

The Nazarene Circular Letter No. 75

February 1986

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, Warm greetings to all the readers of this Circular Letter, both at home and abroad.

We thank those who have communicated with us during the past month, during which we learned of the death of our Brother Alfred Hold of Queensland Australia who fell asleep on Nov. 20th 1985 at the age of 94 after suffering a stroke some months ago. Our condolences go out to the family, especially his sister wife, his son and daughter in law Bill and Maureen. He was a man of great faith and worked tirelessly for the truth, he will be greatly missed but is now at rest awaiting the glorious Resurrection Morning.

We have heard that our Sister May Lockett is not at all well and wish her a speedy recovery.

In this issue we have a further instalment of "Too True to be New" by Bro. Ernest Brady and an exhortation by Bro. Leo Dreifuss entitled "The Testimonies of Jonah and Paul".

The following two letters which may be of interest were sent by Bro. Phil. Parry and are the result of correspondence appearing in the religious section of the 'Forest Advertiser' in which an Evangelist under the initials R.H.F, a Christadelphian, a local Pastor, and Bro. Parry took part. The letters are self-explanatory.

Since writing the above we have had a phone call from Bro. Bill Hold, telling us that his mother Sis. Hold was in hospital undergoing an operation, we hope that all will go well and wish her a full recovery and pray for the welfare of all our readers.

Yours in the Masters Service. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Correspondence between Pastor Wicks and Brother Phil Parry

Addressed to Phil Parry –

Dear Sir, I have noted your letter in the "Forest Advertiser", and your concern for Scriptural truth regarding "Christadelphianism." Since my letter (which was placed alongside yours) I have received a

letter from Mr.B.R.Woodall of that people, who wishes to meet me to discuss one of the basic Christian truths, namely the “Trinity,” He has headed his format:-

Mr. Wicks to speak for the TRINITY.
Mr. Woodall to speak against the Trinity.

The letter has confirmed at least, that the Trinity is not one of their Basic truths: I am wondering if you could give me any help in the way of treating the subject, in such a way that might be of help in a discussion with them: and if possible to attend such a meeting.

I have of course the normal Scriptures for the doctrine of the Trinity, having been to the London Bible College courses many years ago. But would this be sufficient to convince those who have obviously looked into the subject from an opposite point of view.

It seems from your letter that you have already had much to do with the inside working of the “Christadelphians,” so that may be an advantage to the discussion: I have a cousin in Bristol who was married to a Christadelphian and came out from them, because of their imbalance on the Scriptures. His name is Mr. Poe of the Kings Wood area. Please find a stamped addressed envelope enclosed:

Thank you. Yours sincerely S. A. Wicks.
dated 19-11-85

Reply from Brother Phil Parry dated 21-11-85

Dear Mr. Wicks

I thank you for your letter of the 19th Nov. 1985 informing me that you have received a communication from Mr. B.R.Woodall of the Christadelphians, and wishing to meet you in order to discuss the “Trinity”, this not being, as you have deduced from his letter, one of their basic beliefs. In all honesty and sincerity I must tell you that neither can I accept such a doctrine, and I have indicated as much in a further letter to the “Forest Advertiser,” commenting on the Christadelphian position and also what you had to say.

I must say you are more fortunate than myself to be offered the chance of a discussion with Mr. Brian Woodall or any Christadelphian for that matter, for I have corresponded with him and invited him to my home to discuss our many differences, with the Bible as the basic authority, and though he said he might call on me he never did, and like most of them, tends to avoid me.

You will notice he has chosen the subject he wishes to discuss with you because this was a subject discussed between the Christadelphians and the Rev. Rees of the C. of E. (Bream) in the Coleford Community Centre a year or so ago, of which I cannot report, because I did not attend, but I am sure the evidence would have been in their favour which you will also see from what I have sent to you regard the Doctrine of the Trinity and also the booklet “The Gospel which is never Preached,” please note the title “Nazarene” is an appellation put upon us by the Christadelphians who first called us “Clean Flesh” Heretics, a misrepresentation founded upon their own false views of human nature, that Jesus was sinful-flesh, and as much under condemnation as those he came to save. This incorporates the erroneous doctrine of original-sin introduced by false teachers into the Church of Christ and is one of their doctrines to be accepted as a basis of fellowship: together, with others I can prove Scripturally false, and on account of which many like myself have left that body, but still persist in showing them where they have gone wrong, not out of malice, but in love, realising that we also had been deceived as one time members.

