

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 230

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Editorial

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings.

Jewish people, as their scriptures and history reveal were prepared in a way that no other nation was to expect a saviour or deliverer. The Jewish people were to be ‘the sacred School of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life for all mankind’. Though Jesus’ mission was primarily to His own people, it was of vital importance that they should be prepared to share the good news with the Gentile world.

The parable of the Good Samaritan, in answer to the question “Who is my neighbour?” is of great significance to the propagation of the gospel to the world. The priest and the Levite represent the closed attitude in the ecclesiastical system but it was the foreigner who behaved like a neighbour. How much more should the true Israelite behave like a neighbour to his Samaritan cousins, rather than practice apartheid towards foreigners.

When Jesus cleared the Temple area of the merchants buying and selling, with the words “Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.” Only Mark includes the important words “for all Nations.” It is Luke, however, possibly an early Gentile convert, who brings out the destiny of the Gentiles within the purpose of God. Luke records the words of Simeon at the presentation in the Temple, that the child Jesus is to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” as well as to be “the glory of Israel his people.”

Both Matthew and Luke record the words of Jesus: “You will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the Kingdom of God.” Luke also records Jesus as explaining the purpose of his crucifixion and resurrection, “that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

The practical, ritual and social difficulties of extending the membership of the hitherto Jewish movement to Gentiles were faced and largely solved by the Apostle Paul and his attitude to the Gentiles sprang from his own conversion, experience, and direct commission as the Apostle to the Gentiles. The Apostles Peter and Barnabas were intellectually convinced that there could be no distinction among them

between Jew and Gentile, but they wavered under heavy barrage of criticism by Jews in Jerusalem. The end of Paul's letter to the Galatians shows how tense things were between the two main parties within the followers of Jesus, those followers who like Paul had been born and bred Jews, felt that one could not be a Christian without also being a Jew. Paul defended integration as a vital principle and it maybe that his change of travelling and preaching partner from Barnabas the Cypriot to the Roman citizen Silas strengthened his hand. Paul's beautiful statement of 'justification by faith' in the letter to the Romans explains his reasons. "For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved." The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows His riches upon all who call upon him. For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

Paul is careful to emphasize the part of his own people in God's plan of salvation and the debt owed to them by the Gentiles. "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles... but if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the riches of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root but the root that supports you... You have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree."

So we see that God is merciful to all not willing that any should perish and making it plain that there is hope for all be they Jew or Gentile. Peter was crystal-clear in his instructions to potential followers of Jesus: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him."

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

WORSHIP, INCLUDING PRAYER, CONSIDERED IN SEVERAL ASPECTS.

WHEN practised, for the love of the subject, prayer is the most powerful agency for bringing about a close resemblance between the worshipper and the being worshipped. If this law be admitted, it will follow that, the morals of people will, in a great measure, reflect the morals of their gods. This would, of course, place those nations commonly called Christian nations on a much higher level in the scale of morality than those who serve gods like unto beasts, and birds, and creeping things. This principle, however, only applies to the earnest worshippers among any people, its accuracy cannot be judged of from the point of view of the indifferent either among Pagan or Christian communities.

When the effect of heathen worship is considered, the wisdom of its strict prohibition by the Almighty is clearly manifest. The morals of the worshipper must reflect the morals of his god; and where the god cannot properly be said to possess a moral character, that negation of such character will become conspicuous in the votaries. In whatever quarter we look upon this subject the principle of assimilation, is sustained.

The extreme indolence and languor of the Orientals may be traced to the character of their deities. The river and flower worshippers of the east desire to become insensibly mingled with the drops they adore or transmuted to the form and essence of their lily gods. While in the manners of the hardy children of the north is reflected that unrest and love of blood characteristic of the gods they serve. According to Medhurst and other writers the doctrine of assimilation is understood and enforced among the Chinese Buddhists. "Think of Buddha and you will be transformed into Buddha. If men pray to Buddha and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays and not the mind."

This maxim may be truly applied to Christians so-called. If men do not become like God it is because they do not understand Him to whom they pray, or do not pray to Him from the heart. To be transformed into His moral image they must pray to Him with the heart and with the understanding also.

The Egyptians, to whose religion we have elsewhere alluded, adored birds and beasts of various sorts, and also creeping things. These are to be seen in groups of revolting association in their arts and sculptures. And as they were the patterns for Egyptian guidance there was no vice of which mankind is capable that these people did not practise. The prophet Ezekiel has a graphic passage on the subject in his eighth chapter.

“And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall; and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, with every man his censor in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chamber of his imagery? For they say the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth.” (Ezekiel 8:11, 12).

This was an exhibition of the brute adoration of Egypt, to which Israel so often turned back in their hearts. According to Diodorus, the walls of the chambers built round the tombs of the kings of Egypt were covered, with paintings of birds, beasts, and all manner of reptiles. Such were the gods to whom the Levites paid their devotion, and burned incense in the secret chambers. The custom of offering prayer to these creatures soon produced a resemblance to them in their natural habits, and man, who was created in the image of God, become fit society for the beasts of the field.

The worship of Adonis is another example of the demoralizing influence of wrongly directed devotion. Adonis was a favourite god at Alexandria in Egypt, and as much, admired by the Hebrews as the Egyptians. At Alexandria there were magnificent gardens dedicated to this god, called the gardens of Adonis. It would not become these pages to rehearse the details of the high days of the god Adonis. Suffice it to say that the worship of this mythical personage in Syria was a means of corrupting the daughters of Zion. Adonis, who was supposed to spend part of the year on earth and part in heaven, in the society of Venus and Proserpine, respectively, was believed to have been killed by a wound from a boar, and the annual reddening of the river named after him in Syria, was supposed to be in commemoration of the tragic occurrence. On this occasion a festival was celebrated. The daughters of Israel gave themselves up to an agony of lamentation at the loss of Adonis, but the latter part of the festival was signalized by unbounded joy at the imaginary recovery of the lost god. It is related that the damsels of Syria were, on these occasions, as lavish of their love as of their tears. Here was literal conformity to the life of their god.

