

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 204

November/December 2003

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## Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends, Loving Greetings.

Belonging as we do to a small group of believers who are scattered throughout the world and mostly in ones and twos, something we may miss is the pleasure of corporate worship. One of these pleasures involved in meeting in some numbers can be the singing of hymns together. Most of us of a certain age will remember morning assembly at school when every pupil joined in at the start of each school day in singing a hymn, taking part in prayers and listening to a Bible reading. It was a good start to the day and in the process one learned many hymns painlessly by heart, hymns with excellent words and stirring tunes and we also became familiar with Bible words and language.

Because of so-called multiculturalism in today's society this is no longer a practice in many schools with the exception of church schools. I think the loss of this morning assembly is a great pity for the present generation of children, depriving them as it does of an important part of their heritage both in language and music. Taking part in such activities may also stir an interest later in life in things of the spirit, for we seldom forget words and tunes learned in our youth.

There are twenty-five mentions of singing in the Bible. In Chronicles we are told how David and “all Israel played before God with all their might and with singing.” And Jehoida when he had appointed the offices in the house of the Lord it was followed by burnt offerings, with rejoicing and singing. Also when Hezekiah kept the Passover feast it was celebrated for seven days “...with great gladness and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day singing with loud instruments unto the Lord.”

Ezra tells us that when some forty-two thousand Jews returned to their homeland after being exiled in Babylon “...there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.” When Nehemiah had overseen the building of the walls of Jerusalem the completion was celebrated with thanksgiving and singing.

In the Psalms we are told to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord... to serve the Lord with gladness and to come before his presence with singing.” In Isaiah we have the sublimely poetic evocations of singing: “The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, it shall blossom abundantly and even with joy and singing” and, “Sing O ye heavens... break forth into singing O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people and will have mercy upon his afflicted...” and again “...the mountains and the hills shall break forth before into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” Such wonderful word pictures of pure joy.

In Zephaniah we have a description of the Lord God Himself being full of joy over His children "...he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." And in Ephesians we are told to "Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

In the 1960's when the coloured people of America were struggling for their freedom, freedom to eat in any restaurant, sit anywhere on a bus or do a hundred other things that their fellow white citizens were able to do: before their freedom marches they used to gather in their local churches to pray and to sing hymns to give them courage and inspiration to carry on with the battle. Indeed they won many victories in the face of a violent police force with vicious dogs and a white population some of whom punched and spat on the protestors.

I feel sure that music and singing will have a place in the new world when Jesus reigns in the earth at last, but before that great day dawns we have the words that many hymn writers have written so well describing God's love for His children, the joy that is to come because of the birth and death of His beloved Son; one of my favourite hymns is by Thomas O'Chisholm...

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my father  
There is no shadow of turning with thee,  
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not  
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Pardon for sin and peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun Moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my father  
Morning by morning new mercies I see,  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

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## **Letter from Brother John Stephenson querying whether, in His Crucifixion, Jesus "paid the price" to the 'devil' or to the Law.**

Dear Russell, Thanks for the copy of the "Open Letter to the Sutton Coldfield Christadelphians." It is an excellent commentary. There is one little point I would like to question. On page 17 you say, "We note that Jesus did pay the price - His own "precious blood," but it was not paid to the Devil but to the Law."

I am not sure I can agree with that. Your definition of the devil is good - "a personification of man's will when opposed to God's will." I find it helpful to see the Devil as the metaphorical, hypothetical, imaginary personification of the Lord of Sinners. Sinners delude themselves that they are "free" because they reject law, but they are actually slaves to sin, as we see every day in the neighbourhood, in city streets, in world news. And the body of sinners includes some surprising people, very religious and righteous, some of whom know scripture by heart without knowing the heart of it. They include the majority of "believers" in every sect, especially Christadelphians, whose loyalty is to the congregational leaders rather than to the Bible and the Messiah. Those "righteous" religious leaders found Jesus so irritating that they had to get rid of Him.

The Roman Catholic persecution of the Reformers was in the same category. I was horrified to read that James the first persecuted Presbyterians because they wouldn't toe the line with the Church of England.

And of course, Robertsites persecute anyone who refuses to toe the B.A.S.F. line, like the last speaker at the Christadelphian seminar who threatened to ask you to leave. These are all bondservants of the Devil, many of whom would never break the law, except that they are ignorant of the Law of Love. And it was the bondservants of the Devil who extracted the payment of Jesus' blood, so I feel His redeeming sacrifice was paid to the Devil.

When you say it was paid to the Law, I presume you mean God's Law, but I feel you can't separate the Law from God without getting far more hypothetical than the concept of a Devil. So I agree with the second of the three Atonement ideas listed on page 16, except that I would insert "repentant" thus: "(b) Jesus was the price paid to the Devil in order to release repentant sinners from his grasp."

Maybe I am splitting hairs, but I would like to hear other's opinions. But your review in the "Open Letter" was superb.

John Stevenson.

### **We thank John for his letter and here are opinions of two others :-**

Dear Russell, Greetings in Jesus Name. Regarding comments invited in answer to Brother John Stephenson's letter to you. I believe your statement to be correct but it seems John wants a clearer explanation.

I am clear on one fact, that Adam by disobedience violated his Creator's Law and thereby that Law had a claim on his life immediately - "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This was inflicted death by sin, not by natural decay and death to which by creation Adam was already subject.

Please note, natural death in Paul's view is not an enemy and as he writes in 1 Corinthians 15:25,26 "The last enemy that shall be vanquished (Emphatic Diaglott) is death." A person who is physically dead cannot, he destroyed, but that which has the power of the "Death by Sin" (which is the law of sin and death) under which all except Jesus, the Son of God are concluded, can be vanquished.

This was achieved through Jesus, being free from the claim of the violated law which was natural life in the blood, offering up His own free and unforfeited life in the place of Adam's "forfeited life by sin." I do not wish to make a long lecture of what could be made of the subject but a simple example is made by the apostle James in chapter 2, verse 10 - "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." So in this case the penalty of transgression can be the life of the transgressor which the law demands-

Now for example, anyone committing an offence under the law of the country in which they live do not pay its claim to the King, Queen or Sovereign ruler, but to the legal system which administers the law. God could not change the just law He had given to Adam, yet to meet its claim judicial death of Adam was bound to take place; an equivalent life was required to meet the claim of the Law. This is where the Love, Mercy and Justice of God is shown in His foreknowledge and wisdom in the provision of a new man who by His obedient conduct and freedom from sin could take the place of Adam and give His life in the blood a Ransom for all.

This does not mean that all avail themselves of the freedom from the slavery of 'Master Sin,' the Ransom has been paid but a change of Masters is necessary in the way provided and this means dying unto Sin and living unto God in Christ Jesus. There is no need for me to enlarge further on this subject apart than to show from the above error of the Concordant sect in believing that upon the Ransom having been paid in the blood of Christ nothing more is required apart from good conduct, which is a duty of all who profess to know the Truth of God's atoning work in His Son. It should be recognised that when John the Baptist declared to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, He did not mean the sins of the world but the singular Sin of Adam under which all were concluded, even Adam's offence. (See Romans 5:19, 20).

The apostle John records "Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power..." Death and hell cast into the lake of fire was not a physical act but it signified to John the

end of the power of death's dominion with God all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24-26 & 54-57; Revelation 20:14).

Let us hold fast the profession of the One and True Faith for He is faithful who hath promised.

The Grace of God and His Son be with all who love Him in sincerity.

Brother Phil Parry 20.10.2003

### **Second letter :-**

Dear Russell, Thank you for sight of John's letter regarding your "Open Letter to The Sutton Coldfield Christadelphians" and the question of the recipient of "the price" whether paid to the 'devil' or legally to Law.

