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Editorial

Greetings in Jesus' Name to all,

God is love and He created the earth and all therein especially for the benefit of mankind. The beauty of nature is outstanding and thrills our hearts to see its marvels. The diversity of the animal kingdom is incredible whether we consider the sea creatures or birds or beasts, or the myriad forms of insects and microscopic life, we are left speechless in wonder; then scientists have discovered many forms of energy, some difficult to comprehend, let alone explain; and Life itself no scientist can understand or say what life is. The Bible tells us it is in the blood; scientists can only agree. But what of life where there is no blood?

When we look into the heavens on a starry night the spectacle of the stars astounds our minds with its seeming chaos, yet strictly ordered. When we see and consider all these things who can but marvel and wonder at the greatness of our God!

Eternity has no beginning or ending. Space has no beginning or ending. But what of all the substance? Is there any limit to its diversity or extent? Awe and bewilderment takes hold of us and we cannot answer.

Yet God is love, and in bringing us into the world He asks that we should praise Him and give Him thanks for all we have - for we can have nothing but what He has provided. He has also given us the Bible and we can prove the truth of it beyond all doubt if we will.

King David, known as "The man after God's own heart" (see Acts 13:22), wrote of such wonders when The Ark which contained the Covenant of the LORD was brought to Jerusalem ready for when the Temple was to be opened. We quote his words from 1 Chronicles 16:8 to 18 -

"O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually. Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, O offspring of his servant Israel, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."

Today we see these things coming to fruition. The Land which God promised to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel) and to their descendants – and a far bigger

land than they ever possessed in the days when David was King. Yes, their descendants are back home in a portion of their land but they are not at peace, and will not be at peace until Jesus Christ comes again – this time, to be their King

The last King of Israel was Zedekiah; he was taken captive by the King of Babylon about 586 BCE and the prophet Ezekiel tells us (Ezekiel 21:25), “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown”: ---- Verse 27, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

So the Israelites have been without a King for about 2600 years!

Today they are expecting their Messiah to come at any time and are even now making preparations to build the next Temple.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly Amen.

Love to all our readers, Russell.

“This freedom”.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

I think you will agree that “freedom,” as it is understood by the world at large, is impossible. We hear of the freedom of the individual, of the right of the individual to freedom, and the much spoken of “Four Freedoms;” but has there ever been any real freedom from oppression of some kind in the history of the world?

Looking at the world of today we find this freedom further away than ever. Wherever we look in the world today we find people bound and fettered by either political, economic, financial, or social laws, all brought about to keep man in subjection to that great monster –”Mammon;” the god of Greed and Power and Wealth. How then, can we obtain “freedom”?

There is, of course, only one way, and that is God’s way; for there is no freedom apart from Him, and the only way to find it is by reading His Word. “Thy Word is Truth,” said the Lord Jesus, when praying for the Apostles (John 17:17), and so, let us turn to the Word of God.

In John 8:31 we read these words spoken by the Lord Jesus: “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” Then we go on to verse 36: “If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

There then, is real freedom, freedom from all fear, from all the powers of evil in this world, and above all freedom from Death.

In the Word of God we read of the Great Love of God through His Son Jesus Christ, and we read of His great and precious promises to those who love Him, and strive to obey Him. To those who read and believe comes that “perfect freedom,” freedom from all the powers of evil, and inheritors of all the promises for good, which God has promised through His Beloved Son.

Let us, then, gird up our loins, be strong in the faith, fight the good fight, and by the great mercy of God we shall inherit all things.

With Love and best wishes to all Brothers and Sisters,

Your Brother in Christ, A. Hodges.

GETHSEMANE

In golden youth when seems the earth
A Summerland of singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,
We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled under evening skies
A garden we all must see –
The garden of Gethsemane.

With joyous steps we go our ways,
Love lends a halo to our days;
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
We laugh, and say how strong we are.
We hurry on; and hurrying, go
Close to the borderland of woe,
That waits for you, and waits for me –
Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams;
Behind the misty caps of years,
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair,
God pity those who cannot say
“Not mine but thine,” who only pray,
“Let this cup pass,” and cannot see
The *purpose* of Gethsemane.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO

The Giving of the Law

For 2500 years from Adam to Moses we know of no written law of God to reveal to man the perfect righteousness and holiness of God and then the law was given to Moses, after the first born of Israel had been redeemed by the blood of the Passover Lamb. (Exodus 13:15 & 16).

