

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 237

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EDITORIAL

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends, Loving greetings.

Like most people of a certain age I have particularly vivid memories of School assembly. It was an event that marked the start of the school day when all the teaching staff and pupils were gathered together in a big hall for hymns and prayers and announcements. In my school the headmistress conducted the service from the Prayer Book and it was my introduction to its contents and language. I still remember the prayers that we said together to this day and they are worth remembering.

It is a fact that Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer is full of sublime language so also is The King James Bible. As somebody said the Devil may have all the best tunes but God has all the best words. Words that have been fashioned and hallowed by repetition down the ages.

The Church of England has apparently abandoned the Authorized Version for the New English Bible along with the magnificent prose poetry of the Prayer Book and its collects that I recall with such pleasure. Evidently the modern church clergy imagine they have a surer verbal touch than Cranmer.

Sadly we live in an age when everything must be changed, it doesn't matter what it concerns or how effective in the past it has undeniably proved to be, it must be changed. Anyone who complains about it is labelled bigoted and intolerant and is swept aside with disdain.

As a young girl I attended Church Evensong and sometimes late night Compline with my friends. At the time and even looking back I find very little if anything to object to in either of the services as they contained much from the Scriptures. The general confession includes Cranmer's words ".....we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done....." After the Lord's prayer and some responses we sang Mary's words from Luke 1 "My soul doth magnify the Lord" Then came a Psalm followed by singing Luke 2.29 "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace". The Apostles Creed is true and acceptable unlike the Nicene Creed which I believe has superseded it and it contains incomprehensible phrases such as ".....God of God, light of light, very God of God....."

The Apostles Creed, incidentally, was drawn up when the chief enemy was Gnosticism, which denied that Jesus was truly man. The Nicene Creed was drawn up when the chief enemy was Arianism, which denied Jesus was fully God.

I do not believe we gain anything from employing modern usage in new versions of the Bible. Apart from the fact that the unsurpassed elegance of language is removed and replaced by banal words and phrases, I would rather not address my God and my Saviour in the same language as I use in my everyday life. When we approach the Almighty we are treading on holy ground, so to speak, and I feel it calls for a dignified and reverent approach. God is my heavenly Father and Jesus is my Saviour and this relationship demands awe and respect and I therefore relish and wish to use a more substantial language when I am contemplating the things to do with redemption and salvation and I find such words and phrases above all in the King James Bible.

This is only a personal opinion and I know there are those who would disagree profoundly and feel that the archaic language employed in the King James Bible is a bar to some who would learn the truth of the Gospel. Perhaps it is so. However I think that those who spurn or dismiss the King James Version, which is in the main William Tyndale's work for which he is given little or no credit, are cutting themselves off from a rich source of English poetic language which down the centuries has informed and inspired much fine poetry and literature. We can become so used to the crude and poverty stricken vocabulary and expression put out by current broadcasting and newspapers that we forget there are finer ways of expression that can really add another dimension to our minds and understanding.

A Collect by Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

“O God who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Love to all Helen Brady.

Correspondence

We thank Brother Richard Pursell for the following email dated 16th April 2009:-

Bro. Russell,

I would like to make a few comments regarding your “Editor's note” at the end of my letter published in the Mar/Apr. 09 issue.

You ask, “But when one is speaking of ‘law’ how can one not see the result of breaking it as ‘judicial’?” I believe the answer is in the definition of “law.” In *Elpis Israel*, page 90, for example, the “law of sin and death” is understood to be a “law of nature.” Most Christadelphians see this “law” as a principle similar to what one might think of the “law of gravity.” As objects invariably fall to the earth, so also does mankind invariably diminish in strength and eventually die. Thus the “law of condemnation” is seen only in a physical sense. Sometimes this principle is called the “law of mortality.” This limited definition, however, fails to express the present tense aspect of deliverance from the “law of sin and death” which Paul expressed as being “now” (Romans 8:1) by association with “life” in Christ. It will be remembered that Jesus taught that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were “living” (Matthew 22:32) even though they had been dead and buried for a thousand years. In what sense were they “living?” Certainly in that their lives were “hid with Christ” (Colossians 3:3) in a relational, not physical, sense.

The “common” foundation upon which both Bro. Andrew and the Nazarenes have built their arguments is the understanding of the idiom “dying thou shalt die.” The Central fellowship says Adam, by transgression, incurred a “natural death” which is consistent with the limited physical view of the “law of

condemnation.” But a correct understanding of the idiom reveals that the expression is emphatic and means “cut-off,” that is, an inflicted death. (Ironically, the publishers of *Elpis Israel* (p.69) footnoted this correction, but the community has failed to adjust its paradigm.) Bro. Andrew and the Nazarenes, however, have recognized that when Adam transgressed, he became “judicially” or “legally” liable to being “cut-off.” It is this judicial or legal aspect that is unique. The incurred “inflicted death,” however, was averted, so to speak, by Adam’s faith in the promised seed, and his association with it in the sacrificial blood that was shed to obtain the coats of skins. On this basis, then, mercy was extended and Adam lived.

The allusion you make to Bro. Andrew’s book invites some comment. There’s a good bit in Andrew Wilson’s book “The History of the Christadelphians,” about how Bro. Walker was pressed by popularity to reprint Andrew’s “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.” Since it was originally published by Roberts, (when R. Roberts and J.J.Andrew got along, 1872), C.C.Walker reasoned that the Christadelphian owned it, but to save face, as it were, and political embarrassment, Walker changed the name to “The Real Christ” and omitted the author’s name. Dirty politics are not new to Christadelphia. But the date should be of interest to us. It appears that Bro. Andrew did not formulate his ideas about “inflicted death” until well after the date of this book, even 1879 or perhaps later. And even though he and Bro. Turney would likely disagree on “the wages of sin is death,” they seemingly would concur on the “legal” aspect of Adam’s transgression being a “position,” a “status,” a “standing,” a “liability,” – which changes upon association with Christ. Bro. Andrew taught that because Christ rose by means of the “blood of the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20), that likewise those “in Christ” will rise on the same basis. As said above, because they are accounted as “living” – deemed to be so by the living God.

Yours in the one hope, Richard Pursell

In response:-

I wish to thank Brother Richard for his comments pointing out the confusion in the minds of some Christadelphians who consider the law of sin and death to be a law of nature similar, for example, to the law of gravity. This confusion is surely caused by not dividing the word of God as one ought.

It is commonly supposed that being driven from the Garden and away from the Tree of Life resulted in Adam’s death at the age of 930 years, but there is nothing in the Genesis narrative which tells us this. What we are told is that Adam and Eve were dependant, not on the Tree of Life but upon the ‘herb of the field’ (Genesis 1:29) to sustain them in life in exactly the same way as all the other animals, and in Ecclesiastes 3:18-20 we read, “I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

From creation Adam and Eve were as the rest of the animals, growing to maturity, reproducing, and finally dying at the end of their lives. We search the Scriptures in vain to find otherwise.

The Tree of Life was entirely separate from this and although while in the Garden of Eden it was a Tree from which Adam and Eve were able to freely eat we find later in Scripture, it to be symbolic of obedience to God’s commandments, so when Adam and Eve were disobedient to the one and only commandment they had been given they were barred from eating of the Tree. Their natural death had nothing to do with this.

I want next to turn our attention to two sets of laws which God made. The first set to consider are those laws which God formulated for the creation and continuance of the universe. These laws govern all that God made and which man cannot alter in any way. When we see any divergence to these established laws we call them miracles as in the drying up of the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross but not the Egyptians; the continuing supply of meal and oil for the widow of Zarephath; Daniel in the lion’s den; his three friends walking unharmed in the furnace; or when Jesus walked on water, raised the dead, healed the sick, made the blind to see and the deaf to hear, to mention just a few instances.

The other set of laws from God were designed for man’s well-being. These are moral laws which are, of course, of no interest to the rest of the animals, but they give us the opportunity to choose either to obey or disobey God and are for the purpose of building characters well pleasing to Him and every one who obeys is promised everlasting life. Obedience leads to life, while disobedience, or sin, leads to death. That is, to judicial

death as the wages of, or the reward for sin. We see then two very different deaths – natural death due to our physical nature which was never designed to continue for ever, and judicial death due to unforgiven sins. We must make this important distinction between death as the natural result of being made as the rest of the animals, and death as the result of transgression of law. The first is beyond the wit of man to alter, but the second is a matter of choice for all who are called by the grace of God.

