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In this Issue:

Page 1	Editorial	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 2	Exhortation based on Romans chapter 14	Brother Hayes
Page 5	The Powers of the World to come	Brother J.H.
Page 9	The Church of The Living God	Brother J. Cameron
Page 12	Take Time to Pray Poem	Anon
Page 13	1 st letter on “The Immortality of the Soul”	A Christadelphian
Page 15	2 nd Letter	
Page 18	“Jesus Said . . .”	Russell Gregory
Page 19	You Can Burn This in Ten Seconds but...	Brother Ernest Brady

“Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”

Proverbs 24:2 & 3.

Editorial

In the “New King James Version” of the Bible we read in the 1st Psalm of the way of the righteous and of the end of the ungodly - here it is : –

First, the Godly, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. . .” and then, “the ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

All churches teach from the Bible but they differ from each other in so many ways and typically there are those who say we must follow Jesus teaching of goodness and God will be pleased to accept us; again there are others who say, we have worked out the true Bible teaching and it is in our statement of beliefs; join us, follow what we teach and your salvation is assured. We do not, however, find either of these taught by the Apostle in the New Testament as the way of salvation.

What we do find is that Bible teaching is consistent from beginning to end – from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. In the first instance we are told God gave Adam a law and if he broke this law he would die. Adam broke the law but didn’t die; and here we have the first lesson – that God is very merciful and “is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9). Adam repented and an animal was slain in his stead. How do we know this? Because in Genesis 3:21 we read, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God

make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Very brief but very important to note. And Adam and Eve continued to live out their natural lives.

Whatever we may think of animal sacrifices today there is no doubt about their use (and misuse) throughout history. The Bible makes it very clear that there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Sin is unlawful and the penalty is the taking away of one’s life; while forgiveness is by the grace of God so that we do not have to suffer this dreadful consequence.

And here I wish to point out that all God’s laws for us to live by are moral laws and it is God who sets them, not man. Mankind will vary his moral standards in order to justify himself but they are not for the greater good and this is rejecting our long-suffering Creator who only wants the best for us.

Breaking the law is a legal matter and God wants to forgive us but it has to be on the legal basis of His choosing. This is explained to us by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5 where, at verse 12 we read, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin so death passed upon all men. . .”, which is to say that by Adam sin first entered into the world and so came the sentence of death upon him, and at verse 19 Paul goes on to say, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners . . .” but please note that they were not made sinners in the sense of being made sinful nor that there was any guilt attached to them for what Adam did, but they were concluded under the sin of Adam for the purpose of receiving a blessing! And this we shall see in a moment. Paul goes on to say, “by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” This One is of course Jesus who did no sin, and Paul continues at verse 20, “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the blessing and is repeated in Galatians 3:22, where Paul says “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” A blessing indeed!

In all this we see that there is a difference between Jesus and Adam; Jesus the righteous One and Adam the sinner. But we are descended from Adam and the life he passed down to his children was a life to which he had no right as it was forfeited by his transgression which put him under condemnation. Jesus life came to Him direct from His Father and He never forfeited His life so it was always His own. Let us see Adam and Jesus as the two Sons of God; Adam the created Son of God and Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. The life we have has been passed down from Adam and so it can be said we are “in Adam” but by the grace of God we can be “in Christ” with a new life, an everlasting life in the appointed way of baptism into His death.

The life we have passed down from our parents gives us a wonderful opportunity of being “perfected.” Let me explain; I think the biblical illustration of the Potter provides us with a brilliant picture. The Potter chooses to make a vase of exquisite design and having formed it, it now needs perfecting in the kiln in order to bring out its ultimate perfection, beauty and usefulness. Each individual vessel is different from any other as every person is different - and we can go through the “furnace of life” to attain the perfection promised.

Is this too difficult for us? Jesus took on Himself the difficult part when He chose to go to the cross and give His life for us. And what does He say to us? Matthew 11:29,30, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

With love in Jesus to all, Russell.

EXHORTATION

Recommended reading – Romans 14

Dear Brethren and Sisters, Romans chapter 14 is a portion of a very long and argumentative Epistle written by the Apostle Paul to the saints in Rome. It contains very much of a doctrinal character and some things hard to be understood, but it also contains a great deal in the way of practical exhortation. And I am sure you will agree with me that it is very desirable, when we exhort one another that our remarks should take a practical turn and that we should not confine ourselves to matters of exposition.

In this 14th chapter reference is made by the Apostle to differences which had arisen among the disciples of that ecclesia in Rome, and his object was to instruct the brethren as to the way in which they ought to conduct themselves with regard to the questions in dispute. You are doubtless aware that Jesus, being a Jew, preached to Jews and for some few years the Christian Churches were composed exclusively of believing Jews, and it was the introduction of the Gentile element which caused many differences to arise, which were previously unknown among them. The Jews, under the Mosaic order of things, had been accustomed to eat only certain kinds of meat, and to refuse others which were regarded as unclean by that law, while the Gentiles believed they might eat all things indifferently. The Jews again esteemed certain days to be holy, whereas the Gentiles looked upon all days as alike.

In the first verse of this fourteenth chapter the Apostle speaks of certain as “weak in the faith,” not weak in faith but weak in the faith, the weakness in question having no reference to any doubt existing in the minds of such as to the things constituting the one faith, but to abstinence from meats. Had it been otherwise the Apostle could not possibly have counselled the brethren to receive such weak ones among them. All were equally “in the faith,” but some were denominated “strong,” and others “weak,” not in relation to the things concerning the Kingdom of God, which, says the Apostle, “is not meat and drink,” but in reference to abstinence from meats and the observance of certain days. We perceive, then, that such weak brethren were to be received, and their infirmities borne by those who were strong, as the Apostle exhorts in the first verse of the fifteen chapter. Receive them, says he, though not for the purpose of disputing with them about their peculiarities, but give them the right hand of fellowship, receive them among you as brethren in the Lord, meet with them at the Lord’s table and despise them not, for God hath received them. Neither constitute yourselves their judges, for they stand or fall to their own Master, and God is able to make them stand. Thus tenderly and considerately were these weak brethren to be dealt with, but specially were the strong admonished not to put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in a brother’s way, for while there was nothing that was unclean of itself, yet to him esteeming anything to be unclean, to him it was unclean. To induce a brother, therefore, partake of anything which he felt in his conscience was wrong, was to cause him to fall into sin, and even to incur the risk of destroying one for whom Christ died.

But the great question for us to consider in these days is the practical application of these exhortations to ourselves as individuals, and as a community holding the same faith, looking for the same blessed hope, and expecting the fulfilment of the same great and precious promises. We are not like the saints in Rome, a mixed community of Jews and Gentiles. We are not troubled by the coming in among us of disciples from among the Jews, who, from having been long disciplined in the Mosaic code, retained all the prejudices of the Jew against the Gentile, whom they were accustomed to regard then as inferior. Our case is far otherwise: we are all Gentiles, with scarcely an exception, though, having believed the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, we have thereby become the spiritual seed of Abraham, and therefore Jews in the spiritual sense.