The names of the days of the week carry our minds back to the hero-worship of our rude forefathers. Old Thor, the Scandinavian god, was adored as the smasher or mauler of his enemies: the weapon he used being called Mjolnir, that is, a hammer, or more literally, a smasher or mauler. The ardent worship of such a savage monster effectually branded his devotees with the horrid lineaments of their god. Old Thor's worshippers revelled in scenes of rapine and of blood. What there was of kindness in their nature was almost totally effaced, and they resembled bloodhounds rather than men. Even self-destruction was rendered popular by such gods; and it came to be thought almost disgraceful to die peacefully in bed. In a word, the lines of Pope fairly picture the majority of heathen deities : -

Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust; Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust.

Paul's description of the original manners of the Corinthian disciples refreshes our memories with their forms of worship. “Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind.” These were Corinthian citizens; natives of that city which was said to be “the eye of Greece,” such were the hideous hues of light flashed forth from this “eye” for the illumination of the Grecian body politic and religious. The state of things sketched by Paul was fostered at Corinth, and in fact in all Greece, by the nature of the national worship. The most sacred persons in Corinth were prostitutes; and no small part of the revenue was the proceeds of sacred debauchery.

Rome was no better than Corinth. Indeed, until the Pagan worship was abolished it waxed worse and worse. Some of the philosophers of those countries have rebuked the popular religious services in language which confirms the statement just made. "How great," exclaimed Seneca, "is the madness of men! They lisp the most abominable prayers, and if a man is found listening they are silent, what a man ought not to hear they do not blush to relate to the gods. If any one considers what things they do, and to what things they subject themselves, instead of decency, he will find indecency, instead of the honourable, the unworthy, instead of the rational, the insane." On the influence of heathenism the following extract is from Tholuck:-

"We should naturally suppose, that among so great a variety of gods, of religious actions, of sacred vows, at least some better feeling of the heart must have been excited; that at least some truly pious sentiment would have been awakened. But when we consider the character of this superstition, and the testimony of contemporaneous writers, such does not appear to have been the fact. Petronius' history of that period furnishes evidence that temples were frequented, altars crowned, and prayers offered to the gods, in order that they might render nights of unnatural lusts agreeable; that they might favour acts of poisoning, that they might cause robberies, and other crimes to prosper."

Seeing it is a universal fact that the traits of the beings worshipped are reflected upon the worshippers, it follows that, the more perfect the understanding, and the more intense the sympathy, the more exact will be the likeness to the original. When we come to consider the Christian portrait, it is that we realize the vital application and bearing of this deduction. As our minds become more and more enlightened upon the subject of divine justice, goodness, and mercy, the disposition is farther removed, not only from open and secret acts of cruelty and of wrong; but also from all the minor practices of severity of judgment, of selfish display, of vanity, and want of paternal consideration. To express the same sentiment in the language of Scripture, we must have on the whole armour of God. We must put on Godlikeness. This covering consists of a variety of parts, each suited to that portion of the figure for which it was designed. A partial investiture will reveal to the observant eye some spot of nakedness, the warrior will, in other words, be imperfectly equipped.

A correct understanding of the value of every Christian virtue will lead to a sense of our own native nakedness, and produce a corresponding feeling of need for divine covering. This, however, is only attainable by discerning the true character of Him whose righteousness we desire to put on. Righteousness means a system of right. Jesus said to His disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

It is especially important that, as earnest prayer is the most potent engine of worship for changing the moral man, it should be directed aright. We have not seen God, and can only judge of Him through His works in nature and through His revealed will. The value therefore of a knowledge of these, more particularly the Word, cannot be over-rated. It is not that the commands of God are so abstruse as to limit a good understanding of them to the few, it is rather the danger of negligence of that which is easy of apprehension, that produces serious defects in the Christian character.

If we pray fervently for what we ought not, or omit to pray for what we ought, the result will be much the same. For example, if a man habitually prays for the overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, and neglects to pray for kings and persons in authority, the mind of that man only delights in the prospect of a universal war, and becomes hardened towards all rulers and governors, as persons not worthy of any consideration on the part of either God or man.

The application of this in many ways is plain to be seen; and while a man may habitually go through the forms of worship and even increase in a knowledge of divine things, his heart may, after all, be left as hard as a stone, and his disposition but faintly reflect the coldness of stern untempered justice. Let him neglect to pray for his brethren, and he will never feel any real interest in their present or future happiness; let him neglect to pray for the sick, very soon he fails to understand the trials of bodily affliction; let him neglect to pray for daily bread, and by and by he will not see the finger of God in the seed time and harvest. In a word he will degenerate into the luke-warmness of the Laodicean, and at last be amazed to find himself rejected by the Spirit.

We conclude with the quotation of several portions of the Word on the subject of prayer, which shew us how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray for.

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” - Ecclesiastes 5:2.

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him” - Matthew 6:7, 8.

“When thou prayest, thou shall not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: Verily they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” - Matthew 6:5,6.

“Men ought always to pray and not to faint. Be ye therefore sober and pray without ceasing with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance, and continuing instant in prayer.” - Luke 18 :1, 1 Peter 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18, Romans 12:12.

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.” - Philippians 4:6.

“Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.” - James 5:13

“Call upon the Lord in the day of trouble; pour out thy heart before Him; and unto God commit thy cause.” - Psalm 55:15, Psalm 62:8, Job 5:8.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for let not that man that wavereth, think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” - James 1:5, 6. 7:6, 7.

“Pray one for another that ye may be healed; for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” - James 5:16.

“If a man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall pray for it.” - 1 John 5:16.

“Let supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, especially for king’s, and all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” - 1 Timothy 2:1, 2. 3.

“Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” – Matthew. 5:44.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; seek the peace of the city where ye live, and pray unto the Lord for it – Psalm 122:6, Jeremiah 29:7.

Edward Turney

“God Hath Shown Me” - St Peter, Acts 10 Can You Say The Same?

As I sit and meditate certain things come to mind such as the account of Peter’s vision of a sheet let down from heaven by its four corners containing all manner of four footed beasts and creeping things which were legally by the Law of Moses unclean yet all were flesh and blood by creation and physical nature. On account of the voice from Heaven three times, Peter said “Nay Lord for I have not eaten anything common or unclean.” Why then was it now permissible to kill and eat?

