

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 267

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2014

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1. If you believe in Jesus and are baptised into the covenant relationship he established at the last supper, and on Him that sent Him, you have passed from death to life. This is in the Present Tense. What death have you passed from? Please note, I will not accept the term "prospectively."

The Apostle John said "We know that we have passed from death to life." This is also in the Present Tense.

By physical law Adam was already subject to death at creation, so how could the same death pass upon him as a penalty for his sin?

Paul says, "By the offence of one many be dead." Yet they were alive, otherwise they could not pass from death to life while alive naturally.

2. In the teaching of the inspired word of God there is more meaning to the term 'death' than some people realise. How otherwise could St John say, "He that loveth not his brother abides in death." What death does he abide in? Apparently there is a choice.

St Paul said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death", and Paul did not die a natural death for this purpose. What are your answers?

**Brother Phil Parry.**

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## Editorial

"Has the world gone mad?" is a question I read the other day when reading of events in Gaza. Well it would seem so, but it is only what was foretold in the Bible years ago. All the world's eyes are on Israel and Jerusalem.

Jesus said, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers' places. All these are the beginning of sorrows..." (Matthew 24:6-8).

It is needful we see these terrible events from God's point of view. God is Love so where are we to see the love of God in wars of destruction?

It is only right that we start by looking at God's love for mankind. We are His creation and He gave commandments for us to keep, every one of which is for the great benefit of mankind. Jesus summarised and

re-iterated these commandments for us in Matthew 22:37- 40 when He said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

These commandments were given to Israel in the Law of Moses and history shows how Israel strayed away from God through unbelief and chose rather to copy other nations in worshipping idols. This resulted in God’s denunciation and punishment for their backsliding and evil practices. The last king of Israel was Zedekiah whom God rejected as we read in Ezekiel 21:25-27, “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” King Zedekiah was captured and Israel conquered and ruled over by other nations up to the time of Christ. And then they rejected Christ, their Messiah, who proved to all those with eyes to see that He was the Son of God, - and they crucified Him.

The Apostle Paul tells us more about God’s anger when writing to the Romans, where in the first chapter, verses 18 to 23 he writes: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”

Is it any wonder that God was against them?

After Jesus’ crucifixion salvation was offered to the Gentiles through Jesus but have they done any better? Christian history has been no better than Jewish history.

Is it any wonder that the world is in the mess we see today? It is not! Hence the words of Jesus with which we started these notes, “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers’ places.”

So what of Israel today? Ezekiel 20 foretells of this present time for we read in verse 33 to 38, “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out...so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me:” and finally, “there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: there will I accept them... I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

As for the nations who are against Israel, Habakkuk saw in vision God’s anger against them, and cried out “in wrath remember mercy!”

It is during this period Jesus will make Himself known and they will be forced to acknowledge Him as their Messiah for whom all faithful Jews have longed. Once they have acknowledged Jesus they will mourn for what their forefather did and turn to God with their whole heart. This will be the beginning of peace for all the earth for which Christians have prayed – “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is now done in heaven.” Even so come quickly Lord. Amen.

With love to all, Russell.

**Extract from the writings of Edward Turney...**

I now come to speak of Millenarianism, which, as many of you know, comes from the Latin words *mille*, a thousand, and *annus*, a year. Millenarians believe that the kingdom of God is to be established on the earth, and that it is to exist a thousand years. What else they believe is no concern of ours at present; for please to note that *this* is our crime — *this* is the ground of our condemnation, our identification in *this respect* with Millenarianism, one of the “several errors” or “heresies” — a “fag-end” of something that all enlightened men have long ago thrown to the useless scrap-heap of an effete theology. If this be true, I want to know what becomes of hundreds of the best hearts and profoundest heads in the State Church, and many others equally worthy and erudite, though differing in some respects from the Established Church. What of the Newton’s, Lowth’s, Milner’s, Elliott’s; and in our own town Brookes’s — what of such men as Adam Clarke, Milton, Henry Constable, and a crowd of other noble and learned men too numerous to mention? Have they, in holding and teaching this, adhered to what is “unworthy and untrue”? Have they, I demand, been guilty of a “prostitution of the word of God”? I thank God that out of the writings of these noble minds I have found much to strengthen and confirm me in my study of the Scriptures. But we venture to exhume this fag-end, and to say that it is part and parcel of things divine. Under the head of Millenarianism the words objected to are these: “The kingdom of God a divine political administration of human affairs, to be established universally at the visible advent of Christ on earth.” Now I ask, is the kingdom of God *not* to be a divine political administration of human affairs? And, secondly, is it *not* to be established universally at the visible advent of Christ on earth? Our popular and learned opponent says “no.” But Christadelphianism cries “Yes” with the voice of a trumpet, and is prepared to back up the assertion on the moment with 150 passages of Scripture.”

Mr. Clemance, in a certain part of this tract which will come under notice on a future night, charges Christadelphianism with regarding the statements of the prophets in the Old Testament as being equal to the statements of Paul, who, he says, was more enlightened; and (if the truth were known, and a little more candour employed) on the same principle I “guess,” to use an Americanism, that Mr. Clemance would be found a little more enlightened than Paul. It is our crime that we are wont to look at the Old Testament Scriptures as equivalent to the New — that when Moses, David, Isaiah, and the rest speak we regard their sayings as equal to the sayings of Jesus, Peter, Paul, James, and John. In a certain sense we do, and why?

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. xix. 10); “David was a prophet, and spoke as he was *moved by the Holy Spirit*” (Acts ii. 80); and Peter says that the spirit of Christ was in the prophets (1 Peter i. 11). Paul likewise, “For whatsoever things were *written aforetime*, were written for *our learning*, that we through patience and comfort of *the Scriptures might have hope*” (Rom. xv. 4). These are some of our reasons. We do not regard the utterances of the old prophets merely as the utterances of bards or of learned and great men, but we look upon them as we do upon the sayings of Jesus — as *the Eternal Spirit speaking* through them and through Him; and we affirm that they most plainly teach that *the kingdom of God is to be a divine political administration of human affairs*, and, secondly, that it is to be established universally at the visible advent of Christ on earth.

Why does Mr. Clemance object to this doctrine? I ask why, because he says (p. 11, par. 11) that “he believes as firmly as anyone in the glorious kingdom which will be ushered in at the second coming of the Son of God.” Well, that is the “rev.” gentleman against himself, and I like, above all things, to fight a man with his own weapons. He has furnished me with plenty of *materiel*, and I shall take the liberty to use it. Bring in our Procrustes of page 11 against our Procrustes of page 1, or rather 2, for in the latter he ranks this as one of the “prostitutions,” while in the former he says it is “the blessed hope!!!” I will forgive him for what he said at page 2, and accept with all my heart what he says at page 11. And having admitted that the kingdom of God will be established upon earth at the appearing of Christ, I trust the “rev.” gentleman will accompany us with pleasure while we run through several passages which furnish luminous and unanswerable, proof. Now I will refer you to Matthew, chap. 6, and I begin here because Mr. Clemance is of the school that regards the words of Jesus as superior to those of the apostles, and prophets. Commencing at v. 7, we read, “But when ye pray use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do” — (the word heathen here means Gentiles; and there are a good any heathen in this town using vain repetitions when they pray) — “for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” — (as when they pray twenty minutes, for instance, and, after a short rest, pray an additional quarter of an hour). “Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, *thy kingdom COME*, thy will be done *in EARTH* as it is, in heaven.” What

does this teach? That the kingdom is to *come*, but where? To where those are who pray for it, otherwise it could not come. They are not to *go* to it, and have not got it, or they could not rationally pray “*Thy kingdom COME.*” But to confirm it there follows, “Thy will be clone *in earth.*” That I suppose from Mr. Clemance on p. 1 is “unworthy and untrue,” and Mr. Clemance’s “dear friends” are put on their guards lest they should be beguiled with such heresies. Still, I bring Jesus against him. We are to pray for Christ’s kingdom to come. We are to expect that when it does come it will be established, upon the earth.

