

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 99

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Warm Greetings in the Saviours Name

We have had news that our sister May Lockett has removed to a Nursing Home in Leamington Spa as her condition has worsened, we pray for her welfare and for all who suffer at this time and wish them a speedy recovery and thank all those who have contacted us during the past month. Bro. Leo. Dreifuss has removed to a Residential Home during last month and is settling down nicely. Note his new address in the list enclosed.

The news concerning Israel is still explosive and nationally she appears to "be losing her friends as the nations tend to become pro Arab, this may be a sign of the time when her only helper will be God, who will deliver her from all her enemies prior to the establishment of His Kingdom upon the earth.

In this issue there is a letter from a Christadelphian to Bro. Phil Parry and his answer to it. Another article from "Life by Law and by Grace" by the late F.C.Maycock, an exhortation by Bro. Leo. Dreifuss entitled "Taking the law into ones own hands", and a few thoughts concerning "Life and Blood".

We extend best wishes to all our readers, with Sincere Love in the Master's Service.

Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Our Lives Are In God's Hands.

Our lives are in God's loving hands
We know this to be true,
For He is with us constantly
He's part of all we do.

And if our faith is strong enough
We'll never walk alone,
For with His great and perfect love
He takes care of His own.

So any time that trials or burdens
Seem to come your way, find strength
And hope in knowing
God is with you every day,

Letter to Brother Phil Parry

Dear Mr. Parry,

It was good of you to send me your various booklets etc. on the theology of the cross. I have read them with interest, though not with complete novelty, because I have been through the matters discussed many times, and have long since decided not to become involved in the endless arguments they engender. I am content to accept Paul's dictum that "Christ died for our sin's according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day."

The exact modus operandi of redemption may be a subject for speculation, but is not needful for salvation, and we have always to remember that even the great Apostle only saw many things "through a glass darkly". No doubt you will feel disappointed at my unwillingness to become involved in a long dogmatic argument, but I have been through it all in the past and am content to leave our judgement with the Lord "who loved me and gave himself for me". I will add only two points (which may either concern or console) you - not knowing you personally I can't say which.

1) Your statement (or rather that of Helen Brady) that 'not one' Christadelphian dared to challenge the views of Ernest Brady is, to my personal knowledge incorrect, and should be withdrawn. My personal friend W.F.Barling did, in fact debate the issues with E.B. some years ago, and in his view completely overwhelmed his opponent. Needless to say Brady published a Circular letter in which he also claimed the victory. This is what happens in such polemics, of course, which is why you will not get me involved. But the debate certainly took place.

2) I can see the point of view of many who try to "explain" the Atonement on other lines than the B. A. S. F. I would not personally regard one view as being essential to salvation, as H.P.Mansfield and, I presume you do. I have a sympathy with the argument that Jesus died "for others" and not "for himself". And over fifty years ago, when a very young disciple I went through an unhappy division at "Northampton", in which all these various polemical points were bandied around, and some of my best friends left our meeting and formed a splinter group with great sadness to myself.

I would have been happy then, as now to have left it as a difference of judgement, and I expect when the heat of the argument had died down, we should all have been found using the same texts and preaching the same Gospel. Anyway that is what I feel about it, and for this reason I must while thanking you for your concern, ask you to take my name off your mailing list, as I shall not be inveigled into more unproductive and, as it seems to me, obtuse argumentation on what is one of the most profound and holy subjects.

Yours Sincerely, Len Richardson.

* * *

Phil Parry replies:-

Dear Mr. Richardson,

Thank you for your letter as a result of receiving the various literature I sent you, at least you had the courtesy to reply and make some comments as a result of which some comments and corrections are called for. You say that "Helen Brady's statement that 'not one' Christadelphian dared to challenge the views of Ernest Brady, is to your personal knowledge incorrect, and should be withdrawn, my friend in fact W.F.Barling did debate the issue with E. Brady some years ago, and in his view completely overwhelmed his opponent. Needless to say E. Brady published a circular later in which he also claimed the victory. But the debate certainly took place."

Up to the time of the debate in 1949 I had been a Christadelphian for fourteen years and was unaware of the division you speak of in Northampton or in fact of the so called "Clean Flesh" problem of

which R. Roberts was responsible and whose doctrinal degradation of the Messiah of Israel your personal friend has seen fit to continue. But I can definitely say that W.F.Barling did not of his own volition challenge the views expressed by Ernest Brady, the engineering and bringing about of the debate with the Christadelphians was the result of the efforts of the late F.J.Pearce, and your friend was only their choice because he was one of the best exponents of the new blasphemous theories of R. Roberts as embodied in their Basis of Faith. If E. Brady was overwhelmed why did your members refrain from publishing the debate as promised, and why was F.J.Pearce refused a transcript of F.W.Barling's opening address?

