nor did He say he remained faithful, or sleeps in death, and no mention of him being raised immortal.”

Another Brother was given these letters and was asked to give his reply. Here is his answer:-

“Let us consider the things we do know about Adam;

1. He was indeed disobedient, as you say, but he was not deceived and for this see 1 Timothy 2:14.
2. Adam, having sinned, came under the sentence of death pronounced by God.
3. God, in His mercy, provided a covering for Adam’s sin; i.e. the skin of the animal obtained by the shedding of blood - this is the first case of blood being shed for the remission of sin.
4. Adam put on the garment of God’s providing, thereby accepting his new status or relationship with his Creator; he now could stand before God in faith, ever hopeful of pleasing Him in the future.

There is no indication in Scripture that God had finished with Adam, or rejected him for all time. Our heavenly Father delights in mercy and spared Adam, just as He spared the men of Nineveh after saying He would destroy them after 40 days. (See Jonah 3:4 and 3:10).

Regarding the statement “By remaining faithful he now sleeps in death, to be raised immortal,” this statement is ambiguous and would have been better expressed: “If Adam remained faithful he is now sleeping in death awaiting the resurrection to immortal life.”

We hope the above comments cover satisfactorily the points raised by our Brother. The most important matter is whether or not God arranged a new covenant for the benefit of Adam and this we feel we have shown to be the case.”

Brother Phil Parry writes regarding the book entitled “The Devil and Hell of the Bible”:

“The articles by the Megiddo Mission were the best I have read on the topical subjects of interest which confuse the minds of many people not too familiar with the Word of God and the discrimination it demands for a clearer understanding. How right the statement on page 12 of the last issue under the heading “The Serpent in Eden;” that to understand this subject we must recognise that the first three chapters in Genesis are allegorical in part. I readily agree with this from more than one consideration and standpoint, and from information in recent time that was unknown to me before. For example, far from their inability to speak a language to man, it is now supposed to be a proven fact in regard to the snake family that they are absolutely deaf, so if the serpent of Eden was of this same species and has not

evolved into a change from its original state, how would it have heard what God said to Adam regarding the forbidden tree? Of course, to reject the theory of a literal serpent presents a difficulty because we read that the Lord God addressed the serpent independently of both Adam and Eve. We must therefore read the account with the utmost caution and discretion otherwise we can read into it what is not there. For example, because the serpent was said to be more subtle than any beast of the field that the Lord God had made does not mean that it belonged to the beast species, or because it was cursed above all cattle does not mean it was of the cattle species, but it is difficult and well nigh impossible to accept as literal that the serpent would live on literal dust after being cursed above all cattle.

In regard to the serpent speaking to Eve, it would be dangerous to compare the ass speaking to Balaam with man's voice as it is believed the Angel of the Lord was instrumental in this case, therefore it would imply that God spoke to Eve through the serpent and beguiled Eve with subtlety; this we cannot accept because God does not tempt any person nor entice into doing what is contrary to His Law. In the case of the ass speaking, it was Divine intervention to save Balaam from death and ensure the purpose of God in blessing the children of Israel through Balaam in the presence of Balak, king of Moab, but in the case of the subtlety of the serpent this was a cleverly contrived means and use of words to delude Eve into putting the words of God to the test instead of respecting them.

Jesus, in the wilderness under similar test of faith, declared, "It is written thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Where Jesus was successful Eve failed and instantly brought upon herself the sentence of death prescribed for disobedience together with Adam, and legally and federally passed upon all men (not physically), otherwise there would be no escape or release from such a position and Baptism would have been useless. Romans 5:15; 6:3-11. Paul could not possibly mean that physical death was reigning from Adam to Moses for he speaks of some who had not sinned, verses 13 and 14, and how could Paul apply verse 15 to them in a physical way if they were dead? We must accept they came under the Legal and Federal sentence which only applied through enlightenment to Divine Law: sin is not imputed when there is no law. Yet physical death happens to all, on account of their nature as God created it in the beginning, so even the words of the serpent demand that it must refer to inflicted death in the day of eating.

In an effort to justify God as true to His Word and the serpent a liar, most people rely on the Apostate doctrine of changed-nature of Adam and Eve, after their sin, and this changed-nature passed upon all men ending in natural death by decay, the possibility of God's mercy and intervention through foreknowledge being excluded; yet in His statement to Adam regarding the prohibition of the tree God did not say, "If you eat of it dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." This statement was made as a result of their not being put to death, and being turned out of the garden of Eden which they had lost by sin to another Adam who claimed it and will eventually make restoration to all the subjects of His redemptive work, including Adam and Eve, who must have in dying with the typical substitutionary animals slain, acknowledged that death by blood-shedding was the sentence they had incurred and their right to the Tree of Life could only be through an indirect approach to God by faith in the conditions. Whether they remained faithful unto death is not revealed, but the fact remains they died in Law by sin, and they must have died symbolically with God's provisional substitutes, otherwise life would have ended there and then.

Another point in reference to a literal serpent comes to mind. Did Noah take the same serpent species male and female into the Ark for preservation, and why would the preservation of such a subtle species be anything to be desired? It is obvious that it could not have lived on dust during the flood, so is it not obvious that if there was a "talking literal serpent" in Eden, that capability must have ceased in some way and become transferred as a symbol of the personification of subtlety and evil in those people who were afterwards continually opposed to the laws of God and wanted power and pre-eminence themselves? Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in the days of John Baptist and Jesus. From what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:3, it seems to imply his belief in a literal serpent of some kind in

Eden, but there is so little revealed in Genesis on this subject so we must use our own discretion and judgment in the light of scripture.

Sister Linggood writes concerning the same publication:-

“The treatise on “The Devil and Hell of the Bible” is good in general and with reservations, for instance, I don’t see how ‘Satan’ in Job could be a mortal man because he could not have brought about all the calamities that came upon Job. I think it was far more likely to be an Angel deputed by God in the trial of Job’s faith as God does work through His Angelic messengers, “or ministering spirits.” It would be similar to the Angel of death being an adversary or Satan to the Egyptians when He caused the death of the firstborn of man and beast, or the Angel that stood in the way of Balaam as an adversary to His purpose.”

Regarding Ezekiel 37, 38 and 39, Brother Phil Parry writes:-

“On the subject of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, I cannot agree that it is being fulfilled by the Jews now returning or entering the land. They are entering for reasons satisfactory to their own immediate convenience and not in response to the word of the Lord. God’s declaration through Ezekiel, Chapter 37 and verse 4 - “To the whole house of Israel, O ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord;” the result of hearing the Word has to do with the whole house of Israel and I am sure it will take place according to the remainder of the chapter when there will be one King over them and the Spirit of understanding will be in them so that they will indeed know the Lord in the way they do not know Him now, nor the Messiah their rulers rejected.”

While Sister Linggood comments further upon Ezekiel 38 and 39 and Revelation 17, 18 and 19.

“Brother Phil Parry says (in the last C.L.) that Revelation 17, 18 and 19 are about the destruction of the Beast, but chapters 17 and 18 deal mainly with the fall of Babylon which is a religious power, the “Harlot,” not political like the Beast. In his longer article, entitled “Gog’s Invasion of Israel - When?” which appeared in the C.L. for May 1989, Brother Phil goes into his theory in more detail, but we don’t see how it could be at the end of the Millennium because of Ezekiel 39:21 to end of chapter, and various other Scriptures concerning Israel after conversion, and this Gogian war is to take place in the “latter days,” Ezekiel 38:6 and 16. The Gog of Revelation 20 is more concerned with the annihilation of the government rather than Israel as a whole as they surround the “camp of the saints,” and the destruction of these rebels is swift and sure. If fire consumes them there would be nothing left to bury as there is to be in Ezekiel 39.”