Now let us turn elsewhere, first to the 9th chap, of the prophet Isaiah, v. 6 (in the following texts of Scripture you will find some which must have been, often read by all present; with others some of you may not be quite so familiar): “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and *the government* shall be upon His shoulder: and, His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Are you asking what government? The answer is in the next verse: — “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice henceforth even forever.” Have you a reverence for the Scriptures? Mr. Clemance says that Christadelphian reverence for the Scriptures is not real; he speaks of their “pretended reverence.” I do not think it worthwhile to reply to the accusation, but I will remind you, with respect to what Isaiah has just affirmed, that he adds these words: “*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*” Has he yet performed it? Peter says that Christ was raised up to sit on David’s throne (Acts ii. 30), and Christ himself taught that He would sit on it in the regeneration, *when* He should come and appoint His Apostles to tribal thrones, and take the administration over the nations into His own hands. (Matt. xix. 28; Rev. ii. 26, 27.) Now read v. 5 of the 16th chap, of the same prophet: “And in mercy shall the throne be established: and He shall sit upon it in truth *in the tabernacle of David*, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness.” Next turn to the 22nd chap., v. 22: “And the *key of the house of David* will I lay upon His shoulder: so He shall open, none shall shut, and He shall shut and none shall open: and I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place: and He shall be for a glorious throne to His Father’s house.”

I might quote freely from the same prophet, but I pass on to the next book. Please observe that it is universally agreed that the passages I am citing are applicable to the Messiah, and, therefore, to Jesus of Nazareth, who was assuredly the Messiah. Now v. 6 of the 23rd chap. of Jeremiah: “In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is His name by which He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” To whom is that applicable, but the only-begotten Son of God? And now v. 5: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice *in the earth.*” This affirms that the kingdom of God is to be a divine political administration of human affairs upon earth. Turning backward to the 89th Psalm, we read, at v. 3: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and *build up thy throne to all generations.*” A little lower down, at v. 25: “I will set His hand also in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers.” Then, at v. 27: “Also I will make Him my first-born, *higher than the kings of the earth.*” At v. 29: “His seed (the children of the promise, i.e., who believe the promise are counted for the seed) also will I make-to endure-forever, and His throne as the days of heaven.” Verse 36, “His seed shall endure forever, and His throne as the sun before me.” Now turn back a little, and read an extract from the 72nd Psalm: “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son; *He shall judge Thy people* with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment.” The Jews are God’s people, and Christ is their king. Verse 7: “In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth: He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the *ends of the earth.*” Verse 11: “Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; *all nations* shall serve him.” Then, at the last verse: “And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the *whole earth* be filled with His glory.”

Yet another quotation in proof of this proposition, from the 5th chap, of Micah. This testimony is of great weight, and is wonderfully explicit. “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be *ruler in Israel.*” Now v. 4: “And He shall stand and feed (or rule) in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they (*i.e.*, Israel) shall abide: for now shall *he be great unto the ends of the earth.*” I also ask your attention to v. 7 of the 43rd chap, of Ezekiel (and allow me to say that this is part of a vision which the prophet saw with respect to Jerusalem’s future, and Jehovah’s house): “Son of man, *the place* of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell *in the midst of the children of Israel* forever.” And,

doubtless, you have all read sometime or other in the prophet Zechariah that “His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, and the mountain shall cleave asunder,” and so forth.

Here is a passage from the 6th chap, of Zechariah, v.-9-12: “And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah: then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech-the high-priest: and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch” (now all expositors believe that refers to Christ); “and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord. Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon the throne: and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Now here are some very beautiful words from the second book of Samuel, chap. 23. v. 2, styled David’s last words, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, *He that ruleth over MEN* must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”

If the Messiah is not to rule on earth, then this cannot be accomplished, for it would not be ruling over men if He presided over the ghosts of the dead in the popular heaven. To proceed: “And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds: as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain: Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with *me* an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things” (mark that) “and *sure*; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow.” Ask yourselves, as Christian *men* and women, whether that is all *your* salvation and all *your* desire? It is a most important question. This foretells the establishment of the Davidian throne in the hands of David’s son. It was all his salvation and all his desire, though current appearances were not favourable to such a consummation.

We have next a most remarkable statement, at v. 7: “But the man that shall touch them” (the sons of Belial mentioned in the previous verse) “must be fenced” (or filled, as the margin has it) “with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.” Bishop Lowth translates this a little differently, but it does not alter the sense of the English version. Do not these words carry you to Gethsemane, and bring before you that Roman spear? Well, there is the man who is to destroy the sons of Belial — there is He who is to be a ruler over men; and it sometimes well-nigh bewilders me when I hear men calling themselves ambassadors of Jesus Christ preaching what, if carried out, would rob the Son of God of His inheritance.

In the 9th chap, of Amos, at v. 11, we read: “In that *day* will I raise up the tabernacle of David *that is fallen*, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up *his ruins*, and will build it as in the days of old.” You have the comment of Dr. Adam Clarke upon this (and you may read it at leisure), which comment says that the testimony has never yet been fulfilled. The ruins have never yet been raised up. Christ has not sat on the throne of David. In the 15th chap, of Acts, commencing at v. 12, it is written: “Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return, and will *build again* the tabernacle of David, which is *fallen down*; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.”

With what object? “That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.” In the 2nd chap, of Daniel, at v. 35, we have other testimony. I shall not speak of the “great image” seen by the king in his dream, farther than to observe that it was a figure of the kingdoms of the earth.

Now expositors agree that “the stone” which shattered the “great image” and pulverized it stands for the Christ Power. Where, then, is this Power to occupy? We should be inclined to think just where it had been making a clearance. And that is even so, as written by the prophet — “The Stone that smote the image became a *great mountain*, and filled *the whole earth*; This great mountain doubtless represents Christ’s kingdom which shall rule over all — put down all rule and all authority — for “the kingdoms of *this world*”

John in vision saw, “were become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” And at v. 44 we read, in the same chap: “And in their days *even* of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and *consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand for ever.”

Once more from the prophet Daniel. In the 7th chap, he describes one of his sublimest visions, and it is about the kingdom of God he says, at v. 13: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.” Need I ask you who is here meant? You would all cry, The Nazarene. That is true. Listen, then, to what is said of him by the prophet: “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that *all people, nations, and languages* should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” This kingdom he is to share with the saints, for at v. 18 it reads: “But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom forever.” A little lower down, we read, at v. 21-22: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and *judgment was given to the saints* of the Most High; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom*.” One verse more from this chap., verse 27: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” When you hear men ask, What is to be the end of all these political changes? let me remind you that the prophet says, “Hitherto is the end of the matter.” Ah! that is “the end of the matter,” the kingdom of God to be established on the earth; and as to the duration of that kingdom, I refer you to the 20th chap, of Revelation. Here you will find, between the 1st and 7th verses, the period of time—a thousand years—is mentioned no fewer than six times. For instance, it says, in v. 2, “And he laid hold on the dragon that-old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him *a thousand years*.” In v. 3 we are told that he “should deceive the nations no more till the *thousand years* should he fulfilled.” At v. 4, concerning the saints, “they lived and reigned with Christ *a thousand years*.” Once more, at v. 5, “But the rest of the dead lived not again till the *thousand years* were finished.” Yet once more, at v. 6, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall *reign with him a thousand years*.”

Finally, at v. 7, “When the *thousand years* are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” This represents the binding or restraining of sin in all its forms during the reign of Christ and His saints. In the 5th chap., at v. 9, we read: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the hook, 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; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and *we shall reign ON THE EARTH*.”

There, then, is a part of my proof — part because I am pinched for time — of this proposition that “the kingdom of God is a divine political administration of human affairs *to be established universally at the visible advent of Christ on earth*.” I could have quoted from Timothy (“I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom”) and from many other places. My opponent says these things (for they are part of Christadelphianism) are “unworthy” — that they are “untrue.” He says not merely that they are prostitutions, but unequalled - the worst of all prostitutions of the word of God.

Speaking for the Christadelphian people in this town, what have I to say in reply? Just this: May he live to see his error, may God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ forgive him his sin in this matter, and, finally, may those under his pastoral care be delivered from such deadly doctrine, and find their way into the kingdom of God at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Good night! Thank you for your attention. We shall be in the front rank next Sunday night, and before we have done we shall riddle every position, accusation, and argument from beginning to end; and, if that is not enough, if the rev. gentleman thinks he can do more, he shall have the opportunity of meeting us on any platform that is fair either in this or in any other town.

## **A FEW THOUGHTS ON PRAYER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**Introductory reading: 1 Kings 8:22-55.**

At a mid-week Bible Class I recall a talk on prayer and if my memory serves me correctly it was given by our late brother Rupert Chamberlain. I don't remember anything of what was said that night but I well remember my own feelings and the feelings of others who expressed their thoughts afterwards. It was so well received by everyone and felt to be so helpful that it was decided there and then that we should have more talks on prayer.