The exhortations of the Apostle as to meats and days come home to us in this way. From time to time we are brought into contact with those who, being “weak in the faith,” make it a matter of convenience to abstain from certain kinds of meat, swine’s flesh, for instance, and how shall we deal with such? Precisely as the Apostle Paul counselled the Christians at Rome in his day. Receive them into fellowship, avoid any strife; respect their conscientious scruples, pass no condemnation upon them, and, above all be careful to do nothing to cause them to defile their conscience by partaking of that which they feel to be a sin, remembering the words of the Apostle that, “to him who esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” To give a homely illustration of our meaning: suppose we invited such an one to partake of our hospitality, should we not be walking uncharitably (or not according to love) if we placed the “unclean” article upon the table? Might not he, under such circumstances, be induced to partake, and thus be made to defile his conscience? Surely such a course would not be following “after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” “All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, neither to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” These admonitions are comprehensive and far reaching, and place before us a great principle of action by which we are to regulate our conduct towards one another, not only in the matter of food and drink, but as to our entire behaviour. Our example is either for good or for evil, and not one of us can pass through life without more or less influencing our fellows. Our influence may be small, but let us take care to exert it in the right direction. What would be our feelings did we know that our example had been the means of causing a brother or sister to take the first false step in a downward course which ultimately led to his making shipwreck of the faith? Let us carefully avoid the very first approach to anything which our conscience tells us is wrong, and at once turn away from it. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.”

The kingdom of God as preached by Jesus and His Apostles understood and believed, will not lead anyone to suppose that he can commend himself to the Almighty by abstinence from meats, which indeed are to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the true teaching as in I Timothy 4:3, neither will it lead anyone to the practice of asceticism, or austerity; these are not its fruits, but, on the contrary, the results which flow from a hearty belief of the things promised in the Gospel, are as enumerated by the Apostle, “righteousness and peace and joy in a Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.”

Then again, with regard to the observance of days, there are those who needlessly offend their neighbours and prejudice their minds against the truth by doing things on the first day of the week, for instance, which though not evil in themselves are so looked upon by many who consider that the Sunday should be observed somewhat in the same way as the Jews observed Saturday, which was their Sabbath. A Christian may lawfully do that on the first day of the week which he feels assured in his own conscience is harmless, yet if he thereby offends another or puts a stumbling block in his way, he should abstain on the principle laid down by the Apostle in this same epistle, that “everyone is to please his neighbour for his good to edification, even as Christ pleased not Himself.” He is to be our example in all things, for He has bought us with a price, and we are His servants or bond-slaves and not our own, and whether we live or die we are His. While we are under no yoke of bondage in the matter, it is doubtless good to rest on the first day of the week, and to submit to the institutions of the powers that be, and under whom our lot is at present cast, so long as they do not conflict with the commands of God.

Thus I think you will perceive that, though these exhortations of the Apostle Paul were addressed so many centuries ago to believers whose circumstances were in several respects so different to our own, they are nevertheless applicable to ourselves, and that the principles on

which they are based being unchangeable, are as binding upon us today as they were on the saints in Rome in the first century.

Brother S. G. Hayes.

THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME.

Luke 20:35-36, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" and

Hebrews 6:4-5, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, . . ."

It will be well to consider first what is intended by the phrase "world to come."

There are two Greek words, namely, cosmos and aion, which are frequently used in our version of the Scriptures interchangeably for "world" and "age," without due regard to the original. It is for us to ascertain which of these terms is employed in the passages before us. Cosmos, implying the earth on which we tread, or the material system, clearly cannot be the word rendered world in the verses from which I have quoted. It is aion which has the sense of age or dispensation, so that our texts should read, "the powers of the age to come."

The question might be proposed, what is power? Perhaps the most comprehensive of the various meanings of the word "power," is ability. John the Baptist, when speaking of God's power, says, "He is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Power may be classed under three heads - ordinary power, extraordinary power, and supernatural or super-human power.

In order to examine this subject, let me commence by the aid of comparison; indeed we can judge of excellence only by comparison, whether we refer to beauty, virtue, or any other thing. We all possess power in an ordinary way; but some possess it mentally, some physically in an extraordinary degree. For instance, we see a man perform an astonishing feat of strength, and we immediately exclaim, what a powerful person! Why do we make the remark? Because we are comparing him with ourselves, or with someone else less powerful than he.

Supernatural, or superhuman power is that which will most concern us in this inquiry. There are almost numberless illustrations of this kind of power in the sacred writing's, from the beginning to the end of the Book.

At the very threshold of Scripture we read that after our first parents had eaten of "that forbidden tree," which brought condemnation into the world and all our woe, the Lord God "drove out the man; and placed at the east of the Garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." Flaming sword is evidently figurative language; we can scarcely think of a flame apart from fire, neither can we think of a sword without associating it with the idea of an instrument of destruction: all this vividly pictures to our minds flashes of lightning issuing forth from the Elohim keeping the way of the tree of life.

We have, as will be remembered, another example of superhuman power in the case of Lot. The men of Sodom encompassed the house of Lot and made an assault upon it, desiring to abuse Lot and the

heavenly messengers he was entertaining; but the angels pulled Lot into the house and smote the men both small and great with blindness. Then taking Lot and his family they drew them out of the place, and caused fire and brimstone to devour the cities of the plain and their inhabitants.

Again, we read that when Israel had sinned, the Lord gave them into the hands of the Midianites, and he sent an angel to shew Gideon how he should deliver them. Gideon having brought a present of food for the angel, was told to lay it on a certain rock. The angel then put forth the end of his staff and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and fire rose up out of the rock and consumed them.

In the narrative of Manoah and his wife, the parents of Sampson, we have another exhibition of this same marvellous power. Manoah, being visited by an angel of the Lord, wished to detain him while he prepared a kid; but the angel refusing to eat, told him to offer it as a burnt offering to the Lord. "And the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it and fell on their faces to the ground."

These are a few instances of super-human power, as manifested through angels. But we must bear in mind that what we call miracle is simply the natural procedure of those glorious beings.

Time will not allow us to look in detail at the numerous examples of this power to be found in the 2nd Book of Kings, but I would just allude to the ascension of Elijah, "by a whirlwind into heaven," the parting of the Jordan by the mantle of Elisha, the multiplying of the widow's oil, the raising of the dead son of the Shunamite, the feeding of a hundred men with, twenty cakes, the cure of Naaman the leper, the transfer of the leprosy to Gehazi, and causing an iron axe head to float on water.

God has favoured his servants with this power at various periods in the world's history, but more especially in that epoch known as the apostolic times. In the verses we have read from the 6th chap. of Hebrews, mention is made of certain persons who had tasted of this heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Spirit; "they had tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come." The enquiry arises, what was the heavenly gift? I reply, it was the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; the fulfilment of that good Word of God spoken by the prophet Joel, and a taste of that power which will be fully manifested in the age to come.

Now, the apostles, and many of the early Christians were the recipients of this power. Paul speaking of it, says, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. To the Ephesians he writes; "After that they believed, they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," which he declares, "is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." And to the Corinthians he says; "God who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2, Corinthians 1:22.

We learn from this that among the believers of that day were those really in possession of something which others had not - yes, they differed from their brethren in that they possessed power, super human power, which Paul designates "Holy Spirit," and tells them it was the earnest of their inheritance; he also gives them to understand that it was a taste of the powers of the coming age. These words of the apostle to the primitive disciples were words written under the dictation of Holy Spirit. We may ask, why did the inspired penman use the expression taste? Is there any particular significance in it? Let us see.