The answer to this is obvious, and the only disappointing thing, was F.J.Pearce's desire to limit the answers to the questions to 'Yes' or 'No'. However, despite all the obstructions Christadelphians put in the way, F.J.Pearce printed the Debate a number of years later, perhaps 10? I have a copy but no date on it. The endless arguments engendered of which you speak, are endless as a result of building on a false foundation conjured up by Roberts and successive Christadelphian leaders and writers who have rejected what Dr. Thomas defined as essential to Salvation namely. Redemption in Christ, the latter's explanation of it being omitted from the B.A.S.F., thus from time to time the cracks become apparent to some but when brought to the attention, instead of considering the cause, (the faulty foundation), these leaders try to cover up the cracks and pretend they are not there or if they are, they are not that serious.

Some think as you do, that they can live with it. Paul says "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ". That foundation was the Redemptive work of God in His Son, from Eden to the Cross, and by excluding the erroneous view that natural death was the penalty Adam incurred, it is a simple subject to understand. I am amazed therefore at your statement, "The exact 'Modus Operandi' of Redemption may be a subject for speculation, but is not needful for Salvation, and we have always to remember that even the great Apostle only saw many things through a glass darkly".

Redemption definitely, was not one of those things, either with Paul or with Peter, for they both wrote so much in detail on that subject because it was so clear, that Paul included it in the epistle to Romans and in another epistle remarked that he was determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified - this was not a matter of historical knowledge but the significance of why Christ died - and Peter's emphasis to the believers was that they had been redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. It appears to be your experience as well as mine, that those who draw attention to the flaws in the structural building, are not only ignored but become the subjects of removal, so that they will not persist in what they describe (falsely) as "sowers of discord among brethren", when in fact the discord has been there from as way back as 1873 when the best of Dr. Thomas's teaching was discarded by R. Roberts but brought to light by Edward Turney. It appeared strange to me later that when in 1952 I knew almost nothing of the Divisions and their causes, new nothing of the existence of E. Turney, E. Brady, A. Wilson, F.J.Pearce in their connection with the so-called Clean Flesh Heretics, that I, as a result of my own studies of the Scriptures after 14 years as a Christadelphian should as a result of my reasoning be accused of spreading their doctrine yet never read any of their literature or even heard of them. It is no longer strange to me that if a reading of E. Turney's "The Sacrifice of Christ" endorsed what I found to be true from the scriptures prior to reading his views, then there must be something seriously wrong with the Christadelphian view of the Atonement and with the principles of those who defend it to the extent they are prepared to go. My wife and I tried to live with the situation and like yourself, thought we would be happy to leave it there as a difference of judgement, but it was not to be. Truth prevailed at the very Table where we were being reminded of the Sacrifice of Christ when the speaker uttered words as your friend F. Barling has done in violation of all the Divine principles demanded of typical and therefore antitypical sacrifice, that it must be legally clean without blemish and without spot - he said, "Jesus in dying on the cross cleansed his own altar body by his own blood ". This was enough for us and we made our position clear that we were not denying the Faith but we were doing all we could to uphold it.

You say you do not wish to be inveigled into more unproductive and as it seems abstruse argumentation on what is one of the most profound and holy subjects. In this connection I am surprised that you on such a holy subject as the Son of God, could remain friends with one who has gone all out to

make the Subject (Jesus) of this profound Holiness, as Unholy, and Unclean for the Divine mission he came to fulfil as to be forced to admit if honest, that Jesus could not have fulfilled the types under the old covenant or offer his natural life to his Father that He might Ransom the Many in allowing wicked hands to slay him. You are bound to share something in common with him or otherwise remain dumb or evasive when faced with the realities of the subject.

Any professing Christian can stand up and say of Jesus; “Who loved me and gave himself for me”, but can he explain how? The Creator intended for us to understand these things, that is why it is written and explained in the Scriptures, and why Paul said “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”, and hence his explanation in Romans.

You say you are content to leave our judgement to the Lord, “Who loved me and gave himself for me.” I have heard these sentiments many times. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd”, and “the Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep”, and “My sheep hear my voice and follow me, a stranger will they not follow”. This is his judgement now not at some future time when it could be too late. I also am content in this context, to leave my judgement to the Lord, not on knowingly accepting the false basis and theories of R. Roberts, W. F. Barling, A.D.Norris or anyone else who violate the teaching of the scriptures which explain to me why Christ died for us. If Redemption and knowledge of it is not needful for salvation, why do you preach Baptism into the death of Christ, from your lecturing platforms? According to your sentiment’s if we all agree to differ on known facts we would all be now using the same texts and preaching the same gospel. But what gospel? Surely in such circumstances not the true one but a perverted one. See Galatians chapter 1.