I was a young man then, especially young in my understanding and I was listening to one of the respected Elders of the ecclesia talking upon a subject very close to his heart. If there have been any talks on prayer since then I have missed them and it has been my loss. I mention this because I believe it was partly due to my request to the Bible Class Program Committee that the subject of prayer should be included in this year's program and when I agreed to give this talk, it was not because I felt I was the right person to deal with this subject but because I felt responsible for this subject being in the program.

Prayer is a subject of the heart and it is a big subject because it covers man's approach to God in so many different ways, for so many different reasons and on so many varied occasions. There is no way in which one could adequately deal with the subject in one evening talk.

The word 'pray' means 'to ask' or "please" and though not used any more in this sense in our modern language we are all familiar with this meaning in the scriptures. But prayer has come to mean much more than just asking and so in the sense we shall use it here it will be our approach to our Creator in our worship of Him, our reverence for Him, our thanking Him as well as our asking of Him. So tonight let's see some of the ways in which a few people in the Old Testament times approached God. Adam and Abraham and others talked directly with God, or with an angel as God's representative but there were other occasions when it was necessary to approach God through the priest or High Priest who would intercede for them. Then there were the sacrifices, the casting of lots, Urim and Thummim, vows, oaths and fastings all involving prayer. In fact, no part of worship can be left out of our consideration.

There are very many prayers recorded in the Old Testament for nearly all the Psalms are prayers, and besides these there are about 90 others recorded. One of the most marvellous things about these prayers is that they are all expressed by men and women of great faith. They contain no errors, no false nor even doubtful or questionable ideas and in all these prayers we find nothing but truth. We find God-fearing men and women pouring out their hearts, expressing the very highest thoughts of which the human mind is capable. We see them reflecting the character of their great Creator, accepting His covenants, acknowledging His righteousness, proclaiming His love and mercy and grace, while, at the same time, realising their own unworthiness, understanding their obligations and, in humility, appreciating their great privileges. As a man thinketh, so is he and in considering prayer we are treading sacred ground where thoughts of the heart meet with God and it is a great honour to come so close to holy men and women of old as to share such intimacies, fears, hopes and joys.

The prayer that was read by way of introduction is the climax of the Old Testament. God had chosen the site on which the temple was to be built. The threshing floor of Ornan (1 Chronicles 21:18) "Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and set up an alter unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." And in chapter 22 v. 1 "Then David said. This is the house of the Lord God and this is the alter of burnt-offering for Israel." Then in verse 19 David charges Solomon, his son, to build the house of God "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God: arise therefore and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord." And in 1 Kings 8 is the prayer of dedication of that temple - the sanctuary of the Lord God. It is the supreme prayer of the Old Testament, even as the 17th chapter of John's Gospel is the supreme prayer of the New, and it is that on which the Law of Moses centres, and indeed the whole of the Old Testament before being replaced by the New.

It is a prayer which contains all the elements of worship. Praise, thanksgiving, reverence and supplication, covenants and vows. What may seem remarkable is the submissiveness of Solomon; his dependence and humility, for the kings of his time were despots who ruled with great authority and severity and while Solomon was fast becoming the greatest king of the greatest nation in the world his heart showed a right understanding of his relationship with his Maker.

If we are to fully appreciate these prayers it is necessary that we too, have a right understanding of our relationship with God, for only then can we know the depths and the riches of His love, and this, in turn, greatly affects our own attitude in prayer as well as enriching our estimation of the prayers we are considering.

God, over the years, made several covenants with man and in each it is God who formulates the covenant and man has no part in this but to accept whatever God decrees. These covenants show His righteousness, love and mercy and man has to acknowledge his proper standing in the eyes of his Creator.

The first prayer we will look at is in Genesis 24. Abraham's eldest servant ruled over all his house and in an earlier chapter we are told that Abraham's chief steward was Eliezer. It would seem likely that they were one and the same, so let's call him Eliezer here in chapter 24. Now this servant was the eldest of many. We would call him a slave today for he was owned by Abraham and he accepted this as his position. His duty was to do his master's bidding. Eliezer was also a God-fearing man.

Well, Abraham was old and he sent Eliezer on a long journey - perhaps some 600 or 700 miles - to find a bride for his son Isaac. A journey lasting about 2 weeks or so. At the end of his journey, Eliezer seeks guidance in prayer, verse 12, "And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham." Notice how Eliezer asks for nothing on his own account, nor does he presume to address God as his God, but Abraham's. He makes himself of no account. Verse 14, "And let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say. Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink; and I will give thy camels drink, also, let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac, and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."

Here we see Eliezer's attitude as an example to us all as a right attitude for all God's servants and is the one shown in all the Old Testament prayers. And how quickly God answered Eliezer's prayer! Before he had done speaking in his heart there was Rebekah before him! He stood in wonderment for a few moments while the realisation of the events that had happened came to him. When he had finished telling Rebekah his mission, and learning that there was room to lodge in, he again bowed his head in thanksgiving and worshipped God. Verse 27, "And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my masters brethren." That was enough for Eliezer, for he wished for nothing more than to complete his mission. But let's just complete the next part of this delightful story - not that I wish to say much more about it but just for its own sake. Rebekah goes into the house to tell her family this remarkable news while Eliezer remains waiting outside. But not for long and the next words he hears have a familiar ring to them - "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house."

This surely, was not the usual form of addressing a slave and we can only suppose that there was something about this man Eliezer which made it appropriate.

Next we will turn to Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit. They knew they were naked and they hid from God. Now, prayer is our approach to God, but that's not what Adam and Eve wanted to do just now for they were fearful of Him and wanted nothing more than to get away from Him for they knew that their lives were in danger. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" and that's what they had done. It was necessary for God to show the initiative to bring them back to Him. So He called them until they realised it was no use hiding away any more. They had to finally approach Him and talk with Him. They were humble, full of remorse and ashamed. They wanted to put things right but there was no prayer they could offer that would put things right and then, they were told that God would put things right - in His way and in His good time. The coverings they had made for themselves would not do and they watched while a lamb was slain and the skin made into aprons for each to wear. We don't know how they felt in seeing the animal slain, but for most people it is unpleasant and to some a distressing experience, especially the first time. And to feel responsible for the slaying would only add to their sadness. But even more than just this, for they had to wear those skins day by day, always reminding them of their guilt, it had been all their fault. It was explained to them that one day God would provide a lamb which would take away all sin but until then, regular sacrifices had to be made.

Adam and Eve had no alternative but to accept a new relationship with their Creator, and God formulated a new covenant for them to live by. There was no going back to the way things were for the Cherubim, each with a flaming sword would have destroyed them, as indeed it does all that is not acceptable to God. We may be quite sure Adam and Eve offered up a prayer of thanksgiving that their lives were spared.

Adam and Eve were now sinners and had sold themselves and were slaves to sin. All future generations would now be born into that slavery, and even as slaves have no rights so man has no rights, but he must serve a master. However, slaves can be bought and sold, and God so loved the world that he set about buying. It was not the will of God that man should remain slaves to sin and death. So now the covering of skins gave provisional re-instatement of Devine favour, and in the 4,000 years from Adam to Christ sacrifices reminded the God-fearing of their position of helplessness and hopelessness apart from the love, mercy and grace of God, and like Eliezer, they sought to do only the will of Him who sent them on life's journey.

Prayer is for our benefit. It is because of God's love for His children that He asks use to pray to Him, and indeed He demands it and puts us in situations which leave us no alternative. He knows our needs and He tries our hearts - time and again in order to build our trust in Him and develop our characters.

Now let's turn to Exodus 14. Israel, after leaving Egypt, was now three days journey into the wilderness. The Egyptian army came marching after them in order to recapture them and take them back again to slavery. The children of Israel had travelled down a valley to the sea shore. There were mountains on either side and they were in trouble. They had a big problem. Mountains to the right, mountains to the left, the enemy behind and the sea in front! What were they to do? They couldn't fight, for they had no weapons, and they couldn't flee, for there was nowhere to go. But their problem was their opportunity - their opportunity to show their trust in God, and they cried unto the Lord. Sadly, it was not a cry for help but a cry of complaint for they failed to show any faith in God and in verse 11, "They said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt with us, to carry us out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in this wilderness."

Moses, ever patient, pleads with them to put their trust in God. "The Lord will fight for you." But the lesson of appealing to God had yet to be learnt. Time and again the children of Israel failed to approach God in the right way and in the right frame of mind. Though they had been slaves in Egypt and had been severely treated and any complaint brought only harsher treatment and greater burdens, they would, it seemed, rather live for the moment in Egypt than put their trust in God. Where was their thankfulness and their appreciation of all that the Lord had done and was now doing for them? How many had hearts acceptable to God? Sadly, very few.