Their obstinacy is almost unbelievable, when the very basis they profess can show evidence of the errors of their doctrines and the contradictions in the writings of their pioneers “Dr. J. Thomas and R.

Roberts they close their ears and eyes, when we expose these things for their own good, not even their Editors in the past have been heeded.

Christadelphians are always ready to pounce on the clergy in regard to certain subjects, but this does not make their own position any better in regard to salvation through Christ Jesus and his Father the Creator.

I am sorry I am unable to help you defend the doctrine of the "Trinity" because, it is not a basic truth of the true Christian Faith, and I am afraid that the London Bible College courses may be the result of accepting the false theories of men, as explained in the enclosed leaflet, by one of our late members. In the same way Theological Colleges teach their students the very false doctrines that entered the early true Church, such as immortal-soulism, "Original Sin" etc., and people accept their teaching simply because the State and Monarchy authorises them, and they do not bother to read what God has preserved through the ages, His inspired word found in the Bible and spoken originally by Holy men of God moved by His Power. Even a man like the Bishop of Durham is allowed to hold that position of responsibility in the Church of England and make irresponsible statements denying the Virgin Birth of Jesus and his bodily resurrection, the very foundation upon which the true Church of Jesus Christ was introduced - this is not Christianity, it is a mockery - and God is not mocked, He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ whom He has ordained and whereby He has given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead.

But of course this is another subject and concerns the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth, an event of which the majority of people are ignorant and prefer to remain so, even when they are told about it. Our main objection to Christadelphianism is their belief that the death of Christ was not a sacrifice for us but a mere representation of what was due to all who possessed sinful or condemned nature, like Adam was believed to have after he sinned, and consequently by all his posterity, untrue of course, yet it is the doctrine which crept into the early church as a result of a certain Pope needing an excuse for his fleshly inclinations, in opposition to true Christian conduct.

The Christadelphian view is such a conglomeration of contradictory statements of men amounting to what we call blasphemy, in the sense that they make God out to be a monster, instead of the loving and merciful Creator He is that there appears to be no hope for an individual remaining with them, because their "Statement of Faith", unscriptural as it is, is binding upon them. There was (they say) "no injustice in the crucifixion of Jesus, the Jews and the Romans were instruments in the hands of God in doing what He had determined before to be done, namely the condemnation of sin, which was a physical element in the flesh of Jesus, and whereby through his birth of a woman Jesus was as much under condemnation as "those he came to save"! Judge for yourself whether this does not amount to blasphemy and a declaration that the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary would be of no value as far as Christadelphian teaching on the subject is concerned.

I could add more to the subject of the sacrifice of Jesus, but you can observe from my comments that if B.Woodall succeeded in proving to you that the doctrine of the Trinity is not based on the Bible teaching, he is still left holding in error so blasphemous that his own position is untenable, this is why my wife and I left them 32 years ago.

We trust these few observations will be of some spiritual help to you, and if you need help in the search for Truth, we shall be happy to oblige. Have returned the S.A.E, being too small for the enclosed literature, which incidentally you may keep. In the event my letter is not published in the next "Forest Advertiser" through lack of space, I wish you to know, I agree with the last two examples you gave in your letter.

I remain, Yours Sincerely, P. Parry.

(Phil sent a list of quotations in opposition to the "Trinity")

“The Holy Scriptures, are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ” (II Timothy 5:15)

THE HOLY BIBLE.

The Bible as we plainly see,
Then it must have a pedigree.
It either is a book Divine;
OR men to make it must combine.

Suppose the latter: then they must,
Either be wicked men or just,
Take either side; and you will see:
A proof of its Divinity,

If wicked men composed this book,
Surely their senses they forsook;
For they the Righteous man defend.
And curse the bad - from end to end.

If Righteous then they change their name;
For they the Authorship disclaim;
They often say “Thus saith the LORD”;
And testify it is His Word,
If it be not they tell a lie

And all their righteousness destroy,
Could Moses and could Malachi,
Unite together in a lie?
Could Job and Daniel, with the rest -

Spread o’er the world - from East to West;
Unite together and confer,
When oceans rolled between them sir?
Not only seas: but ages too,
Hundreds of years and NOT a few.

continued from January.

Too True To Be New.

