

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 260

March/April 2013

In this Issue

Page 2	Editorial	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 3	Brother Phil Parry Writes to our Christadelphian Friends.	
Page 6	Abram The Patriarch - Part two	Brother Jeff Hadley
Page 9	Science and Creation An Editorial from July 2006	Sister Helen Brady.
Page 11	Veritas and his Friends	
Page 13	Letter to Mr Milne	Sister Helen Brady
Page 14	The Seventh Chapter of Romans	Brother S.G.Hayes

Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings in Jesus' Name.

It has sometimes been asked by those who believe that 'sin' is a physical property of human flesh, "How did Jesus bear our sins in His own body on the Cross if it was not by bearing our sin nature?"

The answer is that Jesus bore our sins by suffering the punishment they deserved. Let us look at some Old Testament references as examples of this:

Leviticus 20:20. "They shall bear their sin – they shall be childless."

Leviticus 24:15 "Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin - he shall surely be put to death."

Numbers 30:8-15 "...The Lord shall forgive her (but her husband) shall bear her iniquity."

Ezekiel 14:10. "They shall bear the punishment of their iniquity."

Ezekiel 18:20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the fathers."

Ezekiel 23:49. "Ye shall bear the sins of your idols."

Lamentations 5:7 "Our fathers have sinned, and we have born their iniquities."

This selection of texts illustrates that to bear sin means to suffer the punishment due to sin, either one's own or, as can be seen from one or two of the texts, the sins of others.

If Jesus did not bear the punishment of the sins of others, He died in vain. But Jesus was not punished instead of the guilty; He voluntarily bore the punishment due to sinners in order to set them free and show Divine Love.

We see an example how Jesus bore our sin in Matthew 8:17 - "...He cast out spirits...that it might be fulfilled... himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Jesus took their infirmities by taking them from the people he cured, yet He himself did not take the evil spirits into

himself. He bore our sicknesses like, leprosy, blindness, lameness, the palsy - not by becoming leprous, blind, lame, or palsied, but by curing those who had such diseases. In like manner Christ took upon Himself our sins when God "laid upon him the iniquity of us all" by removing them from us.

But there is a difference in the manner. A devil, i.e., a deranged mental state or a disease, could be removed as an act of mercy, pure and simple, by the exercise of Divine power; whereas sins could only be removed by transferring the penalty to Himself. And so He suffered, the Just for the unjust, on the Tree, bearing our sins, that is to say, the punishment of them, and so God's mercy and forgiveness now abounds to all.

Take this reasoning along with the laws of sacrifice in the Old Testament and we see how Jesus' death on the Cross took away sins.

With love in Jesus' Name, Brother Russell Gregory

BROTHER PHIL PARRY WRITES TO OUR CHRISTADELPHIAN FRIENDS: -

Why is it that some people who profess they preach the Gospel of Salvation through the death of Christ have not a clue why this was necessary?

There are those who accept the teaching that His death was to condemn the sinful inclinations of His nature, or as they term it, sin-in-the-flesh. Both this theory is false being based on a lack of understanding of what is taught by the Spirit in the Prophets and Apostles.

This weakness of perception lies in the misconception of what is taught in the record of Genesis concerning the first man Adam, who was created from the ground a living soul. Mention to the above people that Adam was a body having within it an immortal soul which could survive death and continue onwards in the realms of Heavenly bliss and Oh, where do they direct the reader? Where else but where it is stated that man was created a living soul and that it is stated in another passage of Scripture that a soul can die or can be put to death.

What then can be learned here? Is it not that Adam was by nature subject to decay and ultimate death if left to himself as God had made him? Is not this a true scriptural description of Adam a living soul? And should not this be accepted by those who deny the immortality of the soul?

Why then is it taught that this living soul already subject to death in a neutral state of innocence was condemned for having such a nature and yet needed a change for carrying out a sentence of death as a penalty for sin?

One well known writer said, "It needed... no change of nature for the penalty for sin to be carried into effect - left to himself this very nature God had created very good, could become the very penalty for Adam's sin."

While another writer held the opposite view that this nature which was already of a capability of death by decay, was changed to become so inclined.

Neither view is correct; each are a complete contradiction of what is recorded in the Genesis account; the authors of confusion being John Thomas in "Elpis Israel", and Robert Roberts in "The Visible Hand of God". The truth lies in God's statement to Adam concerning the forbidden eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Does this not mean

dying by judicial infliction at the time of disobedience, especially as it is said by the one author that before Adam's disobedience, left to himself as God had made him Adam would have died in any case, unless he was made or changed to incorruptibility? Also the same author in stating there was no need of a change of Adam's nature to carry out the sentence of death, not only ignored the fact that the judicial sentence for disobedience was to be inflicted in the day of eating of the forbidden fruit but took on board the very opposite teaching, namely, that natural death by reason of a corruptible nature as created was the penalty God had imposed for the sin.

If the Genesis account was read intelligently and without bias, it would show that God did not take away the life of Adam in the day or time of his eating of the fruit, and it is wrong to add to or manipulate the word to explain that God meant a day of one thousand years. He did not, but meant as He stated for Adam's understanding - a day of 24 hours. The language of the Old Testament Scriptures and their meaning has never been changed; the "surely die" of Genesis has the same language and meaning as that of Ezekiel and other books. It meant the taking away of the life of an already corruptible and dying person, so that when Paul the Apostle, in accordance with revelation received, states, "By man came death," he means "the death by sin" and not the death by creation, which was not and is not the penalty which God passed upon Adam and all in his loins when he sinned. On account of the sin-covering through the taking of life (the shedding of blood) the penalty upon Adam was set in abeyance until the real Antitypical substance foreshadowed in the lamb slain for the sin-covering appeared at the appointed time. The removal of Adam from the garden and the various things he would experience including the death resulting through his creation from the dust of the earth lasting 930 years was an appointment of God and a result of failing at the time to qualify for incorruptible life.

The Apostle Paul knew the difference between the two deaths which are revealed in the Holy Scriptures to those who have eyes to see and the ability to read with understanding. Jesus asked the question of a young man, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" So then it is essentially a matter of how we read the Scriptures ourselves, not how others read them and pass on to us what could be, I say, could be, a misconception of what is meant and taught.