Our whole motive is to enlighten people to the gospel Paul preached unto salvation, we have no mailing list from which to remove your name, we found yours through mention in the local press, nevertheless we will respect your wishes. May I add in conclusion that the book by H. P. Mansfield “The death of Christ and your Salvation”, was sent by your own fellowship to Miss H. Brady as confirmation of what your community believe and teach, she replied to it, but what you actually read were my own comments, I can send you hers if you wish.

It may be we shall meet one day, meanwhile we have been pleased to hear from you and thank you again for writing. We are yours Sincerely,

Phil and Rene Parry.

Hebrews 15: 20.

This passage of Scripture contrary to the faulty reasoning of the blood being the means whereby Christ was brought again from the dead, informs us rather why Christ was “that Great Shepherd of the Sheep.”

Read it again and glean the significance. By this act of love Jesus magnified and consolidated His appointment of being “That Great Shepherd”, and the very reason why He could say “this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you” (Luke 22: 10). He did not say “for you and myself “. It is said the blood of the everlasting covenant spoken of here was Christ’s own blood - We say Amen and thank our Heavenly Father. It has been said we the Nazarene Fellowship strongly deny that Christ was redeemed by His own blood. We do indeed. His crucifixion confirmed that it was He that was sent to redeem us. “To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” this was the antitypical Jubilee trumpet which was sounded on the day of Atonement, to proclaim liberty when every man returned unto his possession and unto his family. We would emphasise the discrimination of the correct rendering of the word redeem in the New Testament; no one can say he has been redeemed unless a price has been paid for him.

Indiscriminate use of rendering of redemption and deliverance is the cause of much confusion. In Ephesians 1:14 we have the phrase "Until the redemption of the purchased possession", we ask what further redemption does an already purchased possession require? We are redeemed now but deliverance is yet to come.

F.J.Pearce.

Life By Law and By Grace

By. F.C.Maycock.

This months article is a copy of our late Bro. F.C.Maycock's reply to; "Made a Curse for Us" written by W.F.Barling which appeared in The Christadelphian Magazine for December 1946. As in W.F.Barling's previous article, to which our brother replied in the Nazarene Circular Letter No. 97 December 1987, both articles by W.F.Barling were based upon a false theory. The supposed sinful nature of man.

Section (a) begins: "Through descent from Adam both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin." (Romans iii. 9). Now we instantly agree that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, but why does Mr. Barling add the words, "Through descent from Adam"? Paul does not say so; Paul says nothing whatever about physical descent, and the reason the writer inserts it is because at the back of his mind he has Clause 5 of the Statement of Faith, viz., "A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being and was transmitted to all his posterity."

This clause is unscriptural rubbish traceable to the same source, though from an earlier period, as the Immortality of the Soul. It is, if anything, a worse and more destructive heresy. In Romans iii. Paul is speaking of Law not of physical descent; if he was speaking of physical descent then the Jews had no advantage, for both Jews and Gentiles are the same flesh, be it sinful or otherwise. But Paul's purpose was to show how Law operates. How was God to judge the world? (v. 6). It was to do with those who were under the Law (v. 19). "By the Law is the knowledge of sin" (v. 20). "Yea, we establish the Law" (v. 31). How are we to understand Paul then when he says, "all are under sin"? He is referring to the Edenic Law of Sin and Death which was incorporated in the Mosaic Law and which required a recognition of the fact that the sentence incurred in Eden was the forfeiture of life because of sin. The only grain of truth in Mr. Barling's mixture is that our physical relationship to Adam does enter into the matter but in a quite different way. The life of individual man and woman is derived from Adam by physical descent and therefore is entailed or in pledge, sold or forfeited. But as in every other instance of an article being sold or forfeited, it is not the nature or the quality of the article which is changed, but the ownership; in other words it is a matter of Law or possession.

This is what is meant by the statement that "the scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Rom. xi. 32). For a fuller treatment of this principle and its purpose the reader is referred to "My Life for the Sheep" (p.4, para. 2), and also, for a concise statement of the responsibility of the individual to the Law or Laws appertaining to the age in which he lives, to Dr. Thomas' summary (quoted in the previous reply by Bro. Maycock to "He asked Life of Thee" - last month). Once grasp the principle that it is the Law which reigns, not 'physical sin', 'defiled nature' or 'evil flesh' etc., and the lovingkindness, mercy and justice of God can be seen in its true beauty. It would baffle the cleverest apologist to reconcile the conception of a loving God with One who not only punished Adam for disobedience but also punishes every individual born of the will of the flesh, including Jesus who was not so born, for the same act of disobedience. The Idea is an absolute contradiction of every standard of justice and also of the clearly defined scriptural principles of Deuteronomy xxiv. 16, and Ezekiel xviii. 20.