The first intimation of the amount of that price is in the prophecy of Zechariah following the declaration that God would break His covenant with all the people and that the "poor of the flock that waited upon me would know that it was the word of YHWH" and declares that "If ye think good, give me my price and if not forbear, so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" which on the instructions of YHWH was cast (not paid) to the potter (Zechariah 11:11-13), and finally used to purchase that field by the high priests, to bury strangers in, presumably being for sale having been stripped of the clay by the potter (Matthew 27:1-10).

The "word of YHWH" is of course the Law. At that time the Law of Moses. "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

The law is not made for a righteous man but for lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, manslayers, whoremongers, them that defile themselves with mankind, menstealers, liars, perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine according to the blessed God which was committed to my trust (1 Timothy 1:9).

Deuteronomy 33:2 - "YHWH came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them, He shined forth from Paran and came with ten thousands of saints, from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea he loved the people, all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. Moses commanded us a law even the inheritance of the children of Jacob.

If the purchase price was provided by the priesthood (acting on behalf of the people?), then the law was the instrument by which they slew the Lord, and it could be argued that the priests were 'children of the devil' as was Judas, but both rejected the money and cast it to the potter in fulfilment of the Word of God through Zechariah, which is the Law that God made for sinners, for "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." How honoured we are to be no longer under the law of sin and death but of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

We are told in Psalm 138 "Thou hast magnified thy Word (Law) above all thy Name" therefore I conclude that the Law takes preference except where, as in the case of Adam, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment" and the price was paid to Law rather than to some metaphorical devil. I am grateful to Brother John for the problem and fully agree with his other sentiments concerning your booklet.

Love to all, Eric Cave

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### **And a further comment from myself :-**

Dear John, You question one point in my "Open Letter to the Sutton Coldfield Christadelphians," where on page 17, I wrote; "We note that Jesus did pay the price – His own 'precious blood,' but it was not paid to the Devil but to the Law," and you express some doubt. I can see your point; we cannot separate God

from His Law. If Jesus paid the debt owed to the Law then surely God was also involved, and if that is not acceptable, then He must have paid it to the Devil, or sin personified as an Owner. Nevertheless it was God's Law that had to be satisfied and that made the payment necessary. But if we say He paid His life to His Father then it may seem His Father demanded His death or even killed His own Son using the Jews and Romans as His instruments (B.A.S.F. Clause 12). But surely Jesus offered Himself freely to His Father in place of Adam and His Father accepted His offering even as He accepted the offerings made in faith under the Law of Moses which typified Him.

While it is true that Scripture uses the metaphor of King Sin, or the Devil, reigning, it is still only a metaphor and a metaphorical 'King' or 'Devil' cannot make laws or demand payments from law breakers. It is true that the bond-servants of 'Sin' extracted the payment of Jesus' life, but then Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep... no man taketh it from me but I lay it down of myself." Those bond-servants believed they had things their own way when they crucified Him but in fact it was Jesus who had things His way. The important point here is that Jesus voluntarily laid down His life. He did not lay it down in response to a demand from His Father, but of His own free choice. Once again it comes to the matter of choice but here it is on a higher level than the law's requirements. Jesus not only kept the law but went beyond the requirements of the law; He turned the other cheek, He gave His cloak also and He went the extra mile - and then He left us a new commandment - to love others as He had loved us. Keeping the Law of Moses ensured His own life for evermore, and going beyond the law's requirements by laying down His life in place of Adam's He ensured life for evermore for the faithful.

However I do not believe it is correct to say that "Jesus was the price paid to the Devil in order to release repentant sinners from his grasp," yet repentant sinners are released from the grasp of Sin or the Devil through the love of Jesus in laying down His life for their release from the Law of Sin and Death.

And just a thought from Isaiah 63:3 (which is prompted by a letter which I have just written to a Christadelphian friend) - "I have trodden the wine press alone... for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment..." Jesus was furious because of the unrighteousness of those who crucified Him and with all who rebel against the goodness and righteousness of God. This on the one hand was the driving force which led Jesus to the cross and on the other hand it was His love for His Father and for the faithful that enabled Him to endure the suffering. And so by His death He was able to separate the sheep from the goats.

With Love in the Lord, Russell.

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## **Blind Leaders Exposed**

Recently I have read through again the four letters by Sister J.A.French written in 1945 to John Carter, Editor of The Christadelphian magazine, imploring him to reason with those people who had found so much doctrinal error in the Christadelphian community and to heed her own warning having, by study of their views put forth without fear of the consequences, come to the same conclusion.

The four letters and John Carter's pathetic brief reply have been compiled in a booklet entitled "You Have Been Warned!" Not only does the warning apply in 1945 to John Carter but to those Christadelphians at that time and even down to this year of 2003 when those same traditionally addicted Robertsites are trying to tell people how to read the Bible effectively when they cannot do so themselves.

Actually a good example of this failure is found in John Carter's reply to Sister French on page 6 of the booklet where he takes Paul's words to Jews formerly under the Law of Moses and desiring to return to it, as being addressed to Gentiles who were never under that Law. Not only so, but he fails to complete Paul's words in Galatians 3:1 which reads, "O foolish Galatians, who hath beguiled you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth?" "Crucified among you" is omitted by John Carter deliberately I think, and also the verses 2,3 & 4 which speak of their receiving the Spirit on their conversion to Jesus Christ, no longer in the flesh (under the law) but in the Spirit. This fact of the Spirit in

those truly baptised into the death of Christ was a sore point with Christadelphians who shunned people for professing it. One who did just that who was from South Wales told myself and others of a certain day when he and other Christadelphians clashed with the Pentecostals who threatened to bring down fire upon them as Elijah did - 2 Kings 1:10 - this was nothing to boast or laugh about, for these Pentecostals no doubt believed in Jesus Christ as much as Christadelphians but like the latter, were in some respects deluded and led astray on other matters of doctrine by those who were in authority.

When reading John Carter's part quotation from Galatians 3:1 I recalled the same being quoted to me when I was expressing my views to other members over fifty years ago in the Christadelphian Ecclesia; the man who accused me of teaching the so called 'Clean-Flesh' doctrine of which I was ignorant, took upon himself the authority of the whole ecclesia which had not been given him and quoted a shorter version of Paul's words from Galatians 3:1 as follows - "Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" The truth where he was concerned was the B.A.S.F. with its R.Roberts compiled false clauses with no setting forth of any true understanding of why Jesus allowed himself to be crucified, and worse still he was addressing me, a Gentile, as one who had been under the Law of Moses and in taking Paul's words out of context manipulating and corrupting Paul's motive of showing the Galatians that Jesus Christ and Him crucified had done away with the handwriting of ordinances that were against them, which was contrary to them and others in like position, taking it out of the way, and nailing it to His cross.

The only regrets I and my wife share is that my misled accuser would not listen to scriptural truths but continued his deluded contention that Jesus was unclean from birth to the time of His death on the cross to destroy the sin in His flesh. I tend to take the view that he, and Robert Roberts, and all of like minds were used of God in order that humble and honest searchers for Truth might be moved to contend more earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints and the apostles of Jesus.

When did I hear from the Christadelphian platform or from the various members with whom I was associated the truth of Christ being evidently set forth as a sacrifice? (Galatians 3:1). My answer is, almost never, yet at times there was a hint of this by visiting lecturers but never taken to its final conclusion as was the case of Caiaphas the High Priest who did not fully comprehend what he was saying of Jesus nor understand the whole purpose of his sacrificial death; he looked no further than the letter of the law and retention of his authority over the common people, not realising even as Paul and his fellow disciples did later, that it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. Those who believe in the Ezekiel type Temple to be built in the future with animal sacrifices being retrospective of the true antitypes' death, should realise these sacrifices to be of any value, have to be ratified by the death of Christ which would be impossible He being incorruptible. Please excuse my digression.

