

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 141

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Editorial

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

All the world is in turmoil with wars, famines, and disease, and when we add to this the natural disasters we see world leaders driven along by circumstances as the masters of ships without rudders, always persuading those on board that all is well, that there is a safe haven just ahead when they cannot see one and ought to know there is not one to be found. Decisions they make may seem right but they only add to the burdens and trials of humanity. When will people realise there is no hope without God? Sadly the answer has to be that for most people there is no hope because they reject God. And for those who are faithful "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him." What could give greater joy and peace of mind to disciples of Jesus? "Be strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." (2 Chronicles 16:19 and 15:7).

With sincere Love to all, in the Master's service, Russell Gregory

From your letters:

This first letter I should have included in the last C.L. – Sister Evelyn Linggood writes; "We would like to comment on Brother Leo's theory that Zachariah 13:6 refers to a false prophet instead of the generally accepted view that it refers to Christ. To make sense of that verse we should see verses 2 to 5 as a digression from the main theme, which is the coming of Christ to Israel. If we read from verse 9 of chapter 12 to the end of chapter 13 omitting verses 2 to 5, it makes perfect sense, whereas this is not the case if verse 6 is a reference to the false prophet, because, according to verse 3, his parents had to put him to death when he prophesied so he would not be alive to answer the question put in verse 6, whereas the living Christ will be able to give the answer specified. "And they shall look on me whom they have pierced," compare Zachariah 12:9 with 13:6.

I wish to thank Brother Leo for pointing out a mistake in a quotation on page 8, 3rd paragraph in the last C.L. where I misquoted "As captain of the host of Israel..." the quotation reads "As captain of the host of the Lord..." Fortunately this mistake makes no fundamental difference to the meaning, nevertheless I am grateful for the correction.

Sister Evelyn writes concerning my understanding of Luke 19:27 and the Everlasting Gospel - "In your further explanation of what you believe Luke 19:27 teaches we were surprised that you think the Everlasting (or age lasting) Gospel is something different to the one now preached and was preached to Abraham and his descendants (Galatians 3:8 and Hebrews 4:2). It belongs to this age..." In reply I would say that it is my opinion that the Everlasting Gospel is the next "stage" of the Gospel to be preached herein the faithful will

not fall asleep in death as we do now, but will continue to the end of the Millennium, to the time when their change will come. Hence, their life is everlasting, unbroken by the sleep of death. Have others any views on this?

Sister Evelyn continues her letter setting out the order of events to the establishment of the Kingdom, which will be included in our next C.L.

God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility

We ourselves are somewhat limited when we try to comprehend our Father, the God of heaven and earth.

How can we fully grasp that He knows all His works from the beginning? (Acts 15:18) knowing, as He does, all things. He knows each one of us (2 Timothy 2:19), and He has called us unto His Son (John 6:44).

This is part of His Sovereignty, i.e., the right of a Sovereign to do with His subjects as He wishes, or, as the potter over his clay (Romans 9:21). As Sovereign He has the power "to have mercy on whom He will" (Romans 9:15), and we are told He has chosen us "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Therefore we can know most surely that "our calling and election is sure" (2 Peter 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:4), for our salvation is God's gift (Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). We have not earned it "so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth" (Romans 9:16). We have nothing to boast of for it was not obtained by our works (Ephesians 2:9).

We cannot avoid these Scriptures which show that salvation is God's work altogether; He quickens and draws whom He will; that is His Sovereignty.

What then is man's responsibility, for we read that God's salvation has been offered to all? (Mark 16:15). The Lord Jesus Christ died for all, and whomsoever believeth in Him (not on) shall be saved" (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; Galatians 2:20). The offer of receiving forgiveness and eternal life by faith in Christ is made to all mankind, and our Father is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but the responsibility is with man that he should come to repentance. Christ being the propitiation (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 10:12,14). Therefore if any are lost it is their own responsibility because they have had the offer also of God's saving grace.

Those who do perish are those "that have fitted themselves for destruction" (Romans 9:22,23). They are not chosen for destruction before the foundation of the world, as is the case with those chosen to be saved (Ephesians 1:4). Predestination is not written of those out of Christ; it is the will of God that all should accept salvation. Man is free to come and be saved, yes he is invited and besought to do so and no one compels him to reject Christ our Lord; in this man is free.

However, he himself is not free for he is bound by birth to his father, Adam, and has no saving qualities in himself, "for in Adam all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Only the Sovereign electing grace of God can reach him and free him from sin and death (Romans 8:2,3).

What joy is ours, having come into Christ, we can put full trust in the words of Romans 8:28-30, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

Also Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated

us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved,” and rejoice that we shall in no way be cast out (John 6:37).

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another... even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:12).

Brother Eric Moore.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A CONSIDERATION OF THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS

There are only three direct references to Luke in the New Testament; in Colossians, Philemon and Timothy. In the letter to the Colossians, Paul, sending salutations, wrote of “those of the circumcision,” he then sends salutations from others who are not of this circumcision. Epaphras and Luke are named here, so from this reference we can take it that Luke was a Gentile and possibly a Greek as his name is a contraction of Loukios. We also learn that Luke was a Physician, for in his writings we find a number of medical terms, and there is the possibility that at some time he could have been a ship’s doctor; this would explain his familiarity with a number of nautical terms used in Acts 27 where we are given an account of Paul’s journey towards Rome.

This then is Luke, a man who found salvation through Jesus Christ. We are not informed as to how or when, but this new found faith set in train his recording of the early days of Christianity in his two works - this Gospel record and the Acts of the Apostles. He was a close friend and fellow-traveller of Paul and we can pinpoint this time from Acts 16:11 where Luke uses the phrase “we made course for Samothrace” writing here in the first person. Prior to this time the narrative had been in the third person.

Luke was meticulous in his work, probably a trait he developed through his work as a physician, and this is made clear in the first four verses of his Gospel record. There he opens with a preface to his friend Theophilus; someone he holds in high esteem for he uses the term “excellent Theophilus.”

A preface is always written after the work is completed and is an introduction to its contents. In these four verses Luke names his subject, its source, and his method of collating, and the purpose of writing.

Its subject is the story of the perfect man, Jesus Christ, here referred to as “the Word.” As clearly defined here as in the beginning of John’s Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became Flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth.”

Luke’s sources were many. He collected stories from those who had actually seen and had had contact with Jesus and served with Him during His ministry – those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word. He emphasises the point that he traced the course of all things accurately from the first. All the information, therefore, was carefully tested and verified before committing it to paper. This was not a letter of quickly gleaned sayings and ever events but a carefully collated and tested investigative treatise. In this connection Luke uses the word ‘*anōthen*,’ which, translated from the Greek can be rendered ‘from the first,’ but it also means ‘from above.’ We can confirm this from the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus, when Jesus said (John 3:7) “Ye must be born ‘*anōthen*’ - born anew, which the marginal reference renders ‘from above.’ When Luke uses this word, surely he is claiming that his work was under the guidance of the Almighty for we know that holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Then in verse four we have the purpose of his writing: “that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.” Obviously his friend, Theophilus, had only received instruction through the spoken word and Luke felt the need to record accurately all these events. With the written word details can be perused many times and studied in detail; the spoken word may be, and often is, varied a little with each re-telling.

We now move forward to study the next 25 verses of this first chapter of his epistle. Here we are at the threshold of God’s almighty purpose; that of providing reconciliation to mankind. The story of John the Baptist constitutes a link connecting the work of Jesus Christ with all that has gone before. At verse 17 we read of John’s “he shall go before his face, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.”

The old and new are linked in the continuous move forward. Typically of Luke’s writing, the time is noted, in verse 5, “there was in the days of Herod, King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias...” Zacharias was married to Elizabeth, also from a priestly family, for we read that she was “of the daughters of Aaron.” Their characters are also noted, “they were both righteous before God, walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.” We are also told that they were well stricken in years and childless. Being childless in the Jewish tradition was a tragedy, for Jewish couples, the devout ones, hoped that from their loins would spring the long looked for Messiah. These two desired a son and had prayed earnestly for one, and had now to all intents and purposes given up any hope, Zacharias at this time was performing his priestly duties, namely to enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice while the multitudes were praying without. This was a great day for him, for such a privilege came only one day in each year of High-Priestly duties. It was while he was performing this duty that the angel Gabriel appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar, and we read that Zacharias was troubled and fear fell upon him. Quite understandably in the circumstances, for this was the first angelic communication that had been recorded for over four hundred years. Gabriel’s first words are of reassurance, “Fear not, Zacharias, because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.” Then came a declaration of John’s mission. Verse 15, “He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before His face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” It is interesting at this point to go into the meaning of their names; how arresting they are! Zacharias ‘Jehovah remembers;’ Elizabeth - ‘The oath of God;’ and now through the power of the Almighty they are to have a son, John - ‘the grace of God.’ So now we have the grace of God, the offspring of the remembrance of God and the oath of God.

