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Editorial

Dear Sisters and Brothers and Friends, Loving Greetings.

Water is a precious commodity everywhere for without it life would be impossible. We take it for granted in Britain, but in many countries women, in particular spend the greater part of their lives and their energy fetching and carrying it for their families.

In Israel water is now of such an overriding concern, that it is thought by many commentators that the lack of it and its unfair distribution, may well be the cause of the next war in that region.

The Dead Sea, which is incidentally the lowest place on earth and the saltiest body of water to be found on the globe, is losing one metre in depth every year. This is endangering rare plants and wild life. King David's Engedi stream once fed the Dead Sea but now it no longer reaches it because it is collected for agricultural purposes higher up.

In 1960 under the Negev desert a virtual fossil ocean was discovered with brackish salty water millions of years old. Fruit and vegetables actually prosper well in this salty environment and with the lower water content the yield is less, but the taste of the produce is better, it is what they call "desert sweet."

The Israelis use 3 times more water per capita than the Palestinians. This inequality cannot continue especially after the drought last year. Israel should stop growing crops like oranges that are wasteful of water, in order to export to water rich countries like ours. Growing wisely along with the refining of sewage water and saline treatments would help. Since the 6 day war Palestinians have been dependent on the Israelis water authority and the Oslo Agreement has limited their rights to drill for water. Palestinians can look across the valley to see Israelis swimming pools and irrigated lawns whilst there are 150 of their villages without running water. One village on the West Bank has spring water in a pipe for people to collect and some people come 10 times a day for water. It is possible to buy water from a tanker but it is very expensive and there is even a black market in water.

In the next twenty years the Israeli population is expected to double and severe long-term drought is forecast. A spokesman has said "it's not a catastrophe for Israel from the point of view of their economy, but for the Palestinians it may be a catastrophe, we must work out a solution together." The Palestinians must have more than Just a right to draw water from certain places,

Many Arab farmers have been forced to leave their land through lack of water. Now north of Galilee a new waste water treatment plant is being set up, funded by the Palestinians, Egypt and the United States. How regrettable that the Israelis can continue to be so ungenerous with a vital resource that they have done nothing to produce, God-given as all water is.

It might be that if the Israelis could find it in their hearts to spend as much money on providing water for the Palestinians as they do on arming themselves, some of the bitterness would be taken out of the situation in the Middle East and peaceful co-existence would be more a possibility than seems at present. However all this is in God's hands and He knows the end from the beginning so we can only watch and wait.

Russell, Eileen and I send our love to all readers and we extend our grateful thanks for the contributions both literary and monetary that we have received this year.

Love from Helen Brady

How Many Deaths Are There?

The writer believes there are five deaths mentioned in Scripture. I will endeavour to list them as follows:

Death No. 1. Legal death, or death by Law, i.e. Judicial or inflicted death: the death which came by Adam's sin but which was remitted in the mercy and foreknowledge of God. Jesus submitting to it willingly in his stead – the typical lamb from which came the covering, foreshadowing this event - Acts 2:22-24. "The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Adam's sin brought this sentence of death and not only so but all in his loins were sold under The Sin and came under the Law of Sin and Death, i.e., they were constituted sinners in him. By Adam's offence therefore, many became dead under the Law, dead in trespasses and sins, having no hope and without God in the world.

It is enlightenment which makes a man responsible and aware of his predicament into which Adam has sold him, but God's merciful provision is there "waiting at the door." In this wonderful way God has concluded all under sin by the offence of Adam so that by the one righteous act of Jesus Christ He could have mercy on all- In effect then, we were all members of the "body" of Adam. All do not know this, but those who do become responsible and can, by faith in the symbol of baptism, be crucified and buried with Christ and rise to newness of life in Him, in His body. Romans chapters 5 and 6 explain this as simply as it can be explained providing one realizes that Paul is not speaking of the natural death which is common to all men and all creation.

It is Law which governs a man's relationship and position; men are not considered sinners by physical descent, but constituted sinners by Law. Sin is not in the flesh and blood but is transgression of God's Law. If this were not so how can we be made free from sin and still walk in flesh and blood nature? Sinful flesh mongers do not and cannot understand Romans chapter 6 but those who understand Paul's letter, chapters 5,6,7, and 8 in this light will appreciate that there is "therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1,2).

Death No. 2. These are dead while they live; dead in trespasses and sins as a result of being sold under sin by Adam and remaining in ignorance of the redemption which is through Christ Jesus unto eternal life. There is much proof of this in the words of Jesus such as: "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:22). "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which commeth down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (John 6:49,50). Jesus was not referring to Abraham as being the father of those whom He addressed, for Abraham was not dead in the sense as He considered their

fathers to be: “God is not the God of the dead but of the living” for all the faithful live unto Him, having passed from death (that is, the first death which came by Adam - not natural death) unto life (John 5:24), the death from which we are quickened or raised to life through the waters of baptism.

There is ample proof in the record of John’s gospel that everlasting life is conferred on the faithful followers of Christ through His grace; though of course it is not a change of corruptible substance to incorruptible but it is a legal status - the physical status to be observed at the coming of Christ when those whose life (everlasting life) is hid with Christ in God shall be raised incorruptible, or changed, as the case may be. “This is the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.” Natural death, as we are always at pains to point out, has nothing at all to do with Genesis 2:17, neither is Genesis 3:19 a confirmation of Genesis 2:17. Genesis 3:19 was a result of not being changed to incorruptibility by continuing in obedience to God, Inflicted death “in the day thou eatest thereof” was the sentence. God was not a deceiver; He did not expect Adam to know a day was a thousand years and a thousand years as one day with Him. The words uttered were for Adam’s understanding and Adam understood the evening and the morning to be a day of 24 hours. To return to our subject, Death No. 2, this death is applicable to all who remain in a state of ignorance as a result of being sold under sin. By the law is the knowledge of sin. As many as have sinned without law (without knowing the law) shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Romans 2:12 & 16). Every man and woman owe their existence to Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, therefore none can ask the question why do we die for a sin committed by Adam? because the question should never arise.

If Adam received his wages of inflicted death we would never have lived, but since God foresaw who would redeem Adam the result was different. Therefore everyone owes his very existence to Christ and is without excuse and until enlightened by the Word of God to a realization of God’s purpose in Christ, is in a state described by Paul in Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” And verse 5, “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,” is confirmation of Paul’s words in Romans 5:6, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” And in verses 9 and 10 of Ephesians 2 we have confirmation of the teaching of Paul that a man is legally Justified through faith and baptism but is not morally justified unless he has “fought a good fight, finished the course and kept the faith.” “Not of works lest any man should boast. We are His workmanship, created in Christ unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Much of the doctrine propounded by the Nazarene Fellowship has been grossly mis- understood and consequently misrepresented from time to time up to this very day. As a Christadelphian of the Temperance Hail section, I was of the opinion that where the discussion of Truth was concerned we feared no one and were always ready for discussion and debate. Never was I so shocked and disillusioned when refused permission to discuss the sacrifice of Christ and all things for salvation, from the Word of God with the whole ecclesia to which I belonged. My resignation was the obvious result!

Death No. 3. Now we come to the third death which is the death common to all animal nature in whose nostrils is the breath of life. When Adam was created he was the same make up as the beasts of the field, flesh and blood of corruptible nature - a nature which left to itself, returned to dust as it was not intended to continue for ever. The words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:44 confirms this, “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body, and so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual.”

There is no support here for the assumption that the flesh or nature of Adam was changed after he transgressed. A notable Bible scholar wrote, “Seeing that man had become a transgressor of Divine Law, there was no need of a miracle for the infliction of death – left to himself he would have returned to the ground from whence he was taken.” But you will notice he mentioned the words “infliction of death,” he realized therefore that inflicted death was necessary. It was necessary, then to do something to Adam if death were to be inflicted; left to himself Adam needed not to be touched in any way, natural death from the gradual process of decay would ultimately have overcome him. This would not be inflicted death and would

make “the shedding of blood” insignificant; for the bloodshedding can only be associated with inflicted death.

When refuting the doctrine of the immortality of the soul some are fond of quoting Genesis 2 which deals with the creation of Adam in order to prove such a doctrine false, but how inconsistent they are, for in Genesis 2 is a description of Adam before he transgressed and if their changed nature theory is true, we should not compare ourselves with Adam before he transgressed, or use it to thwart the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. We must however accept the Bible facts that Adam was capable of obedience or disobedience in the nature of which he was constituted. Adam sinned in this very good nature but God did not condemn the nature for the simple reason that it was capable of obedience. God condemned Adam for transgression of law and flesh is no more obnoxious to God now than when it was first created; it is the unlawful acts of men which are obnoxious to God.

Jesus came to vindicate the righteousness of God and of His Law by proving it was possible to please Him in the likeness of the very nature in which Adam sinned. Dr. Thomas expressed words very near to the above - unfortunately he had different ideas in mind when he wrote in Eureka, Volume 1, page 106, “Sin had to be condemned in the nature which transgressed.” For this to be fulfilled it was necessary to possess the same nature as Adam when created. This has never been fulfilled according to current Christadelphian teaching, yet Dr. Thomas considered it had to be fulfilled in Christ, but again confused the issue, for he thought sin was a fixation of evil in the flesh and the only way in which it can be condemned is by destroying it. In other words, we must all commit suicide. “Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there” says Dr. Thomas. But the fact of the matter is that sin did not exist in the body of Jesus, nor in anyone else’s body. It was sin or transgression of God’s Law which was condemned - by a man of the same flesh and blood nature, proving that obedience was possible by living a sinless life, and then by becoming the offering for sin. Jesus did what the law of Moses could not do – set humanity free from the (legal) bondage of sin. If therefore the penalty of sin was “dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return” then the death of Jesus had no relation to the sin of Adam. Firstly Jesus did not die a natural death and secondly, He did not return to dust, and incidentally the flesh of Jesus which some presume was obnoxious to God was not destroyed but came back from the tomb energized by the Spirit of God - incorruptible.

Now let us ask the question, what is the opposite to natural death? The answer must obviously be, natural life. We need not go to any other source than Genesis 2:7 for an explanation of natural life - “And 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.” It is evident that food was necessary for the continued existence of Adam and Eve and all other animal creation otherwise they would have died from starvation as they were not constituted to live without food. This knocks out completely the supposition and erroneous theory that the flesh and blood nature of Adam and Eve was changed, for if that were true then the animal creation in general was also changed, for “man has no pre-eminence above a beast (in nature).” For “as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath,” “all are of the dust and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:19,20). Paul, writing to the Romans in chapter 8, speaks of the natural creation of Adam thus; “For the creature was made subject to vanity (i.e. corruptible - see verse 21) not willingly (i.e. not by choice) but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.” Paul is not referring here to beasts but to man. A beast does not possess the intellect to hope for deliverance from corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Paul is also describing how he and others who had the first fruits of the Spirit, were eagerly waiting for the redemption (deliverance, is the correct translation) of the body from corruption to incorruptibility; for redemption was already a thing of the present with the children of God. They could not be called children of God otherwise.

If God changed Adam’s nature to sinful flesh, why the words in Genesis 6:5 & 6 - “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”? Should God have expected anything better from sinful flesh, defiled nature, condemned nature, fixation of evil in the flesh, etc., as propounded by sinful-flesh mongers?