Before I began to express views in harmony with Edward Turney on the meaning of Christ's sacrifice, John Carter's name came up in a conversation I had with a Christadelphian member who said that John Carter was not an eloquent speaker but marvellous on exposition, but what do we find? We find that he has exposed himself on many counts such as his failure to meet the reasoning in Sister French's letters, his acceptance of the B.A.S.F. with its erroneous clauses, his manipulation and redressing of the contents in 1958 to make it palatable and acceptable to the people concerned but when analysed containing the same false doctrines - all supposedly for Christadelphian unity but doomed to failure as witnessed today. If any should read the booklet please note the Forward by Sister Helen Brady

Apart from the late Sisters French and Houlston, page 3 of the booklet there are and have been throughout the history of Christadelphianism sincere women who had gained the true knowledge and understanding of the Gospel centred upon the supreme and willing sacrifice of Christ in contrast with the false theories pervading that community when in 1873 the unclean spirit in the guise of Robert Roberts and his successors appeared on the scene beguiling unstable souls, having been themselves beguiled yet professing to have the Truth as it is in Jesus.

I could name many of such women, some still alive, and some who have fallen asleep during my experience in the true fellowship we profess in the Body and Faith of Jesus, whom we emphatically believe gave His life a ransom for all, whether people avail themselves of that freedom from the law of sin and death under which they were concluded through Adam's sin, or have no interest, but satisfied with their way of life leaving it to what they term fate.

If I have appeared to have been personally attacking certain people it has been through their stubbornness to reason out what is being said and written for their benefit, and their own persistence in suppressing the truth offered to their members. 'Christadelphia' as a body died in 1873 but the breath of life from God has entered those willing to accept Him and His Son in honouring them both, a fact which is absent from their views and teaching of why Christ suffered death on Calvary. I say to them as Sister French did in 1945,

**“YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.”**

Sincerely in the Name of Jesus,

Phil Parry.

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**Once again we are reproducing some letters of our late Brother Ernest Brady which we hope you will find interesting and helpful:-**

**First letter - February 1957**

## **ERNEST BRADY TO VINER HALL**

Dear Brother Viner Hall, I must thank you for your letter of the 25th January,

I am returning the copies of your correspondence with Sister X which I have read with interest. In her inability to accept your explanations of how sin was literally in Christ, she has, as I think, an inkling of the truth, and if she had understood what “clean flesh” really means, instead of having accepted false representations of that doctrine which many Christadelphians are guilty of propagating, I think her difficulties might have disappeared. I wonder if she is a relative of the brother in Australia who speaks of “the serpent power of sin (which) introduced its venom into the flesh of Christ”? If she is, at any rate she does not favour his views and I can indeed sympathise with anyone who is troubled by such expressions and feels driven to the view that Christ must have been immaculate (whatever they mean by that) and that He could not experience temptation.

It is evident from your letter you yourself do not quite understand our position and are still convinced that we believe there was some difference of blood or flesh between Jesus and other men.

I fully accept that the blood of Jesus was the same as that of His mother; that His blood was derived from hers. I also agree that the child of a white man and a coloured woman would be a mulatto, but you do not need me to tell you that no one has ever succeeded in distinguishing between the blood of a white man and that of a negro, or a mulatto, so that whatever it is that accounts for the difference between races and colours, it is not the blood. Which of course accords with the Scripture, that God hath made of one blood all nations of men (Acts 17:26) and condemns the foolishness of racial discrimination.

No one that I know of has ever denied that the blood of Jesus was the same as the blood of His mother, so that I cannot see any relevance in the fact that a child of mixed parentage would be a mulatto. The thing we do deny is that the blood of any human being is what you term “Sin-impregnated Blood.” I know of no Scripture which justifies you in saying so and to the best of my knowledge and understanding every scriptural fact bearing on the subject is against it.

You quote Galatians 4:4 and affirm that here it is “authoritatively stated by the apostle Paul that He partook of sin-impregnated blood, since He was begotten of a human mother and made under the law.” I am afraid you are reading far more into Paul’s words than he ever intended. The fact that Jesus was born of a woman proves that He was a man like us; the fact that He was born under the law proved that He was a Jew like His fellow Jews; neither fact proves that His blood was sin-impregnated or His flesh defiled. Paul’s argument in the context ought to make it plain that the difference between Jesus and us is a legal one - a

matter of heirship and inheritance - as shown by verse 1, "So long as the heir is a child. He differeth nothing from a bond-servant, though He is lord of all."

Thus, the purpose of Jesus being born under the law was in order that, by keeping it perfectly He might retain His right to life; the purpose of Him being born of a woman was in order that He might be of the human family. If He had not been made of a woman and born under the law, He would have been an alien and therefore neither an heir of the promises nor a near kinsman in a position to redeem the lost inheritance of His brother. (Ruth 4:4).

The Christadelphian view, that "under the law" means "under condemnation" and that being born of a woman implies that He was in any sense a sinner, or of sinful nature, or related to sin in any sense, is abhorrent to me and I do not believe there is in the whole of the Bible one word to justify it, while I think one could scarce find a page where there is not some word or fact which does not tell against it. The simplest and most obvious evidence to the contrary is the fact that if He had been in any sense defiled He would have been utterly and completely debarred from making Himself an acceptable sacrifice for sin, as laid down in Leviticus 4:2,23,32; 5:18; 6:6; and Malachi 1:14.

I cannot understand the difficulty people seem to find in appreciating the difference between all of us, as human beings descended from Adam, and another human being (Jesus) begotten by a miracle and Who therefore received His life from God. This is a difference not of quality of flesh or blood but of heirship or status.

Most of the literature you have sent me is concerned to combat the error which many people fall into, of supposing that because Jesus was the Son of God He must therefore have been incapable of experiencing temptation. I do not believe this any more than you do; but it arises from the belief that Jesus was in some way a mixture of human and divine nature and that the purpose of the virgin birth was to give Him the necessary power to overcome the sin in His nature. This is the view you hold and it is this that makes it well nigh impossible for you to explain to those like Sister X how it was possible for Jesus to suffer temptation in the same way as ourselves and yet be holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. If you could only see that it is not some evil principle which gives rise to temptation, but the exercise of the God-given freedom to choose between good and evil, and recognize that if we tried as hard as He did to be obedient, we could succeed as Jesus did, you would have no difficulty in reconciling the fact that He was made and tempted in all points like His brethren and was yet without sin.

From what you have written, you recognize, which most Christadelphians do not, that every lust or natural desire has its proper purpose and is good when exercised lawfully, and only leads to sin when allowed to reign unlawfully. Where then is the need for or the evidence that sin became a physical principle implanted in the flesh or that the blood is impregnated with sin?

Do not Jesus' words amply account for the conflict between good and evil both in ourselves and in the world? "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Does it not contradict His words to affirm that He Himself had sinful flesh and sin-impregnated blood, making Him a corrupt tree surely, while asserting that He brought forth good fruit? Either make the tree good and His fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and His fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit.

I recently saw a copy of a periodical called "The Remnant" which appears to represent a section of Christadelphians who regard themselves as the last-stand against the general decline and I wondered if you had come across them. It contains what is called "A history of the Truth in the Latter Days" and I was amazed at some of the things the author has to say in dealing with the controversy between Edward Turney and Robert Roberts. If you would like to read it I will send it to you, but the point I wish all Christadelphians could read was what the author has to say in regard to the death of Christ.

He says "The argument (i.e. Edward Turney's) was elaborated in so-called proof by saying that Jesus came as a "ransom for all," and how could He pay a ransom if He Himself were under bondage?"

That is a very fair statement of Edward Turney's argument and the "so-called proof" is actually the Scripture's own words - it is definitely stated that He was a ransom for all.

