

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 247

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## Editorial

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends

Loving Greetings. When I first went to work at the age of fifteen, I met a girl who invited me to her church and the associated youth fellowship. I went and really enjoyed it, both the church and the social side it offered with many young people. I made friends there that are with me to this day. Two friends that I made at that time supported me unfailingly years later when my mother died and I was left alone.

My parents were very much criticized for allowing me to attend a church and its youth activities, but I have much reason to be glad they were as open minded as they were because of the great benefits it has brought me later in life.

In my time every school day began with a hymn and prayers from the church prayer book so I was familiar with some of its contents very early in my life before I began to attend church regularly in my teens. So when I started to attend Evensong with my friends I got to know the prayer book even better and to appreciate it even more. In those days Evensong was Bible based. It began with an open and collective confession of sins and shortcomings. "Confess your sins to one another." James 5 v 6. There were two Bible readings from the Old and New Testament; two psalms, one sung by the choir and the other by the congregation. Other hymns of course and prayers, also Mary's praise of her Lord on learning of the birth to come of Jesus, Luke 1 v 46. And Simeon's touching thanksgiving "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace....Luke 2 v 29. Then the Creed, which as the late Bro. Fred Pearce - who founded this Circular Letter last century - said in my hearing, was a perfect description of our faith, and he would be happy to go into any church to say it because it was true: -

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. And from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."

Perfect, a statement of faith in fact. A masterly summary of the Bible message, our belief and the Good News. Here is a good place to reproduce part of a cutting written by someone who succinctly comments on these matters:- "The devil may have all the best tunes but God has all the best words. The King James Bible and Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer are full of sublime language, numinous with the faith of those who fashioned it and hallowed it by repetition down the ages. Yet the Church of England has abandoned the Prayer Book and the Authorized Version of the Bible for the New English Bible, a compilation of the utmost

banality, and it often substitutes idiotic extemporary prayers in place of the magnificent prose poetry of Cranmer's collective litany." My thoughts exactly.

The youth fellowship attached to the church I mentioned earlier, met every Friday night and when we were clearing up afterwards, and the girls were washing up and the boys were putting the furniture back to rights in the classroom we used ready for school again on Monday, the current vicar used to call in to see what we had been up to. Several vicars came and went during the six years I was involved, some more interesting than others. One in particular used to persuade us to go into the church next door to the school where we met, for the late night service of Compline. This was new to me and I found it very appealing in its quiet and contemplative nature. Years ago when the BBC was a civilized and cultured institution and not the trendy ramshackle mess it is today, Compline Service used to be broadcast on Sunday evenings before close down and I always made a point of listening to it.

The opening words of the service are -: "The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end." Two of the prayers that were generally used during the service have remained in my memory ever since and I use them often. They are a great comfort in the dark hours of the night when one is wakeful, unwell or afraid and worried, and I commend them here.

"Lighten our darkness we beseech the O Lord and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And...

"Be present most merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon thy eternal changelessness, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I think the words 'eternal changelessness' are particularly relevant to us in the present order of things, for as you get older you do become wearied by the world and its doings. People we love and depend on disappear to go to their rest and we have to find a new way. But whatever befalls us in a new situation there is the Almighty creator of heaven and earth, and an ever fixed mark, in whom we may most certainly repose if only we will, on His eternal changelessness. We can rest assured that the promises made to us by Him and His beloved Son will eventually be fulfilled. May it be soon.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

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## Co-operation Without Compromise

For many years there has been an unhappy separation among those who have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who, so believing, have been baptised into Jesus Christ.

Into the causes of this estrangement it is not my purpose at present enter. I wish rather to excite interest in the inquiry whether now, that the lapse of so many years may be expected to have removed the excitement of personal feeling regarding these causes of division - and to have made all concerned wiser by experience - whether the amount of truth we hold in common is not sufficient to warrant a hearty co-operation in disseminating the knowledge of those grand truths of the Gospel which we believe, and which are so much lost sight of by the community at large? The question is surely an important one and demands an earnest and deliberate consideration.

In the course of these years a considerable number have been added to the several ecclesias, who were not at all concerned in the divisions; and are in many cases were ignorant alike of the circumstances which led to the separation, and if the amount of agreement in matters of faith and hope that really exists amongst those who are "out of fellowship" with each other. It is therefore necessary in their case, and may be beneficial to

all concerned, to have a clear statement of the matters wherein we are agreed, and wherein we differ. This statement I shall endeavour to give as fairly and concisely as I can.

Well then, we are agreed: -

That the One God - the Almighty Creator of all, will establish a kingdom upon earth, which shall destroy and supersede all other kingdoms, and shall be universal in extent and everlasting in duration.

That this divine, universal, and eternal kingdom shall be given to Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the living God; and be exercised by Him, as the absolute monarch of all the earth.

That the throne of His divine administration shall be established on Mount Zion; and that the city of Jerusalem shall become the metropolis of the world.

That the twelve tribes of Israel, now scattered abroad throughout the world shall be gathered again, and placed by God in the territory promised to Abraham, and that thus gathered and established, they shall be made the chief nation in the Kingdom of God.

That the throne of the Lord to be established on Mount Zion is "the throne of David," (announced to Mary as the inheritance of His Son Jesus; and that it is in consequence of His being anointed for this throne that He is called "The Christ.")

That the humiliation and death of the Christ were appointed by His Father to be a sacrifice for sin, and perfect Him for being our High Priest and the Captain of our salvation.

That the race of man is absolutely mortal by nature; and in consequence of sin, under the sentence of death; and that God, in His great love, has appointed that those alone who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, shall live for ever.

That in order to obtain this salvation, God requires of those who thus believe in His Son that they be immersed in water into Christ, and submit to Him in all things as their Lord.

That all who thus believe in Jesus as Lord and Christ, and are immersed in His name, are accounted by God as the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made; and are joint partakers with Him of His eternal power and glory.

That God bestows these favours on believers because of the death of His Son Jesus the Christ. That the resurrection and glorification of the faithful in Christ Jesus, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God shall take place at the return of the Lord from the heavens; and this return of the Lord should be expected and waited for by the faithful in Christ Jesus.