It appears from history that within a century of the completion of the New Testament, the leaders of the apostate Church had gone astray on the question of human nature, laying the blame for their evil deeds upon the impulses of their nature instead of upon the weakness of their characters. They sought to prove from Scriptures and experience how Original Sin changes man to a sin defiled and dying creature and made human nature for ever obnoxious in the sight of God. This has been the teaching of the Church ever since, and according to their Constitution and Statement of Faith it is precisely what Christadelphians are supposed to believe and teach today. Briefly it is based almost wholly upon a grave misapplication of Paul’s teaching in Romans, 7th chapter, but, as many people have realised, including Dr. Thomas, Paul was not here speaking of himself as a man in Christ, torn between wanting to do right but unable to do so because of the overpowering sinfulness of his body. He was describing the mental reaction of a Jew under the Law; knowing what was good but because he sought to justify himself by meticulous observance of ceremonies and works of the law, while harbouring in his heart envy, malice and hypocrisy, convicted in sin. Apart from this much misused chapter and a few passages in Job, nothing in Scripture justifies a belief in an innate evil principle. How could God address such words to Israel as “Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse, a blessing if ye obey the Commandments of the Lord your God, and a curse if ye will not obey” (Deut. 11:26). If they were so created that they were physically incapable of obedience? Surely the whole basis of God’s dealings with man is that we are fully capable of choosing between good and evil, of obeying or disobeying, and if because of an inherent evil principle the dice is loaded against us it would be a cynical fraud to say “ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” (Deut. 50:15). It would be a mistake to suppose that only in recent times has there been objection to the belief that sin is a fixed principle of the flesh. In the 4th Century A.D. a bishop named Pelagius, said to be a Briton, rejected the Church’s teaching, affirming that Adam’s sin affected himself alone and declaring that it was impossible for sin to be transmitted or inherited. This was the so-called Pelagian Heresy mentioned in the Prayer Book, which resulted in the Thirty-nine Articles, of which the 9th states “ Original Sin standeth not in the following of

Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil.” This is a false and God-dishonouring doctrine worse in its implications than Immortal Soulism or Supernatural Devilry. Yet see how Christadelphians in their Statement of Faith teach exactly the same thing. Clause III (1879) “A sentence carried into execution “by the implantation of a physical law of decay, which works out dissolution and death, and while a man is yet alive, gives him, where it is left to its uncontrolled operation, a tendency in the direction of sin. This is the law of sin in the members, spoken of by Paul. In Adam’s sentence, all mankind are involved, in consequence of their “being physically derived from his physically affected unclean being.”

Unfortunately, Pelagius saw only sufficient light to enable him to reject the error; he failed, or was perhaps too early in Christian history to be able to replace it by the true explanation of how Adam’s sin really affected his posterity and how the death of Christ is related to it. There is no doubt it was understood in apostolic times but it is designedly left to be deduced in their writings by reasoning from the historical facts. Paul speaks of “the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest by the Scriptures of the Prophets.” It is made manifest to those who are prepared to put the facts together and accept the conclusions to which they lead, but it is nowhere stated categorically exactly why Jesus died. This is left to our reasoning. We are most fortunate today in having the benefit of the work of Pelagius and many like him since, and it is largely our own fault if we remain in the error and ignorance which has prevailed over the Christian world since his day. It is not easy for English speaking students to get at the full facts of the Pelagian controversy as it was recorded very incompletely and in Latin and very little of it has been translated. It is evident however that at the time the Church never got so far as the discussion of how the supposed inherited defilement of sin affected Jesus. But the time eventually came when it was realised, quite logically, that if all human flesh was full of sin, then it must inevitably follow that the flesh of Jesus was full of sin. Plainly, however the Church argued, this was not so, for the Bible says he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. This was a truly dreadful dilemma, and to escape it and enable Jesus to be spotless while all others are supposed to be defiled, the Church, invented the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, so that a clean thing might be brought out of an unclean. Thus one error begets another. Now, when 1500 years later Christadelphianism Comes into the picture, instead of getting down to bedrock truth, Dr. Thomas seems to have accepted the nearly universal belief that human nature is defiled and full of sin, without question. When one’s eyes have been opened it is truly astounding to re-read Elpis Israel and see how his enthusiastic conviction that human nature is flesh-full-of-sin carries him away and obscures the lack of evidence on which it is based. We can acknowledge with gratitude the tremendous value of the work Dr. Thomas accomplished, but we should be foolish not to recognise once the fact is pointed out to us, that he failed to perceive and reject what is in fact the worst and most “blighting error of the whole apostasy - the teaching that Adam’s sin physically defiled the human race and made it impossible for them to obey God’s Commandments. We who have “benefited from his pioneer work in bringing so much of truth to light again should be the last to blame him for failure on this one point even though it is so vital, but it would be the worst mistake to allow a misguided sense of loyalty to a man, or system, or a community, make us false to our reason and to Christ.