But the writer says this was "Heresy of the first magnitude" and he goes on, "To argue that it was "for us" (which again, it actually says - E.B.) does not alter this, God will never condemn a man who does not in some way deserve it."

So, the alternative to our view is that God condemned Jesus and therefore He must have in some way deserved if!

It would be charitable to conclude that the writer of such a statement did not really mean what he says, or does not really know what he is saying, but he puts the same idea in another way in the immediate following paragraph, saying - "By it (the belief that Jesus gave Himself as our substitutionary sacrifice) the justice of God is insulted in condemning One Who it is alleged was not worthy of condemnation."

I think these are most awful things to say and I would like you, Bro, Hall, if you reply to this letter, to deal in particular with them and tell me frankly if you accept them or if you reject them, for the writer claims they are based upon Robert Roberts replies to Edward Turney. Or it may be I do not properly understand what he is trying to say, though his words are clear enough.

His statement that God will never condemn a man who does not deserve it, requires the establishment of two facts;

- 1) That God condemned Jesus,
- 2) That Jesus deserved to be condemned.

He produces not one word of Scripture to prove either and so far as I know, no one else ever has; if you know of any no doubt - if you accept the argument - you will quote it.

All I know is that on the day of Pentecost the apostle Peter said that Jesus was a man approved of God, not that He was condemned by God. He speaks of Him as the Holy One and the Just, not as one deserving of condemnation. So far from it being God who condemns Him, Peter says, "Ye by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Not God, but wicked men, "denied the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer to be delivered, and killed the Prince of life." What dreadful reversal of the true facts to say that God's Justice would have been insulted if He had condemned One Who was not worthy of condemnation.

The exact opposite is the case. It was evil men alone who condemned Him, and that unjustly, or undeservedly; it was God who justified Him and raised Him because He would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. It literally appals me that apparently sincere and well-meaning people can be found saying and writing things which are so palpably and blatantly contrary to every apostolic utterance. It seems as though they get so carried away by their own theorising that they are no longer properly conscious of what the Scripture does or does not say, I say this, because in the same paragraph as I have quoted from the writer speaks of "the appeals of Jesus for deliverance from the wretchedness of His nature," yet I cannot think of one such appeal and if you can I should be interested to hear of it.

In conclusion, I am bound to say that if in Scripture there appeared to be any real evidence that mankind is what P.O.Barnard calls "a diseased abnormality because of sin," we should be almost obliged to ask ourselves whether we were in fact rightly dividing the Word, when it leads to the conclusion that the condemnation of God fell upon Christ because of His nature.

If it were so, it would prove, not what the writer in "The Remnant" says, that God was just in condemning Jesus, but the very opposite, that He was unjust, because Jesus could no more help His nature than can we.

As I have said, I do not believe there is any such evidence, and the one single fact, that Christ, having the same nature, sharing the same blood, experiencing similar temptations, passed through His probation

without anyone being able to convict Him of sin, is sufficient proof that anyone who affirms that God has implanted sin in His flesh or impregnated with sin His blood, or allowed the sin of an ancestor to so affect Him, understands neither what he says, nor whereof he affirms.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely, Ernest Brady.

\* \* \*

## Second letter - March 1959

### **ERNEST BRADY TO VINER HALL**

Dear Brother Viner Hall, I was much impressed to read the copies of your letters to John Carter and A.D.Norris and I return them herewith as requested. Thank you for sending them... and although I believe you to be grievously in error in regard to the nature of Christ and His death, I have great respect for you and admiration of your work and walk, and it is my hope and prayer that neither of us will be ultimately rejected, but find however humble a place in the Kingdom.

I have much sympathy with your complaint against Christadelphians in regard to their di-theistic tendency of late, but as I have shown in "What God Hath Cleansed," both R.Roberts and Dr.Thomas were confused on the question, though I do not suppose you will agree.

Even yourself however, in attributing Christ's success in overwhelming temptation, to His Divine begettal, are making Him different in nature from us, and although you strenuously insist on The Word as the source of His knowledge and strength, and that it was by His character, words, and works that men saw in Him the Father, yet if, as you say, "all these excellences were latent in Him" in a sense in which they are not latent in us (because of His birth), surely you too are making a metaphysical difference between Him and us.

If you claim that "the Holy Spirit gave Him a higher type than His brethren of purely Adamic stock," are you not also falling into the same error as S.T.Coleridge, and the Methodist minister you reprove? So far as A.D.Norris is concerned, I am bound to agree with the gentleman you quote - he certainly multiplies words and befogs everybody - probably himself included. I fear he has got above himself.

I must say however, that in one point on which you criticize him, I think he is correct. The blood of Christ was indeed God's own blood, in the sense of course, that it was His Property; Just as Christ Himself was God's own Son. I think you are mistaken on your assertion that the blood of Christ was the blood of sin's flesh which Christ inherited from His mother. I understood it to be a biological fact that there is no connection between the blood circulatory systems of mother and child, but that when a new life commences, its blood is newly created in the embryo, from the nourishment of the parent. Thus, Jesus being begotten by a miracle, neither His blood nor His life which it sustained, can be the life of Adam.

This does not mean that either Jesus flesh or His blood, or the nature and quality of His life were different from Adam's or any other man's, but that He was a man newly created, from the Source. I believe that, as much of this as A.D.N. accepts, he has learned from correspondence with me. I suppose you would say, so much the worse for him; but we shall see.

I agree with you in condemning his foolish talk about "the race of woman." The woman was Adam, as God says in Genesis 5:1-2, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him, male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam."

It is not surprising that A.D.Norris ignored your question, as to what he implies by saying that Adam was condemned both to a physical death, and death in the sight of God. Here again I think he has learned something from us, but dare not face up to it, and is seeking to combine what he realizes is true with the Christadelphian principle of physical condemnation. In truth, as I believe, the only death Adam incurred by

sin, was death in the sight of God, and this death will be literally inflicted upon un-repentant sinners in the day of judgment. As I have shown in "What God Hath Cleansed," pages 76 to 78.

Both Dr. Thomas and R.Roberts admit that Adam was corruptible and capable of death at his creation. Do you regard these as legitimate quotations, and do they fairly represent their views? If so, they contradict the teaching that the imposition of physical death was the penalty of sin, do they not?

You speak of Christ as having sin-impregnated-flesh, but I do not know of any Scripture which justifies you in speaking of sin-impregnated-flesh in either Christ or any man. If you have read any of our booklets you must know that we at least do not believe that Christ was incapable of sinning. Anyone who was so foolish, would be making Him no more than a puppet. But if Adam was capable of sinning before he had the supposed sin-impregnated-flesh, and we know he was, because he did, why should not Jesus have been capable of sinning without having sin-impregnated-flesh?

You say truly that the glory of Christ consisted in His victory as a man and that those who hold Him not subject to the same innate susceptibility to temptation as every other son of man, would rob Christ of His glory. But do not you do this very thing when you say, "His begetting by the Spirit conferred upon Him a more susceptible organization - made Him of a quicker understanding - of a keener perception; by reason of His special mental-endowment - (Christ) was advantaged above all other men for the work of subduing of sin."

You apply "Made strong for Himself," as proving this superior mental endowment by reason of His birth, but if so you nullify the reality of His suffering under temptation. What is your reasoned objection to our contention that His strength lay in the fact that as Son of God, and free from Sin, His life was His own to give for our Redemption?

I cannot understand your assertion that "Our Lord Jesus Christ was what He was by the grace of God - for He could not save Himself, as witness Hebrews 5:7." This says that in the days of His flesh He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. This does not indicate or prove that He could not save Himself, or that He Himself needed salvation.

It proves that He feared and dreaded the awful suffering and death, which He knew was necessary for our salvation.