The Lord had once again made contact with His people and was preparing them for the greatest demonstration of His love, the birth, life and sacrifice of His dearly beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon hearing the angel’s proclamation Zacharias had doubts; “Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man and my wife well stricken in years.” Because of his doubt he was given a sign - “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God... thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass.” From this moment Zacharias was plunged into a great silence, neither able to hear nor speak: nine months in which to contemplate the greatness of the Almighty, and at the end of that time a great outpouring - “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel...”

Luke’s record now moves on. Elizabeth is pregnant and in her sixth month “the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city in Galilee named Nazareth.” Here dwelt a virgin “betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” A Jewish betrothal in those times lasted for a year, and it is during this period that the angel appeared unto her.

The first point we notice is the location - Galilee, not Judea, Nazareth, not Jerusalem. Nazareth was a town of little note in the district of Galilee, an area held in some contempt by the Jewish hierarchy. It was on a trade route and overrun by Gentiles. Nathaniel said, as recorded in John 1:46, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Nathaniel belonged to a neighbouring city and knew Nazareth well and was aware of its

corruption. But the Lord was ignoring the city of Jerusalem and its Temple, choosing instead a small town of little repute for the opening chapter of His great salvation.

Of Joseph we are told very little, but we find in Matthew's record that he was a righteous man and that he was a carpenter. When we turn to Mary we have a maiden of the royal line who, despite living in Nazareth with its sinister overtones, had kept herself untainted. This is clear from Gabriel's salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee," and a little later, "thou hast found favour with God." A portrait of a virtuous woman.

There are three sections here in the angel's narrative: 1) The angel's approach and salutation (verses 26-29). 2) His message (verses 30-34). 3) His interpretation (verses 35-38). Upon receiving Gabriel's salutation, as we might expect, Mary was greatly troubled and somewhat perplexed and sought in her mind some reason for the angel's manner of address. When Gabriel announced to her that she was to be the mother of the Messiah, the Son of the Most High God she responds with honest simplicity, "How shall this thing be seeing I know not a man?" This is soon made clear, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall over-shadow thee... And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The emphasis on the naming of the child is given to Joseph and is recorded in Matthew's Gospel. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21). The emphasis at this point is the salvation of the house of Israel, the Saviour that the people longed for. His greater mission that of offering salvation to all, would be made evident later. The angel Gabriel then gives Mary another piece of information - that her kinswoman, Elizabeth, was with child in her old age, and concludes, "for no word of God shall be void of power." And then we have Mary's submission to the Divine Will with the words, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord."

Joseph was now in a quandary. His betrothed wife was pregnant, but if he handed her over to the authorities they would make a public example of her and according to Mosaic Law she should be stoned. But Matthew tells us that Joseph was a righteous man and unwilling to follow this course and was minded to put her away privily; that is, to grant her a bill of divorce and annul the betrothal. In a dream an angel revealed to Joseph the cause of her pregnancy thereby clearing her of adultery, and Joseph obeyed the Lord's command to take her to wife.

Luke now records that Mary hurried to a city of Judea to visit her kinswoman, Elizabeth. This could be to escape the whispering and innuendo consequent on her pregnancy and hasty marriage. There was no way she could reveal the amazing visitation of the angel Gabriel - and who would believe her? There is also the possibility that she wanted to confirm with Elizabeth that she was indeed in her sixth month of pregnancy. They were two privileged women with much to talk over.

In this section of the Gospel record up to verse 66 we have the story of two mothers. Mary's arrival at Elizabeth's house appears to have been unexpected for we read that she entered the house and there saluted Elizabeth. Luke records the wonderful response of Elizabeth's unborn child to the presence of the Lord's anointed - "The babe leapt in my womb for joy." Possibly a better word would have been exaltation. This Elizabeth repeats in her song of praise. It is interesting to note that only Luke among the Gospel writers records these songs of praise. Elizabeth, without being told by Mary, appears to recognise through the power of the Holy Spirit that Mary bore the promised Messiah, and she raises her voice in an ode of blessing to Mary. "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The voice of a daughter of the old priestly line singing of the advent of the new.

Immediately following Elizabeth, Mary breaks forth into praise. Her song is almost entirely composed of what appears to be random quotations from the Psalms. Thus is revealed to us Mary's familiarity with the old scriptural writings. She celebrates what God has done in the past for His people, going right back to Abraham and reaching forward to the future work of Abraham's promised seed.

She opens with, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." And then gives the reason for her rejoicing - "For He hath looked upon the low estate of His handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things." She then celebrates the Lord Almighty in four statements: 1) "Holy is His Name." 2) "His mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear Him." 3) "He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree." 4) "The hungry He hath filled with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath holpen Israel His servant, that He might remember mercy as He spake unto our fathers; towards Abraham and his seed for ever."

This is pure praise and exaltation of worship. There is no mention of the new life developing in her womb and yet the whole song is inspired by that fact. We then get a brief statement, "Mary abode with her about three months." There is an indication here that Joseph was a most understanding husband in allowing his wife this long absence! This was a period of close communion between the older woman steeped in the ritual of the Mosaic Law and the young maid who carried within her the Son of the Almighty God. Both specially selected by the Lord in the furtherance of His purpose.

As Elizabeth's period of confinement approached Mary returned to Nazareth and Luke's narrative stays with Elizabeth, and the delivery of her son, surrounding which there was much rejoicing, and passes on to the day of his circumcision, the day on which Jewish boys are named. Expecting that he would be named after his father, friends and relatives were surprised to be told that he was to be called John. Signs were made to Zacharias, who was still dumb, to confirm this name and he wrote "his name is John" - the name which means "the grace of God." Immediately Zacharias who had been deaf and dumb for nine months, could speak, and, filled with the Holy Spirit, broke forth into prophetic song. Luke writes "and fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. The theme of his song is salvation, note the following passages: "blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people; to show mercy towards our fathers, and to remember His Holy covenant; the oath which He sware unto Abraham our father... the dayspring from on high shall visit us... and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David." This is a blessing to the Lord, a celebration of Divine activity; "He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people." Zacharias then extends this to include the ultimate salvation for mankind, "to shine upon them that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death."

For nine months Zacharias had been shut off from speech and hearing; nine months to ponder the wonder and the power of the Lord, and his first words are of praise and prophecy. The Lord God was to be made manifest, "the dayspring from on high shall visit us." Glad though he might be for his own people, Zacharias, through the power of the Holy Spirit, saw beyond the present to the future - of a new dawn for all nations.

Luke ends this first chapter with a verse covering thirty years, "and the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel." Although it was not mentioned I think we can assume that John did not go to the desert until he was in his twentieth year. He was raised in a priestly family and would, according to custom, take up his training for priesthood in his twenties. Here could come the break from home to live in the desert. At this point John, under Divine guidance, broke with Mosaic tradition, and departed into the desert. Here the herald is declared in Zacharias' song - "thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His way."

This first chapter was written as an introduction to the great events that are recorded in chapter two. The main theme of this second chapter is in the words spoken by the angel to the shepherds, "There is born unto you this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." The opening act of the final phase of God's plan for mankind. The first verse gives the reason why Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem to be enrolled by decree of Caesar Augustus. Joseph being of the royal line of David was required to travel to the city of David - Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy made by Micah, "but now Bethlehem Ephrath which art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." There, in the meanest of circumstances, Mary brought forth her firstborn son, Jesus. There is in this a larger meaning. Firstborn means more than just first in time; it also means first in place, first in order, first in

importance. In the New Testament Jesus is called the “firstborn of creation,” (Colossians 1:15) firstborn of the dead, firstborn among many brethren; but most importantly He was the firstborn Son of God.

There was exaltation in the heavens that night, for there was an angelic pronouncement to the shepherds tending their flocks, “I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. There is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord.” It is interesting to note that this first revelation of our Lord’s birth was first made to shepherds guarding their sheep; they were carers, even as the Lord likened Himself to the Good Shepherd prepared to lay down His life for His flock. The narrative continues with the shepherds departing for Bethlehem to ascertain the truth of the angelic message, feeling no doubt that they could safely leave their flocks in heavenly hands. On arriving at the stables they there made known to Mary and Joseph the events that had taken place and we read that Mary kept all these sayings and pondered them in her heart. In verses 21-24 we have observance of the Mosaic rites; first there is the account of the circumcision and naming of the child Jesus, as revealed by the angel to Mary. Second there is the presentation of the child in the Temple and His dedication. The first event taking place at eight days old and the second at forty days, being the number of days required by law for the mother’s purification. This dedication was given to the Israelites on their departure from Egypt; “Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both man and beast, it is mine, the male’s shall be Jehovah’s.” From this passage it is clear that it was the Lord’s intention to take the firstborn male into priest-hood, and no doubt this held good until He selected the tribe of Levi to undertake this duty; every male member of this tribe would then represent a firstborn son.