Thank you for all your letters and do please keep writing. We will not agree on everything but our fundamental beliefs must be right. None of us can earn salvation via our own achieved standards of righteousness - by Grace are we saved and that not of ourselves - it is the gift of God.

So what remains is for an effort to be made by the individual to live and behave as consistently as we can with the example of Jesus Christ before us, and to have love in our hearts to all. This is frequently not easy and I believe that Jesus understands us only too well.

Our view and belief about the Atonement is above all, one of common sense and everything is clear; we must not judge, that is not our prerogative - it is going to be part of the work of Jesus when God makes up His jewels.

May we receive the help we need, then, from God and His Son Jesus Christ, that the things that remain will indeed be strengthened.

Sincerely your brother in the Hope we have in common, Harold Dawson

A RANSOM FOR ALL

“There is... one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

This passage of Scripture from the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 5 and 6, confronts us with the idea that if one gave himself a ransom for all, then all were in need of ransom. But what is ransom and why should all need it?

The dictionary gives the meaning of “ransom” as “the price paid for redemption from captivity or punishment: release from captivity, atonement, expiation: v.t. to redeem from captivity, punishment or ownership; to set free for a price.”

To illustrate the meaning we could not find more fitting words than those used by Dr. Thomas in his book, *Eureka*, Volume 1, page 20:

“Paul reminds the saints in Rome that they were all the servants of sin once; but thanks God in their behalf, that they had been freed from sin, and were now the servants of righteousness, “having obeyed from the heart a form of teaching... into which they were delivered...” (Romans 6:17). They obeyed a form of teaching which emancipated, liberated, or set them free from the lordship of Sin. This was Paul’s mission - to invite men to change of masters. He addressed himself to free men and slaves, all of whom, whatever their political or social position, were in bondage to the devil or sin. He did not invite slaves to abscond from their fleshly owners; on the contrary, he told men to remain in the several callings of life in which they were when they first heard the truth.

‘Let every man,’ says he, ‘abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called, being a slave? Care not for it; but if thou mayest be free, use it rather.’ As if he said, “Social or political liberty is a small matter in view of what men are called, or invited to, by the gospel of the kingdom. My mission is to “open men’s eyes, to turn them from darkness (of mind) to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified by faith (which leads) into Jesus” (Acts 26:18). He invites Sin’s servants to become Jehovah’s servants upon the principle of purchase; so that in addressing those who had abandoned the synagogue and temple for the house of Christ, he says to them “Ye are bought with a price.” They were “not their own,” being bought bodily and spiritually; “therefore,” says he, “glorify God with your body and with your spirit, which are God’s.” (I Corinthians 7:23; 6:19; 7:20). When a man’s body and spirit become another man’s property, all property in himself is surrendered to the purchaser. All that he used to call his before he was sold is transferred to his owner; and, if allowed to retain it, he must use it as the steward of his lord.

Redemption is release for a ransom. All who become God’s servants are therefore released from the former lord by purchase. The purchaser is Jehovah, and the price, or ransom paid, the precious blood of the flesh through which the Anointing Spirit was manifested. It is therefore styled, ‘the precious blood of Christ:’ as it is written in the words of Peter to his brethren, saying, ‘ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct paternally delivered; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish’ (1 Peter 1:18). If this Christ-Lamb had not been slain, the fifth and sixth verses of the first chapter of the Apocalypse could not have been written.

Satan took the price of release. In the day of his power he valued the blood at thirty pieces of silver. In this was fulfilled the saying of the prophet, ‘They weighed for my price thirty pieces silver and cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them.’ (Zechariah 11:12,13). The life being purchased for this amount of blood-money, Satan nailed the Christ-Lamb to the tree, and poured out his life with a spear. Jesus entered no protest against this arrangement. On the contrary, He lovingly laid down His life for the

sake of those who had died under the Law of Moses, walking in the steps of Abraham's faith; and for them also, who should afterwards become Abraham's children by adoption through himself. With the first class as a man, He had no personal acquaintance; with the last, comprehending multitudes of His contemporaries, His acquaintance cost Him His life."

Rather a long quotation to illustrate the meaning of the word 'ransom,' but we have not seen any other statement which so comprehensively shows how we are ransomed, or "set free for a price."

For our part we have now to show what sort of bondage we find ourselves in, for in the main, men and women do not consider themselves in any sort of bondage, we in this country having emancipated ourselves from serfdom many centuries ago, and the world around being generally regarded as peopled by free men.

It will be readily admitted that we are all bondservants of corruption; there is no one who can say with truth, "My life is my own; I can retain it indefinitely and shall not see death." The Bible teaching is very emphatic on the mortality of man; it speaks of all flesh as being like the grass that withereth; "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4). "Man hath no pre-eminence above a beast," "as the one dieth, so dieth the other." (Ecclesiastes 3:19). No man "can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him that he should still live for ever."

The Scriptures are thus opposed to the teachings of certain Egyptian, Grecian and other philosophers regarding the immortality of the soul, declaring that "God only hath immortality."

In very simple language the first chapters of Genesis tell us how man failed in his probation and of his subsequent removal from the Paradise of God wherein was the Tree of Life. We note from Genesis 1:27, that man was made in the image of God; with just this difference, that, whereas "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24) man was made of the dust of the ground (earthy), hence his name Adam, meaning 'red earth.'

We may surmise that it was in the purpose of God to promote man to something better than his earthy nature if he had successfully passed his period of probation. But the Divine plan was, and is, "first that which is natural and then that which is spiritual." The wisdom of this order is seen when we try to contemplate what the outcome would have been if man had been made in the same nature as angels (to die no more) and then had failed to keep the commandment under which he had been placed.

In fulfilling one of the chief purposes or objects of his creation, that of being fruitful, multiplying and replenishing the earth (Genesis 1:28; Mark 10), he was obeying God's command: if we say that man was created immortal, and then failed in his probation, the result of disobedience to this command would have been a race of immortal sinners - truly a state of chaos.

Only in the mental sphere did man differ from the rest of the living creatures which God had made; He was given a reasoning mind and equipped with this he was able to have fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden, and could thus be placed under a simple law by which the character of the new-made man could be tested. Character, of course, being the only unknown quality of his nature, for physically, like all the rest of creation, he was declared to be very good (Genesis 1:31). The commandment Adam received before he was joined by his "help-meet," Eve, was "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16,17).

Before we leave this passage we must point out that the marginal alternative of verse 17, "Dying thou shalt die," in no way minimises the penalty for the transgression; nor does it in any way qualify its manner of infliction. It is an idiom of the Hebrew language, which uses many such expressions, as for example, "Eating thou shalt eat," "Drinking thou shalt drink" meaning simply "Thou shalt certainly eat," and "Thou shalt certainly drink." The penalty therefore, for infringement of the law was death on the day of transgression. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

If, as many people imagine, the punishment for Adam's sin was natural death, the death he and all his descendants die normally at the end of life, there would appear to be no point in God using the same threat again to any other of Adam's race, seeing they would die naturally in any case. Yet in the 20th chapter of

Genesis there is a record of the use of identical words by God to Abimelech. They are in the 7th verse and read “Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt surely die (dying thou shalt die), thou, and all that are thine.” Abimelech certainly did not think that this meant that he would die eventually at the end of his natural life, but that he would come to an untimely end.