This is confirmed in Hebrews 9:27 were we read, “And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment”. From this it is evident some must be raised from their natural death to live again to be judged and therefore the death they first died was not judicial, i.e. it was not as a result of any judgment but the natural ending of their life. Those who die the second death do so as the result of judgment - the judicial death due to sinners who have rejected the grace of God - this is the death that came by sin - and it was this judicial death which Adam incurred in Eden, but in God’s loving mercy and grace did not receive because his sin was covered when the lamb was slain in his stead and he was allowed to continue his natural life span which for him was 930 years.

The gospel of the grace of God calls us to repentance which God freely offers so that we may not suffer the death for sin but receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. It can now obvious that our natural death is not the result or consequence of sin, either our own or Adam’s at the beginning but a rest from our labours till the appointed time.

With reference to Genesis 2:17, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”, Richard Pursell mentions a footnote on page 69 in “Elpis Israel” which tells us

“The Hebrew idiom is correctly represented by the text of the A.V. Compare verse 16 (margin), “eating thou shalt eat”; and Deuteronomy 13:15, lit., “Smiting thou shalt smite.”“

It is obvious from this that just as smiting thou shalt smite has immediate effect even so dying thou shalt die should also be understood to be of immediate effect and not many years later as is so commonly believed.

[In our booklet “The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B’Yom” we refer to this footnote and mistakenly attribute it to Dr John Thomas. This is not the case as reference to the narrative will show. We believe the footnote was entered many years later by C.C.Walker. We have amended our ‘master copy’ and a note will appear in future reprints of our booklet. Thank you Richard, for this ammenment.]

George Booker is another writer who has followed Dr Thomas, Robert Roberts and other Christadelphians in failing to see the difference between natural death and judicial death. In his article on “Redemption” George Booker writes:-

“It is wrong to suggest that death was inherent in Adam’s nature from his creation. Those who maintain that mortality was a law of his being even before the transgression, and that as a result of his disobedience he was simply driven from the garden and allowed to die when his nature wore out, are in fact teaching that that which worketh death in us was in Adam before he sinned. They are also suggesting that, contrary to Romans 5:12, death did not come by sin, but rather by the law of nature as at first constituted. Such a position also destroys the force of the reasoning in Hebrews 2:14, as to why Christ needed to be partaker of our nature and nullifies the statement that the power of death lay in the diabolos, or ‘sin in the flesh’. To suggest that the Diabolos already existed in Adam even before the Fall requires that it must have been a ‘very good’ Diabolos, and if ‘very good’, then why destroy it?”

Christadelphians have to abandon their long cherished but unscriptural beliefs about natural death being the result of Adam’s transgression and accept that the death which came by sin about which Paul teaches in Romans 5:12 is judicial death for those who reject the offer of salvation; it is the second death of which we read in Revelation 2:11, 20:4 and 20:14. This death comes after judgment at the end of the thousand year reign of Jesus and those who suffer it are raised from the dead after dying a natural death.

It follows that George Booker and Christadelphians in general must find another explanation for Jesus crucifixion as there is not sin in the flesh as they suppose and so it can have no “power of death”. While Jesus vanquished the power of death as we read in Hebrews 2:14, He did this by taking away the power of sin over us

by forgiveness – “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”. Sin has no power over those who are forgiven “in Christ” as Paul tells us in Romans 8:1.

Turning next to Eric Phipps booklet which he asked me to respond to, he states early on that, “It is necessary to make two facts clear: 1. In their original pristine state, they (Adam and Eve) were not immortal, for they could not have died or ceased to exist as subsequently was the case. 2. Neither however, were they at that time dying creatures. Although created corruptible, they were not then corrupting, for death was, as later events reveal, the consequence of disobedience to their creator.”

In failing to see scripture teaching in respect to man’s nature being the same as other animals, living and dying as they do, Eric Phipps, George Booker and many before them are forced to come up with ideas that are not in harmony with Bible teaching.

Whereas we learn that God punishes man with evil when other means of correction fail we also learn that God will not allow anyone to be tempted above what he or she is able to withstand, and that man is drawn away of his own lust which can then lead to sin.

Sadly we find Eric Phipps at fault here so let me quote from his booklet:-

“During this period which could have extended for some years, there is no evidence whatever that Adam or Eve had any thoughts of disobedience to their Creator... But it is evident that when some time had elapsed for them to have developed a sufficient maturity of mind, it was the purpose of God in His Wisdom to put their ability to choose - their freewill - to the proof in such a way which would be crucial in deciding their future. To do this, it was necessary to introduce into their domain a subtle influence which would create a situation demanding the exercise of their freedom of choice. Moreover, it would be something which was novel, quite new to them and would cause them to exercise their minds in channels which beforetime they had no experience. The intention was to test their undivided loyalty to their Creator.

That this serpent was unique (but very real) there can be no doubt. That it had been present and had heard the command of God in respect of the forbidden tree is evident from what ensued. That it had the power of speech, and possessed a subtle sagacity are witnessed in the dialogue with Eve. But it is also clear that it was entirely lacking in moral capacity or integrity, nor was it at all concerned with these particulars, for it was under no constraint and therefore responsibility in regard to the tree.

And that is why for the purpose, God, in His Wisdom created and used this special creature.”

We know that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was in the Garden from the beginning and Adam and Eve had not eaten of it so Eric Phipps tells us God had to do something about that and make the temptation greater so “in His wisdom created and used this special creature.”

Poor Eve didn’t stand a chance in her naivety against such a crafty devil as Eric Phipps pictures for us.

But he says more:-

“We discern that it was into the receptive mind of Eve that the words of the Serpent were injected. Like a virus, these words began their corrupting influence in the working of her brain, which then began to produce thoughts quite foreign to her previous experience. They were of a corrupting moral order... The plausible words of the Serpent were devious, false – but powerful to an innocent mind. They were firstly an appeal to the vanity of Eve - a form of flattery very telling in its effect. Then, its words aroused in her brain a mode of thinking which was altogether contrary to anything she had before experienced. Moreover, by the force of spurious words, there was excited her latent and legitimate propensities, and turned them into unlawful lusts by a process of immoral thought.

The pure thinking which was previously hers by nature was perverted by the introduction of an alien element into her thinking processes. Without wishing to sound facetious, the reality is that it turned her brain, and contaminated her thoughts. It was an addition to her very being,

and reduced her “very good” condition to one which was obnoxious to God **and was sin in itself** - a fact which is so easily overlooked.

It is quite evident from this narrative that both Adam and Eve became, by the decisions they made of their own choice, different from their original condition.” “We may itemise the differences as follows:

1. The introduction into the brain of a powerful alien influence which in its operation produced a process of thought which was that of the Serpent, and alien to God.
2. It altered their previous pure and chaste minds by the creation of an aversion to that of the Divine Mind.
3. It produced in them the cause of their disobedience to God, their Creator.
4. It supplanted the supremacy of God by replacing it with that of the Serpent.
5. It caused their original rightful use of their propensities into improper and immoral misuse or lusts. It caused the illicit awakening of the conscience by their moral defilement.”

Is this really how to understand the Bible teaching regarding events in Eden? It is so unbalanced with the rest of Scripture and not at all in keeping with the love of God we see revealed in His beloved Son. It is surely a gross distortion and a stretching of the imagination. Such flights of fancy are not to be found anywhere in Scripture.

Really! Christadelphians! There are many among you who know God better than this. You should listen to them and learn that our Creator is a loving patient God, not willing that any should perish, who so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son into the world to die so that we should live. God gave mankind law so that he could choose to sin if he so wished or he could choose to obey God. Without law there could be no building of character. Indeed, what more could God have done to make things better for us?

Russell Gregory

Obadiah

Who was the prophet? Where was he born, of what country, at what time did he prophecy? Who were his parents? When and where did he die?

There are varied opinions but nothing definite. God’s Word: “The vision of Obadiah, this saith the Lord God; concerning Edom. We have heard a rumour, from the Lord.” Rumour = what is heard; tidings (concerning its destruction).

Also Jeremiah 49:14, “Behold I will send a blast upon him and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land;” Isaiah 37:7, 36-38 is the answer. “Mischief shall come upon mischief; rumour shall come upon rumour. Then shall they seek a vision of the prophet, but the Law shall perish from the priest, and council from the ancients.” Ezekiel 7:26.