Suppose a half-famished man comes to your door craving food, and you happen to be dining. You rise from the table, take a small portion of the provisions, a mere taste, and give it to him, enquiring at the same time how he likes it. Would he not inwardly groan while he told you it made him long for a full meal. Now, is there any analogy between this experience and the experience of those who had tasted of the powers of the age to come? Paul was one of those who had tasted of this power, insomuch "That from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." Listen to the statement of the apostle. He says, "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption," that is "the redemption of our body." And again, addressing the Corinthians, he writes, "For in this

(tabernacle) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” The question has been suggested, was there any special significance in the fact that the apostle employed the word “taste”? The answer must be in the affirmative, for the term indicates that what they already possessed was a very small portion of that which they were to receive in “the age to come.” And what did they possess? I affirm that they had something in common with the angels, only less in degree, namely, “power,” superhuman “power;” and this power was Holy Spirit and an earnest of their inheritance. It is called an earnest because it was given beforehand as a seal or assurance of that which was to come - even the inheritance. I think it reasonable to conclude that the earnest of a thing must bear some resemblance to that of which it is an earnest. Allow me to offer a simple illustration. A man enlists into the British army for a bounty of ten or twenty pounds; on the day of his enlistment he receives one shilling, usually termed the earnest that is the earnest of the sum promised which is paid to him at a later period! Is there any similarity between the earnest and the bounty? Undoubtedly there is; they are both current coin of the realm, only the earnest is on a smaller scale. Just so, and the earnest which the Christians of apostolic times had was superhuman power, so that the inheritance is superhuman power in a greater degree. If the inheritance be, as I have heard some allege, so many acres of land with eternal life, then, according to all modes of right reasoning, the early Christians should have possessed a plot of land each, as an earnest of their future inheritance; but not so, for they sold their possessions and “had all things common.” My humble view of the matter is, that the inheritance of the saints in light, the inheritance we are called to share, is authority, or dominion, supported and demonstrated by angelic ability. Our adorable Lord and Saviour has inspired us with this hope, the hope of being equal unto the angels, as we have seen from Luke 20:35, 36.

I might ask in what way or manner do we expect to be equal unto the angels? This is a very important question; it is evident that Paul thought so, for the apostle tells the Ephesians he did not cease making mention of them in his prayers, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. I believe that we shall be equal to the angels mentally and physically - that is to say, equal in power of mind and of body.

If the premises laid down be sound, namely, that the earnest of a thing must be some expression of that which it is an earnest of, then we shall obtain a definite answer to the question proposed.

Did those who had the earnest of their inheritance by the power bestowed upon them, perform anything in common with the angels? Yes. Then they will be equal in power or ability to those glorious beings. Let me give a few instances of this:

When the men of Sodom encompassed the house of Lot and made an assault upon it, the angels, it is said, “Smote the men both small and great with blindness.” From Acts 13:8-11, we learn that Paul inflicted the same chastisement upon a “false prophet” at Paphos. A certain governor desired to hear the Word of the Lord, “But Elymas, the sorcerer, sought to turn away the deputy from the faith.” Then Paul “filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him, and said, Oh full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking someone to lead him by the hand.” We also read of destroying angels sent forth from God, to cut off the wicked at various times. We are likewise informed of death occurring by the power vested in Peter. I refer to the destruction of Ananias and of Sapphira his wife.

Having brought forward some examples of this power, and shown that it was an earnest of the expected inheritance, and a taste of the powers of the “age to come,” the consideration arises whether anyone in the present day possesses this power, this earnest, this taste of angelic ability. My answer is no; it were presumption to lay claim to such power. Yet we are neither orphans, nor comfortless; we all have, or should have, those three graces which were to abide, namely, faith, hope, and charity; and these are of God. Faith cometh by hearing the Word of the Lord, hope is inspired by the promises of Jehovah, and charity is begotten in us by the manifestation of His great goodness. God is love, and he “that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him.”

Looking forward to the future, what do we anticipate with respect to our individual selves, in the “age to come”? I reply, perfection, equality with the angels. Man is an imperfect creature, and, moreover, he never has been perfect; when he first issued from the hands of the divine workers he was not declared perfect, but with all the other creatures of God he was pronounced “very good.” And, as an animal organization, a living soul of flesh and blood, he was “very good;” but flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. The will of the Deity concerning us is our perfection, He has, “through sufferings,” made perfect the Captain of our salvation, that He might bring many other sons to the same glory. The Lord said to the rich young man, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast... and come and follow me.”

And Paul speaks thus, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect;” but he was pressing “toward the mark for the prize.” This prize, I believe, to be the Divine nature, or equality with the angels. Let us then see by comparison, what we may hope or expect. It appears to me that all the expedients to which man has recourse, are so many proofs of his imperfection. Does he wish to increase his speed in travelling from place to place, he travels by train or car or plane; if he desires to move large amounts of anything he devises some kind of machine. What expedients too in the shape of vast armaments, and military equipment are employed for the destruction of our fellow men. Yet one angel could go forth, and in a single night destroy the whole army of Sennacherib, numbering 185,000 men. And the righteous “shall be equal to the angels.” How many expedients did the angel require to open the prison doors and release Peter? How many expedients did the angel resort to in order to remove the sealed stone from the mouth of the sepulchre? And the righteous “shall be equal to the angels,” mentally and physically - perfect in strength, perfect in sight, perfect in knowledge. What powers of transition too may we not expect with the velocity of angels of light? I do not imagine we shall be irrevocably chained, by the fetters of gravitation to this terrestrial ball. The writer of a book, entitled “A Plea for the Habitation of the Planets,” gives his threefold reasons, thus - First: All things have been created in wisdom. Second: Wisdom, even in the Creator, is governed by certain unalterable laws; and one of these laws is the adaptation of means to ends. Third: It follows from this that the planets must serve some better purpose than merely lighting up this earth; so he arrives at the conclusion that the planets are inhabited. I cannot agree with the author in all he writes, but it is possible when we are invested with the “powers of the age to come,” that we may explore those glorious orbs. I do not think we shall remain in ignorance of them as now. Well might John write, “it doth not yet appear what we shall be,” and well may it be said, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Paul, however, says, “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” But how much is revealed? Only a part. For the Apostle writes, “We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we only know in part, but then we shall know, even as we are known.” Then shall we apprehend that for which we are apprehended of God.

Brethren, let us hope great things; let us not be contracted in our desires but let us not be straitened in our expectations, but let us hope all things, “For the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “For He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the working of His mighty power.”

J.H.

The divine teachings of the Bible are designed to fashion man into the grander manhood of righteousness.

Joel 1:29, 28.

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams,
your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids
in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

BROTHER J. CAMERON.

In the widest sense, the Church may be said to embrace all who shall be found approved by the Lord when He comes. In the narrowest sense, the two or three met together in the name of Christ in that place is the Church. In both of these communities, Christ is the head: for in a sense, as the Apostle says, "The head of every man is Christ." The truth involved in this proposition is by no means realized as it ought to be; for it implies the absolute submission of every disciple to the will of him they call Master and Lord. This relationship, with the privileges and duties it brings with it, may well engage our thoughts for a little, if peradventure we may learn a little more of the responsibility it lays upon us, and drink a little deeper into the spirit it naturally breathes. It is by correct knowledge of the true nature of things that we can expect to sustain our own relation to them, and reap the full benefit such relationship is fitted to impart.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Every human society is founded on some characteristic which is common to the whole membership, in which none is defective, whatever else may be possessed over and above. Whether it be an Anti-Slavery Society, a Free-mason fraternity, or a simple village Co-operative Store, the same rule applies. Membership, with its duties and privileges, is based upon some qualification which all possess in common. This, and this alone, makes the whole each other's Fellows or equals so far at least as corporate status is concerned. Want of this deprives of fellowship and its privileges, no matter what other qualifications may be possessed.

