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Editorial

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters, Greetings to all in Jesus Name.

On the evening of Friday 30th March the Jews will begin celebrating their Passover or Pesach of their liberation by God from slavery in ancient Egypt and their freedom as a nation under the leadership of Moses

This first Passover was held when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, estimated to be about three thousand five hundred years ago; however, it was many years previous to this the Israelites had been a family group descended from Abraham who went to Egypt during a time of famine. While Pharaoh agreed for them to stay they were shepherds who were considered to be an inferior people and so were expected to keep to themselves apart and not mix with the Egyptians. When the family of Abraham grew in numbers subsequent rulers in Egypt held them as slaves and treated them badly, eventually killing all the boys at birth in order to prevent some future generation taking over their country. But God had very different ideas for His chosen people and raised up Moses to be their leader. This Moses, when born, might have been killed like all the others but his mother hid him for three months and when she could no longer hide him she put him in an ark made of bulrushes at the water’s edge where Pharaoh’s daughter came to bathe each day, and when the princess saw the child she took him for her own so that he grew up in Pharaoh’s palace and was taught all the ways of the Egyptians.

But Moses grew up knowing he was an Israelite and when he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave he killed the Egyptian - but then had to flee for his life. It was many years later that an angel came to Moses with instructions from God to return to Egypt. Here he was told to go to Pharaoh “and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.” (Exodus 3). Pharaoh refused of course, so God sent plagues on Egypt until he gave in. The final plague was the death of the first born in Egypt and it was called The Passover because God had instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb on a certain day and put some of the blood on the two door posts and on the lintel above the door and stay in

their houses all night so that when the destroying angel came to each house in turn through all the land of Egypt he passed over every house where he saw the blood for they had done as they were instructed and no one was hurt; but in every other house throughout all the land the first born of every family died, and this included Pharaoh's family too. That was too much for Pharaoh who had been so stubborn up to this time and not only did he let the slaves go but he drove them out.

That was the first Passover, and now the whole tribe of Israel were driven into the wilderness where God took care of them and led them towards the Promised Land.

Several weeks into their journey God gave them a Law (known as the Law of Moses) and a Covenant. Here the people agreed to keep the Law and all the commandments and obey God in all things. We read of this in Exodus 24:3 to 8, "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words."

The Jews throughout the world have celebrated the Passover every year ever since.

But what has this to do with Christians? It is this; Jesus Christ the Son of God was an Israelite and preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God to them but they didn't believe Him so they crucified Him. But the night before He was crucified Jesus met with His twelve disciples at the 'Last Supper' and gave them a New Covenant which replaced the one given through Moses. In Matthew 26, verses 26 to 29 we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament (*new covenant*), which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

The Jews having rejected the Son of God as their Messiah brought the Old Covenant to an end and this was demonstrated to them by the sixty-foot high curtain in the Temple which hid the Holy of Holies from view of the people was rent from top to bottom the moment Jesus died. For the past two thousand years the Jews have refused to accept they have no covenant with God and in this sense they are a witness to the existence of God who has kept them alive as a nation while there have been many larger nations which have lost their identity.

This New Covenant in Jesus Christ is open to people of all nations as we read in Mark's gospel record chapter 16, verse 15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" - "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" 1 Corinthians 5:7

I said earlier it is about three thousand five hundred years since the first Passover and they have been held every year ever since; and then following after each forty-ninth Passover year there was the Jubilee year when all Israelite slaves had to be released and any land sold to fellow Israelites had to be returned to the family who sold it. "This fiftieth year is sacred - it is a time of freedom and celebration when everyone will receive back their original property, and slaves will return home to their families" - Leviticus 24:10 (free translation).

We would very much like to know when the seventieth Jubilee is to be for it must be very close now and could well be the time of Jesus' coming again, but though the Jews have been very meticulous in keeping records of dates and times of events, they have failed however regarding the Jubilee years and lost count somewhere along the way. One reason for this is that the regulations only applied while they lived in the Promised Land. For two-thousand years they have been scattered all over the world and the continuity of the Jubilee years has been lost.

Today we are nearing the time when Jesus will return with power and to reign over the whole world in righteousness. Here are just a few possibilities regarding events likely to take place in our life-time but as Jesus has said "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13).

The problems in the Middle East revolve around who the land of Palestine belongs to. The land was ruled over by the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years until the first world war; then the League of Nations gave it to Great Britain as a Protectorate, then when the United Nations replaced the League of Nations they agreed the land should be divided between the Arabs and Jews but this was never implemented and when the British withdrew their armed forces in May 1948 it was commonly expected that the Jews would be overrun by the Arabs. But the unexpected happened - and the day after the British left the Jews declared their independence - modern Israel was born. The very next day, forces from Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq invaded the new State of Israel and miracles happened and though greatly outnumbered the Jews fought off all their neighbours and enlarged their territory.

This has led to endless disputes ever since with most of the world siding with the Muslim nations who are opposed to Israel with an almost unprecedented hatred. Yet it is the Muslim nations that are causing the most trouble in the world today. And it is this distress that will lead to Jesus return to rule the world..

God promised the Land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob a long while ago. In Genesis 13:14 to 17 we read, "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Even at the height of their power at the time of David and Solomon Israel never completely fulfilled this prophecy. It is yet to happen when Jesus reigns.

Finally, let's turn to Luke 21:25 to 28 and here we read Jesus own words, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Amen. (Revelation 22:20).

With love in Jesus to all our readers, Russell.

BIBLE ESSAY NO. 5.

**Why The Cross Was Necessary
for Salvation**

What is Salvation?

It is a well-known fact that all animals, human or otherwise, must inevitably die (one exception recorded in the Scriptures is that of Enoch, who was “translated that he should not see death” - but this exception goes to prove that God can alter this rule at His will). There will be, in the future, others who will not die, but who “shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump” (1 Corinthians 15:52) at the return of Jesus.

We are told, in John 3:16, that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Also we read, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25); “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10; see also Luke 9:56, etc.).

Thus we see that salvation is a saving from or out of death. Believers from the beginning of the creation, who have died, are not reckoned as having perished, for they are all written in God’s Book of Life (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, etc.) and they will take part in a resurrection at the appointed day (compare the statement of Jesus – “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” - to prove to the Sadducees the certainty of the resurrection).

Why Does Man Die?

Paul tells us clearly (Romans 5:12), “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This one man, was of course, Adam (verse 14) who, by eating of the forbidden fruit, transgressed God’s law, and as a consequence was expelled from the Garden of Eden, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever” (Genesis 3:22).