I feel sure you must agree that this is a reference to His agony in Gethsemane and that Luke 22:43 gives us the explanation of how He was heard in that He feared; we are told "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Knowing the terrible things through which He was shortly to pass, it is no wonder that sometimes His courage failed and His resolution wavered. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." You say that the fact that God "made Him strong for Himself precluded boasting even in the Lord's case." I would certainly not suggest that Jesus ever boasted, but I feel sure you are wrong in arguing that He had nothing of which He could not justifiably have boasted; indeed, in denying His right, you are minimizing His Sacrifice and giving Him too little honour. Myself I feel it would be impossible to give Him too much.

"I have trodden the winepress alone," "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends." There are many other such passages, which while I think it would give a false impression, to say were boastings, nevertheless, suggest Jesus' just claim to a recognition of His personal Greatness and the glory of His accomplishment, which your reasoning denies Him.

With very sincere regards, Ernest Brady.

## **Brother John Stevenson writes:**

Dear Russell, I recently read a book entitled “Balancing The Book”, published in 1990, in which the author, having spent a life time studying the Bible, decided to reconcile various texts which were apparently contradictory, and worried some Christians. (Like secret and open goodness; predestination and freewill). I am forwarding chapters 13 and 16 which I believe will be of considerable interest to our readers. It confirms what you suggested to me some time ago, that Dr John Thomas did not discover anything very new, because many people in times past have questioned and rejected the Trinity doctrine and the Immortal Soul theory, including the great poet John Milton and the scientist Isaac Newton. But in contrast Edward Turney did discover new Bible-based truth, a reasonable understanding of human nature and the non-physical nature of sin, and of God’s Law and Mercy, and a proper understanding of the “Fall” and the Atonement, which we of the Nazarene Fellowship are privileged to accept and preach. “Balancing the Book” is excellent reading throughout, especially the following excerpts.”

John Stevenson

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## **Balancing The Book**

### **A Study of Biblical Paradoxes By Len Richardson**

#### **Chapter 13. Son of God, and Son of Man**

**“Made so much better than the angels” (Hebrews 1:4)  
“Made a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7).**

These two verses encapsulate the arguments concerning the person of our Lord which have tormented and divided the Christian church for centuries, going right back in time to the days of Constantine in the 4th Century AD when the Arian controversy so split the Church that the exasperated Emperor virtually shut up the conflicting Bishops and told them to find a solution once and for all. They came up with the Athenasian Creed - a statement on the doctrine of the Trinity which only serves to make “confusion worse confounded.” Any attempt to “define” the relationship of God the Father to His Son Jesus Christ is fraught with difficulties, and almost inevitably leads to more verbal strife. For while it is possible to accept the basic biblical facts about his miraculous birth and divine inheritance, human vocabulary is incapable of expressing all that was involved, or of defining in precise terms the relationship of the Son of God who was yet the Son of Man, and is now the Lord of Life.

The two verse quoted above, however, though they appear to be contradictory, will on closer examination be found helpful in leading us to the reconciliation of the two aspects of his nature. So let us look at them more closely -

### **The Supremacy of Jesus**

The whole of the letter to Hebrew Christians is an exposition of the supremacy of all things in Christ over the things of the Law of Moses. Everything is “better.” He is a better “High Priest.” It is a “better covenant,” established upon “better promises.” It brings in a “better hope.” His blood speaks “better things” than that of Abel. He has opened up a new and “better way” to God. So in the opening chapter the writer is establishing the pre-eminence of Christ, even over angels. “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4). He then proceeds to give several quotations from the Old Testament writings to show that the “Messiah,” spoken of prophetically, was to become Lord of all. In the first of these he quotes from Psalm 2, “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?” (Hebrews 1:5). Then he quotes Psalm 45, again prophetic of the Messiah, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever... thou hast loved righteousness and hated

iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” These words are addressed “to the Son” to whom the name of God is ascribed, although we notice that it is “Thy God” (the Eternal Father) who has so anointed the Son, giving him pre-eminence, “above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:8).

The third quotation is from Psalm 102:25, and applies to Jesus words which clearly were originally, by the Psalmist, intended to describe the eternal nature of God Himself. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, etc.” This is in harmony with other examples of the Lord’s own attributes and titles being, in the New Testament, applied to Jesus Christ, his Son. For he has, says the Hebrews writer, “by inheritance,” obtained a “more excellent name” than the angels. They are “ministering spirits” whereas he is the Son of God (Hebrews 1:14).

We cannot, nor should we try to play down the importance of the person of Jesus Christ in the divine scheme of things. To deny his Deity is not to deny his divinity. His divine inheritance as the Son of God, making him unique and superlative in all Creation, is everywhere to be found, as the following passages illustrate:

*“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).*

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature... and he is [the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Colossians 1:15-18).*

*“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens...” (Hebrews 7:26).*

There are many such passages which exalt the glory of the Son of God, and lend point to the view of Jesus Christ put forward in Hebrews chapter 1, that he has been made “so much better than the angels.” So why does the same writer, in the same Epistle say that he “was made a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7)?

## **The humanity of Jesus**

Perhaps we have a clue to the dilemma in the very verse from which our text was derived, Hebrews 1:3-4, for we find in verse 3 that the glory of the Son was entered into, and made possible, by way of the Cross. The full text is:

*“Who being the brightness of his (God’s) glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels...”*

It was after his suffering and crucifixion, and by his glorious resurrection and ascension, that he became Lord of all, under God his Father. “Ought not the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?” he asked his beloved disciples after his resurrection (Luke 24:26).

For Jesus to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, it was necessary that he should bear their nature. This is the argument of Hebrews chapter 2 from which our second text is taken. It was not angels who needed the redemption but Mankind, “and therefore he had to be made like these brothers of his in every way” (verse 17. NEB). Only so, argues the Apostle, could he become “a merciful and faithful High Priest, to expiate the sins of the people.” So although he was indeed, and in every sense, the Son of God, the heir “of all things,” yet he was made lower than the angels, for the suffering of death” (verse 9). The words are taken from Psalm 8 in which the Old Testament poet views the great sweep of God’s purpose in Creation. “Man” was intended to “have dominion” over all things that the Lord had made (the reference in Psalm 8:6 is to the divine decree originally made in Genesis 1:26) but because sin obtruded, and Adam marred the divine “image,” it would be fulfilled in a new Man, whom God would himself provide, and in whom “all things” would finally be made to reflect the glory of the Creator. To effect this deliverance and salvation for the

human race, however, the Son of Man would have to die; and only in his conquest of death, and his return in glory, would God's original purpose be brought about, and "all things" be made subject to him. That was the reason why Jesus the Son of God was made "for a little while" lower than the angels, and came into being as a man, born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Son of God, Jesus Christ was unique. But as the Son of Man he shared our nature, being "in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 5:15). There is a lovely references to this in Paul's letter to the Philippians in which he urges Christians to try to develop the mind and character of their Lord, who although he was the Son of God by birth "did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing the human likeness revealed in human shape, he humbled himself and in obedience accepted even death – death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-11 NEB). In these wonderful words we see the Lord Jesus "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." But in what follows we see him "made so much better than angels," for Paul goes on:

*"Therefore God raised him to the heights, and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, - in heaven, on earth, and in the depths - and every tongue confess, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9 NEB).*

So once more we see the need to "balance THE BOOK." The fact that Jesus was "made a little lower than the angels" is cause for great thankfulness, for in "being found in fashion as a man" he was able to be our Saviour and Redeemer, our Intercessor and Succourer. And because he overcame human frailty and endured the suffering of the Cross he has been exalted and glorified, so that he is now higher than the angels and will one day return to bring all the world into subjection to the will of his Father and so be the Lord of all, owned and revered as the Head and Firstborn of God's new Creation.