When Jesus was taken to the Temple it was in fulfilment of this first ideal. He was the firstborn of the Almighty, the One who opened the womb and was dedicated to the Lord. He entered the priesthood as the firstborn according to the original Divine purpose.

According to Law, Mary offered a sacrifice of atonement; in her case two turtle doves or two young pigeons; clearly indicating that Joseph and Mary had no great wealth, for surely if they could afford they would have offered a lamb of the first year.

We now move on to another sign, recorded by Luke only; that of Simeon. Simeon is described as a righteous and devout man looking for the consolation of Israel for it had been revealed to him that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord’s Christ, He, moved by the Holy Spirit, was constrained to enter the Temple at this time and no doubt witnessed the rite of dedication. Receiving the child into his arms he broke out into a song of blessing, the last of the group connected to the Lord’s advent. His words expressed thanks and joy that the burden of sin would be lifted and that at last the Almighty had remembered His people, as promised through the prophets. He saw the salvation manifest in the young life he held in his arms and not only for Israel, but as a light of revelation for the Gentiles too. Also He had words of warning for Mary in this moment of gladness, for he foretold the anguish she would suffer at the Lord’s crucifixion - “Yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.” Words she would no doubt call to mind when standing at the foot of the Cross. But Simeon spoke other words which she would understand after Christ’s resurrection, “Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” These pronouncements must have made quite an impression on Joseph and Mary, for we read that they marvelled at the things spoken concerning Jesus. Events in coming years would give them a far clearer picture of God’s plan of salvation.

Luke is the only Gospel writer who fills in some of the details of Christ’s years between babyhood and maturity, details of which he must have gained from Mary. We notice that during the period up to twelve years of age the child grew and waxed strong, becoming filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. In the next eighteen years we find that Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, in favour with God and man. There is a subtle difference in these two verses (40 and 52). The duty of any child up to puberty is to grow and develop; whose only responsibility is obedience to authority, the gathering of wisdom from instruction, questioning and observation. That Jesus had assimilated these things well is made clear when He was found in the Temple at the age of twelve, sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them and asking them questions. We are told that all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and answers.

That Joseph and Mary had not missed His presence in the caravan returning to Nazareth shows that they had perfect confidence in the boy, sure that He would be where He ought to be. That He had failed to

come up to their expectations must have shaken them somewhat, and we can understand their concern as they searched Jerusalem for three days before finding Him in the Temple, but His answer to their query “Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us?” must have puzzled them. “How is it that ye sought me, wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Were they overlooking the fact that Jesus was the Son of God? Possibly so, for one does tend after twelve years to consider the child as their own.

We note that Jesus spoke of God as His Father. He uses the definite article - my Father. On other occasions He uses the expression, “The father,” when He is referring to God as the Father of anyone but himself.

This second chapter closes with a verse covering the next eighteen years, “And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature in favour with God and man.” “Jesus advanced.” Here is an entirely different word to the one used for His first twelve years, where “He grew.” In these early years He made passive development but in the later years the development was no longer passive; He had to develop physically and mentally to tackle the challenges He would have to face. It is worth noting that His mental ability is mentioned first, and then that of His physical stature, and finally, in spiritual grace with His Father. In this second chapter of Luke we have recorded the spiritual development of our Lord, from boyhood to manhood, under the constraint of the will of His heavenly Father.

Without Luke’s Gospel we would have no record of the Songs of joy and adulation of Mary, Zacharias and Simeon - all steeped in the history of Israel, and looking for the advent of the Messiah. And here we have Luke, an early convert, meticulously seeking out, cross-checking and recording events that we, in our day and age, are able to read and know with certainty the Gospel of salvation, even as they were intended for his great friend Theophilus.

Brother Jeff Hadley.

Further Extracts From

“THE TEMPLE AT THE TIME OF CHRIST”

WITHIN THE HOLY PLACE

“There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Matthew 24:2

The Royal Bridge

Of the four principal entrances into the Temple - all of them from the west – the most northerly descended, perhaps by flights of steps, into the Lower City; while two others led into the suburb, or ‘*Parbar*,’ as it is called. But by far the most magnificent avenue was that at the south-western angle of the Temple. Probably this was “the ascent... into the house of the Lord” which so astounded the Queen of Sheba. 1 Kings 10:5. It would, indeed, be difficult to exaggerate the splendour of this approach. A colossal bridge on arches spanned the intervening valley of the *Tyropoeon*, connecting the ancient City of David with what is called the “Royal Porch of the Temple.” From its ruins we can reconstruct this bridge. Each arch spanned 41½ feet, and the spring-stones measured 24 feet in length by 6 inches in thickness. It is almost impossible to realise these proportions, except by a comparison with other buildings. A single stone 24 feet long! Yet these were by no means the largest in the masonry of the Temple. Both at the south-eastern and the south-western angles stones have been found measuring from 20 to 40 feet in length, and weighing above 100 tons.

The Temple Porches

The view from the Royal Bridge must have been splendid. It was over it that they led the Saviour, in sight of all Jerusalem, to and from the palace of the High-Priest, that of Herod, the meeting place of the Sanhedrim, and the judgment-seat of Pilate. Here the city would have lain spread before us like a map. Beyond it the eye would wander over straggling suburbs, orchards and many gardens – fairest among them the royal gardens to the south, the ‘garden of roses,’ so celebrated by the Rabbis - till the horizon was bounded by the hazy outline of mountains in the distance. Over the parapet of the bridge we might have looked into the *Tyropoeon* Valley below, a depth of not less than 225 feet. The roadway which spanned this cleft for a distance of 354 feet, from Mount Moriah to Mount Zion opposite, was 50 feet broad, that is, about 5 feet wider than the central avenue of the Royal Temple-Porch into which it led. These porches, as they are called in the New Testament, or cloisters, were among the finest architectural features of the Temple. They ran all round the inside of its walls, and bounded the outer enclosure of the Court of the Gentiles. They consisted of double rows of Corinthian pillars, all monoliths, wholly cut out of one block of marble, each pillar being 37½ feet high. A flat roof, richly ornamented, rested against the wall, in which also the outer row of pillars was inserted. Possibly there may have been towers where one colonnade joined the other. But the Royal Porch, by which we are supposed to have entered the Temple, was the most splendid, consisting not as the others, of a double, but of a treble colonnade, formed of 162 pillars, ranged in four rows of 40 pillars each, the two odd pillars serving as a kind of screen, where the Porch opened upon the bridge. Indeed, we may regard the Royal Porch as consisting of a central nave 45 feet wide, with gigantic pillars 100 feet high, and of the two aisles 30 feet wide, with pillars 50 feet high. By very competent authorities this Royal Porch, as its name indicates, is regarded as occupying the site of the ancient palace of Solomon, to which he ‘brought up* the daughter of Pharaoh. Here also had been the stables of Solomon. When Herod the Great re-built the Temple, he incorporated with it this site of the ancient royal palace. What the splendour and height of this one porch in the Temple must have been is best expressed in the words of Captain Wilson: “It is almost impossible to realise the effect which would be produced by a building longer and higher than York Cathedral, standing on a solid mass of masonry almost equal in height to the tallest of our church spires.” And this was only one of the porches which formed the southern enclosure of the first and outermost court of the Temple - that of the Gentiles. The view from the top of this colonnade into the Kedron was to the stupendous depth of 450 feet. Here some have placed that pinnacle of the Temple to which the tempter brought our Saviour.

These halls or porches around the Court of the Gentiles must have been most convenient places for friendly or religious intercourse - for meetings or discussions. Here Jesus, when still a child, was found by His parents disputing with the doctors; here He afterwards so often taught the people; and here the first assemblies of the Christians must have taken place when, “continuing daily with one accord in the Temple... praising God, and having favour with all the people... the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Especially do we revert to Solomon’s Porch that ran along the eastern wall of the Temple, and faced its great entrance. It was the only remnant left of the Temple built by the wise King of Israel. In this porch “Jesus walked” on that “Feast of the Dedication” (John 10:23), when He told it plainly, “I and my Father are one;” and it was thither that all the people ran together when the notable miracle on the lame man had been wrought at the “Beautiful Gate of the Temple.”