We are agreed that all these things are embraced, in the gospel announced to Abraham, and appointed to be preached among all nations to be believed for salvation.

In all these matters we are at one; yet we are in a state of division.

It is proper that the points on which we differ shall also be fairly noted. I find I cannot do this without also noticing still further points of argument. Thus we differ as to whether "The Word" that became flesh, was personal being, separate from the Father, and existing with God in the beginning before all other created beings - or whether the phrase "The Word" simply denotes an attribute, of the purpose of God: but we are agreed that He who was born of Mary in Bethlehem, and died on the cross for our sins is indeed the Son of God, and the seed of David of whom Moses and the prophets wrote - the Messiah of Israel, and the Saviour and Judge of this world, and Lord of all.

Again, we differ as to whether "the resurrection of the just and the unjust" shall be simultaneous, or whether an interval shall lapse between "the resurrection of life and the resurrection of damnation," but we are agreed that there shall be "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

We are agreed that the faithful who are asleep in Jesus shall, at His coming, be made “incorruptible;” but we differ as to whether “this incorruptibility takes place in the act of resurrection, or subsequently, after appearing at the judgment seat.

We are agreed that,

“We must all appear at the judgment seat of Christ” to receive according to our works, whether good or bad: but we differ as to whether all appear at the same point of time, or whether those who receive the rewards “appear at the Judgment seat” at a different time from those who receive punishment. And we differ as to who or what “the devil” or “Satan” of Scripture is: but we are agreed that whoever or whatever the devil be, he or it is doomed to utter destruction; that all sin, and everything opposed to God and His Christ, shall be destroyed without remedy.

Having thus fully, frankly, and fairly stated the main points of agreement and difference between us, I earnestly commend the careful consideration of the enquiry stated at the outset, and shall anxiously await the issue, leaving further comment in the meantime.

Brother W. Laing.

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## THE JEWISH JUBILEE.

The Jewish Jubilee is one of those festivals that were instituted by Moses at the command of the Almighty; but for the somewhat scanty particulars furnished in the law, it is not at all improbable that the Jubilee would long since have been forgotten, as historians have left little on record concerning it.

I am not aware of any allusion in the Bible to its celebration, after its enactment; whereas we have the observance of other festivals mentioned down to the times of the New Testament.

Throughout world’s history we have no parallel to the state of affairs under which the Law of Moses was given; it was promulgated in the wilderness while the Israelites were in an apparently ‘lost’ condition, beset with dangers, encompassed with difficulties, suffering at times from famine, and without any cheering hope as to the termination of their wanderings.

Imagination can hardly picture the leader of a vast host, while marching through a desert, scarcely understanding where, giving laws respecting an unknown country - laws which were to be a finality. Yet thus did Moses, journeying through the wilderness for forty years. He gave his people laws concerning their land; the cultivation of the corn, the vine, and the olive; for the regulation of their towns and cities; for the treatment of the stranger that might sojourn with them; laws relating to their every day walk and conduct; and laws on a most elaborate scale with regard to their obedience to God, in observing the numerous religious rites and ceremonies enjoined - all which ordinances were unchangeable.

But how could Moses proclaim such laws, at such a time and under such circumstances? We may truly say, only by inspiration; he was instructed by God; his mission was divine.

The term Jubilee is derived from the Hebrew word “Yobel” and signifies a blowing of trumpets, a redeeming, a restitution. The year of Jubilee was one of the many festivals which were to be kept by the Jews; among these was the seventh day, or Sabbath; the beginning of the seventh month, or the feast of trumpets; and the seventh year, or Sabbath year; while the festival of Jubilee recurred but one every fifty years.

Its institution is recorded in Leviticus 25. Every seventh year the land was to enjoy its Sabbath; that is, it was to lie fallow, not to be in any way cultivated. It was to enjoy seven Sabbaths in the space of forty-nine years and then came the Sabbath of Sabbaths, or Jubilee. It commenced with the blowing of the Shophar, or trumpet, by the priest on the evening of the tenth day of the seventh month, which was the Great Day of the Atonement.

The peculiar arrangements of the Jubilee were in some respects similar to those of the Sabbath year, but in others they were far more important and remarkable; in neither year was the land to be tilled; the Jews were commanded not to sow, or to reap that which groweth of itself (verse 11); or to gather of the fruit of their undressed vines; that is, the owner of a vineyard, or land on which grew any thing of its own accord" was not to gather it for his individual profit or benefit (verses 5 to 7).

This increase could be gathered by any one as his own harvest; it was the common property of all, the rich and the poor: the servant as well as his master, their cattle and even the beasts of the land.

On being forbidden to cultivate the soil in any way, during the seventh Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year, two years in succession, an enquiry would naturally arise in the minds of the Jews as to the provision made for their sustenance until the following year when they could reap the produce of what they had sown.

The gracious care of the Deity was announced in these words: "Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years; and ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store." (verses 21.22).

The harvest ripened in the sixth year, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been consumed in the seventh, was to last for three years; not only through the seventh, but through the eighth and ninth; the crop sown in the ninth year coming in at its close to meet the wants of the tenth, thus showing that no difficulty or privation would ensue because the land was allowed to lie fallow for two years. While the care of the stranger, the poor, and the fatherless was enforced, the Israelites were taught that the land was the property of Yahweh, and that His providence, and not the fertility of the soil, was their guarantee for its supplying them with food: thus nourished by His promised bounty, they would learn to devote the spontaneous increase of the earth, willingly and gratefully, to the cause of charity.

There is no reason to suppose that the prohibition against agricultural pursuits extended to any other kind of labour in which different classes might be engaged; although the law does not say anything on the point, the year of Jubilee cannot be looked upon as a year of idleness. During the period that the ground was fallow, no doubt there were various lawful occupations at which the people could be employed, such as the weaving cloth for their clothes and their tents, the construction and repair of their dwellings, and many other things as well.