So we see that the Bible use of rumour is not a vague saying, but a definite report of destruction in the sense of judgement from God.

And they may seek a vision; they may turn to the law, desire council from the ancients, but rebellion, and neglect. The Key of Knowledge has been removed; The use by our Master. Matthew 24:6. Rumour in its parallel. Luke 21:9 is near; its use also in Luke 7:17 is a report and a fact, so God’s word or burden (warning on warning) conjoined with mischief and destruction.

“Arise ye and let us rise up against her in battle: Behold I have made thee small among the heathen, thou art greatly despised.” His strongholds will not save him, not a remnant; not a gleaning shall be left of him. V2.

“The pride of thine heart, hath deceived thee.” Pride. Clefs of the rocks, High habitation are of no avail. Who shall bring me down to the ground? V.4. “Though thou thyself exalted as the eagle, though thou set thy nest among the stars. Thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord!” “How art thou cut off” “How are thy things of Esau searched out, how are the hidden things sought up!” V 8-9.

His allies or confederates have driven him to the borders; Cast out men of Thy covenant (Peace). Professed friends that eat thy bread with thee - none stand by him; there is no understanding in him; His mighty men destroyed – dismayed. Why, why? (Wisdom destroyed) Why? For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee; and thou shalt be cut off for ever.” Chronicles 28:17-18, Psalm 137:7. Therefore a speedy recompense. “Thou stoodest on the other side” helping foes cast lots on Jerusalem “as one of them.” Obadiah 1:12-14. “But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day he became a stranger, neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, - neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress - thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity, or have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. Neither shouldst thou have stood in the crossway to cut off those of his that did escape neither shouldst thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of their distress.”

But one might answer Israel was being punished by God.

The Assyrian, Isaiah 10:5,6 Hebrews 7-15. Obadiah 1:15,16

The day of the Lord is near (measure for measure). Drink continually, yea they shall drink - see Jeremiah 49:7-13, Obadiah 1:16. Deliverance, Mount Zion, Holiness. “Jacob shall possess their possession and the house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame and the house of Esau for stubble; and they shall kindle in them, and devour them, and they shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Jacob shall possess their possessions, Esau, Philistines, Tyre, etc. Also in Genesis 15:18, “The river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates.” Not as limited as by the United Nations or Russia. “And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.

J. Hembling.

DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE.

Extract from “ÆON” a weekly periodical edited by Brother Joseph Chamberlain. (1884)

No. I.—THE NATURE OF MAN.

In view of the widespread belief in the natural immortality of man which obtains amongst professing Christians, it would, no doubt, surprise very many people to learn that the book of Christianity, i.e., the Bible, is entirely silent as to the possession by man in his natural state of this divine attribute. Such, nevertheless, is the fact. Holy writ will be searched in vain for the statement or statements which establish the doctrine that man is of “immortal nature and eternal character:” its pages will, indeed, reveal to the candid enquirer a mass of testimony which is not only inconsistent with, but destructive of that doctrine. For what does the Bible teach with respect to the nature of man and his relation to immortality? Not that he is an immaterial spirit, a divine being, “a particle of God’s own essence,” possessed from his mother’s womb of the valuable quality of deathlessness, but something vastly different, as the subjoined quotations show. The Bible teaches—

(1.) That man is essentially a material being, of the earth earthy, and lives by the breath of life common to all animals:—

“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” (“living animal,” Kitto). - Genesis 2:7.

“There is a natural body... and so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul.” - 1 Corinthians 15:44, 45.

“The first, man is of the earth, earthy” - 1 Corinthians 15:47.

“Out of it (the ground) wast thou (Adam) taken, for dust, thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” - Genesis 3:19.

“Behold now I (Abraham) have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.” - Genesis 18:27.

“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the earth, and all turn to dust again,” - Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20.

“If he (God) set his heart upon man; if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust,” - Job 34:14,15.

(2.)* That in his natural state he is destitute of immortality, the transgression of his progenitor, Adam, having excluded him from the tree of life and made him subject to death.

“And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden.” - Genesis 3:22, 23.

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men.” - Romans 5:12.

“In Adam all die.” - 1 Corinthians 15:22.

“Mortal man,” - Job 4:17.

(3.) That death, which ensues upon his being deprived of the breath of life, resolves him into inanimate clay, and causes him to become as utterly unconscious as though he had never been born:-

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish,” - Psalm 146:4.

“The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything.” - Ecclesiastes 9:5.

“The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee as I do this day.” - Isaiah 38:18, 19.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave wither thou goest.” - Ecclesiastes 9:10.

“Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should, have been carried from the womb to the grave.” - Job 10:18, 19.

(4.) That immortality, or eternal life, is only attainable by man in Christ Jesus through a belief of, and obedience to, the Gospel: its bestowment, moreover, being subsequent to, and impossible without a resurrection from the dead:-

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” - Romans 6:23.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” - John 3:16.

“To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, (God will render) eternal life... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” – Romans 2:7-16.

“There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for my sake and the Gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this present time... and in the world to come, eternal life.” - Mark 10:29, 30.

“The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life.” - John 5:28.

“If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.” - 1 Corinthians 15:16-18.

“If after the manner of men I (Paul) have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,” - 1 Corinthians 15:12.

Brother Joseph Chamberlain

* In No. 2 above we again see the same confusion due to failing to read the early chapters of Genesis correctly and the writer assumes that natural death was the result of Adam’s sin and in support of this he quotes Romans 5:12, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men” whereas Paul is not talking about natural death, but death as the consequence of the judgment which takes place after one has died the natural death as we are told in Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Natural death comes first but the death that came by sin comes to those to whom it is due at a later time at the Judgment.

Russell.

Phil Parry writes:

I find the B.A.S.F. to be the most paradoxical document possible in that the greater number of the Clauses contain doctrinal errors hardly credible in the man Robert Roberts who professed to know the Bible and God’s way of salvation centred in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle speaking of Jesus as the foetus in the womb of Mary says “for verily he took not on him the nature of angels but he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16). Would this make Him a body of condemned nature? Certainly not. It would make Him a living soul or natural body of life like the first man Adam at creation, very good in kind and condition. Yet the compiler of Clause 8 states that God defiled Adam and changed his very good nature to a condemned and defiled one and in Clause 6 we read that God had to conceive a plan to rescue the race from the position He had placed it in because of Adam’s sin.

So we have here presented to us the body of Jesus made of condemned flesh to eat in symbol as the Word of Life when in fact the very rituals of the Law would teach us better for even the Passover Lamb must be legally clean without blemish therefore uncondemned as with the person who ate of it. (Exodus 12). It’s useless saying Jesus body was defiled but His character was legally clean. Jesus did not sacrifice His legally

clean character; He offered His life in the blood. And sin did not run in every drop of His blood as Robert Roberts professed which would have made it a defiled sacrifice and an abomination to God.

Whether symbolic or not it was His own body Jesus referred to at the Passover when He said “This is my body which is given for you.” This body of flesh and blood Jesus offered up to God as a living sacrifice that God could offer Him up to take away the SIN of the world. In Hebrews 10:5 we read, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.” Did God prepare a body of sinful flesh and blood to be the sin offering? Of course not.

Concerning the B.A.S.F. clauses, in places they are blasphemous. Clause 8 especially and here our friend and correspondent Eric Phipps again enters the scene in our Circular Letter and even if he supports the B.A.S.F. the Apostle destroys completely Clause 8 which Eric states that Jesus was raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David and was to wear their condemned nature. The Apostle says that Abraham received circumcision which was a seal of the righteousness of God by faith. So even Abraham condemned sin while in the flesh and if he and David were of a condemned line (Clause 8) where in the scriptures do we find an uncondemned line? Jesus was that “holy thing” born to Mary – the only begotten (firstborn) Son of God. Exodus 22:29 tells us “The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give me”. Were they not holy to the Lord? And Exodus 13:2, reads, “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn”. Were they not holy also? How much more His Holy One who gave Himself to be the perfect sin offering.

Hebrews 10:5, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.” Did God prepare a body of sinful flesh to be the sin offering? But we are sanctified by the body of Jesus which God had prepared. How can we be sanctified by a body of condemned flesh?

Even John Thomas and Robert Roberts could not find evidence in Genesis that Adam’s nature was condemned or changed on account of sin.