The truth is that men in the days of Noah were capable of keeping God’s ways (example Noah) and because of this His judgments came upon them after 120 years of warning under the preaching of Naoh. Is it

any use preaching to people who have sin in the flesh, this fixation of evil which makes them automatic sinners? “Noah, thee only have I seen righteous before me in this generation;” yet Noah had the same flesh. What did Noah do by his righteousness? He condemned the world for its disobedience and sin. Jesus, in like manner, by His righteousness condemned sin. He showed that it was possible to be obedient to the commandments and in this way He vindicated the righteousness of God in inflicting death upon wilful sinners; but He went further than this in that He suffered the death due to Adam for transgression in Eden. Anyone who disputes this must believe the alternative - that Adam received the wages of sin for services rendered, when he died natural death and returned to dust. Those who hold this belief hold out no further hope for a future life for Adam, though some may even deny the fact. When Noah condemned sin, it was not in his flesh, it was in the world outside - the transgressors of God’s Law. It was so in the case of Jesus in His contending with the hypocrisy of the Jewish hierarchy; He condemned their sin by His own obedience and righteousness and it was while in flesh He did so. There is another factor we must not overlook and which is a stumbling block in the path of those who believe the penalty for Adam’s sin was a return to the ground by a gradual process of disease, decay and finally death. This important factor is found in the very works which Jesus performed in the name of His Father. “I do always those things which please my Father, therefore He loves me.” Was Jesus speaking the truth? Undoubtedly. But the belief in natural death as the wages of sin by a process of disease and decay makes Him a liar. Why did Jesus heal the sick, the diseased, the halt, the lame and the blind? Why did He raise the dead? Was this not fighting against God? Was He not arresting the course of justice which said, according to popular belief, the penalty for sin is a gradual process of decay by disease and a returning to dust? Was He not also causing those whom He raised to receive double wages?

As I said previously, wages are for services rendered; the person you serve pays you your wages. If you serve sin, then sin pays your wages, which is death; if you serve righteousness you receive a righteous man’s reward through Jesus Christ.

Nothing can be explained more simply than as Paul puts it in Romans 6, and mark you, he is addressing those who are alive from the dead (not in the literal sense, but in the legal). What death then have they risen from? The answer is obvious and simple - “the death which came by sin;” the death which passed upon all men and which death Jesus suffered, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Those whom Paul was addressing had already died this death in symbol by baptism into Christ and risen to newness of life (not Adamic life) in Him; Adamic life had been crucified with Him, so that the “body” belonging to “Sin” (personified as a Master) might be destroyed. He that is dead is freed from “Sin” even as a woman, by the death of her husband is freed from the Law which binds her to him while he lives. The evidence of Scripture points to the fact that man is as God made him in the beginning - capable of dying, susceptible to pain by reason of the nervous system, capable of hunger and thirst, capable of reproduction, which in fact was required of him upon God’s own instruction.

1 Corinthians 15:40 to 52 is very plain teaching by Paul and no other interpretation can truthfully be put upon it. Paul speaks only of an animal body and a spiritual body. The animal body being first and afterwards the spiritual body. There is no room here for changed nature ideas and those who hold such are wise beyond what is written. If Adam was changed then all the animal creation was changed, for you cannot have one without the other and you cannot hold such a theory without rejecting Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul. “He that made them in the beginning made them male and female... what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” Yet some say this was the nature of the transgression, thus making God its Author! “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” - 1 Corinthians 15:44.

Someone wrote: “The first man Adam was neither mortal nor immortal but in an intermediate state as per nature; the second Adam became a body of sinful flesh as a result of sinning, this sin running in the blood thereby giving it the title ‘Body of sin.’” Such an idea is derived from the apostate teaching of Original Sin and the misinterpretation of Paul’s teaching and is yet another example of being wise beyond that which is written.

Death No. 4. Here we are considering the Symbolic Death through Baptism as a result of enlightenment. Adam by transgression of the Law, merited inflicted death - in other words he forfeited his natural life (which was in the blood); he sold himself to Sin and all in his loins. Paul terms this as being under the Law of sin and death and were it not for the merciful providence of God in finding a substitute Adam would have

been put to death, for the Law demanded it, but God foresaw One who could meet the requirements of the Law and save Adam and all in his loins, from extinction and give them a hope of eternal life. This One was typified in the provision of the coats of skins, which necessitated the slaying of an animal. The life blood of the animal had been poured out instead of Adam's own blood, and by putting on the covering of skins by faith he was continually reminded of this fact. This lamb (for I believe this animal was a lamb) foreshadowed Jesus, who being begotten of God, obtained life direct from His Father and therefore, was not in the loins of Adam as were all others, and was not consequently sold under The Sin, and so required no redemption therefrom. The life and flesh of Jesus was no different from that of Adam. Adam's life came from God, Christ's life came from God. The difference was in the legal sense. We as descendants of Adam are begotten in legal bondage, being sold under sin and are therefore in need of redemption. Jesus begotten of God was therefore also First-born, not being in the loins of Adam and was in the unique position of redeeming Adam and all in Adam, by remaining sinless and then laying down His life, giving His life a ransom for the many. Jesus submitted to the requirements of the Law and this pleased His Father who highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name. Jesus did not again experience natural existence for the law had claimed that life in the blood, but the law could not claim anything else. Jesus had not served sin, therefore sin had no claim. Jesus had served God and God gave Him eternal life in an incorruptible body, with the same character and mind which He had when crucified. Jesus received no wages from Sin for He never belonged to Sin, neither served Sin to expect Sin's wages.

It can be scripturally shown that Adam did die in the day he ate of the tree, but not in the physical sense but by associating himself with the death of the animal in acknowledgement of his transgression and worthiness of death. He died by the Law and he died in symbol; and he was reconciled to God though not restored to his former position and status. This position and status were given with additional glory to Jesus who is styled, the beginning of a new creation. Adam can therefore be expected to take his place among the redeemed at the appointed time.

Redemption through Christ must take first place. The promises to Abraham, yea all things are valueless without it. Indeed Paul gave the promises second place in his preaching because he recognized the importance of putting first things first.

Let us hear Paul on the matter: 1 Corinthians 15:3, "For I delivered to you among the chief things, what else I received, that Christ died on behalf of our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures." 1 Corinthians 2: 2, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

I emphasize, those who are truly enlightened realize the importance of believing and understanding the sacrifice of Christ first and foremost to an understanding of God's scheme of redemption and salvation. It is the lack of understanding the meaning of Christ's sacrifice which has forced religious leaders into making silly statements in regard to salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ. For example, "Christ died and rose again that He might open the way by which we might be saved from death - that to be saved from death is to be raised from the grave and given eternal life." Silly, because the writer thinks this death is natural death - the death common to all animal creation, including man. The correct means of saving anyone from death is to prevent that person from dying. Death being the cessation of life.

The idea is usually expressed that Jesus prayed that He might be saved out of death or from the grave by being raised therefrom, but this is far from being correct. Hebrews 5:7 is quoted to bolster up this idea but is misrepresented and misinterpreted. Jesus prayed to Him who was able to save Him from death (inflicted death) and I emphasize "Him who was able." This does not infer that His Father who was able to save Him from crucifixion did save Him from death, but this does not rule out the fact expressed by the writer to the Hebrews that God was able to do it. Read the words of Jesus on the same matter in Matthew 26:53,54, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to the Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Jesus certainly tasted death for every man - the death which came by sin - not natural death, for He did not taste natural death. To pray with strong crying and tears to be saved from the death state in the grave is to infer that the individual is continually conscious of agony and torment while in the grave, thereby contradicting Ecclesiastes 9:4,5. Such a construction is as foolish as going to bed and praying to God with strong crying and tears to be saved out of an 8 hour sleep. Everyone knows how welcome 8 hours or more of sleep is to a person who has toiled

all day. No, it was the prospect of an agonizing death, impaled upon the cross in the burning heat of a Syrian sun which caused Jesus to pray "If it be possible, Father, let this cup pass from me." He was heard in that He feared but the cup was not taken from Him, nevertheless He was strengthened by the ministration of angels. And we also are assured of the same measure of strength in proportion to our needs for there is nothing commanded us to do that we are unable to do if we pray as Jesus prayed. If it were otherwise, as sin in the flesh believers affirm, then why exhort one another to do things they believe they are incapable of doing? Such theories make mockery of God and of His Word.

Paul did not write or utter the words so often expressed by some people - "In the flesh there dwelleth no good thing." These words cannot be found in Scripture. What Paul did say was, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." From the context we see he was speaking of himself as an unregenerated Jew, under the Law and he regarded this position as "in the flesh." He was not referring to the physical flesh at all but that state of mind in which both legally and morally a person is alienated from God. How otherwise can we understand him when he says of himself and others of like faith, "Ye are not in the flesh;" "We have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;" "So then they that are in the flesh can not please God." Surely we must discriminate, or as we are exhorted, rightly divide the word of truth. The symbolic death, burial and resurrection is expressed beautifully and accurately by Paul when he says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "For I, through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God - I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" Colossians 3:1-3. In other words, "Passed from death to life." That is, the death which came by sin which was judicial and which Jesus tasted for every man.

There are deaths which Jesus certainly did not taste for any man - natural death and what is styled, the second death. Adam brought the first death, by sin, but he did not suffer it for God was merciful and found a substitute - His own Son. Those who by enlightenment realized their position of hopelessness under the Law of sin and death and consequently took advantage of the redemption through Christ and were reconciled to God, became His children, His servants, or slaves and were therefore liable to punishment for their own individual sins as He Judged fit. The Israelites were a redeemed people, responsible to God and with many of them He was not well pleased, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness through His judgments upon them. Had they pleased Him they would have entered the land and would still have died the common death of all men - a death which would have been precious to Him for "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Yet some maintain there was no difference in the case of the Israelites. Analyse it and you will find that wilful sin, considered as such by God, committed by responsible, that is, enlightened people, is punishable by death - the Second Death - from which there is no Atonement. See Hebrews 10: 26- 30 and Hebrews 6:4-8. Notice the words at the end of verse 8, "Whose end is to be burned" and consider Revelation 21:8, "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." But, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (Revelation 20:6). There are only two resurrections; the one at the coming of Christ when, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible." This resurrection is confined only to those on whom the second death hath no power. It is obvious that none of the unjust are raised at this time. The Scripture is very clear on this matter of the second death and of the resurrection.

Death No. 5. The second death is operative at the end of the thousand years reign of Christ, after the second resurrection when all whom God considers responsible will be raised and judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works. But you will notice that another book was also opened which was the book of life and it is evident that those whose names were written in the book of life were not judged out of the other books, for they would, no doubt, have been raised incorruptible - the very fact of their names being in the book of life signifying they had already been judged faithful during their life time. Once the second death is operative upon a person (in the legal sense) there is no deliverance from it, the name is blotted out of the book of life - a very serious thought, is it not? "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but will confess his name before my Father and before His angels" (Revelation 3:5). "And with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3).

Christ came to atone for the sin which caused the first death, not the second death. He was made a little lower than the angels for this express purpose, that He, by the grace of God, should taste the death for every man, the death which came by Adam. Were it not for the grace of God Adam would have died a judicial death there and then, but God foresaw a multitude of redeemed who would reciprocate His glory and rejoice in the work of His hands and through His mercy and grace, provide a Healer of the breach - One who would suffer the death due to Adam and still retain His title to life through His position and obedience.