The blame for the perpetuation of such an incredible error amongst Christadelphians lies with those who lacked the humility and teachableness to admit their mistake when the matter was reasoned out before them from the Scriptures. One does not need what R.Roberts termed “a prolonged spiritual education” in order to perceive that it is impossible to harmonise the belief that human nature is full of sin with the fact that although Jesus was also human nature. He did not sin and He was holy, harmless and undefiled from His birth to His death.

We have seen that the Church solved the problem by inventing the Immaculate Conception. Christadelphians faced and accepted the logical conclusion that if original sin is what they think, then the flesh of Christ must also have been full of sin. They found a different solution. They affirm that we must distinguish between Christ’s nature and His character. The Scriptures which say He was holy and sinless they apply to His character and way of life, while insisting His flesh said nature was essentially

evil. It must be a matter of opinion whether the path of escape chosen by the Church in its perplexity is not to be preferred to the blasphemous arguments which R.Roberts in his day and men like John Carter and W.F.Barling who are prepared to defend the assertion that sin ran in the blood which Jesus inherited from his mother Mary, the handmaid of the Lord. One's mind inevitably goes back to the injunctions given to Israel in regard to the creatures which they brought to the priest as sin-offerings. "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be accepted for you. Whosoever offereth a sacrifice, it shall be perfect to be accepted" (Lev. 22:20-1). "And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any blemish therein, thou shall not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 15:21).

Dr. Thomas says (Elpis Israel p. 114). "Sin I say is a synonym for human nature. Hence the flesh is invariably regarded as unclean... sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there... Sinful flesh being the hereditary nature of the Lord Jesus, he was a fit and proper sacrifice for sin." It is impossible that this should be correct, for if Jesus was unclean His sacrifice was a violation of Divine Law. If sin in the flesh is not a blemish, words have no meaning. If sinful flesh had been the hereditary nature of Jesus then that He should have been made a sin offering would have been a breach of every principle of sacrifice. If one asks how it comes about that Jesus, with a nature supposed to be full of evil, succeeded in living a life free from sin, we are told it was because He was the Son of God and was specially strengthened to overcome. Were this indeed the case, then the Scriptures which tell us He was made like unto His brethren, and that He was tempted in all points like as we are, are utterly false, the trial which He is supposed to have endured were a farce and His example a hollow mockery.

In this connection my mind goes back more than twenty years to a day when accompanied by a girl of 18 who is now my wife, I listened to a Christadelphian A.E.Field, lecturing on Jesus' temptations. My companion asked me how it was that Jesus Who was made in all points like us was able to overcome whereas so the speaker said no other human being could have done so, I had to confess that the problem was beyond me and I suggested she ask the speaker himself. He instantly explained that as Jesus was God's Son, therefore He inherited from His Father the necessary Divine Power to resist temptation which all other men lack. Looking back it seems strange that one recalls little more than a vague feeling of something wrong and illogical, and although young people naturally incline to trust the judgment of their elders, it is remarkable that even children can be green enough to be fobbed off with such nonsense. Thank God we have more sense now. The sad thing is that A.E.Field is a descendant of members of the Crabtree Road Ecclesia already mentioned, who once had the truth, and he will probably believe and preach the same falsehoods for the rest of his days. Of the remnant who drifted back into Christadelphian error his mother seems to have been the only one who had the spirit to refuse to submit to their terms and died a year or two ago in isolation. If the purpose of Jesus being the Son of God was to give Him strength which other men lack, to overcome the evil impulses of their nature, there is neither honour in His - triumph nor shame in our failure. If this were the worst that could be said against Christadelphian teaching it is more than sufficient to condemn it. But as we shall show, the view of the death of Christ to which it leads is an infinitely worse matter, worse than any error of Rome and one which, we believe, will bring shame, dishonour and rejection upon all who wittingly defend it.