For a contrast we will turn next to 11 Chronicles 20. "It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is Engedi. And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgement, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might

against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children.”

How similar was their situation to that of Israel in the wilderness when they had mountains to the right, mountains to the left, the enemy behind and the sea in front! And here again, the people were in dire straights. And again, their problem was their opportunity to show faith. And they did. Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast, and Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord. They put their hearts right with God. This is what it is all about. All things work for the good of those that love God. Jehoshaphat, in his prayer recalls Solomon’s prayer of dedication and they link themselves with the great purpose of God. They cried unto the Lord God in their affliction but this time to seek help. Verse 12 “for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee; and all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children.” It was no use looking around to see what they could do for themselves. They had to look up, and in order to look up one has to stand still. Verse 15 “And he (Jahaziel, a Levite in the congregation) said, Hearken ye, all Judah and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God’s...” verse 17 “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go ye out against them, for the Lord will be with you.” Notice verse 18...

“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord and the Levites stood up to praise the Lord” and all this is before the battle had begun! Next morning they rose early and went into the wilderness of Tekoa where their enemies were encamped, and Jehoshaphat stood encouraging the people saying “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.”

Verse 21 “And when he had consulted the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord and that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army and say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever. The singers went out first - before the army! And all the people praised God, even though the enemy they were going out to meet were preparing for battle. What faith! What trust in God! Verse 22 “And as they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir ...and they were smitten ...and none escaped.” O what joy and thankfulness those people experienced that day. Their salvation was reward enough, but on top of all this they had the spoil of their enemies which took them three days to collect, it was so much. And finally, they came back to Jerusalem. Verses 27 & 28 “Then they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them to go again to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord.” No doubt to offer thanksgiving in the house of God before returning to their homes.

We have looked at right and wrong attitudes of the heart in prayer, now let’s turn to the subject of casting of lots and the Urim and Thummim. This casting of lots was used very extensively in the Old Testament and provision was made for it in the Law of Moses. It was a very deliberate way of seeking a decision from God. It was used on the Day of Atonement for deciding which of the two goats should be slain and which set free. It was used in the allocation of territory when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land. It was used to determine guilty people, and it was used in the allocation of Temple duties. The Urim and the Thummim would also appear to be a method of casting of lots and used on occasions, not only to determine guilty persons but also elsewhere used to seek council of the Lord.

In all cases it would appear to be the prerogative of the priests to cast lots. The first occurrence is in Leviticus 16:8. This is on the Day of Atonement and Aaron had to cast lots over the two goats “one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scape-goat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord’s lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to make an atonement with him and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.”

It may seem a very simple matter but the choice of which goat should live and which should die was made by God and not by man, and there can be little doubt that before the lots were cast a prayer was offered to God, a prayer for guidance, of confession and of thankfulness, though no form of words is recorded.

Turning next to Joshua 7. Jericho had fallen to the Israelites. The first city to fall to them as they entered the Promised Land under Joshua. Ai was next, but something went wrong. They were defeated and Joshua was perplexed. Verse 6, “And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.” On to verse 10 - “And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have taken of the accursed thing and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.” It may be noted that God could so easily have told Joshua that it was Achan who had stolen the clothing and the silver and the gold from Jericho and hidden it in his tent, but God, in His wisdom uses the casting of lots before all the people and this way all the people of Israel were involved. Indeed, God said that Israel had sinned - not just one man or one family. It was necessary for the people to consider themselves as one, so that whatever one person does affects others also. God declared that He would not stay in their midst if there were any amongst them who would not obey His commands. Verse 14 “In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes, and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof. And the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households. And the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.” And so it was. The lots were cast before the Lord and in due course Achan was taken and he and all that he had was destroyed. As prayer is man’s approach to God and all the nation were in prayer at this time, anxious to know why they had been defeated at Ai, who had sinned and what had been done to offend God that He should forsake them. And God was all the while drawing the people closer to Him, so that He should be involved in all they did.

When Joshua allocated the territory to each of the tribes of Israel it is recorded in Joshua chapter 18 that he “cast lots in Shiloh before the Lord.” We do not know just what form the casting of lots took and we get no further help in this direction from 1 Chronicles where we read of the allocation of the Temple duties. It seems possible that the Urim and Thummim were used for the casting of lots but there can be no certainty upon this for there is a considerable amount of conjecture surrounding the Urim and Thummim, so I feel a few minutes spent looking at this subject may be well spent here. Let’s see first of all what we know for certain about the Urim and Thummim and for this we will turn to Exodus 28 where we find that they consisted of two plates carried in the Breast Plate of the high priest. Verse 30 “And thou shall put in the breast plate of judgement the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart when he goeth in before the Lord. And Aaron shall bear the judgement of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.” So we see that these two plates, carried in the breast plate were in some way connected with the judgement of the people. In the margin of your bible you may see that the meaning of Urim and Thummim is ‘lights and perfections’ but this is by no means the only interpretation, for others are ‘doctrine and judgement,’ ‘declaration and truth’, etc., none of which make much difference to our understanding of the matter.

In Numbers 27 we see God directing Joshua and the high priest Eleazer in the use of the Urim and Thummim, although only the Urim is mentioned. Verse 18, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hands upon him, and set him before Eleazer the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in his sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazer the priest (verse 21) who shall ask counsel for him after the judgement of Urim before the Lord. At his word they shall go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.” As this was at the end of Moses life and the people were preparing to go into the promised land, it would seem that this going out and coming in would refer to battle. They had the land to conquer and now provision was being made for Joshua to enquire of the Lord, through the priest, as to when he should lead the people out to battle and when he should bring them in again.

King Saul used Urim and Thummim as we read in 1 Samuel 14:38 “And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people, and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day, for as the Lord liveth which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. Then said he unto Israel, Be ye on one side and I and Jonathan on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee....” verse 41, “Therefore Saul said unto the

Lord God of Israel, give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken. And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.” In the Authorised Version of the bible there is no mention of Urim and Thummim, but the Revised Standard Version reads at verse 41, Therefore Saul said, O Lord God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If this guilt be in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord God of Israel, give Urim; But if this guilt is in thy people Israel, give Thummim, And Jonathan and Saul were taken... verse 42, then Saul said Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan, and Jonathan was taken.” It would seem from this that the use of Urim and Thummim was the usual form for casting of lots.

One more thing to mention here and it is that God sometimes did not answer, as in 1 Samuel 28. By this time Saul had lost his faith and had been rejected by God.

This is now close to the end of Saul’s life. The Philistines had gathered a particularly large army and Saul was afraid. Verse 5, “And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” So how could this casting of lots work if it could give a “no answer”? Well, the Bible doesn’t tell us any more than we have considered so far, so now we must go outside of the scriptures to other sources to see if we can find out anything more, and here we learn that the priest, after making the appropriate request in prayer, would take out the two plates from his breast plate and throw them to the floor. If this is the case then the casting of lots was not unlike the tossing of a coin as we would use today to see if it would show heads or tails. However, there is one most important difference in that there were two plates thrown down, not one. Let’s suppose that each of these two plates had the word ‘Urim’ written on one side and the word ‘Thummim’ written on the other side, then, when thrown to the floor they could each show ‘Urim’, or they could each show ‘Thummim’ or they could show differently, the one showing ‘Urim’ and the other ‘Thummim’ and this last case could be the ‘no answer’. With only one plate the people could receive an answer not in accord with God’s will, as may have been the case with the Apostles, for in the first chapter of Acts we find the eleven disciples deciding in their own wisdom, that either Barsabas or Matthias should replace Judas Iscariot in order to make up their number to twelve. And they prayed “Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen...” and the lot fell on Matthias. But I wonder... did they give God the opportunity of saying neither Barsabas, nor Matthias, by giving a ‘no answer’? I believe, but it is only my opinion, it was the Apostle Paul, the one born out of due time, as he says of himself, who replaced Judas Iscariot.

But now I have strayed from the Old Testament into the New and that is someone else’s subject for next week.

Brother Russell Gregory. (Talk given at a Bible Class meeting in January 1984.)

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## **Extract From The Christadelphian Lamp Volume 2 No. 1. Dated November 1874**

EDINBURGH. Dear Brother Turney, The meeting of Bro. Mewhart’s, mentioned in my last, came off as arranged, and was attended by some twelve or fourteen brethren and sisters, who, to say the least, have not yet arrived at that stagnant position occupied by those who are dependant on, and “committed” to the writings of human authors.