Mr. Barling continues: "Escape from death is therefore a need common to both, for death passed upon all men". Here the writer reverses the process by which he makes scripture agree with his preconceived idea. In the first text quoted he added a clause which is not there; here he omits a clause which is. This kind of double dealing inexcusable. He produces this fragment of text (from Romans v.

12) in proof of his contention that it is through descent from Adam that all are under sin, but Paul gives an entirely different reason, saying "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It would be interesting to be told why it is necessary to omit part of what Paul says in Rom. v. 12, and add something he does not say in Romans iii. 9. If the Christadelphian theory necessitates chopping and changing scripture in this manner it is surely high time to clean it up; here is the explanation and it is amazingly simple when it is remembered that it is the Divine Laws with which we are concerned and not with Laws of nature. Jews and Gentiles, wise and ignorant, good and bad alike, are all under the Law of Sin, but no man is accountable to that Law until he is aware of its existence. Hence Paul qualifies his general statements with the restrictions, "But sin is not imputed where there is no Law" and "where there is no Law there is no sin". It is convenient to ignore these when one is trying to prove, as per Statement of Faith, that it is natural corruption which is the wages of sin, but it is wisest neither to add nor to take away from God's word when one is seeking to arrive at an understanding of His purpose. (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) We challenge Mr. Barling or anyone else to produce a passage of scripture where natural death is stated to be the consequence of Adam's sin. No one who dies a natural death or even an untimely death from an accident or disease, fears that it is a bar to eternal life if he is in Jesus Christ. He did not die to prevent us from dying but to save us from the sin, or out of the Law of Sin and death which, typified by the expulsion from Eden and the barred way to the tree of life, excludes all under it from the hope of Eternal Life. Those who pass their natural life in ignorance of its operation perish without law, while those who knowingly remain under it, thereby rejecting God's gracious offer of redemption, will be raised to reap the wages of sin and perish by Law. Verse 14 distinctly states that some "not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression". Adam became a sinner by actual transgression of one specific Law, but the condemnation, judgement or sentence of Law made many sinners in the sense that they were born legally in bondage to sin and related to the Death for Sin. Similarly, by the obedience of Jesus Christ, many can be made righteous, released from bondage and receive justification of life.

The writer goes on to say: "The Jew.....was also made subject to a curse which did not concern the Gentile". How can a man write such futile statements? Anyone knows that the Law of Moses applied only to Jews and did not concern Gentiles, for the simple reason that the Jews were the chosen people and were thus in a special relationship. But the absurd thing is that he tries to prove that because the Jews were under the Law, they were therefore cursed in a way Gentiles were not.

The Law provides for both blessings and curses. Those who were obedient and kept it were blessed; those only who were disobedient were cursed. And even for those who broke the Law and deserved to be cursed there was provision for obtaining forgiveness so that they need not suffer the penalty. The Jews had this advantage over the Gentiles, that nationally they were in a renewed Covenant relationship with God while Gentiles were still in Edenic alienation which they could only remove by becoming naturalized Jews. Thus it was easier for Jews to obtain salvation they were by birth nearer to God - beloved for their father Abraham's sake. But this advantage also carried with it responsibilities; they were both nationally and individually accountable, whereas Gentiles were not. The Jews lost initial advantage by their national failures, so that their Kingdom was ended and its Law superseded, and now they can only obtain reconciliation on what had proved, for them, much more difficult terms. Mr. Barling next affirms: "As long as the Law remained operative, so did the curse, for there was none capable of perfect obedience to it, no, not one." We answer this from his own statement made a few lines previously: "Jesus was wholly obedient". Was Jesus a Jew? Was he under the Law? Was he capable of perfect obedience? He further states, and with no more foundation: "All Jews, except He (Jesus) were cursed by the Mosaic Law". Leaving aside the fact that even he has to recognise one exception and thus destroys his whole argument, it would be interesting to know how Caleb and Joshua (to cite only two of a considerable number) were cursed, as we are told "They have wholly followed the Lord". He then proceeds to argue that since no one could obey the Law, its curse could only be removed by abolishing it. As we have previously shown, the failure to obtain life via the Law was not because they could not keep it, but because they sought it not by faith in what the Law exemplified but (merely) by the (ceremonial) works of the Law. They calculated the tithes of their smallest herbs but they neglected the weightier matters of the Law.