Eternal death was not the penalty, death is the complete cessation of life. We know that if Adam had suffered the penalty he would have perished for eternity because he was a sinner, but Jesus did not substitute Adam's character; He was a substitute for Adam in the sense of forfeiting His natural existence by the shedding of His blood; it was life that was forfeited and it was life in the blood which Jesus gave. It is impossible to sacrifice character. If Jesus had come from the tomb without His character what use would He have been as an High Priest? Yet some would entertain the view that the lamb sacrificed under the Law, which had to be without spot and blemish, was typical of the spotless character of Christ. Yet the character of Christ was not sacrificed, which, to fulfil this foolish idea, would be a necessity, as the lamb was sacrificed in the physical sense only, having no moral character. The lamb typified Jesus in the legal sense - free from the condemnation His life having been derived direct from God and not through Adam by the will of the flesh and like the lamb, without any moral sin (there is no physical sin), bearing the sin of the individual by dying in the stead thereof.

This is a subject which has been dealt with time and again in various literature of the Nazarene Fellowship and here I must stress the fact that we do not carry substitution as far as saying that Christ's righteous character was substitutionary although it was of great importance to the act, for a sinner could not free a sinner seeing that his own life was become forfeit by that sin.

To summarize here are the five deaths which I have tried to explain as scripturally and simply as possible:-

1. Legal or Judicial death. This is the death which came by Adam's sin: atoned for through Christ.
2. Dead in trespasses and sins - through ignorance. That is, sold under sin. "Because we thus judge, that one died for all, then were all dead (or died) (2 Corinthians 5:14).
3. Natural death - to which Adam and all creation were subject apart from Divine intervention. See 1 Corinthians 15.
4. Symbolic death - through baptism upon enlightenment of the fact of redemption (released for a ransom) from under the Law of sin and death. That is, sold under sin (Sin's bondservants) and the hope of life in and through Christ.
5. The second death - operative on all responsible, as God judges, whose names are not in the book of life, but experienced at a specific time. See Revelation 20 and 21:8.

Please note: The second death can be the first death experienced by an individual who nevertheless is worthy of it which proves that the penalty for wilful sin is inflicted death. This does not alter the fact that it is the second death, for it takes its order of merit from the first death of its kind which was judicial or inflicted death, typical though it may have been in Eden yet actual in the case of Christ for by Adam came the death which Christ suffered which in effect was the first judicial death. Operative firstly, yes, upon the animal as a type, and symbolically upon Adam through his acknowledgement of what was due to him, but the true pointer was to Christ - God's provision.

"And they cast him out... And Jesus said, for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." – John 9:34 & 39.

Brother Phil Parry.

Letter to Sister Helen Brady from Brother Richard Lister, dated 31.8.2000

Dear Helen, In reply to your July/August C.L. I am enclosing two articles by Brother John Thomas from "Eureka" and "Elpis Israel."

The problem is that the doctrines you promulgate are not new with Edward Turney but in fact a turning back to the old Apostasy of the Churches (Papal and Protestant) which brother Thomas early on came to realize were false, unscriptural and to represent an awful falling away, or apostasy, from the original apostolic faith.

The apostle John fought against clean flesh heresy in his own day which he styled the doctrine of antichrist (1 John 4:1-6, 2 John 7:11). Whilst the possession of the Holy Spirit could be proved by the apostles (and those they passed on to [a gift] to make up the star elderships of the ecclesias) by their powers and gifts, that they received on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

Otherwise where is the proof? Except a person's feeling. To wrest scripture in this service is to misunderstand. The Word of God is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and able to make a person wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:16). Nothing else.

Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 13 that the Holy Spirit gifts would die away when that which was incomplete was complete (i.e. the revealed Word of God) (with John on the Isle of Patmos AD96).

The figurative typical application of the former and latter rains also makes it clear that there is a long dry period in between the two outpourings of the Spirit (Joel 2:23, Acts 2:12-21).

Present possession of the Holy Spirit is also an apostate doctrine of the churches opposed by Brother Thomas.

The two witnesses of Revelation 11 make it clear that the Truth would be extinguished or the witnessing thereof (Revelation 11:7); but that it would be revived, so that there would be a living witness at the return of Christ. The extinction of the witness was accomplished by the massacre of Bartholomew and the Revocation of Nantes. After 3/2 lunar days it would revive. The political witness for liberty revived at the French Revolution exactly 105 years (31/2 lunar days later) (1685 - 1790). The true witness was revived thereafter through the instrumentality of Brother Thomas.

Failure to grasp this is the reason for all the diverse doctrines that now plague Christadelphia and its many schisms. The Truth was revived in its entirety by Brother Thomas and his indefatigable labours. This presents a bench mark for measuring and identifying apostasy which started with the Dowieites and then Edward Turney as soon as Brother Thomas deceased. Then Robert Ashcroft and partial inspiration heresy opening the flood gates for subversive opinion in Christadelphia ever since 1885 and rampant in the Central body today since John Carter brought about reunion (1958), between Suffolk Street and Temperance Hall.

I urge you to wake up to the true foundations of the apostolic faith as revived in this last age before it is too late. For heresy will save no one.

Yours Truly, Richard Lister.

* * *

By way of reply Sister Helen wrote as follows

Dear Richard, Thank you for your letter and enclosures. I found your handwriting very difficult to read so if I have misunderstood any of your comments you will understand the reason.

I am very well acquainted with the views and extracts you have sent. However many times I read or hear such things I find them totally unacceptable and disagreeable but above all, unscriptural and at variance with what I read in the Bible.

I have never been a Christadelphian. I grew up in a household where Christadelphian views and the views I hold now were under constant and careful scrutiny and discussion. Therefore painlessly and early in my life I realized where the truth lay and it was not with papist notions of original sin and the Christadelphian perversion of a “defiled” Christ. I hope you will expect me to be as frank about what I believe as you have been about what you believe.

What do you think Jesus meant when he said “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die”? For we do all die, don’t we? As well as all those who have believed in Him down through the ages. This proves to me that there are two deaths spoken of in the Bible as well as two kinds of life.

Old Testament *NEPHESE* = The natural life of creation

Old Testament *CHAY* = The life of God promised to those that are His.

New Testament *PSUCHE* = The natural life of creation and equivalent to *NEPHESE*.

New Testament *ZOE* = The life of God promised to those that are His and the equivalent of *CHAY*.

Natural death (*Psuche*) is emphatically not the wages of sin. Jesus died to save us from the final and eternal death that is the fate of non-believers and to offer us the glorious opportunity of life eternal (*ZOE*). We die at the end of our natural lives because we are the natural creatures that God has made us, just as He made Adam a natural creature and part of the natural creation; all of whom die at the end of their natural span - do you really believe that the beasts and birds etc. all die because of “original sin”? Adam was the same before he sinned as he was afterwards, a natural creature destined to die. Flesh is neutral, it is what we are made of. It is neither good nor evil. Sin is transgression of the law, not a “synonym for human nature.” What a revolting concept. Which of the commandments is it impossible for a person to obey? What just and loving God would handicap His children with a built-in evil bias and then give them rules impossible for them to keep? This is not the God of the Bible who is loving and above all just.

Jesus was holy, harmless and undefiled separate from sinners. The sacrifices in the Old Testament pre-figuring Christ had to be without spot and without blemish in their flesh. This is obvious because animals have no reasoning powers or conscience so do not develop character as we are expected to do and as Jesus did. It follows therefore that Jesus’ flesh was without spot and without blemish, also His character and behaviour were beyond reproach. Jesus did certainly not have a body as “unclean as the bodies of those for whom He died.” Another revolting concept.

Jesus came to save us because we are constituted sinners (a legal position) and we are in that position because of Adam’s sin and we are his descendants. Jesus was a new creation not of Adam’s line. He was free from the condemnation that is ours through Adam. Once we recognize this position and understand what Christ’s death achieved and we are baptized, we can say with St. Paul “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ.”

If we live a perfect life and obey all God’s commands as indeed we could and should and no doubt some people do, we still die a natural death and we are still constituted sinners standing in need of God’s grace, which we may have through baptism and by belief and understanding the death of Christ.

It is of no account to me as you suggest that these views are old any more than if they are new. What matters is, are they true and all reason tells me they are. I could go on but I can see that you are fixed in the Christadelphian mode of sinful flesh, natural death the wages of sin and all the things that follow from that false foundation, so it is pointless to write more and labour my position and the chasm that lies between us. We are east and west and never the twin shall meet, so I will leave it there.

Yours sincerely, Helen Brady.

For some time now I have been in correspondence with Brother Grant Pearce regarding his views on the Atonement. Although he has written very extensively in his previous letters, I feel his letter, which follows mine to him, is concise and covers all the main points of his views:

My letter dated 2.10.2000;-

Dear Grant, Greetings in Jesus' Great Name. I have been meaning to write to you for a long time now and at last have settled down to write this short note.

I enjoy your writings and can sympathize with your views up to a point. No one wants to think of Jesus Christ having to die in our place, and if we can find some other reason for His crucifixion then we must do so. However, the one serious point on which I differ is where you suggest that if Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself then He became polluted and therefore unfit for a sacrifice.

But let me start with Adam in Eden. When he sinned, an animal was slain to provide a covering for his sin. This is substitution. The animal died instead of Adam. It also provided, in symbol, the necessary covering for his sin. This was also a type of a future reality. Genesis 3:15 - "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Sacrifices constituted the very core of Old Testament teaching and the fundamental idea of sacrifice is that of substitution. Indeed, all the sacrifices for sin in the Old Testament were symbolic and typical, and all sinners are saved by the substitution of the One to whom they pointed - Jesus Christ - who was not a sinner.

The laying on of hands, heavily, was done to symbolically convey the offerer's sins to the victim to be slain. Likewise when Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sin of the world, He was pleasing His Father and, as you say, I think the sin polluted Him and so He became unclean. It was perhaps at this point, when the sin of the world laid heavily upon Him, that Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" I think the reason then why His Father had forsaken Jesus was because He had voluntarily taken on Himself the sin of the world and this is what made Him the sacrifice. But it cannot be said that Jesus was literally (physically) defiled by the sin of the world.

The very purpose of and reason for Atonement (or Mercy-Seat - covering over) is that God looks upon the covering instead of that which is covered over. Thus one substitutes for the other and so we find that substitution is the very essence of sacrifice. In the Old Testament the Mercy Seat covered over the Law which condemned the sinner to death. In like manner in the New Testament, the Covering - Jesus Christ - is accepted by God in the place of the sinner - whose sins are covered over by Christ, our Mercy-seat. He is our propitiation or Mercy-Seat - 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. Jesus became the perfect Substitute and the perfect Mediator and perfect High Priest in Heaven - Hebrews 10.

God declared to Moses what should be the acceptable sacrifice under the Law, knowing what was to follow when His Beloved Son gave His life for us to fulfil that Law. God did not offer His own Son in sacrifice neither did He kill Him. The parable of the Householder in Matthew 21:33 - 39 confirms who killed Jesus.

Perhaps I shall write more on this subject in the next Circular Letter. Until then I will send my love and best wishes in the Lord,

Russell.

* * *

In reply to the above Brother Grant wrote the following letter, dated 14.10.2000

Dear Russell, Thank you for your note and can I reply too with a short comment. You mention Adam and the sacrifice that was made to cover his sin. It was here we observe and learn of very first exhibition of the character of the unchanging, always the same, Almighty God, and his infinite mercy and forbearance as a loving Father.

Adam's sin was forgiven exactly as a loving father would treat his son or daughter today. A lesson was learned by Adam but not without some penalty being imposed in that he was removed from the Garden to different conditions and circumstances outside, etc.

Here is Stage One enacted and fulfilled in a huge 'Human Resources and Property Development encompassing the whole of Creation where the Great Architect, Designer and Civil Engineer, knowing the Beginning and the End from its inception and in full control of the Great Plan which would extend forward into the future for a period which would take some 7000 years...; for the multiplication of the people He had created and for the replenishment of the Earth which had just previously been in darkness and lifeless.