The answer is that the Law of Moses had been fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ as the Apostle John said, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”

When Jesus cleansed the lepers the Mosaic Law was in operation and Jesus respected it, “Go, show yourselves to the Priest and offer for your cleansing that which Moses commanded as a testimony.” The Virgin Mary did the same but the physical nature of the lepers, neither that of Mary was changed from what it was before the cleansing. Those who believe the doctrine of sinful condemned flesh should begin to take notice.

Peter said, “God hath showed me that I should call no man common or unclean” yet certain people have been doing it of Jesus for over a hundred years, how then can a man who dies under his own penalty of condemnation be said to have sacrificed himself for others under the same penalty?

Condemned flesh is a teaching foreign to the Bible. Paul does not teach it in Romans chapter 7; he talks of himself in the past tense unconverted to Christ.

Augustine and others whom I know, like to make it an excuse for their shortcomings yet Jesus of the same nature as St Paul was sinless to the end. Edward Turney believed and taught this so what of the false accusers of his day and at the present time? In Galatians 3:22 Paul says, “The scripture hath concluded all under sin” but this does not mean all are sinners for Paul also says of some that they are concluded righteous, he also says that the scripture teaches this. It is time those people who boast of knowing “The Truth” should have sought and found this in the scriptures and explain it but we know it is all of God to reveal it. Romans 3:9, “We have before proved...” said St Paul.

From the time of righteous Abel it has been revealed in the scriptures and rituals of the Law to Calvary, all involving the shedding of blood which commenced with that covering for Adam’s sin which was provisional for the probationary period until he died a natural death relative to his created nature when he could be termed legally justified and morally justified if he had died faithful unto that death.

From Eden to Gethsemane the covering provided for Adam and Eve had been recognised by faith, how else could it be said that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain? Even the ground was cursed from which Cain brought his offering and perhaps he was too proud to ask Abel for a lamb or ignored what Abel had been taught. As the wise man in Proverbs said “There is a way that seemeth right to a man but the way thereof are the ways of death.”

What death? Even the righteous in Christ die natural deaths. Comprehend?

Love in Jesus, Phil Parry.

“Christendom Astray” Summary

In recent correspondence I had occasion to comment on the Summary at the end of Robert Roberts “Christendom Astray.” These are my findings:-

1. “The Scriptures are to be read in their natural sense, except where natural fitness and necessity determine a metaphorical or symbolical construction.”

Comment: Agreed.

2. “The understanding of the Old Testament necessary to the understanding of the New.”

Comment: Agreed.

3. “Man mortal, and made of the dust of the ground.”

Comment: If we use the common understanding of “mortal,” then I could agree. But the Bible does not use “mortal” in this way; “Mortal” is not synonymous with “corruptible.” Man is corruptible as is all creation, whereas scripture uses ‘mortal’ as a legal term - not physical.

Older dictionaries contain the word “mortalise” which means “to make mortal.” Adam was made mortal (using the legal sense) when he transgressed God’s commandment, but there was no change in his physical make-up.

Man is reckoned as mortal when he recognises his position “in Adam” and he realises he is under sentence of death for sin, i.e. he finds himself “under condemnation.” The unenlightened are corruptible but not mortal, as it is knowledge of God’s law of sin and death that makes a person mortal. While natural death, or the common death to which we are all subject, is not the wages of sin, the second death is the wages of sin and the unenlightened do not suffer this but perish as do the beast of the field.

4a. “The life of man not himself, but the power which enables him to exist, in the same way as the life of any animal sustains that animal in being.”

Comment: If the writer means that ‘life’ is one thing and ‘character’ is another, then we would agree.

4b. “It is the very same life that is possessed by the beasts of the field.”

Comment: There seems little point to Robert Roberts’ statement. Life is something which scientists have never been able to explain. The principles operating all natural life may well be the same. While both man and beast possess natural life, it is an assumption to claim it to be “the very same life.” There is also the legal aspect to consider. Why did God chose to make the life of one animal legally “clean” for the purpose of sacrifice and the life of another legally “unclean”? Why was it that the sacrifice of bulls and goats could not take away sin while the natural life of Jesus which He laid down in sacrifice did so?

4c. “Man in death in a state of non-existence for the time being, requiring resurrection and judgment to determine his future destiny.”

Comment: This is not true; it is not Bible teaching. Man’s destiny is determined during his lifetime, not after resurrection. The first resurrection is to eternal life when Jesus comes. Those who are to suffer the second death are raised a thousand years later - at the end of the Millennium.

5. “Immortality a state of incorruptible and deathless bodily existence, developed by resurrection, and attainable only by the righteous, at the second appearing of Jesus Christ on earth.”

Comment: A physical bodily existence as we experience in this life is nowhere stated to be necessary in immortality. While “this corruptible must put on incorruption,” it is no longer the natural body such as we have in this life which is constantly being renewed cell by cell all our life-time.

6. “The wicked will be put out of existence for ever, by the infliction of the “second death” at the judgment.”

Comment: No. This statement is not true. Only those who have known the gospel and turned from it will suffer the second death, for they have rejected God’s gracious offer of salvation. Those who never come to the knowledge of salvation will die as do the animals; they will not be raised to judgment regardless of how wicked they may have been in this life. See 7 below.

7. “Judgment to come will be dispensed only to the responsible classes of mankind, the rest never seeing the light of resurrection, but perishing for ever like beasts.”

Comment: Statements numbers 6 and 7 contradict one another - unless Robert Roberts supposes “the rest of

mankind” cannot be wicked! However, there are two responsible classes; of the first, Paul says “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ,” so when they come before His Judgment Seat it will be to receive their rewards – e.g. “to reign over one, five or ten cities.” The other responsible class are those who reject the Gospel.

8. “At the resurrection, the dead “come forth” in un-quickened natural body, to have it determined whether they are worthy of the gift of immortality, or deserving of consignment, after punishment, to corruption and death.”

Comment: No! Once again Robert Roberts has forsaken Bible teaching. “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power.” All who come forth at the first resurrection are therefore raised immortal.

9. “God is ONE POWER, the Increate Father, by whom all things have been created, dwelling in unapproachable light.”

Comment: Agreed. We agree where we are able, but ‘ONE POWER’ hardly seems the correct term for the inexhaustible and limitless power of God.