Two simple and indisputable facts destroy his whole case: (1) Jesus kept the Law perfectly; (2) many Jews obtained a title to life under the Law. In section (b) "The curse of hanging", Mr. Barling

makes the assertion: “To remove the curse he had first to come under it”; and goes on to argue that in suffering Himself to be crucified Jesus ‘innocently’ broke the Law and was therefore cursed by it and put to death in execution of the curse. It is beyond understanding how anyone could break a Law by keeping it, or how death could be at the same time both the suffering of the penalty of the Law and the breach of Law by which that penalty was incurred. We have learned however not to expect much in the way of logic or consistency from this writer.

His initial fallacy is the assertion that Jesus could only remove the curse by coming under it. Neither scripture nor any other evidence supports it; on the contrary, sense and reason rebel against the suggestion that only one who was himself cursed by the Law could redeem others who were also cursed by the Law. The reverse is what we should naturally expect and this is, in fact, what scripture states. “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world” (John x. 36) that he was cursed by the Law which the Father institutes? Jesus was Himself free from the curse of the Law because He kept it both in spirit and letter, but He bore the curse in the stead and for the sake of His nation who had incurred it by disobedience and unbelief. It is quite true as Mr. Barling says, that “he that is hanged is cursed of God”, but hanging was not in itself a breach of Law but simply the public demonstration of the fact that the criminal whose carcass was hung up had committed a sin by which he had incurred the curse of God and had duly paid the penalty. One who committed a sin worthy of death and was stoned and his body hanged was accursed of God, but one who was put to death unjustly and innocently was cursed neither by the Law nor by God.

When Jesus was “made a curse for us” it was purely and solely in the sense that He suffered the curse that was due to those who had broken God’s Law. The purpose of Paul in quoting “He that is hanged is cursed of God” was not to suggest that because Jesus was hanged therefore He must have been cursed by God, but to prove that those to whom the hanging was justly due were cursed by God.

It was the very fact that Jesus was innocent and free from all curse or condemnation which enabled Him, by suffering as their sacrifice and substitute, to bear it for them. Being born “under the Law”, as Jesus truly was, is quite a different thing from being under the curse of the Law. He has wandered from the truth by confusing the Law itself, as a code to be obeyed in the spirit of faith, with the curses which applied only to those who broke it presumptuously.

In conclusion: What was the purpose of Law? Note what Paul says in Romans v. 20: “The Law entered that the offence might abound”. This can only be the Edenic offence, the sin of the world. The Israelites were brought face to face with the first act of disobedience and by the enactments of the Law made to realise more fully and completely the hopeless position into which sin had delivered them. Their history was one long typical, allegorical lesson; in their Law was the form and knowledge of the Truth; it was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ and the one essential factor in its observance was that God was to be magnified and this way honoured. The offerings of the blood of animals, the redemptive shekel, the Passover, the Day of Atonement, the Jubilee, were each types and reminders of the Adamic condemnation and the means of reconciliation upon God’s own conditions.

To see no more in it than a code of behaviour and meaningless ceremonial which it was impossible to keep, hung by God like a millstone around the necks of his helpless children for the express purpose of putting them under a curse, is the same kind of insanity as to see in the Law of Eden a physical, principle of sin in the flesh by which man is defiled and corrupted. The Law of itself was holy, just and good, and ordained unto life, but by their fanatical worship of the letter and blindness to the Spirit, the Jewish scholars made it a burden grievous to be borne. Mr. Barling and his associates, by their crazy infatuation with the unscriptural theories handed down to them are making equally foolish mistakes of a similar kind, thereby rendering the Word of God of none effect.

We can only implore the reader “by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ” to renounce the superstition of original sin, inherited sin, sinful flesh and a cursed Son of God and turn to the pure light of the Truth.

“Come ye out from amongst them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you”. (II Cor. vi. 17.) The farce of apostate ‘excommunication’ now labelled ‘disfellowship’ can never separate you from the love of Christ nor from His table. Rid yourself of the delusion that men with their “statements of faith” can dictate your spiritual walk towards the Kingdom. Search for yourself - seek and ye shall find, and with the Revealing Light kindle a flame that will purify your heart and mind and consume the God dishonouring doctrine of “wholly evil flesh” that defiles the Son of God, curses Him and makes His loving sacrifice a polluted offering.

Mistakes

I've made “mistakes” - just the same as you;
The same “mistakes” that all mortals do;
Just little “mistakes,” and big “mistakes” -
Bringing us little and big heartaches;
Bringing us sorrow and sighs and tears;
Some of them shadowing all our years;
Turning life's song to a sad refrain -
Let's try to forget them, and start again!

