

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 242

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EDITORIAL

Dear Brothers & Sisters & Friends,

Loving greetings. When we read the story of the judge Samuel the thing that strikes one most about it is the extraordinary nature of his birth and childhood. His mother Hannah had longed for a child but she did as she had promised and gave him, when still an infant, to be brought up by priests and from then on only saw him once a year to bring him a coat she had made for him.

As a child Samuel evidently helped with the religious services. Twice during one night Samuel thought he heard the voice of the aging high priest Eli and went to him to see what he wanted, but was sent back to bed. The third time this happened Eli realized that it was in fact the Lord calling to Samuel so he told the boy to answer “Speak Lord for thy servant hears.” When Samuel did this, the Lord told him that Eli and his household would suffer for the misdeeds of his two sons who were corrupt. Strangely this also happened to Samuel for his two sons, whom he had appointed as judges, were corrupt in that they took bribes and perverted justice. This was when Samuel was old and it led to Israel insisting that they have a king. Samuel warned against this, telling the people that a king would take their sons as soldiers and their daughters as servants: he would exact tithes from their herds and produce and confiscate their best lands for his own use. The elders of Israel were not put off by this wise lecture and so by a series of lots, the choice narrowed to the tribe of Benjamin, and finally fell on Saul the son of Kish.

From the beginning of Saul's reign, his relations with Samuel were strained. Both were obviously men of unusual strength and character. Saul had difficulty with depression and dark moods, and jealousy also seems to have been a problem for him. As king the moment he deviated from what Samuel told him to do the prophet turned fiercely upon him and rejected him. It was a one sided quarrel. Saul was strong and courageous in battle against his people's enemies, but he was cowed by Samuel's wrath and stood in awe of Samuel's claim to speak for God and he did not argue or resist when attacked by the prophet. Maybe it was this experience with Samuel that made Saul so jealous of David. Perhaps he saw in David a similar closeness to God and did not want to be dominated again by another person of the same type and calibre. Saul certainly became jealous of David's exploits and his resulting popularity. The affection he saw between Jonathan and David probably didn't help. As always in life, family life particularly, and also in the wider

world, even in politics, personal relations and personal animosity have a great effect on decisions that are made and events that ensue.

David married Saul's daughter but the moody king allowed his jealousy to get the better of him and when he tried to kill David, David fled to Ramah and took refuge with Samuel. When messengers failed to bring David back Saul went himself, but this did not heal the breach between the king and the prophet. The aged Samuel died and was buried at Ramah and was mourned by all Israel.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:5-6).

Love to all. Helen Brady.

BORN AGAIN

Some find difficulty in reconciling the plain statements of Scriptures pointing to the fact that believers have Eternal Life as a present possession, such as John 3:36, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”; 6:47, & 54, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life... “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” See also John 17:3, 1 John 3:15, 5:11, 5:13, 5:20, and others which declare it to be a future attainment; this seeming inconsistency can best be comprehended by allowing the natural order of the birth process to enlighten us to that which is spiritual.

In John 3:5, Jesus tells Nicodemus that “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” This is usually taken to mean a belief and baptism, but a close look at the following verse - “that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit” - suggests literally of the latter as of the former, we do know that Baptism, preceded by understanding and belief of the Gospel, as well as a change of nature are necessary before we can inherit the future Kingdom of God, seeing that flesh and blood cannot do so, it would seem then that in verse 5 Jesus is speaking of a beginning and ending of a birth process and in as much as in the natural order we have no power to bring about our own begetting so it is in the spiritual order.

James 1:18 reads “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” Christ Himself became the First-fruit or First-born from the dead - Revelation 1:5, having first been “born of the flesh” of Mary, though literally begotten by the Holy Spirit, and so (the only begotten in that sense) of God, though God has many spiritually begotten sons-

1 Peter 1:3-5 and 23, the word here translated “born” (*anagennao*) in the Authorized Version is “begotten” in the original. See Emphatic Diaglott and Revised Version, as in other references, where conversion is alluded to. John 1:13 (born, *gennao*, of the will of God), 1 John 2:29 (born, *gennao*, of God), 3:9 (no one born, *gennao*, of God commits sin), 4:7 (He who loves is born, *gennao*, of God), 5:1 (everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born, *gennao*, of God), 5:4 (Whatever is born, *gennao*, of God), 5:18 (anyone born of God does not sin), whereas when actual birth is alluded to as in John 3:3-8 (born anew; born of the flesh; born of the spirit; born again - *gennao* in each case), the word is properly translated “born.” The A.V. of the Bible is misleading here as it is in some other places.

The period of gestation in the natural order which is a time of development of the new life as yet hidden in the womb, but bringing hope and expectation that in the fullness of time a normal human being will come forth, so we may see a counterpart of that which is spiritual, if the Seed-word regarding Christ be planted in “good ground” it will develop as we “grow in grace and knowledge as comprehended in such expressions as “Christ in us as a hope of glory,” “The hidden man of the heart,” “The inward man,” “we have the mind of Christ,” or a mind that understands Christ. “Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.” Our probation is a time of trial and testing, and chastisement for our own good, but if we have the true faith and keep it to the end our spirit birth is sure, just as the unborn foetus in the womb in the natural order is the child of its parents, so believers are now children of God by faith in Christ. The believer is now, during this probationary period

working out his own salvation by keeping faith in Him whatever opposition and trial he may have to face, “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,” who for the joy set before him (of bringing many sons unto glory) endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God as High Priest and Mediator on behalf of the Saints in the forgiveness of sins repented of, to purify a people for Himself, zealous of good works, those of proving our faith as examples in Abraham’s offering up of Isaac (James 2:21-24), thus signifying his belief that God would provide Himself a Lamb, as Jesus said “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad;” also the good works of loving one’s neighbour as oneself as seen in James 2:1-20, the whole briefly comprehended in loving God first and neighbour as self; these works extending into the future as the Bride of Christ an help “meet” or “fit” for Him in His future government of the world.

It is evident that as John records in chapter 12 verses 23 and 24 that Jesus could have been glorified without dying (just as those saints will be who are alive at His coming), but He would have been alone, as Adam, the type would have been without an help. He therefore became that “grain of wheat” who willingly died in order to bring forth much fruit, the many sons to Life Eternal, God had declared regarding Adam that “it was not good for man to dwell alone.” The New Testament reveals him to be as type of Christ so the likeness

between the “deep sleep” required for the creation of a bride for Adam which must have caused some loss of blood from his side, for we read that God “closed up the flesh instead thereof” indicating that there was a literal severing of the flesh for the extraction of the rib, so with the antitype Christ the “second Adam” whose side was literally pierced and His Life blood shed to make it possible for His spiritual bride, the church, to be formed.