But one of the most important features of the Jubilee was that every Jew who had sold himself as a hired servant was now set free. The 39th verse reads, "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shall not compel him to serve as a bondservant: but as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee and shall serve thee unto the year of Jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his father's shall he return."

It was also provided in the law that no Jew could sell himself for more than six years (Exodus 21:2) and further, that when the Jubilee came he was not to go out in a state of poverty, but was to be liberally "furnished" from the flock, and from the floor, and from the wine-press (Deuteronomy 15:12-14).

One of the particular provisions of the Jubilee was that at whatever period of servitude it fell every man could then claim his liberty, even though he had not served his six years: neither could any sell himself as a slave, but as a hired servant only. The Israelites who had been forced by poverty or any other circumstance to sell or mortgage the inheritance of his fathers now received it again.

The law permitted such inheritance to be redeemed at any time, either by himself or by any of his relatives; its value was decided by the number of years to the Jubilee and the price for which it was sold.

No doubt it often occurred that the seller was too poor to buy back his inheritance, his relatives as poor as himself - no one to act the friend in need - then when the Jubilee came it came with the most joyful aspect as a redeemer; it redeemed all that had been sold; the land immediately returned to the original owner, and that without purchase.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> verse of the chapter declares, “The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine,” saith Jehovah; and in reality it had not been sold, in the sense we attach to the expression: it was only the produce which the land brought forth between the sale and the next Jubilee that was sold. The price would therefore vary in proportion to the number of years that intervened, so that by the time the Jubilee came the purchaser would have received full value for the money advanced.

Upon this the law was very explicit; “and if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbours hand, ye shall not oppress one another: according to the number of years after the Jubilee thou shall buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: According to the multitude of years thou shall increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God, for I am the Lord your God.” (verses 14-17).

There were two exceptions to the action of the Jubilee on property.

The first concerned houses in walled cities, they could be redeemed at any time within one year only after the sale; if not redeemed within that period they became the property of him who bought them, throughout all generations – they did not go out in the Jubilee (verses 29-30), but the dwelling in unwalled villages were considered as fields of the country: they could be redeemed at any time, and if not, they went out in the Jubilee (verse 31).

Why should this distinction be made between walled towns and unwalled towns?

The inhabitants of unwalled towns were probably those who had inherited possessions of land from their fathers, were the tillers of the soil, and the owners of the dwellings in which they lived, as they could not lose their land beyond the Jubilee, neither could they lose their dwellings.

The houses in the walled towns had no particular relation to the land, they would not be occupied by agriculturists, but by those who were engaged in trade, and by those who were of no settled habitation, just as towns are occupied now; hence the necessity for the operation of the law to extend to the one and not to the other; the houses in unwalled villages were counted as land and it was the land the Jubilee affected.

The other exceptions to the stipulations of the Jubilee was on the property in the cities belonging to the Levites; it could be redeemed at any time up to the Jubilee (verses 32-33), whereas in the other case of property in the cities if not redeemed within one year it was lost for ever.

There was a further exception with regard to the land belonging to the Levites: it could not be sold for it was to be a perpetual possession (verse 34). Everything sanctified, or set apart was to be the inheritance of the Levites; anyone could so set apart land unto the Lord, the produce of which was to be the Levites; but if at any time before the Jubilee he who had dedicated it wished to redeem it could do so.

The produce of the land was to be valued by the priest according to a proscribed scale, and the man was to pay to the priest in addition one fifth part of such valuation; his land was then restored to him (chapter 33 verses 16-19).

If the land was not redeemed and the original owner should sell it to another man and thereby make his offering void, such land was not to be redeemed any more; when the Jubilee came the land went out as a thing holy and devoted unto the Lord, the inheritance of which was to be the Levites for ever (verses 20:21).

Again, if a man set apart land for the Levites, land that he had bought and which did not belong to him as an inheritance, the priest was to value it according to the number of years to the Jubilee, and the offerer was to give such valuation as a holy thing unto the Lord.

When the Jubilee came the land returned to its original proprietor as his inheritance (verses 22-24).

There is no account of debts being cancelled at the Jubilee; although it is highly probable that debts connected with the land were cancelled: had it not been so the Israelites could not have returned to the inheritance of their fathers.

As I have before stated the year of Jubilee began on the evening of the Great Day of Atonement, Israel's greatest day, a day peculiarly adapted for its commencement, for while they had been seeking forgiveness from God, it would no doubt remind them of their duty to forgive each other's trespass.

We may ask: what could have been the motive for the establishment of the Jubilee?

It was a check against tyranny and a safeguard against the selfish desire of the more wealthy to become possessors of the freeholds of their poorer brethren. While it would more or less relieve every family from the effects of constant poverty, brought on possibly by the misfortunes of their forefathers, it would be the means of preventing those who had sold their possessions from emigrating, or leaving the territory of their own tribe, as it was forbidden that any inheritance should "remove" from the tribe it had originally been allotted to (Numbers 36:9).

This arrangement would also ensure a better cultivation of the land, and keep the several tribes distinct, as each head of a family would have the strongest inducement to preserve the evidence of his hereditary descent, that he might present proofs of his claim when the Jubilee returned.

This was one of the many attestations of the Divine authority under which Moses acted. Had a legislator of his own will required such a surrender of property every fifty years, would a people in actual possession have given it up if they had not been fully convinced that his demand rested on the word of God?

That the Jews, whose leading characteristic was "rebellion, or walking "contrary" to their Heavenly King, and who were designated by Moses himself as "stiff-necked", should have submitted to laws seemingly inimical to their own interests, it is a remarkable illustration of the Divine authority by which they were governed.

From these premises it would appear that the Jubilee restored to the Israelites the position in which God originally placed them with regard to their liberty and their possessions.

There was a tendency to fall into covetousness and tyranny on the one hand, and into destitution and misery on the other: upon these evils the Jubilee was designed to put a stop, and to renew from time to time the arrangement instituted by the wisdom and goodness of the Lord.