10. “Jesus Christ, the Son of God through the Holy Spirit’s begettal, of the Virgin Mary, raised up as a “last Adam,” to remove (by death and resurrection) the death brought by the first Adam.”

Comment: Agreed.

11. “The Spirit, the energy or power of the Father in heaven, effluent from His person and presence, filling universal space. The “Holy Spirit,” the same power wielded by direct and specific will on the part of the Father.”

Comment: Agreed.

Brother Russell Gregory.

PASSOVER 2008

Passover this year will be celebrated on 19th April.

The corresponding Jewish date will be 15 Nisan, commencing at sunset on Saturday, with the traditional feast eaten Saturday night.

Prior to that on 14 Nisan will be the “Day of Preparation,” on which all leaven is to be removed from Jewish homes, in readiness for the next seven days which is called the “Feast of Unleavened Bread.”

Saturday afternoon 14 Nisan is this year’s anniversary of the day on which the Passover lamb would have been slain. However today Jews no longer eat a Passover lamb at the feast because they don’t have a temple in which to kill the lamb. The Old Testament is very specific that the lamb can only be slain “*in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in.*” (Deuteronomy 16:-6) i.e. No temple - No Passover sacrifice!!!

When the temple veil was rent at the Crucifixion of Jesus, it could be clearly seen that there was no sign of the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. The temple was revealed as finally desolate - abandoned by God (Daniel 9:27; Luke 13:35). And that state of desolation was reinforced in AD70, when God removed even the temple itself, and “*not one stone was left upon another.*” (Matt 24:1).

The destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70 wasn’t just a fulfilment of an ancient prophecy by

Daniel. Of course it was that - but much, much more, it was God's final declaration that the old Mosaic Covenant had been superseded by the New Covenant, in which regular animal sacrifices have been replaced by the "*once for all time*" sacrifice of Jesus. (Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 10:10).

In 2008 the Jews will again celebrate Passover without a lamb. Sadly the vast majority will keep the feast in ignorance that they don't ever again need to kill a lamb since "*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Apostle Paul urges all who know that to: "*keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*" (1 Corinthians 5:8).

On Wednesday night, all over the world, Jews will again take time out to remember how God "passed over" their blood sprinkled homes, and spared them from the plague which slew all the firstborn of Egypt.

But that isn't really what it is about, is it? For those who will look beneath the surface, that ancient historical event was actually a prophecy about Jesus. It foretold even the date of His death and the time of day at which it would happen! And more important, it told us why it would happen and what it would achieve.

At Calvary Jesus accomplished a new Exodus! (See Luke 9:31 Interlinear Greek text).

If we have Repented we have purged our "homes" of the "leaven" of sin. His "sprinkled blood" has saved us from the death due for our sins. And we have been called out of "Egypt" to follow Him to the Promised Land.

Of course Christian discipleship is not about keeping feasts! Nevertheless we are encouraged to remember "Christ our Passover" in a simple ritual which reminds us that:

1. This (unleavened) bread represents the sinless body of Jesus, given for us on the cross. And 2. This cup represents the blood of our "Passover Lamb" shed for us as a token of the New Covenant in which God's laws will be written in our hearts and minds, and the penalty of our sins has been remitted, and our sins will be remembered no more. (Hebrews 10:16-18).

Spare thought on the Saturday morning and afternoon to remember that terrible suffering of the cross, endured for us. Spare a thought on the Saturday night to rejoice in the salvation it has made possible for us. And spare thought on the Sunday morning for the Exodus we have undertaken to journey with Jesus to the Promised Land - the everlasting kingdom of God!

Allon Maxwell.

Letter to Paul Billington, Editor of "The Bible Magazine.

In February I was sent a copy of the October 2007 Issue of "The Bible Magazine." This is a Christadelphian publication from Ontario, Canada and the Editor is Paul Billington. This issue is "A Special Edition Presenting Four Articles on The Battle For Europe: 200 years of The Apocalypse."

In such an issue the Editorial is, or should be, one may suppose, somewhat 'special' too and Paul entitles his editorial, "Our Fellowship." In it Paul Billington emphasises the importance of living as disciples of Jesus. But before I comment on this here is his editorial in full:-

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL

Our Fellowship

We live at a time of the world's history when all the indications are that - as the prophet expressed it, "the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Malachi 3:1). The question that follows is: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" (verse 2). The day of the Lord's coming is first, a day of judgment.

The apostle Peter has similar words when he says (1 Peter 4:17): "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

This event, which the prophetic word teaches us to expect now - now, when Israel is back in their Land, and when the nations of Europe are uniting their power and strength with the Beast - may come upon us at any hour. Who will abide it? Who shall stand in that frightful moment?

We are told that there will be many who imagine that they have fellowship with the Lord, but who will be told: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21- 23). He explains what knowing the Lord is (verse 21); it is doing the will of the Father who is in heaven. Jeremiah tells us what the Father's will involves; it is to "do judgment and justice... to judge the cause of the poor and needy... was not this to know me? saith the LORD" (22:15,16).

To know the Lord, in the Scriptural sense of the term, is what constitutes fellowship with him; it is to do as he would do - to act as he would act and to be motivated by the same principles. This is what the New Covenant involves. In Jeremiah 31 we learn (verse 33) that this is a process whereby God puts His laws in the inward parts and writes it upon the heart. Then he says: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Here is true fellowship - when the Father's laws and His principles are operating in a man or woman, and when as a consequence their iniquity and sin is forgiven.

There are many who claim this fellowship and even flatter themselves by imagining they are secure in it, yet live in denial of the very principles that should govern conduct towards others. Judgement, justice, the cause of the poor and needy are the characteristics already mentioned. In the same vein we read in Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." It may be noted that this is said in a context about the New Covenant (see verses 16-17), and also about "the blood of the covenant" (verses 1 and 29). The ideas are obviously connected.

The Pharisees were proud of their scrupulous observance of laws and traditions, but Jesus told them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matt. 23:23-24).

We must surely look to ourselves and ensure that we do not strain at gnats while swallowing camels whole! Let us remember the Lord's emphasis here - it is judgment, mercy and faith, those characteristics through which we may "know" the LORD and his fellowship. And it is in the exercise of these principles that we "consider one another, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." It is in our treatment of one another that our true condition is made manifest. Many of

the Lord's parables demonstrated this and it seems that if we want to abide the day of his coming we had better take notice of these things.