The issue before Adam was perfectly clear therefore; he knew good by all he experienced: created a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8) he had dominion over all the rest of living creatures and lived in a paradise planted by God, and had access to the Tree of Life. To partake of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil would in ordinary circumstances have brought to Adam the evil of an untimely death.

Now as we have seen, the commandment was given to Adam before he was joined by Eve in the Garden, but as subsequent events prove, she was aware of the commandment. To disprove the idea held by some that the result of -their sin had anything to do with their sex relationship, and was the so-called ‘original sin;’ we quote the words of Adam when Eve was first presented to him, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:23,24). We would further remind the reader that God Himself said in His blessing to the man and the woman, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, “God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...” This was the object of their creation; male and female, as in the case of all other created things. Jesus also endorsed these words when He said, “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.” (Mark 10:6-8).

They were created male and female, flesh and blood, and told to multiply and replenish the earth. “He (God) hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” (Acts 17:26).

And, be it known, flesh and blood, though created by the Eternal One, is not of Angelic nature, nor is it Divine nature. Paul reminds us of this when he writes in the 15th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians at verse 50, “This I say, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” Very clearly, then, do we see that the life of the first created pair depended absolutely upon their obedience to God’s commandment. In their day it was “Do this and thou shalt surely die,” just as in our day the rule is “Do this and thou shalt live (eternally).” If the story of the “fall” be carefully studied it will be seen that there were extenuating circumstances in Adam’s case. Eve had already fallen a victim when Adam came into the way of temptation through her.

We accept a literal meaning of the words recording these events although a figurative interpretation can be placed upon the words used and the action taken by God as a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve. For instance, we believe that there was a literal tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that there was a literal serpent, who noticed the beauty of its fruit, and not being himself a moral agent, wondered why Adam and Eve did not partake of its fruit notwithstanding God’s ban upon so doing. The facts are that they partook of the forbidden tree, were troubled by their conscience and endeavoured to clothe themselves and hide from God’s presence. The record says, “Their eyes were opened,” which, of course, can only mean the eyes of their minds. They now realised their mistake and could no longer stand unabashed in their innocence like the animals, without any sense of shame before their Creator, as hitherto they had done. Conscious now of evil as well as good, they considered some parts of the body which Paul said “God had set as it pleased Him” as “uncomely.” (1 Corinthians 12:18-26).

But their efforts to clothe themselves and to hide from God were both futile, for soon they were arraigned before the Lord God to give an account of their action. Then God, after the inquiry, proceeds to tell them of the consequences of their sin in the order of their coming into effect, and it is here we notice figurative language used as well as literal.

Firstly, to the serpent God says, “Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:14,15).

Literally the serpent is cursed above all other beasts, and whatever way it proceeded before, the serpent does now go on its belly. But serpents do not in our day eat dust, so here we must look for a figurative meaning. It is easy to find such a meaning. The serpent was to become a symbol or personification of sin. By sin, or transgression of law, Adam, failing in his probation, returns to dust, thus becoming the serpent's meat; the victim of sin. So then, as long as 'sin' lives, man returns to dust. But there is an end to the life of the serpent, or sin, because of the enmity between the serpent and the woman particularly between their respective seeds. The serpent, or sin, brings forth as its seed death (James 1:15), while the seed of the woman, who gives the fatal wound in the head, although Himself being wounded for our transgressions, is spoken of as "Our Saviour Jesus Christ who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10).

Secondly. "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Everything in this sentence can be taken literally; the woman would indeed bring forth her children in sorrow, realizing that by her weakness in yielding to the serpent's suggestion instead of serving God, her children would be denied that fellowship with God which existed in the garden of Eden. Her conception was indeed multiplied. There is no record of Adam having any other wife yet he lived 800 years after the birth of his third son, Seth, and begat sons and daughters. (Genesis 5:4).

Thirdly. Unto Adam God said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return." (Genesis 3:17-19). This, of course, was not death on the day of transgression. What, then, had intervened to alter the purpose of God? Those great attributes of the Almighty, Love and Mercy, were exercised in order that He might be the Saviour of the world (1 Timothy 4:10). His purpose was not to be set aside forever, there was yet to be a death "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament." (Hebrews 9:15). God so loved the world that He was willing to provide a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8).

Adam's position vividly recalls the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 130:3,4, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared."

We think there was forgiveness in Adam's case although he had to suffer certain consequences of his disobedience. First, the ground was cursed for his sake: he would no longer have God to plant a garden for him, but would have to fend for himself against thorns and thistles. He had failed to earn a title to Divine Nature and now natural decay would overtake him like all the rest of created things, and he would return to dust, for "Man hath no pre-eminence over a beast, as the one dieth so dieth the other... All go to one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake," may also have a figurative meaning. He was taken from the ground and himself brought forth such men as Cain, whose characters causing so much sorrow, could be regarded as thorns and thistles. Yet while this may be so, as we have stated, there was also a literal application.

Following upon the statement of God to Adam there are two remarkable verses in the third chapter of Genesis. Hitherto the helpmeet of Adam had been referred to as "the woman," and in verse 20 we read "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." It is highly significant that following upon the statement of God to Adam (the sentence which is regarded by many Bible students as the point at which Adam began to die, on a false idea of the meaning of the Hebrew idiom "dying thou shalt die") that Adam should call his wife by a name meaning "life" as being the mother of all living, when as yet she had no child.

It is possible that from the word spoken by God regarding the "seed of the woman" that Adam foresaw that "one" who would be born of the woman that mankind might have life and have it more abundantly.

(John 10:10). The next verse suggests that this is not an unreasonable conjecture - "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Genesis 3:21).

In their nakedness they had attempted to clothe themselves, but their fig-leaf covering was apparently unsatisfactory to God. Thus in this first record of man's need of clothing we find God Himself provided the means, and thereby established a principle. To make coats of skins one or more animals must be slain; the life would be poured out, and this being done on behalf of Adam and Eve the animal thus sacrificed would become man's substitute, and its death would be a "death for sin" (man's sin), for it is written "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22).

The New Testament in several places teaches that to be clothed with garments provided by God is equivalent to having one's sins covered or forgiven. In the parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22), the man not having put on the Wedding Garment, and being without excuse for his omission, is cast into outer darkness. He had not availed himself of the covering provided by the King for those called to the Kingdom (or Marriage). The Laodiceans had by their neglect of the Truth's requirements become, amongst other things, naked and were counselled to buy "gold, tried in the fire... and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." (Revelation 3:17,18). Adam and Eve, therefore, being clothed by God at the expense of the life of an animal (or animals) were forgiven their sin, but the death of a lamb was only token payment of the penalty; they had forfeited their lives by their disobedience, but a life in their nature must in due time pay the penalty on their behalf, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4).

If the animal sacrifices under the Law of Moses pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, surely this cover provided in Eden was also a type of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (John 1:29).