## **APPENDIX**

### **The Trinity**

The doctrine of the Trinity was a later development, after the close of New Testament times. It has led to a good deal of misunderstanding and confusion about the relationship of the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The following quote from the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Coggan, however, simplifies the Church's idea about the Godhead to a point at which it is very little different from what has been written above, and would probably be recognised by most Christians as a reasonable view of the matter, free from "theological" definitions or creeds;

"If you had asked the first generation of Christians whether they were orthodox believers in the Trinity, they would probably have looked askance at you. But they might well have replied:

"We believe in God the Father, our Hebrew Scriptures taught us to think of Him like that, and Jesus filled out the picture in His matchless teaching. We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us lived with Him in Galilee and Judea, saw him at work, and saw Him die; others of us are friends of His friends. We do not think of Him as dead. Indeed, we find it perfectly natural to address our prayers to Him. We believe in His Spirit. Though the years are passing, Jesus does not recede into the past to take His place "among the immortals." It seems that His Spirit makes Him into our great Contemporary, with whom we can converse and from whom we can receive our orders. Through this Spirit, time and distance are annihilated and the word of Jesus becomes to us a living and contemporary word. If this is what you mean by being orthodox believers in the Trinity, then you can put us down as such.""

## CHAPTER 16

## Eternal life - now or future?

**“That ye may know that ye have eternal life...” (1 John 5:13).**

**“This is the promise that he has promised us, Eternal Life...” (1 John 2:25).**

There are certain basic facts about human nature which I would ask the reader to accept as a basis for the discussion of Eternal Life. They can be summarised as follows:

1. Man is a mortal being, and is not possessed of an immortal soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the human soul is not a biblical teaching (See appendix).

2. The biblical hope of a future life is by resurrection from the dead at the coming again of the Lord Jesus ( 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

3. The dead who are not “in Christ” by faith are as dead as “the beasts that perish” (Psalm 49:20).

4. Those who have died in faith are still as dead as others, and have no conscious existence until they are brought to life again “in the resurrection at the last day.” The death state is therefore described metaphorically in the Bible as “sleeping” in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Now in the New Testament there appears to be a conflict of thought about the position of Christian believers in relation to “Eternal Life” as the two texts at the head of this chapter indicate. In agreement with the clearly stated “axioms” above there are a number of texts which put “Eternal Life” in the future, as something to be sought after. It is a “promise,” as 1 John 2:25 clearly states. Here are some more similar texts:

*“In the world to come, eternal life...” (Mark 10:30).*

*“God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life...” (Romans 2:7).*

*“In hope of eternal life...” (Titus 1:2).*

There are others which clearly, or by inference, tell the same message. But these are sufficient to illustrate the point. They imply that we are mortal, perishing creatures, to whom the promise is made that if we take hold of the salvation purchased by Jesus Christ by his death on the Cross, and offered to men in the gospel, we may live in hope of receiving the gift of Eternal Life by being raised from the dead when he comes in glory. All this is clearly true... but... What about those other texts which speak of “Eternal Life” in the present tense?

Take the first one at the opening of this chapter;

*“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...” (1 John 5:13).*

This verse tells us that by believing in the Lord Jesus we come into a state which is described here as “eternal life.” In the same letter the writer tells us that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). The master himself used similar language:

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24)*

Or again,

*“Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, bath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).*

Here it is to be observed that the “raising up” at the last day is added to the promise of “eternal life,” which comes by absorbing Christ into our lives now. This is in harmony with the statement in John in his first Epistle that “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

Here we have a different concept from that of immortality. It is the life of God which was shown to men in the ministry and love of Jesus Christ and which we are called upon to begin to share even now, in this life of discipleship. This is the “eternal life” with which John is concerned. He sees in the life of Jesus the qualities of God’s Eternal Being manifested to men, that they, through him, may “have fellowship,” or share in, “that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 John 1:1-2).

It is not necessary to quote more texts on either side of the equation. These are sufficient to illustrate that we have two concepts of Eternal Life presented to us and to make one exclude the other is to get the balance wrong. If we say that “Eternal Life” is immortality, and therefore we are possessed of immortal souls, we are running counter to all the texts which tell us that it is something promised in the future; quite apart from the clear evidence from other parts of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, that we are mortal creatures in need of deliverance.

On the other hand, what are we to make of those other passages which speak of eternal life in the here and now? We cannot and must not ignore them- Some endeavours have been made to reconcile them by saying that in these texts eternal life is being spoken of prospectively, so that when we are told we “have eternal life” it really means “you will have.” You have become “heirs of eternal life,” and though not possessing it now, you will do so in the Kingdom age. There are certain texts which could be said to support this view (e.g. Titus 3:7 and Hebrews 1:14) though they do not seem to me to completely answer our problem. However, I believe it is possible to see a balance which would take in both aspects of eternal life, without violating either the biblical view of human nature or the rules of common sense interpretation. The Greek word for “eternal” has the meaning of “belonging to the age” (*alonios*). The basic idea is not so much the quantity as the quality of life. The Kingdom age will be ushered in by the coming of Christ in glory when the qualities of God’s world will be brought to the world of men in the Earth. The Kingdom of God will embody all the principles of His nature and His will. The glory of that age will be the glory of God Himself, represented in the very person and presence of His Son. So that “the glory of God will fill the earth as waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14). To live in that glorious age the believers will be raised from the dead and receive the gift of immortality. This is “the promise which he has promised us.”

In the present life, however, the *aionian* life, “eternal life,” is that new relationship with God into which the believer enters at baptism. It is, in this sense, living in anticipation of the life of the Kingdom NOW. The new life in Christ is “eternal life” in terms of quality rather than quantity. By “eating my flesh and drinking my blood,” Jesus declares, “You have eternal life.” In other words, we become related to the quality of spiritual life which is even now seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, and which will one day be manifested in all the world in glory.

*“for, this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).*

However imperfect we feel our knowledge of God and of Jesus to be, we are assured that it is our present foretaste of the life of the Kingdom. This is “knowledge” not in an academic sense, but in a personal relationship- In so far as I know God in Jesus Christ, I am “dwelling in him and he in me.” And in so far as he is dwelling in me, I am living in the essential spiritual life of Eternity - the life which was shown to believers in Jesus Christ, and will be shown to the World in the Age to come. And if this life is real and vital now - if we have in any real sense absorbed into ourselves the life of Jesus Christ ‘then we shall be partakers of “life and immortality” when the Kingdom is established. Because “this is the promise which he has promised us, even eternal life,” in its completest and fullest sense.

So the Book is balanced again. There is no conflict. Both concepts are correct. We have “eternal life” when we are born again to a new relationship in Jesus Christ. Even though the old nature lives on, and we find it still warring against the “new life” in Christ, yet we know that the spiritual life we now seek to nourish and make strong is the true life of God in us, the incipient Eternal Life of the Kingdom. And when at last he comes in glory to bring God’s will and ways to Earth, we know that those who are truly living in Him

will receive the fullness of life from Him - the life of God Himself. For in seeking for “glory, and honour, and immortality,” they will receive that which embraces all these things; the full knowledge of God, the Father, and of His Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is Life Eternal.

## APPENDIX

The following quotations from orthodox theologians will illustrate that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the human “soul” is not a biblical doctrine but one that has been adopted from Greek philosophical sources:

Dr F.S.Bennett, Dean of Chester, in a book published 1929 entitled “The Resurrection of the Dead” writes -

“No doctrine of the natural immortality of a part of the human organism, called the soul, has any right of place within the precinct of revealed Christian truth. It is a philosophic doctrine or theory, older than Christianity, often very ingeniously sustained and as often very effectively contested.”