A plan that would go forth and be fulfilled stage by stage just like the multi-hectare subdivisions on the western suburbs of Melbourne. Detailed clearly in the Scriptures is an ongoing historical account of the Creation development for its culmination when those believers who by testing and trial and for development of character, have been sufficiently moulded and shaped and scraped and polished just like precious stones to make up what the Great Architect's Revelation describes as "jewels in the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven." This is the ultimate end of the Architect, Designer and Engineer of all things. Stage by stage, piece by piece it would all be built and developed with not one thing not done that was to be done. John 1:1-3.

As to Adam's sin, I say, "So what?" He was on trial for the development of character and testing. It was no more heinous or wicked than those of King David and yet an alt loving and merciful Father forgave both of them beyond measure. The death sentence in both cases and in God's infinite mercy as a loving father was remitted absolutely. When God forgives, He does just that. End of story.

Yet what a heap of ostracism and scorn and blame and the fabrication of absolute fables that have confused and deceived has been put upon poor Adam down through the ages. Who dare say that our first parent Adam, will not be in the Kingdom? There is no such thing as a debt that must be paid 4000 years later or that a loving Heavenly Father required satisfaction" by a man's death for the infringement of His Law. Adam's sin was forgiven. Any claim to the contrary is a denial and slander of the loving merciful character of our God - Exodus 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15, Look at Psalm 103!!!

Right from the beginning we note the principle - recognition of sin by the offender. Then comes repentance, reparation and amends; afterwards comes forgiveness and atonement.

I remember writing before how atonement is a state of mind, a mental and moral condition of well being and of good conscience before God and nothing anywhere near the complicated gobbledegook mistakenly written by brethren and the churches. What is it that God requires of His sons and daughters? - "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise" Psalm 51:17.

What did the animal offerings portray? Here we find in the law that the emphasis was in the selection of the animal, not the slaying. Everything that blood touched became holy. The lesson being that the offerer was saying in his mind - "From now on I must dedicate my whole being, heart, mind, body and soul, completely to the service of God. This is true atonement. Romans 12:1. Micah 6:6-8.

In other words, the entire life of the believer, not only the Jew of those times, but the believer today, just like Jesus life was a living offering. The offerings represented holiness and righteousness, doing what is right and the offerer setting himself apart as a servant, just like Jesus did. This is the sweet smell savour that ascends to the Most High. This is the true Burnt Offering that is pleasing to God. A Jew will tell you that sacrificial blood represents life given in dedication in service to God, never death.

Furthermore nowhere in Scripture can we find that sin, either symbolically, representatively, or in type, is put on or in the offerings. Such a tenet would have defiled it. What is more, sin offerings were detested by God. Proverbs 21:3, Isaiah 1:16,17, Jeremiah 7:23, 1 Samuel 15:22.

Only the free-will voluntary offerings (even the believers in this day and age "doing thy will O God") arose as a sweet smell savour. These are the Burnt Offerings - Romans 12:1.

The Lord Jesus Christ being the antitypical true Burnt Offering, “Lo I come to do Thy will O God” and so He did and turning the other cheek, suffering the evil until it killed Him. He indeed was the anti-typical *Olah* or ‘continually ascending offering.’

Did Jesus’ murderous death on a Roman torture stake arise a sweet smell? No way! What does Scripture say? “...and there was darkness over the whole land.”

Any tenet of “sacrificial death” or “expiatory “sacrifice for something Adam did or owed is Church doctrine and we should avoid it like the plague. This tenet has its origin in paganism.

Kind Regards. Grant Pearce.

* * *

P.S. My comments in “Who Killed Jesus Christ” were prompted in part by this correspondence and are in some way a response to Grant.

Brother Grant would welcome the views and comments of other readers and says he “will hold on to his present views until defeated by Scripture”!

Since these letters, Brother Grant has sent me another ten page article explaining his views in greater detail. This article is available to anyone who wishes to have a copy.

Russell.

Readers may recall that last year I wrote to Brother Graeham Mansfield, Editor of “Logos” magazine, inviting him to correspondence with us regarding our differing views on the Atonement, for publication in our two magazines. He agreed to this suggestion but has been very busy with many commitments, so on the 1st October I wrote the following letter:-

Dear Graeham, I had hoped to hear from either yourself or one of your colleagues but as it has been so long I wonder if I may put a specific question to you for the purpose of getting the ball rolling?

The question I wish to put is this:-

In Romans 8:3, do you consider the expression “sinful flesh” in this verse a satisfactory translation, or would ‘Flesh belonging to Sin’ more adequately reflect Paul’s meaning?

In putting this question I am sure you will fully realize the implications. It is not meant to be a difficult question but it is put because I have heard Christadelphians say they can see no difference between the two - a claim I find difficult to accept.

With sincere regards, Russell.

* * *

In response Brother Graeham wrote the following note:-

Dear Russell, I have just returned from ecclesial work in Perth, after our extended visit to North America and the United Kingdom, and still find little time to set in process the matters you mention. It is very difficult with the pressure of editorial and other daily work, although I was looking forward to communicating with YOU on the teachings that are disputed between us.

I thought it appropriate, however, to answer the question you mention on Romans 8:3.

It is true that the Diaglott has “flesh of sin,” whilst other translators try “sin’s flesh,” or “sin-influenced flesh.” It describes the common nature of mankind, which was shared by the Lord Jesus Christ, as this verse teaches. It was flesh in which naturally Sin reigns (Romans 6:12), and which produces fruits consistent with that (verse 19). The term relates to flesh that is weak and prone to sin because of the inherent characteristics derived from sinning parents. The nature of Jesus was identical with that of our own, being “made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4), and had he followed the natural will of the flesh, he would have sinned like every other individual has: a law which is proven by very demonstration in every person. But this he did not do, being uniquely strengthened by the power of the Highest (John 1:14).

The word “sinful” is the Greek *harmartia* in its genitive form, indicating a relationship of ownership, by virtue of its origin (the transgression of Adam). Thus the flesh is constitutionally owned by Sin; and is under the dominion of Sin. Thus it is both belonging to Sin and is influenced (“sinful”) by it.

I do not really see much difference between the two terms, but I suspect that depends upon how one reads the phrases. It is clearly describing a nature which is dominated by the sin-influence, and has the “law of sin” in its members, and consequently is the arena in which sin is supreme.

But obviously you are reading two different definitions into the phrases. Since you do not clarify what these are, I cannot comment further, but trust the above is helpful.

With kind regards, Greaahm.

* * *

In reply I have sent the following letter dated 15th November 2000:-

Dear Graeham, Thank you for your letter of the 25th October and for answering my query so promptly and succinctly.

I am very pleased to note we agree with Paul’s meaning that flesh is owned by Sin, thus flesh belongs to Sin, and also I am pleased we agree the Lord Jesus Christ was not of a different kind of flesh as ourselves but shared the flesh common to all mankind.

However, when you say the Lord Jesus Christ was uniquely strengthened by the power of the Highest (John 1:14), you raise a query in my mind which, in the forty years I spent in the Christadelphian community, I never heard explained, and I would be most grateful for your explanation.

The question is this, how can it be truly said that Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like unto His brethren if He was uniquely strengthened by the power of the Highest? There is surely a contradiction here.

Also you claim, “It is clearly describing a nature which is dominated by the sin-influence, and has the “law of sin” in its members, and consequently is the arena in which sin is supreme.” This surely is a biased opinion and not a logical reasoning. The fact that we are “sold to sin” as Paul expresses our situation in Adam, and are thus ‘Sin’s possession’ means we are concluded under the sin of Adam for the purpose of being able to escape from Sin’s ownership and become Christ’s possession through baptism. Our flesh does not change but we are no longer sin’s possession – not longer Sin’s *harmartia*.

Jesus was of like flesh as ourselves but He was never Sin’s *hamartia*; He belonged to His Father and was God’s *hamartia*. Therefore Paul wrote in Romans 8:3, that Jesus was in “the likeness of sin’s flesh,” thus marking the difference in ownership. We were before baptism, sin’s flesh,’ that is, flesh belonging to Master Sin, while Jesus was not; He was flesh belonging to God. Thus, the one great reason for the Virgin Birth.

With my sincere regards, Russell

“For then will I turn unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of YHWH, to serve Him with one consent” Zephaniah 3:9.

When Lord Elton opened the International Conference for Philosophers some years ago in this country he began by quoting a pontification from the German philosopher Schleiermacher to the effect that “every language was a particular mode of thought and could not be repeated in the same way in another” with the comment that “Since Schleiermacher almost certainly wrote in German, what we have in English purports to be a translation of a statement that no statement can be translated.” The assembled sages grinned appreciatively. “It follows does it not,” he continued, “that if this statement is true, it was not made by Schleiermacher - and conversely, if it was made by Schleiermacher, then this is not what he said.” The world’s most sparkling philosophers laughed out loud; Sir Karl Popper was moved to applaud, and Jurgen Habermas grimaced with joy.

The above amusing incident came to mind recently as I was reading Romans chapter seven and the way in which Paul writes in those verses so blatantly misused by Christadelphian expositors to support their ‘sinful flesh’ theory. There you are, they claim, scriptural proof that, even after baptism our flesh is still cursed by sin. The more erudite amongst them will point out the change of tense from past to present which occurs in the middle of verse 14, “For we know that the law (of Moses) is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,” and what follows superficially justifies their error:

“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of Sin.”

There are several factors involved in the discernment and understanding of Paul’s statements. Translation, context, Greek grammatical rules, and the universal Roman Catholic belief in Original Sin shared by Christadelphians since the death of their founder John Thomas, although originally denied both by John Thomas and his successor, Robert Roberts, but subsequently adopted by the latter when he formulated his unnecessary statement of faith.

First translation: English grammar necessitates that the verb tense must always be definitive of time - Past, Present or Future. This is not true of the Greek in which the apostle wrote, nor for that matter, the Hebrew in which he spoke, although in a different way. Grammarians (e.g. Wenham) state that “Greek tenses, with the exception of the future tense, are concerned with the nature and state of the action and not with time” and “the Greek present corresponds more closely in meaning to the English Present Continuous than to the Present Simple. Hence we cannot exclude a past tense aspect in what Paul wrote. The Concordant Literal Version points out that the Greek verb is concerned with the state or condition of the action and is often confused with the ‘state’ which indicates either Incomplete, Complete and Indefinite. Remember, moreover, that King James translators were all firm believers in Original Sin.

But the really important factor for all Bible students is Context, and in this connection we must all agree with what Miles Coverdale wrote on the flyleaf of his Bible almost 500 years ago:-

“It shall greatly help ye to understand scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken and written, but of whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth forth, and what followeth after.”

The letter to the Romans was written according to Acts 19:21 and Romans 15:25,26 as the apostle was on his way from Corinth via Ephesus to minister the collections made in the Asian ecclesias for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem. Paul expected to be in bonds at Jerusalem, and possibly knew that it would be at least two years before he himself could reach Rome. But the situation according to report was desperate; the ecclesia must be made aware of its peril. The saints in Rome had been freed from the law of sin and death and passed to the Law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ. They were seriously abusing that privilege, enthusiastically participating in the licentious feasts of their pagan neighbours, even to the extent of sexual perversions, especially the Jewish Christians, with the fatal result that even the YHWH name was blasphemed amongst the gentiles by their conduct.