We note that according to the terms of the commandment given to Adam, he ought to have died on the day of transgression, but his life was spared and a substitute provided by God was sacrificed on his behalf. This (violent or judicial) death was the death that "came by sin," but natural death was also a consequence of sin in that the man, Adam and his wife Eve, were now turned out of the Garden of Eden and Cherubim were placed at the door to bar the way to the Tree of Life "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." (Genesis 3:22 & 24).

It is surely evident from this that there was no change in the constitution of our first parents due to their disobedience, as some have taught. There is no evidence whatsoever in the Divine record of an "implantation of the physical law of decay," neither is there mention of an element in the fruit of the tree which was poisonous to their system, introducing corruptibility or mortality into their nature. They were created in a nature which was corruptible, of the earth, earthy; not a Divine Nature, and being kept therefore, from the tree of life, that nature took the course of all flesh, which is death by physical exhaustion.

It was to be the work of the "second man," "the last Adam," (1 Corinthians 15: 45 & 47) to approach the tree of life and to "taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9). There can be no doubt that animal sacrifices from this time were used as an approach to God. It is a Scriptural teaching that the "life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:11), and blood is accepted on the altar as an atonement for the soul or life. Thus in pouring out the blood of an animal man acknowledges that his life was forfeited by sin, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:20).

We think, then, that it is perfectly clear that death, whether we regard the sacrificial death of animals whose blood is poured out to make reconciliation for mankind, or the natural death that has come upon mankind, came because of Adam's transgression of Divine Law. He was driven out of Eden "... lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life... and live forever..." So it is, then, "by one man's offence (that) death reigned." (Romans 5:17) and it is "by one man's disobedience (that) many were made (or constituted) sinners." (Romans 5:19). Why? Because Adam is typical of all mankind; he is a true representative of the race of which he is the progenitor, as it is written in Romans 5:14, "...the figure of him that was to come." We can see the justice and mercy of God in this when we realise that, on the other hand, it is by the obedience (and love) of one that many are similarly constituted righteous (Romans 5:19).

On this principle there is no need for each individual sinner to provide his own Saviour, or to offer an animal sacrifice for his sin, as there is a way or means of association with the sacrifice of that man who has “offered one sacrifice for sins for ever.” (Hebrews 10:12).

There can be no doubt that God had foreseen the possibility and had prepared for Adam’s fall. He was made in a nature which was corruptible so that in the event of failure in his probation, he could be kept from the tree of life and his flesh allowed, like the grass, to wither and die in God’s own time. (1 Peter 1:24). Had he been successful in his probation, then Adam could, by Divine operation, be born again, or re-created, for “except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” (John 3:3). Jesus taught plainly that human nature is not Divine nature when He said “That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6). We see then, how utterly helpless man was in his fallen state, being as Paul declares in Romans 5, “Without strength.” This of course, is to be understood as referring to his inability to redeem himself from the position of estrangement from his God, in which he found himself as a result of his transgression of the Law of his Maker.

God only could provide the means of ransom. His immutable Law could not be set aside, and so His love is commended to us in that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6).

The position in which Adam found himself after transgression is similar to that of all his descendants who are born of the lust, or will of the flesh, although in their case through no fault of their own. Born outside the Paradise of God, mankind is denied that fellowship with his God which existed before the “fall.” They are regarded by Scripture as “all under sin.” (Romans 3). All have come short of the glory of God, which, of course, is an eternal glory? but there are individual members of the human race who have by faith and obedience and through God’s mercy established a title to the glory that shall be revealed.

It may be interesting at this point to consider one or two members of this class. The first to be mentioned in the Bible is Abel. (Genesis 4:4). He brought the firstlings of his flock and offered such in sacrifice to his God, Jehovah. He evidently had learned the lesson that “without shedding of blood (there) is no remission” of sin. (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus speaks of him as “righteous Abel” and Paul in Hebrews 9 says that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Now there were only two sources from which Abel could have learned the lesson of sacrifice. The knowledge came to him either through his parents, Adam and Eve, or it came direct from God Himself. In either case it would show that God still took an interest in the eternal welfare of His creatures notwithstanding the estrangement caused by sin. Indeed we might safely assume that Adam and Eve were again on probation for eternal life, but this time under the redemption typified by the cover that God had provided for them, which denoted the necessity of the shedding of blood, the pouring out of the life.

God has offered salvation to sinners who have committed many offences, not just one, as in Adam’s case.

God was prepared to accept the person of Cain, whose birth is regarded by some as being the result of the sin of our first parents. Those who hold this view do not realise that it was because he slew his brother, and because he rejected God’s terms of acceptance, that “he was of that Evil One,” and not because of his birth.

When Cain made a sacrifice of the fruit of the ground, which was not acceptable to his Maker, the Lord God said to him, “If thou doest well, shall thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” (Genesis 4:7). The word translated ‘sin’ here (Hebrew, *chattath*) means a sin-offering. The means of reconciliation was there at hand; an animal lay at the door of the fold and might have been taken and offered in sacrifice. Having rejected this means of reconciliation even when he had not “done well,” Cain could truly be said to be “of that Evil One;” a servant of Sin instead of a servant of God.

A few generations from Adam brings us to another character who, like Abel, found favour with God. We refer to Enoch who is one of those of whom the Scripture record says that he “walked with God.” (Genesis 5:22-24). Now one of the inspired writers informs us that “two cannot walk together except they be agreed,” so we must conclude that some measure of reconciliation had been effected between God and this man whose character so pleased God that he was preserved, and spared that death which is the common lot

of all mankind. The lack of Scriptural information prevents further comment on the character of Enoch, except to say that he was a prophet who spoke of the return of the Lord. (Jude 14).

The great-grandson of Enoch was also one who found favour in the eyes of Jehovah. (Genesis 6:8). The Divine record says "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation." We notice in the sixth chapter of Genesis that "God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.... for the earth is filled with violence." (Genesis 6:12,13). In view of the previous statement we must conclude that those of whom are referred to as "all flesh" who had corrupted God's way upon the earth Noah and his sons were excluded. Similarly the statement in Romans 2, where the Apostle charges both Jews and Greeks with being under sin, asserting that "there is none righteous," must be understood to allow for exceptions; and it must be given a general application, especially in view of the Apostle's subsequent remarks concerning Abraham of whom he says that "his faith was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3).

We must take heed to the Apostle's exhortation, for he reminds the believers that they are no longer under Sin's jurisdiction; they can no longer "serve sin," having died to sin symbolically in the waters of baptism, and he says in Romans 6:18, "Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

Noah, then, being a just and perfect man, and having faith in God's word, expressed his obedience thereto by making the Ark, as God had commanded. By his action in thus preparing them against the "wrath to come" he became a preacher of righteousness and by his faith "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7). The first thing Noah did on emerging safely from the Ark was to offer up one of all the clean animals and fowl as a burnt offering unto Jehovah.

Animal sacrifices found their place also in the life of Abraham, on that memorable day when God made a covenant with him, Abraham was commanded to take certain animals and birds and divide in the midst the animals only. (Genesis 15:10). These are the words recorded: "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he (God) said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And... thou shalt be buried in a good old age."

We have often wondered what this "horror of great darkness" prefigured in this incident that happened to Abraham. It has been thought that the sleep of death was indicated before Abraham should inherit the promises. Perhaps so, but why a "horror of darkness" in death which is referred to by God at this time as a "going to his fathers in peace"? We suggest this "horror of darkness" prefigured two things. First it prefigured the Children of Israel in their Egyptian bondage and secondly, it indicated the darkness in which the nations walk before they see the "great light."