Bishop Gore in his book on “The Epistle to the Romans” writes as follows:

“Careful attention to the origin of the doctrine of the necessary immortality or indestructibility of each human soul... will probably convince us that it is no part of the original Christian message. It was rather a speculation of Platonism taking possession of the Church.”

In 1945 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York set up a Commission on Evangelism which published a report entitled “Towards the Conversion of England.” In dealing with the Christian teaching about immortality this Report states:

“The idea of the inherent indestructibility of the human soul (or consciousness) owes its origin to Greek, not to Bible sources. The central theme of the New Testament is eternal life, not for anybody and everybody but for believers in Christ as risen from the dead.”

Such comments as these, from well known Christian scholars, could be multiplied but these will suffice to demonstrate that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has no place in biblical Christian teaching.

Len Richardson

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Comments on the above article by Len Richardson will be very welcome.

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## A WARNING FOR THESE LATTER DAYS

Despite what other people believe and teach on the subject of salvation from the legal position of Sin and Death, we who have been falsely accused of not believing that Jesus came in the identical physical flesh and blood of the descendants of Adam and well known as Nazarene’s as distinct from creeds based on the corrupted doctrines of men uninspired of God, base our faith on He who was called a Nazarene because He was the central figure in God’s plan of the Creation, Adam being a type of the natural order out of which would emerge the Spiritual order. “First that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual” - 1 Corinthians 15:46.

So then, what God said to Abraham recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 makes us aware of that important central figure which God mentioned in the garden of Eden, "The Seed of the woman" explained by the apostle Paul as Christ Jesus the only begotten Son of God through the overshadowing of His power upon the womb of the virgin Mary.

Back then to God's promise to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Consider this; How can all the families of the earth be blessed in Abraham if they are not his descendants after the flesh? Even John the Baptist could see that natural descendants of Abraham were not necessarily "in Abraham" as he declared to those serpent-minded people who came to him on the banks of the Jordan river, "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father for God is able of these very stones to raise children unto Abraham." We know John had been sent of God to prepare for that very purpose, to prepare the way for His Son and To prove that if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, a revelation to the apostle Paul of the mystery that had been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel. (Ephesians 3:1-11). "In thee through Jesus Christ shall all the families of the earth (Jew and Gentile) be blessed" (Galatians 3:26-29).

Read Ezekiel chapter 34 in the light of what Jesus said to the false shepherds of His day, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," not directly addressing them but through the woman of Canaan requesting Him to heal her daughter. He had already instructed His disciples not to go in the way of the Gentiles and not to enter into any city of the Samaritans but go rather unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Their preaching was authorised by the miracles Jesus told them to perform in His name adding, that judgment would come upon those who rejected their preaching. (Matthew 10:1-15).

The calling out of Abraham to make of him a great nation does not exclude those people of great faith who preceded him. so apart from Paul's reference to the Gentiles of becoming fellow-heirs and of the same body (Christ Jesus), what was it that in other ages was not made known to the sons of men as revealed by His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit? Paul speaks of it as a mystery (secret) hid in God. Let us consider the facts. Where do we read in Genesis that due to his sin Adam became the subject of a dying nature? It is not there. He was created as such and if such had happened to him as happened to Abel's offering he would have surely died. So, when Paul says, "By man came death," he cannot be speaking of Adam's corruptible or dying nature for this came by his Creator not by man. If any believe otherwise they are not supported by Paul either in Romans or in 1 Corinthians, and by the way, it does not say in Genesis that natural death passed upon all men, it was only logical that all Adam's posterity would be reproduced in his nature, living souls subject to death by a physical law of creation (very good). God could not pass a sentence of natural death upon a man who was already capable of dying if not changed to a superior nature. But this does not deter people who boast in knowing the truth from quoting Paul's statement, "By man came death," as a fact of teaching natural death as the penalty upon Adam and passing upon all men. Thus natural death is their end as an unremitted penalty as a Mr. Fry expressed some years ago when faced with this error and false theory, "How can God be said to forgive and yet exact the full penalty? We have learned resurrection is not the answer but Redemption before death must be, as Abel showed in his more excellent sacrifice than Cain's.

We are informed that by faith Abel offered; and also that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It was evident Abel had learned about acceptable sacrifices involving the shedding of blood and associating therewith to put on the righteousness that cometh by faith in what he hoped for, and that which he hoped for was eternal life through the antitype of his offering, so that he being physically dead by Cain yet speaketh. (Hebrews 11:40).

What was it about Abel's blood of which the blood of sprinkling spake better things? Was it not that the life in the blood of Abel had been through Adam forfeited to the Law of Sin and Death but when by faith he offered and associated himself with the blood of the lamb, his life became unforfeited when Cain slew him and that unforfeited life cried unto God from the ground. Jesus also confirmed this when He reprimanded the Cain element of His generation. Luke 11:47-51, "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of

all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.” Of course he would not be referring to every person of that generation but those who rejected the words of God through the prophets and also Himself. This came to pass in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD70.

Since that time the persecution of believers in Christ and the rejection of Him by Jews in our own day of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel will be required, and especially those people who declare that He came in condemned nature and had to suffer on Calvary first for Himself and was unable to die for the people for whom He gave His life as a Ransom. Those leaders who teach their fellow members so great an error as the meaning of the Atoning sacrifice of Christ after so much correction of such false doctrines and suppression of the Truth, must realise that it will be required of them according to the measure of responsibility they profess. We do not ask for vengeance but justification for the Truth we preach and uphold which we find in those people who after many years come to true enlightenment and are prepared to hold fast the profession of Faith.

Jesus is coming to “the Israel of God” for their benefit, not to the State of Israel whose leaders rely on and use carnal weapons of destruction to defend what is not theirs.

May that day of His coming arrive soon to those who look for Him, no more as a Sin offering but unto Salvation and Eternal Life.

Brother Phil Parry  
14.10.2003

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## **Thy Kingdom Come**

*“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped, not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word. Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:25-27.*

Ever since Jesus taught His disciples to pray “Thy Kingdom come” there have been those who have expected Him to set up His Kingdom within their own lifetime. In Luke 19:11 we read that His own disciples expected His Kingdom there and then: “And as they heard these things, he added a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” The apostle Paul may also have expected Jesus early return when he wrote to the Thessalonians (1st letter, 4:15-17): “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

But Christianity was to take some unexpected turns during the next two millennia. Very early on superstitions were mixed with Christian truths and within a few hundred years the Church had reached rock bottom in their teaching of falsehoods and this in turn led eventually to many harlot daughters of the “Mother” Church, making weird and wonderful claims with all sorts of contradictory teachings in the name of Christianity. Some teachers denied that Jesus would return to this earth while others taught that we must make this world a suitably glorious place fit for Him to return to, thus adding to or taking away from Scripture or choosing those parts of Scripture which suited them and rejecting the parts which didn’t.

Within this diversity there have been some in all ages who have believed that Jesus will come again to establish His Kingdom, however the temptation to fix the date has been irresistible and suggested dates have regularly come and gone, especially so in the last 100 years. Such forecasts have proved fruitless and even counter productive to a firm faith in the Scriptures, for it has encouraged scoffers to pour ridicule upon the Word of God, and brings to mind 2 Peter 3:3 “Where is the promise of his coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning.”

But what of those who accept the Scriptures in all their fullness as the Word of God and acknowledge that “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” (Matthew 24:36).

The return of Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom may take a very short time but more pages of the Bible are devoted to this theme than to any other matter in the history of the world, so it is incumbent upon us to be mindful of the signs of the times and this requires our vigilance - “When ye see these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads, for your redemption (deliverance) draweth nigh.” But what are “these things”? Are they the world events we see today?

But let us first of all see how many “comings” of the Lord there may be. Some have suggested two and others say three.