Such were the circumstances, those Jewish Christians must be made to realize that freedom in Christ does not mean freedom to behave like the prodigal son who devoured his living with harlots, thus sinning against heaven and before his father. Hence the powerful arguments of Romans 3,4,5, and 6 illustrating their position before baptism into Christ and the honour and glory of their ‘In Christ’ situation. In Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive. Justified by His blood they were saved from wrath through Christ, reconciled to God by His death, saved by His life. Sin no longer had dominion over them, they were not under law but under grace. As they had previously yielded their members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity he exhorts them to now yield themselves servants to righteousness unto holiness. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul brings his exhortation to a head in chapter 7:

“Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead that we (Paul associates himself with the Roman Christians) that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For WHEN WE WERE IN THE FLESH the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But NOW WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE LAW (of sin and death) that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness OF SPIRIT, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

And so in verse 14 of this 7th chapter Paul describes his own pre baptismal situation, changing the tense to emphasize to those Jewish Christians who were leading the ecclesia back to perdition the full horror of what they were doing, culminating in that heartfelt assertion

“THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION (Greek *katakrima* = down judgment) TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT. FOR THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HATH MADE ME (Paul) FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.”

The Christadelphian contention that the man who wrote the foregoing was still under the law of sin and death is absurd, a mere clutching at straws in the face of all that the Scripture is teaching us. How could Paul be still in captivity to sin when he could say to Timothy,

“Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.”

Only those blinded by Robert Roberts ‘sinful flesh’ obsession can be so foolish.

Brother Eric Cave (October 2000)

This article entitled “*Zoe and Psuche*” was written up by Brother Ernest Brady from notes left by Brother F.J.Pearce and has been passed to us by Sister Helen Brady. It continues with the theme of Brother McKinlay’s essay which was published in our last Circular Letter:

ZOE AND PSUCHE

Sometime ago I received from Jas. Brown of Australia an article entitled “What is *Zoe*?” and in view of the misconceptions which are current in regard to the real Truth concerning life in general, it occurred to me that a short article on the subject would be of benefit to others.

Some rough definitions of the words are:- *Zoe* means spiritual life while *Psuche* means natural life. Before proceeding to deal with these definitions as they apply to scriptural doctrines, let me explain why I think it necessary to examine the question.

Many religious people believe that all human beings have an immortal soul which cannot die and will live throughout eternity in heaven or hell as the case may be; we reject this doctrine as false and unscriptural. On the other hand there are those who maintain that since believers hope for eternal life (*zoe*) it is sufficient proof that they have not got *zoe* life now. Their argument is based on Romans 8:24,25 and while I formerly accepted it as sound, I now realize that it is as false as the other and that the truth lies between the two extremes.

Accuracy in vital doctrines is essential if we are to avoid confusion and contradictions and we must discriminate between things which differ, otherwise we distort the truth and where this question of life is concerned, unless we rightly understand it we shall fail to appreciate the purpose and the love of God in sending His Son into the world.

All will admit that many words have more than one meaning and if we were to try to impose a single definition in every occurrence of a given word much of what we read would be incomprehensible. There is a further and more important factor to be taken into consideration, i.e. the spiritual application, and unless this is taken into account and spiritual discernment used, the literal understanding will not benefit us much. It is only the letter of the Law which killeth; the spirit of the same letter of the Law giveth life (*zoe*) – 2 Corinthians 3:6. Jesus said “The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life (*zoe*)” - John 6:63.

Let us look at two examples: 1. Matthew 16:5-12, “And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them “Oh ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand?” Then He reminded them of the miracle of the loaves. “Then understood they how that he bade them beware not of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Leaven is generally used as a figure of wickedness and malice - 1 Corinthians 5:6,7) Whereas the Jews reasoned of literal leaven which is used in bread, but it is very clear that Jesus spoke of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees which made of none effect the word of God.

As literal bread is the staff of life (*Psuche*) so Jesus is the bread of life (*zoe*) in the scriptural order. Hence we see the hidden meaning of the words of Moses quoted by Jesus in His trial in the wilderness, “Man shall not live (*zoe*, forever) by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 3:4, Deuteronomy 33). Jesus said “I am the bread of life (*zoe*) (the bread of heaven) which if a man eat he shall live for ever.” He was the anti-typical manna and whoever lived upon this word should never hunger. Job and others of the holy men of old esteemed and treasured the word of God more than their necessary food (Job 23:12).

It was a joy and a rejoicing (Jeremiah 15,16) sweeter than honey (Psalm 119:103).

Jesus said He had come that they might have life (*zoe*) and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). He also said “Ye have no life (*zoe*) in you” (John 6:53). It must be quite evident that since Jesus was speaking to living literal persons who certainly possessed physical or natural life (*psuche*), He must have been speaking of something they had not got, which was separate and distinct from the *psuche* life, and this was the *zoe* life which was in Him and which they could only get through Him.

The second example is in John 3 and were it not on record we should never think it possible that a “teacher in Israel” could be so dense.

Jesus said it to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

This is just as the first example. Nicodemus thought of natural birth and reasoned on that ground, but Jesus explained that it was a birth of the Spirit which mattered and to get a clear picture one need only read the parable of the Sower in Luke 8. The seed is the word of God (v.11). Having been begotten or born again of the incorruptible word of God (1 Peter 1:23), “Begot he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18, 1 Corinthians 4:15, 1 John 5:1).

The word of God germinates and brings forth fruit; the living word makes us grow in knowledge and grace so that when Jesus comes the second time, He will give us a body like unto His own, that this *zoe* life will be clothed with an incorruptible body and ever be with Him.

Now what is the meaning of the word “life”? The dictionary gives the following definition:- State of being, animation, existence, vitality, etc.

While these words convey the idea of natural life (*psuche*) and cover a great deal it does not state what life (*zoe*) means from the biblical stand point, so we go to Cruden’s concordance and there we have an indication of how the word is used in both aspects. Life is an abstract noun and is manifest in various ways.

Natural life is manifested in natural forms or bodies - plants, animals and men, but it is equally true that spiritual (*zoe*) life is manifested in natural bodies, but it needs an incorruptible body for the *zoe* life to manifest itself for ever. If the *zoe* life is manifested in the natural, it is certain it will be manifested in a spiritual incorruptible body.

From what has been said it will be evident that it is necessary to determine the sense of the word “life” by reference to the context.

God created the natural order very good of its kind so that the higher spiritual order could be developed out of it. First that which is natural, then that which is Spiritual. The fall of Adam necessitated the loving plan and purpose of God in sending His Son into the world that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (*zoe*).

Jesus did not come to prevent us dying but that we might have life (*zoe*) through Him.

There are some passages of Scripture which state that believers have life (*zoe*) now:-

“He that hath the Son hath life (*zoe*). And he that hath not the Son hath not life” – I John 5:12

“He that heareth my words and believeth in Him that sent me, hath everlasting life (*zoe*) and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (*zoe*).” John 5:24.

Those who believe and teach that we have to await the issue of a future judgment in the nature of a court of law to know whether we are accepted or not can only escape the force of these and many similar passages by asserting that they are prospective only, but those who accept the teaching of the word at its face value can have the confidence and assurance of having the *zoe* life now, because their sins are forgiven and they are now the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

To make the matter clearer we will ask the following questions:-

- 1 Can the Word of God dwell in us? - Colossians 3:16.
- 2 Can Christ dwell in our hearts by faith? - Ephesians 3:17.
- 3 Can the Spirit of God dwell in us? - Romans 8:11.
- 4 Can God dwell in Christ - John 14:10.
- 5 Can we dwell in God? - 1 John 4:12.

If we do not understand these passages in their appropriate ways it is not much use asking us to let the various things dwell in us. The word of God, faith, love, etc., are all abstract things, yet they can, under the correct circumstances and understanding, dwell in us and become the characteristics of our daily life. So much so, that we are definitely told that unless they do dwell in us - the Spirit or mind of Christ - we are none of His.

Then why should there be any more difficulty or impossibility about the *zoe* life being in us? In reality it is none other than the mind of the Spirit, for this is life (*zoe*) and peace - Romans 8:6. So that we can have this confidence and satisfaction now.

Those who embrace this truth cannot but live as did Paul and others. They manifested and magnified in their corruptible bodies the love and zeal which eats them up and which one cannot fail to see in their lives as the result of their faith. It cannot be stopped any more than a river. It is a well of water springing up in our lives, which can also be felt and which giveth joy, peace, comfort and strength which none can have nor none can take away from those whose mind is stayed on it. It is the living experience and testimony of all of like precious faith. The importance of the fact must be seen or received to be realized. It is this assurance also that the incorruptible seed that dwells in us is the life of God that is to be manifested in the incorruptible body which He will give us.

Finally, let us dispose of the idea that Romans 8:24,25 is proof that *zoe* life is only a future hope.

The context shows that what we hope for is the deliverance of the body and while this is the body of Christ with all its members (the saints) Christ being the Head, it does not exclude the individuals who will be made incorruptible. We know that our sins are forgiven and we wait in patience and confidence for the day when Jesus comes back, so that whether alive or asleep in the grave, we shall be raised incorruptible or changed in the twinkling of an eye and enter into His Kingdom. Paul in another place puts it in these words, "Not that we should be unclothed (die) but that we should be clothed upon with our house (habitation or tabernacle) which is from heaven." - 2 Corinthians 5.

The real personal "I" is the new man in Christ who has obeyed from the heart those doctrines which have made us new creatures who can never be destroyed, as we have the truth as a sure anchor of the soul.

The following are some of the passages where life in its two senses are used:-

"For they are dead which sought the young child's life (*psuche*)" - Matthew 2:20.

"Take not thought for your life (*psuche*)" - Matthew 6:20.

"The Good Shepherd giveth His life (*psuche*) for the sheep" - John 10:11.

"I lay down my life (*psuche*) for the sheep" - (v. 15-17).

"To give His life (*psuche*) a ransom for many" - Matthew 20:28.

"There shall be no loss of any man's life (*psuche*)" - Acts 17:22.

"Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life (*zoe*)" - Matthew 7:14.

"In Him was life (*zoe*) and the life (*zoe*) was the light of men" - John 1:14.

"As the Father hath life (*zoe*) in Himself, so He hath given to the Son to have life (*zoe*) in Himself" - John 5:26.

"That we should walk in newness of life (*zoe*)" - Romans 6:4.

"Through one righteous act... justification of life (*zoe*)" - Romans 5:18).

"He shall receive the crown of life (*zoe*)" - James 1:12.

We know that the words are not always used correctly, but the context will easily decide. Look the question up so that you can have satisfaction yourself and say with Paul, “That in nothing I shall be ashamed but that with all boldness as always, so now also Christ shall be manifested in my body whether by life or death.” Philippians 1:20, or again, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me... by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” – Galatians 2:20, Or again, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness... not for me only but unto all that love His appearing” – 2 Timothy 4:7,8.

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” – Matthew 11:28-30.

F.J.Pearce.

WHO KILLED JESUS CHRIST?

Outside a Pentecostal Church there was, last year, a “Wayside Pulpit” proclaiming...

“GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE MURDERED HIS OWN SON FOR US.”

It was meant to be startling but is it true? I think most people would find this statement offensive and I feel a great sense of sadness when reading such unfounded teachings. Jesus said let the blind lead the blind and they will both fall into the ditch so I cannot but be dismayed that anyone could imagine that the God of love, compassion, mercy, grace and truth would do such a wicked thing. There are some who see Jesus dying as the substitute for mankind and therefore reason that God must have punished His own innocent Son with crucifixion in order that the guilty may go free, but this is against all Scripture teaching. It could further be argued that God’s ways are higher than man’s ways and God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts, and the seeming heartless action of God, who so loved the world that He “murdered His own Son for us,” is simply a failure on our part to know and understand all things, things we shall know and understand when we are in the Kingdom. But is this explanation good enough?