To this day the tree of life is still withheld from us and we die. Our own individual sins do not constitute the cause of our dying (for otherwise there would be no infant deaths), nor can our own righteousness bring about everlasting life, “For there is none other name (but Jesus) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The Qualifications Of A Saviour:

(a) The Saviour must be a man. Since it is mankind which is guilty of sin, it would not be right, even according to man’s view of justice, to inflict the penalty on some other animal or creature. Scripture takes the same view, for in it we read (Hebrews 10:4) “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” But how can we know that human blood (under certain circumstances) may accomplish this? Well, it is laid down in God’s plan of salvation which began to operate in the very earliest days, and we may understand some of it by studying His word. If we turn for a moment to the first pair who sinned we can see some of the principles involved.

After their transgression, Adam and Eve immediately became conscious of a feeling of nakedness which they sought to overcome by wearing aprons of fig leaves.

As a mere bodily covering no doubt these served their purpose, but evidently they were not approved by God, who made coats of skins and clothed them, their consciousness of nakedness and of guilt thereby becoming dulled or non-existent, (we may here remember the words of David; “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” - Psalm 32:1). But in order to cover them

with skins it had been necessary to cause the death of some animal, or animals and here we see a principle of salvation coming to light.

The penalty of Adam's transgression was death in the day that he ate of the fruit. Adam did not die that day, but some animal did. Now we read, in Revelation 13:8 about "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" - an obvious reference to Jesus (see Revelation 5), and so we see that the animal slain in the Garden of Eden was but a representative of Jesus - a token payment, a promise that in due time someone should come who, by his death, would pay in full the price of Adam's transgression.

It is not surprising that this person should have to be a male when we consider the following: -

(i) The law in Eden was given to Adam when he was the sole human on the earth. We are not told whether it was later expressly given to Eve, but undoubtedly she understood the law to be binding upon her also (Genesis 3:3). At any rate, Adam was the responsible party though not actually the first to transgress.

(ii) Eve was formed from Adam's rib and can still be regarded as being "in Adam" or part of Adam or, as he himself said, "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23), and in the same way that Levi is said to have paid tithes in Abraham (Hebrews 7:9), so also Eve may be said to be in Adam.

(iii) God called their name Adam (Genesis 2), thus showing again that the man was the responsible one and that the actions of Eve were done in, or under, his name.

(b) He must be an Israelite. This may not have been necessary for the salvation of the Gentiles, but for the Jews it was vital that he should be of their race, for they were under another law or system of laws, with its own benefits for adherents thereto and its own penalties for infringement. For some offences the penalty was death. Now, we read in Deuteronomy 27:26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," and in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Therefore the children of Israel needed to be redeemed from the death penalty; even those who might not have committed sins worthy of death, and to do this their redeemer must also be under the same law.

(c) He must be sinless. Obviously a man under the sentence of death cannot be bought back by someone under the same sentence, and so it was necessary that the redeemer should be guiltless.

(d) He must have a life to give. It is obvious also that a man cannot be said to give his life for someone else if he is bound to die in any case. Therefore a redeemer must possess a life which cannot be taken from him without his consent.

(e) He must be willing. It would not be just to exact from an innocent person the penalty due to a sinner, but if the innocent one willingly offers to die in the place of the sinner then there is no injustice.

How Jesus Fulfilled All These Conditions.

(a) & (b). Jesus was the son of Mary who was of the tribe of Judah. The law recognised Joseph, the husband of Mary, as the father of Jesus, but Joseph was also of the tribe of Judah.

(c). There are many references which testify to the absolute sinlessness of Jesus.

For example: -

"For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," (Hebrews 7:26).

“For He hath made him to be sin (sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18).

“He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

(d). Adam was the first son of God (see Luke 3:38); Jesus, though not a new creation, was the only begotten Son of God, for although He was born of Mary, His life came direct from God who was His Father. For this reason He is called the second man (1 Corinthians 15:47) or last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45).

As Jesus had a life unforfeited by transgression He had the right to eat of the tree of life like the first Adam before his transgression. Jesus Himself said; “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26).

“I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17,18).

“I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

(e). His voluntary submission to His Father’s will was as complete during the sufferings on the Cross as throughout the whole of His lifetime:

“I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15).

“I lay it down of myself” (John 10:18).

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend’s” (John 15:13).

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

Why The Cross?

It was the Father’s will that Jesus should endure the sufferings of the Cross, and so we must conclude that those sufferings must have been absolutely necessary. A natural death (i.e. one due to old age or “natural causes”) would not have sufficed. Most of us die a natural death, but this is not the penalty for sin, as even innocent babies die.

The wages of sin is an inflicted death from which we are saved by belief in Jesus who, though Himself sinless, took our punishment upon Himself. Thus, by His sacrifice, we have been permitted to have life (through Adam, whose life was spared on account of that sacrifice), and those who are accounted worthy will later receive life more abundantly (see John 10:10).

Paul states that “without the shedding of blood is no remission” (of sin) (Hebrews 9:22, see also Leviticus 17:11). This was in relation to the Law of Moses which pointed forward to Christ (Colossians 2:17, etc.) and the principle still applies. Therefore the mode of death of the Saviour necessitated the shedding of His blood.

The Jewish method of execution was by stoning, but under the Roman law which was in force over the Jews at the time of Jesus, the method was by crucifixion. Now whereas it may be possible for a man to be stoned to death without the shedding of blood (by a blow to the head, for example), the crucifixion of Jesus made the shedding of blood a certainty, for His hands and feet were pierced in order to nail Him to the Cross. (Much more blood was spilled later when His side was pierced with a spear),

But since the blood shedding could have been brought about some other way there must be some other reason for the use of a Cross. Paul explains the reason to us in Galatians 3:10-14.

As has been mentioned before, the Law of Moses contained a curse “for everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10). It is written in Deuteronomy 21:23 and quoted in Galatians 3:13, that “cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.” By his suffering on that wooden Cross, Jesus took upon Himself that curse (of death) which the law held over the Jews, and by this means He redeemed the Jews from that curse “that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:14).

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Romans 11:33).

Herbert Taberner.

**By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:
it is the gift of God.
Ephesians 2:8**

BIBLE ESSAY NO. 6

The Forgiveness of Sins, The Resurrection of the Body, and The Life Everlasting

Probably these words will be quite familiar to many people, or at any rate awaken a memory of having heard them before, yes they are Scriptural and they are here quoted in the right order.

Of the three ideas, forgiveness of sins is the foundation upon which the other two depend. There can be no everlasting life without a resurrection, and no resurrection without the forgiveness of sins.

Let us consider each point separately.

Forgiveness of Sins.

Every time we repeat the Lord’s prayer we pray to God to forgive us our trespasses or sins, thus admitting that in some way we have sinned against God, and are consequently sinners in need of forgiveness.

It is not our purpose in this article to discuss how sin came to be in the world (that has been dealt with in Bible Essay No. 1 – “The Plan of Redemption”), but we will accept the fact that “all have sinned.” In this respect not one of us is better than another. We are all servants of Sin, and, to quote Psalm 49, “No man can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him,” because it is not possible for one who is held to ransom to pay the ransom-price for another who is also held to ransom. The one who pays the price must himself be free. It is not our liability to sin but our sins that are an offence to God; not our weaknesses in regard to temptation, but our yielding to temptation which incurs the wrath of God. Jesus “was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Reconciliation was not required between God and His Son. It is we, the people in the world, who are in need of reconciliation, so that we may be at one with God. How, then, can this Atonement (At-one-ment) be accomplished?