The first item on the programme of our meeting was tea and bread and butter, which Bro. and Sister Mewhart very hospitably provided. While partaking of these bounties of Providence some little cross shooting took place over the table. A Bro. Cameron first fired at me, and I, in the most Christian-like manner possible, returned the shot. His powder was “damp” and his cartridges blank, and, therefore, perfectly harmless; and, if I mistake not, had been obtained from a manufacturer by the name of Roberts. We reminded him that our battle could only be profitably fought with ammunition obtained from the inexhaustible store-house of God’s word, and at this early part of the proceedings tried to impress the minds of all present that the “Sword of the Spirit,” and the “Sword of the Spirit” only, could decide the question we

had met to consider. Tea being over and the table moved, we assumed the form of a half circle when Bro. Mewhart suggested that, for the meeting to be profitable, it must be orderly, and would some one or more, propose a plan by which the meeting should be conducted.

You will not be surprised to hear that “the Socratic method” was ultimately agreed to; and having reminded each other that this “method” only allowed one question at a time, the meeting commenced, each questioner to be allowed 15 minutes to present his questions, and as I was the only person present who had “renounced” the “heresy” that Christ was born in a state of, and owned by, sin and therefore had to pay its “wages,” - death - I thought well to have an understanding at the onset of our conversation, and so I turned questioner first. We all opened our Bibles at the Fourth Chapter of Romans, and the 12th verse was read - “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. For that all have sinned.” Addressing Bro. Philip Brown, who sat first in order I asked, “do you think Christ was included in the ‘all’ spoken of in this verse?” “I am disposed to think He was not,” was his reply. Well then, said I, it will be necessary to present the same question to the next brother, (Bro, Gordon) who said, “there was a sense in which He was included, and a sense in which He was not.” We then interrogated a third Bro. (David Brown), who said he “scarcely knew.” The question being put to Bro. Cameron, who sat fourth in order, said, “I will say yes, He was.” And I will say quite as emphatically “No, He was not,” was my reply. The foundation, or understanding thus being established, the brethren proceeded to question me one after the other, for something like three hours, at the conclusion of which we exchanged positions, when I presented several questions, which were answered as well as could be expected under the circumstances. Of course I cannot think of filling your pages with all that transpired, or another enlargement would be necessary; but the general proceedings established beyond a doubt, to my mind, that the Edinburgh brethren, with the brethren in general, little understand the question at issue. The ground covered in our conversation is well known to yourself and to many of your readers. Nothing of a very startling nature transpired. We laboured to show that the “all” mentioned in Rom. v. 12, was the same “all” as mentioned in 2 Cor. v. 14, and that Christ was not included in either of the “alls,” and for the simple and scriptural reason that He is said to be “separate from sinners;” whereas it is said that the “all” were under sentence of death because of their connection with the man who first introduced sin into the world.

It is said, “He died for” the “all” described in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, and in Luke it is said He “gave His life a ransom for many;” while it was possible for a sinner to die for sinners, it was impossible that any eternal results could obtain therefrom. Any blood would not do for a “ransom;” but blood it must be, for, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and therefore, no redemption. The blood of innocent animals won’t do, “for it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin” (Heb. s. 4). The blood of Christ ONLY could pay the price of our redemption; therefore, “a higher value must be placed upon it than any other blood: and this entirely agrees with what Peter affirms in his first epistle, the 18th and 19th verses, that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, etc., “but with the PRECIOUS blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” A sinner’s blood could be shed, but a sinner’s blood could never be a ransom for the redemption of the race. The value, or preciousness, was not in the blood itself, for the life, or the blood of Christ was the same as the life or the blood of any son of Adam; but the life of Adam and all his descendants belonged to sin, and owned the wages thereof. Jesus, not having derived His life from Adam, but direct from God, He was not legally the property of sin; therefore, legitimately death had no claim upon Him. Hence, His life, or blood, was “precious,” and suitable for God’s redemptive purpose of RANSOMING the race. Adam, and all in him were by nature, “aliens,” “strangers,” “without hope,” “without strength,” “all dead,” “without God,” in and “of the world.” Jesus never was in these positions, but was, as Paul describes Him, “the SAME (in relationship) yesterday (in the days of His flesh), to-day, and for ever;” or, in other words, He was born King of the Jews; He was born the heir of the world; He was always God’s Son; He never was less and never will be less. All we are, we are by the grace of God, as manifested through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Some thought this “was not so bad as Bro. Turney’s doctrine,” while others said, “it is nearly the same.” This last expression indicated that it was possible to find two “renunciators” speaking the same thing, and encouraged me to hope that someday I might meet two “Adamites” who agreed together. I must confess it would be something out of the common. Bro. Smith has delivered himself several times publicly in my hearing upon the subject of the Christ. He seems to be a firm believer in the entire “Messianic character of Psalms,” for he most deliberately stated to the assembly in the Temperance Hall, that the passage in Psalm cxix. 9, “wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way,” etc., “applied in an especial manner to the Messiah;” and in essaying to expound the 39th and 40<sup>th</sup> Psalms, he, as well as others, saw nothing in them

but prophetic utterances of the Christ. In commenting on the 12th verse of the 40th Psalm, he distinctly said Christ was a sinner in two senses; first, as the sin-bearer of the nation; and second, as being “full of a loathsome disease,” or full of sin. This was caused, said Bro. Smith, on account of His taking our nature, or “flesh and blood.” Heb. ii. 14, was quoted to prove this position, and it was also affirmed that it was only by dying that the devil or sin was destroyed. In a private conversation I had with Bro. Smith, he tried to make his position good in a very remarkable way, which is as follows: - In reply to a statement of mine, that Christ was never in Adam, in the sense we are, or were, he said, “Christ Himself acknowledged His descent from Adam, by calling him Father.” “Well,” said I, “I have never come across that statement, and if you can point it out to me you will do a good deal towards convincing me that Christ had two Fathers.” “Well,” said Bro. Smith, “He had two Fathers, and this is nothing strange; we all have two Fathers.” “Indeed,” said I; “how do you make that out?” “Why, we have our real fathers and our grandfathers.” “That is true,” said I, “but you know upon that principle it would be safe to say we had twenty-two fathers; at all events, it would prove, if Christ, as you affirm, was the Son of God, that He must have had three Fathers. But let me have chapter and verse for the assertion that Christ acknowledged His descent from Adam, in the sense of being His Son.” I hope none of your readers will think I have misquoted the passage, here it is: John viii. 44., “Ye are of your father the devil,” etc. “Do you quote that as a proof text for the assertion, I asked?” “Yes,” said he, “and to my mind it is very clear;” if you will look, you will find the word ‘your’ is in italics, and this shows that the word has been supplied by the translators. Its absence alters the sense considerably. Read as originally written: ‘Ye are of father the devil.’ I could not help smiling; it was such a strain, and, moreover, such an outrage upon the context. We had a tussle about the passage in 2 Cor., viii. 9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” Bro. Smith explained this by saying, “that Christ was born heir of the world, and therefore rich;” forgetting, doubtless, that by such an assertion he concedes the whole question; but, on being questioned as to when He surrendered His heir-ship, and became poor, he seemed a little embarrassed, and again took refuge on finding fault with the translation. Bro. Smith thinks that the phrase, “He was rich,” should be in the future tense, and therefore, should read, “He who is to be rich.” We only require to complete the verse to show the absurdity of this liberty, “will for our sakes become poor.” So, according to this new translator, Christ has yet to be rich, and He has yet to become poor, or to die. The first assertion is true, He will, one day be “rich,” for He is to possess the whole earth; but, thank God, He is never again to be “poor,” for He “ever liveth,” and having descended to His Father’s nature, cannot “die anymore.” I am very desirous for the enlightenment of the brethren upon this glorious subject; but while I try to exercise great charity towards all of them I cannot help thinking but that the Apostle would place Bro. Smith, and all such, amongst those who “count, the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing.” (Heb: x. 29). (Continued).

*[The reader will recollect that the editor of the Christadelphian magazine has affirmed that Jesus was a sinner in no sense, while his co-labourer, Mr Smith, declares that Christ was a sinner in two senses. The Apostle’s advice - “Be ye all of one mind, speak the same thing” - is strangely exemplified by these teachers of the blind. - EDITOR.]*

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## **E-mail to Brother Duncan Heaster - June 2014: -**

On the 26th June 2014 I sent the following email to Brother Duncan Heaster: -

“Dear Brother Duncan, Greetings in Jesus’ Name.