To explain this briefly we turn to Matthew 25:31 where we read of the time: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him.” This apparently may not be His first “coming” for we find that the “holy angels” are none other than the saints as verified in 1 Thessalonians 4:14, “them also which sleep with Jesus will God bring with him” and again in Colossians 3:4 - “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Prior to this the saints have been resurrected to “meet the Lord in the air and so shall they ever be with the Lord.” We have two separate and distinct events here; the taking away of the elect to be with their Lord and the coming of the Lord with His elect to establish His kingdom. I believe there could be a significant interval of time between these occasions referred to as “The day of the Lord” in Zechariah 14:1, during which time God judges the nations, as Jesus suggested by His reference to the time of Noah and the time of Lot. Both Noah and Lot were taken away and protected from the judgments which followed and I believe it will be the same for the elect.

The other “coming” of the Lord as suggested by some is when Jesus reveals Himself to Israel during the time of these judgments to give the remnant of the people hope and encouragement knowing that the Lord is with them, or at least with the remnant that is left of them, at a very dark time. It may be here that the prophecy of Zechariah 13:6 will be fulfilled when “one will say to him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then shall he answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

There are so many pieces to this prophetic jig-saw that it is no wonder uncertainty lies over the order of events or how far we may be into these latter-day prophecies. For example, in the 1960's and 70's Lebanon became the Middle East's leading centre for finance, trade and tourism. The capital, Beirut, with a population of nearly 4,000,000 began rivalling London, New York and Hong Kong as a financial trade centre due to the vast wealth of the oil producing nations in the Middle East channelling much of their funds through the city. But then disaster struck; civil war devastated the country which led to interference from Syria and Israel. The Palestinian Liberation Organization moved from Jordan into Lebanon and Syria in 1970, and in 1974 the PLO, led by Yasser Arafat, was recognised by all Arab nations as the representative of all Palestinians. When Lebanon was devastated by war and became impoverished it seemed that Isaiah 33:9 & 10 was being fulfilled: “The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Basham and Carmel shake off their fruits. How literal this prophecy has been, but the next verse is remarkable for we are told - “Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.” Surely this three-fold declaration of action by Almighty God could mean nothing less than the end of Gentile times! But that was over thirty years ago and as the years passed by we had to stop and think again. There is more to happen in the Middle East before the end of Gentile times. Maybe we are too impatient and the prophecy “Now will I rise, saith the Lord, now will I be exalted... now will I lift myself up” is taking place before our very eyes.

But for now Jesus exhorts us to “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:42 & 44). While we can understand this “coming of the Lord” to refer to our falling asleep in the Lord when the next thing we shall know is the resurrection when the Lord has come, I believe it is meant primarily to refer to events surrounding His advent; to the events we should be looking for prior to His return - to the time of the end, as the time referred to by the angel to Daniel: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4.

This one prophecy alone tells of the present time, for of a certainty people are running to and fro in a fashion and with a frequency and over distances never dreamed of a few years ago; whilst knowledge has been increased dramatically in this age of “Information Technology.” The other day I visited my seven year old grandson’s school; a school of about three hundred children, and there are over fifty computers linked to the website to help further their education. What a vast wealth of knowledge to have on a child’s desk - an incredible amount of knowledge, in such depth, on every subject under the sun. And the availability, diversity and volume of knowledge is set to increase year on year. My grandson showed me how to use the computer, and some of the sorts of things he uses it for in class. But I digress.

Daniel 12:1 tells us that “At that time shall Michael the prince stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” And this I believe is when the resurrection of the righteous takes place. As Jesus promised in Luke 21:28, “And when these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads; for your redemption (or “deliverance” as *apolutrosis* is used in Hebrews 11:35) draweth nigh.” The next verse in Daniel seems to show that the resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked take place simultaneously but it is evident from Revelation 20:6 - “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power” - that we must separate the two resurrections even as Jesus divided Isaiah’s prophecy in Luke 4:18 to 21, (see Isaiah 61:1,2), and in this way we can see how the later revelation fills out earlier prophecies.

In our last Circular Letter, Brother Eric Cave reported on a lecture by Lance Lambert, a Jew converted to Christianity some 50 years ago. In his lecture Lance Lambert talks of the various “shakings” referred to in prophecy and my mind went back many years to a talk given to the Erdington Christadelphian ecclesia in which the speaker expressed his understanding of Ezekiel 37 where we read of the valley full of dry bones. In his view the scene envisaged in verse 7 - “there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone,” referred to the first world war, the outcome of which allowed the Jews to go back to their long promised land. Then verse 8, “And when I beheld, lo, the sinew and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them,” this scene the speaker believed referred to the second world war out of which circumstances arose making possible the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948, but as yet there is no “breath in them.” The prophet continues: “And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.” Israel as a nation today has no ‘spirit’ life in them so I believe this is to take place when the nation of Israel is converted and brought back to God - the God of Abraham, the friend of God. Today we are waiting for the fulfilment of verse 10 - “So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” Is this the prophecy of Zechariah 13:6 being fulfilled, when Jesus appears to them? Perhaps so. Ezekiel 38 seems to confirm it for here we are told that God will gather all nations together to battle against Jerusalem such as we read in verses 19 to 23: “For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall and every wall shall fall to the ground...” It appears this wrath of God will come in response to the invasion of Israel by “Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.”

For many years “Gog” was thought to represent the Communist powers headed by Russia as the threat to the Middle East but today it seems more likely to represent the Muslim powers who are becoming an increasing threat through terrorism in their opposition to Israel and the Western powers. Islam’s adherents claim Abraham to their fathers but do not see Allah as a gracious God but rather they see forgiveness as weakness and revenge as right. The contrast between Jacob and Esau! Malachi 1:2,3, “I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou love us? is not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord: Yet I

loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom (the descendants of Esau) saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel” This could not apply to any time in history but this situation is developing before our very eyes!

Again in Zechariah 12:1-4, we read of Jerusalem - “Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it...” verse 10.

This is again repeated and added to in Zechariah 14:2-9, “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled, and the women ravished: and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle...”

“As when he fought in the day of battle” refers to the time of Joshua when the sun stood still, and this we read of in Joshua 10:1-14; the Gibeonites had tricked Israel into making a league with them and when five kings made war against the Gibeonites for making a league with Israel rather than choosing to fight against her, Israel, though having been deceived by the Gibeonites, nevertheless honoured the league she made with them and went to their rescue. Verse 12 - “Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Ammonites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, “Sun, stand still upon Gibeon; and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon.” And the sun stood still and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies... So the sun stood still... about a whole day...”

Next we read in Zechariah 14:4, “And his feet shall stand that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem... and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst...” Verse 6 is reminiscent of Joshua’s day for we read, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light...” And then in verse 8 we see the kingdom established for we read, “and it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea... and the Lord shall be king over all the earth.”

As I said earlier there are many events prophesied which relate to this time that it is indeed very difficult to be sure how they all fit together, but I believe the outline above gives a fairly good framework into which we can fit other prophecies. For example we can see how Isaiah 10:20 may be placed about the time Jesus reveals Himself on the mount of Olives - “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.”

James adds more to this picture in Acts 15:16,17 in which he quotes from Amos 9:11,12 where we read, “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”

Turning now to Jesus, where in Matthew 24:14-30, He tells us, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come... Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe him not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect...” Has this time come yet? It may be argued that it has for there are many false teachers, some making great claims and many are deceived. But Jesus assures His disciples that “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together,” (Matthew 24:28).

O! How many wonderful prophecies there are, but we will quote but one or two to finish:

Joel 3:16 - "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

And in Haggai 2:6,7 we read, "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

Peace at last!

And when we read of mountains and hills in prophecy we know we can think of government and rulers as in Isaiah 2:1-22, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.-..

Again; Isaiah 51:11, "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

"Surely I come quickly" said Jesus. "Even so come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Russell Gregory