There was a threefold giving of this law. The first time it was spoken orally to Moses on the Mount and communicated to the children of Israel, who accepted it and promised to keep it, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do.’ (Exodus 19:8). How little the children of Israel realised it was a very hard thing to keep God's law perfectly, and failure meant judgement and death. Israel, in their blindness, having confidently proclaimed their desire and ability to keep God's law, the Lord now calls Moses back up the mountain to give him the written copy of that law inscribed on tables of stone. This was the second giving

of the law “and the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone and a law and commandments which I have written: that thou mayest teach them. And Moses went up into the mount and a cloud covered the mount... and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.” (Exodus 24:12 & 16). “And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” (Exodus 31:18).

Forty Days and Forty Nights

Why was the Lord communing with Moses for forty days and forty nights on the mount when He could have given Moses the two tables of the law and immediately sent him back to deliver them to the children of Israel?

There seems to be two reasons for the span of forty days; the one being to test Israel and show them that they could not, by their own efforts, keep God's law even for forty days. They had confidently boasted their ability “All that the Lord hath commanded we will do” and had to be convinced of their utter failure to please God by their own efforts. How they failed. “When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” (Exodus 32:1). The rest of the story of the Golden Calf is well known. This people who had heard the word “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” are now dancing, carousing and offering sacrifices to just such a lifeless idol!

The other reason for the delay of forty days and nights before Moses returned to the people was to make a provision for escaping the judgement that the breaking of the law would bring. According to the law which Moses delivered, the death sentence was pronounced upon the sinner, and so, at the same time God gave the law which cursed the transgressor He also made provision for the redemption from that curse of death.

The Tabernacle

When Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the tables of the law, he also received the plan of redemption in the symbol of the pattern of the Tabernacle, God's answer to the broken law, for during the forty days God was giving him His provision for salvation for those who were even then transgressing those very commandments. Had Moses come down from the mountain with only the tables of the law, it would have been the end of the nation of Israel, but together with the tables of the law came also the message of salvation, the redemption by blood. The writer to the Hebrews tells us Moses received the pattern of the Tabernacle at the same time he was given the tables of stone. ‘Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount.’ (Hebrews 8:5).

The Tabernacle was called the Tent of Meeting, for here, on the basis of the shed blood the sinner could come to God. So when Moses came down from the mount after forty days and nights he brought the two things: 1) The law which condemned sinners, and 2) The pattern of the Tabernacle pointing to Jesus through whom we have redemption and forgiveness.

The law condemned the sinner and Moses on coming down from the mount and seeing the people carousing, in his righteous anger, cast the tables of stone upon the ground and broke them to pieces, showing what Israel had already done by their worship of the Golden Calf. Before Moses could present them with the tables of the law, they had already broken them. But God anticipated Israel's failure, and so, in His mercy, He provided again a temporary covering, pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to take away the sin of the world, so that the transgressor might be spared and not perish.

The provision in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ was symbolised and taught by the pattern and the instructions for the Tabernacle which was God's answer to the judgement of the law. Every part of this Tabernacle pointed to God's substitutionary atoning Lamb and was climaxed in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

The Third Giving of the Law

The tables of stone which God had made were broken at the foot of the mount and must needs be replaced and this is the third giving of the law. “And the Lord said to Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest, and be ready in the morning, and, come up in the morning unto mount Sinai... and he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose early in the morning and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and he took in his hand the two tables of stone.” (Exodus 34:1-4).

Now this copy of the law was to be hidden in the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle, The Ark of the Covenant was the central object, the very heart of the Tabernacle teaching. It was a wooden box overlaid with gold and covered by a lid of solid gold with two cherubim overshadowing it. In this box, or Ark was placed these second tables of the law - this law which demanded and cried out for justice. So God placed over this law a lid called the ‘Mercy-seat’. Within the Ark, the law pronounced the sentence of death upon the sinner, but God provided a covering. The Mercy-seat, or cover of the Ark was a type of the Lord Jesus, He is called our Mercy-seat in Romans 5:25. Here we read concerning Jesus ‘whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,’ The word translated ‘propitiation’ is ‘*hilasterion*’ in the original and means literally ‘Mercy-seat.’ Upon this Mercy-seat covering the law which called for the death of the sinful nation, the High Priest, once a year, on the day of Atonement, took blood from the altar in the Court of the Tabernacle and sprinkled it upon the Mercy-seat over the (broken) law, and then when God descended in the cloud of shekinah glory into the Holy of Holies He did not look upon the broken law but the blood instead. God had said before, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you...” (Exodus 12:13).