Divine wisdom has seen fit to incorporate that community called the Church upon the same simple principle, the members of that body may be the merest babes in Christ, or they may understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge; but if they have complied with the terms which God has been pleased to prescribe, they are, in virtue of this, and of this alone, entitled to rank as fellows of the very chief of the Apostles, because they are the brethren of the Lord Jesus the Anointed, the Son of God; and consequently the "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty." This principle finds a beautiful illustration in the designation by which the community of Christ's brethren are most commonly known in the New Testament, namely, "THE CHURCH." Modern nomenclature has obscured the light which the original word sheds on the simplicity of the constitution of the Christian community. The Greek is *ekklesia*, which is compounded of *kaleo*, 'I call', with the prefixed preposition *ek*, 'out', and signifies "the called out;" that is, the Ecclesia, or Church, consisted of the aggregate of those who had been called out from among the world at large, embracing both Jews and Gentiles. This aggregate was divisible into groups of smaller dimensions, according to the different localities in which it had pleased the Lord to cast the lot of his called ones. But there is no indication that any other principle than that of "local habitation" was ever allowed to subdivide the members of the body of Christ. Pity it is that what God has thus joined together, any man should presume to put asunder. Pity it is that human wisdom has invented terms and conditions of Church fellowship which Christ and His Apostles never dreamt of, and have substituted these for the Divine invitation in the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. And pity it is that the professed disciples of Christ have in so many instances suffered such interference with "Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan."

HOW IS THE CHURCH CALLED OUT?

In the calling out of God's Ecclesia, "the simplicity which is in Christ" is abundantly manifest. The Gospel is the only means by which "God has visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." A few quotations will shew this to be the case: - "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus

before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Timothy 1:8-10.

Paul's gospel is the gospel Paul preached, a specimen of which we have in what he preached for two whole years in his own hired house at Rome. This is described in these terms: "Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." The Kingdom of God is that Kingdom to be established on the earth in the land of promise, over restored Israel and the nations. "The things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" are summarized by Paul himself in these words: "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first to rise from the dead." Upon an intelligent apprehension of the things scripturally involved in such a summary as this, confessing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, believers of the Gospel were immersed into the name of Jesus, and were thus called out from a world lying in wickedness. But "the Gospel of the Kingdom" is not only the means by which God is inviting sinners to become His sons and daughters, the Kingdom is also that to which they are invited when it shall be set up according to Divine prediction. A few extracts will demonstrate this without a word of comment: - "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children,) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Peter 5:10. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." 1 Timothy 6:12. "I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14.

Those thus called to God's Kingdom and glory by the Gospel, constitute God's Church or Ecclesia, irrespective of all other human requirements. These are mere inventions which the foolishness of men seek to impose on the wisdom of God.

THE "FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL."

When Paul wrote to the Church at Philippi, whom he styles "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," he had no other idea in his mind regarding the fellowship than that of those called out by the Gospel. He says: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." For what? "For your Fellowship in The Gospel from the first day until now." But the Philippian Church seems to have been highly favoured in respect of their fellowship being in the Gospel. For we read of this simple basis of fellowship being interfered with at other places by men who would have "God's easy, unencumbered plan" eked out with human wisdom, which but too often proves to be folly. Thus, at Antioch, certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "except ye be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This was happily quashed by a decree of the Apostles at Jerusalem, based on the simple fact stated by Peter: "How God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." This form of human attempt at improvement on Divine wisdom was fruitful of evil in Rome, Galatia, and probably at other places. Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians are specially directed against this form of sectarianism. In the former epistle (Romans 16:17, 18) he seems to have this evil fully before his mind: - "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

This "causing (or *making*, ποιῶ) divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned" cannot be applied to such divisions as existed at Corinth, which shewed itself in a preference for certain teachers, none of whose doctrines are called in question. But the Judaizers come under Paul's description most fittingly: for the divisions they made were contrary to the doctrine they had learned. And be it remembered that the main design of the letter to the Romans was to vindicate the simplicity of the faith against the very class who taught the necessity of keeping the Law of Moses in order to justification.

THE ONE FOUNDATION.

The figure of a building is often employed by the apostles to illustrate the simplicity of the Christian fellowship. To the Corinthians Paul wrote: - "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's

husbandry; ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which, is Jesus Christ." And to the Ephesians: - "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

This is in exact agreement with what our Lord taught his disciples. He asked them, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter (Petros, a stone) and upon this rock (Petra, a rock) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This rock is none other than Jesus Himself in His character as the Messiah of Israel, and the Son of the living God. This is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, for it was predicted by the prophets and preached by the apostles, namely, Jesus Christ, the chief corner-stone laid in Zion.

Thus the prophet: - "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." - Isaiah xxviii. 16. Peter, quoting this, says, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house"

DIVERSITY IN UNITY.

The one foundation having been laid in Jesus the Christ, and the living stones built thereon, on the simple principles of gospel faith and obedience, there could not fail to be many diverse elements outlying the cementing medium by which each unit was united to the foundation. This connecting link was the faith of the gospel. There were Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, Greeks and Barbarians, the wise and the unwise. They differed about meats and days, but the apostles expressly forbade such diversity to interfere with the unity which existed alongside of it in the one faith, of the gospel. Paul was thoroughly cognisant of this diversity in unity from the very first. He even accommodated himself, at the express request of a fellow apostle, to the prejudices of his Jewish kinsmen, by observing a certain ceremony in the temple. The oneness was in Christ Jesus, not in the manifold units of the body. "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." A Jew remained a Jew, and a Greek a Greek. But each was a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul at great length treats of this diversity in unity. "The body is not one member but many. But the eye never becomes an organ of hearing, nor the ear an organ of vision." As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."

THE NECESSITY OF FORBEARANCE.

It must be evident that in a society composed of such materials as the Church of Christ, there must be the greatest need for forbearing with each other. There would always be a danger of those things in which they differed exalting themselves over those in which they were one, thus marring the unity of the body. In beautiful adaptation to this liability we have a perfect body of injunctions and exhortations by the apostles. Those men never dreamt of classifying the disciples into groups or sections, in accordance with their various peculiarities and prejudices. As a specimen we might select one from Paul, which is thoroughly characteristic: - "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Ephesians 4:1-7.

Here are surely elements of unity sufficient to constitute the most stable bulwark against division, if only allowed to have their due influence. This is nothing less than paramount. All opinions or theories apart from the one faith of the gospel are the private property of their possessors, and must be

subordinated to the unity of the church. If such are deemed important, and worthy of being taught, and others willing to hear, well and good. But it is purely a matter of courtesy that any member of the Christian brotherhood is allowed to teach his brethren anything that is outside “the common faith,” and that for the simple reason that everyone is as much entitled as he is to express an opposite opinion if so disposed.

BAPTISED BELIEVERS OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

The application of these principles to the present day among ourselves should not be very difficult to the sincere respecter of God’s will in preference to man’s. If God has called my fellow-creature to His Kingdom and glory by the gospel of His Son, what am I that I should not hail him as a fellow-worshipper in the assembly of the saints? Shall I presume to say “Stand back, for I am holier than thou;” I understand all mysteries and have all knowledge, while you know little beyond the simple elements of the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles for the obedience of faith? Nay: for has not my Master said “Whoso shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.” “Take heed that ye despise not one of the little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. “ – Matthew 18:6-10. And has not his servant Paul left us a charge in his letter to the Philippians, we do well to ponder? - “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the FAITH of the GOSPEL.”