The Court of the Gentiles

It was the rule when entering the Temple to pass in by the right, and when leaving it to go out by the left hand. The Great Court of the Gentiles, which formed the lowest or outer enclosure of the Sanctuary, was paved with the finest variegated marble. According to Jewish tradition, it formed a square of 750 feet. Its name is derived from the fact that it was open to all - Jews or Gentiles - provided they observe the prescribed rules of decorum and reverence. In this court tradition places eating and sleeping apartments for the Levites, and a synagogue. But, despite pharisaic punctiliousness, the noise, especially on the eve of the Passover, must have been most disturbing. For there the oxen, sheep, and doves selected as fit for sacrifices were sold as in a market; and here were those tables of the money-changers which the Lord overthrew when He drove from His Father’s house them that bought and sold. Matthew 21:12 and John 2:14. Within a short distance, in the court, a marble screen 415 feet high, and beautifully ornamented, bore Greek and Latin inscriptions, warning Gentiles not to proceed, on pain of death. One of those very tablets, bearing almost the same words as those given by Josephus, has been discovered in late excavations. It was because they thought Paul had infringed this order, that the infuriated multitude went about to kill him. Acts 21:31. Beyond this enclosure a flight of fourteen steps, each 9 inches high, led up to a terrace 15 feet broad, called the ‘*Chel*,’ which

bounded the inner wall of the Temple. We are now approaching the Sanctuary itself, which consisted, first, of three courts, each higher than the former, and, beyond them, of the Holy and Most Holy Places, with their outbuildings. Entering by the principal gate on the east we pass, first into the Court of the Women, thence into that of Israel, and from the latter into that of the Priests. This would have been, so to speak, the natural way of advancing. But there was a nearer road into the Court of the Priests. For both north and south, along the terrace, flights of steps led up to three gates (both north and south), which opened into the Court of the Priests, while a fourth gate (north and south) led into the middle of the Court of the Women. Thus there were nine gates opening from the Terrace into the Sanctuary - the principal one from the east, and four north and south, of which one (north and south) also led into the Court of the Women, and the other three (north and south) into that of the Priests.

The Beautiful Gate

These eight side gates, as we may call them, were all two-leaved, wide, high, with superstructures and chambers supported by two pillars, and covered with gold and silver plating. But far more magnificent than any of them was the ninth or eastern gate, which formed the principal entrance into the Temple. The ascent to it was from the terrace by twelve easy steps. The gate itself was made of dazzling Corinthian brass, most richly ornamented; and so massive were its double doors that it needed the united strength of twenty men to open and close them. This was the "Beautiful Gate;" and on its steps had they been wont these many years to lay the lame man, just as privileged beggars now lie at the entrance to Continental cathedrals. No wonder that all Jerusalem knew him; and when on that sunny afternoon Peter and John joined the worshippers in the Court of the Women, not alone, but in company with the well-known cripple, who, after his healing, was "walking and leaping and praising God," universal wonder and amazement must have been aroused. Then, when the lame man, still "holding by" the apostles, again descended these steps, we can readily understand how all the people would crowd around in Solomon's Porch, close by, till the sermon of Peter - so fruitful in its spiritual results - was interrupted by the Temple police, and the sudden imprisonment of the apostles.

The Court of the Women.

The Court of the Women obtained its name, not from its appropriation to the exclusive use of women, but because they were not allowed to proceed farther, except for sacrificial purposes. Indeed, this was probably the common place for worship, the females occupying, according to Jewish tradition, only a raised gallery along three sides of the court. This court covered a space upwards of 200 feet square. All around ran a simple colonnade, and within it, against the wall, the thirteen chests, or 'trumpets,' for charitable contributions were placed. (It was probably into one of these that the poor widow dropped her two mites - Luke 21:2). These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence their name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them. Nine were for the receipt of what was legally due by worshippers; the other four for strictly voluntary gifts. Trumpets I and II were appropriated to the half-shekel Temple-tribute of the current and of the past year. Into Trumpet III those women who had to bring turtledoves for a burnt- and sin-offering dropped their equivalent in money, which was daily taken out and a corresponding number of turtledoves offered. This not only saved the labour of so many separate sacrifices, but spared the modesty of those who might not wish to have the occasion of the circumstances of their offering to be publicly known. Into this Trumpet Mary the mother of Jesus must have dropped the value of her offering (Luke 2:22,24) when the aged Simeon took the infant Saviour in his arms, and blessed God. Trumpet IV similarly received the value of the offerings of young pigeons. In Trumpet V contributions for the wood used in the Temple; in Trumpet VI for the incense; and in Trumpet VII for the golden vessels for the ministry were deposited. If a man had put aside a certain sum for a sin-offering and any money was left over after its purchase, it was cast into Trumpet VIII. Similarly, Trumpets IX, X, XI, XII, and XIII were destined for what was left over from trespass-offerings, offerings of birds, the offering of the Nazarite, of the cleansed leper, and voluntary offerings. In all probability this space where the thirteen Trumpets were placed was the 'treasury,' where Jesus taught on that memorable Feast of Tabernacles (John 7 and 8; especially 8:20). We can also understand how, from the peculiar and known destination of each of these thirteen 'trumpets' the Lord could distinguish the contributions of the rich who cast in of their abundance, from that of the poor widow who of her penury had given all the living that she had (Mark 12:41). But there was also a special treasury-chamber, into which at certain times they carried the contents of the thirteen chests; and, beside, what was called 'a chamber of the silent,' where devout persons secretly deposited money, afterwards secretly employed for educating children of the pious poor.

It is probably in ironical allusion to the form and name of these treasure-chests that the Lord, making use of the word 'trumpet' describes the conduct of those who, in their almsgiving, sought glory from men as 'sounding a trumpet' before them - that is, carrying before them, as it were, in full display one of these trumpet-shaped alms-boxes (literally called in the Talmud, Trumpets, and, as it were, sounding it)..

The Chambers

In each of the four corners of the Court of the Women were chambers, or rather, unroofed courts, each said to have been 60 feet long. In that at the right hand (on the north-east), the priests who were unfit for other than menial services on account of bodily blemishes, picked the worm-eaten wood from that destined for the altar. In the court at the farther angle (north-west), the purified lepers washed before presenting themselves to the priests at the Gate of Nicanor. At the left (south-east), the Nazarites polled their hair, and cooked their peace-offerings; while in a fourth court (at the south-west) the oil and wine were kept for the drink-offerings. The musical instruments used by the Levites were deposited in two rooms under the Court of the Israelites, to which access was from the Court of the Women.

Of course the western colonnade of this court was open. Thence fifteen easy steps led through the so-called Gate of Nicanor into the Court of Israel. On these steps the Levites were wont on the Feast of Tabernacles to sing the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, or ascent, whence some have derived their name. Here, or, rather, in the Gate of Nicanor, all that was ordered to be done "before the Lord" took place. There the cleansed leper and the women coming for purification presented themselves to the priests, and there also the "water of jealousy" was given to the suspected wife.

The Court of Israel

Perhaps it will be most convenient for practical purposes to regard the two Courts of Israel and of the Priests as in reality forming only one, divided into two parts by a low balustrade 1½ feet high. Thus viewed, this large double court, inclusive of the Sanctuary itself, would measure 280 feet in length by 202 feet in breadth. Of this a narrow strip, 16½ feet long, formed the Court of Israel. Two steps led up from it to the Court of the Priests. Here you mounted again by three low semicircular steps to a kind of pulpit or platform, where, as well as on the 'fifteen steps,' -the Levites sang and played during the ordinary service. The priests, on the other hand, occupied, while pronouncing the blessing, the steps at the other end of the court which led up to the Temple porch. A similar arrangement existed in the great court as in that of the Women. Right and left of the Nicanor Gate were receptacles for the priestly vestments (one for each of the four kinds, and for the twenty-four courses of priests : $4 \times 24 = 96$).

Next came the chamber of the high-priest's meat-offering (Leviticus 6:20), where each morning before going to their duties the officiating priesthood gathered from the so-called '*beth-ha-Moked*,' or 'house of stoves.' The latter was built on arches, and contained a large dining-hall that communicated with four other chambers. One of these was a large apartment where fires were continually burning for the use of the priests who ministered barefoot. There also the heads of the ministering course slept, and here, in a special receptacle under the pavement, the keys of the Temple were hung up at night. Of the other three chambers of the *Beth-Moked*, one was appropriated to the various counterfoils given as a warrant when a person had paid his due for a drink-offering. In another the shewbread was prepared, while yet a third served for the lambs (at least six in Number) that were always kept ready for the regular sacrifice. Here also a passage led to the well-lit subterranean bath for the use of the priests. Besides the *Beth-Moked* there were, north and south of the court, rooms for storing the salt for the altar, for salting the skins of sacrifices, for washing "their inwards," for storing the 'clean' wood, for the machinery by which the laver was supplied with water, and finally the chamber '*Gazith*,' or Hall of Hewn Stones, where the Sanhedrin was wont to meet. Above some of these chambers were other apartments, such as those in which the high-priest spent the week before the Day of Atonement in study and meditation.