The children of Israel during their bondage in Egypt were strangers in a strange land, without God, without a leader, slaves of the lowest order and almost without hope of Deliverance. But God raised them up a Deliverer in the person of Moses, who was a type of their Messiah (Christ), being one of the people himself, yet providentially not himself in the same bondage. He came with signs and wonders to reveal the purpose of the Great "I am" with the people whom He was to redeem, or buy back unto himself. It was not without the shedding of blood that the redemption of the people from the house of bondage was to be accomplished. A lamb without spot or blemish was to be sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses. This was the sign whereby the people of God would be known. The people of the sprinkled blood could not acceptably serve Jehovah in the land of Egypt. No man can serve two masters; and so they were brought forth by the hand of Moses to be a peculiar people unto the Lord their God; they were separated from their former taskmasters and from all other peoples in order that Him only should they serve who was their God.

This separation was accomplished in several stages (as with the people of God in this age). They received their call while still in bondage, and would witness some of the judgments poured out on the nation that refused to let them go. Their obedience and faith was tested in the instructions concerning, and the observance of the Passover; but they did not reach the Promised Land until after their baptism in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:2).and forty years pilgrimage in the wilderness. The land of darkness was then altogether

behind them, the God-given illumination beheld by Abraham in the vision denoting the end of the sojourn in bondage. Genesis 15:17 reads: “And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying. Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” In Exodus 13:21 we read: “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.”

At the end of their period of bondage God provided the light to lead them by day or night to bring them into the land of promise. How much was actually revealed to Abraham in the vision he had while watching the slain animals we do not know, but Abraham had asked, “Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” and this we presume was the answer: sacrifice, horror of darkness and a burning lamp. Now as Jesus is the Minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Romans 15:8), and as He Himself said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad,” we can only presume that Abraham was acquainted by this means of the purpose of Jesus Christ as the Light of the World and the Lamb of God.

In the Epistle to the Galatians we learn that “the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (nations) through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Now as most people acquainted with the Scriptures will admit, the Gospel is the good news concerning the Kingdom of God. Paul, reminding the Corinthians how he preached unto them the gospel, goes on to say, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” Here we have the first principles of Christian doctrine which must certainly have been known to Abraham, viz..

The death for sin, and the resurrection of the dead (without the hope of which faith is vain)
His future inheritance of the land of promise (in other words the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth).

Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac, his son, in the assured belief that God was able to raise him again from death. (Hebrews 11:19).

Now there could be no resurrection from the dead to immortality until He come who is the “Resurrection and the Life.” The life of mankind, forfeited by sin in Eden, must be atoned for by one not himself a transgressor (or legally, sin’s servant) in order to merit resurrection. It was in the mind and purpose of God to raise up a “Second Man” or Second Adam, who would be able to do what was beyond the power of the first Adam to do after he had sinned, that is to pay the penalty incurred by sin and yet retain his right to the “Tree of Life.”

Ws have seen that the penalty Adam incurred by sin was death on the day of transgression, but this penalty (a judicially inflicted death) was not inflicted on Adam but on the animal slain in substitution to provide a covering of skin.

To have carried out the requirements of the Law would have meant an interruption in the Divine plan of creation, for God declares through the prophet Isaiah that He created the earth, not in vain, but to be inhabited. (Isaiah 45). This surely was implied in the commandment to the newly created pair in Genesis 1, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” If our first parents had been created immortal, as some affirm, this command to be fruitful, and multiply, would hardly have been necessary, for surely the earth would soon be replenished if none of its population ever died; but as we are assured in 1 Corinthians 15, “there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” and of course, the natural comes first, out of which, if a successful probation is run, must come the spiritual. Had Adam been successful in his first probation God would (probably) have conferred upon him a change of nature. He would then, like the last Adam, have become a quickening spirit, and there would be no necessity for another to be raised up to become the First-born of a New Creation and the Everlasting Father. Seeing then that these titles, and others of similar import, converge on the Lord Jesus Christ, it will now be seen in some measure how He merits them.

“The opening verses of the New Testament speak of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. We see at once that He was born according to the flesh in a line of men who had covenants, or were in covenant relationship, with the Great Creator. Naturally so, for both covenants were concerned with Jesus. Since the time of Adam there has been no tree of life to attract mankind, but God eventually planted a vineyard from which He looked for justice and righteousness. (See Isaiah 5). In the main He failed to get these fruits but the vine-yard (Israel) did bring forth by God’s planting the True Vine, the Son of God, the owner of the Vineyard, as the prophet declared should happen. We must never forget that while Jesus was the Son of Man He was also the Son of God, and as such He obtains by inheritance a more excellent name than even angels. (Hebrews 1:4,5)

This fact is often overlooked by one section of Bible readers and in the interests of Truth we must have a look at some of their reasoning on this matter. This is one of their assertions: “The flesh is invariably regarded as unclean. It is written, ‘How can he be clean that is born of a woman?’ (Job 25). ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one,’ (Job 14) and ‘What is man, that he - should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in His saints? yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight’ (Job 15:14,15)”

After these quotations the writer goes on to speak of Jesus thus: “His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom He died, for He was born of a woman and not one can bring a clean body out of a defiled body for that, says Jesus, which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

It will be readily noticed that most of these quotations are from the book of Job, and are by different speakers - Bildad, Job, and Eliphaz. Not one of these in their arguments against each other could be taken as being divinely inspired. Their “darkening of counsel by words without knowledge” was repudiated by Jehovah. (Job 38:1,2). Whereupon Job said, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 41:6) and his three companions are commanded to offer up seven bullocks and seven rams for a burnt offering, making use of Job as their priest. But Job had spoken more rightly than his fellows, and so to be perfectly fair we must examine the words that he uttered. Here are his words (Job 14:4) : “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.”

Now, does this suggest that all flesh is invariably regarded as unclean? Not if we must follow the reasoning of Scripture; for was it not the purpose of God (Who of course, could do the thing in question) to claim for himself the children of Israel in Himself? Was not one of the purposes of the Law to teach Israel to make a distinction between the clean and the unclean, including “clean and unclean men and women”? (Leviticus 7:19; Numbers 9:9-13; 19:19). And how very plain is the way to attain this cleanness with which the Scriptures are concerned, rather than a physical one. Here it is: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.” (Psalm 119:9). “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.” (Psalm 119:1). “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” (Psalm 19:7). This is how the legally unclean may be cleansed.

The suggestion we are considering is that Jesus was unclean because He was born of a woman, and because He was flesh and blood. We have just shown that the cleansing process is by taking heed to God’s word. That word He has sanctified above His name. Let us consult that word for information concerning Christ’s coming in the flesh. We read in John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” There is not the slightest suggestion of defilement in that statement. It is just the contrary, and is quite in keeping with all Scripture teaching that anything used specifically for God’s purpose is set apart, or sanctified; hence the Glory, Grace and Truth of God’s own Son, notwithstanding His having come in the flesh, (though not born of the will of the flesh). He was Holy Harmless Undefiled, and Separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26), doing always the things that pleased His Father. He was the Holy Jesus. (Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27,30)

These testimonies do not mean that Jesus was removed from all temptation. He had the lusts, or desires of the flesh common to all men, but in His case lust was not allowed to conceive and bring forth sin; therefore it could be said with truth, He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15). Now we admit that a man born of two human beings, born of a woman and of a man, would be regarded by God as being unclean, i.e. legally unclean, being Sin’s bondservant; Jesus was not of this category. He was not born of a human pair; God was His Father, not man. We are, as Paul says in

Ephesians 2:1-3, “dead in trespasses and sins” and are “children of disobedience.” This of course refers to the time when we were in the position described in verses 11 and 12, as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But so far, we have considered the cases of persons who were inside the covenant fold,

Mary the mother of Jesus was not only one of the covenant race, but was also in the royal line with which God had a special covenant. She is described as the handmaid of the Lord, and the woman whom all generations would call blessed.