To be continued.

The Testimonies Of Jonah And Paul.

Exhortation "by G. L. Dreifuss.

We are all acquainted with the book of Jonah. As with all books that tell us of an event in history, our attention is usually fixed on the main theme. And so today let us consider a small matter of detail which may easily have escaped us. It is the fact that the mariners of the boat in which Jonah fled, or tried to flee from the presence of the Lord, tried their level best to avoid throwing Jonah into the sea. They

tried their utmost to control the steering of the boat, but all their efforts were in vain, until they carried out God's will. By this statement we do not intend to imply that those mariners were rebellious to God. On the contrary, they knew that Jonah was a prophet, that he tried to run away from God. They had every good reason to fear God, because of that heavy storm that raged on the sea. No, they merely did what all of us would probably have done in similar circumstances: to throw somebody deliberately into the sea is after all a terrible thing to have to do, and we would most certainly have tried to avoid it just as the mariners tried. But what I want us to notice is the fact that God brought about circumstances that just forced them to carry out that disagreeable task: they just could, not control their boat by any other means, and so the only thing left for them to do was what Jonah commanded. And immediately the storm calmed down. This is one of the many instances in history, of Biblical as well as post-Biblical times, in which God brought about circumstances which forced people into doing His will. Cruel as it must have seemed to those sailors, it was nevertheless God's will that Jonah should be cast into the sea and be swallowed by the fish God had specially prepared.

If God wills a thing he arranges matters so that even the most rebellious people are just forced to make decisions which bring it about. Many such examples could be given. To mention only a few: such as Pharaoh's determination not to let the children of Israel go, Nine times he broke his word. Then after the tenth plague there were only two alternatives left for him: to do God's will, or to risk all Egypt to be destroyed. At last he made the right choice.

Or, the circumstances during World War I which forced the British Government to take over the protection of the Holy Land, and subsequently after World War II their futile attempt to curb Jewish migration into Israel. Or, again, the supreme example of God's rule as shown in the book of Esther, in which circumstances were brought about such that Haman was made to honour in public the very man he intended to hang, and Haman himself was hung on the very gallows intended for Mordecai. Yes, God rules not always by spectacular miracles, these too, have their place, but also by these much less obvious means of just overruling man's minds and capabilities.

Next we notice that after they had cast Jonah into the sea, and the storm ceased, they were, as might "be expected, greatly afraid, and they sacrificed unto the Lord and made vows. This was not the only incident where heathen people had sacrificed to God. There comes to mind the sacrifice of the lords of the Philistines, after that the Lord had plagued them "because they had taken the Holy Ark. We may never know whether God accepted their sacrifices. Neither that of the Philistines, nor that of the sailors was brought according to divine law. That which the mariners brought was not made at the appointed place at Jerusalem. That which the Philistines put into the Ark was far removed from anything God had commanded. It consisted of golden images symbolising the plagues which God had put upon the Philistines. But the Word of God makes it abundantly clear that responsibility is reckoned according to enlightenment, for "sin is not imputed when there is no law", and "this is condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light". The motive and heart count a lot. The Philistines were unenlightened, the mariners who took Jonah were perhaps a little enlightened. They did their best in their ignorance, but it was meant well enough. Had the Israelites sacrificed what the Philistines did, it would have caused extreme divine anger with all its grave consequences. It would have been idolatry in its extreme. As it was, the children of Israel as God's chosen people were responsible for the Ark. They, especially the Levites, had to know how to treat it. As early as in the days in the wilderness two sons of Aaron died for offering strange fire before God. And in David's days Uzzah died suddenly before the Lord for putting forth his hand to steady the Ark. Only the Levites were to touch it, and they only after they had sanctified themselves. This act of Uzzah was no doubt well meant. But being an Israelite he should have known better. He was more enlightened, and therefore more responsible. To him it was sin.