But to return to John 3, in answer to Nicodemus’ question, “How can these things be?” (i.e. in what way can a man be born when he is old, etc. and “from above”?). Jesus predicted that it would be made possible through the Cross revealing the incident in Numbers 21:9, of Moses “lifting up” the brass image of a serpent in the wilderness that the sinners of Israel may look thereon in faith and live as a type of Himself bearing the judgment due to Adam and his seed, He Himself being “seed of the woman,” holy from birth, harmless, undefiled and separate (by spiritual begetting) from sinners (in Adam) not being begotten by the will of the flesh but by the will of God. He was born free and unblemished in every way until “lifted up” on the Cross where the sin of the world was laid upon Him and He suffered the judicial death due to sinners.

“He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, with His stripes we are healed...” (Isaiah 53). How sad therefore it is to see this great act of self-sacrificing love explained in such terms as a “renunciation of His body prone by nature to sin;” He had to submit to a “ceremonial condemnation of His nature, a cutting off of fleshly desires” etc.

Human nature was never condemned, but sin, which is transgression of God’s law. Compare the Image of Numbers 21:9 with the likeness of Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do in that it (the law) was weak through the flesh (being legally dead in Adamic bondage), God did by sending His own Son (flesh belonging to God) in the likeness of Sin’s flesh (or flesh belonging to Sin, the slave owner), and for (or by an offering for) sin, condemned sin (while He was) in the flesh.” Jesus came in flesh that He might taste death (judicial) for every man, thus rendering powerless the Devil or sin personified as a slave owner, by Himself suffering the death due to sinners. He set them free, Hebrews 2:14-18, compare also with 2 Corinthians 5:21. for He (God) hath made Him (who knew no sin) to be a sin offering for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him and if we are truly in Christ by belief and obedience, His righteousness is imputed to us just as Adam’s sin was imputed to us when we learned by enlightenment of our own estranged position from God on account of being in Adam’s loins when he sinned. We must therefore in the symbol of baptism, die unto sin which Christ did literally for us, rising from the water to a newness, of life, a new creation of God. Those “born out of water” are pictured as newborn babes growing up into spiritual adulthood in this life but the Spirit Birth (incorruptibility) still awaits Christ’s coming for the faithful who will rise to meet Him “in the air,” those who sleep to wake in “His likeness” and the living “changed” in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Sister Evelyn Linggood

Casting of lots

In our last Circular Letter, at the end of the article entitled “A Few Thoughts on Prayer in The Old Testament”, I questioned whether or not the Apostle Peter had given God the opportunity of choosing neither of the two disciples put forward to take the place of Judas who had betrayed Jesus and then committed suicide. The story is told for us in Acts chapter 1 verses 15 to 26.

It had always seemed to me that the Apostle Paul, the one “born out of due time”, as he says of himself (1 Corinthians 15:8), was God’s choice.

In response to my thoughts, Brother Phil Parry draws attention to Matthew 16:19, where Jesus said to Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”; and we should note also that very soon after His resurrection Jesus came to where His disciples were assembled, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews and He came into their midst “And he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). For the next forty days Jesus taught the Apostles and then ascended into heaven.

It was shortly after Jesus ascension into heaven that Peter was with an assembly of about a hundred and twenty disciples gathered about him, when he addressed them saying, “Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus... For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take... And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:16-26).

In the above context who am I to doubt or question Peter’s authority in the matter?

Love in Jesus to all. Russell.

The Man Born Blind

A Christadelphian who has been studying our teaching concerning the Sacrifice of Christ raised a question which is of interest.

In his letter he quotes Jesus’ question to the scribes: “Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, ‘thy sins be forgiven thee’ or to say, ‘Arise and take up thy bed and walk’.” And he comments: “I have always previously thought that this passage meant that sickness and disease was the direct result of sin at the beginning. What do you think?”

When I wrote I said I thought these words of Jesus were intended, like many others of His questions, both to reveal and conceal, to make things plain to those who were willing to see, and to make them difficult for those who were wilfully blind. The power of healing which Jesus used was not an end in itself, otherwise He would have made it His main purpose to find and heal the sick wherever they were. It was a sign, evidence of His authority and origin, and He used it for that purpose. His power to heal was proof of His authority to forgive sins. Thus, when He was faced by hostile scribes it was immaterial whether He said, “Thy sins be forgiven,” or “Arise and Walk.” The words and the result of the one were no more difficult than of the other - but the effect of the healing was evident, whereas no one can see when a man’s sins are forgiven. On another occasion they asked Jesus, “Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was

born blind?” They also thought that sin was always the cause of disease. Jesus replied, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

I think that the chapter from which this passage comes (John 9) contains some of the very few instances in Scripture where there is an element of humour - the encounter between the man whose sight had been restored and the Pharisees. They knew that Jesus had healed the man, but they dare not face the meaning of it. They tried to find a loophole by questioning his parents, but they were wary – “He is of age - ask him.” Then they tried to overawe the man himself, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” (Does this attitude of the Pharisees remind you of anyone?). But the little man had a stout heart, and was not to be terrified by their pomposity, and used his commonsense. “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” After some further questioning and illogical reasoning they got sick of the whole thing and concluded, “As for this fellow we know not whence he is.” But the little man had not yet finished - another dash of cold commonsense. “Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.” Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings... With these and a few other biting cracks, which make as entertaining a bit of reading as there can be anywhere in literature, he showed that his mental eyes were as wide open as his literal eyes, and utterly exposed the foolish self-importance and arrogance of the Pharisees. Their last word put the finishing touch to their own defeat. “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?” And they cast him out.

Their descendants are with us today. In spite of what Jesus says they still tell us that we are altogether born in sins. And when they cannot stand up to logical reasoning and the evidence of commonsense, they follow the example of the Pharisees - and cast us out. Here is one of the gems of that chapter which is worth recalling again; “now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.” This is good enough proof for the poor blind, man that Jesus was not a sinner, and I vote Brothers and Sisters, that is good enough for us.

With Sincere and Affectionate Greetings,

Your Brother, Ernest Brady.

The Destroyer of The Devil

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” Hebrews 2:14).

Death is an effect of which sin or the transgression of God’s law is the cause. The removal of the effect from any transgressor does not of necessity remove the cause. The children of God referred to in the first clause of the above verse, in addition to being of flesh and blood, were related to the cause of death - him or that having the power of death is the devil or accuser. To vanquish an accuser, slanderer, or devil, it is necessary to illustrate and prove that the accusation or slander uttered by him, was without any proper foundation.