We most certainly will know all things in the Kingdom for it has been promised that we shall know even as we are known. Nevertheless, in this present time we are able to learn much about our loving heavenly Father - about His will, and about His plan and purpose with the earth. A lawyer asked Jesus, “Master, which is the great commandment of the law?” Jesus said unto him, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Again we know that God is love and that Jesus manifested His Father to us in His manner of life. Scripture teaches us much about God’s goodness, mercy, long-suffering and loving-kindness, and Jesus reflected all these attributes, so how then can anyone say that God punished the innocent so that the guilty could go free? Does God have double standards? That would be blasphemy. No, God did not punish the innocent so that the guilty could go free. God never, ever punished the innocent. Neither does He let the guilty go free! The innocent and faithful go free!

Another line of argument in support of the notion that God killed His own Son is that the reason Jesus Christ was brought into the world by the will of God was for the very purpose of dying a violent death in order that, in some way, it would save us. Some say, as do the Pentecostals, that God murdered Jesus Christ instead of punishing us. While Christadelphians see this as very wrong and rightly so, they, the Christadelphians nevertheless say God killed His own Son, not instead of us but as a Representative, to show what sin deserves and convince us of the seriousness of sin. Is this view of Jesus being killed by His Father any better? We must leave the reader to judge righteous judgment in the matter, but for those Christadelphians who doubt it is the true teaching of the BASF let them look it up and see for themselves where they are supposed to believe that God killed His own Son using the Jews and Romans as His

instruments! Should any Christadelphian reader of these notes, believing the Pentecostal view to be an abomination and is yet prepared to accept the BASF teaching in this respect, feel disposed to explain his understanding of BASF, we would very much like to hear from him or her.

However, none of this rules out the fact that Jesus Christ died instead of us, in our place and on our behalf, for there is an altogether better understanding taught in the Scriptures which gives honour where honour is due to both God and to His Son. Of course it was in the foreknowledge of God before He created Adam that He would bring His only begotten Son into the world in due time - 1 Peter 1:20, "Foreordained before the foundation of the world." This fact alone also proves God knew Adam and Eve would fail in obedience and would need to be redeemed. Adam and Eve were provisionally redeemed while in Eden when the animals were slain to provide them a covering in order to prevent their dying that very day. The abiding redemption was effected on Calvary when Jesus Christ gave His life to purchase Adam and all in his loins. Redemption was now complete - Jesus Christ had now purchased the whole human race, good and bad alike. It is therefore inconsistent to think of redemption being a future event. Redemption has passed - it is history and Jesus accomplished it on Calvary when we were purchased with His precious blood. By this grace of God we have our present life. Our present life then, is our redeemed life (though not many will take advantage of this redemption).

Will anyone doubt this?

So let us ask the question, who did kill Jesus Christ? His Father? No; that should be unthinkable. Was it the Jews with the aid of the Romans? The Jews certainly wanted Him dead and out of the way, and they did indeed get the Romans to crucify Him. So the answer is, yes, the Jews and the Romans killed Jesus.

Next let us ask who was responsible for killing Jesus Christ?

When we read the gospel accounts of the events and circumstances leading up to His arrest and trial we are convinced that Jesus was in complete control of His situation. There is no room for any idea of His enemies surrounding Him, trapping Him and eventually leaving Him no way out and finally, they had their own way and killed Him. This is not what happened. Just to note the three days before His crucifixion we see Jesus riding into the city of Jerusalem with the crowds hailing Him as their King. Previously the people had been charged that if anyone should know of His whereabouts they must notify the chief priests, but now we see those authorities outraged and they could only stand by, helpless for fear of the people. The next day Jesus went into the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and drove all the animals outside. This scam was a good money-spinner for the high priests and this man Jesus was having things all His own way, so apart from appearing utterly helpless in the eyes of the people they were now even more incensed against Him. When the next day came Jesus preached to the people and the chief priests demanded of Him by what authority He did these things. In return Jesus challenged them to answer His questions and the answers they gave were turned against them to their great discomfort, for again they were put to shame in public. That night in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made no attempt to escape His arrest but allowed Himself to be taken for trial. Then at His trial He was again in control of His accusers, provoking their reactions to the end they should crucify Him ensuring they were ever more determined to put Him away for good, as they supposed. They were angry beyond restraint and accused Him out of malice and on a whim, overriding the more reasonable counsel of Pilate.

Was Jesus therefore responsible for His own demise? Could we say He committed suicide? Not if we ask why He acted in such a way, for we will realize that what He did was for us, that we might share eternal life with Him.

So who then was responsible? Why, Adam and all in his loins. It was for Adam that Jesus died in order to give us this present life. The redemption of Adam was the redemption of the world, i.e., Jesus died to take away Adam's sin because Adam did not die for his own sin, but was allowed to live out his natural life span and so became the forebear of the human race; and more than this, "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus is in the position to forgive and save whomsoever He will. All are the purchase of His blood, so the result of Jesus volunteering to go to the Cross was that the human race now belongs to Him. It was His purchase and He has been given all power and authority over it.

Jesus Christ Himself gives the lie to the notion that His own Father killed Him, for when the chief priests were demanding of Him by what authority He did these things, one of the stories He told them was the parable of the vineyard - Matthew 21:33-41 - "a certain householder planted a vineyard... and let it out to husbandmen... and he sent his servants... that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another... last of all he sent them his son, saying. They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir; come let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance... When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" This parable hardly needs explaining to us but when the chief priests answered Jesus and said "He will miserably destroy those wicked men," they condemned themselves for they were those wicked men who were about to kill the Son of the Lord of the Vineyard. How can anyone, therefore, say the Lord of the Vineyard, killed His own Son as do the Pentecostals and Christadelphians? "Blasphemous theology" as A.L.Wilson would say!

It will be seen that the Son went into the vineyard knowing full well that the husbandmen would kill Him. This is surely proof enough that Jesus offered Himself as the willing sacrifice - a free-will offering of the first magnitude - for the joy that was set before Him in bringing many sons to glory.

How very thankful we should be!

Russell.

The Biblical Record On Man's History From Genesis. Assumption Or Truth, What Are We To Accept?

If our reading were restricted to the Book of Genesis alone, would we believe that the creation of the earth out of its deformity (for it was without form and void, being in darkness and under water) took 6,000 years when it states a day (the evening and morning) to be a matter of hours?

Are we told anywhere in Genesis that a day was the equivalent of 1,000 years? Was Adam made aware that a day was this length of time?

I would not think God would deceive Adam but would know that Adam's only conception by experience would be the evening and the morning as one day; this being essential to Adam in order to rest from his labours in the garden.

This fact is shown in the statement that God set two lights in the heaven, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night in order to separate also the light from the darkness. These are appointed of God despite what other conclusions men may come to in their estimation of the Great Uncreate where time cannot apply or be related to.

In prophecy God can make an ordinary day to refer to a year, or a year to a day, also "time, times and the dividing of time," "an hour and a day" and so on, but nowhere 1,000 years as one day of 24 hours and vice versa, as far as I know.

If therefore Adam's life was dependent on his obedience to the conditions God laid before him, then I would think God, being just and righteous, would make sure Adam would understand that his natural life was limited either to the duration of his corruptible and decaying nature as appointed, or to the moment he disobeyed and brought about his inflicted death by sin, "surely die."

When we study the Book of Genesis we are concerned with what is taught in that Book and if some things are not clear we need only go to the teachings of the Lord Jesus and His pastors and teachers who by the power of the Holy Spirit made plain in their records and epistles their knowledge in the mystery of Christ of which Paul speaks in regard to himself how that by revelation the mystery of Christ and the dispensation of the grace of God was made known, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of

Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3:1-11). See also Paul's confirmation of this in Romans 16:25,26. This mystery which was kept secret since the world began is now made manifest by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God and made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Therefore we conclude that whatever has been hid to the superficial reader of Genesis is hid because that reader fails to consult the people who have the knowledge and the whereabouts of the hidden wisdom of God. Where they fail to understand or comprehend what is written they are forced by their preconceived theories to make things fit and thereby wrest the Scriptures out of context and to the detriment of their own understanding and salvation.

This is what comes of ignoring Adam's capability of dying from the time of his creation as a living soul which could be by partaking of the fruit of the tree not good for food, or by falling and breaking his neck, or by some other way causing the infliction of death such as a grievous wound and bleeding to death. Oh yes, this is not foolish surmising, it has to be considered of Adam's nature before being placed in the Garden of Eden, though no doubt the Creator having a purpose with him to replenish the earth would have protected him as he does now with all who serve him in newness of life. Nevertheless we cannot ignore the facts.

Now after placing Adam in the Garden of Eden, God allowed him a certain amount of freedom but forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for if he did he would "surely die." The penalty God pronounced for disobedience was not contained in the following, viz. - "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife," etc., etc. as in Genesis 3:13-19. This was not "surely die" in the day of disobedience, it was the result of being spared from death by infliction and allowing Adam's nature to run its course outside the Garden, from which pleasures he had been removed. It is foolish and inconceivable that a penalty for sin can already be that nature which Adam was experiencing in the Garden. The penalty upon that nature was cessation of life, not something added to its formula which was not already there as a physical law - see 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

If people accept Genesis 3:13-19 as the fulfilment of Genesis 2:17 by making the evening and morning a day of a 1,000 years, it would mean Adam died a sinner at the age of 938 years and if you accept the apostle Paul's teaching that death passed upon all men when Adam sinned and that in your view it was a physical sentence of return to dust then you are inevitably in this situation and without hope. You would not therefore see any point in the shedding of blood for the covering of sin that Adam might be spared the penalty of bloodshedding himself. I refer to the coats of skins God provided for the covering of Adam's sin as provisional and a type of Him who was stated to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Jesus Christ (Revelation 13:8). If you ignore this how can you explain the sacrifices from the time of Abel and onwards if they were not in recognition and faith in the one who would appear to fulfil these types. If you choose to replace this fact with a 1,000 years day because of a false conception that the love and mercy of God could not lead to his repentance and violation of His Word and you want to justify Him with the words of David in Psalm 90, then you have placed yourself in a perplexing position, you die a sinner unredeemed from your admitted physical flesh condemnation through ignoring the typical covering of sin for Adam when he disobeyed in the day of 24 hours and making it a day of 1,000 years and also saying that the nature he already possessed at his creation was the penalty for his sin, thus adding to what was already a fact of the physical law of his being. As one well known writer falsely stated;- It required what men called a miracle to depress to the level of the beasts that perish - to alter or change this dying nature - to what it already was at its creation. Another man wrote:- Seeing that man had become a transgressor of Divine Law, there was no need of a miracle for the infliction of death - left to himself as God had made him, Adam would have died without any further modification or improvement to his nature.

We conclude from the statement of the first writer that Adam could not die - that his nature had to be changed to a physical law of decay to bring about death. It did not enter his mind the Divine statement "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" which was bound to mean an inflicted death, but seeing Adam was not put to death in the day of his sin, he must needs make it a day of a thousand years, ignoring altogether the Genesis record of the shedding of blood to save Adam's life. He was prepared to turn to

Psalm 90 in and vain attempt to make it fit, but not prepared to see the Slain Lamb in Eden in the way Jesus explained it to Nicodemus, a Master in Israel, "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). Did this apply only to the time when Jesus died on Calvary? If so, what then of the sentence upon Adam and all in his loins constituted sinners? What then of Abel's offering accounting that he was then righteous in God's sight? Was not the Lamb of God seen in it, attesting that God so loved and gave His only begotten Son and in so doing removed the sentence of death?