The death to which Adam was subject at his creation was not the result of a sentence passed upon him by the Creator, but a physical condition whereby in the foreknowledge of God's plan, the earth could be replenished with people, which was not possible with incorruptible beings. God's plan still stood by this natural means of Adam and Eve but only by reason of another man of like nature but not under the sentence of the death that passed upon Adam legally through his disobedience and from which he was spared by the shedding of the blood which typically in the lamb foreshadowed this other man's death, Jesus the Son of God (Romans 5:11, 12).

Throughout the Scriptures, this work and shedding of blood is recognized by the term "Atonement," whereby people are reconciled to God through His Son, and thereby become part of Him who needed not a woman to produce the many sons in His likeness to replenish the earth as God planned.

As Adam's deep sleep resulted in the production of Eve, a helpmeet for him, so from the wounded and bleeding side of Jesus a multitudinous throng in His likeness will fill the earth. So as Paul says, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." Paul declared, "If by the offence of one man many be dead"- could the many be dead in the physical sense when Adam sinned, when the many were non-existent? Surely Paul must have reasoned on the same lines of imputation as in Hebrews 7 concerning Abraham giving a tenth part of the spoils to Melchizedec when at the time Levi was in the loins of Abraham and though unborn, was accounted as having paid tithes to Melchizedec though under the Aaronic Priesthood he was receiving tithes himself from the people. In the same way those who were in the loins of Adam and unborn when he sinned, were imputed of God to have sinned yet not personally guilty. This is known as the Federal position - one sin and all concluded under it; and one act of righteousness by one man, Jesus Christ, that all by faith in Him and His sacrificial death might be justified and imputed righteous in Him; not of works but by the grace of God. Out from Adam and into Christ by justification and faith.

This federal position has nothing to do with the physical quality of the flesh; we are either federally in Adam or federally in Christ without any change of our physical nature which has remained the same from

Adam's creation from the dust. If people cannot or will not accept this then they have been following cunningly devised fables preferring the doctrines and precepts of men void of the Spirit of God.

I quoted Paul's words from Romans 5:15, "For if through the offering of one many be dead;" - this cannot be physically dead, and therefore must be as I said earlier, by imputation of a Just and Merciful God.

Jesus, when disclosed by John at the Jordan, became from then on the Word of God, the Bread of Life upon which men should feed to receive the life Jesus gained for by His death; they are already dying as was Adam but must die in symbol by immersion in water recognising that the shedding of Jesus' blood was the death which Adam was spared in Eden by the love and mercy of God. Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of God and drink his blood ye have no life in you." And, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." Also, "As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father (not will live); so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" - (John 6:57).

This is not telling people to feed on His supposedly unclean and condemned flesh as taught and believed by the die-hards of the Thomasite and Robertsite history down to the present day.

You may wonder where all this has been leading to and it may also be a little puzzling on account of what you have been led to believe as "The Truth." Perhaps you have not considered that in contrast with Adam who failed of himself to qualify for everlasting life, God provided another Son to pay the price of Adam's sin with the equivalent life Adam owed. It was necessary therefore that Jesus should be in the same relative position and nature as Adam was before he transgressed. Hence the words of Jesus found in John 3:16 "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." If this does not speak of sacrificial voluntary shedding of blood for the salvation of the world which God loved in the beginning when He created man, I don't know what does.

I have led you to the very point where you are now obliged to examine yourselves before eating and drinking at the table of remembrance, because if you reject that Christ gave His life in the place of Adam's, the death by sin, then you are not discerning the Lord's body and blood, for it was not a natural death which Jesus experienced in the place of Adam's natural death but the judicial death Adam had merited by sin but did not receive. Jesus did not give His life to prevent Adam or us from experiencing the death common to all, as many falsely believe, and on account of this they reject the death of Jesus as a substitute for natural death to which Adam was already physically subject at his creation.

It is obvious therefore that the typical animal sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was a substitute for the judicial death under which all were concluded. In like manner the Antitypical sacrifice of Christ was substitutional in order that God might conclude all under righteousness, therefore not of works but by Grace. Deny this and you reject the Gospel of Salvation taught by Paul in the Roman and Corinthian Epistles on the essential shedding of the blood of Christ as the basis of Atonement and forgiveness.

You are consequently left with martyrdom of a man who was of condemned flesh as you believe and justly condemned you suppose - thus sacrifice is rejected and for what? - for the eating and drinking of damnation to yourselves not discerning the Lord's body, the Bread of Life and the life in the blood, of which Jesus said before His death, not after, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And as the Apostle Peter declared, "Ye have been bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ."

What then? Who provided the Price? Whose superscription did it bear? That of Master Sin? Or that of God the Owner? It is high time those who deny Jesus was a substitute for the debt to the law Adam violated, should discard the blasphemous teaching of a Christ raised up in the so-called condemned line of Abraham and David, for if this were true, then God offered up to Sin what already belonged to Sin.

Will you eat and drink to that?

Think again and think soberly what Paul is teaching and warning of in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. The fact remains Jesus told Paul that His body and blood was given for His disciples and also for all who partook of that symbolic bread which was on the table and drank also of the wine. Consider then verse 26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

How can anyone shew the Lord's death if they cannot discern the Lord's body? Is it not then eating to themselves and drinking to themselves damnation?

Listen then to the advice of Paul while there is yet time - Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves by your own conscience and conclusions.

I have not addressed people who cannot read or reason, therefore I have delivered my soul. Ezekiel 3:18,19.

Brother Phil Parry.

Continued from C.L.259

ABRAM THE PATRIARCH

Part Two

Now, Abram, whenever any doubt came into his mind, had only to recall this incident for the doubt to be cast out, and surely he would need this recall for ten more years were to pass by and still the promise of a son was not fulfilled.