The slander uttered at the foundation of the world by the serpent, “Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and, evil” (Genesis 3:4), believed by Eve, and afterwards by Adam, was the cause of death in him and all his descendants.

The children of God were those who believed that God would show by a seed of the woman that the slander was a wicked insinuation against His character. So the apostle states that as they were flesh and blood descendants of him who believed the slander, Jesus likewise took part of the same, i.e., flesh and blood that through subjecting Himself to death He might vanquish the slander which had existed from the foundation of the world.

Some have supposed that flesh and blood is another name for sins but this cannot be the truth, as flesh and blood, or mankind, existed, before sin; neither is it correct to say that sin is another name for the devil, for the devil “sinneth from the beginning,” and it would be absurd to say that sin sinneth from the beginning.

Sin is an effect of which lust is the cause, and although lust exists in flesh and blood, it is not sin until it lusts after what God has forbidden. It is therefore sinful to say that either lust or desire is sin, or that flesh and blood is sin, or that any law made by the Almighty is sin, because all these were created by Him.

What, then, it may be asked, is that which required to be vanquished? Paul answers, it is the devil, accuser, or slanderer. John says the accuser sinneth from the beginning. The first accuser was the serpent which said, “Ye shall not surely die although you disobey God.” This one ‘died’ without redemption and therefore left no literal progeny, so that neither the serpent nor the serpent’s seed in the literal sense have sinned from the beginning.

The next accuser was the woman who was beguiled by the expectation of being like the gods or angels, which visited her and her husband and who in all probability had partaken of the tree forbidden to Adam and herself. Adam was not deceived, says Paul, and therefore he must have disobeyed with more deliberation than his wife. When charged with his crime he coolly accused the Almighty of giving him a wife which gave him and he did eat.

Thus the first man sinned and blamed God for giving him a wife that caused him to do it, and all Adam’s descendants that have yielded to their own lust have invariably accused the Almighty in one form or another.

Jesus Christ, who was in the flesh and blood of the accuser though not lineally descended from him, never obeyed his own lusts or desires in preference to the will of God, and therefore vanquished by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, that which was the cause of death in the first.

The cause of death being thus proved to belong exclusively to the lawless indulgence of the first man, and as Jesus Christ had never in the slightest degree yielded to such indulgence, even when subjected to temptation more severe, He magnified God’s law and proved that transgression was crime, and by His submission unto death, the Just for the unjust, He also proved His approval of the sentence of the death against the unjust as well as His gracious disposition to open up a way of deliverance. The cause being removed there can be no consequence or rather where there is no cause there is no consequence. Thus it is those who are in Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation.

Brother William Ellis.

Galatians 5:19-24.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

While we can harmonise this reference, the first thing we say to those who bring these verses up to prove their contention of the “physical fall of Adam”, there is nothing here to prove the changed flesh assumption.

Paul says there is One Flesh of men; first natural, which cannot be true if Adam’s nature was changed.

We see Adam and Eve break the simple Law given them with their supposed better nature which was different after they had sinned. The account is plain to any who wish to see that natural creation (whose seed was in itself) was the order. When the woman saw that the Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil was good for food, pleasant or a delight to the eyes, to be desired to make wise, she ate of it. This, in the words of John, is all that is in the world, the lust of the Eye, the lust of the Flesh and the pride of Life.

What was the difference between Cain and Abel? The one served God with this supposed “sinful” flesh; the other served himself.

We do not say literal flesh is good or bad. We know that man can be worse than the beast, as well as otherwise - the above is proof, but man, even at his best, is vanity.

In Romans 1, and Psalm 81, we see that God gave people up to their lusts, and saying they that do these things are worthy of death. We reap what we sow, and God is not deceived or unjust. “I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 14.23).

Take Jeremiah 35, where the prophet was told to go to the Rechabites and tell them to drink wine, they said, “we will drink no wine.” Thus they obeyed their father, “but this people hath not hearkened unto Me. They that sow to the flesh will reap corruption. Those that sow to the Spirit shall reap Life Eternal.”

Free Will is Choice. The same flesh that serves sin can serve righteousness (Romans 6). In other words, where your treasure is there is your heart. The good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Paul says those that sow to the flesh cannot enter the kingdom of God. He also said that “such were some of you, but ye are washed,” etc.

What we cannot understand is professing Christians saying they cannot do what they would like to; they say Paul, in Romans 7 proves in his case as well as in theirs. Read Dr. A. Clarke on it; he agrees with Dr. Thomas that Paul was speaking as an, unregenerated man, not doing the commandments God gives. They, in words, say,” throw out an hard man, harsh, stern, etc. Read “The Two sons of God”, pages 62 and 63.

Why do Jesus, Paul, and others, speak so plain and tell us to obey, to love, don't do this - do that, this ought not to have been, etc? While I have no room for monks, let us listen to Thomas A' Kempis, “What is the reason why some of the saints were so perfect and so given to meditation? Because they laboured to mortify all their earthly desires, and therefore, they could with their whole heart fix themselves upon God and be free from perturbation.” (2 Colossians 3:5).

We are too much led by our passions and too solicitous for transitory things. We seldom overcome any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a fervent desire to grow better every day. Therefore we remain cold and lukewarm in our religious life. Let us be honest with ourselves, not want earthly things as well as God - we cannot have the “penny and the bun.” Christ told those of His day that they kept the traditions of the Elders, and made of non-effect the word of God. They would fight might and main to do the one, but not the other.

Let us put our affections on things above, let the word of God richly dwell in us, let the Spirit lust against the flesh. Then if we are led by the Spirit we will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

There are plenty of people today, yea even drunkards, which will do a good turn for their neighbour; there are today a class of people who believe that you can have morals without religion. While this goodness counts for nothing regarding Eternity, God does even reward them in the natural. Many examples of this are in the scriptures. Abimelech, Egyptian's house, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, etc.; “they that bless thee I will bless, and those that curse thee I will curse.”

The parable of the Good Samaritan should be a lesson for those who profess Christ, and do nothing. “Out of thine own mouth thou shall be judged.”

Author unknown

The Federal principle

The First Principle of the Oracles of God.

All are agreed that according to Romans 5 alone, the posterity of Adam are all involved in the Sin of Adam, and in the Death Sentence incurred by him, on account of what is known as the “Federal Principle” being employed by God, but regarding the manner of its application there is a variety of opinions.