Here, then, is the position: we, as sinners, are alienated, estranged from God, who, in His great mercy, has provided the means by which we can be reconciled to Him. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Jesus was the only one free from sin who could, and did, give Himself as a ransom (1 Timothy 2:6). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "And you who were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind... yet now hath He reconciled, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight, if ye continue in the faith..." (Colossians 1:21,27). In Hebrews 10:17 we read that God says "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God means what He says. It is impossible for Him to lie. Read now Isaiah 53, where the prophet foretold that Jesus should be "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

The realization of sins forgiven and that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), brings a deep joy and an increased and overflowing love to God the Father and to Jesus our Saviour. We feel impelled to do our utmost to continue to "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In other words, to please God.

Perhaps it would be profitable to pause here and consider what is meant by the words, "to them that are in Christ Jesus." We read that "if any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is necessary to "put on" the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14). How can we do this? The Apostle Paul, writing to the Galatians, very clearly and simply says, "so many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). The Apostle Peter mentioning how, in the days of Noah, a few persons were saved by water, goes on to explain, "The like figure, even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience towards God," in other words, not only a washing away of our sins, but also a regeneration - living a new life. Did not Jesus tell Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God"? "Know ye not, that so many of us as are baptised into Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5).

Resurrection.

Very little is mentioned in the Old Testament about resurrection, for it was Jesus who brought life and immortality to light. Many people do not realize that there are three great epochs connected with the subject of Resurrection. They are summarized by the writer to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:23,24), "Every man in his own order,"

(1) Christ, the first-fruits. This event is passed, when Jesus rose from the dead.

(2) Those who are Christ's at His coming, has not yet taken place. In the very near future we expect the words of Thessalonians to be fulfilled - "The dead in Christ will rise first and those who are His at His coming will be caught away with them to meet the Lord."

The just are those who, having put on Christ, have been justified, sanctified and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus.

Those included in this class are given great confidence by the words of 1 Corinthians 15:15-58, "Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed, in a moment... for the dead shall be raised incorruptible." These words are confirmed in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, where we learn that at the coming of the Lord, "the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive shall be caught away with them... and so be for ever with the Lord." All in this class will then have been changed, will have become incorruptible. They can die no more, but will have eternal life, everlasting life. This is the promise He has promised us, even eternal life (1 John 5:11 & 5:13).

Many foolish and unscriptural notions have been brought forward at different times about the state of the dead and a future life. It is stated in several passages in the Bible that the dead are unconscious, in the grave. The first resurrection is at the commencement of the Millennium reign of Christ on earth, during which period the redeemed, who have been made equal unto angels, and are the children of God (Luke 20:36), will live and reign with Christ.

Life Everlasting.

Referring to this Kingdom, the Apostle Paul says, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9,10). We are permitted a glimpse of some of the blessings; for example, in Isaiah 35; 55:12, 13 and 65. An understanding of these portions conveys to the mind the assurance, which is corroborated by other inspired writers, of freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the abolition of sin, with all the blessings, joy and happiness which will accrue from the beneficent rule of a Righteous Ruler. "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." (Revelation 20:6).

(3) Perhaps you are now wondering about the fate of the wicked, or unjust. This is the third order; they have been reserved unto the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:9; Job 21:30). At the end of the thousand years they will be raised, but to a resurrection of judgment, and become subject to the second death. The sentence is inevitable and conclusive (Revelation 20:14).

After this, when the earth has been cleansed from all sin and wickedness, and when Jesus has delivered up the Kingdom to His Father (1 Corinthians 15:24), into this new order God shall come and dwell with men. "God will wipe away all tears, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."

Many other texts could be quoted in support of each section in this paper, but enough has been brought forward for the present occasion to show that if we confess our sins "God is faithful and Just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. If we have put on Christ in the appointed way, we can rejoice greatly in the knowledge of sins forgiven; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God (2 Peter 3:12), our bodies changed from natural to Spiritual, from corruptible to incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:53,54). When "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Now as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God (1 Corinthians 5:20). "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55: 6).

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and he that heareth says, Come."

"The Lord direct your hearts into the patient waiting for Christ."

K.H. (Name not known)

THE BREAKING OF BREAD.

The charge, which Pliny the younger, in his letter to Trajan, six years after the death of "the beloved apostle John," preferred against the disciples of Jesus, would have had little or no force against those who have left off eating the Lord's supper every first day of the week, and who eat only once a year. It was alleged that these simple people obstinately assembled on the first day before sunrise to eat together and to bind themselves to do no harm.

If they had “neglected the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is,” they might have been tempted to wander, under the pressure of persecution, into some of the Pagan temples, and to eat of the things offered to idols. Their weekly gathering kept the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world fresh in their memories, and kindled anew the love of God shed abroad in their hearts through Christ.

The observance of the ordinance before sunrise might be on account; of the duties many of those disciples had to perform on that day. Some were slaves to Romans, who regarded their worship as an abominable superstition; others were servants to Jews, whose day of worship being Saturday, had no respect for the first day of the week, and worse than none for a religious service on account of one whom they looked upon as a great political disturber and an impostor.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the death of John, informs us that the Christians - the name was new then - met together on Sunday, being the day of their Lord’s resurrection, to read publicly the writings of the apostles and prophets; that after this the president made an oration to them, exhorting them to imitate and practise the things which they had heard, and that after joining in prayer they used to celebrate the sacrament and give alms.

The custom of the first disciples brings us, according to these historical notices, down about 120 years after the death of Christ, or to A.D. 153, shewing that the same practice first observed by the Jewish Christians was also followed by the Gentile. The scripturalness of the ordinance thus celebrated is confirmed and sealed by the hand of inspired men. When Paul called at Troas there were with him several Gentile converts; Sopater, of Berea, Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, besides those others living at Troas who came with the disciples on the first day of the week to break bread.

“Concerning the collection for the saints,” for the distribution of alms to the poor, as mentioned by Justin, Paul gave the same direction to the believers at Corinth as he had given to the church at Galatia. The “liberality” was to be offered “upon the first day of the week,” when they came together for the breaking of bread. By the general consent of Christians the first day of the week came to be called “the Lord’s day,” and it is thought by some that the mention of “the Lord’s day,” in Rev. i. 10, refers to the first day of the week, notwithstanding that the things seen by John were, in some measure, to be fulfilled in the day of the Lord’s reign on earth.

Paul speaks of the breaking of bread as the Christian Passover, and exhorts the brethren everywhere, but at Corinth in particular, to “keep the feast - or holy-day - not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” This is to be done for the reason that “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” In this counsel the Apostle makes a beautiful use and interpretation of the Jewish Passover and feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, probably in sign of the perfect continuance in well doing, and that unspotted-ness from the world which Christ requires of all who profess to be His disciples.