Mistakes are bad, but they should not make
Men to turn back, or their faith to shake;
Who never makes, as the years go by,
Mistakes, through life, as the moments fly,
Does nothing at all, either good or bad;
Does nothing to make his brother glad,
But let this be our watchword, men,
Don't make the same mistakes again!

Let's turn our thoughts to the future, friend,
And let the “past” with its sorrows, end;
Let's turn our eyes to a brighter day,
And let the bitterness fade away;
I've made “mistakes” - just the same as you
And millions of souls have made them too;
We've made “mistakes” like all mortal men -
Let's try to forget them, and smile again!

Let us turn away from the yesteryears,
And cease our sighing, and dry our tears;
What's done is done, and we can't turn back -
Let's bravely start down the future track,
And sternly strive to efface, erase
“Mistakes” we've made, and with smiling face
Do what we can to help other men
Who've made “mistakes” to take heart again!

Taking the Law into one's own Hands, Bro. G.L.Dreifuss

This is a modern English phrase, meaning, doing what the authorities should be doing, an act usually resulting from impatience. The expression is not found in the Bible, but there are a few instances where peoples actions amounted, or nearly amounted to taking the law into their own hands. And I wish to consider a few. There is the case of Abraham when he took Hagar the servant girl to wife. Abraham truly was a man of faith. God promised him an heir, and Abraham believed God. So we are told in the letter to the Romans. But he was getting old, nearing a hundred years, and Sarah well beyond child bearing age. So, at Sarah's instigation he took Hagar to wife, an act which proved to be very unwise.

There was family trouble over this right from the start. First there was jealousy on Sarah's part. Then after Isaac was born, Isaac and Ishmael, to use a modern phrase ‘did not hit it off together’ and Abraham, at God's command, had to send away Hagar and her son. Abraham, or more likely Sarah, was too hasty. They could not wait for God's time. How must Abraham have felt when eventually through God's miraculous intervention Isaac was born!

Truly, as Abraham and many more after him, learned the hard way, nothing is impossible with God. Moses had to learn that lesson when he did not believe that God would be capable of feeding the whole congregation of Israel with quails. So had the priest Zacharias when he did not believe the angel Gabriel that his wife could give birth to John in her old age. But coming back to Abraham, the consequences of

his hasty act are with us to this day, for there was the beginning of the Arab Israeli strife. We must realize that God works slowly in performing his wonders. He has plenty of patience which we often lack. But just think how we benefit from God, and our High Priest' patience.

If God were as impatient as we often are, it would be a poor outlook for us all. And to be frank, we all have to learn patience at times, the hard way on occasions.

Next there is the incident of the golden calf. Again, the Israelites got impatient and worried that something might have happened to Moses in the thunderstorm. Their promise "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" did not last very long. Just why Aaron apparently gave in to them – go fairly readily, as it appears, we do not know for certain. Let us leave it by saying that as in Abraham's case, impatience, and in this instance also lack of faith, were the root cause of the trouble. Next we come to an event in Israel's history where somebody really and truly took the law into his own hands.

When Saul was at war with the Philistines and Samuel's arrival was delayed, Saul took it upon himself to offer a burnt offering. This was definitely illegal. Only a priest was allowed to offer sacrifices. And as a result of this act of disobedience, though there were more such acts to follow, e.g. when Saul spared Agag and along with the people the best of the sheep and oxen, his excuse being they were for a sacrifice. Saul was deposed from being king. Again impatience combined with lack of faith were the root cause, and also the fear that the people would leave him. Both Aaron when he made the golden calf, and Saul on this occasion gave in to the people they were supposed to lead, which does not speak well for their leadership.

But let us return to Saul's impatience when Samuel was delayed. Before we judge Saul to harshly let us put ourselves into his position. How often have we lost patience when somebody whom we eagerly expected say a visitor, or some business call, or some repair engineer did not turn up at the promised time? On such occasions are not we tempted to take some hasty action which we might regret later, especially when it turns out that the expected person had a good reason for the delay? Is not the first thought that comes into our mind either an accident, or he/she has let us down. Let us now look on the virtue of patience, and what can be more appropriate than what Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8 verses 24-25 "For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it"

This just about summarizes it. God is very patient with us, and so is our High Priest. He puts up with a lot of our faults, and to be honest, we all try God's patience many times. Coming back to our impatience when somebody lets us down: this is, when analysed, a mixture of impatience and lack of faith in the other person's reliability.