But the Lord's fellowship cannot be a mere humanism. There are "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" as given in Hebrews 6:1-2. There are the promises of God made unto the fathers (Act; 26:6,7) involving "the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12) and which embody "the hope" by which we are saved (Romans 8:24; Acts 28:20). Salvation, says Paul, is "through sanctification and belief of the Truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13), so there are certain Gospel facts that are to be believed, and all these things are to be understood as "the gospel of Christ" (Romans 1:16 etc.). This is believing in Christ - it means believing in all that he stands for as the basis upon which believers "all may be one," that is to say in the fellowship of the apostles (John 17:17-21; 1 John 1:3).

All this may be accurately and perfectly understood and believed - but if our treatment of fellow-servants is harsh, as in the case described in Matthew 24:48,49, what can we expect to receive at the hand of Christ? Perhaps verses 50 and 51 provide guidance here - as does Jeremiah 66:5.

In Luke 22 we read of the Lord's reference to drinking "of the fruit of the vine" which, we understand, represents - as he said - "the New Covenant in my blood" (compare verses 18 and 20). In Genesis 49:11 the fruit of the vine is termed the blood of grapes, and it is the fruit of the true vine (John 15:1) that is "the blood of the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20), or New Covenant (Luke 22:20) "shed for you." Those branches that are in real fellowship with the true vine bring forth much fruit - fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). This fruit is seen in our treatment of others, and it is by their fruits that ye shall know them (Matthew 7:20).

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE VOL. 20. ISSUE No. 4.

Letter to Paul Billington, dated 19th March 2008:-

Dear Paul,

I wish, if I may, to comment on your editorial in the special October edition of The Bible Magazine, and hope you do not feel it is too presumptuous of me to mention a matter of the utmost importance which I feel is lacking.

But let me first give a quick recap on some of your pointers to discipleship:-

Jesus explains that knowing God is "doing the will of my Father who is in heaven;" that "in the scriptural sense of the term, is what constitutes fellowship with Him - it is to do what He would do; to act as He would act and be motivated by the same principles. When the Father's laws and His principles are operating in a man or woman, and when as a consequence their iniquity and sins forgiven, here is true fellowship. So "let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works... exhorting one another: and so much more as ye see the day approaching." Let us remember the Lord's emphasis - it is judgment, mercy and faith, those characteristics through which we may "know" the LORD and His fellowship, and it is the exercise of these principles that we "consider one another, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." It is in our treatment of one another that our true condition is made manifest.

The Lord's fellowship also includes "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" (Hebrews 6:1-2; there are the promises of God made unto the fathers (Acts 26:6,7) involving the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and which embody "the hope" by which we are saved.

Salvation is through sanctification and belief of the truth" so there are certain gospel facts that are to be believed... this is believing in Christ... as the basis upon which believers "all may be one."

All this may be understood and believed but if our treatment of fellow-servants is harsh what can we expect to receive of Christ? Real fellowship with the true vine brings forth much fruit – fruits of the Spirit. This fruit is seen in our treatment of others and it is by their fruits that ye shall know them.”

Well, Paul, your editorial could have been written by any of a thousand Christian denominations and each would say “This is how to be saved.” There is nothing in all this that makes Christadelphians distinct from the others.

And if we narrow your article down and apply it to the 2 dozen or so Christadelphian divisions, each of whom sincerely hold these matters to be needful, then why aren't they united? Can they all be telling the Truth? Which one is telling the Truth - and why should we not wish to join it? “Is Christ divided?” 1 Corinthians 1:13. Are ye “the body of Christ”? 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Neither are Christadelphians divided over insignificant matters but over such matters as corrupting God's Word and defiling Jesus Christ.

Only once do you mention “Truth” and this is simply a quote in passing commenting “there are certain facts to be believed” which are “to be understood as the gospel.” Do the things you have mentioned show us the gospel? How important is the truth?

The conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well of Samaria brings out the lesson I wish to draw attention to. Jesus said to her, “The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

‘True worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth.’ This is where Jesus places the emphasis. Any why so? Because ‘the Father seeketh such to worship Him’! What greater calling could there be?

The importance of this is all too seldom brought into any discussions regarding the gospel. Christadelphians boast about their ‘Truth,’ of being “in the Truth” i.e. being a Christadelphian.

I am one who left the Christadelphians and some say that I “left the Truth.” But that is not so; I found the truth, and that is why I am writing to you as I do to so many Christadelphians.

Christadelphians have only to answer two questions according to the Scriptures – two questions put to Robert Roberts over one hundred years ago – two questions to which his reply was bluster and angry outbursts followed by a hurried change of subject – two questions put to many Christadelphian leaders ever since and never answered by any of them.

If these two questions are answered in accordance with Bible teaching then Christadelphians would not be claiming a defiled Christ as an unclean offering whose flesh was full of sin – “Sin ran in His blood” said Robert Roberts, blood which Jesus ‘sacrificed for Himself’ as well as for all mankind. What blasphemy is this – to call Jesus sacrifice a defiled offering? Here is the “camel” which Robert Roberts asked his followers to swallow whole!

All Christadelphians should ask themselves if their teachings are from the scriptures or are they doctrines of men handed down from their founding fathers, especially Robert Roberts?

Have Christadelphians in general understood the message of Jesus to the woman at the well of Samaria? Can they honestly claim they worship God in spirit and in truth? If they are not worshipping God in spirit and in truth are not they in danger of joining those rejected by Jesus?

Just these two questions have to be answered:

1st Is flesh full of sin?

2nd Was Jesus under Adam's sentence of death?

Are you able to answer “Yes” from the Bible and say you worship the Father in spirit and in truth?

With regard to flesh being full of sin, we say with Dr Thomas, “There is no evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely contrary. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his maker, but not in the nature of his organisation.” - Ambassador. March 1869

With regard to Jesus being “concluded under sin” we would point out that this ‘conclusion under sin’ applies only to those who have Adam as their father but Jesus had God as His Father. Jesus had no paternal descent from Adam as do all others.