All this was fulfilled by Jesus. He proved the same two things that Moses proved by his sojourn on the mount for forty days and nights: 1). The awful sinfulness of the human heart, in contrast to God’s perfect law of righteousness, and 2). To demonstrate God’s love and mercy in providing salvation, which the law could not. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh” God did by sending His Son to redeem us and then to provide us with continual forgiveness throughout our present life.

The first thing the coming of Jesus proved was that the law could be kept and that sin was our fault, for Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. The crucifixion of Jesus was the crime of all time, by condemning to death the only One whom the law could not condemn. But Jesus coming not only showed the weakness of the human race and the failure of the law to make men better, but by dying on the cross and shedding His blood He opened the way whereby we sinners could be declared righteous; for His blood now stands between the faithful and God who said ‘when I see the blood, I will pass over you.’

What the law could not do Jesus did, for during His lifetime in the flesh He condemned sin and at the same time provided forgiveness for the sinner who will go to Him in faith. By the shedding of His blood, by the substitutionary atoning death and resurrection, the Throne of God, which by the law was a throne of judgment and death, became a throne of grace, mercy and life.

From Adam to Christ

How were people saved before Jesus died and rose to justify the faithful believer? How was Abraham saved? The Bible tells us that the law was not given to Israel until 450 years after Abraham was saved, (Galatians 3:17). Certainly Abraham was not saved by keeping the law, nor was he kept saved by it. However, the Bible takes great pains in telling us how Abraham was saved. In the first three chapters of Romans Paul had gone to great lengths to prove that no one was ever saved by works, but by grace. He comes to the final conclusion in chapter three verse 28 “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

This was a difficult truth for his hearers to accept, for they made great pretence at keeping the law and so Paul refers them to Abraham, who was revered and honoured by all. He asks “How then was Abraham saved? By the law, or by grace?” Listen to Paul “What shall we say then that Abraham our

father, as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? (always the final word) Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh (the works of the law) is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:1-5).

What did Abraham believe? He believed what God said. He believed the good news of the virgin birth, the redeeming blood and the resurrection of Jesus! “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: the man that doeth them (the works of the law) shall live in them.” (Galatians 5:8-12).

Paul contrasts faith and the law, and proves that Abraham was saved by faith, by believing the gospel. So what was the gospel which Abraham believed? Let us define what we mean by Gospel, The word in the Greek is ‘evangelium’ or ‘good news’. Usually the gospel is defined as the good news of the death and resurrection based on Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:5 “That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” But there is more to the good news than this, for the good news also includes the virgin birth.

The Virgin Birth and Isaac

The virgin birth was declared to be the gospel by the angel on the hills of Judea, for the angel announced “Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy... for unto you is born this day... a Saviour.” (Luke 2:10,11). The word here translated ‘good tidings’ is the Greek word ‘evangelium’, the gospel, for the miraculous begetting of Jesus is a very important part of the Gospel message.

God revealed to Abraham the gospel of the miraculous conception, the substitutionary death and the glorious resurrection of the coming Redeemer. Abraham believed in the super-natural conception of a promised son, for God had promised him a seed, in the birth of a son. God had said concerning Sarah, “I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her.., and she shall be a mother of nations.” (Genesis 17:16). But the years dragged on and this promise remained unfulfilled until Sarah had long passed the age at which, in the course of nature, she could conceive. Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 when we read “Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.” (Genesis 18:11). Sarah had well passed the age of child bearing (Romans 4:19 and Hebrews 11:11), and it was at this time God told Abraham that he and Sarah would become parents of the promised son, Abraham believed this word of God, even though it was impossible in the course of nature, and it would take a miracle, a supernatural act, to make these two old people parents of a son, Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6). Abraham believed the gospel of the birth of a promised son by a supernatural conception, and the birth of Isaac was as great a miracle as the virgin birth of Jesus, although of course, in the case of Isaac there were two human parents.