The Chambers

The account which the Jewish tradition gives of these gates and chambers around the Court of the Priests is somewhat conflicting, perhaps because the same chambers and gates may have borne different

names. It may, however, be thus summarised: entering the Great Court by the Nicanor Gate, there was at the right hand the Chamber of Phinehas with its 96 receptacles for priest's vestments, and at the left the place where the high-priest's daily meat-offering was prepared, and where every morning before daybreak all the ministering priests met, after their inspection of the Temple and before being told off to duty. Along the southern side of the court were the Water-gate, through which at the Feast of Tabernacles the pitcher with water was brought from the Pool of Siloam, with a chamber above it, called *Abtinah*, where the priests kept guard at night; then the Gate of the Firstlings, through which the firstlings fit to be offered were brought; and the Wood-gate, through which the altar-wood was carried. Alongside these gates were '*Gazith*,' the hall of square polished stones, where the Sanhedrim met; the chamber of *Golah*, for the water apparatus which emptied and filled the laver; and the wood-chamber. Above and beyond it were the apartments of the high-priest and the council chamber of the 'honourable councillors,' or priestly council for affairs strictly connected with the Temple. On the northern side of the Priests' Court were the gate *Nitzutz* (Spark Gate), with a guard-chamber above for the priests, the Gate of Sacrifices, and the Gate of the *Beth-Moked*. Alongside these gates were the chamber for salting the sacrifices; that for salting the skins (named *Parvah* from its builder), with bathrooms for the high-priest above it; and finally the *Beth-Moked* with its apartments. The two largest of these buildings - the council-chamber of the Sanhedrim at the south-eastern, and the *Beth-Moked* at the north-western angle of the court - were partly built into the court and partly out on the terrace. This, because none other than a prince of the house of David might sit down within the sacred enclosure of the Priests' Court. Probably there was a similar arrangement for the high-priest's apartments and the priests' council-chamber, as well as for the guard-chambers of the priests, so that at each of the four corners of the court the apartments would abut upon the terrace. All along the colonnades, both around the Court of the Gentiles and that of the Women, there were seats and benches for the accommodation of the worshippers.

The Altar

The most prominent object in the Court of the Priests was the immense altar of unhewn stones, a square of not less than 48 feet, and, inclusive of 'the horns,' 15 feet high. All around it a 'circuit' ran for the use of the ministering priests, who, as a rule, always passed round by the right, and retired by the left. As this circuit was raised 9 feet from the ground, and 1½ feet high, while the horns measured 1½ feet in height, the priests would have only to reach 3 feet to the top of the altar, and 4½ feet to that of each horn. An inclined plane, 48 feet long by 24 wide, into which about the middle two smaller descents merged, led up to the circuit from the south. Close by was the great heap of salt, from which every sacrifice must be salted with salt. On the altar, which at the top was only 36 feet wide, three fires burned, one (east) for the offerings, the second (south) for the incense, the third (north) to supply the means for kindling the other two. The four horns of the altar were straight, square, hollow prominences that at the south-west with two openings, into whose silver funnels the drink offerings, and, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the water from the Pool of Siloam, were poured. A red line all round the middle of the altar marked that above it the blood of sacrifices intended to be eaten, below it that of sacrifices wholly consumed, was to be sprinkled. The system of drainage into chambers below and canals, all of which could be flushed at will, was perfect; the blood and refuse being swept down into Kedron and towards the royal gardens. Finally, north of the altar were all requisites for the sacrifices - six rows, with four rings each, of ingenious mechanism, for fastening the sacrifices; eight marble tables for the flesh, fat, and cleaned 'inwards;' eight low columns, each with three hooks, for hanging up the pieces; a marble table for laying them out, and one of silver for the gold and silver vessels of the service.

The Laver

Between the altar and porch of the Temple, but placed towards the south, was the immense laver of brass, supported by twelve colossal lions, which was drained every evening, and filled every morning by machinery, and where twelve priests could wash at the same time. Indeed, the water supply to the Sanctuary is among the most wonderful of its arrangements. That of the Temple is designated by Captain Wilson as the 'low-level supply,' in contradistinction to the high-level aqueduct, which collected the water in a rock-hewn tunnel four miles long, on the road to Hebron, and then wound along so as to deliver water to the upper portion of the city. The low-level aqueduct, which supplied the Temple, derived its waters from three sources - from the hills about Hebron, from Etham, and from the three pools of Solomon. Its total length was about forty miles. The amount of water it conveyed may be gathered from the fact that the surplusage of the

waters of Etham is calculated, when drained into the lower pool of Gihon, to have presented when full, an area of nearly four acres of water. And as if this had not been sufficient, the ground is perfectly honeycombed with a series of remarkable rock-hewn cisterns, in which the water brought by an aqueduct from Solomon's pools, near Bethlehem, was stored. The cisterns appear to have been connected by a system of channels cut out of the rock; so that when one was full the surplus water ran into the next, and so on, till the final overflow was carried off by a channel into the Kedron. One of the cisterns - that known as the Great Sea - would contain two-million gallons; and the total number of gallons which could be stored probably exceeded ten millions. There seems little doubt that the drainage of Jerusalem was as well managed as the water supply; the mouth of the main drain being in the valley of Kedron, where the sewerage was probably used as manure for the gardens.

The Great Stones

The mind becomes bewildered at numbers, the accuracy of which we should hesitate to receive if they were not confirmed by modern investigations. We feel almost the same in speaking of the proportions of the Holy House itself. It was built on immense foundations of solid blocks of white marble covered with gold, each block measuring, according to Josephus, 67 by 9 feet. Mounting by a flight of to the Porch, we notice that it projected 30 feet on each side beyond the Temple itself. Including these proportions the buildings of the Temple were 150 feet long, and as many broad. Without them the breadth was only 90, and the length 120 feet. Of these 60 feet in length, from east to west, and 30 feet in breadth, belonged to the Holy Place; while the Most Holy was 30 feet long, and as many broad. There were, therefore, on either side of the Sanctuary, as well as behind it, 30 feet to spare, which were occupied by side buildings three stories high, each containing five rooms, while that at the back had eight. These side-buildings, however, were lower than the Sanctuary itself, over which also superstructures had been reared. A gabled cedar roof, with golden spikes on it, and surrounded by an elegant balustrade, surmounted the whole.

The Veil

The entrance to the Porch, which was curiously roofed, was covered by a splendid veil. Right and left were depositories for the sacrificial knives. Within the Porch a number of dedicated gifts were kept, such as the golden candelabra of the proselyte queen of Adiabene, two golden crowns presented by the Maccabees, etc. Here were also two tables ~ one of marble, on which they deposited the new show-bread; the other of gold, on which they laid the old as it was removed from the Holy Place. Two-leaved doors, with gold plating, and covered by a rich Babylonian curtain of the four colours of the Temple (fine linen, blue, scarlet, and purple), formed the entrance into the Holy Place. Above it hung that symbol of Israel, a gigantic vine of pure gold, and made of votive offerings - each cluster the height of a man. In the Holy Place were, to the south, the golden candle stick; to the north, the table of shewbread; and beyond them the altar of incense near the entrance to the Most Holy. The latter was now quite empty, a large stone, on which the high-priest sprinkled the blood on the Day of Atonement, occupying the place where the ark with the mercy-seat had stood. A wooden partition separated the Most Holy from the Holy Place; and over the door hung the veil which was rent from top to bottom when the way to the holiest of all was opened on Golgotha (Matthew 27:51).

Such was the Temple as restored by Herod - a work which occupied forty-six years to its completion. Yet, though the Rabbis never weary praising its splendour, not with one word do any of those who were contemporary indicate that its restoration was carried out by Herod the Great. So memorable an event in their history is passed over with the most absolute silence. What a complete answer does this afford to the objection sometimes raised from the silence of Josephus about the person and mission of Jesus!

Our Lord's Prediction

With what reverence the Rabbis guarded their Temple will be described in the sequel. The readers of the New Testament know how readily any supposed infringement of its sanctity led to summary popular vengeance. To the disciples of Jesus it seemed difficult to realise such utter ruin as their Master foretold could so soon come over that beautiful and glorious house. It was the evening of the day in which He had predicted the utter desolation of Jerusalem. All that day He had taught in the Temple, and what He had said, not only there, but when, on beholding the city. He had wept over it, seems to have filled their minds alike

with awe and with doubt. And now He, with His disciples, had departed from the Temple. Once more they lingered in sweet retirement on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:1). The purple light on the mountains of Moab was fast fading out. Across the city the sinking sun cast a rich glow over the pillared cloisters of the Temple and over the silent courts as they rose terrace upon terrace. From where they stood they could see over the closed Beautiful Gate, and right to the entrance to the Holy Place, which now glittered with gold; while the eastern walls and the deep valley below were thrown into a solemn shadow, creeping, as the orb sunk lower, further and further towards the summit of Olivet, irradiated with one parting gleam of roseate light, after all below was sunk in obscurity.