I am afraid Eric that people of your doctrine received by the precepts of men are too fearful to discuss these matters face to face and it is a serious position to be in and not of our making. Brother Gregory has been very patient with you and has other peoples comments to deal with. Read my booklet “Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit – Who is Guilty?”

Yours sincerely, P.Parry

ANALYSIS of ISLIP COLLYER’S “MEANING of SACRIFICE”

On reading through Friend Islip’s pamphlet, I was disappointed at the absence of a technical definition of the term “sacrifice,” since the Sacrifice of Christ is the most important event that ever transpired on earth.

We can afford to dispense with definitions, but I strongly advise the reader to refresh his mind by a scan over the definition, and candidly ask himself if Christ were under sentence of death on account of His (supposed) sinful flesh or condemned nature, could that ‘death’ be a sacrifice?

Ask himself candidly, if there ever was a man on earth, or an Angel from Heaven who could sacrifice his own debt? Ask himself if it is possible to exhibit two more antagonistic terms. Does not the very term ‘debt’ blaspheme the term ‘sacrifice?’ “Understandest what thou readest?”

There never was, under the canopy of Heaven such a freak as ‘sinful flesh,’ nor ‘condemned nature’, because God alone is responsible for these. The only sin recorded in God’s Book which changed the flesh is that of Lot’s wife and of Miriam, Moses sister.

This eternal confounding of flesh with character the legal with the physical and possession with the quality of the flesh, is that intoxicating cup of her who has “Charmed all Nations”.

Sin cannot exist apart from law. “Where there is no Law there is no transgression.” Jesus says: “If I had not done amongst them the works which no other man ever did, they had not had sin.” Your assumption turns the Master out of court here.

“The sting of death” is not your supposed condemned flesh, but positively condemned character.

“The Sting of Death” is sin not flesh. And the strength of sin is the law. The law scrutinises not the quality of your flesh, but that of your character. Does our law hang a man for the quality of his flesh, or that of his character? Ponder this - “There is nothing unclean of itself,” and “Every sin man performs is outside the body.”

Paul is grievously misunderstood, due alone to this Pagan “Sinful Flesh” assumption. Peter especially warns us against wresting Paul’s words to our own destruction. Indiscrimination of Paul’s metonymy, that abridged figure of speech, peculiar to Paul alone, when literally construed admirably satiates the Creed Hunter and none more so than the sinful flesh glutton. Give us flesh to eat!

Paul, addressing the brethren, says: “Ye are not in the flesh.” Did he mean, they were not flesh and blood? Even the phrase - “the body of sin” fails lamentably to prove sinful flesh. In English it means - the body “belonging to sin.” The Greek ever uses the Genitive form of Possession. So it is in Romans 8:3. The adjective “sinful” is not there. Thus friend Islip’s very criterion vanishes into oblivion.

When two nouns come together, it is a case of possession, except, however, it be a noun in apposition as ‘John the Baptist’ meaning the same person. We, in English, do not use the Greek genitive form of possession, unless the possessor be neuter, as “the roof of the house.” We do not then say “the house’s roof.” (The following is a riddle to many—“If Moses were the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he was then, the “daughter of Pharaoh’s son”). Paul’s Greek genitive case converted me to Christ.

“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” But don’t forget that “the pure in heart alone shall see God.” Whence this transformation? Would you advocate a surgical operation? Again, “Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Here our opposing friends imagine this clenches sinful flesh. Permit me however, to point out that the first thing staring us in the face here is the Imperative or Commanding Mood. Something we are Divinely prohibited from doing. If our physical system be a compound of three fourths sin and one flesh, will you please inform me how to proceed? Must I resort to Anatomy?

In my Paul’s inverted, elliptical, figure of metonymy (Meta = change; Nomen = the name) he speaks of “sin that dwelleth in me.” Also, “the foolishness of God.” If you force the literal into the former, you are irrevocably bound to force the literal into the latter.

Let us hear James: “Every man . . . “ this included Adam in Eden, who, when he saw that the forbidden tree was pleasant to the eye, and to be desired. But we must not condemn Adam for these God-implemented natural desires until he “tastes” the forbidden fruit. Why then, condemn Dear Jesus, who ever subordinated His legitimate, natural, desires to “The will of His Father?”

“Not my will but Thine be done.’ But let the Apostle proceed - “Every man when he is tempted, is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed, and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

I have now the utmost pleasure in transcribing Bro. Zilmer’s Deductive Analysis of that Scripture, and Paul’s metonymy. He says:—

“Lust conceived bringeth forth sin. Although there may be a desire for some forbidden object, yet sin does not become a fact until lust hath “conceived.” What is this “conception” of lust? In the ordinary sense of the term conception comes from the union of two elements, the

male and the female. In the case with which we are dealing, there is a union between two mental faculties; and there are two mental processes. The first of these is the judgement. Man as a rational being, ordinarily engages in actions which his judgement approves. By this we mean that he somehow justifies such acts as right. Once the judgement approves one more element is necessary to effect the conception, that is "The Will." When the judgement approves, and the will resolves to carry the desire into execution, then the union is complete, conception takes place, and sin, as an act of transgression against the Divine Law, is the child that is brought forth!

Was R. Roberts anything behind the above when he declared:—

"The phrase "Sin in the flesh" is metonymical. It is not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading physical organisation. Literally, sin is disobedience, or an act of rebellion. The impulses which lead to this reside in the flesh, and metonymically came to be called by the name of the act to which they gave birth."

I ask, is it possible to exhibit purer Divine harmony among any other three men on earth, the Apostle, Zilmer and R. Roberts?

But allow R. Roberts to finish:-

"The impulses which lead to this existed in Adam before transgression as much as they did afterwards, else disobedience would not have occurred."

I here ask - was Adam, therefore doomed to death on account of his being created with natural desires? Absurd! Is it not, therefore, wild deduction to condemn Jesus for possessing natural desires? But let us hear R. Roberts finish:-

"Our Friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatever and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam's relation to his Maker but not in the nature of his organisation."

I ask therefore, how have our Christadelphian friends become "Flesh Changers" and ignorantly misrepresented us across the broad earth of being guilty of that pagan delusion?

On page 2, paragraph 3, our friend Islip says:-

"It is as though the prophet was anticipating this controversy when he wrote - "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted of God. But He was wounded for our transgressions..." But please observe the Prophet does not say "He was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded and bruised for what friend Islip is pleased to term "His own unclean, sinful, condemned, flesh, nature."

Reader! Think for yourself. Ask yourself candidly if that "idea" could honestly be read into that glorious declaration of the prophet?

We agree with friend Islip when he says, "Jesus was the son of God, the beginning of a New Creation, and that it is by His righteousness (and faith in His shed blood alone) we can be saved." But when, at the top of Page 3 he says - "God made His Son strong for the work of overcoming and condemning sinful flesh," then we are forced to part company, because this idea reduces Christ to a mere machine, reduces His trial to a mere sham fight and positively robs Christ of all merit.

We verily believe that God made His Beloved strong for our redemption, but we denounce the idea that His strength lay in His 'hair' like that of Samson. This supposed infinite strength idea is forced by the sinful flesh delusion, which alone is the 'father of the thought.' God tries no man above what he is able to bear,

who every time makes a way of Escape, that he may be able to bear it. His commandments are not grievous. His burden is Light.

Jesus was truly “The beginning of a new creation, in whom alone was life”. This is wherein His strength lay. “The Prince of Life,” “The way, the truth and the life.” Who “poured out that life blood unto death.”

No sham fight here. No concocted yarn of receiving infinite strength to strangle His supposed sinful flesh or condemned nature. This Monster of all delusions.

Jesus was the property of God alone. Do you know what that means? If you will point out where the Adversary and God had equal shares in the Christ, we will proclaim peace tonight. We must not violate God’s fundamental law of private ownership, and force Him into co-operation with the ‘sinful flesh butcher.’ Did Jesus sacrifice His own debt? Did He say, “This is My sinful body which must be slain for Myself? This do in remembrance of Me? Horrid idea!!!

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

On page 3 bottom, friend Collyer says, “We recognise that it was in character, and not in nature that Jesus differed from us.”

This Declaration we thoroughly endorse. But it evades the main point at issue and tacitly renews the false charge of our having changed nature. Is it not a deplorable fact that changed nature, with friend Islip and his adherents, is a foregone conclusion? His cherished criterion, which forces him to ‘saddle the wrong pony’ and mutilate the word of God to uphold? This fact alone exhibits the actual flesh changers. Will friend Islip point out to us, in God’s book, where Jesus stood in a relation condemned to death on account of His sinful flesh or condemned nature and then define Sacrifice? A duty he, hitherto, positively has failed to do.