If this is not so then all sacrifices for sin from Abel to Moses and the Law, were a waste of time. But Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob living unto God because they had died unto sin, which was untrue if their nature was under condemnation by natural death. So, as Jesus said of them and of all of like faith. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all (in that relationship) live unto Him." In other words as Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgement); but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). Abraham heard that word and believed, for Jesus was the Word of God manifested in flesh. Abraham rejoiced in seeing Christ's day and was glad, because he saw Jesus in the typical lamb in Eden - in the seed promised to Eve, and in the seed promised of the Land in Genesis 12:7 before it was promised to Abraham - see Genesis 13:14. This is not assumption on my part, the evidence is in the Scriptures but I do not find Abraham or David listed in a condemned line from which Jesus has come. I would have looked at Cam's offspring for that if there was any at all, and even then it would have to be condemnation in the legal and moral sense, not the physical, the latter also not in Scripture for we are all in the nature in which God created Adam, only the relationship to God can be different.

Abraham saw that difference in the promised Seed which must not be under condemnation in any way. He saw that through his seed God would justify all nations through faith and this was explained to him in the gospel God preached to him - Galatians 3:8 - and at that time a covenant was made which involved the shedding of blood - see Genesis 17:1-13. Now see Paul's reference to it involving Christ - Galatians 3:16-17. If Abraham had offered flesh of animals and fowl not appointed of God, his works would not have been accounted to him for righteousness, but condemnation, not of his flesh but of his character.

Seeing then that sacrifices by blood shedding had a significance in that the Creator set before Adam a matter of life or death in his putting on of the sin-covering or preferring the fig-leaf covering of his own device and die an inflicted death in the day of his sin, I can see no point in Adam being afraid in the sight of God if he understood that he would live on for a thousand years after eating the forbidden fruit and in any case David was not there to tell him that the day God referred to was of a thousand years duration, and I am sure David was not appointed of God to tell us this was what God meant, seeing Adam did not die an inflicted death when he sinned. I feel sure David's mind was centred upon the Majesty of the Creator in contrast with man in that he declares in Psalm 90:2-4, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For a thousand years in thy sight (not Adam's) are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

Peter the Apostle considered it in a different way by his reference to God's mercy and longsuffering in contrast with the short limits of man's patience. He speaks of scoffers walking after their own lusts and calling in question the promise of Christ's coming and assuming that since all things have continued the same since the Patriarchs fell asleep, things will continue the same as they had done and they could carry on with their corrupt conduct. They forget the longsuffering of God with those people who had corrupted His way while He gave them room for repentance while Noah prepared the Ark to the saving of his family, for indeed God through His Spirit in Noah had preached unto them the way of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Peter reminds his brethren and sisters that these scoffers ignored the longsuffering of God and did not realize that God had in mind the salvation of those yet to be born, and as a thousand years was nothing to Him He was prepared to suffer their corrupt conduct for the salvation of those who would have respect for Him and the salvation offered in Christ Jesus (2 Peter 3:5-15).

It is noticeable that Peter could have been quoting David's view in Psalm 90:4 and not from Genesis, yet not even David stated a day was a thousand years. How could he when he was talking of the day of 24 hours? God relates time to man, not to Himself. There is an example of this in Genesis 6:3, "And the Lord said. My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and

twenty years,” not an hundred and twenty thousand years as some would be forced to accept if a day with God is one thousand years.

Here again God is relating time to man as he experiences it, and that after 120 years God would bring the flood of destruction upon the wicked. The love and mercy of God toward Adam after his sin, took a much shorter time in that he was spared the death sentence in the day or duration it took him to eat of the forbidden tree. Many do not accept this and in so doing they reject the sacrifice of Christ on the false conception that God deceived Adam regarding the day. They also ignore the fact that God’s statement “surely die” in the day of disobedience did not mean what was stated in Genesis 3:13-24 but as can be verified from the reading, all concerned continued to live, only under different conditions from those in the Garden of Eden-

Now because Adam and Eve continued to live instead of being put to death, which “surely die” really meant, and still continued to mean in Genesis, in Ezekiel and other parts of the Scriptures, people have concluded that God’s statement was unalterable and He was bound by that statement, yet there are many examples in the Scriptures which also show of God changing His mind, but mainly because of His mercy, for as we are told, “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” Can anyone really ignore a greater example than Genesis 6:7, “And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

Did God do it? No; yet the serpent was accounted as a liar because of God’s love and mercy in not putting Adam and Eve to death in the day he sinned, and in order that God might not be classed on a par with the serpent, people manipulate the meaning of the twenty-four hour day to a thousand years and the term “surely die” as a process of decay, when in fact it means as Jesus explained of the son who dishonoured his parents, let him die the death (Matthew 15:3-6). Is not this the judicial sentence of “surely die” upon a man whose nature was the same as Adam’s when God created him? Why then ignore it for the traditions you have received from uninspired men? For you who believe the penalty passed upon Adam and his posterity to be natural decay ending in death, David in Psalm 33:18,19 gives you another corrective pill to swallow, “Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”

If God or David regarded natural death as the judicial penalty, would there be any reason in keeping them alive in famine and preventing that penalty taking place?

If the views and facts I have expressed were understood, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a substitute would not be an obstacle. Therefore those who reject Christ’s death as substitutional have only a certain man and themselves to blame, seeing it is true that Jesus did not die on Calvary to prevent our natural death but the judicial death that came by the first man and passed legally, not physically, upon all.

Read Ezekiel 33 in application to persons under the covenant where the statement “surely die” meant to them inflicted death by transgression of law seeing that they would in any case die a natural death like Adam did on account of his redemption and his corruptible created nature. See verse 32 & 33, for like Ezekiel’s words, mine also might appear a lovely song and pleasant to hear - for you have had opportunity to read them - but will do nothing about it while there is time. The Prophet greater than Ezekiel, greater than Moses, came and spoke God’s message, I think I have spoken and written the contents of that message in all sincerity, not that I am a prophet but that I know that in some way a prophet hath been among you.

I was reminded recently by one of our younger brethren that on the mount of transfiguration three prophets were seen but only one remained and a voice then proclaimed “This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” That same Son said, “If any man have ears to hear let him hear.”

Brother Phil Parry.

In submitting the following article, the writer, Brother Stanley Jelfs has asked for reader's comments please:

Adam's Children and the Son of God

OUR INHERITANCE IN ADAM

The phrase "in Adam" occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:22. It refers to inheritance, which in this case is death, in the phrase "in Adam all die." "In Christ" the opposite is true, that all in Him "shall be made alive" - it is a spiritual inheritance.

We have a physical inheritance, not our fault, and a legal or spiritual inheritance, which, ancestrally, is our fault. This is hard to understand since it cannot be denied that "everyone should die for their own sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16) and not for somebody else's. Nevertheless, it is a way of working God uses, stated in Galatians 3:22 - "But the scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." This is similar to Romans 11:32 concerning Israel: "God has committed them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all.

As Dr Thomas rightly said, "A man's inheritance is traced from his father." Although the principle had been known from time immemorial and Esau had lost his birthright to his younger brother Jacob, it also was an enactment of the Law of Moses. To solve the problem of a man who "Had no sons but daughters" God interposed with words, which included: "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying; If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter." (Numbers 27:8).

Our legacy from Adam, or inheritance in Adam as our generic ancestor is given in the New Testament: "Therefore just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." The Greek has "in which all sinned" and the thought appears to be that all sinned in Adam's sin and the sentence of death passed through from Adam to all mankind. This does not mean it is imputed personally (Romans 5:13). In this Adam became a type, figure or representation, in reverse, of Him who was to come - as stated in Romans 5:12,14.

THE INHERITANCE OF JESUS IN HIS FATHER

Saints are marked out for Sonship and inheritance through Him who is the natural-born Son of God (Ephesians 1:5,11). Although the Lord Jesus was the seed of Abraham and David this was finally by Mary, His virgin mother, having not known man at the time, although espoused. This was the source of His physical inheritance.

He received no legacy or inheritance of sin and death in Adam for, remember, a man's inheritance is traced from his father and God was Jesus' Father according to the Scripture we accept as God's Word, His title to righteousness and life is through His own Father - God. We learn that "the Word was Life" and He was the Word dwelling among men (John 1:14). This Logos/Word came to His own people and His own did not receive Him, as clearly stated in John 1:4,11. He came as Life and Light, not sin and death (verse 9).

In John 5:24-27 we learn that, as new believers received eternal life vested in Him, so He too had been given in some present sense "life in Himself" and He certainly was not deathless, for He died. He was therefore able to say, and especially in view of His heavenly origin, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven... he who believes in me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life... I am the living bread which came down from heaven... If anyone eats of this bread he will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:41-51).

It was not that He became the Bread of Life, He was that Bread of Life and inherited the quality of and right to Eternal Life and was by no means under any condemnation from God. This was the secret of His victory; without life in Himself, He could not have been the "clean" Lamb of God, or have been raised or die for others.

This was all due to His connection and relationship to His Father in heaven as He said in John 6:57; "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on me will live because of me" - live the shared life of a heavenly family of whom He was the first by divine conception and begetting. He did not become the Bread of Life because of His sacrificial death, He was the Bread of life from heaven, which circumstance qualified Him to die and rise on behalf of the dead in Adam and in their own trespasses and sins (John 6:48-51).

Are there any direct references to Christ's inheritance in God? In Psalm 16:5 a resurrection Psalm, He says in verse 5: "O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; you maintain my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have good inheritance."

In Hebrews 1:2-5: "God... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things... who... when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

He was the Son of Man who gives the food of everlasting life because God, the Father, set His seal (His stamp) upon Him (John 6:27). He was the Son of God "whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world" (John 10:36). He was "the Holy One, who is to be born" who would be called the Son of God - holy from birth without any qualification whatever (Luke 1:35).

A PURE OFFERING (Malachi 1:11).

This view of Christ is essential to a proper harmonization of Old Testament type and New Testament fulfillment. In order for sacrifices to be acceptable it was necessary to observe two rules of law. The offering must be of a "clean" classification and also "without blemish": "You shall bring your offering of the livestock - of the herd and of the flock" (See Leviticus 1:2,3). It is also to be noted that the offering was on behalf of the offerer and not on its own account, as indicated by the rite of "putting his hand on the head... and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (verse 4). Sin's flesh could never be a Lamb of God or a pure offering (Malachi 1:11).

In the future, as in the past, Israel will be taught to discern and observe the difference between the unclean and clean, between the holy and the unholy (Ezekiel 44:23). Only the Son of God qualified to offer Himself as a clean offering which His designation "the Lamb of God" required Him to be." "The law of animals" is given in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, "to distinguish between the unclean and the clean." The unclean represents the unclean state of sin in which we naturally find ourselves following the events of Genesis 2 and 3, for which see Acts 10:9 & 16:28: "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

"You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean... and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird" (Leviticus 11:25).

Now was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, clean or unclean - that is the question? It is not a question of flesh being either clean or unclean, it being simply the "clay" of which we are made for the probation and testing. It is the question of which federal head does Jesus come to be under and belong to, our father Adam, corresponding to Sin, or His Father in heaven from whom He obtained life and inheritance?