Of course the other person might have let us down. And here is the great difference between faith in another person, and faith in God. God never lets us down. But we must bear in mind that God works to His own plan slowly and surely, and our prayers are not always answered at the speed of lightening the moment they are uttered. They might not be answered at all if they are against what is good for us. We must trust God. Unanswered prayer could be like parents withholding a toy from a child because it is not safe. We can't always know whether any wish of ours is for our good, only God knows this. But what a difference in the hope that God's promises to us will be fulfilled, and the hope that another person's promises will be. As we are told in Romans, there is no point in hoping if we see it already fulfilled. And here we can take Abraham as our great example. He hoped and waited patiently for God's promise of a son, to the age of 100 years. His other hope of inheriting the land of Canaan' had not been fulfilled in his life. That is yet future. Just think of this sort of hope. Abraham being a man of faith knew, he knew that God will not let him down. And so his hope was untampered with the sort of doubt, in the fulfilment of another person's promise.

And how do we stand? The one thing that is certain is that if we remain faithful God will keep His promise and raise us from the dead, if the Lord does not return before our life comes to its end. The resurrection is certain. What is not certain is whether or not the Lord will return before we die. So we, like Abraham have every good reason of hope in our part in the Kingdom of God, unspoiled by doubt, be

His return during our lifetime, or after. Let us rejoice in this hope before us and set our minds on this our future life.

Wealth is a tremendous obligation not many men can sustain. “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God” (Luke 18.24), and how difficult it is for a rich person to be aware to his own faults. Success in worldly affairs is apt to carry with it the assumption that one is successful in spiritual matters. So easy, having the means to make it look like it. What counts is not the apparent measure of measure but the measure of our fidelity. Job’s fidelity was worth more when he lost all his money. It is so easy to speak of what a man is worth by referring to his bank balance; - true worth is the value of character being built up - “Let your light so shine before men...” Light is composed of many different colours, which blended together give us white light. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, form a spectrum. The light of our characters will shine more clearly, individually and collectively, the more complete and more balanced they are.

There are many fruits of the spirit, the more we manifest, the more nearly does our light approximate to Christ’s. If one colour is absent from the spectrum it ceases to be white light. Do not be content with the strong points, concentrate on the weak to counterbalance.

See II Peter chapter 1 verses 5-8.

You get no more out of a thing than you put into it. We tend to become what we wish.

J.B. - From an old C. L.

A Few Thoughts Concerning Life And Blood.

It is well known most primate tribes and nations in their many and varied activities during their daily lives and religious ceremonies practiced blood-rites in various forms, including scarification of the body until the blood flows, and blood-brotherhood is practiced even today among some African tribes; it is only a few years ago the Nigerian Civil war was raging the tribes involved having in earlier days had blood feudal differences. Blood rites were practiced among many of the nations among whom Israel came into contact, moreover they were an abomination to the Lord and Israel were forbidden to copy or partake in them.

Abraham was brought up in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11.51), an area which practiced such things, but he was told by God to leave his parents and the land of his nativity as we read in Genesis chapter 12 verse 1.

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee and make thy name great”.

Israel in time past were in bondage in Egypt, the inhabitants of which country practiced many things which were abominable in the sight of God.

In Elijah’s day many in Israel had gone astray and worshipped Baal, with all the abominations associated therewith, which we see recorded in I Kings chapter 18 - here we have 450 of Baal’s prophets crying out and abusing themselves while crying out to Baal - in verse 28 we read:-

“And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them”

The result we read in the 40th verse, the destruction of Baal's prophets.

“And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there”.

Life and blood are both mentioned early in the scriptures. Life we are introduced to in Genesis chapter 2 verse 7. Blood is brought before us in Genesis chapter 9 verse 4.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul”. “But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof ye shall not eat”,

Flesh is another vital constituent of the body, we are told in I Cor. 15 v 59; it varies in different forms of creation.

“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, and another of fish and another of birds”.

Now we come to look more particularly at that which concerns us. Life and blood. There are two forms of life, both of which are God given. Natural life, which is in the blood and circulates. Spiritual life which is through blood; the shed blood of Christ.

We return to Genesis when God breathed into man the breath of life. God activated the form he had created from the dust of the ground. Medically to keep natural life active the blood must be kept circulating, hence the use of by-pass machines when doing heart operations, if the blood does not continue to circulate, very soon it coagulates in the body and we die.

If we cut ourselves and bleed very soon a scab is formed, for the blood has been cut off from its normal circulation. This essential blood circulatory system was fully established in 1615 by one William Harvey,

nevertheless from the earliest times a singular mystery has been attached to it by all people.