It is a duty incumbent on all who understand and believe the gospel to persuade others to embrace it, but it would appear almost a greater duty to assemble themselves regularly to break bread, and, by earnest and thoughtful exhortation “to provoke one another to love and to good works.” In the face of apostolic usage and the subsequent punctuality of their survivors, we are quite unable to perceive on what scripture grounds the ordinance can be neglected by those who profess to walk in the footsteps of the Apostles and their approved associates.

The Jewish Passover fell on the first day of the first month of the sacred year, or the seventh month of the civil year, called Abib or Nisan. The first month of the sacred year was the one whose full moon followed next after the vernal equinox, and therefore sometimes answered to March and sometimes to April, and sometimes to parts of both. The paschal lamb was slain on the fourteenth day of the month, at even, and every morsel was either eaten that night or consumed with fire. On the sixteenth, the first-fruits of the barley harvest were presented, and the twenty-first was the end of the

Passover and of the days of unleavened bread. In the vicinity of Jericho barley was ripe; wheat partly in ear; the fig trees were in blossom; and the winter figs still lingering on the tree.

What was this feast but a shadow of better things to come? Those who break bread once a year in conformity to the Jewish Passover, do neither the one thing nor the other according to the Scriptures. To eat a loaf of bread and to drink of a cup of wine is not to keep the original Passover, and to do this once in the year is a practical subversion of apostolic precept and example, which require the ordinance to be celebrated every week.

Brother Edward Turney

**“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea” - Habakkuk 2: 14.**

Extract from the Jewish Chronicle

PASSOVER.

If the success of a mission be a test of the authenticity of the Faith which is founded on and accepts such mission, Judaism, in the gradual achievement of its sublime purpose, proves itself divine. Now that we Jews throughout the world are about to celebrate the inauguration of one great branch of our Mission, we are forcibly reminded of the truth that History - which is Fact - is stronger than Philosophy which is often Fancy; and that while Speculation in the assumed garb or disguise of Logic assails the foundation of our Creed, inexorable History helps to render its truth triumphant.

Three thousand years ago, at this spring time of the year, there dawned on the world the great System of Judaism in the startling events of the Passover. It was in the month of Abib, the opening of the buds – the month which from a like reason bears the name of April through a Latin source - that the blossoms of Freedom first opened - blossoms that were to ripen into goodly fruit. A fruit that has often been tainted by the blight of persecution and bruised by the autumn gales, but which blossoms perennially like the golden berries in the garden of the Hesperides.

In no phase of history has there been such a succession of varied, dramatic and interesting scenes as in the episode of the Exodus. Scene follows scene, each intense in action and forcible in effect. The Bible paints it with graphic and picturesque power. From the gloomy opening of the drama with the advent of the plagues in the ill-fated land, to its jubilant closing scene on the shores of the Red Sea, events succeed each other with never-failing vividness; and from each may a lesson be learnt.

One great effect of the Episode has been to impress the Majesty of Faith on the World. Speculative Philosophy may do its best - or rather its worst; its teachers may lecture with brilliant eloquence from every platform, may pile Pelion on Ossa - book upon book - in a vain endeavour to scale the skies; but they cannot weaken the force of that structure of Faith which is up-reared on the events of the Exodus and which spans the Present and the Past. The results that have directly or indirectly proceeded from the incidents of the marvellous narrative which Passover celebrates give increased intensity to History and fresh force to Faith.

Nor among these results is the least important the great Lesson of Freedom taught to mankind. For the principles of Liberty were new and unknown to the world till the episode of the Exodus. But then a people held in abject bondage resolved to be free, led by a great chieftain, and Heaven smiled on their enterprise. And from those days to these, the love of Freedom born in the Hebrew breast

beneath the Egyptian sky has never perished in the Jewish heart. It woke to life in those bye-gone days and in that far-off clime. It has lasted through all the ages - through all the wanderings in the wilderness, through the political struggles of the Commonwealth and the Monarchy, through the struggles of post-biblical days, through the horrors of the Dispersion, through the brief golden season of the Caliphate, through the persecutions of mediaeval and modern ages. The banner of Love and Liberty was set up on the sands that stretch between the Nile and the Gulf of Alba, and the Jewish Race has never abandoned it. It has passed down with an hereditary grasp from generation to generation. Other nations in the days of yore submitted readily to a foreign yoke, but the Jew resolutely resisted. He taught the first Syrio-Greek and the barbarous Roman that every people would not tamely yield to hitherto victorious arms. Our fathers were beaten, it is true, but their spirit was never broken. Other nations were subdued by foreign influences, but the Jewish race has, under Providence, maintained its independence. The Jewish character is meek and forbearing, but never abject nor servile; loyal and orderly, but never slavish. The tread of the tyrant has pressed on the neck of the Jewish race, but that race has risen resilient when released.

The Exodus was the opening scene, the Prologue, of that great Revelation which, given among the thunders of Sinai, has never failed in its influence on civilized humanity. The principles of the Decalogue have pervaded the civil, social and moral codes and practices of subsequent ages. And indeed the Exodus, which is the path that leads to Sinai, was a marvellously well adapted opening to the grandeur of the coming scene. Most majestic is the history. An enslaved people rose against a heavy yoke. In vain a mighty king sought to rivet their fetters. A mightier King intervened and showed His Will by startling manifestations of His Power. Mourning and desolation fall on the stricken land. At midnight, under the light of the springtime moon, march forth the hurrying bands of fugitives. Before them spreads a rushing restless sea. The perils thicken around them. Before them throb the billows: behind them sound the angry tread and the clanging arms of the pursuing host. Again the manifestations of Divine Power is shewn. The waves part, and the rescued people pass through – to Freedom, fame and immortality!

Year after year, in every age, in every clime, the commemorative services of the Passover have been held in all our Jewish homes. Thus not only stately synagogues, in crowded congregations, led by Canons and regulated by choirs, is the Holyday celebrated: but in the quiet home-circle, where the father and the mother are the leaders and the children are the congregation, the tale of the Exodus is told with many a symbolic and significant rite. So as the tale been told for centuries – thus is the religion of faith intensified by the religion of the family. Thus is the spirit of the Lord who redeemed us in the days of old invoked in that most solemn Temple which we call Home.

And the ceremony is trebly sanctified by the elders who sit at the board by tearful recollection of those who have gone before, and who shall never more join in the rites of the rehearsal of the Redemption: by their tearful hopes for the young ones who shall join in those rites in the days when the elders shall be no more. And never let us forget that the Passover, which is the Memorial of the first Redemption of our ancestors from the bondage of the Egyptians, is the type of the coming – though long delayed – Redemption from the bondage of a world of passion, sin and fear; the promised redemption which shall bring our people back to the Land they won by Faith and lost by Shame.