The ‘majority’ understand it to be visited upon us through our physical organism which, if such procedure were attempted by mankind, would bring down the righteous anger of every son upon the “Unjust Judge.” Moreover, they would realise in it the dastardly and horrible process of “killing by slow poisoning,” and again, the crown of sufferers would pounce upon the “Unjust Judge” and consider themselves “Justified” in putting him out of existence as positively unfit to live.

Shall we, then, accept such a horrible story in connection with the procedure of the Just God who “so loved” that He gave His “Own” Beloved Son to save the unfortunate trespasser from his merited punishment, even though He knew that he wilfully transgressed? Would it not be more consistent with the attributes of a Just God if He, on account of the Federal Principle under which we, the members, are accounted parts of the Federal Body of which Adam is the Federal Head, included us under the sentence of death for Adam’s sin when we became enlightened, and from which we can instantly become extricated by rendering obedience to the appointed form of doctrine for our participation in the redemption therefrom, effected typically in Eden, Antitypically on Calvary? (Genesis 3:21, Revelation 13:8, 1 Peter 1:18, Revelation 5:9.)

This understanding of it excuses the unenlightened, leaving them in the natural sphere, to die as do the beasts (Ecclesiastes 3:19) from physical exhaustion... and is decidedly a more just procedure than the “Slow Poisoning” assumption, is it not?

The reason for God introducing this Federal Principle seems to have been for the exercise of our faith in His promise to provide a Ransom Price (Genesis 22:8) and to incite our love toward Him for His merciful act and wonderful love toward Adam, but for which we had never come into existence at all, because had Adam been slain instead of the Lamb in Eden, we had perished in Adam.

Understanding and applying this Federal Principle in this manner shows plainly why only one random sacrifice was requisite to extricate the One Adam (ic) (body) from the effects of the One Sin committed in Eden, and why “without the shedding of (Christ’s) Blood” no remission - and reveals a perfectly Just and gracious God, a loving “Father,” and exonerates Him, also accounting for the One literal participant in the redemption effected thereby, and the many symbolical participations therein, does it not?

Personification of Sin

It seems evident that the language of personification was adopted to enable us more readily to perceive the absolute necessity for, and to understand, the scheme of redemption. Having become by transgression the “Servant” of, and sold under Sin, Adam became this sin’s possession. No provision for remission having been made in the Edenic Law, Adam could do nothing to obtain, and having become the lawful possession of another, there was no other honourable means whereby his release from this “Bondage” could be effected by “redemption” which necessitated that an equivalent be paid in Ransom.

How could this transaction be accomplished in harmony with the attributes of a Just God, other than by making provision whereby His Second Son could attain to a right Resurrection again? Having honourably secured this Son’s willing co-operation He then could honourably pay over to “Mr.” Sin the life “in the blood thereof” (Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:18,) of this Son as a Ransom to Redeem His brother, could He not?

“O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?”

Not a single soul of Adam’s race need have perished. “Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory.”

A. and L. Wilson

Exhortation

Our solemn duty is to worship God in spirit, for only spiritual worship can be acceptable to Him.

The first thing is to pray - to thank God for His great love - to ask that His blessing may rest on all we do; also to pray for one another. Do we really join in that prayer? Have our thanks for His goodness, and prayer for His blessing, been real or merely formal?

The next thing is to sing. Do we sing simply for the love of music, or with grace in our hearts unto the Lord? Then we read God's Word. Do we read it attentively; with a desire to learn; or parrot-like, just to get through the chapters? To read it with profit it is essential that our motive should be pure even to learn the mind and will of God. After reading comes the contribution. There is worship even in this, that is, if we contribute cheerfully in proportion to the extent God has blessed us and out of love for the interests of the truth. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Then comes the breaking of bread before which we give thanks. Do we discern in that bread the Lord's body which was broken for us? We naturally ask, Why was that body broken? When we remember that it was in order that we might attain unto eternal life, the warmest gratitude ought indeed to fill each breast. We then take the cup, having returned thanks for the out-poured blood of our Lord and Saviour which it represents to our hearts. If our thanks were not real, we indeed eat and drink unworthily. By constant attendance on this ordinance, our interest in the truth is kept up.

Absentment tends to promote disinclination to come until we keep away altogether. Let us never forget our serious responsibility thus to remember Him who has done so much for us.

The partaking of these emblems is followed by the singing of a hymn. Do we sing it with a love of God in our hearts? It is a mockery if we do not, and we had better not sing at all than that such should be the case. Then follows the exhortation. This needs to be done in the right spirit, not simply to make a fine speech to please one another. Let us earnestly attend to exhortations; we shall find them productive of happy results; we shall be strengthened thereby and manifesting a better spirit.

Brethren, we have need to thank God that we have been brought into such a grand position, having come to know God, whom to know is life eternal; become His adopted sons; closely allied to Christ through whom we inherit all things.

How blamelessly we ought to walk. We do well to examine ourselves that we may see wherein we are lacking. If we do this in a humble prayerful spirit, good cannot fail to come of it. Paul helps us in doing so, for he presents to us a "perfect man" in Christ. He does this in various ways. One aspect is that of a soldier in full armour (Ephesians 6:12-16). In his letter to the Colossians, 3:9:10, Paul tells each Brother that he has "put off the old man with his deeds," and has "put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The other proceeds to enumerate a beautiful spiritual dress of five garments (verse 12) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," to encourage in us that disposition which is ever ready to forgive, having even a yearning heart to forgive; not soon taking offence, but rather pitying those who have offended against us.

"Kindness" that is another garment; encouraging in us a disposition to the happiness of one another. "Humbleness," that is another; submission to God whether in health or in sickness, in riches or poverty. "Meekness," is also enjoined; softness of temper, not soon irritated by provocation.

We are apt to misunderstand each other. How needful that we should be ready to put the most favourable construction upon what others say and do. Let us not be suspicious of one another; but "longsuffering," - patient under injuries for a long time. If these things obtain with us, what is stated in the next verse will be sure to follow.

Five beautiful garments, but there is still another, "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfection."

Just let us fancy each Brother and Sister attired in this spiritual dress. What a happy and prosperous state of things would obtain; what peace and joy, and not only so, but how the truth would spread. Let us admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; let us do it with the love of God in our hearts.

“Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

Brother H. Farmer.

THE ATONEMENT

FOREWORD

A simple, straightforward and scriptural explanation of the Atonement which takes in all Bible facts and presents them fairly and in an easily understood way so that a child can see the truth of it.