Then it was and there that the disciples, looking down upon the Temple, pointed out to the Master: "What manner of stones and what buildings are here." The view from that site must have rendered belief in the Master's prediction even more difficult and more sad. A few years more and it was all literally fulfilled! It may be, as Jewish tradition has it that ever since the Babylonish captivity the Ark of the Covenant lies buried and concealed underneath the wood-court at the north-eastern angle of the Court of the Women. And it may be that some at least of the spoils which Titus carried with him from Jerusalem - the seven-branched candlestick, the table of shewbread, the priest's trumpets, and the identical golden mitre which Aaron had worn on his forehead - are hidden somewhere in the vaults beneath the site of the Temple, after having successively gone to Rome to Carthage, to Byzantium, to Ravenna, and thence to Jerusalem. But of those great Buildings that once stood there, there is not left one stone upon another that has not been thrown down.

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

No. 2 in a series of Bible Essays.

THE BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING LIFE AND DEATH

Let us at the outset give a brief definition of the word "life." Life is that power by which all animate things or beings move, grow, and multiply; the smallest of such forms as the Amoeba, which, though a single cell, exhibits all the characteristics of life.

Death is the opposite of this; it is the cessation of life, the dissolution of being.

Having made this definition let us turn to the Bible and read how life first entered into the world. On the sixth day of creation we read that God created the living creatures, birds, and fishes, and finally man.

Now we read in Genesis 2:7, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Let us consider this process; first we see a dust-formed creature, man, then breath is breathed into him and he becomes a living soul. Without that breath of life he is a dead soul or body; this is precisely the case with human beings today. If the breath of life is taken away a man dies; his body corrupts, and eventually returns to dust.

Life, then, is the state or condition of being in which is manifested those characteristics which we associate with activity. It is the power or energy which makes possible all the various functions of the body. It is manifested in a variety of ways and forms; thus we have insects which retain life for but a short time, and monsters like elephants and whales which live for many years. Life is the same however it is manifested. Thus we have human life, animal life, plant life, etc.

Human flesh can retain life for but a limited number of years; few people attain to much over eighty years of age. The extent, or duration of life, depends on the medium in, or through which it is manifested.

Life manifested through or in an incorruptible body is unending. The Creator's life is from everlasting to everlasting.

We read in the Genesis account how the man was placed on probation in the garden of Eden, and how a simple command was imposed upon him, namely, "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, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here we have death as a penalty for sin introduced. Now this cannot be natural death, for that is not a penalty but a natural consequence of the life being held in a corruptible body.

The sentence, we note, was to be death on the day of transgression. Here we have introduced death as a penalty, a judicial death, an inflicted death. Other instances of judicial death recorded in the Scriptures come to mind.

Under the Law of Moses a murderer was to be put to death; this was a judicial death. An idolater or a man who dealt with a familiar spirit, or a necromancer, also was to be put to death. One of the sins of Saul, the first king of Israel, was that he sought the services of a witch. These and many other sins were sins unto death; concerning which John speaks in his first Epistle, when he says,

"There is a sin unto death; I do not say he should pray for it." Such a death is an untimely end, a cutting short of life.

Under the Law of Moses stoning was the means by which this death was brought about. In England hanging used to be the method. In each case life is brought to an abrupt end.

Accidental death, though not judicial, is a violent and untimely end of life; this kind of death is also recognised in the Bible; if any man met his death in this way owing to the negligence of another, provision was made in the Law of God for that case.

Returning to the Genesis account we find that Adam merited such a violent death, but God, in His mercy, instituted sacrifice as a means of redemption, as we saw in the last essay. Adam was now allowed to continue his life, but under ransoms - he was on probation with a life which he had forfeited, and now held in the mercy of God under ransom, but it was natural life.

Another kind of death recognised in the Bible is "Spiritual" death. A man may be very much alive in the natural sense and yet be spiritually dead. How otherwise could we understand the words of Jesus, "Let the dead bury their dead"? Or the words of Paul in Ephesians 2, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"? Or again in writing to the Romans, chapter 8, "To be carnally minded is death"? Here the mind of the flesh, which we hope to consider more fully in another essay, is regarded as being dead to spiritual things.

Another kind of death referred to in the Bible is figurative death. We take an illustration from the apostle Paul, in Romans 6, on the subject of baptism. Here we read, "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Again in verse 11, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Baptism is a figure of the death of Christ, and as such, is the counter - part of the act of the offerer under the Law of Moses, who, laying his hand on the head of his offering, figuratively transferred his sin to the animal. Baptism is a burial in water after a belief in the things which Jesus taught, and a good confession before God. Thus we are introduced into Christ's death and escape the death for sin (though we die the natural death), unless we wilfully sin an unpardonable sin and merit the second death, which takes place at the end of the Millennium (See Revelation 20:7-14).

This introduces us to the death which those die who, being responsible to the Divine Law, either ignore it, or having responded to it turn away again, and do despite to the word of grace. The Apostle says concerning such, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall consume the adversaries." This is the end of all those who reject the Divine invitation.

Let us now turn to the subject of life. We have noted that natural life is the state of being alive, or possessing life in a natural body; a body subject to decay and subsequent dissolution of being. We have seen, too, that life can be forfeited; also that a life which has been lost to sin can be bought back with a price - even the precious blood of Christ; that this life which is so bought is under ransom and can again be lost. In the first essay we saw that the life of Jesus was free and never in bondage to sin. Jesus Himself said, "If the son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed."

We are now introduced to a life made free by the Son of God. Christ died the death unto sin for sinners, and became the author of eternal salvation to every one that believeth, and so by baptism into Jesus a man is introduced into a new relationship. He is now dead to sin, but alive to righteousness. This is a spiritual life, a life of service to God.

As they who sow to the flesh shall reap corruption (Galatians 6:7,8), so he who soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life. This is life manifested in an incorruptible body such as Jesus now has; a body none the less real because it is immortal. Jesus Himself, after His resurrection, said to His disciples, "Handle me and see, for a spirit (that is, a mere phantom) hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

We note that He did not say "Flesh and blood." His blood had been shed on Calvary for us - the price of our redemption; and we are told by the Apostle Paul that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Here we have flesh and Spirit; incorruptible flesh; flesh which can retain life for evermore, made like unto the angels, dying no more. Such are the children of the resurrection. This is the true hope of the Christian, the hope of the resurrection of the dead when the "dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (which are alive and remain) shall be changed." And when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory; O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Brother F. Lea.

Continued from last C.L.

For What The Law Could Not Do

The Figurative Seed of a Plant or Tree

We will now proceed to look at the same lesson under the figurative seed of a plant or tree. The earth in Scripture is representative of the people in many instances. The following are a few examples:- "Give ear, O ye heavens (rulers) and I will speak; and hear, O earth (people) the words of my mouth" Deuteronomy 32:1. "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. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" Isaiah 45:22; Genesis 11:1; Jeremiah 6:19, etc.

Also the Scriptures represent nations and individuals by a tree, and each can bring forth its own kind (whose seed is in itself). The most prominent example as a nation is Israel, represented by the vine and the olive. As an individual, the outstanding example is Jesus, who spoke of Himself as the true vine.

Many other examples could be given, e.g. Judges 9; Psalm 1, "Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord." "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree" Isaiah 61:3. Then we have them mentioned as figures of the nations in prophecy - Psalm 92:12-14. In Psalm 80 and Isaiah 5 we have in figure God's plan of redemption manifested through the Jews under the figure of a vine and vineyard.

The different stages of this nation could not be more forcibly illustrated – as history has proved. It speaks of what God has done for them, with a continual reminder of His plan for earth's redemption. He brought His vine out of Egypt and planted it in the land of Canaan. He cared for it - as in the words of the prophet, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah 5:4). God had nurtured it and hedged it about with His loving protection. He looked for it to bring forth much fruits of righteousness but they went wild, and brought forth unrighteousness (wild grapes). They became a degenerate plant which was once a strong vine (Jeremiah 2:21). They were the children in whom there was no faith (Deuteronomy 32:20). The result was that the vine was uprooted, branches broken off, some burned or destroyed and others scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Yet out of this degenerate vine God said He would raise up for them a plant of renown - the Messiah. In Psalm 80:15 we read, "And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch (or Son, R.V.) that thou madest strong for thyself." And verse 17, "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself."

We see the nation of Israel, which God had termed His firstborn in Exodus 4:22, which was the choice of the nations, or tree - a multitudinous body, as one, a natural nation which is the type of the spiritual Israel. The flesh, i.e., fleshly descent from Abraham, profiteth nothing, as Paul emphasised when he said "They are not all Israel which are of Israel; but the children of the promise (Spiritual Israel) are counted for the seed." (Romans 9:7,8).