Jewish Chronicle.

**Neither the imitation of Christ's life nor the influence of His life upon ours
can give salvation, but only His willing sacrifice**

WORDS

Their Use and Doctrinal Significance

The purpose of this article is to try to encourage and instruct all lovers of Bible truths in the need for careful study in the use of words and their doctrinal significance, and at the same time expose the Physical Sin doctrine, which is none other than Original Sin. (See Footnote for No. 9 of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England).

The generally believed idea by the majority of religious people to-day is that Adam was created "very good," and that after he sinned his nature was changed to a very "bad physical sinful condition." The idea is based upon words, which in themselves do not teach such a God dishonouring doctrine.

Extremes beget extremes and create difficulties on both sides, but with sound consistent reasoning from the Word of Truth to prove all things we have the promise of the Master - we "shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17), so "come, let us reason together." (Isaiah 1:18), "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be shamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." (2 Timothy 2:15).

We know that there is natural and spiritual reasoning, and each are legitimate in their respective places. Natural things can be the base of spiritual things, but spiritual things must be compared with spiritual things. The natural man cannot understand them, unless he accepts the principle laid down.

There is another point worth emphasising before we actually start with "words." Many earnest souls are led astray by others who can use their reasoning in such a way that they cannot see that the basis of the subject is wrong because they have not got all the facts, and cannot refute it, and it is taken for granted as conclusive and final. Let us take an example of this reasoning and use a syllogism which is supposed to settle any argument. The Dictionary gives the meaning as; "a reckoning altogether, an argument or formal expression of reasoning, consisting of three propositions of which the first two are called the premises and the last the conclusion." Here are two examples; "All men have sinned." John is a man: consequently John is a sinner. This is a valid deduction. Again, "All men have sinned." Jesus was a man; yet the above conclusion cannot be applied to Jesus as it is recorded "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." (1 Peter 2:22). He is the grand exception to the rule. This is a valid deduction.

So we see the need of the truth of the Proverb: "Discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee" (Proverbs 2:11).

ADAM

Let us start with Adam. It will be understood that God has a plan and purpose with the earth and with man upon it. That is established upon just principles. That law and order is interwoven with love and mercy. That God alone knows the standard of our actions according to time and circumstance, but men cannot, no matter how good their intentions may be.

After Adam's creation from the dust, God give him a law. This in itself is evidence of his ability either to obey or disobey. Here are a few passages to prove our contention:

"For where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15).

"For sin is transgression of law." (1 John 3:4).

So sin is disobedience of God's known law. This can be observed in two primary ways, viz. (1) By doing what is forbidden by Divine Law, or (2) by refusing to do what is commanded by Divine law. This brings us to another point which must be kept in mind:-

"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and so many as have sinned under law, shall be judged by the law" (Romans 2:12).

Few realise the importance of such a basis of reasoning, though some may admit it, but yet fail to take it to its logical conclusion. The result is, however, that they accept or invent some theory. For example many believe that after Adam sinned his nature was changed, and that we have this evil nature as a result of Adam's sin. There is no evidence of this, and the proof is to the contrary. They do not take into account the fact that Adam transgressed Divine law by following his own natural desires before this change took place. Scripture plainly states that "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" (Deuteronomy 24:16).

Dr. Thomas wrote, "The grace of God was upon Adam, and imparted to him such wisdom and knowledge; but left him free to obey the impulses of his own flesh if he preferred it rather than Divine law." ("Phanerosis," page 43).

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Right from the moral fall of Adam there has been a way which seemeth right unto man and God's righteousness has been overlooked. "Seek ye first His righteousness, and Kingdom and all other things (including doctrines) will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). "And the Truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32). The fig-leaf device and mere works of the law cannot make God's righteousness of none effect. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours, and are based upon love, wisdom and justice. His own Arm (His Son, Jesus) brought salvation. God provided the ways and means. It was by God's unpurchased and unmerited Grace that He provided the coats of skins. Here we see the first lesson and a very important one. It is the basis of man's redemption – "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22). This typical sacrifice of the Lamb of God is the only way that anyone can accept the Grace of God's righteousness, by being justified by the blood of Christ, apart from any works.

Much more could be written here, but we would like to mention that the legal condemnation that has passed upon all men is the one sin on a federal principle (Romans 5). The sin of Adam is the sin of the world which Jesus came to take away or render powerless.

CHANGED MASTERS

The general belief is that there are two opposing forces - God and the Devil, One the Ruler of Heaven, and the other of Hell. This subject cannot be dealt with in this article. God is the sole rewarder of good and evil. (Read Leviticus 26, and Exodus 23). Sin is personified as a Master, as wisdom is spoken of as a woman. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Adam, by committing sin became the servant of sin. He sold his birthright (Romans 6:16, John 8:34, Romans 7:14). We are either servants of righteousness or servants of sin, personified as a master or king reigning over us.

Adam, while obedient, belonged to God; by disobedience he forsook God and became associated with the god of this world. When he sold himself to sin, God redeemed or bought him back with the price of His Son's blood, first in type. Here we see the two positions of Adam while he was of the very same nature. The life of the animal was taken instead the life of Adam. This was in the Garden of Eden and type pointed to a much higher order. This was only possible in Christ and His loving sacrifice.

THE SECOND MAN OR LAST ADAM

"Jesus Christ is so styled in 1 Corinthians 15. He was Son of God in creation. He was clearly in an intellectual and moral condition paralleled with Adam before he transgressed... the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee... Therefore, also that Holy thing that shall be born of there shall be called the Son of God. Creative power was to be preternaturally asserted as in the formation of the first Adam, and of Isaac, and therefore the production was the Son of Power, that is, of God." (Phanerosis, pages, 38 and 43,)

The important fact to remember is that although Jesus was like unto Adam in every respect before he sinned, flesh, bone and blood, He did not fall or change Masters. He retained His Sonship and ever belonged to God. If He had He would have need a Redeemer just as Adam. No man can redeem his brother if he is in the self-same condemnation. God slew the animal which had no moral responsibility: Jesus willingly gave His life to restore His brother Adam. Here we can see the higher order as Shadow is to the Substance. Here was the only just way in which the one Sin, which forfeited the natural life of Adam, could be effectively repealed. A life for a life. One sin, One obedient Act in the shedding of His Precious Blood. Here we see two fundamental principles; 1) Without the shedding of blood there is no remission, 2) The wages of sin is death (by execution).

God did not condemn Adam because of his nature but because of his sin. Adam could not help his nature, but he could help his sin. God did not bless Jesus because He was a machine and could not do anything else; but because He had a free will and showed it in no unmistakable manner, that God was a reality and that He chose God's way and not His own natural desires.