If any reader still holds the view that Jesus was an unclean person by being born of Mary, we remind him of what Paul says of a child born of a union where one was definitely an unbeliever, “... the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Corinthians 7:14). Again the Holy Spirit to Peter, “What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common (or unclean),” even though it be a Gentile, as Cornelius. (Acts 10).

Jesus in His ministry referred to the writings of Moses and other Old Testament worthies as the “Word of God which cannot be broken,” and we shall see by their teaching on Ransom (or Redemption) how it is necessary that the Redeemer must Himself be free to pay the price of ransom. We can see the idea at a glance when we recall the old time custom of capturing a wealthy man and holding him a prisoner until a ransom be paid.

A similar system applied in the case of an Israelite who, having fallen upon bad times, sold either his inheritance or even himself unto bondage. In the case of his inheritance - a possession of land - a ransom could be arranged at any time by a kinsman of the unfortunate one, though in the case of any land it could not be sold for ever and if not redeemed must go back to the original owner at the Jubilee year. So in Leviticus 25:24,25, we read, “And in all the land of your possession, ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”

Reading in the same chapter, verse 47-49 are the words, “And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family: after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: either his uncle or his uncle’s son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him: or if he be able, he may redeem himself.”

With the lessons of the Old Testament, then, as a background, we begin to see how we may have redemption in Christ Jesus.

Adam, by disobeying the Law became a servant of sin, and, as the Representative Head of his race, sold himself and all with him into the bond-service of Sin, “Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation” (Romans 5:18). But the judgment was suspended in Adam’s case so that the love of God and His mercy might abound.

(This may sound strange to those who believe that natural death is the judgment that came upon Adam, but there is a vast difference between “In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die,” and dying more than 900 years later, after begetting many sons and daughters.)

Paul says in Hebrews 9:27, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this (when the death state ends in resurrection) the judgment.” Jesus, of course, is the appointed Judge of all human kind (John 5:26-29). Even the angels who kept not their first estate are reserved unto the Day of Judgment. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6 and 1 Corinthians 6:3).

The offering of the blood of animals as a sacrifice to God was a continual reminder that the life of mankind had been forfeited by sin. Adam was a Son of God by creation (Luke 3:38), and the right of redemption being held by a near kinsman, only another Son of God could fitly be the Redeemer. So in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4,5). Jesus came as He declared, to “give His life a ransom for many.” It was

not demanded of Him, but He and the Father were at one in the reconciliation of the Word, therefore He willingly laid down His life for the Life of the World, the Life of the Sheep. "No man", He declared, "taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18).

So on Calvary, the debt incurred in Eden, and constantly recurring in the lives of the sons of Adam since that time, was paid off for all time. By the Grace of God, Jesus tasted death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9). He came that we might have life. Yes, that is what mankind forfeits by sin; the wages of sin is death. But the death of Jesus not only insured the life of the world (John 6:51), but He came that we might have life more abundantly (John 10:10), even eternal life.

As we have stated before, in order that Jesus could lay down His life for His friends/ and still justify a resurrection from the dead, it was necessary that He be free from every taint of sin. Although descended from Adam on the material side we see how, by His Divine begetting, He received life direct from the Source of all life. God Himself, and all Scriptural testimony on the subject shows inheritance was always reckoned through the male line. He was therefore free from every condemnation, having by inheritance obtained a name "more excellent than the angels." In fact, there is no other name given under heaven whereby we might be saved. (Acts 4:12). Jesus never became a servant of sin because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. So God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Therefore He could truly say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth for ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:34-36).

This freedom held out to believers by Christ Jesus is freedom from the bondage of sin. The sixth chapter of Romans, verses 6 & 7 reads: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." J.N.Darby, in his new translation of the Bible, comments on these verses as follows: "Serve, here, means to serve as bondmen. 'Free' is ambiguous. It is justified, cleared, discharged - from sin, note, not from sins."

Yes, that conforms clearly with the teachings of Romans 5 and 6. It is the one sin of Adam that has brought the sentence on all men and it is the one righteous act of Jesus in crucifixion that has obliterated this sin of the world. How clearly shine; the Love and Mercy of God in the Gospel in including us all in the one sin of Adam so that we can all share in the one redemption; instead of each needing an individual Saviour.

There is indeed a Ransom for all, but the great question is will all respond? We know that in the days of slavery there were those who did not desire freedom, they loved their masters and decided to remain with them. Similarly, in Divine things there are many who of their own choice still serve the "body of sin," sometimes called "the old man," "the adversary and the devil," which of course is an expression personifying "transgression of the Law."

These transgressors have not died to sin in the waters of baptism as prescribed by Paul in Romans 6, neither have they been begotten again by the Word of God, the incorruptible seed. But the invitation is still open to them, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." The whole earth is yet to be filled with God's Glory as He declared through the mouth of the prophets. We can by faith and obedience, belong to this new world order, or we can reject the invitation at our peril, for it is written, "He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

The choice is ours; "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

Brother H. Taberner

Further Extracts from

THE DEVIL AND HELL OF THE BIBLE

Chapter Five

ARE DEVILS FALLEN ANGELS?

Is it possible that God would ask us to believe that one who is found worthy of becoming a holy angel, worthy of being clothed with immortality, one who has become “holy and without blemish” could turn and rebel against the Eternal Creator who had lifted him to glory and eternal life? If an angel could fall from such an exalted position, what assurance would you or I have that after spending our lives developing the character God desires and receiving God’s approval for our efforts, a like cataclysm might not overtake us?

But no, such a thing is unthinkable; it is impossible; it is unscriptural. If one can rebel after being saved and given immortality, then the promise of Isaiah” 45:17 is untrue; “But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” It will be an everlasting salvation - no danger of falling.

Yet various groups of religious-minded persons hold to the theory that devils were once bright angels around the throne of glory in the high courts of heaven. To support this position they frequently turn to Isaiah 14 for evidence. Verse 12 reads; “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

Who Was Lucifer?

Harper’s Bible Dictionary says of the name Lucifer as used in Isaiah 14:12, “Used to render the Hebrew ‘shining one’ applied to the King of Babylon, fallen from his high estate. In the 3rd century A.D. the saying of Jesus: ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven’ (Luke 10:18) was erroneously supposed to refer to Isaiah 14:12. Hence, Lucifer came to be regarded as the name of Satan before his fall.” Not until the third century was Lucifer regarded as Satan.

The context of Isaiah 14:12 makes very plain who this Lucifer was, and from what heaven he fell. We are told in verse 4: “Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!” The narrative is a proverb, and it is directed against whom? Against the king of Babylon, and no one else.