These are serious matters if we are to worship God in spirit and in truth as He seeks. We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

With all hope in the Gospel, Russell Gregory

Exhortation

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Love and Greetings in Christ Jesus.

There are times when we are able to speak for the Truth to our orthodox friends and have regretted that there is no meeting nearby to which we could invite them to hear us further, or a suitable pamphlet free from contention and strife, stating a few facts of the Kingdom and the Name.

Why are all these facilities possessed by our Christadelphian friends? Of course, there are Christadelphian meetings where a good framework of God’s plan of salvation is told, but the filling in is all wrong; therefore we feel it safer to leave our friends with the message we have delivered trusting that their mind will be occupied by it.

No doubt some of our friends would soon be shocked at some of the things proclaimed. I met a friend a few days ago who was very emphatic upon the purity of Jesus – “He was no son of Adam, and was free from the claim of sin” – very cheering to find. But talking together further my friend believed too much. Jesus, in his opinion was from everlasting; He was present when it was said “Let us make man in our image” – words from the Holy Trinity; then in some mysterious way He became a babe.

Strange that men with big brains can yield to this – how much better if religious people paid more heed to what is written.

The Gospel is so simple and the preaching of the Cross appears to some to be foolishness, and much filthy gain is got out of it by making it a mystery.

“The Almighty immortal God hath died for men” are words of a hymn I used to sing when a Wesleyan Methodist.

Always the impossible for salvation, it is also impossible for salvation is we hold that Jesus had sins of His own in His flesh to atone for – how could He make both one and break down the middle wall of partition?

No unclean thing could enter the veil, and I take it that “sin in our flesh” is a state of uncleanness and a blemish.

As a Christadelphian I was always proud of the many well educated among us, such as doctors, professors, and scientists, kind and good men, but who were unable to give a reasonable and sensible talk upon the Sacrifice of Christ.

If Jesus had sin, if He suffered all the effects at Adam's transgression - even the death that passed upon all men - there was no sacrifice.

When they come to their true senses and see what they are losing, to be without a sacrifice and delete such errors of doctrine, we will have one big fraternal gathering.

With Fraternal Love. F. Skinner.

Letter to Edward Turney

New York, April 13th, 1874.

Mr. Edward Turney, Dear Brother,

My attention was directed to you and your work of late in the Christadelphian, up to January, 1874; but having learned from my friend and teacher, Dr. Thomas, to prove all things, and to hold fast the good, I have examined your lecture on the "Sacrifice of Christ," in the light of the Scriptures, with Bro. Roberts' reply, and Elpis Israel; the conclusion that I have come to is this, to take my stand on the subject of your lecture, believing it to be in harmony with the Scriptures; and if the honest expression of this opinion must lead my brethren to regard me as having departed from the faith so be it; but I trust that my kindness and affection for them, no less now than formerly, they may, through the grace of God, be willing to examine for themselves.

During my connection with the brethren Dr. Thomas was my friend, and now that he sleeps near to where I write, I still love his memory. On one occasion during his lifetime two of my brethren took exception to the Dr.'s teaching. I advised them, if they thought he was wrong, to overthrow him by argument, I then went to the Dr. and stated to him what I had done, and in the nobility of manhood he said I had done right, for he remarked, Brother Ennis, I want the truth. The Dr. never pretended to be infallible. I thank God that in His Good providence I heard him speak for years on "the deep things of God;" but that is no reason why I should now close my eyes and ears and say, I will stick to the Dr. "for better or for worse;" no, by the grace of God, I will stick to men only for good.

Hoping that the grace of God may rest on you, and that you will continue to declare the whole counsel of God, I remain, your Brother, in the hope.

William Ennis.

Some Middle East News Items

Israel's destruction. Iran's unceasing "sabre-rattling" has been stepped up a little. In a letter from an Iranian commander to the Hizbullah leader, he wrote, "I am convinced that with every passing day Hizbullah's might is increasing and in the near future, we will witness the disappearance of this cancerous growth Israel by means of the Hizbullah fighters' radiation [therapy]."

An associate of the guerrilla group, said that anyone who is interested should join the battle for Israel's destruction and that the tools used in the campaign would be different to those used in the past. He said that Israel should "expect a painful and rational response from an unexpected direction since the enemy broke all the rules."

Hassan Nasrallah, head of Hezbollah, said Israel's "disappearance" is an inevitable fact, "If Israel attacks Lebanon again we will wage war without any preconditions... The disappearance of Israel is an inevitable fact. It is an historical process in the region which will come to an end in several years."

The fight between Israel and Hamas continues with Hamas appealing to the world that it is being badly ill-treated by Israel's firm response to being attacked while they are targeting only civilian areas with their rocket attacks on Israel. Their talk, however, convinces few and a UN spokesman condemned the firing of these rockets: "We condemn absolutely the firing of these rockets. There's no justification for it. They are indiscriminate, there's no military target,"

The Mercaz HaRav massacre. On March 6, a Palestinian, resident of East Jerusalem, infiltrated the yeshiva (University) and began firing at students, killing eight and wounding at least 15 others before he was killed. The people directly affected by the terrorist attack are not just the students, their relatives and friends, but the much larger segment of the religious Zionist public who are extremely unhappy about this attack. Together with the grief and sorrow, there is angry talk about good and evil, about a religious war over the Holy Land. This attack was aimed particularly for the religious Zionist population, and the terrorists knew that their message could only be interpreted in one way. This is seen in terms of Ishmael and Isaac. Being messianic religious people, the religious Zionists are linking this attack to messianic prophecy. The religious Zionist radio stations have people talking about the attack in prophetic terms, such as Isaiah 59 verse 20, and, "a redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Settler radio talk-show hosts are interpreting this prophecy by saying that if the Jews don't stop Hamas, the Palestinians, Hizbullah and any other Islamic fundamentalists 'God will force the Jews to do it.'

Two-state settlement. The Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, said recently his government would make every effort to settle its long-standing differences with the Palestinians, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. "We are absolutely determined to make a giant step forward so that we will be able to conclude once and for all this historic conflict between the Palestinian people and the people of Israel."

Part of this deal will have to include the dividing of Jerusalem, leaving Tel Aviv as Israel's Capital.