This is truly an object worthy of our strife, not among ourselves, however, but with those around us; earnestly contending for The Faith once delivered to the saints.”

Brother J. Cameron.

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

TAKE TIME TO PRAY

I rose up early one morning and rushed right into the day,
I had so much to accomplish that I just didn’t have time to pray.

Troubles just tumbled about me, and heavier became each task,
“Why doesn’t God help me?” I wondered, and He answered, “You didn’t ask”

I tried to come into God’s presence, I tried every key in the lock.
When gently and lovingly He chided, “Why, child, you didn’t knock”

I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on grey and bleak.
I wondered why God didn’t show me; but He said, “You didn’t seek.”

So I rose up early this morning, and paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish I had to make time to pray.”

Two letters from the past - April, 1875.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

1st letter to the Editor of the Waterloo Chronicle)

Sir, I desire through the columns of your paper to make a few remarks upon a lecture on this subject delivered by the Rev. Mr. Dickie, in this village on Thursday evening last. The rev. gentleman through his whole lecture linked together the belief of the existence of a separate conscious entity in man called the immortal soul with the belief in a future state, and laboured hard to make the impression that to disbelieve the former was to deny the latter. In the outset I would state that while I do not believe that either nature, experience, or revelation teaches the doctrine as above stated, yet I firmly believe the words of Jesus, who says, I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth on me though he were dead yet shall he live;" and in the words of the Apostle Paul, "To those who seek for glory, honour, and immortality, God will give eternal life." I believe that "Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," and that it is not inherent in man, but that at the resurrection, those who have believed the gospel and obeyed it, will realize the fulfilment of Paul's language, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

The rev. gentleman followed the rational argument, and endeavoured to prove from reason that the soul is immortal. In the review of some of his leading points I shall try to be brief, not to occupy too much of your valuable space, yet I ask your indulgence in order to carry my objections to their legitimate conclusions. He says,

"The elements of the body are ever changing, and become completely changed in seven years, yet our personal identity remains unaffected, which renders the separate existence of the soul or mind highly probable."

For this argument to be of any force we have to suppose that the mind is unchangeable. This we cannot do; for, in a perfectly intelligible sense, the mind is the most changeable thing of which we have any knowledge. Through all the mutations of the body its identity is no less perfect than that of the mind. The changes which take place in the mind between infancy and old age are as indicative of a renovation of substance as the changes of the body, during the same period, are presumptive of a change of the corporeal particles. Is our personal identity determined by our mind or our body or by both? Would we have any identity at all without our bodies? and if so describe it? It is an entire assumption to speak of the identity of the mind or soul apart from the body, and to affirm its powers and properties in that separate capacity. Of the mind apart from the body we have no experience and absolutely no knowledge. The physical is the very law of our mental being and without the physical we should have no mental existence. He says,

"The mind works when the body is quiescent; unconscious of sensation, and incapable of perception of external objects, as in trances, dreams, etc." "Hence the mind is probably independent of the body."

Let the evidence be produced that the mind works when the body is quiescent and his deduction may be true. In a state of quiescence, the lungs have ceased to respire, the heart no longer beats, the blood does not circulate through the veins, and the brain and nerves are in a state of inaction. Science furnishes no instance in which the mind works while the body is in this state. In trances, dreams, &c., there is only a partially quiescent state of the body, and at the same time there is a corresponding quiescent state of the mind. It is not, therefore, logical to conclude that if a partial inactivity of the body produces a corresponding state of mental inactivity, the total quiescence of the body would produce the entire cessation of mental power. He says,

"The body is divisible, while the mind is indivisible, which is an evidence of its immortality."

That is to say the mind is immortal because it is indivisible. The inconclusiveness of such reasoning becomes apparent when the argument assumes a syllogistic form.

That which is indivisible is immortal. The mind is indivisible. Therefore the mind is immortal.

The major premise contains an obvious fallacy. Immortality is one thing and indivisibility is another and a very different thing. An atom of matter is indivisible yet this quality does not render it immortal. Therefore the indivisibility of the mind fails to prove its immortality. He says,

“Volition is not a property of matter and cannot be conceived of it.” “Matter is composed of atoms which cannot be supposed to exercise foresight, and choice either singly or in combination.”

It is easy to say that volition is not a property of matter, but where is the proof? When such a principle as that of galvanism or electricity, confessedly a property of matter, can be present in or absent from a body, attract or repel without adding to or subtracting from its weight or size, it will require some better species of logic than any hitherto produced to establish the impossibility of mind being a property of matter. We know very little of the properties of matter except within a very limited sphere. There are the properties of matter called gravitation, magnetism, electricity, heat, light, &c., and we see the most beautiful harmony in their operations in the economy of nature, yet we know nothing of their cause or origin. May not mind be that property of matter by which a living being is so organised that it can discern its own identity? How can the rev. gentleman in the face of science state that the living organisms of men and animals cannot exercise volition, foresight, and choice? Do not the ant and the bee possess the faculty of foresight in a very high degree? Has the ant, therefore, an immortal soul of which foresight is a property? This is the result of his proposition, and he thus assumes the responsibility of teaching that all animals have immortal souls as well as man. On volition scientific men say “The brain governs all the voluntary motions of the whole physical economy by direct volition.” (Cole’s Physiology, page 290.) Volition is a physical fact, the motive power of muscle is as purely physical as the motive power of steam, food is to the one what fuel is to the other. (Alexander Bain, L.L.D., Mind and Body page 76.) He says,

“Men strongly desire immortality. This desire is natural and normal, and is no doubt implanted by the Creator. Will it not be satisfied? The eye is given us and light also the ear and sound satisfies. Whence this universal desire for immortality if man is wholly mortal?”

The argument plainly stated is just this.

All men are what they desire to be. All men desire to be immortal. Therefore all men are immortal.

This is had reasoning, and I am surprised that Mr. Dicke should have thus infringed upon the rules of logic. The fallacy in the proposition is this. All men are not what they desire to be, for instance, it will not be denied that all men desire happiness, yet the fact must be admitted that all men are not happy. Other desires might be instanced, but I will notice one in particular, which may well be called universal - the desire for a longer continuation of life than that which is allotted to man. This desire, which is perhaps inherent in every human breast, has never been gratified; it has never added one moment to the existence of any human being.

If the argument as above stated be valid, it proves that not only are all men naturally immortal, independent of moral character, but it also proves that all men are equally the heirs of endless happiness. If that only is eternal which is the object of universal desire, then most assuredly the doctrine of eternal torment is untrue; for we cannot suppose that any person ever desired so dreadful a destiny.

The major premise of this proposition cannot be sustained, and the argument accordingly fails.

Space will not permit me to notice a number of his minor arguments, I will, therefore, pass on to his remarks respecting universal belief. He says,

“The Greek and Roman philosophers delighted to dwell on the doctrine of the soul’s immortality. All nations both ancient and modern believe it. A small minority dares to raise the voice in opposition, but are scarcely heard.”

That this should be adduced in proof of the soul’s natural immortality is truly surprising. The argument formulated stands thus,

That in which a vast majority believes is true. A vast majority believes in the immortality of the soul. Therefore the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is true.