They were long years also for Sarah for her faith began to fail. Genesis 16:2, "Behold now the Lord has restrained me from bearing, go in I pray thee, to my handmaiden, it may be that I will obtain a child by her." Possibly Sarah had broached this subject several times before knowing how eagerly Abram looked for a son. This time we read, Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarah "and Hagar conceived." It was a catastrophe. Now Sarah was belittled in her maidservants eyes and realising her mistake appealed to Abram for redress. Abram understanding her anguish leaves the solution in her hands; "Do to her that which is good in thine eyes." Apparently Sarah could not turn Hagar out of the household, but she contrived to make life so unbearable that Hagar was only too glad to go of her own volition. From the script it appears she fled under the pressure of emotion with little thought or preparation. For all she could answer to the angel's query "Whence camest thou or wither goest thou?" was "I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai." Possibly her main fear being that Sarah would claim the child as her own, but the angel reassures her - "Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands," and promises that she will have a son, for he said "the Lord hath heard thy affliction." To emphasise the point that the child would be Hagar's she was to have the naming of him, Ishmael, and through him would spring up a nation, "He will be a wild ass of a man, his hand will be against every man and every man's hand will be against him."

These are quite opposite to the promises made to the Abramic seed - "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Hagar returned, the child was born, and Abram willingly agreed to Hagar's wishes to call him Ishmael - "God will hear." Another lesson learnt! God's purpose was not to be hurried and needed no help from man.

Paul picks up the lesson of Hagar in Galatians, "It is written that Abram had two sons, one by a bondmaid and one by a freewoman. The one born after the flesh and the other by promise." He likens them to the Law of Moses and to the Gospel of love in Christ, and although those born in bondage now afflict those of promise, points out that Christ has set us free.

More years passed but Abram and Sarah had learnt their lessons well. Patience and faith were needed. Then in Abram's ninety-ninth year an angel appeared to him - "I am almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect, I will make my covenant between me and thee and multiply thee exceedingly." A reiteration of the covenant made years before that Abram was not likely to forget. This time, surely it must mean that God would implement his promise and we read that Abram fell upon his face in abeyance. The promises that he now heard opened up an incredible prospect, "Behold my covenant is with thee and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations." Not only the father of natural Israel but of spiritual Israel drawn from all nations.

Here is the explanation of the seed like the stars of heaven in number, the multitude of nations reckoned to be the seed of Abram. His name was no longer to be Abram but to be Abraham - Father of a multitude of nations.

The promise continued, "I will make thee exceedingly fruitful and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." Again the promise of the natural seed and the multiplicity of the spiritual seed. The first to be ruled by the Davidic kings of Jerusalem, the second by the great King - the Messiah. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and they seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant. And I will give to thee and those after thee all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." We are reminded by the Apostle Stephen's exposition that during Abraham's natural life He gave him no inheritance in the land and that this promise once again pointed to future resurrection in the Kingdom of God.

Sarai was not omitted from this promise for her name also was to be changed - to that of Sarah, meaning Princess, very apt considering the quote "Kings will come out of thee." And now for the long awaited moment - "I will bless her and moreover I will give thee a son of her, yea, I will bless her and she shall be a mother of nations, kings of peoples shall be of her."

And we read that Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said in his heart "Shall a child be born unto him who is 100 years old and shall Sarah that is ninety years old, bear?" It reads as though Abraham laughed in disbelief and yet it can be construed differently. It could be that Abraham fell on his face in prostration before his Lord and laughed for joy that at last the promise was to be fulfilled. This latter view appears to be confirmed by Jesus as recorded in John's gospel "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad."

As a further token of God's covenant Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a special sign of approbation for his faith, as is recorded by Paul in his letter to the Romans, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of righteousness of faith which he had while he was yet uncircumcised." But circumcision, like baptism, is of little value unless it comes from an understanding and commitment of faith in the salvation that is offered by Jehovah.

How different was Sarah's reaction when she overheard the messenger - "and Sarah laughed within herself, saying, after I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (Genesis 18:12). This was the laughter of disbelief and how shocked she must have been to hear the words of the angel "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord?" These words must have wiped out all doubt from her mind, and from this time she would comprehend more fully the promises made to Abraham.

The time came and Sarah conceived and brought forth a son and named him Isaac, as the Lord had commanded. Definitely a child of promise and under miraculous circumstances and pre-figuring Abraham's Messianic Seed, also conceived under miraculous circumstances.

As might be expected, as the lad Isaac began to grow up Ishmael, his elder brother began to mock him. After all he was the first-born, and friction developed in the household. Protectively, Sarah reacted "Cast out this bond-woman and her son, for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son." (Genesis 21:10). This prejudice of Sarah against Ishmael upset Abraham "and the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son." But a revelation from God removed all doubt, Ishmael had to go. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and the message made it clear that Hagar and her son would be cared for, for it continued "also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed,"

Again the allegory of those who lived under the law and those who lived under the gospel of Christ, both circumcised, the one born after the flesh and the other born through promise. In his letter to the Galatians Paul writes, Galatians 4:31, "So then, brethren we are not children, of the bondwoman, but of the free." With freedom did Christ set us free. Galatians 5:6, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love." And verse 5, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." The attitude of mind being the most important factor and faith in the promises made by the Almighty.

Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines for some years and Isaac grew and developed. How old he was when Abraham was instructed to take the lad and offer him as a sacrifice is not indicated. Usually he is shown as a young lad in his teens but as he is to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ surely we may conclude that he was nearer Christ's age when He was crucified.

Abraham's response to God's instruction now showed how much his faith had increased. This time there was no query 'Whereby shall I know?' for we read that in the morning Abraham arose early, saddled an ass and prepared to move off to Mount Moriah. By his action it is obvious that in his mind Isaac was as good as dead. Here was the new Abraham, strong in faith, accounting that God was able to raise up his son from the dead, for the Lord had promised "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Arriving near the Mount the young men were left behind and Abraham and his son climbed to the point of sacrifice. Here the altar was built and the wood laid in order. Isaac would possibly be a little puzzled that although they had the necessary fire and wood they had no burnt offering, but on questioning his father was satisfied with the answer that he received - "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

With everything prepared Abraham bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar. In allowing himself to be bound Isaac shows the great trust he had, that whatever his father did before the sight of God must be right.

Preparing to strike with the knife Abraham's hand was stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." In place of Isaac God provided a sacrificial lamb for "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns" and Abraham offered up this ram for a burnt-offering "in the stead of his son."