The ‘Slaying’ of Isaac and his ‘Resurrection’

There is more to the gospel than the virgin birth. The next step is the substitutionary death of this promised Son. This part of the gospel was preached to Abraham and believed by him. When the miraculously begotten son, Isaac, was a grown young man Abraham was commanded to take him to mount Moriah and sacrifice him upon the altar. Abraham again believed the gospel and in Genesis 22 we have a detailed account of Abraham (type of the Father) taking his son (type of Jesus) up the mountain and there potentially and typically offering his son upon the altar. Yes, Abraham believed that while he would have to put his son to death, God would also resurrect him. It had to be that way. How else could God fulfil His promise that in Isaac would his seed be called as Isaac had no seed when he was to die. If then God was to keep His word, Abraham reasoned, God would have to raise him from the dead after the sacrifice.

But in the event, Isaac was not literally slain, nevertheless. God reckoned it as though it actually occurred. And then God provided a substitutionary ram to die in Isaac's stead, to take his place. But as far as God was concerned He reckoned it as though Isaac was actually slain, and that Abraham also potentially sacrificed his son. Abraham looked ahead and saw in this the gospel of the supernatural conception, the substitutionary death and the glorious resurrection of the Greater Son of Isaac, for we read in Hebrews 11:17, "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son... accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (type)". For to Abraham, Isaac was as good as dead for three whole days from the time of the command to sacrifice his son until God spared him. So when God suddenly intervened it was a potential resurrection of the son. Abraham therefore believed the gospel of the miraculous conception, the substitutionary death and the victorious resurrection after three days.

Abraham understood that the birth, death and resurrection of Isaac pointed to the birth, death and resurrection of the Greater Son, the promised seed of which Isaac was only a type. In Genesis 22:14, after he had offered his son and saw him restored, Abraham called the name of that place JEHOVAH- JIREH, "The Lord will provide as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

This then was the gospel Abraham believed and by which he was saved. It had nothing to do with him keeping the law, for that was not yet given, and. God's plan has never changed. Salvation today is still believing what God says about His only Son, who was virgin born, who died to redeem us and who rose again from the dead. Paul says, referring to Abraham's faith, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him (for righteousness) but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:25-25), Salvation is believing "the record God gave of His Son" (John 5:10,11). Salvation is by faith in the virgin born, crucified, risen Saviour. The law is bad news for the sinner, the gospel of redemption is good news for the faithful.

The Laws Requirements

The law of God is holy, eternal, perfect and good; it is the Divine pattern of righteousness which God required of those who would be saved by their works. The law of God is powerful and is absolutely just in treating all alike without respect of persons. There are no exceptions, for the soul that sinneth, it shall die. It is inflexible and rigid and makes no allowance for effort if that effort fails to measure up to every single demand of the perfect law. The law knows no distinction between big sins and little sins as far as guilt is concerned. Sin is sin. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 5:10). And as Paul records "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 5:25).

While the law is holy it cannot produce holiness in the transgressor. While the law is perfect, it cannot produce perfection in sinners. While the law is just, it cannot justify injustice nor unrighteousness. These things the law cannot do nor was it ever intended, to do. The law reveals the perfect righteousness of a holy God and righteousness is the one requirement for salvation for those depending on the law.

James says "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10). Adams sin in taking of the forbidden fruit we would call petty larceny but God regarded it as rebellion and His righteousness was incompatible with the unrighteousness of Adam. The law reveals the gravity of sin and the righteousness of God.

No Judgement

The law stands as the pronouncer of death to all who fail to accept, by faith God's means of salvation from its power and condemnation and curse. We do not meet the high standards of the law and we cannot lower its standards to meet our own imperfections. While the law is powerful in condemning the sinner it is powerless to save the sinner. Also it is powerless to condemn the faithful in Christ, for the child of God is ever free from its judgement. For there is no judgement to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit and in spite of our failures there is NO JUDGEMENT. There may

well be the chastening of the Lord when we offend, but there is no judgement, for if this were not the case it would mean that each time the believer sinned he would need to be baptised. That cannot be and God has made provision for our sins after we have been baptised into Christ, for He is our High Priest interceding for us and when “we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” (John 1:9). “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2). For we have passed from death into life.