One instance is sufficient to show the utter fallacy of such reasoning. Three hundred years ago a vast majority of the people of Europe believed in the doctrines of the church of Rome; yet no one would think of stating this fact to prove that the teachings of the Vatican are true.

I have gone over his leading arguments and shown wherein he has failed to prove from reason that the soul is immortal.

Is the soul immortal? Reason answers: there is no evidence that this. Does the mind survive the dissolution of the body? Science answers: there is no fact on record that it does.

I am pleased to hear that Mr. Dickie intends at no distant day to deliver a lecture giving the arguments from Revelation in favour of this doctrine.

A Christadelphian.

* * *

2nd letter to the Editor of the Waterloo Chronicle

Sir, On Thursday evening last, the Rev. Mr. Dickie delivered his second lecture on this subject, and endeavoured to prove from revelation that the soul of man is immortal. In my former communication I showed wherein he failed to establish it from reason and science, and I shall now endeavour to show that he has failed from Scripture. I am in perfect accord with his remark that we should not accept his teachings on this all important subject, but that we should go to the Word of God, and search the Scriptures, “proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.” I believe as strongly as he does, that the Scriptures are the oracles of the Deity, and are the only record which gives us the true teaching regarding the nature of man and his destiny.

He says that the opponents of the doctrine of the soul’s immortality rely mainly upon passages like the following: Ecclesiastes 9:10, “There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (sheol) whither thou goest.”

To this I object, for in citing these passages they only show wherein they harmonize and support the great truths of man’s moral nature and Deity’s plan for his redemption. They rely on the whole evidence of the Scriptures from the sentence pronounced upon Adam, “Dust thou art and into dust shalt thou return;” followed immediately by the gracious promise, that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” down the stream of time, through the gradual unfolding of the great salvation, to the full revelation of the mystery of “bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” 2 Timothy 1:10, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who, for obedience to his Father’s will, was made the “Prince of life,” and is now able, and will, at the time appointed, raise his brethren from the grave. 1 Thess. 4-16, crown them with eternal life; James 1:12, and give them an inheritance in the Kingdom of God; Acts 20:32, when Christ will sit upon the throne of his father David; Luke 1:32, and all the nations of the earth will enjoy the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, “In thee, and in thy seed (Christ) shall all families of the earth be blessed,” Genesis 12:3, and 22:18; Galatians 3:16.

One of the strongest reasons for opposing this doctrine is, that it destroys the harmony in the great scheme of salvation, and becomes subversive of the resurrection and judgment. If the soul at death enters *sheol*, Heb., *hades*, Gr., and at once goes into Paradise, a state of everlasting joy, or into (Gehenna, a state

of endless woe, I would ask what purpose would be answered by the resurrection of the body to life? If souls go to God and to the Devil at death there is no need of a resurrection; for resurrection is life or the way to life. How then can an immortal soul be said to arise to life, when it has been living in heaven for thousands of years; or a wicked soul to arise to punishment, when it has been in flames for ages? This doctrine of passing directly to heaven or hell at death necessarily flows from the supposition that there is an immortal soul in man, and, as we have just shown, becomes a denial of the resurrection of the dead, and which Paul says is a denial of the faith. 1 Corinthians 15:14.

But to follow the rev. gentleman. he says,

“I take for the basis of my argument, Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:7, and around these two passages the whole of the truth relating to man’s nature may conveniently be grouped. Mark the distinction between the soul and the body. The body material and of the dust, the soul immaterial and from God.”

Instead of marking a distinction between the soul and body, I see an intimate similarity, and the words of Genesis 2:7 are the most positive testimony that the “man formed of the dust of the ground became by the operating spirit of Deity in the breath of life, a living soul.” Now I ask, Did this operation transform the material dust from which man was composed into an immaterial immortal soul? For it was the man of the dust that was made the living soul. Some will say that the spirit of life which God breathed into man is the immortal soul. To this I object, for the Divine record nowhere says that God breathed a soul into man. It is illogical for Mr. Dickie to attempt to prove the immortality of the soul from this passage, because there is nothing in the premise upon which to base such a deduction.

Let us trace the history of this living soul and if possible determine its nature. Man was placed under law which he soon transgressed, and in consequence God arraigned him for judgment. The sentence pronounced upon this living soul was, “Thou shalt die. Dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return.” Gen. 3:19. Paul in his unanswerable argument proving the resurrection of the dead shows that a natural body and a living soul are identical. 1 Cor. 15:44, 45. He also shows that Adam by disobedience brought death on the whole human race, and that Jesus by a life of obedience brought eternal life by a resurrection from the dead. Rom 5th chapter. If there is no resurrection of the dead, which is a logical consequence of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, then Christ had not risen, and the gospel of a future life by a resurrection was of no avail to those who believed it; they were yet in their sins and perished at death. 1 Colossians 15:14 to 18. From the foregoing synthesis we can formulate the following syllogism:

That which is subject to death is not immortal. The soul is subject to death. Ezekiel 18:4, and Romans 5:12. Therefore the soul is not immortal. He says, “What becomes of the soul at death?” It has an unbroken existence in hades the place of the departed, and is there always represented as being in a state of active unconsciousness. For proof, see 1 Samuel 28:15. Isaiah 14:15, Ezekiel 31:16. The souls of the righteous go to paradise in hades and enter upon their rewards of fullness, of joy and pleasures evermore. The souls of the wicked go to Gehenna in hades and suffer the punishment of an endless torment. See Luke 16:19 to end, Luke 23:43, Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:8, for proof.

Thus death to the righteous is the path of life to everlasting happiness, and to the wicked it is the path of life to a state of endless misery.

Space will not permit me to examine these passages separately. I will first show that his theory conflicts with itself, and then that it is not in harmony with the teaching of Scripture. If the souls of good men go to heaven at death, the witch of Endor must have brought Samuel down, but the record says she brought him up out of the earth. This is surely inconsistent and requires explanation. A dispassionate investigation of the record will show that neither Samuel himself nor his soul was brought up or down, but that it was a mediumistic deception that the witch practised, and against such the Deity had pronounced the severe penalty of death. If any one wishes a private interview with Samuel he can be gratified by applying to a spiritual medium of the present day. The language of Scripture is most emphatic respecting those who go to hades, the place of the dead. “The dead know not anything.” Ecclesiastes 9:5. But Mr. Dickie says: ‘the righteous dead are praising their Redeemer with loud songs of joy, whereas the Word

most positively states that “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Psalm 6:5 and 46:3, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Isaiah 38:18, they are represented as sleeping in the dust of the earth, waiting for the trumpet’s awakening sound, when Jesus will call on those who sleep in the dust to awake. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 to 18, and Daniel 12:2.

He cites the text, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,” to prove that the souls of Jesus and the thief went to heaven at death. Yet three days after the crucifixion Jesus said to Mary, “I am not yet ascended to my God.” John 22:17. God is in heaven, therefore Jesus had not at that time gone to heaven. Jesus at death went to hades, which Mr. Dickie says is the place of departed and conscious souls, but Jesus did not remain there, for Peter says, Acts 2:31, “His soul was not left in hades,” and why? Because “God raised him from the dead.” Hence Jesus and the souls of the righteous are not together, for they are in hades, and he was not left there. This is in harmony with the works of Jesus to his disciples, “Whither I go ye cannot come.” John 13:33. And it is also in harmony with the whole tenor of the Scripture, that hades or the grave is the place of the unconscious dead, and that Jesus was not permitted to remain in this state, but was raised, ascended to heaven, and became the first fruits of them that slept, and that his brethren will be raised in the resurrection at the last day. John 11:24. When Jesus will return “to judge the quick and the dead,” and “give rewards unto his servants the saints.” The doctrine that the souls of the good are with Jesus in paradise, in hades, conflicts with the truth which says “the soul of Jesus was not left in hades,” and “that David is not ascended into the heavens.” Acts 2:34.