It is widely accepted that Jerusalem will be divided and it is no longer a question of whether, but when and how. Already a security barrier cuts off some parts of the city; there are a quarter of a million Arabs in east Jerusalem in neighbourhoods where no Jews visit. Also the Jewish majority is shrinking as many move away, complaining the city is too poor, too Orthodox and too Arab. In a few years there could be a Palestinian mayor!

"Nuclear Umbrella." It may seem strange that some Middle Eastern countries are looking to Israel for protection. However, these countries are concerned that if Iran acquires a nuclear bomb then Gulf States and others would be threatened by radical Islam and forced to appeal to Israel to ensure their safety under a "nuclear umbrella." Another reason why some Gulf States are "friendly" towards Israel is because they wish to improve their standing with the US. Communicating with Israel is in fact a way of communicating with the US, especially as they are concerned about Iran's nuclear ambition.

And in the meantime, these countries are expecting or perhaps hoping, Israel will "take out" Iran's nuclear facilities as they did in Iraq in 1981.

Palestinians 'return' to Israel. The Palestinian Authority is planning to mark Israel's 60th anniversary by calling on all Palestinians living abroad to converge on Israel by land, sea and air.

The plan is designed to implement the United Nations Resolution 194 regarding the refugees. Article 11 of the resolution says that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law, should be made good by the authorities responsible."

This action is clearly aimed at embarrassing Israel during the anniversary celebrations by highlighting the issue of the "right of return" for the refugees. Entitled "The Initiative of Return and Coexistence," the plan suggests that the PA has abandoned a two-state solution in favour of one state where all Arabs and Jews would live together. The Palestinians, backed by all those who believe in peace, coexistence, human rights

and the UN resolutions, are called upon to recruit all their energies to return to their homeland and live with the Jews in peace and security. “Fulfilling the right of return is a human, moral and legal will that can’t be denied by the Jews or the international community.”

This plan is backed by many PA leaders in Ramallah; it calls on all Israelis to welcome the Palestinians “who will be returning to live together with them in the land of peace.” The plan calls on the refugees to return to Israel on May 14, 2008 with their suitcases and tents so that they could settle in their former villages and towns. The refugees are also requested to carry UN flags upon their return and to be equipped with their UNRWA-issued ID cards. The Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees are requested to facilitate the return of the refugees by opening their borders and allowing them through toward Israel. The plan specifically refers to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, whose governments are asked to provide logistic support to allow the refugees to carry out their mission. Palestinian refugees living in the US, EU, Canada and Latin America are requested to use their foreign passports to fly to Ben-Gurion Airport from May 14-16. The plan calls for the Palestinians to hire dozens of boats flying UN flags that will converge on Israeli ports simultaneously. To ensure international backing, the plan calls to invite world leaders, the UN secretary-general, journalists and legal experts from around the world to declare their support for the Palestinians’ “right of return.” The Palestinians, in return, would promise to practice their right peacefully and to denounce terror and violence. Arab governments are requested to provide both financial and political backing for the initiative. The plan stresses that the Palestinians can no longer expect to achieve the “right of return” at the negotiating table with Israel. “We must take matters into our own hands,” it states. “Negotiations, slogans and UN resolutions are not going to bring us our rights.”

Israel’s confidence. The Israeli Defence Force remains confident it is able to withstand any onslaught, yet their greatest worry at present seems to be the possibility of Hamas encouraging tens of thousands of Gazan civilians to break through the security fence into Israel as they did into Egypt in January. During the breach in the security fence last January between Egypt and Gaza, many Al-Qaida members managed to infiltrate into the Gaza Strip, also Hamas members who had been training in Syria and Iran were able to return, and with them came copious amounts of weaponry.

Israel now fears that there will be a major attempt to break through the security fence from Gaza into Israel, encouraged and helped by Hamas; not in order to smuggle in arms nor to help its members to return to Gaza but to cause chaos. Tens of thousands of Gazan citizens could end up in Israel within a few days and should this coincide with the PA plan for the “right of return” of Palestinians in mid-May, Israel will beset by major logistical problems.

Luke 21:25-28, “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

(1) **“Sun, Moon and Stars” – Israel.** For this compare Jacob’s response to Joseph’s dream in **Genesis 37:9-10**, “And he (Joseph) dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”

(2) **“Perplexity” Greek – ἀπορία - ‘no way out.’** This is surely the present situation, not only in the Middle East but in all the world.

The Principles of the Hamas are stated in their Charter.

The following are a few highlights:

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”

“The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up.”

“There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours.”

“After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.”

Hizbullah Statement of Purpose

Hizbullah is an Islamic freedom fighting movement founded after the Israeli military seizure of Lebanon in 1982, which resulted in immediate formation of the Islamic resistance units for the liberation of the occupied territories and for the expulsion of the aggressive Israelis forces.

In addition to shouldering the burden of resisting the Israelis occupation as it is stated by the international Bill of Human Rights, Hizbullah is also concerned about the presentation of Islam which addresses the mind, and reasons. Hizbullah is concerned about presenting Islam that is confident of its fundamentals, its highly civilized understanding of Man, life and the universe; Islam as being self-assured about its capability to achieve the basis of right and justice. We are anxious to present Islam as being open hearted to all nations their various political and cultural trends and their numerous experiences, away from subjection or bewilderment. We are anxious to present Islam as being the guardian for human rights defining choices, adopting convictions and expressing them socially. We opt for the formation of political pressure in education, pedagogy, medical case and other social benefits announced in the Bill of Human Rights. We are anxious to define the priorities for our cultural project that utilizes persuasiveness and polarization through the civilized and the human methods confirmed by the Bill of the Human Rights. Away from evidence force, and coercion. We are anxious to offer a model of performance in struggling targeting the enemy that represents a challenge for the existence of the whole nation along with its regimes and people. We also circumvent conflicts that do not serve the main aim, fighting the enemy, or that could create discord at the front, which is to be unified around the common interests. The hope is to rid of the pressuring threats practised by the foreign Zionist entity which has been thrust upon the Islamic and the Arab contemporary nation. It should be clear that the kind of Islam we want is a civilized endeavour that rejects injustice, humiliation, slavery, subjugation, colonialism and blackmail while we stretch out our arms for communication among nations on the basis of mutual respect. The Islam we mean is the religion that never accepts control or delegation by others for the sake of manipulating the rights and the interests of the nation. The Islam we mean is the religion that recommends communication among civilization and rejects divisive collision between those civilizations. An Islam that believes in cultural communication among nations and refuses setting up barriers and embargos and sees that it is our right to remove those barriers by the diplomatic means, however, when others intend to launch wars against it, Hizbullah finds it a natural right to defend itself representing the supporters and their achievements .