We have seen the simple trivial test of Adam and the great test of Jesus. Now compare popular belief – Adam with the supposed superior nature failed the test; Jesus with the supposed inferior nature, accomplished and passed a much greater test. The only answer that popular belief can give is to get into a greater muddle by saying God gave Jesus extra power, the Spirit without measure. Without labouring the point God is to blame in Adam's case, and there is no honour to Jesus if this is the answer and no responsibility to Adam, - which is absurd. Let us look at Abraham. When he was asked to offer his only begotten son in whom the promises of God actually depended, Abraham could have, from natural reasoning as well as from offering human sacrifice, refused to obey and had a reasonable excuse, as it was wrong only upon the face of it. He did not so reason, but was strong in faith as it is recorded of him "Accounting that (if he had slain his son) God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from when he received him in a figure" (Hebrews 11:17).

Here is a direct challenge to the sinful flesh assumption. Just stop and think; Abraham with supposed changed flesh and a far more severe trial; accomplished what Adam, with the unchanged flesh and simple test, failed to do. Far worse than this it makes God a monster for punishing Adam and all others for what they could not help doing because of their sinful desires, which cannot obey God's commandments.

THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM

The first and last Adam are two men with two different characters. Now we want to consider two characteristics in one man. This may be a bit confusing at first but it can be solved if we so desire. We quote Dr. Thomas to show the use of the word "character" and how it can be misapplied and misunderstood:-

"And Paul, alluding to the transforming efficacy of God's revelation of Himself comprehended and believed, told obedient believers of the Word that they had put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man again by exact knowledge after the image of Him creating him" (Colossians 3:9,10). Here are two characters, or moral natures, in relation to one and the same animal man." (Phanerosis, page 8).

Here we see "Character" and "Mortal Nature" used interchangeably. It should be seen that, strictly speaking, Nature is not character. Character can and does manifest itself in different ways while the literal flesh is the same.

P.Monro: "The New Nature or spirit which the believer receives from Christ the Head of the New humanity. (The character of his services changes... But there is no sin in the New Nature).

Read Weymouth: ""For if men are controlled by their Earthly Natures they give their Minds to Earthly things; if they are controlled by their Spiritual Natures, they give their Minds to Spiritual things." (Romans 8:5. See Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 3:14; also). The use of the word "Nature" can be understood upon the above principle, but it has caused and continues to cause, confusion, hence the

need for discrimination. Much more could be written, but we commend the study of Romans 2:14 and footnote in the Emphatic Diaglott.

The following shows the meaning and the process of the formation of character in conformity with Bible teaching:

“The word Character is True to its derivation. It is a Greek word, which the Greeks derived from the word which we pronounce Harass, which they pronounce Charass, but which had the same meaning then as now. They spoke then of a coin in the mint, which was hammered and tortured by the sharp edges of the die, being stamped upon, indeed as a poor Charassed thing as bearing a Character. Its Character came to it because it was beaten, the more distinct Character it had. I believe all our words of similar import have a similar derivation. Thus, when we say that a man is of this “type” of manhood, or that “type” of manhood, the original meaning is that he has been beaten into that shape by the blows of experience that have passed over him. Burns says: “The rank is but the guinea’s stamp.” This means, at bottom, that a ‘pound’ is metal that has been pounded. And there are metals which improve in quality all the time you stamp and hammer them. Just the same is true of a man, if he have the true heart, the true life and makes himself master of the circumstance instead of the slave. And the hammering is no unimportant part of the process.” E.V.Hale.

CHARACTER.

“The first step towards understanding what goodness of Character is, is to consider the way in which it is actually produced. We are not born with this goodness of temper and feeling ready-made, nor yet do we obtain it by theoretical instruction; it is a result of training and discipline of the feelings and impulses. The possibility of such a training is due to the fact that feelings and impulses are rational capacities, and a rational capacity can be developed into either of two contrasted activities according to the training it receives. You cannot train stones to fall upwards, but you can train a hot temper to display itself either in the form of wrong-doing or in that of violent defiance of all authority. Our natural emotions and impulses are in themselves neither good nor bad. They are the raw material out of which training makes good or bad character according to the direction it gives them. The effect of training is to indeterminate tendency into a fixed habit. We may say then that moral goodness is a fixed state of the soul produced by habituation; by being trained in habits of endurance, self-mastery, and fair-dealing, we acquire the habit of Character to which it is pleasing to act bravely, continently, and fairly, and disagreeable to act unfairly, profligately, or like a coward. When habituation has brought about this result, the moral excellences in question have become part of our innermost self and we are in full possession of acts that we acquire the right kind of character” - “On the Goodness of Character” - Aristotle.

So faith cometh by hearing the Word of God. The Word of God is the incorruptible Seed. The Word is Spirit and Life and it will change our character if we allow it to dwell in us richly. Our actions will manifest the thinking of the mind. We cannot love unless we serve and we cannot serve God and Mammon.

FLESH

Here is a word generally restricted to the literal physical flesh. Many are the places in Scripture which could not be understood if this literal application only was meant. For example:-

“For when we were in the flesh” (Romans 7:5)

“For ye are not in the flesh” (Romans 8:9)

This can only be understood in a doctrinal sense, and not in the literal, as in the use of the word Nature, for both believers and non-believers are literal flesh and blood.

The context must ever be the ruling factor. The apostle Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20).

We will now contrast it with Paul in another place. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). Weymouth renders the words in brackets as “that is my lower self.”

Paul does not contradict himself. Listen again: “So they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). Here we ask you to look at the Emphatic Diaglott’s “Sensual state” and Weymouth “Whose hearts are absorbed in earthly things.” Again, “In the animal man there dwelleth no good thing” (Dr. Thomas). That much good did dwell in Paul and others by letting the Word of God dwell in then richly there can be no doubt. Ask questions on this if you are interested.

DEATH

Are we to understand this word only as announced by the grave side? We have written much upon this and Adam’s relation to it. Ask for article, “How Many Deaths Are There?”

There are five deaths mentioned in Scriptures:

1. Legal (or Judicial). I.e. inflicted death for serious offence.
2. Those “dead in trespasses and sins i.e. all “in Adam” - those “Sold under sin”
3. “The common death of all men” “It is appointed unto men once to die.”
4. Baptism or symbolic death. Baptism into the death of Christ
5. The second death at the end of the thousand years. This can also be the same as 1 above

LIFE

Life is the exact opposite to Death. There is the natural and the Spiritual Life, Life may be the same in the abstract, but when we know that Jesus said to natural living persons “He came that we might have life (Zoe) not Psuke) and have it more abundantly,” it is sufficient to learn that we cannot restrict the word “life” to only mean just natural existence.

The spirit word makes the natural life worth living; and this is not the only sense, as this Spirit Life will ultimately be manifested in an incorruptible physical divine nature, just as our natural life is manifested in a corruptible body or physical nature.