We do not accuse him of wilful indulgence, in subtle, hidden, under-currents. It is his own sinful flesh bias which prevents him ‘spitting out’ and speaking plainly. Friend Islip has become so much the slave of phrases that he has lost all capacity for meanings. No amount of reasoning in a circle will, to eternity, settle this question. This supposed change in the flesh of Adam is a Will-o-the-wisp, against which Robert Roberts declared: - “There is no evidence whatever, and the evidence and presumption are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker but not in his physical organisation.” Why then, change the flesh?

The Spirit portrayed that prior to the close of the age, there would be a cage of full fledged, unclean and hateful birds.

Reader! Do you belong to that cage?

We therefore patiently await friend Collyer’s “Definition of Sacrifice.”

Dr. Thomas held that Christ was raised in mortal nature. See “Echoes of past Controversies” Page 80. This means, raised doomed to death. Peter declares: “He was quickened in Spirit.” Paul says: “Not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” We must not violate God’s law regarding The Passover Lamb. “None of it shall remain over until the morning.” If God raised His own Passover Lamb in mortal nature on that glorious Resurrection Morn, does not the assumption force God to violate His own law? We must not believe all we hear; but prove all things. Because there never was a greater Babel of Tongues.

“When I see the blood, I will pass over.” This was “The Great Stumbling Stone Laid in Zion.” The great majority neglected the sprinkling of the door posts of their hearts, and sought deliverance by mere works of law.” Works of law could not redeem life. Hence, “By works of law shall no flesh be justified.” This demonstrates that Jesus was in a justified relation toward His own Father before works of law could

count. His fidelity to the Divine law merited His reward of immortality by retaining His justified relation towards His own Father.

Here, then, stands One "Mighty to save." Before accepting His merited reward of immortality if He will now pour out His soul (Life) unto death, my salvation is eternally solved. Did my Lord do this? "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

"Greater Love hath no man than this." That Life blood has perished for ever; "He was quickened in Spirit." His merited reward according to the oath of God, via. - "This do and thou shalt live." This is my meaning of sacrifice.

Sinful flesh is 'top dog' throughout friend Islip's booklet. Page 7, top, he says, "The racial tendencies are a part of our physical nature." Do we deny this? Were they not in Adam also prior to transgression? Genesis 1:28. Did God hold Adam condemned for natural desires which God alone implanted? Horrid deduction!

Friend Islip continues, "For Christ to have been free from all desires of the flesh to please itself, would have involved a miracle of Divine energy for the express purpose of making His nature different from ours."

Here again is a subtle implication which forces changed flesh and condemned nature with a vengeance. Demonstrating to the hilt that friend Islip is the 'Flesh Changer,' who, on Page 3, forces God to a miracle of "Divine energy," imparting to Jesus "Infinite Power" for the overcoming and condemning of this supposed changed sinful flesh.

If Friend Islip would but leave off stewing Rome's sinful flesh and accept the Word of God that "there is nothing unclean of itself" it would save him from involving God in a miracle of Divine energy to save man from what never existed on earth, viz.- Sinful Flesh.

How long will they saddle the wrong pony?

2nd June, 1928. A.L.Wilson.

Appendix

2 Peter 3:13.

A new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. If righteousness consists of acts of obedience to certain Laws how can it be understood to dwell in a person ("O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord" - Earth = persons), except it be by knowledge thereof not by indulgence therein. The same with "the sin that dwelleth in me" {see below).

1 John 3:17, How dwelleth the love of God in him.

2 John 3, For truth's sake which dwelleth in you.

See Romans. 10, 3. A.V.

Candidly I do not think the statement, "Sin that dwelleth in me" is metonymical.

The indwelling of sin is due to the application of the federal principle and is doctrinal not literal. Sin cannot literally dwell in man, neither does lust dwell in man as a constant inmate, it does not exist until something arises to call it forth. Its existence then is in the abstract realm of thought and cannot be a physical principle or property of, nor pervading the literal flesh. Lust can only be said to dwell in one when and so long as the thoughts thereon, hence the principle (Rule) upon which Paul could base his speech is the federal. In no other sense could he rightly employ or use it. Hence R. Roberts' speech is most subtle and misleading.

Isaiah 1:21, provides an example of this speech. Would they suggest righteousness was an indwelling physical principle and a lodger? What is a lodger? Answer: A person who temporarily resides in the house belonging to - another person (Apply the idea of bought and sold). Is this what was meant? In what form did righteousness lodge therein? Of what does righteousness consist? Is it concrete or abstracts is it acts of obedience or knowledge pertaining to acts in accordance with laws of justice = Just laws.

If only they would let every word perform its own function there would not be this indiscriminate mixing of thought with matter, abstract with concrete. In what sense does righteousness lodge within a person? Is it not by knowledge thereof? Hence I conclude sin is said to dwell therein in precisely the same manner, viz., by knowledge pertaining thereto.

Hence, instead of the statement, being metonymical, it is a statement of literal fact and pertains to the abstract realm of thought, not to the concrete flesh.

If the statement were metonymical where is the advantage in changing the name from lust to sin? Does this change convey a better idea of the thing said to dwell therein? What object could be served thereby? Are we intended to understand, lust to be a part of our physical make up by such an expression and by such use of metonymy?

It has become customary to understand that man - in connection with the law of God, is weak, on account, of his sinful flesh, his sin-in-the-flesh, a fixed principle termed "lust," yet Paul says it is the law that was weak through the flesh.

Here we have something via the flesh that rendered the law weak and I ask: is it consistent with sound reasoning to conclude that transgression, man's mental weakness and inability to obey the law took away the law's strength?

Paul says: "The strength of sin is the law," hence the law gave strength to sin. If it could give strength to sin and yet was weak through the flesh, would not such rather suggest that the impulses of the flesh towards sin were not strong enough to cause man to sin that strength might be given to the law. Surely such proves the theory of sin-in-the-flesh erroneous, and should cause all to reason these things out for themselves, trusting implicitly to no man's explanation without full investigation.

How, then, could there be something via the literal flesh that could render such a law weak, surely the literal flesh cannot act on its own initiative. Must we not turn to that other method in Scripture, its metonymical mode of speech, where the word flesh is employed instead of the word men or man, e.g., "the end of all flesh is before me."

Does the passage in question include all men as in example quoted or to one certain person. A glance at the Greek solves the problem, for there we perceive the Definite Singular article, denoted in English by 'the' employed, and not only so but we have its grammatical meaning to assist us because the Accusative form - which indicates 'sin' as the Object - precedes the word for "sin" and the Dative form which indicates the time and the clue or fact given for locating the person to whom it relates, precedes the word 'flesh.'

"Condemned THE sin in THE flesh."

What particular sin was this and what particular flesh?

If sin, in the shape of lust, desire or the impulses were a "fixed principle" surely man could not refrain from sin. The average man does not desire to sin but desires to avoid sin because of its consequences. The average man could refrain from sin if he exercise his power to control his actions because "God tries no man above what he is able."

We do not deny there are fixed principles which govern the flesh of man, which govern (rule over) his ability mentally to experience lust or desire, which principles were fixed at his creation (as witness their conception of sin; James 1:14, 15) but these "fixed principles" governing rules or laws - are known and exist in the mind

of God alone. Man knows them not, his physical organism is controlled by them and man has no power to alter this law, tho' he may damage the organism and prevent their perfect operation.

Paul further says: "there is nothing unclean of itself" hence the flesh "itself is not scripturally unclean, yet we read: "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Surely "it is not the putting away of filth of the (literal) flesh," as Paul says but a legal transaction, "it" refers to the flesh and if the flesh is not unclean of itself all this talk of inheriting sin in the flesh as a fixed principle in the flesh or as impulses which lead to sin is contradiction of these clear concise statements.

Uncleanness pertaining to the flesh is imputed per the law. To what uncleanness via the flesh does it refer if not to that under which scripture - not man - hath shut up together all under sin? If they would refrain from repeating phrases without paying attention to the meaning thereof, they might be enabled to perceive how comprehensive is the above quotation. As Andrew said it answers the question "multum en parvo."