John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” and the Apostle Paul, “we have before proved both Jew and Gentile that they are all under sin.” It is evident that Jesus did not take away the sins we still commit, and Paul’s words cannot apply to character because a person of moral goodness is as much “under sin” as the worst sinner. The truth is that the whole human family is estranged from God because of sin.

Adam was created at the beginning a man of flesh and blood with the same corruptible nature as all other living creatures. In order to develop character he was placed under a law requiring obedience. He transgressed and incurred the penalty of sin.

The account in Genesis is almost universally misunderstood and it is believed that sin made man corruptible and his eventual death the punishment. But what actually happened proves that this is not so. He had been warned that in the day he sinned he would surely die, yet he lived on for more than 900 years.

What is the explanation? Did God change His mind? If we look up all the other instances of the same expression as that in Genesis 2:17 (e.g. 1 Kings 2:37-42) we find that it implies an inflicted death on the day of the crime. Similarly, every instance of the punishment of presumptuous sin was a judicial execution (cf. Genesis 20:7). This is what Adam incurred but it is clear that he was not put to death; but how could he possibly escape if God was not to be untrue to His word? The explanation is the plan of redemption whereby Adam died in law, but under a typical sacrifice his life was spared - he was delivered as Isaac was when Abraham was about to kill him - and he lived to become the father of the human race. God did not change His mind, but He made it possible in His own wisdom to open to man the hope of regaining, by faith, what had been lost by disobedience.

In Romans 5:18,19 the Apostle Paul shows how God has chosen to regard all men as involved in the Sin of Adam. “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” They were not made sinners in the sense of being created evil, or obliged by their nature to become sinful; the meaning is that we are legally classified as sinners in a similar way to that which we are by law citizens of the country in which we are born. The sentence of death incurred by Adam ‘passes upon’ all his descendants, since all who share his life would have perished in him if he had been put to death on the day of his sin. So that Adam is not only the man from whom we are all descended, but he is also appointed the federal head of all who are under the reign of Sin. This is the relationship of being “in Adam” and its vital importance is because if we remain in it, that is, unredeemed, we are inescapably destined to receive the wages of sin.

Sin is literally the transgression of the law and one has to know that a law exists before, in justice, one can be held guilty under it, so that those who are ignorant of God and His purpose are not accountable. But sin is also personified as a king, or master, holding man in bondage, and the reason for this is given in Galatians 3:22, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

The meaning is that God has appointed a second federal head, Jesus Christ, and the only way we can demonstrate that we have the faith which will make us acceptable to God is to recognize that our relationship, by birth to the first Adam by which we are in bondage under sin, can only be changed by getting ourselves out of Adam and into Christ. To do this we have to believe and obey, dying in baptism a symbolic death to our former life and being re-born by faith as children of God.

Law is the basis of the Divine plan. It is God's will that we should not perish but have everlasting life, even though by our own efforts we cannot earn it. He wishes to be merciful and to show His love towards us, but He will not do so at the expense of the supremacy of law. So there is a double problem - to show mercy, and at the same time uphold a just law which must condemn sin - and it is solved in a wonderful way by the sacrifice of Christ.

Under the supreme law of a righteous God a man who is a sinner does not deserve to live, he has forfeited his life, which means that the death which came by sin is not so much a punishment as a debt. A sinner owes that which he cannot pay without perishing; he owes his life. The basis of the Atonement is that if someone else could be found with the means to pay the debt, and providing the supreme authority sanctions the transaction, the sinner might be free from his debt while at the same time the justness of the law is upheld. God brought Jesus into the world for this purpose.

When Jesus submitted Himself to the death of the Cross, He made Himself the sin-bearer, translating into reality the deliverance from the death foreshadowed in Eden when Adam was covered by skins of animals slain. His death was therefore an exact substitutionary sacrifice, not to appease the wrath of God by the infliction of undeserved punishment on the innocent in order that the guilty might escape; this would have been an injustice; but Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to the condemnation passed upon Him by wicked men, because He saw Himself as paying the price of their redemption. He was wholly good and innocent; there was no cause of death in Him, but what Jesus knew was that He alone could pay the price of their deliverance. Why He alone?

This brings us to the vital factor in The Atonement which God kept concealed from the beginning - the fact that the Redeemer was to be His own Son. Most Christians believe what is revealed in The Gospels about His origin but they do not understand its true significance.

Born of a woman, He was the same natural flesh and blood as all other men, but as He was begotten by the Holy Spirit His life was not a continuation of the Adam-life but a new life direct from God. He was therefore born outside the state of captivity, not under the reign of sin but free, and therefore in a position to purchase the release of those who were enslaved. Jesus said (Matthew 20:28) that He came to give His life a ransom (*lutron*) for many; the word *lutron* means a price paid. The apostle Paul also wrote (Galatians 4:5) that Christ was sent to redeem (*exagorazo*) and this word means to acquire out of the forum, in the same way as slaves were bought, or prisoners ransomed. So this is how Christ redeemed mankind. We have been purchased out of bondage, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a price. It is a figurative transaction, but it was completed by a literal price, the life of Jesus which He laid down for us on the Cross.

If Jesus had not proved Himself personally sinless, He could not have offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, because a sacrifice had to be perfect and unblemished before sin could be laid upon it. But, even though He had been sinless, if He had been the son of a human father it would have been impossible for Him to meet the legal claim of sin because his life would not have been His own to give; he would have been in the same hopeless condition as all in Adam.

Therefore, being the Son of God and having proved Himself obedient under temptation He was legally free and morally perfect. Though He could have claimed a kind of equality with His Father, he humbled

Himself (Philippians 2:5-8) and became obedient unto death, suffering what was due to sinners, giving Himself the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.,

The purpose of God in Christ is unique in history, in what it reveals of His mercy and love and in the logical perfection with which it meets man's needs, enlightens his mind and gives him hope. It spans the ages from the moment when God said "Let there be light" to the infinite future when He will declare "Behold, I make all things new." These are indeed things which even the angels desired to look into. Today they are open to us and they show the way to eternal life.

Ernest Brady.
(1978)

Crucified Through Weakness

2 Corinthians 13:4

There are those with the preconceived idea that this weakness applies to Jesus - that He was weak through having sinful flesh, which was only fit for destruction. This is taught by those who believe that because Jesus was made like unto His brethren (which is true - see Hebrews 2:17), they say He was a son of Adam and therefore under condemnation to die. This is based on the assumption that the fall of Adam was a physical one, and that his flesh was in some way changed, even though this has never been proven as it cannot be found in the Scriptures.