Not Our Way but His

In Romans chapter 7 Paul, speaking of the time before his conversion and while he was yet ‘kicking against the pricks,’ admits his failure to keep the law of God by his own efforts. Paul earnestly desired to keep the law of God but found the desires of the flesh opposing him at every turn. He now, after his conversion, disclaims any perfection of his own and relies entirely upon the imputed perfection of Jesus. He now rejoices in the fact that there is now therefore no condemnation (judgement) to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit,

God sees us in Christ as perfect and sinless and accepts us, not on the basis of our own righteousness, but on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Jesus. The law could not give us this righteousness, and it was beyond our reach as sinners, so the scripture says “what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His Son in the likeness of sins flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” (Romans 8:5).

The failure of the law to justify the sinner became the occasion for God to step in and redeem lost humanity, for God, sending His Own Son in our likeness, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, as a sin offering, to condemn sin once and for all, for Jesus was born with our humanity, with our corruptible nature.

By Jesus miraculous conception and virgin birth He assumed our human nature but escaped the condemnation of Adam’s sin. (He was ‘Free-born, of whom Paul was a type). The law could not redeem Adam's race so God sent His Son to redeem lost humanity from bondage to sin. But Jesus’ miraculous conception and virgin birth was not sufficient of itself to obtain redemption for us. It was only the first step. While Jesus did not share Adam’s condemnation as we do, Adam’s sin had first to be taken care of and in order to pay for Adam’s transgression every demand of the law had to be fully met and Jesus did this in His perfect life of obedience for He said “Who convinceth Me of sin?” Jesus fought extremely hard against sin in order to condemn it “who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.” (Hebrews 5:7). In the days of His flesh tells us when Jesus condemned sin as in Romans chapter eight where Paul says Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” that is, He condemned sin while He was in the flesh. This is why Jesus was so very precious in the eyes of His Father. The righteous demands of the law must be met and the price paid to the last farthing. This was accomplished by Jesus, who needed no redemption for Himself, who was free of Adam’s sin, took it upon Himself to pay the price of our redemption on Calvary’s cross.

The fact that the law cannot save the sinner, nor keep those in Christ saved, is not the fault of the law but of our weakness and sinfulness, because we cannot, of our own efforts, attain unto the righteousness of God. So God, in His great love for us, sent His Son into the world, and though He was born with the same nature as ourselves. He trusted not in His own strength, but appealing constantly to His Father, He walked not after the flesh, and paying the price required by the law for our redemption, offered us His own righteousness that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Not by us, but IN us. Have we been trying to make ourselves fit for salvation? Have we tried to earn God’s favour by doing our best? Our best is not good enough. We must accept His righteousness and live by faith. Abraham was saved by believing. “Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.” And even as God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6), a person may believe in God and be lost for ever and indeed will be, if all he does is believe in God, for here is no diligent seeking. It is necessary to believe and seek diligently. We are His disciple and must follow His discipline.

We are His servants and our duty is to serve Him.

The great things Jesus accomplished on our behalf satisfied all the requirements of the law and condemned sin. It shewed the awfulness of sin and the great love of God and His own great love for us, for “greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends...” (John 15:15). The result is that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us! The imputed righteousness provided by Jesus, who died to pay the price demanded by the law; who rose from the dead to take His own righteousness and clothe us with it!

The price is now paid and because we are in Christ, God looks upon us as being righteous, for Jesus is “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:50). God accepts what Jesus has done on our behalf and reckons it to our account. Now He sees us in Jesus as “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:6,7).

Author unknown.

Jesus said - “Let The Dead Bury Their Dead” - Matthew 8:22

What did He mean?

If the word “dead” in the above quotation, means the same in each case, then we are asked to believe in the impossible. Is it not obvious, therefore, that a correct understanding of the different deaths in Scripture is essential before we can harmonise the same?

We venture to say that if the knowledge of the different states of death be absent, then we can close the good Book and store it away as being incomprehensible.

Dr. Adam Clarke says re this verse, “It was usual for a Jew to consider a man dead who had departed from the precepts of the law, and on this ground every transgressor was reputed, a dead man.”

This verse had no difficulty for the Jew – “leave the spiritually dead to bury their naturally dead.”

Before one can spiritually die one must have been made spiritually alive. “God is not the God of the dead but of the living.” The spiritually dead, though naturally alive, have no life in them, although they had seen and heard the Prince of Life and have done many wonderful things in His name, they will hear those dreaded, words: “depart from me, I never knew you.”