Abraham's willingness to offer his son in sacrifice brought him nearer to God than he had ever been before at any time in his life and it brought the last great promise, "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Again, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son demonstrated his utter trust in God. To lift his hand to destroy Isaac, his beloved son of promise, demanded supreme faith. God had made promises and of a surety he would fulfil them. The restoring of Isaac to his father and the promise of the seed in whom all nations should be blessed indicated to Abraham that Isaac was not the true sacrifice for sins, and yet his willingness to offer his son illustrates God's willingness, in due season, to give His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sacrifice for the taking away of sins. This is clearly indicated in Peter's appeal to the Jews in Jerusalem "Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And unto you first, God, having raised up his servant sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Abraham saw all this with the clear eye of vision, and returned home justified. As James writes in his epistle, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar. It was reckoned unto him as righteousness and he was called the Friend of God."

Abraham lived through the sorrow of Sarah's death and celebrated with joy the marriage of his son Isaac to Rebecca, and finally, at the age of 175, the Friend of God died, an old man, full of years.

Throughout his life his faith in God increased and he lived a life of obedience and patience, as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the

heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Because of his faith and obedience we are privileged to share in the blessings that come through his Seed, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, writing to the Galatians stated, “For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ, did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to the promise.”

Indeed we are all blessed in having knowledge of these things and let us, like Abraham, draw near to God, the Almighty and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; for herein lies redemption and our hope of salvation and entry into the Kingdom of God.

Brother Jeff Hadley.

Science and creation

An Editorial by Helen Brady [July 2006]

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends,

Are scientists really on the verge of explaining the enigma of existence as some of them claim? We are not at the moment thinking of life but of matter; how did something appear out of nothing – why is there anything at all in space? We read recently of the claim that “unified theories of physics, when combined with refined versions of the big bang model, will soon provide us a so-called ‘theory of everything’.” We wonder if those who believe this is about to happen find the prospect exhilarating or perhaps somewhat frightening, even chilling, to imagine there is nothing more to find out. “The theory of everything” is too big a claim!

The big bang theory itself is a paradox once we ask what went bang. It brings scientists no closer to the creation of matter yet it is supposed to represent a profound insight into the history and structure of the cosmos, but it does not tell us why creation occurred in the first place. ‘Particle physics’ theorises that space is full of ‘virtual particles’ which spring into existence and are able to vanish just as quickly in the same way, speculating that the entire universe might be a kind of ‘virtual particle.’

There are other scientists who admit there appears to be no reason why there is something rather than nothing, and that before anything could be, there must first have been some force in operation to cause it to be – a force which made an organised creation possible.

The physicist Steven Weingerg writes:

“Why does the universe look this way rather than some other way? Why does it adhere to these laws of nature rather than to some other laws? Altering any of the universe’s fundamental parameters would have radically altered reality. For example, if the universe had been slightly more dense at its inception, it would have rapidly stopped expanding and collapsed into a black hole. If the universe had been a smidgeon less dense, it would have flown apart so rapidly that there would have been no chance for stars, galaxies and planets to form.”

After the creation of matter there came life; another ‘impossibility.’ Richard Dawkins, the biologist, wrote that life “is a mystery no longer.” But this seems a silly thing to say because ‘life’ is just as mysterious as ever despite evolutionary theories, or modern biological theories regarding genetics or molecular biology. There is no scientific theory explaining why life appeared on earth and neither has it been found to exist in any other part of the universe despite ill-founded assertions. Researchers, with all their tools of the modern biotechnical laboratories have tried in vain to give life to matter. What would they do with that life if they were successful? With man’s record for messing things up the prospect is too dreadful to contemplate.

Francis Crick affirms that “the origin of life appears to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have to be satisfied to get it going.” Once life had begun, other scientists tell us that for some 3 billion years there were only single-celled organisms on the earth. So why did the first, simplest multi-cellular organisms develop into multi-celled organisms? And not in billions of years but in a mere few million from single-celled organisms to the complex multi-celled plant and animals organisms of today?

And when scientists have answered all these questions, doesn't it all seem so pointless if they are unable to tell us why?

All scientists have ever done is to examine the things God has created and this has in turn helped us to marvel at His Creation. And while they may go much further in discovering more of nature's wonders, they have yet to discover what makes the brain work, i.e. how it thinks. How do we reason? How do we understand? What is intelligence?

It seems scientists have a long way to go before they can even consider themselves to be on the verge of explaining the puzzle of existence of matter, or of life, or of thought. Then, if they can, they will need to produce a reason for everything when all they see is here today, and gone tomorrow. So what is the purpose of it all?

Science reveals the wonders of God's Creation, and we marvel at what we see but only knowledge of God's Word can reveal His purpose with the promises of the future. Science can tell us nothing of this, nor can science, being dispassionate, tell us of God's goodness, mercy and loving kindness.

How unique is the Bible! How we ought to treasure it above all else.

The origin of life is indeed a miracle. How else can we explain the incredible complexities of the world around us, not to mention the differences, abilities and complexities of every human being who lives or has ever lived? It all suggests a creator of unimagined capabilities and propensities, furthermore a creator with a deep concern and interest in his creation.

The odds against all that exists and all that we ourselves are, having evolved by blind chance or by a “big bang” are surely greater than the odds against a whirlwind blowing through a scrap-yard and assembling a perfect Boeing 747.

We rest our case.

With Love to all in Jesus Christ. Helen Brady

Veritas and his friends

“BUT how about the New Testament,?” Said Dubitas, “that teaches plainly that hell is a place of punishment, and it is fair to turn to it because it is your own principle to explain one part of Scripture by another.”

“Quite fair” replied Veritas, “but first let me observe that you have again introduced a new word, into the conversation. You speak, now, of hell as being a place of punishment; no doubt, both in the Old Testament and the New, it is that, but that is different from saying it is a place of conscious torment. What you have to do is to find in both Testaments that “sheol,” or its equivalent, means a place of conscious and endless suffering.”

“But if ‘hell’ means the grave,” his friend persisted, “and yet, as you admit, it refers to a place of punishment, I don't see how your statements agree, for in the grave there is no consciousness of pain or any thing else.”

“But surely you will admit that a man is punished, when that most precious thing belonging to him, namely, his life, is destroyed, and especially if that destruction should be effected by such a terrible agent as fire, which the Scriptures everywhere teach will be, in the case of the wicked?”

“You admit then,” enquired Pietas, “that the wicked will be punished by death?”