What we find taught in the Scriptures is that when Adam sinned his relationship to his Creator changed and therefore the only change that took place was a moral one; it was an estrangement from God. His flesh remained unchanged; it was just as good as God had created it.

With this understanding in mind we see that Jesus was not crucified through any weakness of His own, in fact we marvel at His great strength of character and His determination to do His Father's will whom He loved, and His unlimited love for us.

By a little searching of the scriptures we can see the true teaching, and so make the following observations: Jesus never brought sorrow upon Himself, yet He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3). And "Jesus wept" but not for Himself, so what was the weakness through which He was crucified?

He was crucified through our weakness; it was all for us as Isaiah 53 says, and not for Himself. He was made strong for us. Psalm 80:17 - "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." He was the "arm of the Lord" (John 12:38), extended through love - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). He, in love to God and us, willingly laid down His life for Adam and all in Adam. John 10:11 reads: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" and this is the price paid for our redemption, so that our release from law of sin and death is accomplished.

No one but Jesus could pay the price - the price He laid down was His life as He says again in John 10:15, "I lay down my life for the sheep" - as the purchase price of our redemption. Adam sold us to the power of sin as Paul tells us in Romans 7:14 but Jesus bought us back from that power so that death has no more dominion over us (Romans 6:9). Jesus was rich and became poor, that we poor ones might be made rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For 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"

While we were without strength (weak) in due time Christ died for the ungodly - Romans 5: 6-8, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous

man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Paul says, we are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ, we are weak, but ye are strong. To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. For my strength is made perfect in weakness... when I am weak, then am I strong. (See Corinthians chapter 12).

The people at the cross said He saved others and cried saying “if He is the Son of God let Him come down from the cross.” This is what they hoped to see. When He did not do as they wished, to them it was “proof” that He was not the Son of God.

What people, Jew and Gentile, think is weakness and foolishness is the power and strength of God. Christ said, “I lay down my life of myself. No man taketh it from Me.” He made Himself of no reputation, and took on the form of a servant, and made in the likeness of men, being found in fashion as a man. He humbled Himself and became obedient, unto death, even the death of the cross.

Is this humility “weakness”? Faith overcometh the world. It is recorded of Jesus that He set His face like a flint. (Isaiah 50:7). The joy that was set before Him, not only knowing of the Glory and Honour, but the tasting of death for all so as to bring many sons to Glory.

Author unknown

In the Flesh - or - In the Spirit

In his letter to the Romans the Apostle Paul shows how through the one transgression of Adam all were constituted sinners. They were not made sinners and neither were they made sinful, but were sold to “Sin” as their ‘Master’ which Paul personifies elsewhere as a slave-owner, or as one who reigns supreme. On the other hand Paul shows how through the righteousness of one, Jesus Christ, those who are faithful are constituted righteous. This does not make them righteous but they are reckoned to be righteous by the righteousness of Jesus being imputed to them.

We see then the two Federal Heads - Adam and Jesus Christ. Adam is the Head of all under the law of sin and death while Jesus Christ is the Head of all under Grace. Some contrasts between the two positions are shown below:-

Again, Paul shows these two contrasting positions in Romans 6:16 where he writes, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Let’s compare and contrast some of the things Paul has to say about these two positions:

IN ADAM IN THE FLESH

ROMANS

1:18 the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness

2:8,9 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil

IN CHRIST IN THE SPIRIT

ROMANS

1:16, the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;

2:7 who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

3:10-12 There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way.	4:7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.
5:10 When we were enemies	5:10 we shall be saved by His life.
5:12 By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men in whom (margin) all have sinned	5:12 Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
5:15 Through the offence of one many be dead	5:16 but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
5:16 Judgment was by one to condemnation	5:17 they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.
5:17 by one man's offence death reigned	5:18, by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life
5:18 by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation,	5:19 by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
5:19 by one man's disobedience many were made sinners	5:20 but grace did much more abound
5:20 the law entered that the offence might abound	5:21 even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.
5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death	8:5 but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.
8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;	8:6 but to be spiritually minded is life and peace
8:6 For to be carnally minded is death;	8:9 but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit
8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.	

The main emphasis in this article is to consider two verses - a) Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing", and, b) Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh". Both of these verses have been considered difficult to understand for one reason or another.

Sinful Flesh.

Let us first of all consider "sinful flesh" in Romans 8:3 were we read, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..." Here is the only occurrence of the phrase "sinful flesh" in the Bible and the important point to note is that it is no translation at all! It is not what Paul said! Yet it is almost always expressed this way or in similar fashion in the many versions of the Bible. But still it is wrong. The matter is important because of its far-reaching implications.

The Greek words are literally *sarx hamartia* which translates to 'of flesh of sin'. The adjective 'sinful' is not here in the Greek: it is a noun in the Greek genitive case, indicating possession, not an adjective indicating the quality of flesh. It is therefore, a question of possession – are we the possession of God or are we the possession of 'Sin' - the two 'possessors' mentioned in Romans 8:3.

We see therefore that the correct translation is “of flesh of sin”, but in English we would not say “the hat of John” but “John’s hat”, so for *sarx hamartia* we would say “sin’s flesh”, understanding it to be flesh belonging to sin as a master.

Paul has already used this idea in Romans 6:16, as quoted in our opening paragraph, where he says, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Here Paul is saying if we are the servants of sin then we are sin’s possession.

Let us be consistent in our understanding of Paul and not change “sin’s flesh” into “sinful flesh” as there is no such thing heard of in scripture.

Sin in the flesh.

For those of us who are convinced there is no such thing as “sinful flesh” we also reject the use of the term “sin in the flesh” to mean the same thing. Sin does not literally dwell in the flesh. While sin is abstract, the term is also used symbolically to denote a bond-master or slave owner, as one who pays wage (of death) to those who serve sin, but never can sin dwell in the flesh. Such an absurdity, like sinful flesh, is also foreign to scripture.

We ask, how are we to understand, the phrase, “His own Son... condemned sin in the flesh”? In answer to this we say that Jesus was put to death in the flesh and this is when He condemned sin, or as we read in 1 Peter 4:1, “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh...” Again 1 Peter 3:18 “For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

We find then that Jesus suffered for sins and condemned sin while He was in the flesh and this is what we understand Paul to mean in Romans 8:3. We would therefore suggest that the meaning in Paul’s words are given by saying ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh, and for sin, condemned sin while he was in the flesh’. This is consistent with everything Paul’s has to say regarding being ‘in Adam’ or being ‘in Christ’.

In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

Next we will turn to Romans 7:18, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing”. This reference has long been used to show that there is sin in the flesh or that we have sinful flesh and taken at face value it does support the idea, but there are problems with such a view and here we will look at some of them.