We who have been blessed abundantly with enlightenment have our responsibility. We do not live in the Old Testament days when the law of Moses was in force, and when a mistake like that of Uzzah had such grave consequences. But it is our responsibility to "let our lights so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

In that ship Jonah was the only prophet among many heathen mariners. He could have enlightened them in God's ways, his laws and his dealings with men. Yet, what a bad testimony he gave. We can be quite certain that those sailors never forgot that journey for the rest of their lives. They have truly learned something about God on that journey, but alas, they only learned to fear him. They never learned of God's love and mercy, at any rate hardly on that journey. And it is sad to think that they might have learned more of God but for Jonah's folly. It shows what damage one person can do by bad testimony of this sort. And this applies to us as well. Better not mention the Truth, than to mention it and not show it in our lives. Some eight centuries later the Bible tells us of another rough sea journey. Once more there was just one of God's servants among a lot of unenlightened sailors. This time it was Paul, who described himself as "the prisoner of our Lord." On that journey, unfortunately, he was also the prisoner of the Roman authorities, not because of any wrong he has done, but as a consequence of his standing up for the Master; for this he got into trouble.

But what a difference between Paul's testimony to the sailors in those moments of peril, and that of Jonah. Paul took bread and before them all gave thanks to God. Then he comforted them by foretelling them their escape. Soon after, they found out for themselves that God means what He says, when they all escaped safe to land. The impression which Paul left with his travelling companions and guards on that journey was very different to that of Jonah some 800 years earlier. Far from trying to run away from God, he courageously served Him, regardless of what man could do to him. Now like Paul and Jonah we are God's ambassadors, often perhaps the only true Christians among a crowd of unbelievers.

And it is for us to decide what kind of testimony we give: that of Jonah, or that of Paul. Let us follow the example of the latter, as well as that of the many other faithful witnesses. Let us always bear in mind the responsibility consequent upon enlightenment. Bad conduct on the part of a professing Christian is always more noted, and more noticeable, than worse things committed by one who is not responsible through being unenlightened. But let us endeavour to walk worthy of our high calling.

THE SHEKEL.

"Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel... to make an atonement for your souls." - Exodus 50:14 and 15.

In a recent issue of the Mount Zion reporter, the shekel was the subject dealt with from Biblical to Modern Currency. The following has been extracted as we felt it of interest, as is anything connected with the land of Israel, ancient or modern. Among the Israeli coins in use during 1985 some of the illustrations (but not the words) are the same as those of the Roman times from around A.D. 68 which have been found during recent archaeological digs. It is not many years since the Shekel was introduced as a basic coinage of Israel. This was in 1980 when its exchange rate was 10 shekels = 1 U.S. Dollar, but throughout the years due to staggering inflation it needs 1500 shekels to equal 1 U.S. Dollar, only 5 years since its re-introduction. The result being that on 4th September 1985 a new Shekel was introduced. According to present plans the changeover is due to be completed by 1st, January 1986. The outcome is that a 10000 shekel note will lose 2 Zeros and become only a 10 New Shekel Note.

Interest however is not just monetary. In O.T. days the term 'Shekel' was not used for coins or currency. It was a unit of weight to measure precious metals as gold and silver. It was not until the 2nd. Temple period that the shekel became a coin unit of currency. The old shekel will continue to circulate until 4-9-86, from that date the old shekel, will cease to be legal tender.

The shekel is first mentioned in the Scriptures in Abrahams time. Genesis 25:16. "And Abraham harkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver".

The shekel is mentioned again in the time of Joshua and the fall of Jericho. Joshua 7:21. "...And a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them:..." So said Achan.

The shekel in its original form was a precise unit of weight. Subdivisions were as follows. The Beka was half a shekel; the Gerah was a 20th. of a shekel; while in turn the shekel itself was a 50th part of the Maneh and the Maneh was a 60th part of the Kikkar, the Kikkar in turn being worth 5000 shekels. Values were related to the kind of metal which they contained is the conclusion of Biblical Archaeologists in the Holy Land. A Gold Shekel was worth 10 Silver Shekels, while a Silver Shekel was worth 20 Bronze Shekels. Until the time of the 2nd, Temple the Maneh and the Kikkar were only used in accounting. From then on the shekel referred to monetary coins. The Denarius, a Greek translation of the Dinar, is still used in Jordan and some other Arab countries. So the term has been around for about 2000 years, it is reputed to be this coin which was referred to in Matthew 18:28.

Doing What Is Neither Asked Nor Commanded

"He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" I John 4:16.