What shall we say then that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh hath found (out) Romans 4:1? Yea, what shall we say? Shall we say he discovered it was full of a physical sin principle termed sin-in-the-flesh or that scripture hath legally concluded all under sin due to fleshly relationship to Adam our forefather under what is now termed the federal principle?

A.L.Wilson

Exhortation

Dear Brethren and Sisters, Greetings and Love in Jesus.

"What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it?"

One has recently strayed from the Christadelphian flock, having been attracted by nicer and sweeter pastures, and besides has found the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. She had hardly noticed him before and had mistaken Him for one of the sheep, so hazy had she been in trying to get sufficient food.

Among the ninety and nine one would imagine that some effort would be made to get back that lost sheep back to the fold by those shepherds in care of the flock, but they haven't even raised an alarm, not a sound - it is the ninety and nine they are concerned about: and so they strengthen the hedges with the poor stuff they possess and hope that they will not lose another.

The one that strayed is so very happy and peaceful in fellowship with the Good Shepherd and the fresh green pastures. But strange, when she tells of her findings to the rest they will not believe her. How could the Good Shepherd represent us creatures full of sin in our flesh if He had none in His? 'You are without a sacrifice.' How could sin be condemned in Jesus if it was not there? How could Jesus be a Good Shepherd if He was full of sin? Like the sheep He would be a bad shepherd.

How can they know Him and hear His voice with such wrong ideas of Him? The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep - no one took it from Him: 'I lay it down of myself in obedience to my Father's will. I have power to lay it down and power to take it again.'

He had no power at all if sin was in His flesh. How can so many be wrong on this vital point. Because it is of men, and cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. The precious seed by which we are begotten, the living, lasting Word, is not of men.

Holy men of old spake as the Spirit prompted them, to write about Jesus as a Lamb without spot and blemish.

Here is our strong Anchor that will hold us against any storm that may arise - but we are concerned about the ninety and nine in the wilderness with those blind 'caretakers,' and pray that more will break away and find pastures true.

With Fraternal Love. F. Skinner.

What Was The Sentence Upon Adam?

The usual answer which is generally believed by religiously minded people is that the sentence was natural death. If this was so, then we say at the beginning of this brief article that our Lord Jesus Christ died in vain.

The mistaken theory arises from the passage of Scripture, "dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return." Now we would emphasise the fact that all mankind (apart from accident) from the time of creation up to the present, succumb to a natural death by a process of natural decay.

If approximately, two thousand years ago our Lord was nailed to the cross to save us from natural death, then it is obvious that He has miserably failed, for countless millions have died since His sacrifice and returned unto dust. Assuming that "unto dust shall thou return" was the sentence upon Adam and all in his loins, then we are faced with the difficulties of Enoch and Elijah who did not see death; also those who are alive at Christ's return who do not see corruption.

If confusion and contradiction arises it is not because the Word is at fault but rather because reason and harmony does not develop from wrong premises. Natural death had nothing at all to do with the sentence upon Adam, but rather is that which is common to man along with all the other animal creation.

If we ask ourselves for what was the sentence upon Adam, the answer is transgression of law, otherwise, sin. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here is the commandment without which sin would have been an impossibility, a command which resulted in the writing of the quotation, "by one man Sin entered into the world and Death by Sin." This quotation in no way denies the fact that death would otherwise have resulted from the constitution of the human body which God had created from the earth. "The first man is of the earth, earthy;" "dust thou art."

The vital point that is commonly overlooked is that Adam should have died "in the day" he transgressed, "Death by sin," but a merciful and loving God provided a substitute in the sacrificial Lamb, which was slain because of sin. This was the death that came by sin, a violent death by the shedding of blood, and one which exactly prefigured the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on account of Adam's sin. Is it not obvious what the sentence was upon Adam? There is no doubt that it was "death by sin," a violent judicial death.

Is it imperative in order to declare or acknowledge God's justice that Adam must have paid the price of sin? If so, Adam would have died the day he sinned and man upon the earth would have ceased to exist. Has not God, out of the multitude of His tender mercies, provided a way of forgiveness of sin? If so, did not the same apply to Adam?

On the other hand, assuming that Adam suffered the penalty by his natural death after 950 years, why was it necessary for Christ to pay it also?

If natural death was the wages of Adam's sin, then it is impossible for him to be forgiven the penalty, because he has already paid it.

We are informed that "death is the wages of sin," yes, and this death is a violent one. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." Jesus was the Lamb of God that took away The Sin of the world - one sin, Adam's sin, to which mankind is related upon enlightenment as being in Adam, by reason of being in his loins at the transgression.

Upon this enlightenment, unless one takes the opportunity [advantage – RVG] of God’s provided means of redemption in Christ Jesus, by symbolically dying to sin (which Christ did literally) in the water of baptism, then he belongs to sin and will be resurrected to suffer sin’s wages – the Second Death.

In this country, by law, a sentence of violent death is imposed for the crime of murder. If an accused person is found guilty of this crime, and during the previous weeks waiting period before the sentence is carried out, natural death occurs, can it rightly be said that the accused has paid the penalty for the crime he committed? Would he not have died naturally irrespective of the crime? Was the sentence carried out by his death? If so, it would be impossible for an innocent person to pay the penalty by naturally dying.

“Sin is the transgression of the law,” and death by sin. Did this murderer who died naturally die for his sin? It is very evident that he did not; death by natural causes is neither a sentence nor a penalty but rather the result of being created corruptible.

This is applicable to Adam; he was in a similar responsible position to the murderer, the only difference being that Adam, by the mercy of God, obtained a reprieve from the conditions of the sentence – a lamb being provided as a substitute. This lamb foreshadowed Jesus Christ - the “Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” the Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world,” for “without the shedding of blood is no remission.

Surely the word “slain” implies a violent death, a death which was brought into the world by Adam’s sin, the death which Jesus suffered so that Adam and all his posterity might have both natural life and the opportunity of eternal life.

By His death He has destroyed him “that had the power of death, that is the devil.” Can we construe this passage to mean natural death? This death still persists, but rather Death by Sin, Adam’s sin, has been rendered powerless by the price He paid for our redemption.

God’s plan of redemption is revealed in wisdom, mercy, and love; He is not willing that any should perish; God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

What was the sentence upon Adam? The shortest and simplest answer to this question is that which Christ suffered. Was His death natural? Did He return to dust? Unless the precious blood of Christ had been poured out on Calvary, mankind would have ceased to be, owing to the death (by violence) of our first parents, for “the wages of sin is death,” and “without the shedding of blood is no remission.”

During the period of His manifestation Jesus was able to say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” By this statement, is it not very evident that the condemnation mentioned cannot be natural death, for this is the experience of all and therefore an impossibility for one to pass from, apart from the return of Christ?

Death, that is, The Death, is the climax of condemnation both final and eternal, a death which many will be raised to suffer who have already naturally died, in short, the Second Death. This is The Death which became operative upon mankind by one man, Adam, because of Sin, a death in harmony with the statement of Jesus (John 5:24), which Adam and all mankind by God’s Grace can pass from by participating in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus by faith. After confirming this faith in the waters of baptism it can be said, “there is therefore now No Condemnation to them which are in Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”. (Romans 8:1,2).

The force of this law of sin and death which was established by Adam’s transgression became operative upon himself and all his enlightened posterity. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and is the correct answer to the question at the head of this short article, but by the mercy of God, a Lamb was

provided in the stead of Adam, which literally suffered the force of this law of sin and death, Adam suffering it symbolically, or by his conscience.

The mind is the man; the members and organs of the physical constitution being but the implements of action which are decided by the brain.

When the lamb died, Adam, by his conscience, would die also; henceforth not to live unto himself but unto Him, by faith, of whom the Lamb prefigured, even the only begotten Son of God.

Likewise Paul, who could say, “for I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” (Galatians 2:19); “likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 2 (Romans 6:11).

T. Gettliffe.

THE HOLY INCENSE

Exodus 30:34-38, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.”

Stacte:

Stacte is a gum that exudes from the beautiful *Styrax officinalis* tree. It is abundant on the lower hills of Israel. In March the blossoms come in clusters, four or five together, with their sweet smelling perfume. The flowers are shaped like a snowflake and are pure waxen white. The anthers are a vivid orange colour. When in full bloom, the large shrub appears to be covered in snow. The leaves are a clear, shining green on their upper side and gray-white underneath.