Let us look again at Romans 7:14 for it is central to understanding what follows in the rest of the chapter. In this verse we read, “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” and straightaway we see from Paul’s argument above that he was no longer “carnal, sold under sin” but had been bought with a price; he was now in Christ and no longer in Adam. Indeed the first point to make is that it is never said that a child of God is ‘sold under sin’ for this is the state from which he has been ‘purchased’ – saved by faith and baptism.

So how is it that we read of Paul in verse 14 - “I am carnal, sold under sin”?

Aorist.

The answer is that this section is written in the aorist tense, which tense is not used in the English language. How it is translated must be decided by the context.

Weymouth says that ‘Aorist’ means indefinite. Prof. Robertson wrote in his “Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research”, “The Greek Aorist and the English Past do not exactly correspond. The Greek Aorist covers much more ground than the English Past. The Greek Aorist is translatable into almost every English tense except the Imperfect. The Aorist is, strictly speaking timeless.”

While William Mounce's "Basics of Biblical Greek," and Eric Jay's "New Testament Greek Introductory Grammar," both say that the Greek Aorist tense, should usually be translated as a simple English past tense.

Perhaps we can gain a little more from an article written some years ago but I have no reference to give regarding it:-

"With respect to baptism, the verse that most clearly states that baptism accomplishes a change in relation to the jurisdiction of law is Romans 8:2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death." It was recently expounded in an Advocate article that the verb "hath made me free" is in the aorist tense, a way of distinguishing an action in the past that occurred only once from an action in the past that was recurrent or continuing. In the Greek language, one would not use the aorist tense to express the thought "the water cascaded over the falls" because it would be a continual thing. But one would use the aorist tense to express "The ocean liner Titanic sank in the North Atlantic." It was a one-time action.

The English language does not have an exactly equivalent tense that enables this distinction to be made.

The fact that the aorist tense is used in Romans 8:2 is important because it shows that there was a one-time action that brought about the freedom from the law of sin and death. That action can only be baptism into the death of Christ."

Enough has been said about the aorist tense to show what Paul was really saying in Romans 7. If we simply read this section in the past tense we can make much better sense of his meaning. Take verse 24 for example, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" makes better sense if we read "O, wretched man that I was! Who has delivered me from the body of this death?" Then thanking God he is free through Jesus, he continues with - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

So we next contrast what Paul writes in Romans 7:15 to 20 with Paul's behaviour as an Apostle who laboured more than all the others:-

Romans 7:15. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

And please remember "the Greek Aorist tense, should usually be translated as a simple English past tense."

While Paul the Apostle wrote: -

1 Corinthians 11:1,2, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you."

Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

2 Thessalonians 3:10, "night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?"

1 Corinthians 4:15,16, “in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”

Ephesians 5:1,2, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love,”

1 Thessalonians 1:6,7, “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.”

Philippians 2:19-20, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

I said earlier there were far reaching consequences in believing that sin dwelt in our flesh or that we have “sinful flesh.” It is quite wrong to take the words of Paul literally when he said no good thing dwelt in his flesh.

It is also a grievous mistake to teach that Jesus died for Himself because He had defiled flesh and for that reason there was no injustice in His crucifixion. Such perverted views deny the unbounded love of God. But sadly these false beliefs, which are more properly traditions and not Bible teachings, are still being forced on to believers from an early age, and if such beliefs are questioned or denied disfellowship is a consequence.

It grieves us to see such hardness of heart let alone to have to write in these terms. We have endeavoured for over 130 years to correct these teachings, and we are very thankful to report that individuals and small groups have from time to time had their eyes opened to true Bible teaching concerning the sacrifice of Jesus, and our relationship with Him through His amazing love for us. It is with great hope and sincerity that we present this article and look forward to your response.

Brother Russell Gregory

Foreknowledge

“And we all know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30.

“Whom he foreknew” - certain ones are special subjects of God’s foreknowledge “before they were born - marked off beforehand (predestined). For what? What destiny? “To be conformed to the image of His Son.” But there are two phases to this. 1). Conformity of character. 2). Conformity of nature. The first depends largely on ourselves, the second entirely on God.

Conformity of character is our responsibility. Paul omits this for the sake of his argument, to stress, not in the first place of works, but Grace. So there are four stages, three of which are gone. Predestinated, called, justified. The fourth is certain so far as God is concerned, so certain indeed, that the past tense is used. That depends on us; being morally free we make our “Calling and Election sure,” so it is obviously not sure.

J. B.

IT ISN'T PRACTICAL.

We are often told that our constant habit of calling attention to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign on the earth is not “practical” teaching; that, while it may be true, it cannot be of that practical importance which would put it in the front rank of truths.

We met with a little volume of essays the other day, published by one “Abdiel,” in 1834, in which this objection is very sensibly met by a series of quotations from the New Testament, showing the very practical use of this doctrine made by Christ and the apostles. We subjoin the quotations, with the introductory words of the essayist.

“I shall now, by way of showing the practical tendency of the second Advent, and the consequent importance of this truth to every Christian who desires edification, bring forward some of those testimonies, to which I adverted in the former paper, when I pledged myself to shew the use which the writers of the New Testament make of it.

We have already seen that they apply it, as the legitimate source of consolation, to those who mourn for the dead; ‘that they may not sorrow, as those who have no hope’ of seeing their friends return. We have likewise seen an apparent limitation of the reward to them that love his appearing; an application of the subject, which, if it be not to be insisted on to its full extent, is nevertheless calculated to awaken heart-searchings. In regard to those passages which remain, I shall, to avoid circumlocution, only quote them at length; so heading them, as to point out the evangelical duties and graces to which they call us, and consequently the practical use made of them.

As a Call to Repentance - “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ...” (Acts 3:19, 20).

To Love Christ - “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha;” which, being interpreted, is, “Let him be accursed, our Lord cometh” (1 Corinthians 16:22).

To Love one another “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love towards one another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you: to the end he may stablish your hearts un-blameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

To the mortification of earthly lusts - “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry...” (Colossians 3:4, 5).

“The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and unworldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; looking for that blessed hope [even], the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).

To general obedience and holiness - “For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27).

“And now, little children, abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28).

“We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2,3).

“Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

To Spirituality of mind – “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body...” (Philemon 3:20, 21).

To works of mercy – “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall divide them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matthew 25:31-36).

To watchfulness – “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh” (Matthew 24:42-44).

“Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh” (Matthew 25:13).

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching” (Luke 12:35-37).