Loving God is not a sentimental feeling, "but a state of being in which we abide in Him and He in us. Since there are degrees of loving God, so too of abiding in Him. The highest degree of abiding in God is to love Him for Himself without any ulterior motive and to do His will without being asked or commanded. The more we abide in God and He in us, the more we will find ourselves united to Him and His will, even as Jesus "was one with the Father. The words "I always do what is pleasing to Him" reveal the degree of His love as well as the degree of His abiding in the Father (John 8:29). Elsewhere, John mentions that one's love to God and abiding in Him is determined not only by obeying His commandments but more, by our doing, without being asked or commanded, those things which are pleasing in His sight. Several illustrations are before us in scripture which will confirm this truth.

In I Samuel ch. 23 mention is made of the Philistines' unprovoked attack against the defenceless city of Keilah. An exile at this time, David was being pursued by Saul who wanted to destroy him. Yet, when David heard of Keilah's plight, he sought God's will, putting aside his own welfare in order to protect the inhabitants of Keilah. David did not have to go to Keilah's rescue, but he offered himself to the Lord, ready to defend the city if God willed for him to do so. He could have found many reasons not to go, but putting aside all reasonings and personal considerations, including the fears of those in his company, he went to Keilah's help. David's unconcern for himself and his genuine concern for others whom he saw in greater danger and need was pleasing to the Lord.

Nehemiah is another case in point. Although, in position of great responsibility as the king's cupbearer at the Persian court, he was not indifferent to the suffering of the remnant that had returned to Jerusalem from exile. Informed of their troubles and that the walls and gates of the city were still in ruins, he mourned and wept for many days. His was not a maudlin expression of grief, but that sorrow of genuine love and concern for others. Day and night he prayed for his brethren, imploring divine mercy and help on their behalf. He also placed himself at God's disposal, ready to go to Jerusalem if the Lord so willed. Given a leave of absence by the king. Nehemiah obeyed at once. He was not asked or commanded to go to Jerusalem, and, like David, he too could have found arguments not to go, but he was not preoccupied with himself, his position, or with the risks in undertaking that long trip and the difficult task awaiting him in Jerusalem. He was willing to sacrifice himself and to make whatever other sacrifices were necessary in order to carry out God's will.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, given to a lawyer who wanted to justify himself by asking who was his neighbour, Jesus spoke of a man who was robbed, beaten, and left dying on the road to Jericho. Both a priest and a Levite passed by, but ignored the injured man. They were followed by a Samaritan, who, on seeing the dying man, went to his help. After dressing his wounds, he then placed the

dying man on his “beast, brought him to an inn, and stayed with him all night. Before leaving the next morning, the Samaritan entrusted the wounded Jew to the care of the inn-keeper, giving him two denarii and promising to reimburse him for any further expense he might incur in providing for the man’s needs. The Samaritan was not asked or commanded to go to the aid of the needy Jew, Like the priest and Levite before him, he too was travelling and had commitments, but unlike the priest and Levite, he was willing to go out of his way to attend to the needs of his fellowman. The fact that the injured man was a Jew, a member of a race which looked down upon Samaritans with contempt, did not prevent the Good Samaritan from helping him. When he saw the man in need, he went to him at once and did whatever he could for him. Helping the wounded Jew not only delayed him on his journey but also burdened him to expenses he had not anticipated. What the Good Samaritan did was not prompted by any personal consideration, honour, or reward but a genuine compassion; that concern of love which knows no prejudice or limitation, and which is willing to give of oneself, one’s time, and substance without being asked or commanded and without expecting anything in return.

The Road To Jericho

In an article entitled “The road to Jericho,” Priscilla Fauth, a Christian Jew takes us on a journey down this road today. A few facts from her article are interesting. In Jesus’ day, this road was ideal for thieves to lay in wait to rob and plunder passers by. The article says, we leave Jerusalem by one of the most desolate roads, known as the Jericho road, on our way we pass a marker stone, maybe similar to our mile stones in this country, but this marker tells us something different, we have reached sea level. But we continue to descend. In this desert valley lies the lifeless body of the Dead Sea. We stop and ponder a few moments in the hot dry temperature. It is just 30 minutes since we left Jerusalem at 2,528 ft, above sea level with a temperate climate; but we are now in the Dead Sea area, having descended some 4,000 ft., but what a change in temperature and climate. It is the extreme dryness and aridity of the Dead Sea area some experts think, which has lead to the remarkable preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in caves in nearby hills and Masada.

Here again we can see how God has used the elements to provide for us another witness to the truth of the Scriptures in these days near the end of Gentile times and the return of our Lord from heaven.