“Yes, the Scriptures teach that ‘the wages of sin is death’, that ‘the soul that sinneth it shall die’, that the ‘judgment (death) has passed upon all men’ that ‘the wicked shall perish,’ and hundreds of such like testimonies can be found shewing that death, or extinction of being in the grave, is the fate of sinners, while such as have had the divine mercy offered them and have neglected or rejected it will, after resurrection and trial, suffer what the Scripture calls the second death,”

“What do you understand by the ‘second death?’ Pietas asked.

“The Apostle John answers that question in Revelation 21:8. I will read the passage, “but the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: THIS is THE SECOND DEATH.”

Then this ‘second death’ is the punishment of Gehenna, that you referred to some time ago?” asked Pietas.

“Yes; that is the metaphorical word by which the New Testament sets forth the violent extinction of such as have been found unworthy in the judgment.”

“But there is another word translated ‘hell’ in the New Testament, is there not?” remarked Mentor.

“You refer to ‘hades’?” “Yes.”

“Hades ought, like sheol, to be translated ‘the grave,’ “said Veritas, “for it is the place to which the good and bad alike go. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, always has ‘hades’ when rendering the Hebrew word ‘sheol,’ which shows plainly how the word was understood by the translators.”

“But many scholars,” said Mentor, “hold that hades means an invisible world to which good and bad depart until the time of resurrection,”

“We are not concerned,” replied Veritas, “with what scholars may think of the meaning of this word; the question is, what is its meaning in the New Testament? And we find that such an interpretation of the word is inconsistent with the teaching of that book. That teaching is that ‘as many as sin’ – perish - die under God’s judgments - utterly perish in their own corruption – ‘their end is destruction’ - that without resurrection even the saints are ‘perished,’ and that Christ’s mission is to ‘give life,’ and so obtain a victory over the GRAVE.”

“But what reason have you for waving scholarly opinion aside in such a manner,” asked Dubitas.

“A very good reason,” answered Veritas, “for scholars cannot be expected to accept a meaning for a word which would contradict their foregone conclusions as to the nature of man and his survival after death. It is very true indeed that among ancient Greek writers, instances may be found where hades does stand for an invisible world of departed spirits, and if modern scholars are filled with such notions of ‘departed spirits’ they will be very prone to accept such a meaning for the word hades as agrees with them.”

“It seems to me,” said Dubitas, “that if you accept their opinion for one word, you should for another.”

“That is not good reasoning” said Veritas, smiling, for a reason may be found for a warped judgment in one instance that does not exist in all cases. I have suggested how their judgment may have become warped by the prevalent theory of a future state; which leads us to be cautious in accepting their opinion of ancient words bearing on that subject: besides all scholars do not define hades in the sense which you ask for it; even King James’s translators have rendered it ‘the grave.’”

“But the Jews must have believed that ‘hell’ was a place of conscious suffering, “remarked Pietas,” for is not the rich man represented as crying to father Abraham in the parable?”

“No doubt” replied Veritas, “that the Jews in Christ’s day held a notion (not the popular one though) of conscious existence after death, but it would be very foolish to set their notion against the teaching of Old and New Testaments. Peter, for instance, in his second epistle uses the pagan Greek conception of Tartarus in speaking of the darkness of the grave (ii. 4), but it would be absurd to construe the teaching of the Scriptures to suit that pagan notion. Christ has told us how these Jews had falsified the doctrines of God by their traditions (Matt. xv. 9), and we can trace instances of this not only in respect of commandments but also in their speculative beliefs.”

“But,” said Pietas, “this parable was Christ’s own teaching, not merely Jewish opinion.”

“It is more correct to say,” replied Veritas, “that Christ’s teaching is mirrored in this parable, but it does not make the mirror any more Christ’s own, than the use of Tartarus makes that pagan doctrine Peter’s own. If Christ’s purpose in that parable had been to delineate the truth of a future state then your observation might have some force in it, but it is not so. Accepting for a moment his hearers’ theory of the death-state he reflects his two-fold lesson therein; shewing first that man’s position in this life does not determine his position hereafter (that being abominable unto God which is highly esteemed among men), and secondly, that if a man will not listen to Moses and the prophets, he will not listen though one rose from the dead.”

Pietas seemed to feel the force of this, but Dubitas coughed, as though he could not swallow it, and quietly said - “clever.”

‘Clever, did you say? Then let me put to you a few simple questions.’”

“O, put them to Pietas,” he apologized.

“No, they belong to you,” returned his friend. First; supposing Christ held the common Jewish ideas of ‘Abraham’s bosom’ and of ‘Hades,’ what object could he have in saying, ‘neither will they listen though one rose from the dead?’ Second: do the Scriptures teach that ‘hell’ is within speaking distance of ‘heaven?’ Then again: do they teach that these localities are divided by ‘a great gulf?’ Further, do they represent that those who are in ‘hell’ are exercised in great solicitude for such of their kinsfolk as are still on earth.”

Dubitas evaded these questions by saying that he did not perceive their drift. “Never mind their drift” his friend replied, “Can you answer them?”

“Not at this moment” said Dubitas. “Then I will try to answer them for you” said Veritas.

To be continued...

Sister Helen Brady writes:

Dear Mr. Milne

I read your letter in the March Christadelphian magazine about the divine side of Christ’s nature but I cannot agree with your explanation of the subject and I wondered if you would consider another viewpoint.

If, as you say, the only difference between Christ and ourselves was the mental and moral strength which He received direct from God to enable Him to overcome temptations - why was it necessary for Him to be the Son of God at all?

Do you not think had God been merely concerned to provide a sacrifice who lived a perfectly obedient life, He could not have chosen a man already living and equip him with this special strength and power?

We certainly read in the Bible of men who pleased God by their complete obedience to His commands and Enoch at least was rewarded by never seeing death. We too, are exhorted “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father...” and where is there a commandment we cannot obey? Yet if your views are correct, Christ was the only one who could overcome and obey because He was the Son of God and received a special strength, and as we do not we can never obey and yet, as I have said, we read of men who did in fact succeed in obeying, so were they not as ‘different’ or ‘divine’ as Christ was? All this rather suggests to me that something more than perfection of character was required for a fit sacrifice, although obviously this was an essential requirement also.