He laid the greatest stress on Isaiah 14:15, Ezekiel 31:16, and Luke 16:19, in proof of the conscious activity of the dead. He says:

“These passages, though highly poetical and figurative, teach the highest truth, and it is perfectly reasonable and logical to conclude that they teach the conscious existence of souls in hades.”

True, the language is figurative. But if the truth here taught is what is plainly expressed, then it is not figurative but literal. We are also informed that the trees of the forest spake and rejoiced at the overthrow of Lucifer, son of the morning, therefore is it not reasonable to conclude that trees are consciously active. But if trees symbolize nations and kings, and are figuratively represented as speaking, is it not in harmony that these nations and kings, having lost political power, should be symbolized by the dead rejoicing at the downfall of their oppressor. Yet we know literally, the dead do not speak, neither do trees rejoice.

From what has been said regarding the resurrection, our Lord’s argument against the Sadducees, becomes of easy interpretation. Remember the subject of discussion was the resurrection and not the consciousness of souls; Jesus says, Mark 12:26, “As touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read, I am the God of Abraham, &c., He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.” Why? Because the dead rise. The rule for interpretation is furnished by Paul in Romans 4:17, “God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” said to Abraham, “I have made thee a father of many nations.” The past, present, and future are the same to God, who is “from everlasting to everlasting,” “knows the end from the beginning,” and “with whom a thousand years are but as one day.” Therefore, he, who had promised a resurrection from the dead, could say “I am the God of Abraham,” thus speaking of the future life, which is not yet, as though it were.

I have been as brief as possible in my remarks, yet I fear I have occupied too much of your valuable space.

I would gladly hear the Rev. Mr. Dickie harmonize the inconsistencies I have pointed out in this theory, both with itself and with revelation.

Yours truly, A Christadelphian

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

– **Romans 10:10-13**

JESUS SAID . . .

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46,47).

However great our knowledge of the scriptures, however well we may reason among ourselves, however much logic we insist on applying, differing ideas regarding the how and the why of Jesus Christ's work of salvation abound. How many leave it to others to reason these things out and then accept their findings when Almighty God has extended the invitation to each one to “come now, and let us reason together,.... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Also Jesus tells us to “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

“God is not the author of confusion,” (1 Corinthians 14:33); that appertains to man, and we can avail ourselves nothing, for, if our understanding is to be opened it will be by Jesus Christ, and only then can we know the truth.

The importance of understanding was known to Solomon who, through inspiration, wrote in Proverbs 4:7, “Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

The disciples of Jesus were God-fearing, devout law-abiding Jews, brought up through childhood to know the scriptures. They were chosen for their sincerity and integrity, and for three and a half years were with Jesus knowing Him to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, yet it was after the resurrection that “opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

To all who will be His disciples the exhortation is “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matthew 7:7,8).

Matthew 24:29-31, *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

You Can Burn This in Ten Seconds...

Eternity Will Not Efface the Facts

Do You Realise....

....if you are a Christadelphian you are supposed to believe that Jesus died for Himself? And have you ever found any place in the Bible where it says so? Yet the Birmingham Statement of Faith speaks of Him as “abrogating the law of condemnation for himself” and as “a representative of Adam’s disobedient race.”

Do you realise that you are supposed to believe that there is a physical principle of evil in human flesh which makes it impossible for people to keep the Commandments and that it was because Jesus had sin in His flesh that God required Him to die upon the Cross? Has it never occurred to you how utterly foolish and unscriptural this is and what a monster of evil God would be if it were true?

We have never seen it stated anywhere except in Christadelphian literature that Jesus was under condemnation, or that His death was for Himself, or that sin can be literally in the flesh and blood of man. When we learned that these beliefs had been challenged more than 70 years ago and that the courageous souls who scripturally refuted them had been vilified and misrepresented ever since, we realised that Christadelphians were just one of many sects of apostate Christendom and that truth was really of less importance than their organisation.

It is quite true that many who may read this message object as strongly as we do to the doctrine that Jesus was in any sense sinful, defiled, or condemned and that His death upon the Cross was necessary for His own salvation and we are glad that one ecclesia has made a start by adopting a Statement of Faith from which all that rubbish is left out. It is still a fact however that as a Community they believe and teach that people are born with sin literally in their flesh and if you regard yourself as a Christadelphian these evil apparitions are on your doorstep and you must either disown them or take them in and live with them.

Cry Aloud And Spare Not

If there was any real scriptural defence against our reproaches Christadelphians would hardly resort to physical violence and hooliganism to prevent us distributing literature, as they did at Smethwick on September 37th 1949. They would rather hold us up to the ridicule of the public and prove the superiority of their own teaching. We are not much concerned whether our testimony is welcomed or spurned by such people; fortunately speech is still free and although they would like to take from us the liberty to proclaim what we believe to be the truth, we shall continue as opportunity offers to intrude upon the attention of those who make a great song about reading the Bible and preaching against error, but who become remarkably and uncontrollably angry when anyone ventures to draw attention to a few of the inconsistencies in their own teaching.

Since many people cannot understand how a sincere believer who has once had what Christadelphians regard as “the Truth” can ever have forsaken it, and because those who could and ought to explain the matter prefer suppression and misrepresentation, we offer the following explanation.

The Nazarene Fellowship believe the Bible to be the word of God, wholly inspired and infallible, and when it proves to be in opposition to the writings of Christadelphians, the Statement of Faith, or any other Creed, they follow the Bible.

They believe in the literal return of Jesus to the earth to establish the Kingdom of God and reign in righteousness and peace; they believe in the resurrection of the body and the reward of the righteous and all other things which can be scripturally proved.

Amongst these they believe that Jesus voluntarily suffered on Calvary a death which He neither incurred nor deserved, in order to redeem the life of the race forfeited by disobedience. He paid His brother's debt by the sacrifice of His own life, meeting the claim against Him of a just law and Justifying the mercy of God in allowing a condemned sinner to live.

This is briefly the awful doctrine hated by Christadelphians and nicknamed by them "the Clean Flesh Heresy," "The Free Life Theory," "Renunciationism" and "Substitution." Can you see anything very terrible in it? Does it strike you as a soul-destroying heresy? Is it not rather exactly what the Bible tells us?

Don't Believe All You Hear

We are constantly being told that we teach that the flesh and nature of Jesus was different from that of all other men. If we had ever believed or taught so, then we should deserve some of the epithets we are given, but it is a complete untruth. We believe that Jesus was the same in nature and experience as us, but different in character and origin. We believe that flesh as such is neither clean nor unclean but simply the living material of which human beings are formed. The thing that matters in the sight of God is their relationship and the character which human beings display. The same kind of flesh can manifest good character or bad, according to the behaviour and thinking of the man concerned.

We have renounced nothing but the unscriptural teaching that sin (an abstract word meaning transgression of law) is literally in the flesh of human beings and that this was the defilement from which Jesus could only be cleansed by death.