Islam that we understand is a message that aims at establishing justice, security, peace and rights for all people no matter what nation, race or religion they belong. We don't have any complex toward others, but

we feel the responsibility toward them, to make them understand the essence of our religion away from obligation and fanaticism.

We don't seek the application of Islam by force or violence but by peaceful political action, which gives the opportunity for the majority in any society to adopt or reject it. If Islam becomes the choice of the majority then we will apply it, if not, we will continue to coexist and discuss till we reach correct beliefs.

We hereby affirm that our Islam rejects violence as a method to gain Power, and this should be the formula for the non-Islamists as well.

Hizbullah Press Office, March 20, 1998. Lebanon

From an Internet source:

Saddam's Dam

The surge of US troops in Baghdad is succeeding but deeper structural problems continue to plague the American presence in Iraq. The country's largest dam, 40 kilometres northwest of Mosul, near the Turkish border, spectacularly symbolizes this predicament.

Just after occupying Iraq in April 2003, a report found that Mosul Dam's foundation was "leaking like a sieve and ready to collapse." A more recent report from the US Army Corps of Engineers concludes that "The dam is judged to have an unacceptable annual failure probability." More explicitly, the corps finds the current probability of failure to be "exceptionally high." A senior aid worker calls the dam "a time bomb waiting to go off."

Mosul Dam, formerly known as Saddam Dam (Arabic: *Sadd Saddam*) is in danger of collapse. That's because the dam was built on unstable bedrock of gypsum that requires a constant infusion of grout to prevent the foundation from eroding and the giant earthen wall from collapsing. Over the years, engineers have pumped into the foundation more than 50,000 tons of a bentonite, cement, water, and air mixture. As the *Washington Post* explains, "Twenty-four clanging machines churn 24 hours a day to pump grout deep into the dam's base. And sinkholes form periodically as the gypsum dissolves beneath the structure." Despite these efforts, the dam's condition continues to deteriorate, raising the prospect of its complete collapse. Were this to happen with a reservoir full of water, predicts *Engineering News-Record*, "as much as 12.5 billion cubic meters of water pooled behind the 3.2 km-long earth-filled impoundment [would go] thundering down the Tigris River Valley toward Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq. The wave behind the 110 meter-high crest would take about two hours to reach the city of 1.7 million." In addition, parts of Baghdad (population 7 million) would come under 5 meters of water.

THE ARMY Corps estimates the flood would kill a half-million people immediately, while the aftershocks, such as power outage and drought, would kill many more. (Not coincidentally, Iraq was the site of Noah's Ark). It would likely be the largest human-induced single loss of life in history. Many Iraqi officials, unfortunately, exhibit a cavalier attitude toward these dangers, further exacerbating the problem. They reject as unnecessary, for example, the Army Corps recommendation to build a second dam downstream as a back-up. Yet, were a catastrophic failure to take place, who would be blamed for the unprecedented loss of life? Americans, of course. And understandably so, for the Bush administration took upon itself the overhauling of Iraqi life, including the Mosul Dam. Specifically, the US taxpayer funded attempts to shore it up by with improved grouting, at a cost of \$27 million. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction has, however, judged these efforts mismanaged and ineffective. Massive Iraqi deaths would surely spawn conspiracy theories about American malevolence, inspiring epic rage against the US government and creating a deep sense of guilt among Americans themselves. Yet, this blame and remorse would be entirely misplaced. Saudi and other Arab aid - not US monies - funded what was originally called the "Saddam Dam." A German-Italian consortium headed by Hochtief Aktiengesellschaft built the \$1.5 billion structure in 1981-84. It had a primarily political goal, to bolster Saddam Hussein's regime during the Iran-Iraq war. The dam, in other words, had nothing to do with the United States - not in funding,

construction, or purpose. Nonetheless, misbegotten American policy has made it an American headache. Mosul's dam replicates a myriad of lesser problems in Iraqi life that have landed in the lap of Americans (and, to a much lesser extent, their coalition partners), such as provisioning fuel and electricity, working schools and hospitals, a fair political and legal system, and an environment secure from terrorism.

This shouldering of responsibility for Iraq's domestic life has harmed both Americans and Iraqis. It yokes Americans with unwanted and unnecessary loss of life, financial obligations, and political burdens. For Iraqis, as the dam example suggests, it encourages irresponsibility with potentially ruinous consequences.

The Crude Oil Reserve 8 Times Bigger **than Saudi Arabia's**

While oil demand grows higher by the day, supplies are in a constant state of flux...

The Middle East's tinder is constantly catching fire, and the other major crude oil players are either unfriendly (like Venezuela and Nigeria) or simply running out of oil (like Mexico and the North Sea region).

But Alberta, Canada's oil sands, once too costly for crude oil refineries to process, have suddenly become a veritable black gold mine.

- The cost of refining crude oil from tar sands has dropped from \$29.63 a barrel to \$13.21 – and continues to fall as oil production ramps up.
- Canada's sands contain up to 2.5 trillion barrels of oil – that's more crude oil reserves than every OPEC country combined.
- With the razor-thin gap between supply and demand – and the volatility of producing nations not priced in – the crude oil price is an undervalued commodity at \$90+ a barrel.

Editor's comment: These vast oil fields are most easily accessible during the cold Canadian winter when transport can cross frozen lakes and each year new 'roads' have to be 'reconstructed.' The cost in human lives is high yet drivers, being paid extremely high salaries, know the risks and are still prepared to take the chance.

ALABASTER BOXES of HUMAN SYMPATHY

Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness. Speak approving, cheering words, while their ears can hear them and - while their hearts can be thrilled and made happier by them. The kind things you mean to say, say before they go. The flowers you mean to send to brighten and sweeten their homes, send before they go. If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my dead body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way.