The narrative continues in the following verses, still referring to the deposed I and slain king of Babylon, until verse 12, where the taunt is flung (some commentators style it a taunt-song): “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

Verses 13 and 14 continue: “Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

When the king of Babylon said in his heart, “I will ascend into heaven,” he was not necessarily speaking of the physical heaven. When he said, “I will exalt myself above the stars of God,” he was not speaking of the stars that shine in the firmament on a dark night. He was saying, “I will exalt myself above the other political leaders in my realm.” His one design that would concern the people of Judah the most of the time of which Isaiah prophesied could have been his determination to exalt himself above the “stars” or kings in their immediate realm, Jerusalem, their seat of government, to make them one of his satellites. That such was his design is shown in the following sentence: “I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.” Jerusalem, as the seat of secular and religious authority, is indicated here. Jerusalem is similarly identified in Psalm 48:1,2: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of

our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

The term “heaven” is used elsewhere in the Scriptures of the political leadership: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken;” “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:2,10).

The context in Isaiah 14 also clearly identifies the nature of Lucifer: he was a man. Notice verse 16: “They that see shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?”

To summarize: Lucifer was a man, the king of Babylon; and he fell from heaven, from his seat of authority and power, and became weak as one of the common people. Could anything be plainer than this, when we let the Almighty use His own qualifying terms?

Who was the Cherub of Ezekiel 28?

Was the cherub of Ezekiel 28 the likeness of Lucifer, or in any way related to the devil?

Let us look closely at the context of the chapter. Verses 1 and 2 read: “The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying. Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God...” The word of the Lord was being directed to the “prince of Tyrus,” in its immediate significance. And for longer-range application, we find the meaning of the word “Tyrus” is, “an adversary, an enemy reserved for the day of judgement and vengeance.” The prince of Tyrus, in a spiritual sense, includes all those who prove unfaithful, those who become enemies of God, whom God will bring to judgment to “convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.” (Jude 15,16).

Ezekiel says further: “Thus saith the Lord God: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.”

Verse 12 contains more of the message: “Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering.” The persons represented here had been in Eden, the vineyard or garden of the Lord, where all of God’s servants labour during their day of salvation. As servants of God, they had been heir to God’s richest blessings, even life for evermore; but they did not choose to submit themselves to the rule of God.

“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezekiel 28:12-16). The position of these persons is the same as that of the Galatian brethren, to whom Paul wrote many years later: “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Galatians 5:7).

What will be the result of their disobedience? “Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee” (V.18). “Fire,” representative of the judgments of God, shall “devour” them, and “never shalt thou be any more” (V. 19).

No, the cherub does not represent the devil as a monster or spirit or demon, or as a fallen angel, but only unfaithful servants of God who could have received God’s high honours and blessings for faithfulness, but who proved disloyal to their trust, thus making themselves subjects of God’s judgment.

What Angels “Kept Not Their First Estate”?

If devils are not angels fallen from heaven, who are the “angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation” (Jude 5,6)?

Jude writes of a particular event in history. Let us begin reading at verse 5:

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.” Notice particularly in this verse that Jude wishes us to recall something that occurred when the Lord saved His people out of Egypt. Jude is not calling our attention to something that happened up in heaven, but to what happened when He saved the people out of the land of Egypt.

Verse 6 continues: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

First let us ask: Who were these angels? What is the meaning of the word “angel”? Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon defines the word *‘angelos’* translated “angels” in Jude, as “messengers, envoy, generally one that announces or tells.” The term may refer either to mortal or immortal messengers.

What kind of messengers was Jude speaking about? They were messengers who were serving in the days when the Lord saved His people out of the land of Egypt.

When Israel first came to the borders of the Promised Land, about two years after their departure from Egypt, “the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them” (Numbers 13:2). Here were twelve men, rulers among them, men high in authority, chosen to be messengers sent into the land of Canaan. Moses sent them to spy out the land to bring an account of it.

After forty days the messengers returned from their search, bringing with them luscious grapes, pomegranates and figs. Ten of these messengers brought also an evil report of the land (Numbers 13:32), which caused a mass rebellion among the Israelites, turning them against Moses and Aaron, also against Caleb and Joshua, who refused to consent with the evil report. We read: “And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation murmur against him, by bringing up slander upon the land, even those men... died by the plague before the Lord” (Numbers 14:36,37). This explains who were these messengers who fell from their high estate when God delivered His people from Egypt.

These men had a high estate - each was a ruler in his tribe; but by their disobedience they fell, and they are “reserved unto the day of judgment.” Neither Jude, nor any other Bible author, ever taught that angels, glorified, immortal beings can fall from the heaven where God dwells. But when we let the Bible interpret itself, all is plain.

Jesus Beheld Satan Fall.

When the seventy disciples whom Jesus sent forth returned, having accomplished their mission, Jesus “said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Who was the Satan that He was talking about?

Satan, as we have discussed already, may be used as the personification of evil and sin. Revelation assures us that Satan - sin and all sinners - is doomed for eventual destruction in the “lake of fire... which is the second death” (Rev. 20:9,10; 21:8).

When Jesus said he “beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” He spoke prophetically. The heaven this Satan now occupies is not God’s heaven, but the social and political heavens of our troubled cosmos. But Satan will fall from it, be cast out, when Christ and His co-rulers take the reins of government and suppress all evil. During the Millennial reign, sin and all sinners will be bound and at the close of the Millennium eliminated. Satan will fall from heaven.

‘Sin shall lose its last dominion on earth.

Chapter Six.

WHAT DEVILS DID JESUS CAST OUT?

On several occasions during Jesus' ministry He was said to cast out devils. An outstanding example of this was Jesus' healing the insane man (Luke 8:26 - 34). The devils were said to have left the insane man and entered into a herd of swine.

Knowing that the word "devil" is used to refer to an opposer, as when Peter opposed Jesus (Matthew 16:23), we can understand that a devil might also refer to that which opposes a healthy condition of body or mind. In the Gospels, diseases are often called devils. The Greek word employed is '*daimonion*,' meaning "demon."

The man referred to in Luke 8 was insane. This can be readily observed from the narrative, beginning at verse 26.

Verse 29 reveals that the man was insane. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness)." The word used here is '*daimon*,' meaning "a deified spirit" (of a bad nature).

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep" (vs. 30,31). Here was evidenced the confused thinking of an insane man; he thought of himself as a dual personality, "legion."

In verses 32 and 33, the insane man, thinking himself to be many in one, and termed "devils," "they," and "them," implored Jesus that the disease might leave him and go into the swine. This Jesus did; He had the power to cure the insane man, also the ability to infect the swine with a mental disturbance that had afflicted the man, with the result that the swine ran into the lake and were drowned.

Verse 35 shows definitely that the man was insane. The text reads: "Then they (the people of the nearby village) went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." The man was now in his right mind. He had been insane, and Jesus had healed his insanity.

In Matthew 12:43 - 45 Jesus spoke a parable that may have been suggested by a case history of an insane man who had been healed. In this case the man who had seemed to be cured suffered a relapse, and his condition became worse than it had been before.

The narrative reads: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

The lesson in this parable is the persistence of wickedness. It returns, and the soul not indwelt by the rightful tenant - righteousness - is always beleaguered. Rejection of evil is never enough; at best it is only a prelude to a new loyalty. Nature and human nature both abhor a vacuum: no faith is almost worse than a bad faith, for no faith invites a swarm of bad faiths; no life remains empty of worship. It doesn't help a man to know what he does not believe, unless he knows also what he does believe.