The principle on which the land returned in the Jubilee to its former proprietors was that it belonged to Jehovah; the Israelites never received it as a possession of their own; it was distributed among them by lot, and God's absolute ownership was thus recognised; it was His therefore to bestow with just consideration towards those who had first received it.

Righteous are all His ways.

In the same manner the persons of the Israelites were not their own. God was the proprietor of them as well as of the soil; they were His servants whom He had brought out of the land of Egypt, and He held the right to restore to them the freedom which they had at any time forfeited.

This then was the procedure of the Almighty – every fifty years He gave back the inheritance of his father's to the man who had been obliged to mortgage it, and broke the bonds in which any might have been enthralled for a number of years; thus began a new life in their history.

With respect to the estimation in which the Jews held their hereditary possessions, we have a striking instance in the case of Naboth; he refused to satisfy the avarice of King Ahab, saying, "The Lord forbid me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

There is a somewhat similar case in relation to the daughters at Zelophehad, and their claim to the family inheritance on this death at their father.

It must indeed have been a great day of thanksgiving and praise for the chosen nation when they had seen their sacrifices accepted, and had received forgiveness for their past offences, and with the evening came the glad sound of the Jubilee trumpet to proclaim the year of redemption.

I think I may safely assert that we are anxiously looking for a Jubilee which shall indeed be the restitution of all things. Such an idea was certainly inculcated by Jesus, and believed in by His Apostles. In the fourth chapter of Luke we have an account of Christ in the synagogue at Nazareth, the eighteenth and nineteenth verses are quotations from Isaiah 61:1, and read; “the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The Saviour preached the gospel to the poor, the glad tidings of the restoring of all things at the establishment of the Kingdom of God; He also healed the broken hearted by raising the dead, curing the blind, the lame, the withered, and those suffering from other afflictions; but what a healing of hearts will there be at His second coming. He was anointed to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised. These words will have a literal fulfilment in the Jubilee He is to inaugurate.

Isaiah, speaking further of this year, says, (54:8), for it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion.” Also, (62:4), “for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come;” and 1:26, “I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.”

There are many other passages in the Scriptures alluding to the great day of restitution, the future Jubilee.

We read of the venerable Simeon as waiting for “the consolation of Israel;” of the prophetess Anna, as one that “looked for redemption in Jerusalem;” and of the two disciples when going to Emmaus, saying to Jesus, after His resurrection that “they had trusted it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.”

We also find that Jesus Himself, in answer to a question put to Him by one of the Twelve, promised them their reward “in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory;” and at the ascension, the Apostles asked Jesus whether He would at that time “restore again the kingdom to Israel.”

We read also of Joseph of Arimathea, as one who “waited for the kingdom of God.”

I think that these passages are sufficient to show that our Lord taught and that His disciples expected a redemption, a restoration, a Jubilee for Israel.

Josephus says nothing about the Jubilee beyond the fact of its institution, and the only mention of it in history, so far as I know, is that it was celebrated down to the time of King Zedekiah. If this statement be correct, how grandly the declaration of Peter in the temple (Acts 5:21) follows the prophecy of Ezekiel (chap. 21:27). As the kingdom was overturned through that “profane wicked, prince,” so shall it be restored by Him “whose right it is,” at His Jubilee, or “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

We may form an idea of anxious desire with which the Israelites of days gone by would look forward to the Jubilee, recurring but once in fifty years; not all could hope to see it more than once; how great would be their happiness on hearing the sound of the trumpet, as it echoed from city to village through the length and breadth of the land.

Let the desire of the Israelite of old be our desire, that when the great Jubilee shall come, and the Great Restorer appear in His glory, we may be able to say, “Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isaiah 25:9).

In conclusion, I cannot do better than ask you to read a portion of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, verses 1 to 11; this, brethren, to my mind will be the Jubilee restored, Paradise regained. Here it is:

Isaiah 11:1-11, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.”

Brother George Riggott

**Editor’s note:** It seems most likely that the return of Jesus to set up the Kingdom will be at the seventieth Jubilee. When Israel was established in 1948 it was claimed by some that it was the 69<sup>th</sup> Jubilee but this seems to have been wishful thinking for by adding fifty years to that date brought us to 1998 for the 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee – but no return of Jesus.

The difficulty is fixing the date of the first Jubilee and being sure of the accurate calculation of years since then. 70 Jubilees of 50 years is 3,500 years and that takes us back to the time of Moses in the wilderness, but more than this would be difficult to prove. – Russell.

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## EXHORTATION.

### 1 Corinthians.

“Dear Brethren and Sisters, The other day I was reading the 1st Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and it struck me very forcibly how Paul introduces this Epistle. The way he chooses his words, placing great emphasis on the Cross of Christ and the grace of God given through the same, and that the fact that they were greatly enriched by Him in all utterance and all knowledge. Paul continues with the words, “Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what does Paul lead up to when he uses these words, for we always notice that Paul makes clear certain facts to introduce a great lesson? The lesson on this occasion is unity amongst those who have received the knowledge of the Gospel and Jesus Christ and believed. The danger becomes acute because unity is least expected to be disrupted where the word is fresh and the soil is good. The rejoicing is such at first that these Brethren and Sisters think there can be no danger of disunity or division where the word is accepted with such zeal and understanding. But soon we begin to realise, like Paul that exhortation to unity is absolutely necessary if we are to keep the Doctrine pure and the mind free from the evils that can easily creep in. Let us study therefore the wise approach of Paul to the subject he has in mind and notice how he brings it to bear on their future as faithful followers of Jesus Christ, the One who lived and died to give them this great hope of glory. Thus Paul begins the exhortation to unity:-

“Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement.” - Three principles pointing to one and the same thing - Unity.