Jesus was the firstborn of God through the spirit and of the flesh, the first-born of the Spirit from the dead by resurrection (Colossians 1:18; Luke 2: 7). He is God's firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth (Psalm 89:27). He is the true vine; the federal tree (Colossians 1:18) which God planted and whose branches shall never perish.

Let us now refer to a passage of Scripture in connection with His being the Seed of the Lord, Isaiah 53:1; that much quoted chapter, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is a remarkable fact that the word translated "arm" from the Hebrew is the same Hebrew root from which is translated the word "seed." That the word here translated "arm" should be "seed" is obvious as the context shows. Verse 2, "for He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," etc. Here we have Jesus as the seed of the Lord's planting.

Well could the prophet say, "Who hath believed our report?" Well could the Apostle John refer to these words of the prophet in chapter 12, verse 38. Well can the same be said today, for who can believe our report that He was the Seed of the Lord and still say that He was condemned human nature? Why, it is like believing that God produced a condemned thing in order to save that which was already condemned!!

The promise of a righteous branch unto David (shoot, or bud - R.V.) that should reign as king (Jeremiah 23:5) or, in the words of the Spirit to Ezekiel, "I will raise up for them a plant of renown" (34:29) is proof that the plan and production is of God (Isaiah 9:7).

(Nor do we forget the planting of the natural Jew again upon the mountains of Israel).

Isaiah 11:1 reads, "And there shall come forth a rod (or shoot) out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch shall grow out of his roots," but verse 10 reads, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse..." This seems to be paradoxical, or, as the critics say, a contradiction. The best answer to this is to employ the words of Jesus when He asked the Jews, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" They could not answer; nor can anyone else answer unless they have the Spirit's answer. If He was born of the will of the flesh, or was of a different nature to the rest of the human race, this question is unintelligible, and the plan of God's redemption cannot be understood. The question can only be understood by realising that God who is Spirit, produced Jesus through a female of the line of David, therefore also son of Adam, and Abraham, in accordance with the promise, without the intervention of man. The seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head. This spirit power was before Adam or Abraham, therefore Jesus could say, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The Spirit's declaration in the promise to the woman and to the nation of Israel regarding a righteous branch, became flesh to manifest God's love, grace, and truth. God's love, in the words of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Why? "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Grace, in that it is unmerited favour. Truth, because God cannot lie.

His truth was manifested in that He gave the seed in accordance with the promise This is not generally accepted in its simplicity, but is made the ground of mystery; hence the forceful application of the prophet's words in Isaiah 53:1 to our day, "Who hath believed our report?"

From the birth of Christ until now there has indeed been very few who have believed the report in its simplicity; without intermingling it with mystery. Truth and error, like iron and clay, don't mix.

In His own day Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not (John 1:11) though He had done so many miracles, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, "Who hath believed our report?" (John 12:37-43). "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19:14). "We have no king but Caesar." But yet, as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. These believed the report that He was the Seed of the Lord, the plant of renown, the true vine, the righteous branch. The tender plant that grew up strong for man's redemption; but not a physically condemned sacrifice. "Many are called but few are chosen"(Matthew 20:16). "Few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:14).

We do not find many of the eunuch type who enquired about man's redemption according to Isaiah 53. He said, "How can I understand "unless some man shows me?" He was shown by one of God's inspired Apostles; in harmony with God's plan from the beginning; in harmony with the Scriptures. No man-made creeds entered into Philip's explanation as to whom the Seed was in Isaiah 53, nor was there any shadow of a doubt as to the free, unfettered production of that Seed.

Surely Israel was indeed a dry ground in many ways, and especially with regard to producing such a seed and root. Surely this was impossible, not only with Israel, but with the whole human race; because all were concluded under Adamic relationship, therefore in prison, sold under sin. There was no eye to pity, none to help, guide nor uphold; therefore His own Arm brought salvation. We see the germ, or seed of the spirit growing out of a dry ground, as a tender plant. The whole Adamic race was barren to the production of this necessary seed, therefore it could only be done by a divine miracle of a new creation which was the only possible and just way.

This new tree, or federal head, God has brought forth that no flesh should be justified but by His grace, and that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus through faith in His blood as the only means of redemption and deliverance. (Romans 3).

Adam was spared in Eden from suffering the violent death which he had incurred, and in sparing Adam God spared also the seed which was in his loins. So from the degenerate Israel vine was raised up a plant of renown by God who was the husbandman to accomplish His salvation of man. First that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. All are born in the Adamic tree (relationship) and all who desire to be grafted into the true vine can have that desire gratified, but only upon the conditions of the husbandman. When the conditions are complied with, one is in a position to be a partaker of the root and fatness (Romans 11). "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John 15). "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13). How do we become engrafted into the vine? Why, by leaving our Adamic tree relationship – not physically or we would be under two heads while still a natural being – and becoming branches of the new tree and root. These two federal trees speak to us of death and life. Death, if we remain in the tree of Adamic relationship, and life, joy, and peace, if grafted into the true vine. If Jesus was a branch of the Adamic tree, as we are, we ask. Could a branch redeem the tree from corruption? If it is contended that Jesus came as merely a branch of that tree to save that tree, we ask. Why then the need of the special intervention of God? Could not one righteous man born of the will of the flesh have sufficed on that reasoning? Throw over the bogey of physical condemnation in Adam, i.e., that Adam's flesh was changed after transgression, and avoid confusion becoming worse confounded.

In concluding this section we say emphatically that if Jesus was not the new and true vine, the idea of us being engrafted into Him would be a matter of “moon-shine.” We would be grafted into the same body and thus do away with the necessity of Jesus, who is “the way, the truth and the life.”

The Figure of Stones

The next section under the figure of stones teach the same lesson and result. There are many examples of this figure, and we will commence with the prophet Isaiah. “I lay in Zion a tried stone, a sure foundation” (28:16). Jesus used this similitude in His day when He told the people to build upon a rock, and not upon sand, which is wise counsel, even from a natural standpoint. (Matthew 7). The first prophetic statement concerning the stone is perhaps not so familiar. Jacob, in blessing his sons, made the following statement when blessing Joseph:

“From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel” Genesis 49:24.

That Jesus came through the tribe of Judah is well known. (Matthew 1:1; Hebrews 7:14; Genesis 49:10). Joseph and all others receive from God His blessing. Even the wicked receive blessing from God in that He provides for them, though they do not recognise the source, but partake of His goodness like the beasts of the field, for the satisfaction of stomach merely. Nevertheless, God’s goodness descends upon the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45; James 1:17; Psalm 104). So it was from the Mighty One of Jacob, the God of Israel, came the Shepherd, the stone of Israel, and not from Joseph. This was a direct statement to Joseph that God would be Christ’s Father, and not as the Jews thought of their Messiah coming through Judah in the male line. We see this again in -the words “and if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it” (Exodus 20:25). Is not Jesus the antitypical altar? Undoubtedly He is., but would He be the antitypical altar if He were “dressed” by a human tool? No! But all doubt is cast away as chaff before the wind in the face of the fact that He was the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. This was according to the pattern, so that if Joseph were His father, or that He came of the male line, then Jesus would have been no more the antitypical pattern than any other son of Adam. The spirit that gave life to Jesus came direct from God, hence the command to Israel not to use any tool upon the altar. “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle” (Hebrews 13:10).

Jesus was separate from sinners, not only in that He did no sin, but also in the mode of His production. “The Lord of hosts shall perform this” (Isaiah 9:7), which is equivalent to saying that He had no connection with sin. He had none morally, as everyone who professes to be a believer will agree. He had none physically, as there is no such thing as physical condemnation inherent. The sin that He did not have apart from personal moral sinlessness was the legal condemnation passed upon all men born of the will of the flesh. He was legally separate from sinners in being begotten of the spirit of God, and morally separate in that He kept the moral condition.

The prophet Daniel (the beloved of God who acknowledged that God was the revealer of secrets) gives us another picture of the history of the world in God’s plan, in his second chapter, in which is recorded the words, “The dream is certain, and the interpretation sure.” The dream Nebuchadnezzar forgot God brought back through Daniel and gave the king, and us, what has and surely will come to pass. The historical fact of the four empires having existed in confirmation of the prophetic word is proof of the certainty of a fifth, which will break in pieces all other kingdoms. The kind of kingdom that will break in pieces all other kingdoms will be of God. Daniel saw that it was not of man. “Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands... and smote the image, and became a great mountain and filled the earth’ God alone, who knows the end from the beginning, who could swear by no greater, declared Jesus to be His only Begotten Son, in whom, He was well pleased (Matt. 3:17; 2 Peter 1:17). Which is proof of Him being the Son of the Highest, cut out of the mountain of humanity without human hands. This is the sure word of prophecy, and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10). Hear Jesus: “I come from above (spirit) ye are from beneath (born of the will of the flesh).” “I came to do my Father’s will.” “Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” (Matthew 21:42).