The Pharisees had cast out the gross sins, but they left life empty of any loyalty beyond themselves. So seven other "devils" arrived, such as love of money, greed, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy. In the form of a parable our Lord was foretelling the degeneration of the people who imagine that they have nothing to learn from Him, although He has more wisdom to impart than Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba.

Chapter Seven.

RESISTING THE DEVIL.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” commanded the practical James (4:7)

Who or what is this “devil”? Can we identify him? Is he a real corporeal enemy?

If on D-day during World War II the Allied forces landing on the beachhead of Normandy had found no enemy, met no opposition, what a strange situation it would have been. Or, to make the metaphor still more ridiculous, if they knew nothing about the type of fighting men they were to encounter, nothing of their armaments, or their ability to fight, nothing of their manoeuvrability or their possible war strategy, what a predicament they would have been in!

But that is just the position we are in today in our religious life if the theory of much of the religious world were true. We have been made familiar with one feature of the devil of popular belief. He is sometimes said to be heavily armed, but we have never been shown one piece of his armament. He is said to have a personality of his own, but we have never seen so much as one hair of his head. He must have a voice, for he is said to go about as a roaring lion “seeking whom he may devour,” but we have never so much as heard a faint whisper in our ear at any time during our entire lives.

History states that Martin Luther thought he was familiar with the devil, that he “lived in constant consciousness of contact and opposition with the evil one. At his study, in bed, or in his cell, the devil was incessantly interfering with his work or rest. As he was going to begin his studies he heard a noise which he immediately interpreted as proceeding from his enemy. He said, “As I found he was about to begin again, I gathered together my book and got back into bed. Another time in the night I heard him above my cell walking in the cloister; but as I knew it was the devil I paid no attention to him and went back to sleep.” Again he says: “Early this morning, when I awoke, the fiend came and began disputing with me. Thou art a great sinner, said he, I replied, Canst thou not tell me something new, Satan?”

All who would lay the blame for evil and sin on an imaginary devil have tried in vain, for in so doing they are fighting that which does not exist and neglecting the real devils - the evils within their own human heart; these, said Jesus, which come from within the human mind, these “defile the man.”

The pagan world of Paul’s time believed in demons and spirits; some groups thought of the heavenly bodies as the abodes of spirits which hold human life in thrall. Paul himself espoused no such beliefs, but he did borrow from the language of contemporary astrology to describe the conflict between good and evil. For example, he wrote: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). He spoke also of “the prince of the power of the air,” referring again to the powers of evil. In this way he was expressing to the Gentiles in language they could understand the very real and earnest Christian conflict with all powers of sin and evil which every Christian must experience.

God Provides Armour.

God has not left us defenceless against the devil, all sin and evil, but has provided strong, tested spiritual armour. “Put on the whole armour of God,” advises the Apostle Paul, “that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). Then he names each essential piece of this God-given armour: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:14- 17). These would not be weapons with which to fight a corporeal devil.

What do we Fight?

Paul did not engage his time warning people against a literal devil, or blaming evil on an external power, nor did he himself fight in that kind of warfare. Paul knew whom he was fighting, and he also knew why he was fighting. The battle he was fighting gave him the blessed assurance that a crown of glory would be his at the coming of the Master. He affirms with confidence: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Whom did he fight against? The following verse will answer: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:26,27). He fought to bring his body into subjection, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4,5). By such fighting as this Paul defeated the devil.

To resist the devil means simply to conquer one's own self - a great accomplishment, for he who can rule himself is greater than "he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

Jesus stated clearly what we must war against: "There is nothing without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man... For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:14,15^21-23). We repeat, "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.... There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him" - nothing, either devil or spirit or power of any kind, nothing can defile the man except his own mind give its consent.

This unequivocal statement leaves absolutely no place for the demoralizing work of the devil.

Chapter Eight.

THE FUTURE OF THE DEVIL.

Today the devil, that is, all workers of evil and iniquity, runs unrestrained. "Sentence against an evil work" not being executed speedily, "the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The prophet Micah foretold this condition, that men would "do evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3).

However, this condition will not always prevail. Christ is coming to establish a new government of righteousness and equity. He is coming to put down evil and exalt righteousness and become Earth's rightful King (Zechariah 14:9).

How will these promises be realised? When Christ comes, all men will not readily accept Him in this capacity of absolute ruler. The devil, the evil in men's hearts, will come forward, and all nations shall rise up and resist Him. At this time, according to the Book of Revelation, there is war in heaven: "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was the place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7 - 9). This great dragon is representative of all forms of evil extant upon earth at Christ's return. It is "the Devil, and Satan," the same devil and Satan that have been working down through the ages, sin darkness and iniquity, and all those who promote them.

This war takes place in "heaven" - it is a battle between the leaders of the darkness of this world and Christ and His saints, therefore its location is in the political heavens, the positions of authority. And who shall prevail in this great battle, this war in heaven? Christ and His saints, for the "great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," he and all his angels (co-agents, messengers). All evil will be suppressed, put down, though not destroyed until the end of the Millennial reign.

The Devil Bound, Loosed, Destroyed,

During the glorious Millennial reign of Christ, the devil or evil, will be bound. Revelation 20:1 - 3 is definite: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he should be loosed a little season." Certainly this description could not be taken literally; how could a spiritual pit confine a literal devil?

During the thousand years, evil will be bound in the hearts of men - they will not dare disobey the law of God, as so many are doing now. Another divine forecast applies to this period: "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying. This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21).

At the end of the thousand years, Satan shall "be loosed a little season," after which he shall be cast into the "lake of fire," "Which is the second death" (Revelation 20:14,10; 21:8). Sin and evil shall perish forever from the earth, and nothing but righteousness and holiness, peace and love and every good survive to bless with pleasures for evermore the immortal inhabitants of an earth made over new. Far from interfering in that heavenly new world, the devil shall belong to the "former" which "shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

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Jesus said.....

No.21.

"Judge not that ye be not judged." Matthew 7:1.

The Greek word '*krino*' here translated 'judge' is also translated into about ten other words and therefore has to be understood in the context in which it is used, and to give just one illustration of this we find the word used in Acts 3:13 where we read:- "...the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined (*krino*) to let him go." Here we see that in the judgment of Pilate, Jesus should have been released.

In Matthew 7 Jesus is here forbidding the use of judgment that is censorious, as He explains in the verses which follow, for here He goes on to say, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" Jesus is uncompromising; "Thou hypocrite." Such actions are not those He wishes to see in His disciples, so He goes on to tell of the right course of action: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

We may feel we have cast out the beam out of our own eye and can now go about casting motes out of the eyes of our brethren, so Jesus said, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." It is incumbent upon us to take great care in any judgment we may make, and furthermore, we must also consider the matter of forgiveness, for if in our judgment we would condemn someone then it follows that we consider that he should not be forgiven; but if we consider that he should be forgiven then we cannot condemn.

Forgiveness must be our first consideration because in Jesus and through His great and unbounding love, we have been forgiven all things and if we continue in well doing shall continue to be forgiven. So it is that Jesus made the point that "if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14,15).

It follows then, that if we judge against someone then we are unforgiving and are therefore unforgiven.