MEMBERS

This may not be so hard to understand. We can be members of several organisations. We have literal members of our body - hands and feet, etc. These literal members are the basis of the Spiritual. The Church of God is the body of Christ of whom He is the Head as Adam is of the physical race. They are both the doctrinal Heads, which is not quite so easily grasped. Paul in Romans 6 makes it quite plain that we can yield our members as servants of sin or servants of righteousness. The saying of Jesus, “If your right eye (ask yourself the difference between the right and left) offend thee pluck it out; if your right hand offend thee, cut it off.” Are we to understand this literally? Would it stop us from sinning if we did? No. There is a far deeper meaning than this. Christ compared the Law of Moses with the Spirit’s teaching. “Thou shall not commit adultery. But I say, whosoever looketh...” The principle is nipped in the bud. If a person will not hate his brother we are sure he will not kill him. Think good and you will do good. “So let us have holy hands unstained with anger or strife.” (1 Timothy 2:8) and a pure heart, guided by a pure conscience. “To the pure everything is pure,” but to the mentally polluted and unbelieving nothing is pure. (1 Timothy 2:1 to 10).

SLEEP

The natural is the case again of other meanings of the word “sleep.” The natural sleep is very essential after much labour which, the writer of Proverbs says “is sweet.” Sleep is used in Scripture as the state of the literal dead saints. Read John 11. You will also see this very forcibly brought out by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 where he speaks of the dead in Christ as asleep, to be awakened at the coming of their Master.

This is contrasted with Jeremiah who speaks of those who are not responsible as a “perpetual sleep, and shall not wake” (Jeremiah 51:39). The responsible wicked will awake to receive their due

reward or punishment, and will finally die the second death to wake no more. (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:6-14).

Then we have what is understood as spiritually asleep while naturally alive or awake. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins and such references as Ephesians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 11:30, should be sufficient to show the different meanings of this word.

Now we think we have said enough to make clear the title of this article and how careful we should be in considering many words and their doctrinal significance. There are many more words that could be dealt with, such as everlasting, "World" and "Image." There are also words that have their meaning changed to the very opposite, such as "Scan," "Gossip," and "Let."

The main thought for us is to remember we have been given a grand invitation by Prophets, Apostles, and Christ, to drink of the water of Life. We do know that the unrighteous men shall not inherit God's Kingdom" (Galatians 5:21). No one who continues in union with Him lives in sin. The man who acts righteously is righteous (1 John 3:6-7). For ours if not a mere conflict with the flesh and blood but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern the dark world. (Ephesians 6:12).

But if you belong to Christ then you are indeed true descendants of Abraham and heirs in fulfilment of the Promise (Galatians 3:29), and have washed your robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

No name attached.

Romans 8:14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God

CHRIST AND MELCHISEDEC.

"For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, a priest of the Most High God." That which is especially worthy of notice here is, that Melchisedec is the first instance we have of a person specially set apart for the office of the priesthood. Sacrifices, as we know, are part of an aboriginal institution, commencing with the expulsion from Paradise, and surviving the desolation of the deluge. But the persons who offered up the victims in the earlier ages of the world were not priests, that is, were never consecrated to such an employment as a distinctive office, but only performed this, as they did other religious services, in their proper capacity, as heads of families; and, of course, by the act of sacrifice expressing their faith in the great Atonement. Here, however, is the case of one who, though a king, ruling among his neighbours as a king, appears before us as solemnly designated to the office of the priesthood; is regarded by Abraham as entitled to all the prerogatives pertaining to the holy office; is allowed to claim a fixed proportion of the spoils taken from the enemy, not because he is King of Salem, but because he is the priest of the Most High God. All this adds to the eminence of Melchisedec's typical priesthood. He is not one of a line of priests succeeding to the office in a certain family order. He is not one invested with authority by the hands of others, acting under the prescribed rules of any ecclesiastical authority. But he is one who, long before the Levitical priesthood had any beginning, stands alone in a strange country, challenging homage from the greatest saint of antiquity, as an ordained priest of God.

In all this we see at once certain resembling features to the priesthood of Christ. He is not descended from any family line of priests. He receives no imposition of hands from men designating Him to the sacred office. Yet there rest upon Him the tokens of a holy consecration. The opened heavens testify to the indwelling in Him of the power of the Lord's anointed. The Spirit of the Lord without measure is given unto Him, and when He had made His soul an offering for sin, and when He had borne the sin of many, and when He poured out His soul unto death, believing souls did homage at

the foot of His cross, and, exercising faith in the great oblation, said, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." And then observe one office of the typical high priest which is here mentioned by the apostle, "Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. "Surely, this is a work which specially belongs to the true Melchisedec. Benediction seems never to have been off the lips of Christ. With promises of blessing He opened His Sermon on the Mount; with hands of blessing He called little children to His embrace; with uplifted voice of blessing He was borne away on the ascension cloud; and when He shall come again to welcome, and claim, and receive His own, His language to them will be, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Yes, blessing was the first act of the Redeemer, after He had gone back to heaven. Unto you, first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, and never will He lay down that glorious prerogative till we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. Especially will Christ bless us thus after our return from the slaughter of the kings; after victories obtained through His grace over all the potentates and powers of evil. Then, like the Melchisedec of old, will He come forth to meet us as we are laden with spoils, saying to us, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But observe another act of Melchisedec noticed by the apostle, namely, his receiving a portion of the spoils: "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all." No question will be raised here as to the offering spoken of being a dedicated religious offering to God. Melchisedec was too rich to need any gift for his own use, and it were an affront to Eastern hospitality to suppose that it was offered as a compensation for his kindness to Abraham and his company. The gift was plainly what the apostle's argument seems to make it - a recognition by Abraham of God's hand in his recent successes - a recognition regulated in amount by some traditional standard of the proportion of our goods, which God had a right to, and governed as to the mode of offering by the consideration that it should be directly set apart to the Divine service. Abraham evidently recognised the principle that every man was bound to give of his substance towards the maintenance of a national worship. He had a church in his own house. He commanded his children and his household after him that they should keep the way of the Lord. But leaving to individual or sectional effort to accomplish what it may.