Was it without cause? Paul shows in the following verses that it was not without cause, for says he, “It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe that there are contentions among you.” Are we surprised at this Brethren, that there should be contentions among the Corinthians who had men like Paul to write and speak to them those who had the first fruits of the Spirit. If we have any experience of brethren and sisters at all we are not surprised. But it means this, that if Paul needed to exhort them to Unity at that time, our need must be greater in these days. We know, however, that these petty quarrels and contentions were already at the time of Paul’s writing growing more frequent and so becoming the more serious. And this mind you was taking place not so many years after Christ had died, and among men and women who had been taught of Paul with his ability to teach the word. They were actually taking sides and using as their figurehead the men who had either preached to them or baptized them. But Paul would have none of this; he wanted no credit for the work he had performed in the Name of Christ, least of all to be used as a figurehead for divisions among brethren and sisters.

Paul puts the question to them, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptised into the name of Paul?” “I thank God” says Paul, “that I baptised none of you but Crispus and Gaius lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name.” He could see the type of people he was dealing with and foresee the danger ahead if nothing was done to clear away the foolish misconception of what they had allowed to enter their minds. He had foreseen a certain amount of these dangers and had taken precautions by not baptizing them himself. Paul did not by this belittle the importance of baptism however; he knew just how necessary it was, but says he, “Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel, not with the wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect.” Much is contained in this one sentence, far more than what is seen on the surface.

“Lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect.” If Paul had used the wisdom of this world as he was fully qualified and educated to do, he would have brought in a class of people to whom Christ meant little, and who were incapable of giving glory unto God, an hypocritical class, self-centred, and full of conceit, having their own wisdom, not that of God. These would have made the cross of Christ of none effect and destroyed them for whom Christ died. The preaching of the Gospel, however, together with the cross of Christ in its full meaning was unpalatable to those who wanted their works to be seen of men - those who liked to show off before others. This goes for the common people, however, as well as the rich, for this type remains the majority in both classes down to the present day. The cross of Christ to them is foolishness. Or to use the words of Paul, “For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness,” - that is indeed the reason why they perish.

We must therefore be very careful having received the Gospel message and accepted it, that we do not allow these differences of opinion to become contentions, and by so doing become divided against one another as did the Corinthians to whom Paul wrote these words of exhortation to Unity.

We have many in our day who claim to be teachers of the word, leaders among brethren, those who rather discredit those who are more sincere than themselves, even if poorer in pocket. Our late Bro. Fred Pearce experienced much of this kind of treatment in his great efforts to spread the word of the Gospel and to try to undo much of the harm these so-called leaders of brethren had done during their life-time and by the writings they had left behind them to continue the same. That is one sad thing, the fact that the evil which men accomplish does not always stop at their decease but continues to spread its roots, lasting as a rule longer than the good works of a sincere man when he dies.

It is not for us to try to out-do one another just for the sake of self-praise and to be seen of men. This sort of thing does not give glory to God, neither does He rejoice in this kind of wisdom, for it is the wisdom of this world which is foolishness with God. He requires rather a quiet spirit, humble and sincere men and women who try to keep Unity among brethren, not self-centred men and women steeped in their own conceits.

Paul, because of his sincere thoughts for these Ecclesias, was determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

And as a conclusion to these few words, I would like you to read the last seven verses of this 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 1:- “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

Paul ends this chapter in this beautiful way just as he ends many of these chapters in this Epistle.

Brother Ernest Brady

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## **LOVE - SERVE - TELL**

**(Matt.5.16) (Luke 22.26) (I Cor.15.15)**

Three people met to do God’s will,  
They sought to do it well.  
They planned that each should do one thing-  
One, Love; One, Serve; One, Tell.

They all went forth and with great zeal  
One loved. One served. One told.  
They met again to check results,  
And see God’s plan unfold.

The one who loved, reported first,  
And found with great dismay:  
“I could not love until I served,  
God has no other way.”

The one who served, then bared his heart  
“I must confess ‘tis true  
I could not serve until I loved,  
So I did both things too.”

The one whose aim was to proclaim,  
With wisdom did agree.  
“You cannot separate each one,  
For God combines all three.”

“I tried to tell, but no one heard  
Until God’s love showed through  
And both of you proclaim with deeds.  
All three we each must do.”

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## **God Said, “Speak With My Words Unto Them”**

The Lord’s Prayer is recited by countless congregations every week in churches throughout the world, and in His prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray “Thy kingdom come” so that “Thy will be done in the earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

But before the establishment of this Kingdom we know from Daniel’s prophecy that “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Daniel 12:1). This prophecy is confirmed by Jesus when He told His disciples, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:” (Matthew 24:21). Such is the devastation foretold in the Bible and at no time in the history of the world has such a situation been possible until now. The Old Testament prophets had more to say about this time such as in Zechariah 12:1-9:-

*“The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be*

*gathered together against it... And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”*

And in Zechariah 14:1-3,he writes:-

*“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle”.*

And Malachi writes, in chapter 4 verses 1-6:-

*“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts”.*

Isaiah also has this to say in chapter 2, verses 17-21: -

*“And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.”*

And Zephaniah 3:8:-

*“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”*

With this fearful picture before us we may well ask how long will these things last, and how safe will people be? First of all we are reassured that God is in control of all these things and has promised us that whosoever shall call upon His name shall be saved. In Psalm 37:39 we read:-

*“But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

And in Psalm 86:5-7 we read :-

*“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.”*

And in Psalm 145:18-20 :-

*“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.”*

We can therefore approach God with confidence whatever our past. This is what He wants us to do as He explains through the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 18, verses 21 to 23:-

*“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?”*

Many churches teach some of these things but how do we know who to believe? The answer has to be that each person must seek God for him or herself and not rely overmuch on what others may say. Listen and discuss but think for yourself. Jesus mentioned these last days especially when, in Matthew 24:29-31 He said,

*“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers; believe it not for as the lightening cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

While in Luke 21:25 to 28 we read :-

*“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.”*

There is more in the Bible about the return of Jesus and the setting up of His Kingdom than about any other subject, so we will select just a few, first of all from the Old Testament:-

Micah 4:1-4 :-

*“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”*

Isaiah 2:1-4 :-

*“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many*

*people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

Zechariah 8:23:-

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."*

Psalm 72:6. 7 :-

*"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."*

Ezekiel 39:7.