The Hebrew word is *nataph* and means “a liquid drop” from the root meaning “to distil” or “fall in drops.” It is the first mentioned component of the perfume which was offered on the golden altar and reference to Youngs concordance tells us its figurative sense is “to speak by inspiration.” Stacte is a resinous substance which exudes from a tree in great quantity, of its own accord. Perhaps symbolic of Jesus who offered himself spontaneously, a freewill offering to the Father.

Onycha:

Is part of a large white aromatic mollusc found in the Red Sea which, when burned emits a musky odour. The Hebrew is *sheheleth* which means nail; claw; hoof and this indicates the top of the shell which is claw shaped. It was dried and ground to a powder.

Galbanum:

This plant from the family Umbelliferae, the same family of plants to which belong carrots, parsley and celery. Galbanum is common in parts of Syria and Arabia as far as Abyssinia.

It spontaneously produces a milky juice which, when dried, takes the form of a pale, waxy yellow-green gum resin which is unctuous and adhesive, of a strong unpleasant and somewhat astringent, balsamic smell.

It is said to have been used as an antidote for snake bites.

Frankincense:

Frankincense trees are unusual for their ability to grow in environments so unforgiving that they sometimes

seem to grow directly out of solid rock. It develops a disk-like growth at the base of the tree which prevents it from being torn away from the rock during the violent storms that frequent the region they grow in. This feature is slight or absent in trees grown in rocky soil or gravel. The tears from these hardy survivors are considered superior due to their more fragrant aroma.

The Hebrew for frankincense is *lebonah* meaning “white” which may be reference to the milky sap tapped from the *Boswellia* tree from which the aromatic resin is obtained.

It is tapped from the tree by scraping the bark and allowing the exuded resins to bleed out and harden. There are numerous species and varieties of frankincense trees, each producing a slightly different type of resin. Differences in soil and climate create more diversity of the resin, even within the same species.

When burnt it emits a fragrant odour, and hence the incense became an emblem of the prayer (Malachi 1:11; Psalms 141:2; Luke 1:10; Revelation 5:8; 8:3).

Frankincense was presented to Christ at His birth as a symbol of purity and suffering.

[This frankincense, or olibanum, used in the temple services is not to be confounded with the frankincense of modern commerce which is derived from the Norway Spruce, the Pinus abies.]

These four ingredients were mixed in equal proportions to form the incense “which is the prayers of the saints.” This then is what prayer ought to be; first, spontaneous from the heart, in Spirit and in truth; coupled with the remembrance that we have been delivered from bondage through Christ in whose Name we approach God.

Compiled from various sources

Proposed New page for the Nazarene Fellowship Website:

Our Understanding of Certain Scripture Teachings

The purpose of this Question & Answer section is to help us understand scripture teaching regarding God’s purpose with mankind and to help us give an answer to those who ask us the reason for the hope we have.

We have not attempted to go into any great depths of thought but show a foundation for the things we believe using what we hope is easy to follow language.

We pray that readers will find this a firm foundation on which to build.

ADAM AND EVE

QUESTION 1: Did Adam and Eve need the Tree of Life to keep them alive while in the Garden of Eden?

ANSWER: No, they had the food from the Garden to keep them alive. Genesis 1:29-30, “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. Adam and all the beasts of the earth were given this food to sustain their natural life.”

THE TREE OF LIFE

QUESTION 2: What was the purpose of the Tree of Life?

ANSWER: We feel sure the Tree of Life was a real tree and Adam and Eve had free access to it whilst in the Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve transgressed God's commandment they had to leave the Garden and no longer had access to the Tree of Life but they continued to live their natural lives remaining dependent upon the "every green herb for meat".

Apart from Genesis there are seven other references to the Tree of Life in the Bible – Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4, Revelation 2:7, 22:14, and 22:17. Each of them refer, in some symbolic way, to more than our natural life – wisdom more precious than wealth, fruit of righteousness, hope realised, a wholesome tongue, a gift from Jesus, for healing of nations, right to eat of tree of life – such matters suggest an opportunity of eternal life for they appertain to spirit life.

In this present Christian dispensation we see Jesus as our Tree of Life because of all the things we read about Him in the New Testament. Here are a few verses from John's gospel:-

John 1:4, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." 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." 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." 4:14, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 5:26, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 6:27-63: 27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." 32, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life...

40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day... 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life... 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

This is ample evidence to show we have eternal life through Jesus and this is why we believe Jesus is our Tree of Life. We see the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden as symbolic of the offer of eternal life through obedience, that is, through the perfect obedience of Jesus who died for us and in whom we have our faith. We have the same choice as Adam and Eve, and we fail as they did; we have temptation to disobey. In fact, the whole purpose of law is to give us opportunity to obey our Creator. It is His Law obey or disobey and there is no commandment that it is impossible for us to keep. Jesus said, be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect, and we know Jesus was perfect and He is our pattern. So when we offend, as we do from time to time, we have, by the loving mercy of God, Jesus to appeal to for forgiveness, and so live by God's grace. God's Law is good and by obedience we show we love Him.

THE FIRST TRANSGRESSION and THE WAGES OF SIN

QUESTION 3: Did Adam by his transgression, bring natural death into the world?

ANSWER: No. Adam was like other animals in respect to his physical needs requiring food for sustenance and in the natural course would die at some time as do all animals.

Natural life in all its forms was and is transient. Birth, growth to maturity, reproduction and death is God's arrangement for all living things since He brought each of them into being. Neither the natural death of Adam nor the natural or common death of any of his descendants was or is the penalty for sin.

Adam was created a corruptible creature and was to remain so all his natural lifetime. This is the position we, as descendants of Adam, are in and the hope of the Gospel is to receive a change to Spirit nature like the angels as we read in Matthew 22:30, “For in the resurrection they... are as the angels of God in heaven.

However, we read in Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” - but this does not apply to our natural death; it applies to the law of sin and death. This death is the wages due to the sinner unless forgiven.

In many parts of the world today the death sentence is enforced for serious breach of law and such was the case too under the Law of Moses as we read in Deuteronomy 24:16 –16. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

This statement of fact of being put to death for ones own sin is straightforward to grasp and alone should be sufficient proof to show that the common or natural death is not the wages of sin. A ‘putting to death’ suggests a violent form of death.

Jesus was the exception to the teaching that “every man shall be put to death for his own sin”; He was put to a violent death though in His case it was totally undeserved and it was not for Himself. We are told that it was for us - to take away the sin of the world! (John 1:29). This “sin of the world” is Adam’s sin to which we are all in bondage as his descendants.

PASS FROM DEATH TO LIFE

QUESTION 4: Jesus said that the faithful have “passed from death unto life”. What death has the faithful person passed from as he can still expect to die the common death of all men?

ANSWER: The death that the faithful baptized person is saved from is not natural death that we all die at the end of our lives, if it was Jesus’ sacrifice has failed, for we all still die. No, there is a second death for those who have died in their sins; those who are enlightened but choose to turn away from God’s offer of redemption. This is not natural death - it is a judicial death and this is the death that Jesus’ sacrifice saves us from.

CHANGE OF NATURE

QUESTION 5: Could Adam have lived for ever without a change of nature?

ANSWER: The body with which Adam was created was not designed to continue for ever. This is shown in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 we read the body “is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

It is evident from this that there will be a change of nature in due time for the faithful.

WHAT CHANGE TOOK PLACE

QUESTION 6: Was Adam’s nature changed from the “very good” condition after he transgressed?

ANSWER: There is no evidence in the Scripture for any change in Adam’s nature. There was however, a change in Adam’s relationship to his Creator. Whereas he was created a Son of God and remained so while obedient to Him, by transgression he sold himself to be a servant or slave of sin – “his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16). All Adam’s descendents are born into this bondage to sin; not made sinners nor made sinful, neither are they held guilty of Adam’s sin, but they are legally held in bondage to sin for the purpose of salvation that by one sacrifice many are saved as we read in Romans 5:18, “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment

came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

It isn't true to say God's creation became less than very good at any time. Neither did man necessarily become more sinful. We have been given free-will to choose. Whether one wishes to serve God or not is a matter of our own choice - just as it was for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve did not have to sin and neither do we.

However, Yes, we see many evil people bringing up their children to be evil too and this wrong behaviour is due to selfishness and self-righteousness and ignorance. Paul tells us in Romans 1:28 of those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

WHAT DEATH DID ADAM DIE

QUESTION 7: We read in Genesis 2:17 that “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Was this impending death fulfilled?