It sometimes seems that Christadelphian leaders are themselves more than half ashamed of the doctrine, for it is rarely mentioned and then usually glossed over, but it hangs like a skeleton in the cupboard and is only revealed when anyone persistently asks why it was that God made the death of His own beloved and innocent Son the sole means of redemption. Then they produce the astounding explanation that although He was the Son of God, although He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, His flesh was unclean, His nature defiled by sin and fit only for destruction! They say His sacrifice upon the Cross was "a ritual exhibition of what was due to sinful human nature."

But when giving this explanation which explains nothing, they conveniently forget that the body which was put into the tomb was the selfsame body which came forth on the third day! Was it still unclean and defiled? Why did not Jesus say, at the last supper, "This is my unclean body which is to be ceremonially condemned" and "this is my sin-defiled blood which is shed for myself"? How horrible it sounds; yet these would be appropriate words at the memorial table for "Filthy dreamers who defile the flesh."

When the writer, then a member of the Suffolk Street fellowship, learned from former members of the Temperance hall section the implications of Christadelphian doctrine concerning Christ, all the petty squabbling which rends that body became meaningless, it was realised that membership of any section of the community was impossible to one who intelligently believes that Jesus, the only begotten of God, was given as a sacrifice to save sinners. We know that many deplore much of what has been written by their editors and fellow brethren on the subject, but the fact remains, that the accepted teaching of Christadelphians is that it was right and just for Jesus to be put to death, because He was personally of a sinful nature. That view seems to us so near to blasphemy that we do not see how one who knowingly tolerates it by sharing the name or fellowship of those who hold it can hope for acceptance.

What We Really Teach

We once asked the simple question, "If human beings are born sinful and incapable of obedience, how can a just God hold them guilty?" We also asked, "If Jesus was the same as us, how did He succeed in living a sinless life?" These seem very simple and reasonable questions, but John Carter immediately wrote of us as "a renegade brother." So long as he and the rest of Christadelphian expositors can do no better than the shameless assertion that Jesus had to be specially strengthened in order to overcome His innate sinfulness we shall be content for him to call us names.

Is it not the merest common sense to conclude that the attested fact that Jesus was made like us and tempted in all points as we are, yet lived a perfect life, proves that the reason we do wrong is because we do not try hard enough to do right? That being so God is Just in regarding us as sinners and holding Christ before us as an example. His life proves beyond any question that it is not human nature or flesh and blood that is at fault but the relationship and behaviour of men and women. Honest people know perfectly well that they are not compelled to do wrong and when they go astray they must blame themselves, not God, and confess their faults and ask for forgiveness. No one who believes he is born sinful or inherits sin or has a physical principle of sin in his flesh can possibly be truly and sincerely repentant.

It is not however primarily our own transgressions which put us in the need of salvation, though they are involved and are wiped out in the process. If God had called us all to account individually, every individual sinner would have required an individual saviour or would perish without hope. Christadelphians have never understood this aspect of the atonement and yet it is one of the vital factors which make the subject so enthralling. One sacrifice could only redeem one sinner, one debt paid could only release one creditor; one righteous act could only atone for one act of sin (Romans 5:12-19). This is the reason why God regards all the offspring of Adam as involved in the act of rebellion which alienated him; his life was forfeited (but was not taken) and therefore the life which was transmitted to all his descendants was a condemned life. This is not in any sense a physical matter or a change of nature but purely of legal status and relationship and its purpose and object was not to make it difficult or impossible for men and women to obey God but to make it possible for Him to show them mercy and forgiveness. This is proved by the fact that the condemnation which came by Adam is removed as soon as a believer puts on Christ (Romans 8:1).

Now how was it possible for Jesus alone by the one great sacrifice of Himself, to redeem a multitude? It was because Jesus did not derive His life from Adam but direct from God and when He chose to carry out His Father's plan to save mankind, there was only one possible way to do it and that was by paying the ransom price, a life; His life instead of Adam's, to that other master, sin. He thus purchased back to God all those who were sold into bondage in Adam.

This explanation brings upon our head the sneers of "legalism," "the pawnshop," "taking metaphor too literally," and so on. We are not dismayed but simply ask our opponents to point out where it fails to agree with Scripture and to show if they can, that there is either truth, reason, justice, love, or mercy in, or scriptural proof for their own teaching.

We certainly believe that Jesus was free and had life in a sense that we have not (Matthew 17:26; John 6:38; 7:29) because His life came from God and not, as the Statement of Faith says (Clauses 8 and 9) from the condemned line of Abraham. Jesus was related to the line of Adam, Abraham and David "according to the flesh" as the Son of Mary, but His title to the promises was on infinitely higher grounds, being the child of promise raised up unto David's house and out of Abraham's line when it was dry and dead, by the only One capable of imparting life to the dead, even God Himself.

It was precisely because He was free and His life unforfeited that He had in His possession the price of our redemption. This is the true and the only adequate explanation of the virgin birth; if Jesus' life had come from Adam via Joseph He would have been in the same poor, lost and helpless position as we. Receiving His life direct from the Source and retaining His right to that life by perfect obedience, He alone of the human race had the wherewithal to redeem his brethren. Compare this with the Christadelphian teaching that His divine origin endowed Him with superior strength to overcome temptation and you may perceive how wide the gulf that separates us. It would debar Him completely from the common experience of humanity, rob Him of all honour and make the record of His bitter suffering a hollow deception.

We confess without shame and with a deep sense of thankfulness that we believe that Jesus was our substitute and that He bore in our stead the wages of sin. All that is required of us is that we pass through that death in the figure of baptism, thus acknowledging that by sin we were alienated from God and that in strict justice death would be our due reward. Then, when we think of Jesus nailed to the Cross, forsaken and stricken, suffering death in its most dreadful form for our sakes' alone, as our Redeemer, we can truly and thankfully acknowledge His loving self-sacrifice.

It should make you think; to see that Christadelphians to-day like some in Jesus' own day, can hardly find words harsh enough to describe us and our doctrine, but we appeal to you, as you stand before God, to ask yourself if it is not truly the teaching of Scripture and that other the invention of devils.

Any stick will serve to beat a dog, and because he could find no other, W.F.Barling said in "The Christadelphian" that our teaching implied a belief in a personal devil. He has admitted publicly that we deny such a belief and that he had never found it in our writing, but ignorant oafs who have not the sense to read and think independently now state it as if it were a fact proved against us. Sincere people will not believe without evidence all the nonsense that gets about and before you drop this in the fire you should read and think for yourself, if you have the truth it will stand up to criticism and investigation. It is only when there is something to be feared or concealed that people are advised not to read anything outside Christadelphian works.

In conclusion, if you have read this and are satisfied that what you now hold is complete and perfect truth, we are satisfied too and thank you for your patience in reading so far. If, however, your conscience tells you that there is something wrong somewhere, but you prefer the friendship and associations of a prosperous community to a search for truth wherever it leads, no one will compel you. If you choose to continue to support those who teach that Jesus was condemned by His own Father because of His nature, and if you choose to live in daily dread of the uncertain result of a Judgment which only concerns the unfaithful and unbelieving, the loss is yours.

On the other hand you may decide it is better to be a renegade, if thereby you can put your trust in a Saviour who in the days of His flesh was holy, harmless, undefiled and gave Himself freely for you in order that you might not come into Judgment. In such a case, your rightful place is with the outcasts, who rejoice in the assurance that whether they live or sleep, when He returns they will be accepted – not for what they have done but because He gave His life to save them and they have believed and obeyed Him.

Brother Ernest Brady

Isaiah 65:17 to 25,

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.”