*"So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. **Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.**"*

Brother Russell Gregory

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## ANGELS UNAWARES

A widow from Germany has been staying with us. It has been an exchange visit with Sister Lois, who if the Lord wills will spend her holiday there later on; the exchange plan makes a holiday less costly.

The widow of a Professor at a University, she was bereaved some years ago and left with the care of two children, a linguist including a good knowledge of English. It was interesting to have such a visitor to stay with us.

We talked over many subjects, not omitting religion. I informed her as best I could of our belief; she was most interested, I was glad to have just received the circular and the Brother Brady's Article "The Gospel As We Understand It." I gave her one to read and she scanned the list of things we do not believe, - "I am in agreement with this on every point... I think I am the only one in Germany of the same belief; I never heard of any, strange that I should find here those with whom I agree. May I take this article back with me? I will translate into our language. Do write to me more about these things, I am quite a lonely person, no one agrees with me, my children are opposite."

What will be the result of this visit we cannot tell; she has discovered the truth without human aid by careful study of the Scripture. I raised the subject of baptism but she had no true idea, probably did not think it important.

We entertained this stranger not knowing what kind of person, but we found her not far from the Kingdom of God. It is not so easy when dealing with one of another tongue, but we felt a certain oneness in so far as the simple gospel was concerned for in every nation one that feareth God and doeth justly is concerned, is accepted with Him. Angels unawares, what, are they not all ministering Spirits sent forth on behalf of the Saints, the many whom Jesus is conducting to glory? The truth is our principal concern, and to meet at any time those of like faith is a joy to us, then they that feared the Lord spake often one to the other and the Lord heard it, we pray for His blessing who has sent forth light and truth.

Brother Frank Skinner. (1970)

## A CHRISTADELPHIAN CHALLENGE

In our booklet “To the Law and to the Testimony” we issue “a challenge to Christadelphians to produce a single passage of Scripture which proves any one of the following articles of their faith”. This challenge has now been taken up by yet another Christadelphian, Bernard Burt, who has provided the following quotations with his comments under their respective headings. To which we have added our observations.

### Challenge No. 1.

#### Can you provide Scriptural proof that the nature of Adam was changed after he sinned?

The first two proof texts Bernard Burt put forward are:- Genesis 2:25, “*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed*”, and -

Genesis 3:7, “*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*”

**Bernard Burt comments:-** Before their sin there was no conscience of nakedness for shame, afterwards there was – and this awareness has passed to all of their descendants.

**Our observations:-** We cannot see that this proves the nature of Adam and Eve was changed in any way. They were guilty of their transgression and like anyone with a good conscience they felt ashamed of themselves for having done wrong. Becoming aware of their nakedness does not mean that there was a change of nature but rather a change of clear conscience to guilty conscience.

Third proof text put forward is Genesis 3:22:- “*And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.*”

**Bernard Burt comments:-** Man only knew “good and evil” after he had eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That knowledge has also been inherited by all of his descendants.

**Our observations:-** While we can agree that Adam and Eve had no knowledge of evil before they disobeyed God’s commandment, we ask what should we expect to find after the first time of sinning? How could they have known good and evil before?

Apart from this, it should be obvious that knowledge is not inherited but acquired.

Fourth and fifth proof texts are Genesis 1:31 - “*And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*” And –

Genesis 6:5, “*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”

**Bernard Burt comments:-** Man, along with all creation was pronounced “very good”; but by Genesis 6:5 his imagination is only evil continually – whence this change – if it is not a result of the sin of Adam?

**Our observations:-** Although God saw that the imagination of men’s hearts was only evil continually He did not say this about all men, Abel was righteous. And let’s go on a few verses to Genesis 6:8,9, “*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*” If Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation and found grace in the sight of God and walked with Him then you cannot apply changed nature to him (or others like him) on the grounds of him having evil imaginations continually in his heart. 1 Corinthians 15:39 tells us that

“There is one kind of flesh of men”, and verse 45, that “the first man Adam was made a living soul;” and verse 47, that “the first man is of the earth, earthy.” Noah was not of different flesh than people whose imagination was only evil continually.

Scripture again gives no hint of a change of nature. God made our nature good and it has remained so ever since. God deals with our characters and rewards us accordingly.

**Sixth proof text in this section is Genesis 3:16,17:-** *“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.”*

**Bernard Burt comments:** Sorrow was now part of their experience – because of their sin.

**Our observations:-** Of course. But where is the curse? There is no indication here that the nature of Adam and Eve was changed. It was the ground that was cursed. If God cursed our nature so that we are unable to obey perfectly why did Jesus say “Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect? Surely that would be cruel.

Our conclusion is therefore that there was no change in the nature of Adam after he sinned.

## **Challenge No. 2.**

### **Can you provide Scriptural proof that Jesus Christ was sinful flesh?**

**Bernard Burt’s only proof text in this section is Hebrews 4:15:-** *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

**Bernard Burt comments:-** Jesus could not have been tempted in all points like as we are if he did not have in him the same desires as we have – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – despite this he was without sin (in the sense of transgression).

**Our observations:-** Again the obvious - - it is clear that Adam and Eve, while being in their “very good” condition were tempted and transgressed.

Of course Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, but the supposed ‘sinful flesh’ notion has nothing to do with temptation. We cannot be tempted to sin without law and sin is transgression of (God’s) law. But the point is that Jesus overcame all temptations and so kept the law, and can we too. God has given us the choice to obey Him or not by giving us commands to obey. God has never given anyone a command which he cannot obey.

Jesus said “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”. (Matthew 5:48). The teaching that we cannot always obey because of our sinful flesh brings to mind the saying “created sick; commanded to be well”. But God is not cruel. We have a loving God who did not make us sick with sinful flesh and then command us to be well!

Flesh is never described as sinful in scripture. People are sinful when they sin. Romans 8:3 is the only place where we read of sinful flesh but this is not what Paul wrote! No. The word ‘sinful’ here has been translated as if it were an adjective but it is not an adjective, it is a possessive noun and the meaning is “sin’s flesh” or “flesh belonging to Sin as if it were a Master - that ‘flesh is the possession of sin as a king reigning’ as Paul already explained in Romans 6:12, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies...” We do well to follow the context and be consistent in following Paul’s meaning.