To talk about a “divine side” of Christ’s nature will inevitably suggest an improbable half-God-half-man being and however distasteful it is to you it is inescapably Christadelphian Trinitarianism.

Christadelphians are no different from the rest of Christendom in their complete ignorance of the Nature and Sacrifice of Christ. They just do not know the real reason why Jesus was the Son of God and can only summon the feeble explanation that it was to enable Him to be specially strengthened. They conveniently ignore the fact that this doctrine completely robs Christ of all the glory and honour so much His due and simply makes Him a puppet manipulated by God and quite devoid of freewill.

I hope you have borne with me this far, because now I want to try to explain as briefly and clearly as possible what I believe to be the truth about Christ, His nature and sacrifice.

Adam received his life from God and was told if he ate of a certain tree he would be put to death that day. He disobeyed and but for God’s mercy he would have been put to death, but this would have meant the end of the human race. When Adam sinned he was alienated from God which was typified by his banishment from Eden. He was a sinner who owed a debt to his God, so all Adam’s descendants were born in the same state, alienated in debt or in bondage.

Jesus received his life from God not from a man descended from Adam and thus was a new creation as Adam had been in the beginning, and Jesus therefore was free from the bondage which included all other men, but He was related to the race which He was to redeem because He was born of Mary. He had to have an identical nature in order to prove that obedience is possible. By perfect obedience He retained His right to the life He received, and was thus in a position to give that which belonged to Him - His life - as the ransom price of his brother, Adam, who in parallel circumstances lost his right to life by sin. It was a violent death incurred in Eden and it was a violent death which Jesus suffered.

I am enclosing a book by Edward Turney written many years ago about these things. Do please read it, and I should be more than pleased to hear from you with your comments about this letter and the pamphlet.

Yours sincerely, HELEN BRADY.

The Seventh Chapter of Romans

“This seventh chapter of Romans is almost a touchstone by which a man’s whereabouts in spiritual understanding may be ascertained.”

So asserts a past editor of the Christadelphian in an article which appears his periodical. Now, suppose we endeavour to ascertain the writer’s “whereabouts” on the principle laid down by himself in reference to this chapter. While with many of his comments we can quite agree, on the other hand there are some from which we altogether dissent; and with the latter it is that we have mainly to deal. The editor starts well by observing that

“this chapter forms part of a chain of reasoning, but may, nevertheless, be considered apart without disadvantage, if its relation to the chain is recognised.”

He thinks it presents an illustration of Peter's remark about the Epistles of Paul in his second letter, third chapter, and sixteenth verse, which is not improbable. However that may be, certain it is the chapter under consideration has been found somewhat difficult of interpretation, for there has been much contention about it, even among those believed to possess spiritual discernment. There are some indeed who have gone the length of quoting the Apostle's words in justification of their own evil practices, and such persons would thereby seem to belong to the class denounced by Peter as the "unlearned and unstable (who) wrest (this), as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." No doubt it requires spiritual-mindedness to understand Paul's statements and to see their truth, as the Editor observes, but at the same time we must be careful to distinguish between the statements of an Apostle and those which are made by uninspired men, however high their reputation for "spiritual mindedness." To elucidate his idea that "a carnal man does not know what a carnal nature is," the editor brings forward a lion, which beast, he says "does not know itself a lion, though it be such." The illustration, however, is not apt. The parallel would be, a man does not know himself a man, though he be such. But this is not true, so we will dismiss the illustration and enquire what "a carnal man" really is? Paul defines him as one who minds the things of the flesh, who fulfils the desires of the flesh or who does the works of the flesh; and of these works he gives a long catalogue in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians.

Now, when a man lives in the practice of the vices enumerated, does he not know that he is guilty in these particulars, and that he is gratifying the appetites of his carnal nature? Does not an adulterer know that he is an adulterer, a murderer that he is a murderer, a drunkard that he is a drunkard? Undoubtedly he does, and not only so, but he will often take the greatest pains to conceal his iniquities from the eyes of others. In the same way a man who takes no heed to religion is fully aware of the fact. How common it is to hear such a man say openly - I am a man of the world, I am not a religious man, I make no profession of religion. We maintain, then, that a carnal man is not ignorant that he is carnal, but that his ignorance consists in his being unacquainted with divine things, and this is in perfect harmony with the Apostle's teaching that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them "because they are spiritually discerned."

In writing to the Saints at Rome the Apostle was addressing himself to a mixed assembly, composed partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles, a circumstance which gave rise to many disputes between them, and caused the Apostle to pen much that he has written not only in this Epistle to thy Romans but also in others of his letters. While the Jews would in all probability be conversant with the law of Moses, such would not be the case with the Gentiles and we believe it is for this reason that, in addressing them collectively in the parenthetic words of the first verse, Paul does not say "I speak to them that know the law," but "I speak to them that know law" there being no article in the original; thus alluding to law as we conceive, in a more general and extended sense, and not specially to the law of Moses. The illustration of marriage, as used by the Apostle would be readily understood by both classes, and would prepare their minds for the argument that was to be based upon it. In subsequent verses, beginning at the fourth, it is evident the Apostle referred particularly to his Jewish brethren, for to them only had Jehovah sustained the character of a husband. Thus in speaking to that nation by His prophet Isaiah, God declared, "Thy Maker is thy husband" (Isaiah 4:5). The Jews then stood in the relation of a "married wife" to the Almighty, and such being the nature of the union between Him and them, the law had dominion over them as long as they lived. In Paul's illustration, therefore, it follows that the woman is representative of the Jewish nation, and the husband of Jehovah; who may be said to have died representatively in the person of Christ. At this crisis the law was abrogated and the Jews became free to be married to another, "even to Him Who is raised from the dead." The Jews died legally and the Christ died really, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinance that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross." (Colossians 2:14). In this manner, then, the bond of union, or old covenant between God and His people was dissolved and the new covenant, or law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus, brought into force. In the prescribed way, that is, by Baptism into Christ, the Jews individually could, be united to another, although nationally in the condition of a widow, and thus desolate they must remain until the time indicated by the Prophet Ezekiel, when the Lord will bring the whole house of Israel into the bond of the covenant, Ezekiel 20:51.