For a long time I have wanted to ask if you would be prepared to discuss several points of Bible teaching raised in “Bible Basics”? I have no desire to dispute any points of difference between us in a spirit of controversy but in a spirit of enquiry and enlightenment for all.

As you know, we of the Nazarene Fellowship have a great and keen desire to prove all the points we hold dear and if you or anyone else should feel any point is in conflict with reason or revelation, we are glad to discuss it, for if we are wrong our chief aim is to get it right. I am sure you feel the same.

I know you are very busy and may well consider your time is better spent in other ways and this I understand, so I wondered if there are others associated with “Carelinks” who may be prepared to join the Nazarene Fellowship Facebook forum to discuss some of these matters.

What has ‘sparked off’ this email is that the other day I was reading section 9.3 of “Bible Basics” regarding Jesus as our representative in which I feel there are several points astray from Bible teaching. For example

the statement, “There is the obvious contradiction that if Jesus died instead of us, then we should not die.” As you know I have other thoughts on this matter and see no contradiction whatsoever, and I wonder how it is that anyone can support such a claim as is made here?” - Brother Russell Gregory.

In response to this e-mail I receive the following:-

“Hi Br Russell, It is no longer important for me to “get it right” over everything, I am secured in Christ and choose to spend my life spreading the knowledge of Him to others and caring for those who respond... which leaves me little time for much else, including controversy over the finer points of doctrine. With much and abiding love in Jesus. Duncan.”

To which I replied:-

“Dear Bro. Duncan, Thank you for your email... I understand you haven’t the time. However, as I believe it is an important matter I would like to raise it for open discussion on the Nazarene Fellowship forum. If you would rather I did not do this I hope you will let me know within a few days. With love in Jesus, Russell.”

**With this introduction we now reproduce what appeared on our Nazarene Fellowship Facebook Forum:-**

**Russell:** In “Bible Basics”, Section 9.3 we find this statement: –  
“There is the obvious contradiction that if Jesus died instead of us, then we should not die.”

This is simply not true! It is not a basic Bible teaching but a fundamental error and the situation can be seen clearly when Bible teaching is put in order. Jesus did not lay down His eternal life, so why should Jesus dying for us mean that we should have eternal life? for this is what the writer of this statement is saying. However, Jesus death does not give us eternal life.

This elementary error was developed by Robert Roberts and it skews all Christadelphian writings about the reason for Jesus death.

Also it is far from being a controversy over a ‘finer point of doctrine’ but a wrong basic teaching, and all who love Jesus should surely wish to do their best to get it right in order to worship God in spirit and I truth.

Mankind was redeemed when Jesus died on the cross. This is when He purchased the human race. Redemption requires a price to be paid, and the price, as we all know, was the precious blood of Jesus. We are not going to be redeemed again; Jesus is not going to pay the price of our redemption twice. Jesus has redeemed us but this has not given us eternal life.

**Allon:** Russell Gregory wrote <<In “Bible Basics”, Section 9.3 we find this statement – “There is the obvious contradiction that if Jesus died instead of us, then we should not die.” ... This is simply not true! ..... etc.>>

Actually Russell, It is true! But only if you take into account WHICH DEATH WE ARE TALKING ABOUT.

The fact is that, because Jesus has died on the cross in our place, we will not die AT THE JUDGMENT.

Duncan is confused about the difference between mortality which we are born with, and judgment, which we incurred when we sinned. It is that “second death” from which the cross has saved us. We will only be delivered from mortality when we are raised incorruptible.

**Russell:** But, Allon, Not so. Christ died because Adam did not. More tomorrow. I’m off to bed now.

**Allon:** Russell, perhaps through trying to be brief, I have oversimplified it. For a more detailed discussion, see my article... “MUTH TEMUTH” - YOU SHALL SURELY DIE” : -

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/bdigest/bd74bbs.htm>

“Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ (muth temuth) yet if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, ... and walks in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.”

**Martin:** I think this comment by Duncan says it all: - <<It is no longer important for me to “get it right” over everything>>. However, I imagine you will not be persuaded to agree. The real question for me is how much ‘wrong’ doctrine will God overlook, and who decides what is right or wrong doctrine. For myself, God amazing grace is sufficient for me and my salvation.

I am no longer interested in the mechanics of how it was achieved. It happened and for me it is enough. God’s grace says it all.

**Russell:** Allon we are agreed on this matter for your article corresponds to our own booklet entitled “Muth Temuth and B’Yom”.

I also agree with your statement that <<The fact is that, because Jesus has died on the cross in our place, we will not die AT THE JUDGMENT.>> This is one of the outcomes of Jesus dying on the cross. But let’s put first things first.

The error in “Bible Basics” is that the writer was making out that substitution has to be wrong (doctrine) because it would mean that Jesus, by laying down his natural life, would result in us having eternal life. This is not true. All I was doing was pointing out that this observation is a basic error and I am sure you would agree. Using false arguments to ‘prove’ ones point is not a good thing to do. The writer of “Bible Basics” had not stopped to work things through but it seems to me he copied the views of others instead of thinking for himself.

Jesus died to give us our present life. Our present life here and now is our redeemed life. The first Adam should have surely died and would have lost his life but for the grace of God. That is to say, the death Adam was warned of was not carried out; however, there was a death that day – the death of the animal which was slain to provide Adam with a covering for his sin. This animal, which I feel sure was a lamb, symbolised the “Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.”

Jesus laid down His life in place of the life Adam lost. The life of the lamb slain in Eden was a ‘token payment,’ or ‘promissory note’ allowing Adam to continue his life, but the ‘Gold Sovereign’ was laid down on Calvary.

It was a psuche (Greek) life which Adam lost and it was a psuche life which Jesus laid down. It was a life for a life, but the result is that the one life of Jesus saved the many lives of His faithful disciples.

My initial point was that Jesus did not lay down His life to give us eternal life, but to provide the race with our natural (psuche) life. And here I will now add that Jesus laid down His life to provide the way to eternal life for those who seek it. And these are not the same thing.

**Russell:** Martin, I would agree with you except that the matter involved here is too important to get wrong.

**Allon:** Martin wrote <<I am no longer interested in the mechanics of how it was achieved. It happened and for me it is enough. God’s grace says it all.>>

Paul did write about “grace”. But, apparently it “wasn’t enough” for Paul, when he also wrote 1 Corinthians 15:1-3: - “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

Is it possible that you are no longer “interested” in what Paul declared to be an essential element of the GOSPEL?

Or perhaps you have fallen victim to the 21st century Australian “syndrome” where Christadelphians seem frightened to have any opinion at all about this essential gospel teaching, lest they get it RIGHT, and thereby become targets for the keepers of the “unclean flesh” faith, (who have obviously got it so terribly WRONG. And who prove that they have something terribly wrong by their unloving behaviour towards their brethren)

This has resulted in a generation of Christadelphians who are totally ignorant of something which vitally affects the FOUNDATION upon which the rest of their faith is supposed to be built.

A proper understanding of the Atonement is designed to inspire unquenchable LOVE FOR JESUS.

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11)

Get the foundation wrong and it becomes impossible to learn the all-consuming love for Jesus, in which disciples are willing to lay down their lives for each other. (John 13:35) “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Does the world know that about US? Do other members of the denomination know that about us? We must learn to examine OURSELVES. Are we willing to lay down our lives for our brethren? Especially when it is about helping them to get it right about this essential foundation doctrine?

Or do we run for cover and hide our lamps under a bushel, at the first hint of any perceived threat to OUR OWN “ecclesial safety”?

Personally, I think it far more important to PRAYERFULLY study this topic until I KNOW that my prayer is being answered as PROMISED, (James 1:5-8) and it has touched my heart in the way Jesus intended.

**Allon:** Below are links to some articles about the ATONEMENT. They are not written to cause controversy. They are written in spirit of love, accompanied by a prayer which hopes that readers might use them as a springboard for their own prayerful study of this essential foundation doctrine. I want to get it right! and I want you to want to get it right!

I don't insist that you agree with me! But I do want you to experience the love described by Jesus in John 13:34-35. The World is able to measure that by the way you respond to me!