“Behold I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame “(Revelation 16:15).

“But ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: ye are all the children of light and of the day: we are not of night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others: but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book “ (Revelation 22:7).

To patience and long-suffering – “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:7, 8).

“We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...” (2 Thessalonians 1:4-7).

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: for yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:36, 37).

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receiveth the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7, 8).

“Wherein (in the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time) ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much

more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6, 7).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (I Peter 4:12, 13).

To moderation and sobriety – “Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand” (Philippians 4:5).

“Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

To ministerial fidelity and diligence – “Who is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Matthew 24:46).

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

“I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things; and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:13, 14).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:1, 2).

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock: and when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Against censorious judgment – “therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come...” 1 Corinthians 4:5).

Next year - in Des Moines?

On September 15, 1825, Buffalo, New York was the site of a grand ceremony that might have changed the course of Jewish history. On that day in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, journalist and Democratic Party activist Mordecai Manuel Noah announced to a large crowd the creation of “the Jewish State of Ararat” on Grand Island in the Niagara River, near the US border with Canada.

Noah, an American Jew who wanted to provide “an asylum” for his persecuted brothers and sisters in Central and Eastern Europe, believed that the new colony - named after the mountain upon which Noah’s ark rested after the great flood - would provide that safe haven that world Jewry needed to survive. In the end, Noah’s vision did not translate into reality. All that is left of Ararat is its cornerstone. It is inscribed with the Hebrew words of the *Shema* prayer and now rests in Grand Island’s town hall as a curio to attract tourists.

Historians have not treated Mordecai Manuel Noah kindly, branding him a schemer and an egotist who dreamed dreams that bordered on the realm of insanity. Yet, let us remember that in the early 19th century,

the idea of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel was a fantasy. The Ottoman Turks controlled Palestine - there was no way that the Muslim empire was going to allow a Jewish state in its domain. Noah, as an American Jew, tried to do his best to find an answer to the suffering of Jews in the Old World. For him, the New World provided an answer. He was not a crackpot. He was a man ahead of his time. For him, living in America two centuries ago, Grand Island was the only option.

In July 2006, when the IDF was struggling to defeat Hizbullah terrorists in Lebanon, *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen referred to the State of Israel as an “honest mistake.” He argued that the creation of a Jewish State in the Arab and Islamic Middle East had produced “a century of warfare and terrorism.” In the wake of the recent Israeli war of self-defence in Gaza, more and more American Jews seem to be agreeing with Cohen’s assessment. While many American Jews remain supporters of Israel, Jews here are starting to abandon hope that Israel will be able to survive. They argue that the Jewish state is surrounded by enemies, that Israel’s Jews are a house divided, and that, perhaps, the creation of a modern Jewish state in the Land of Israel was not meant to be. They are starting to say that “Israel is a mistake” and that Judaism and the Jewish people would survive even if Israel were to be obliterated by Iranian nuclear weapons. Many years ago, a student in an adult education class that I taught at a local community college proposed that the Jewish state should not be in the Middle East, but in America’s Midwest. Would not a Jewish state in Iowa, located in a region far, far away from the hostile Arab and Islamic world of the Middle East, be the best location for a homeland for the Jewish people?

Perhaps, at the Passover Seder this year, I should conclude the festive meal with the cry of “Next Year in Des Moines!” Perhaps those who do not recognize the centrality and importance of Israel to the future of world Jewry are right. Perhaps we, as Jews, can go on even if Israel no longer exists. Perhaps we should forget who we are, the descendants of men and women who sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem, studied in the academies of Yavne and Tiberias, fought for independence in Modi’in and Betar against the Hellenists and the Romans. Perhaps we should discard the Hebrew Bible as our deed to the Land of Israel. Perhaps we should ignore all the archaeological evidence proving that the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel dates back 3,000 years. Let us forget the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Bar Kochba letters, the Western Wall, Masada. Let us forget that Jews have yearned for millennia in the Diaspora to be redeemed in the Promised Land. Let us abandon Hebrew as a living language, relegating it only to sacred texts that we do not understand except through English translation. Perhaps this form of mass amnesia is the answer. Forgetting who we are, where we came from, and forgetting 60 years of sacrifice, backbreaking work, heroism on the battlefield, Nobel Prize winners, economic success, the revival of Judaism in a Jewish homeland - for some Jews, this sort of amnesia seems to be the answer.

World Jewry will not survive the destruction of the State of Israel. The Jewish state is the religious, political and cultural centre of all Jews. The hope of the Jewish future is the hope of Israel, the people and the nation. Some American Jews argue that Jews have lived in the Diaspora for more than 2,000 years and will continue to do so whether Israel exists or not. At best, this argument is misguided. At worst, it is defeatist. With each passing day, we resemble more and more the spies in the Bible who demoralized the Israelites by claiming that the Land of Canaan could not be conquered.

Some American Jews are simply ignoring the realities of history. They forget that while Jews were persecuted in the medieval world, our people were never the victims of systematic mass murder and cultural repression. Genocide of the Jews is a modern phenomenon, the result of both traditional anti-Semitism and the dynamics of modern nationalism. Have we forgotten the disaster of the utter powerlessness of the Jews of Europe only 65 years ago? Furthermore, Jewish identity is both religious and national. Whether it was Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel in ancient times or Jewish self-government in Germany and Spain in the medieval period, Jewish identity was never based solely on religion. We, as a people, cannot survive if we forfeit either crucial element of our identity.

American Jews fool themselves if they truly believe that Judaism could survive another destruction and another exile from the Jewish homeland. There will be no more genocide of the Jews. There will be no more exile of the Jewish nation from the Land of Israel. This time, history will not repeat itself. The year 2009 is not the year 586 BCE or the year 70. Jews and Judaism in the 21st century would never recover from the destruction of the State of Israel.

I apologize to my fellow Americans in Iowa. I am sure your state is lovely and honourable. But it will never be the homeland of the Jewish nation. Forget Grand Island, Uganda, Argentina, Birobidjan and New Zealand. Jewish history began in the Land of Israel; our future as a nation is in the Land of Israel. Jews in the Diaspora, especially Jews living in America, can certainly play a vital and active role in the continuing drama of Jewish survival and continuity. There will always be a Jewish Diaspora - the State of Israel has not negated that reality. In the end, however, the future of the Jewish people will likely not be in Des Moines or New York or Los Angeles or Chicago or in my own Fort Lauderdale. The destiny of the Jews as a people - our future - will be played out in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

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Jude 24,25

Jude concludes his letter to faithful with praise,

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”