The main constituent of blood being “The breath of life “ which came from God. If God were to withdraw this breath of life, all flesh would perish; not being a chemical element known to man. Job reminds us of this in his 34th chapter verses 14 and 15 where speaking of God he says:-

“If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn to dust again”.

The main chemical compound of blood is described as plasma, which according to the Oxford dictionary is a solution of salts and protein in which blood-corpuscles are suspended. Analytical Chemists are able to separate the various elements, and are afterwards able to put them together again as blood, but an element has been lost for it is no longer usable; they do not know or realize what is missing. Indeed “The Breath of Life” is this missing factor. The equivalent is seen by the botanist, who are able to take a seed, or a stone from a fruit tree and dissect them into their various elements, but when put together again and planted in the ground nothing happens, for again the vital element ‘life’ which comes from God has been lost.

We read in I Corinthians ch. 15 verse 46 of both types of life.

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual”

Let us consider briefly the attributes of a spiritual life. That which is first, the natural life, needs the blood to circulate to maintain its life, so a spiritual life must be kept active so that it does not die. We

know that spiritual life will attain to its fullness at the return of Jesus to this earth from His Father's right hand where He now dwells. Those who hope to partake in this fullness must, during this natural life live to a high standard as set forth in Galatians chapter 5 verses 22-25.

“For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit”.

In the future age those who are partakers in full of this Spirit Life will still be physical beings, but not relying on blood circulation as Jesus reminded his disciples when they thought they had seen a spirit or ghost.

Luke 24:39. “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and “bones as ye see me have”.

I Cor. 15:50 “...flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God....”

Those who inherit the Kingdom will be flesh maintained by the Spirit Life.

Of creation we read in Genesis “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good”. The only need for a change in the age to come will be for those who are worthy for a change of activation from a blood life to a Spirit life. We shall be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. In Isaiah 45:18 we read:-

“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it. He created it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited...”

And yet again in Numbers 14:21 we have the words of Moses recorded

“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord”.

From these two verses we see the purpose of creation as we know it. To be inhabited and filled with the Glory of God. This glory is seen in the animal world and the earth and heavens as the Psalmist declares in many places, as in Psalm 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork”. But what of man? For as yet he had no character, God did not want a mere Robot or Automaton with no reasoning power to declare his glory, who had no experience of right or wrong, obedience or disobedience. So that man might have the opportunity to form character we quote from Genesis chapter 2.

Verse 8 and 9, “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD GOD to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil”... verses 15 to 17, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it”. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat”. “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall die”.

To my mind there is no doubt that Adam, for as yet Eve had not been formed, fully understood the penalty to be paid should he disobey. What fine surroundings he was placed in with but one restriction, ideal conditions. Sad to say he failed, having partook of the fruit of the tree forbidden by God, Adam must have felt very guilty, he realized he was naked, but he also as the result of his knowledge maybe now he would know which was the tree of life. His physical covering provided by God necessitated the shedding of blood which Adam would see and maybe cause him to realize it should have been his blood (life) should have been shed, but for the moment the animal's blood was accepted.

But it was not just this one error Adam had made in endangering the natural life, but as the one who had disobeyed God the tree of life was in the garden and Adam also was still in the garden, but to prevent him from partaking of the tree of life as a sinner, God sent him forth from the garden of Eden still bearing the natural life and it is here we see the love of God, for from Adam all mankind excepting Jesus are born, 'In bondage to Sin', which if God had taken the full dues from Adam, we should not have existed. Here we see the love of God. Furthermore to prevent Adam from returning to the garden and taking of the tree of life, "God placed at the east of the garden Cherubims and a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life". Genesis 3:24.

But is the tree of life barred to man for ever? No. For we read in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life", and in Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without the shedding of blood is no remission".

Throughout the Mosaic institution while the children of Israel were passing through the wilderness they committed many offences against the laws and statutes given by God, in most cases we read they were purged with blood. Many of the offerings made during the year by Israel consisted of 'a lamb without blemish', now there was a particular lamb spoken of on many occasions, such as Abrahams reply to his son Isaac, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb". If we look at John's gospel record in his first chapter speaking of Jesus when he came to John the Baptist we read "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". Here we have the provision of a lamb whose blood makes it possible for us to partake of the Tree of Life. God's law had been broken, it was for God to stipulate the means of punishment or expiation of the offence.

As physical offspring of Adam let us take to heart the words of Peter in his first epistle ch. 1 vss 18 and 19. In conclusion turn to Revelation ch. 22 verses 1 and 2. In Genesis we have the Tree of Life. Lost to us by Adam. In Revelation we have the Tree of Life made available to us through Jesus Christ. "Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us".

H. Linggood.

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