Our conclusion therefore is that there is no such thing as sinful flesh.

### **Challenge No. 3.**

#### **Can you provide Scriptural proof that Jesus had to die to redeem himself?**

**The first proof text put forward is Hebrews 9:12, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”.**

**Bernard Burt comments:-** The verse should read, “He found for himself, is finding (*for us*) and continues to find eternal redemption”. His last words before his death were “...into thy hands I commit my spirit” – quoted from **Psalm 31:5**, “Into thine hand I commit my spirit:” which continues (1<sup>st</sup> words when he rose?) “thou hast redeemed me O LORD God of truth”.

**Our observations:-** There has been endless argument as to how this verse should have been written. The Septuagint version reads, “nor through the blood of he-goats and calf’s, but by his own blood he entered once for all into the holies [an eternal ransoming having found]”. This is not unlike the one which Bernard Burt quotes but hardly allows for his construction on it.

Regarding Psalm 31:5, it is worth noting that the word translated ‘redeemed’ (“Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord”) carries varied meanings. According to Strong’s Concordance the Hebrew word ‘*padah*’ can be used in such ways as – ‘to sever’, ‘release’, ‘preserve’, ‘deliver (by any means)’, ‘rescue’, ‘redeem’, ‘ransom’, etc.

I do not agree with our challenger that it means Jesus needed redemption for Himself. It means that His Father delivered Him or released Him from death, or that God preserved Him – all of which are true for he “would not suffer His holy one to see corruption” (Psalm 16:9).

We are told that Christ died for the ungodly, that He died for us, that He redeemed us to God by His blood, that He gave Himself for us, that with His stripes we are healed. But never once in scripture are we told He died for Himself or that He needed cleansing from (supposed) sinful flesh.

**Second proof text: - Hebrews 9:23, “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”**

**Bernard Burt comments:-** Jesus is part of the “heavenly things” which were “purged” (or cleansed or purified – I do not mind which way you translate *kathariso*) by his own sacrifice.

**Our observations:-** Bernard Burt says Jesus was part of the heavenly things purged by the sacrifice of Himself, but here is an example of using scripture out of context. Quite apart from the fact that Jesus was “that holy thing” born to Mary (Luke 1:35) who had His life direct from His Father and not from Adam as all others do; He never needed reconciliation with His Father for at no time was He separated from Him. The main fault with Bernard Burt’s argument is that the writer to the Hebrews is not talking about Jesus dying for Himself but Jesus dying for us.

Let’s go back a few verses to Hebrews 9:15,16, “And for this cause he (Jesus) is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.” This shows that Jesus did not die only for the faithful who have lived since His crucifixion but for all the faithful people under the covenant made at the time of Moses, which is referred to in Exodus 24:6-8 – “And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning

all these words.” Under this first covenant sins were forgiven but Jesus had not yet come to bear them away by His sacrifice – Isaiah 53.

This is the context and message.

Besides this, it is an essential principle laid down by God that all sacrifices had to be legally clean or they were not acceptable and anything offered that was not legally clean was an abomination to the Lord. Therefore a ‘sacrifice’ that needs cleansing by sacrificing itself must be an abomination and no real sacrifice. A sacrifice that is acceptable doesn’t need cleansing as was illustrated under the Law of Moses. Jesus was the great antitype of these sacrifices being the spotless Lamb of God.

**Third proof text: - Hebrews 13:20, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”**

**Bernard Burt comments:-** it was by means of the blood sacrifice – “the blood of the everlasting covenant” which he offered that he was brought again from the dead by his Father.

**Our observations:** - Your understanding of this verse is dependant on the word “through”. The Greek word is ‘ $\epsilon\upsilon$ ’ and occurs a little over 2,000 times in the A.V. New Testament. Over 1,800 times it is translated “in” and about 300 times by several other words such as ‘among’, ‘at’, ‘because’, ‘by’, ‘during’, ‘for’, ‘on’, ‘upon’, ‘to’, ‘with’, ‘within’, etc. It is translated ‘through’ 32 times in the Authorised Version but I checked with the literal translation of the Septuagint New Testament and of these 32 occasions the translation ‘through’ is not once used; 26 times it is translated ‘in’, 5 times it is translated ‘by’, and once it is translated ‘among.’ Never is it translated “through.” From this it would seem the translators made the worst of choices.

Furthermore, the grammar does not allow for the view expressed by Bernard Burt. Let me quote Andrew Wilson, nephew of Benjamin Wilson who gave us the Emphatic Diaglott:-

“God declared through the prophet; “I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.” On the authority of God, therefore, we say Jesus was the Shepherd before the smiting. Jesus says “I am the good shepherd. The hireling fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming; he fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep.” On the authority of Jesus we also say He was the Good Shepherd before He laid down His life. Second, we have not yet found in Scripture where blood had anything to do with the resuscitation of Jesus; but we do find that it was because Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Hebrews 1:9), that God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27). Third, the blunder consists in the theorists applying the adverbial phrase “in the blood of the everlasting covenant” to the verb of an adjectival clause, instead of the verb of the principle sentence. This will be seen if we strike out the subordinate clauses, viz. “Now the God of peace make you perfect...” If we ask how or by what means God accomplishes this then the adverbial phrase “in the blood of the everlasting covenant” at once settles the question. Fourth, if Paul had wished us to understand either that Jesus earned the title Great Shepherd or that He was brought again from the dead through that blood, he would have employed the preposition “ $\delta\iota\alpha$ ”, ‘through’, but he did not. Why then do all the expounders employ the term “through”? The term Paul used was “ $\epsilon\nu$ ” – “in”. How consistent then to read; “Now the God of peace in the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect...”