**The Atonement - Reconciliation With God.**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/bdigest/bd54bbs.htm>

**“Muth Temuth” - You Shall Surely Die.**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/bdigest/bd74bbs.htm>

**THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM -- WHEN ADAM REPENTED**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm024.htm>

**LOVING JESUS MORE.**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm036.htm>

**GRACE IN GOSPEL PERSPECTIVE**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm048.htm>

**WHAT IS GRACE?**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm053.htm>

**SAVED BY GRACE - JUDGED BY WORKS!**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm054.htm>

**SALVATION IS A PROCESS.**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm084.htm>

**WHAT DO YOU MEAN - ATONEMENT?**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm113.htm>

## **THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT PART 1 - FAULTY FOUNDATIONS A BARRIER TO UNDERSTANDING**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm114a.htm>

## **THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT PART 2 - FALSE THEORIES**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm113.htm>

### **THE LAMB OF GOD AND THE RANSOM**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm114c.htm>

### **WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE ATONEMENT**

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~amaxwell/housmail/hm128.htm>

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

### **Allon: - DIFFERENCES ABOUT THE ATONEMENT**

It is not open for any negotiation between us that I might not be reconciled with God, just because you think I don't understand or agree with what you think might be a better or more detailed explanation about the “legality” of how it all works.

I KNOW that my faith in the cross has reconciled me to God. It has saved me from the penalty of my sins and changed my heart towards God. What Jesus has done for me, has given me a new vision of who God is and what God is. It has changed my attitudes and my response to the laws of God. It has given me Eternal life!

But if you have a different theory OF “HOW IT WORKS”, I will not reject you on account of it! I have learned that love must concede that, even if your own understanding of how it worked in your case is different to mine, you may also have arrived where I am. If you are truly reconciled with God, that will be obvious from the visible “fruit of the spirit” growing in you, (Gal 5:22-25) If I can see that, I dare not fail to confess you before men as my brother in Christ, (Matt 10:32-33) just because we differ in our understanding of the detail of how it came to pass for each of us.

Have we “arrived”? How do we measure that? “By THIS shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have LOVE one to another”. (John 3:35)

### **Allon: THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT:**

**THE “JESUS DIED FOR HIMSELF” THEORY.** This theory appears to be unique to the several mutually exclusive groups of Christadelphians, amongst whom significant divergences in detail have been the source of a number of major divisions.

On the good side of things, the Christadelphians reject the theory that the death of Jesus satisfied God's “honour” and appeased his wrath against sinners, in order to change His attitude towards us.

The downside is that what they have managed to put in its place, is a most unsatisfying explanation which says that the death of Jesus was primarily to save Himself by exchanging His mortal body for an immortal one!

One extreme “version” has it that Jesus died to save Himself from a “defiled” and “sin prone nature”, inherited from Adam, and so obnoxious in the sight of God, that it had to be deliberately put aside by nothing less than that awful “criminal's death” on the cross. In the most extreme variation which I personally encountered amongst them, Jesus was said to have deserved the cross because of his alleged defiled nature -- which sooner or later, it was claimed, would inevitably have led Him to sin! How truly MONSTROUS it is to say of the “Holy, Harmless, Undefined” Jesus, (Heb 7:26) that he was in any way, or at any time, “defiled” and “obnoxious” in the sight of God, through mere possession of the nature He was born with! And yet it is claimed that this interpretation, is somehow supposed to “honour” God”!

In another much less extreme version, it is recognised that the use of words like “defiled”, about Jesus is not acceptable. How could that be true of the sinless son of God? However, in rejecting “substitution” of any sort, the rather meaningless statement is offered, that Jesus died “for us or on account of us, but not instead of us”. Nevertheless, the word “us” is passed over, in order to emphasize that somehow the death of Jesus

was primarily for Himself, required of Him as an act of obedience to deliver Himself from “mortality”. Had He not submitted, He would have been regarded as disobedient and therefore lost, along with the rest of us. To be fair, there is today a significant number of the younger generation, who besides admitting that it is most inappropriate to use words like “defiled” about Jesus, are also prepared to endorse the view that the great weight of the Scriptures says that it was ALL FOR US, and that without our need, Jesus would not have been there on the Cross! Nevertheless, the other older views are still held by those “in authority”, and the official Basis of Fellowship still retains the offensive words, “defiled” and “condemned nature”, and places the major emphasis on the death of Christ as an offering “for himself” to escape from His mortality. The “Doctrines to be Rejected” section, insists that to be in fellowship, one must reject the teaching “that there is no sin in the flesh”. (which is defined elsewhere in the writings of the author of that document as something within human nature that results in “our native tendency to disobedience, and our native inability to conform” !)

The third major opinion amongst Christadelphians is the “Socinian” version discussed below.

### **Problem**

In the Scriptures the death of Jesus is NOWHERE described as a sacrifice FOR HIMSELF! In fact Daniel 9:26 says clearly that when Jesus was “cut off”, it was NOT for Himself. Where is the justice in requiring that terrible Criminal’s death of a totally innocent man, primarily to rid Himself of His mortal body? For those who truly know Him, God is not like that at all.

It is significant that amongst those who profess belief in these things, few know with any real assurance that their sins are forgiven, and will never again be remembered against them. (Ezek 33:16) Many remain in fear of the judgment, expressing the rather forlorn and wishful “hope” that if they “get lucky” on Judgment Day, God might somehow exercise a “mercy” they do not really expect!

### **THE SOCINIAN THEORY (Almost Identical with “Clean Flesh” Christadelphians)**

Personally I did not even know of the existence of the Racovian Catechism of the Polish Brethren until about 10 years ago. However now that I have my own copy of this remarkable 16th century document, I can recognise the considerable contribution it has made to the faith of my Christadelphian “clean flesh” spiritual ancestors.

I am grateful to them for faithfully upholding the truth, and opening my eyes to see that the Scriptures do NOT support the Roman Catholic doctrine of “original sin”, (or anything like it amongst the thinly disguised Protestant alternatives), in human nature, before or after the fall. And of course this leads inevitably to the conclusion that there is nothing in our common human nature now, which might prevent us from exercising a freewill choice to obey God. Men are not condemned or punished for Adam’s sin, but for their own.

The Socinian view also rejects the death of Christ on the cross as in any way, a “blood sacrifice” or “ransom payment” to purchase salvation or pay the penalty of sin. It says instead, that the sacrificial offering of Jesus was the whole of His 33 years of obedient life, -- not just His death on the cross. And it insists that if a “ransom payment” is required, it cannot with truth be said that God freely forgives the sinner’s debt.

In some mysterious way, (which is not adequately explained), Christ’s lifelong obedience, “even to death on the cross”, (Phillip 2:8) has been made the ground for forgiveness and remission from the penalty of sins.

The Socinians also said that the death of Christ was in some measure part of the fulfilment of his prophetic office, in that it somehow communicated God’s will to human kind and sought our response through it.

### **Problem**

This Socinian theory, successfully rejects “original sin”. It also refutes Orthodox Mainstream substitutionary teaching, in which an angry God vents His wrath on Jesus, until He is “propitiated”, and His attitude towards us is thereby changed. It recognises that God is not like that at all. It was our attitude that needed changing -- NOT God’s! And in those aspects one can find a great deal of Bible truth.

However, by teaching that God forgives sin without the need for a blood sacrifice, it neglects to come to grips with those Scriptures which say plainly that there is no forgiveness of sin without a blood sacrifice. (Heb. 9:22)

Further, it fails to distinguish between the perfect life of Jesus, and His sacrificial DEATH. It was His sinless life which qualified Him to pay the “Ransom for many”, through the offering of a “blood sacrifice”. We must not confuse the two, lest we detract from the importance of either.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

If you want to know more beyond the brief descriptions given above, you can do your own research by

wading through some of the countless thousands of pages of technical “Religious Rhetoric”! To be frank, I think much of it is the sort of thing that Peter and Jude meant by “Great swelling words”! (2 Pet 2:18; Jude 1:16, KJV)

The problem with most of these, is that they concentrate rather too much on how the theory works! -- at the expense of the Biblical emphasis on what is meant to be the end result!!

The simple bottom line is this question.

Has what we believe about the Atonement reconciled us with God? Has it caused us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength? Has it caused us to love our neighbour as our self? And has it caused us to pursue the ultimate goal of a completely holy character and lifestyle, modelled on that of Jesus?

If it has not achieved THAT for us, we have neither understood nor believed the Scriptural Doctrine of Atonement!

**Martin:** Allon Maxwell. You will need to tell me all this over coffee. As far as ‘defiled’ I just ignore it. As you know I think that the BaSF has had a close encounter with the shredding machine. My only Statement of Faith is my life, poor as it may be at times.