ANSWER: When two words are repeated in the Hebrew language as we find here where we have ‘death’ and ‘die’, i.e. *Muth TeMuth* translated “surely die”, it is used to show the certainty of the matter and so it was translated “surely die” to emphasise the certainty of death. Because Adam and Eve did not die the very day they transgressed many people believe it means they started dying that day and that they would die within a ‘day’ of a thousand years. But was this the sentence?

Our first two questions related to this and here we can take the matter further and say that the animals sacrificed to provide Adam and Eve with coverings were slain in their stead.

Their punishment was commuted by God by way of atonement. This actually is a perfect example of what was to come later, by way of the law, and ultimately with the provision of Jesus Christ. So, the death that eventually claimed Adam was not the punishment for the sin he committed.

FORGIVENESS THROUGH THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD

QUESTION 8: In Genesis 3:21, we read “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” This required the slaying of at least one animal and maybe two. Adam and Eve had transgressed God's commandment and as God says there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22) it is evident that Adam and Eve were forgiven by this act and the skins were in effect the covering over of their sin.

What is the connection between the animals sacrificed in Eden and the Sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God?

ANSWER: We see the animal which was sacrificed in Eden as a type of Jesus' sacrifice. We are told that the blood of bulls and of goats which were sacrificed under the Law of Moses cannot take away sin (Hebrews 10:3) It is evident that sins were ‘covered over’ by the sacrifice of animals but not taken away until Jesus came so John the Baptist hails Jesus as, “Behold! The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This was effectively fulfilled when Jesus gave His life in sacrifice on the cross.

It maybe said that we are not told that Adam and Eve repented of their transgression, which is true enough, and nothing had been said beforehand that God would accept repentance. This was an entirely new experience for Adam and Eve of course, and they were afraid of God and tried to hide from Him. They were certainly not rebellious once they had transgressed, but were downcast, dreading what God was going to do next.

We have been given a very brief outline of events in this account in Genesis and it is easy to speculate one way or another but if we look at later events recorded in Scripture we see that, while God is long-suffering He does not forgive those who persist in rebelling against Him, though He is pleased to forgive and in fact wants to forgive all who will seek Him with all their heart. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for us that we might be forgiven.

Next, one may ask how can anything take away something that you have done wrong? Some wrong thing that has been done cannot be undone, of course, but Jesus took away the consequence of our transgressions so that we can stand before God as though we had done nothing wrong. This is forgiveness without limit.

ATONEMENT

QUESTION 9: How does Jesus' sacrifice save the sinner from the consequence of his sins?

ANSWER: A sinner owes that which he cannot pay without perishing; he owes his life. The basis of the Atonement is that if someone else could be found with the means to pay the debt, and providing the supreme authority sanctions the transaction, the sinner might be free from his debt while at the same time the justness of the law is upheld. God, in His ultimate love for His creation, brought Jesus into the world for this purpose.

When Jesus, in His supreme love for us, submitted Himself to the death of the Cross, He made Himself the sin-bearer, translating into reality the deliverance from the death foreshadowed in Eden when Adam was covered by skin of the slain animal. Jesus' death was therefore an exact substitutionary sacrifice. We have been purchased out of bondage, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a price. It is a figurative transaction, but it was completed by a literal price, the life of Jesus which he laid down for us on the Cross.

BAPTISM

QUESTION 10: In Acts 19:3-5 we read, "And he said to them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then Paul said, John verily baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." What is the difference between the two baptisms?

ANSWER: In Romans 6:3, we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" John the Baptist could not have baptised anyone into the death of Jesus as He had not at that time given His life in sacrifice. But John had said, "I indeed baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8). Jesus confirmed this when He said to Nicodemus (John 3:5), "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The Apostle Paul tells us that "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). (That is, all those in Christ shall be made alive, not all people), and from this we see we can either be "in Adam" or we can be "in Christ".

In our natural birth to our parents we are born as descendants of Adam and therefore we are "in Adam" by birth. We can, by a new birth, be "in Christ" by baptism into Him. We would compare this to a person who having been born in one country wishes to become a citizen of another, for example, having been born in England I am naturally a citizen of this country, but if I were to choose to be a citizen of the U.S.A. for instance I could apply to that country for citizenship and live there instead of in England. Baptism then, is our means of leaving behind our relationship to Adam and from this time on be related to Jesus.

For our salvation then, baptism is necessary. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21) and by it we receive the promise by faith of Jesus Christ... given to them who believe" (Galatians 3:22).

By faith we are restored to grace and favour with God and become His children and as we are now "in Christ" we are free from any future judgment as we read in Romans 8:1,2, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Once a person is baptised it can be said "ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ be in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:9-11).

No one can be in Adam and in Christ at the same time. We have to accept we have been bought from our old master, redeemed by Christ, and “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:15-17).

JUDGMENT

QUESTION 11: Let us next turn to the subject of Judgment. It is the expectation of all Christians that there will be a day of judgment for all people at some future time and many Bible references are quoted for this yet there is much argument as to when the Day of Judgement will be, who will be brought before the Judgement Seat of Christ, where it will take place and what will be the result for various groups of people.

We of course acknowledge the many judgments of God through past ages and that there are judgments yet to come, but we are told that the wages of sin is death and we ask what death this refers to for in Hebrews 9:27, we read, “And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment.” It is obvious from this that the common death which comes to us all at the end of our lives is not the judgement for our sins - but that there is a judgment which follows later. Also it was mentioned in the above section that there is to be no future judgment for the faithful. How can we be so sure?

ANSWER: Because sin leads to so much harm, God, who is Love, will not let a sinner live for ever. Nevertheless a sinner who repents of his deeds and turns to God and appeals to His mercy and loving kindness with his whole heart is forgiven and offered the free gift of eternal life in the appointed way through baptism into the sacrificial death of Jesus.

We see three groups of people and first will briefly consider those who never come to a knowledge of the Gospel; these are unaware of God’s ways and remain unenlightened and are therefore not counted as being under His laws and so they do not receive any penalty or punishment under the law but are as the beasts that perish.

Then there are those who come to a knowledge of God and His ways and know of the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. Having this enlightenment it is incumbent upon them to seek for more knowledge and understanding to ensure their salvation is secure. They know they are under law and ought to seek to obey God but if they do not and remain unrepentant sinners they become subject to adverse Judgment in due time. Let us take a few thoughts from Romans 2:8,9 & 16, but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath... tribulation and anguish... in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ; Romans 1:18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness... we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

It seems clear from this that the apostle Paul is saying that God has a very real and deep anger against sinners (which is all of us), which will only be turned away by individual faith in the Atonement made by Christ. Those who neglect their opportunity to obtain salvation on God’s terms will reap the reward of their deeds. If we received the call of the gospel and fail to obey it but continue to sin presumptuously and are unrepentant, or have wilfully withstood the grace of God, then the sleep of death will be ended by an awakening to shame and contempt - the resurrection to judgment, to suffer the condemnation of the second death which is truly the wages or penalty of sin. This is the death to be feared.

If during our life we heard the call of the gospel and responded, and have accepted the principles and provisions made for our deliverance then our sleep of death will be concluded by an awakening to the eternal life conferred upon us during our probation and will receive the gift of life. For such as these the plain statements of Jesus are present realities; “He that believeth is passed from death unto life” and “He that believeth shall never see death.” The death which the believer shall never see is that death after judgment which is the wages of unbelief and which results in eternal destruction.

The truth is then, that so far from having to go on trial for his life at the judgment, one who belongs to Christ is assured now of a glorious waking; the blessedness of his position is that there is no uncertainty, his name

has been inscribed in the book of life even now and the object of his life is so to walk that it is not blotted out. That is why Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Jesus does not say that in the judgment he that believeth shall not be condemned; He says he that believeth shall not even come into judgment. (Romans 8:1). Why? Because at that day those who belong to Christ have been judged already; it is taking place now day by day. Paul says: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged (day by day), we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:31,32).

Anyone whose soul is burdened with a weight of sins and living in dread of judgment ought to confess and repent, now; ask for forgiveness and try to do better. One such, who realizes his position and says "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned..." need have no doubt about his reception, "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him... for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." (Luke 15:18 and 22).

Your comments on the foregoing piece for our website are welcome and will be considered before it is added to our site. - Editors.