* * *

To a priest by whose personal ministrations Abraham could not stately profit, he yet gave a tenth part of all. Nor is this reference less noteworthy in its bearing on the general subject of almsgiving, and the proportion of our substance which belongs to God, and which is not at our own disposal at all. Under the gospel we have no binding rule upon the subject. Faith worships by love, and love does not want rules. But there is something in this dedication of a tenth part of their property to religious objects by good men of old time which, to say the least of it, is very striking. You will hear people say sometimes, "This dedicated tenth was part of an abrogated Levitical code; was, in fact, a mere form of Jewish poor law." Here we have proof that it was no such thing. Four-hundred years before the law was given Abraham sets apart his tenth for Christ; whilst a hundred and fifty years later, but long before the giving of the law, we have Jacob vowing a vow to the Lord, "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." How carefully the same holy practice - especially after any great successes - was kept up by David and Solomon, and what a lasting blemish is made to rest on the fame of the good Hezekiah for that he returned not unto the Lord according to the mercy which he had received, I need not stay to recite! The practical lesson is one which we can all draw for ourselves. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. If we have been prospered in the work of our hands; if we are returning after a victory over many foes, and hindrances, and difficulties; and if, above all, Christ, our great High Priest, is meeting us with tokens of His benediction, and favour, and grace, let us give Him a part - and a liberal part, too - of these our captured spoils. Let one strength, one grace, one outstretched arm, be acknowledged in our deliverances, testifying that on earth we would lay our successes, even as in heaven we shall lay our crowns, at the feet of Him who is "ordained a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

But the parallel between Christ and Melchisedec is pursued further in relation to the mysterious circumstances of their descent. This Melchisedec is declared to "be without father, without mother,

without descent; having neither beginning of life nor end of days!" Now, as Melchisedec was a veritable human person, these words cannot of course be understood in their strictly literal sense. Nor does the usage of Jewish phraseology require that they should be so taken. The expression "without father, without mother," implies no more than that there has been no record of the person's individual genealogy preserved. The point is insisted on in relation to Melchisedec's claims to exercise the functions of the priesthood. According to the Levitical rules, such a failure in the family history would have been fatal to him. It was fatal to some who had got into the priest's office in the time of Ezra, concerning whom we read, "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore, were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." Having no descent preserved, they were reckoned as "without father, without mother." In a similar way we are to explain the language that Melchisedec had "neither beginning of life nor end of days," that is, that no account has been handed down to us of the time when his office began, or when it ended. Of Moses, of Joshua, of David, and other eminent types, we have such accounts, but none of Melchisedec. He starts up on the page of the sacred record as one exercising the mysterious functions of a royal priesthood, shrouding beneath a veil of impenetrable obscurity all the antecedents of his history, as well as all that relates to the end of his days. The bearing of all this on the apostle's argument with the Jews we may see at once. He wished to show that Christ's was absolute, independent, self-originated and eternal priesthood. He owed it to no law of human successions at all. So far otherwise, His human genealogy would have been an insuperable bar to His priestly claims sprung, as He was, from the tribe of Judah, a tribe which, by law, was excluded from the office. His claim therefore, like that of this mysterious priest in Abraham's time, must have been of some higher and unknown origin. The consecrating unction must have come upon Him direct from heaven. In Him the successions of Aaron's line were set aside. He was made of God, a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec. And yet let us not fail to notice, in passing, the subtle beauty of adaptation which lies enfolded in these inspired words. See how the very language which we can apply to the typical Melchisedec only with the limitations of a Jewish gloss, may be applied to the true Melchisedec without any limitation or any gloss at all. For, in relation to the great mystery of His incarnation, is He not "without father." In regard to His proper and essential Godhead, is He not "without mother."? Did not Isaiah teach that He was without descent, when he said, "Who shall declare His generation?" And when Micah says, "Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting," does he not testify that He has "neither beginning of days nor end of life"? Thus, in relation to Christ's priesthood, we may take the sublime description of our text in all its length, and breadth, and depth, and height. That priesthood has no beginning of days, and till the elect of God shall be gathered in, it shall have no end of life. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the ancient of days. He is the mighty Father of eternity. "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

And this brings us to the last point of the comparison here instituted - namely, that the priesthood of Melchisedec was an intransmissible priesthood; that he had no successor in his office; that a sort of typical perpetuity is attributed to his ministrations because there was no mention in Scripture of the time when they ceased. "Made like unto the Son of God, he abideth a priest continually." And in all this, argues the apostle, He is a fit representative of the true Melchisedec who does abide for ever; who has an unchangeable priesthood; who, in all the might and prevalency and sovereignty of an unshared mediation, ever liveth to make Intercession for us. He is a priest for ever, and a king for ever, and an intercessor for ever; with none second to Him, and none like; with none to co-operate, and none to come after; with no interruption, and no pause. One is our High Priest, and His name one. There is the same blood to cleanse there always was; the same voice to plead there always was; the same emblem of sacrifice is ever in the midst of the throne; and the same censer is still in the hands of the Holy One to receive the prayer of saints. "He abideth a priest continually." Such are a few points of parallelism between Christ and Melchisedec on which the apostle claims our confidence, and rests the title of Christ to our eternal gratitude. Gathering up the argument in a few words, we may observe: In that Christ hath provided the means whereby God may be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, He is the King of Righteousness; in that He is our peace, and hath made our peace, and dissipated all trace of displeasure from the Eternal Father's countenance, He is the King of Peace; in that He hath prepared us an altar, provided a lamb for our sacrifice, ordained a priest to slay - altar, sacrifice, and priest all being found in Himself - He is "Priest of the Most High God;" in that He can

challenge all the finite intelligences, whether of earth or heaven, to declare the fathomless mystery of His generation, He is said to be “without father, without mother, without descent;” in that He is now gone back into heaven, in that He now lives a priest on the throne, in that all the prerogatives and powers of an endless life are being now employed on behalf of all who will put their cause into His hands, He is said “to abide a priest continually.” And now, what more shall we say? What can we say more to add to the security and comfort of those who worship at the true tabernacle? Our Melchisedec is before the throne. He is exalted there to be a Prince and a Saviour; to give repentance, to scatter pardons, to send down gifts, to encourage faith, to strengthen the tempted in their conflicts, and to uphold the despairing in their fears. The proper scope and tendency of all our recent commemorations has been to show that the whole mediatorial life of our Lord, whether on earth or in heaven, was meant to assure our hearts before God. The cross and the sceptre, the grave and the throne, the fainting and the Almightyness, all that of humanity was kind and pitiful, all that of Godhead was infinite and supreme, must equally and alike conspire to stay our souls on Christ and His work. That work is perfect. None can succeed to, and nothing can supplement, the ministrations of our great Melchisedec. For, as our salvation has been purchased for us by Him, who is both King of Righteousness and King of Peace, so the application of that salvation to us is entrusted to that priest of the Most High God, whoever liveth to make intercession for us, and who, to defend, to sanctify, to save, to bless, “abideth a priest continually.” Amen.

“Quiver.”

A Friend Is a Gift from God

Among the great and glorious gifts our heavenly Father sends
Is the gift of understanding that we find in loving friends . . .
For in this world of trouble that is filled with anxious care,
Everybody needs a friend in whom they’re free to share
The little secret heartaches that lay heavy on the mind—
Not just a mere acquaintance, but someone who’s just our kind . . .

For somehow in the generous heart of loving, faithful friends,
The good God in His charity and wisdom always sends
A sense of understanding and the power of perception
And mixes these fine qualities with kindness and affection . . .

So when we need some sympathy or a friendly hand to touch
Or one who listens and speaks words that mean so much,
We seek a true and trusted friend in the knowledge that we’ll find
A heart that’s sympathetic and an understanding mind . . .
And often just without a word there seems to be a union
Of thoughts and kindred feelings, for God gives true friends communion.

anon

**“Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous;
and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”
Psalm 97:12.**