**Allon:** Martin wrote <<As far as ‘defiled’ I just ignore it. As you know I think that the BaSF has had a close encounter with the shredding machine.>>

Martin, are you ever going to be brave enough to say that to the Editor of The Christadelphian Magazine?

From my own personal contact with him. I already know what his answer is going to be. But would you care to predict his response in this forum?

**Martin:** I have only had one very brief introduction to the present editor. From what he said to the Hoddesdon conference, he saw his situation as working for Provincial Publishing Group.

I do not see my position as saying out loudly what many possibly believe. The SoF is best left hidden in a drawer gathering dust. Nor is it my intention to distress those who have a close attachment to this document. As I see it they are prisoners of the document and its dogma. It’s time to live in the freedom in Christ.

**Russell:** Allon, Thank you for what you say. You have provided a clear outline of the understandings of the various groups which has been beyond my own capabilities to do. I have yet to read many of the articles you listed but from past association I wouldn’t expect to find any great points of difference between us.

**Russell:** Martin, In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 we read, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” while in Ephesians 4:21, Paul writes, “If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.”

I fear that while the BASF flag flies over Christadelphia many will never come to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. This is the reason I wish to show a better understanding of the scriptures than has been passed down to them from the eighteen seventy’s.

Along with so many others you have said you are “no longer interested in the mechanics of how it (salvation) was achieved.”

It seems such a pity to use such a word as ‘mechanics’ to describe what is near and dear to us all. God said “Come now let us reason together” upon this very subject – the ‘mechanics’ of the Atonement – for He continues, “Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be a white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Are we to reject an invitation to reason with God? What greater privilege could we have at this time?

**Russell:** For those readers who may not be familiar with the matter, we find two Greek words translated 'life' in the New Testament. 'Psuche' which always and only ever refers to our natural life. The other word is 'zoe', the meaning of which is not so straight-forward but it would seem we can have zoe life now which we hold as a promise of eternal life in the future. "I am come that they might have life (zoe) and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus makes it very clear that He laid down His psuche/life of course. Was it a sacrifice? He said on one occasion, "I lay down my life that I might take it again." From this it would appear to be a loan which He received back again, yet we read in 1 Corinthians 5:7 "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"

But why should Jesus need His (psuche) life back once He had (zoe) eternal life? No, what Jesus had back in return for His (psuche) life was the (psuche) life of Adam. Adam's life was then passed on to all his descendants down to the present day. This is what Jesus purchased with His precious blood. But Jesus life was not passed down to Him from Adam but from His Father.

I say again, our present life is our redeemed life which we have received by the grace of God and in this present life we have the opportunity of receiving eternal life through faith in Jesus and what He has done for us.

Our baptism into the death of Christ brings us into covenant relationship with God. He will forgive us our sins for Jesus sake. This is the grace of God which saves us from the consequences of our sin. As Paul explains it in Romans 8:1 and 2, "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."

**Martin:** Russell your comment about the BaSF resonates with my thoughts. That document at its best should be seen solely as an historical document. It should be consigned to a drawer gathering dust and then only used for reference but not for bible exposition. Sadly at its worst it can only enslave adherents to a life of legalism. It will not be able to help us to experience the grace of God and will just as surely deny us the opportunity to live our lives in the freedom of Christ.

I am hopeful that with the passing of time more and more members of the community are coming to the same conclusion. It is not a rapid revolution, just a slow realisation by a few here and there, but a growing number all the time. For that reason I stay, it is what I know, and there are so many I know both here in Australia and in England who share at least some of my thinking.

It is dishonest; I cannot answer. What I know is that it is better to honour God rather than man. Further, I do not see my role to cause an upheaval in the community, rather that by my presence I have at least be a help to some. O that we might all live in the grip of grace.

**Russell:** Martin, I sympathize with you and I suppose had I not been disfellowshipped, I would still be amongst them as you are.

History has shown that many hundreds, if not thousands of Christadelphians have seen the nonsense in the BASF and yet have stayed hoping to see some improvement in the community. What a difference the internet has made! Falsehoods can be exposed for what they are.

I have no wish to say much more on this thread - depending on what others post. I pray the eyes of some will be opened to some of the glorious truths we see.

**Russell:** Returning now to "Bible Basics", section 9.3, we read: - "Christ 'died for us' once. The theory of substitution would mean that He had to die for each of us personally."

This is not true, for it ignores the fact that Jesus died in place of Adam. He lay down His life so that Adam could live. The animal slain in Eden was a token of this payment. Had Adam died we would not be descended from him. Because Jesus died in place of Adam we live today. This is how Jesus died for us all and it is also how Jesus purchased Adam's race for Himself.

Next we read in “Bible Basics”: - “The English preposition “for” (as in “Christ died for us”) has a much wider range of meaning than the Greek word which it translates. If Christ had died instead of us, the Greek word ‘*anti*’ would have been used. But never is this word used in any Bible passage which says that Jesus died for us.”

Again this not true, for it so used in Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for (*anti*) many.”

And then we read: - “If Christ paid off a debt with his blood, our salvation becomes something which we can expect as a right. The fact that salvation is a gift, brought about by God’s mercy and forgiveness, is lost sight of if we understand Christ’s sacrifice as being a debt payment. It also makes out that an angry God was appeased once He saw the physical blood of Jesus. Yet what God sees when we repent is His Son as our representative, whom we are striving to copy, rather than we connecting ourselves with Christ’s blood as a talisman. Many hymns and songs contain an incredible amount of false doctrine in this area. Most false doctrine is drummed into people’s minds by music, rather than rational, Biblical instruction. We must ever be on the watch for this kind of brain-washing.”

It is sad to see this paragraph so full of ridicule. I know the writer knows there is more than one view of substitution. Over the years he has read many of the writings of the Nazarene Fellowship and he has read of “True substitution” and “False substitution.” Yet here he picks out the worst parts of ‘false substitution’ he can find and throws the ‘True’ and the ‘False’; the good and the bad together into the bin.

The writer also claims that: - “If Jesus paid off a debt with His blood, our salvation becomes something which we have a right to expect.”

However, paying off a debt with His blood does not give us salvation anyway so this claim is meaningless. At this stage Jesus bought us and we have become His possession - He has the right to forgive us or not as He sees fit. All judgment has been given to Him by His Father. Our salvation is dependent on our individual response to the gospel message.

Then the next statement reads: - “The fact that salvation is a gift, brought about by God’s mercy and forgiveness, is lost sight of if we understand Christ’s sacrifice as being a debt payment.”

The answer to this is the same as for the previous claim. The writer confuses two different events – the debt payment was made when Jesus laid down His life for Adam’s life, while salvation is through faith.

And then the writer says: - “It also makes out that an angry God was appeased once He saw the physical blood of Jesus. Yet what God sees when we repent is His Son as our representative, whom we are striving to copy, rather than we connecting ourselves with Christ’s blood as a talisman.”

Here I am truly lost for words!!! God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. What God sees when a sinner repents is a repentant sinner and even the angels in heaven rejoice. And the repentant sinner sees Jesus as God’s representative.

The writer is making out that all ideas regarding substitutionary atonement are the same, forgetting that it is not possible to take the principle of substitution out of sacrifice; that purchase demands that a price is paid in exchange for what is purchased; that a ransom is the price paid for our redemption. True substitution is Bible teaching and is at the very heart of the gospel.

It is the false substitution theory which requires that God demands the punishment of an innocent man in place of the guilty.

In true substitution we see God giving His only begotten Son to take Adam’s place in death – and Jesus, in His love for us, yields His life to His Father. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” God gave and Jesus gave. God did not demand and Jesus had the choice. “I lay it down of myself.”

It is important to make this distinction between true substitution and false substitution otherwise we cannot make much sense of what happened in Eden.

Consider these words seriously and note the contrast to which they point:-

**True substitution = God gave**  
**False substitution = God demanded.**

“He that hath my Word, let him speak it faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat.”  
Jeremiah 23:28

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## The Federal principle

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Personification of Sin

It seems evident that the language of personification was adopted to enable us more readily to perceive the absolute necessity for, and to understand, the scheme of redemption. Having become by transgression thee “Servant” of, and sold under Sin, Adam became this sin’s possession. No provision for remission having been made in the Edenic Law, Adam could do nothing to obtain, and having become the lawful possession of

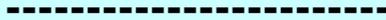
another, there was no other honourable means whereby his release from this “Bondage” could be effected by “redemption” which necessitated that an equivalent be paid in Ransom.

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

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

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

A. and L. Wilson



“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.” - Psalm 91:5 - 8