**Bernard Burt also puts forward the following seven texts, where he says the same Greek construction occurs:-**

a). **Romans 3:25, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;”**

b). **Romans 5:9, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”**

c). **1 Cor.11:25, “After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”**

d). Ephesians 2:13, *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”*

e). Hebrews 10:19, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”*

f). Revelation 1:5, *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”*

g). Revelation 5:9, *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”*

h). Revelation 7:14, *“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

**Our observations.** If one assumes that Jesus had to die for Himself then these references may show a little support for such an assumption but what they all teach is that Jesus died for us – 1 Peter 3:18, *“For Christ also hath once 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.”* The fact that it was the Just One who died for the unjust sets them apart in the first place.

#### **Challenge No. 4.**

#### **Can you provide Scriptural proof that we will not know whether our sins are forgiven until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ?**

**First proof text, Romans 14:10-12** *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

**Bernard Burt comments:** we are to behave to our brethren in a way which reflects our understanding that we must stand before the judgement seat of Christ and there give an account of ourselves.

**Our observations:** Agreed that we are to behave towards our brothers and sisters in a way which reflects our understanding that we must stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ.

But our sins are forgiven, not only at baptism when we come into covenant relation with God through Jesus' shed blood, but the promise is that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:19). There is no question about our not knowing; it is a promise. Besides, this is ongoing forgiveness day by day as we petition in prayer for forgiveness before Him.

But apart from this, the judgment seat here spoken of is ‘bema’ in the Greek and is not necessarily a place of adverse judgment; no one will be condemned at this judgment Seat of Christ. It signifies a seat, or a rostrum, or a throne. The bema in the Jewish synagogue was the place from which the Torah and the Haftarah were read, while in the early Christian church the bema was a raised platform with a lectern and seats for the clergy.

Another point is that the faithful will be raised immortal to evermore be with the Lord as we read in 1 Thessalonians 4:17&18, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Again in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body”. While we know the faithful are to appear before the “Bema” (or “Throne”?) of Jesus Christ we also see that there is no fear of rejection.

Matthew 24:40-41”Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” Judgment has already taken place for God knows who to take and who to leave.

**Second proof text, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.” –**

**Our observations:** Yet in Ezekiel 18:22 we read regarding everyone who is faithful -”All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.” Why? Because his faith is counted as righteousness, as it was with Abraham. (Galatians 3: 6, “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness”).

It is true that no one is worthy of eternal life and so we pray that we may be accounted worthy as we read in Luke 20:34-38, “And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.”

In conclusion we wish to say that Bernard Burt has put forward no new thoughts but has concentrated on typical Christadelphian arguments which are founded on the doctrine of Original Sin. This doctrine was formulated by the Roman Catholic Church just a few hundred years after the time of Jesus here on earth; at a time when corruption had become rife within the Church. Sad to say but Clause Five of the B.A.S.F and Article Nine of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England are a close match. The Church of England like the Roman Catholic Church and almost all other churches teach sinful flesh and in order to exclude Jesus from such contamination they brought in the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Christadelphians have made no attempt to see that Jesus was not of sinful flesh and believing that He was they say He had to die for Himself. Neither teachings are right but of the two surely the Roman Catholic view is to be preferred.

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## God has said

### **“He will Destroy in This Mountain the Face of The Covering that is Cast Over All Peoples, and The Veil that is Spread Over All Nations**

The above title is taken from Isaiah 25:6-9, “And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is

our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

To be under a veil, our vision from beneath is imperfect. To be under the covering, we may experience even greater restriction of vision and perhaps understanding also. All should desire that they were both removed, the covering and the veil. No wonder it can be said we now see through a glass darkly and that we now only know in part.

There are veils and other coverings which are man made and these are frequently imposed by men on their fellows and there are those which God allows for a purpose and for a given time only such as this veil and the covering referred to in the writings of the prophet Isaiah 25:7. God, through His prophet has said this veil shall not be lifted until He lifts it, and this He will do, first in mount Zion.

Why does God wish it to remain for so long? Is it because the heart of man is out of tune with His and the time will not have come until after the conversion of Israel? This may possibly be the reason.

By looking to Israel we find further light and are able to see in what way the removal of the veil and the covering which is now spread over all peoples is to be removed first in mount Zion. The removal of the veil and the covering refers to Israel's conversion to Jesus as their Messiah. Israel's knowledge of the meaning of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb is already clear in their minds. They realise and believe that their sins are transferred to the lamb on the occasion when the priest lays his hands on its head and confesses the sins of the people. They realise that this should have been their lot, even that which befell the innocent animal, the Passover Lamb.

Once Israel's eyes are opened to Jesus being the Lamb of God and realise and believe as God intends they should then they will see the full light and will no longer be under a veil for then, before any others, they will understand and appreciate what God has done for them through the Lamb of God which He has provided, even His only begotten Son. The lifting of the veil could be when they are shown the marks of crucifixion in the hands and feet of Jesus.

How can the sacrifice of Christ be clearly understood by any who believe in the doctrine of the trinity or any other teaching which does violence to the Scriptures? John the Baptist's understanding of the work of God in Christ was clear for he said of Him "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"; thus revealing that which the apostles later had to learn.

Today, Israel, "being scattered throughout the world and able to speak all languages, are already placed in positions suitable to commence their appointed work as soon as they are converted and recognise who Jesus is. Once God pours out His Holy Spirit upon them and their sons and their daughters commence preaching to all Gentiles, Israel will be able to explain the true and simple message of the cross in language all can understand and appreciate. This does appear to be the object of the veil being lifted first in mount Zion.

Israel, then being armed with such knowledge and setting out to preach the Everlasting Gospel, will then do what all previous missionaries have failed to accomplish. The result of this will be as we believe and know - many will then turn to God and fear Him in that day and give glory to Him.

Israel are to be God's reapers and they will reap for God, and with God's help, that is, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. They will reap the harvest of the earth. The great multitude which no man can number. These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb therefore are they before the throne of God and serve Him day and night within His temple; and He who sits upon the throne will shelter them with His presence. They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more... The Lamb... will be their shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of living water and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. So shall Israel be unto The Lord - "A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation." (Exodus 19:6).

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