With respect to the death of Christ, the editor says,

"When He rose again He was 'another man' in relation to what He had been before, a free man, by marriage with whom we may obtain freedom also."

Which, of course, implies that He was previously a bond man. But to be under law is not necessarily to be in bondage. The first Adam was placed under law but will any one venture to say that he was in bondage before he transgressed? Paul rejoiced in a certain law which had introduced him to a state of freedom. By implication, we are accused of teaching "it would have been sufficient to be married to the first Christ - Christ before crucifixion," which is about the most monstrous charge that has yet been brought against us. Such a charge involves the absurdity that Baptism into Christ before He suffered would have been efficacious as a means of salvation and thus, in effect, entirely overturns the plan of redemption for a belief so "vain" would render the death of Christ unnecessary, leave the promises unconfirmed, and falsify the divine word, which proclaims from Genesis to Revelations, that without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. The imputation, however, is one "carrying weight only with the simple. We do indeed teach that Christ was "free" - the free-born Son of God, and that He never lost that freedom by any act of transgression; maintaining with the Editor, that Christ was not "a sinner by birth, or any other means." Even here the writer is not consistent with himself, for in the very next sentence, he affirms, "*I believe He (Christ) inherited in His flesh the result of Adam's sin as we do.*" Other contradictions occur in the same paragraph; but the above sample of the Editor's "*spiritual discernment*" may suffice for the present.

The next statement we have to combat is that Christ was "*subject to death like His brethren.*" These words "*subject to death like His brethren*" are added by the writer to those of Paul in Galatians 4:4 where, speaking of the Son of God, the Apostle says He was "made under the law." Hebrews 2:9,14,16, are also quoted in the same connection; but these passages fail to establish the likeness contended for. What they certainly prove is that He was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death; that He was a partaker of flesh and blood, and of the seed of Abraham; which was requisite in order that the purpose of God in Him might be fulfilled. But unlike His brethren, His death was sacrificial; a sin offering for the sins of others, and a voluntary act of obedience to the will of His Heavenly Father. His own words prove this: "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." John 10:17, 18. Could Jesus have uttered such words as these if He had been "like His brethren" already dead in Adam? Impossible: there is no parallel between the two cases. Apart from His mission, there was no reason why Jesus should die; for death is the wages of sin, and He was without sin. On these grounds, then, we hold that Christ was not "subject to death like His brethren."

Passing over matters concerning which there is no dispute among us, "we must pause for a moment," as the Editor says, to consider the "*I*" of this (the seventh) and the succeeding eighteen verses. We concur with him in so far that in some of these verses "*Paul speaks of himself at different stages of his life.*" The question, however, arises - Does the Apostle refer to himself exclusively or does he not also speak of others in a similar position to himself, making the "*I*" of these passages representative of a class? Further, was not Paul an "unregenerate man" at one period of his existence? Was he not in this condition when he describes himself as "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious?"

We question whether the Editor's "*very rapid glance*" had not been rather too "rapid," and whether the charge of using "*the language of Ashdod*" does not recoil upon his own head? Did Paul himself "with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (verse 25) at any stage of his life? Hear what the Apostle says about the matter, "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:1, 2. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." 1 Corinthians 9:27. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," 1 Thessalonians 2:10. "This say I, then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1. These quotations show conclusively that Paul having been made free from the law of sin and death, not only served God with the mind, but also with the body, and that his members were the members of Christ. He did not exhort others to do what he did not perform himself, but was an example to them in all things. The fact is, the Editor has been misled, partly by his preconceived notions about "sinful flesh" and the Law of Moses, and partly by the English rendering of the apostle's words. The verse under consideration is interrogative, and should read thus: 'Do I, myself then, serve with the mind the law of God, but with the flesh the law of

sin? And the answer is, 'by no means.' This at once removes all ambiguity and shows the Apostle to be in harmony with himself. To use the Editor's own phrase,

"nothing but the requirements of a wrong theory could have suggested such an application of the words of Paul as would make him declare himself to be still serving with his flesh that very law of sin and death from which he had been made free."

McKnight has an excellent note on this verse, which we here transcribe:

"Do I, myself, then, as a slave, serve with the mind the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin? *Apa ouv auros eyw* etc. Here *apa* is a particle of interrogation. This question is an inference from what the Apostle has said concerning his being delivered from the body of death, through Jesus Christ. Being delivered, Do I myself then, as a slave, serve with, etc. Translated in this manner, interrogatively, the passage contains a strong denial that the person spoken of, after being delivered from the body of this death, any longer serves as formerly, with the mind only, the law of God; and with the flesh the law of sin in his members. Whereas, translated as in our English Bible, So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin, it represents the delivered person as still continuing in that very slavery to sin, from which he says he was delivered by God through Christ, and utterly overturns the inference drawn, chap. eight 1) from what is said in this passage. There is, therefore, no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, 2), For the law of the Spirit, etc. But if those to whom there is no condemnation walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, it surely cannot be said of such, in any sense, that with the flesh they serve the law of sin; so that the common translation of verse 25 is utterly wrong, and even dangerous." - (Apostolic Epistles, vol. 1, p. 291, note 2.)

Far be it from us to make "sport" of a law of God, or "dare" a "presumptuous question." To make sport of a divine law, and to make sport of those who by their false interpretations pervert a divine law, are two totally different things, and they must not be confounded. There is nothing either "presumptuous" or "son of Belial like" in exercising our reasoning powers in what God has caused to be written. On the contrary, we are expressly invited to do so, for instance, God says by His prophet Isaiah, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," Isaiah 1:18. And again, by His prophet Ezekiel, 18:29, 29, addressing the house of Israel, "Are not your ways equal, are not your ways unequal?" What are such passages as these but invitations to His creatures, on the part of the Almighty, to examine and search into the justice and equity of His proceedings in relation to them? We believe, as the Apostle affirms, that "the law is holy, just and good," and on this account we cannot accept the conclusions arrived at by the Editor: in our judgment they would prove that the law was the very reverse in all these particulars, and would in effect make the Almighty the author of sin. Not in this fashion can the "apparent paradox" in Paul's writings be reconciled. The conflict between the propensities of human nature and the new man of the spirit is felt and admitted by all who are under the influence of the latter: but it is a mistake to suppose that it is impossible to obtain the victory over the flesh. Such an idea is contrary to both precept and example, not only as set forth in the writings of Paul, but throughout the New Testament. In addition to what has been already quoted we add the following "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John 3:6 and 5:18.