Jesus of Nazareth is the stone and there is no salvation under heaven except in Him. He is not only the foundation stone but also the corner stone or keystone; He is the alpha and omega of all God's promises. (2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 2:3,8; Revelation 1:8). He is the chosen of God; elect, precious, the head in whom ye are builded together as a temple of spiritual stones. Here can be seen the federal body of Christ while still natural, mortal beings. Builded and fitly framed together, "an holy temple unto the Lord. (Ephesians 2:21). "Ye are God's building." (1 Corinthians 3:9). None can lay any other foundation but that which is laid in Christ. All who are lively stones have passed from death into life now, if they retain their place in the building. Their incorruptibility is sure if they have "the witness in themselves."

This beautiful figure of the stone could be enlarged upon, but we proceed to present to you in brief what we have dealt with as a three fold cord which is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12), namely. The Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15); the Plant of renown (Ezekiel 34:29); and the Stone of Israel, which came forth from the mighty God of Jacob (Genesis 49:24).

What was impossible for the law to do. God did, in sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, and as the offering for sin, condemned sin while He was in the flesh. Could Jesus pay the due price for sin if He were not in the flesh? No. He had to be flesh before He could pay the equivalent redemption price, viz., and "a life for a life." The life of His flesh, which was in the blood and that life God gave. "I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement..." Jesus condemned and made void the sin, by paying the debt incurred by the law so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. (Romans 8).

By grace we are saved, through faith, so that no flesh should glory. Being justified by faith.... by His blood we are reconciled to God. Could the law produce such an one? No; because the law was as Paul says, "a ministration of death." What did Paul mean when he said: "The law that was ordained to life I found to be unto death"? Did he mean the law which was holy, just and good, was a worthless thing? Certainly not. Paul kept the letter of the law blameless (Philippians 3:6), but had he understood the spirit of the law he would not have gone about causing many to be put to death thinking that he was doing God a service. Paul could say upon recognition of the spirit of the Law: "I, through the law, am dead to the law." He recognised that by the works of the letter of the law no flesh was justified. It was the works of Abraham, who was before the law, which were works of faith that was the spirit of the law. Paul recognised that flesh (fleshly descent from Abraham) profiteth nothing, and that the spirit of the law concluded all under sin (Adamic relationship) and that it was necessary to be dead unto sin before works of righteousness could commence.

Hence the need of the first requisite - redemption from Adamic relationship, which is a legal one. Upon acceptance of the redemption from that relationship one becomes a member of the family of God by adoption.

We can only receive adoption through the Son and it is through Him that we can be made free; and for the Son to make us free necessitates the Son being free Him-self, before He can offer liberty to us. Our liberty was bought with a price and the price was the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot. The law could not produce such an one because all were born in Adamic relationship and by law were "sold under sin" even though not born but in Adam's loins. It was therefore necessary for one to be produced apart from the will of the flesh, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law (Galatians 4:5).

Why redeem those who were under the law given by God? Was not this an enigma to the Jew? If they were under God's law, and needed redemption though under that law, it is obvious that they were under condemnation. The explanation lies in the fact that the law could not give life.

All under the law had every opportunity of seeing in the ordinances and moral code of the law the spirit of it, but they did not, with few exceptions. Each had to see in the ordinances of the law the prefiguring of the redemption price that would ultimately be paid by Him who was prefigured; which price was not paid in Eden but on Calvary. They had to recognise that what they needed redemption from was something pertaining to the legal sphere and not the physical. That something was Adamic relationship, the sin that all were concluded under; and if they recognised that they were born under Adamic relationship they would be keeping the spirit of the law by afterwards keeping and reckoning themselves dead to sin. Their

circumcision would then be of the heart, and not merely of the flesh. "Do one, but not leave the other undone" said Jesus. The spirit of the law is as much in force today as ever it was. What was taken away was the handwriting of the ordinances, which Jesus nailed to His Cross (Colossians 2:14) because He was the substance, the antitype.

Jesus had to be free in every sense of the term from condemnation and this could only be accomplished by God providing the life by His own power. Jesus was not free from the same temptations which beset every son of Adam, being tempted in all points like them. If that were not so His overcoming would be a farce and His testing a mere sham fight. When we say that Jesus had a free life we are misunderstood by some because they base their reasoning upon the flesh being under condemnation and contend therefore that Jesus, being flesh was as much under condemnation as every son of Adam. If this were so, we ask. What did Jesus mean when He said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I am from above, ye are from beneath"? Again He said, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself." Did not God give Jesus His life which He had in the flesh by causing His Holy Spirit to operate upon Mary? Did not God give Him the life He now possesses by the same Spirit? Did not Jesus receive both direct from God? Certainly He did. Not being born of the will of the flesh but of God, was He not legally free from Adamic relationship? Certainly He was. Why do some jump to the conclusion that the term free-life means that Jesus was a different kind of flesh to us? Why be frightened of the term? "Free Life is not found literally in the Scriptures, but is there anything more clearly taught? if Jesus did not have a free life then the redemption price could not have been paid by Him for those in prison, because He would be in prison Himself, and what is more, if God had not produced Him in accordance with His sure word of prophecy there would have been no redemption, because He (Jesus) would be a sinner in Adam on the federal principle of being under the Adamic head and the term "second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:47) would have no meaning. Was He the second man only after resurrection? No; He was holy (separate) from conception (see Luke 1:35). The second man had to be produced by God separate from the first'. If that were not so, the first son of Adam (Cain) could logically be called the second man, if the production were via the will of the flesh. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath know the mind of the Lord? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever." (Romans 11:33). "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift (Christ)." (2 Corinthians 9:15). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; and in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:23).

Jesus was rich, by being Son of the Highest, and free; but for our sakes He became poor. How? By giving His all; the life of the flesh which was in the blood, and we, through faith in that shed blood, being the price of our redemption, have right to the -tree of life.

As freely as Jesus received He freely gave; therefore we feel very thankful to God for the knowledge we have received; and as freely as we have received we freely give. (1 Chronicles 29:1; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Matthew 10:8; Acts 20:35).

Brother F.J.Pearce.

Editor's note: By agreement a few alterations have been made where it was felt the original text was a little ambiguous.

Part of a letter dated 3rd February 1911:-

Dear Arthur,

...Christadelphians embrace the doctrine of “sinful flesh” which is Romish... But Rome dare not defile the only begotten Son of God, yet Christadelphian teaching does so defile Him. Whilst Romish teaching is that Christ’s own soul purchased eternal life for us, no one termed Renunciator has ever so taught. I can think of a Christadelphian hymn which says that eternal life was purchased by the blood of Christ! (“To them eternal life He gives - the purchase of His blood”). No, the substitution of the Bible is that the life of Christ’s flesh was given for the natural life of the world. It was natural life that Adam lost and regained through the substitution of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who died instead of Adam. This is the only way the Scriptural doctrine of Ransom can be understood. Jesus died the violent death due to the sinner, this frees the sinner from the power of sin, the slave owner to hold him captive, thus enabling the erstwhile captive to be placed in God’s service on probation for eternal life. These things are obscured by the doctrine of a condemned Saviour Himself under the dominion of sin from which He came to deliver those sold in Adam. As Brother Caldicott says, “Some may be compelled to quail before Him to whom they have attributed sin.” May God forgive their attempted defilement of the Holy One whom He sanctified and sent into the world.

It is a great privilege to have the mists cleared away from the splendid vision of the pure and Holy Son of God and I rejoice daily that I have been enabled to see the redemption that is in Christ Jesus - to know the joyful fact that there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus’ - to know that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. “For though He was rich yet He became poor for our sakes that we, by His poverty, might become rich.”

Yours in God’s Ransom, H.W.Warre.

* * * * *

Brother Caldicott who is mentioned in the above letter, was another Christadelphian who held our views regarding the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother Caldicott was well known as a musician who wrote the following verses as well composing the music that was originally put for it. For well over fifty years it was held as one of the favourite hymns until some modern ‘tune’ was substituted for the original hymn.

“We shall be like Him.” O how rich the promise?
What greater could our Father’s love prepare?
Few are the words, and softly are they spoken,
But who shall tell the blessings hidden there?

“We shall be like Him,” - pure in heart and sinless;
But His redeeming mercy ends not there;
These bodies like to His shall then be fashioned,
And we His resurrection glory share.

“We shall be like Him,” - raised above all weakness,
For ever past all weariness and pain;
E’en death itself shall have no power to reach us
When with our risen Lord we live and reign.

So in the hope of bearing His bright image,
Rejoicing in His present gift of grace,
His love shall keep our hearts in patient waiting
Till we in glorious beauty see His face.