We should be able to see from the foregoing that the Lamb of God must be "clean" and if sin is in flesh, as Christadelphians say, He would be unclean. Remember we are not to be redeemed with "corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (2 Peter 1:18,19).

He was in fact the only "precious blood available - the same blood as our own yet sanctified by His heavenly origin in His Father. Read Malachi 2:8 and what He said to the priests of that day - "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts." Surely all the kingdom teaching in the world is worthless if this goes unrecognized and unrepented of!

PRINCIPLES OF SACRIFICE

1. Our flesh is to God a neutral medium of life in which trial and suffering takes place in preparation for a spiritual body. God does not condemn our nature of which He is the Maker.
2. God has condemned man for sin and counts humankind as under Sin's power. This we see in Galatians 3:22, "God has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."
3. God mercifully provides sacrifice for sin by the offering of Jesus Christ once for all time (Hebrews 10:10, Ephesians 5:2, Romans 6:10, 1 Peter 3:18).
4. The offerings of Israel in Leviticus picture to us the principles of acceptable sacrifice, which are: first, animals separated for cleanness; second, no defect, "without blemish," perfect without corruption (Leviticus 22).
5. The first, in some ways most important, offering was the burnt offering detailed in Leviticus 1. It was to make atonement but not for specific sin. It provided atonement for Adam's descendants "confined under sin" (Galatians 3:22).
6. The offering was by the free will of the offerer, who was represented in the slaying of the sacrifice by placing his or her hand on its head. It appears to have been for Adamic sin only.
7. Jesus Christ fulfilled these conditions. As Son of God born of a virgin He was free from Adamic sin or uncleanness in accord with the principle of inheritance wherein a son has the stamp, seal or inheritance of his father. Jesus inheritance was spiritual in which the Father sanctified Him, separating Him from the stigma of the sin of Adam, which condemned the human race. He was of course flesh and blood, of our nature, able to represent and redeem by the sacrifice of Himself.

He was without blemish or sin of any kind.
He offered of His own free will, laying down His life,
It was an act of love, not for personal redemption of Himself.

All the offerings were clean and holy in themselves; "it shall be perfect to be accepted" was the inescapable rule (Leviticus 22:20,21). There was no double standard. The same principles in different context are in the New Testament thus: "...that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God..." (Hebrews 12:1). "And walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

Accepting the principle of a completely sinless sacrifice, clean and holy as only acceptable to God - the really Biblical theology of Christ's own sacrifice - frees the mind to fully appreciate the love of Christ both to man and to His Father. This expressed many times as, for example: "greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13); "For the love of Christ compels (A.V. constrains) us, because we judge thus: that if one died for all, then all died: and he died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again" (see 2 Corinthians 5:14,15 and many others).

DR THOMAS ON FEDERAL CONSTITUTION:

"The apostle says, "Levi who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham." Upon the same principle, all mankind ate of the fruit, being in the loins of Adam (figuratively) when he transgressed. This is the only way men can by any possibility be guilty of the original sin. Because they sinned in Adam, therefore they return to the dust from which Adam came (Gr.)-.. says the apostle, "in whom all sinned."

“Mankind being born of the flesh, and of the will of man, they are the natural-born citizens of Satan’s kingdom...”

“There are two states or kingdoms, in God’s arrangements, which are distinguished by constitution. These are the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. The citizens of the former are all sinners; the heirs of the latter are saints...”

“But men are not only made, or constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam, but they become sinners even as he, by actual transgression. Having attained the maturity of their nature, they become accountable and responsible creatures.”

(Abridged from Elpis Israel (1924) p 128-131)

This would have been sufficient explanation for the reign of Sin; not defiled unclean nature but a defiled relationship with God. Sadly, Dr Thomas appears not to have seen Christ’s special federal relationship which He describes as a unity, a oneness, a being “in the Father and the Father in me” in which He was unique. This was the opposite of being “in Adam” and under Sin’s condemnation. It would have made all the difference.

Brother Stanley Jelfs

The Words Spoken by Jesus :-

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” John 3:13

In my opinion, and based on many of the declarations of Jesus which followed on in John’s record, Jesus did ascend into heaven to receive God’s message for the people, even in a similar way that Moses went up into the Mount and descended with the law written, not in flesh but on tables of stone. In the case of Jesus the Word of God became embodied in the flesh of Christ both by revelation and by His conduct so that He could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father” (John 6:46).

We may indeed rightly reject the pre-existence of Jesus in Heaven as a person, so in that case an answer must be found in explanation of His own words to the Jews of His day, “Before Abraham was, I am,” also confirmed in the words of John the Baptist, “This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.” And of his fullness have ail we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:15-17. See also Romans 5:20,21). Paul is speaking here in Romans of the offence of Adam, and the reason why grace abounded in God’s foreknowledge and plan of redemption in a Son whom He would provide in due time to take away that sin (the Sin of the world).

In consequence of the first fourteen verses of John chapter 1 and Isaiah chapter 40, John the Baptist was able to say “He was before me,” but of course he could not be referring to personal pre-existence. Yet in my quoting of John 3:13 in reference to the words of Jesus, “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,” this latter dogmatic statement, “Even the son of man which is in heaven” is confirmed in John Baptist’s explanation in John 1:18, “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him.” To be in heaven in this case I take to be in the bosom of the Father, or as Jesus said “I am in the Father and the Father in me.” This would be by Spirit habitation in the Son of man. When the Power of the Highest from Heaven over-shadowed Mary, this did not become the Son of man until conception, gestation and birth in flesh and blood, yet by begettal a Son of God free from the legal condemnation imputed in Adam’s sin and penalty.

This was not therefore the “Son of man” Jesus says of Himself being in heaven where He was before, that is, part of the Spirit of God which fertilized the ovum in the womb of Mary, though that also could be phrased as a coming down from heaven, but Jesus speaks of Himself as “a Son of man” who has ascended into heaven which no other man has experienced.

He also speaks of Himself as the Son of man in heaven, which in the consideration of some that He was of corruptible nature, would be an impossibility - that He could not ascend to heaven in that nature, yet we have His word that He did ascend, and no twisting of the Scriptures by any people to alter it will do, as far as I am concerned.

All that Jesus has said of Himself concerning coming down or, ascending and descending, must be understood in the context in which He addressed His words. Many of His disciples after hearing Him refer to Himself as the bread of life which came down from heaven, etc., remarked, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it.” When Jesus knew of their doubt, He said to them, “Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.” When did Jesus receive this life-giving word of the Spirit? Was it not when He ascended to heaven to receive from His Father the reasons for His birth and the purpose of His sacrificial death by wicked hands? John 6:33, “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” Is it not obvious that He could not be the bread or word of life at His birth but had to be enlightened to the fact by His Father? To a great degree in His everyday experience and study of the Scriptures, nevertheless the authority of God in the word “SENT” had to be finalised and, please notice how often Jesus uses this word in relation to His mission as Son of God yet of flesh and blood as Adam at creation. John 6:27, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

“My doctrine is not mine,” says Jesus, “but his that sent me.” He received the approval of His Father at His baptism of John, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” but He was not ‘sent’ but led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tried and prepared for the great work for which He had been begotten of the Father. As He declared, “This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” - John 6:29.

“Ye sent unto John... but I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me- And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not” - John 5:36-38.

“I am come in my Father’s name,” this was the authority Jesus had directly from God even as the Angel had when bringing Israel out of Egypt - Exodus 23:20,21, “Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.” There was a due time when this began in fulfilling what God had said to Abraham concerning his seed being in bondage four hundred years and afterward come out of Egypt with great substance - Genesis 15:13,14.

Thus we have Paul’s reference to Genesis 49:10, “The coming of Shiloh.” Speaking to the Galatians in chapter 4, Paul likens Jesus the Heir of God, as a servant, though He be Lord of all, under God’s teaching. “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

The question I put is this, did Jesus ascend to heaven to receive instruction from His Father concerning this mission of Redemption and all that it involved from the time of Adam? Jesus speaks as the Son of man in a personal sense, “I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” - John 6:38,39. If Jesus ascended in person, then He must have descended in person with the full knowledge of His Father’s will including the necessity of His sacrificial death which He Himself referred to, “For this cause came I unto this hour.”

Some time ago I put these ideas forward and they were published in the Nazarene Circular Letter as my own personal views, but I was criticised by a couple of readers that such a view was impossible of corruptible man ascending to heaven. People thought this of man getting to the moon but he did. We know that Paul was caught up to the third heaven whatever that means, but he speaks of it as visions and revelations of the Lord, but he does also add “whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth.” – 2 Corinthians 12:1-7.

Does Jesus rule out the possibility of His ascending to heaven? Consider His statement about the camel passing through the needle’s eye and the amazement of those to whom He spoke - “The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.” – Luke 18:27.

Constructive comments and criticism welcome, we have no closed shop where the Truth is concerned.

Brother Phil Parry
(14,11.2000)

The Tree of Knowledge

“The Bible says that this tree was the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil) and I believe it. It is not called the Tree of Physical Change, and Adam did not experience a physical change. His was a mental change, something to do with knowledge. We read in other parts of Scripture concerning “knowledge of good and evil,” and concerning the “opening of the eyes,” and these occurrences amply explain what happened to Adam. For instance, Deuteronomy 1:39, “Your little ones... which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil.” They did afterwards know. How, is shown by Isaiah 7:16, “Before the child shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good...”

Knowledge is a mental, not a physical process. A child at school attains to knowledge without the necessity of a surgical operation. At home it duly learns what is good in the sight of its parents and what is not. So with the opening of the eyes. Saul on the way to Damascus had his eyes opened (yet physically shut). We have had our eyes opened. We once imagined that “heaven was our home,” for example, and we are still physically the same.” - W.L.

The above on the Tree of Knowledge gives us some room for thought. So I thought to add some Scriptures that would verify and help us discriminate between things that differ.

The first thought that came to my mind many years ago when contending for the natural creation was “In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened” - were they created blind? The evidence, “in the day” proved what we contend. When the woman ‘saw’ (mental) that the Tree was good for food, pleasant, or a delight to the eyes (actual sight) and a tree to be desired to make one wise...” there we have the three desires, all of which are natural and right in their place.

They are also the three means whereby sin can be committed if law forbid. James shows how lust, or desire when conceived brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death; all in the natural order.

There is no doubt that the Scriptures explain themselves - God is His own Interpreter as we have seen in “thou shalt surely die” having an exact parallel in Shimei (1 Kings 2:36,37) and a further one is observed in Luke 24:31, “and their eyes were opened.” The people were no more blind than Adam and Eve. It was their understanding that was at fault, being open to the consequences either for good or evil. In verse 45 of Luke 24 we have the answer; “Then opened he their understanding...”

Have not we experienced the same thing? Have not some things in the Scriptures been dark to us and suddenly have seen a truth which had previously been hidden? Thus we see there is the natural sight and blindness and the Spiritual sight and blindness.

When this difference is seen, the right understanding can be applied. "Open thou my eyes," says David, "that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" - Psalm 119:18, also expressed by Paul in Ephesians 1:18. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." (R.V., "having the eyes of your heart enlightened").

I leave you to take up your concordances and look up the words regarding the "opening of the eyes," for there is much profit to be had from such study. Jesus opened the eyes of the literally blind as well as the eyes of their understanding.

May we not be as the Pharisees who say "we see" and our sin remaineth but like the literally blind man saying "Once I was blind, but now I see," in Spiritual sense and be among those who shall see the King in His Beauty.

F.J.Pearce.