The difficulty of understanding verses 14 to 24, we are informed, "*arises from a superficial view of the case.*" This may be granted without, however, committing ourselves to the editor's view of the case, which does not appear to us to be a following of Paul "*in the depth of his argument.*" The writer says of the Apostle that

"he carried about with him the spiritual burden of the old man, whom, though held in subjection, he found, to be an ever-present obstacle to the full flights marked out by the new mental man created in him in Jesus Christ."

According to the Editor's reasoning, the case of the Apostle was that of a man who had not put off the old man with his deeds, as he counselled others to do, but who still carried the burden about with him! If the

“*spiritual burden of the old man*” was held in subjection, how, we ask, could it at the same time be an ever-present obstacle? Are obstacles held in subjection obstacles still? We confess we have not yet soared high enough to comprehend such logic as this. Speaking of Paul having become spiritually minded, the writer remarks,

“but this was an engraftment from without.” “It was superimposed on the natural Paul by the education of the truth. It was a new man united with the old or natural man.” “There was thus a duality created.”

This is the editor’s idea of the Apostle when he had become spiritually minded; he was a “*duality*” composed of a new man united with the old or natural man. A sort of co-partnership had thus been established between sin and righteousness! The Apostle consequently was at one and the same time both carnal and spiritual, in the flesh and in the Spirit, sold under sin and redeemed by Christ, under condemnation and not under condemnation, under the law of sin and death and yet free from that law! If Paul’s “*duality*” is to be admitted, it cannot certainly be allowed in this sense. The engraftment from without transformed the natural Paul into the spiritual Paul. It did not unite the one to the other as the editor teaches. Thus transformed, the Apostle was no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, having passed from under a sentence of death into a state of justification to life eternal. The editor has mistaken the struggle between the natural impulses of our nature and the new man thus created in Christ Jesus, for a struggle between the old man of the flesh and the new man of the Spirit, as if the two could co-exist in the same person and constitute him a duality.

The writer continues,

“It is necessary, to have this duality in view in order to appreciate Paul’s remarks in question.”

And these are summed up in what the Apostle said to the Galatians,

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

In brief, the Editor’s position with respect to the “*spiritually-minded*” Paul is that so long as he was physically in the flesh he was unable to accomplish what he would, and necessarily submitted to things he would not. And keeping this in view we see the Editor’s “*whereabouts*” in relation to the Apostle and the seventh chapter of Romans - a position which we entirely repudiate as not only false but most pernicious in its tendencies, for it would not only countenance but excuse all sorts of shortcomings in those professing to be spiritually minded. The application made of the passage just quoted from Galatians does not savour much of “*spiritual discernment*.” The words used by the Apostle do not teach, and could not possibly be meant to teach, that a man could not in the absolute sense do the things that he would. Such an interpretation would not be in harmony with the previous verse which reads, “This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Campbell translates the last clause of the 17th verse thus: “So that ye do not do the things that ye would.” And in the Diaglott it is rendered, “ye do not perform” etc. Such a rendering does away with the notion of impossibility and harmonises the Apostle with himself as well as with the Apostle John.

“We will (shall?) not be held accountable for non-performance of the impossible”
says the editor in the last paragraph but one of his article.

“Shall we presumptuously dare to impugn Almighty justice and charge Him with commanding us to the perform the impossible? God forbid.”

The natural impulse or desires are not sinful in themselves; they were originally implanted in man by his Creator, and only became sinful when allowed to pass over the boundary line which the law of God lays down. Within this limit all is well: to go beyond it is transgression of law, which is sin. Paul doubtless was fully conscious of this warfare within him, but in the conflict he overcame and “crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.” In his sanctified state Paul, though of course still in the flesh in a physical sense, did

not do things which he hated and allowed not. To cite the observation of Archbishop Whateley on this point, the Apostle did not live “a life of wretched contradiction to his own judgment.”

In his Epistle to the Romans Paul says – “Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6. But according to the Editor’s reasoning the “old man” in Paul, instead of “being crucified,” had formed an alliance with the new, and the Apostle still served sin. He calls upon the Ephesians, chapter 4:22, to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” Taking the Editor’s view, the Apostle, while thus exhorting the Church at Ephesus, had himself failed to comply with the injunction, and so far from putting off the old man had united him to the new! Again, in writing to the Colossians, the same Apostle says: “Ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” Colossians 3:9. But the editor would persuade us that Paul had neither put off the old man nor his deeds; no wonder then he could not do the things that he would! In the same paragraph we are gravely informed by the writer that:

“The implantation of the mind of the Spirit by the word, does not extirpate the natural man with his affections and lusts; it imposes but a check, a control, a power to restrain and crucify and bring into subjection. From which it results that although this implantation of the mind of the Spirit has the power to do all this, yet it is not done or only in an imperfect manner! There is power to bring into subjection, but the person under its influence is not subjected, and can still say: “I am carnal, sold under sin.”

If this was Paul’s position we should just like to ask the Editor how the Apostle could be a follower of Christ? Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:1.

Paul could triumphantly say at the close of his career: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” 2 Timothy 4:7.

The Editor will of course repudiate the results arrived at from this examination of his article, but they are nevertheless logical deductions from the premises he has laid down, and convict him, we will not by any means say of teaching intentionally what is not only contrary to sound doctrine but most dangerous in its tendency, giving room for those so disposed to excuse themselves on the plea that they are no worse than the Apostle, for he did things that he hated, and the good that he would he did not, but the evil that he would not that he did; and further induce such to comfort themselves with the notion that it was not they who did it; but sin that dwelt in them! It is much to be regretted that a man like the Editor, who has reasoned so well about the Kingdom, the mortality of man, etc., should be so far astray on other points; but so long as he continues to adhere to the dogma of “sinful-flesh,” he will not only be out of harmony with the Scriptures but inconsistent with himself, we are sorry for him, and also for those whom he misleads, but we still venture to indulge a hope that he may live to see his error and have the moral courage to renounce it.

Brother S.G.Hayes.