“If one died for all, then were all dead.” Is this state of death the same as those above (spiritual, or natural)? We believe it is neither, but rather that which passed upon all men by Adam’s breach of law.

All men, until enlightenment and acceptance of the Redemption in Christ, are legally dead, being under sentence, or constituted, (by law) sinners. After acceptance of the Redemption in Christ they pass from death to life. If, after enlightenment, the Blood of Christ is trodden underfoot, then they become spiritually dead, or twice dead, plucked, up by the roots; for such there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful looking for of judgement which will devour the adversary. None are the children of God, who are without knowledge, neither are those who reject Christ.

From this it should be seen that the dead in the first reference are those who are dead by the one sin of Adam, or those who had been spiritually alive but had fallen from grace; add literal or natural death to these former two and. all three could be applied to “God is not the God of the dead.” (Matthew 22:32).

The “all dead” of 2 Corinthians 5:14 can only be on the Federal Principle – legally dead by the Law of Sin and Death which passed upon all men and which all are under, until passing from the death sentence to the life sentence in Christ Jesus.

T. Gettliffe

Promise and Fulfilment Israel From 1917 To 1948

In the interests of time and space, I wish to give a ‘potted history’ of the events since the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 in order to show how Britain promised to give the Jews land in Palestine - and how events unfolded.

For this we will start with a letter -

From the British Foreign Office dated November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of this Majesty’s Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

* * *

This is the land first promised to Abraham and his descendants by God (Genesis 12:7) nearly four thousand years ago, and was occupied by Israel until driven out by the Romans in the year 70 CE and then, coming nearer to our own day, after the first world war, when the Turks were driven out of the land by the British armed forces, it was promised to the Jews as their National Home – the Balfour Declaration being described as a public pledge by Britain in 1917. But it was not till five years later that the League of Nations (forerunner to The United Nations), granted the British a Mandate of Palestine in July 1922.

Palestine had never been an independent state or country or had its own government and for six hundred years it was part of the Ottoman Empire; it was a land sparsely populated by Jews and Arabs, together with a scattering of people from surrounding countries who had been living alongside each other for many years. But during the next two decades about one hundred thousand Jews entered the land and the Arab nationalism was whipped up from time to time, especially in Jerusalem and violence broke out.

The Arabs who fought with the allies against Germany felt they should have been given the land of Palestine as their own but Britain had promised it to the Jews, though they seemed to be doing nothing positive about it but were, in fact, restricting the number of Jews who could enter Palestine. So not only were the Arabs against the British and the Jews; the Jews were against the British and the Arabs.

By the nineteen thirties persecution of the Jews began in Germany and even more Jews were trying to get to Palestine causing more violence from the Arabs and there was nothing the British army could do to

bring peace to the situation. In 1931 some 4,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine and this was increasing rapidly year on year. In 1935 it was nearly 62,000.

The Jews formed three separate militant groups whom the British considered terrorists the biggest was the National Military Organisation whose leader was Menachem Begin, (who, years later became the first Prime Minister of Israel), then there was a more militant organisation called Heruth Israel (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel), and a smaller group known as The Stern Gang. These groups caused the British army a great deal of trouble for all the delay in partitioning the land promised to them.

Then came the Second World War and the Jews moderated their attacks on British forces while they were fighting the Germans. Indeed, elsewhere in the world many Jews joined the British army in order to fight Germany.

While the British Army's operations in Palestine during this period were mainly directed against militant Arab groups opposed to this mass Jewish immigration from Europe, violence reached a peak with the Arab Revolt of 1936-39 directed at the British army and which they suppressed. But to add to the mix, the Holocaust had a major effect on the situation in Palestine especially from 1939 to 1944 as more and more Jews wanted to enter Palestine but were greatly restricted by the British who were anxious to appease the Egyptians and oil-rich Saudis. There were some 250,000 Jewish refugees along the Northern Mediterranean coast seeking to settle in the 'Land of Promise'; and they sought all sorts of boats, large and small in order to sail to Israel. Many of these boats were not sea-worthy and some didn't make it; but worse was to come for those who did reach Israel and the British armed forces would not let them land. This provoked armed Jewish resistance, and eventually united those who looked to Britain to help to establish their national homeland (the Haganah) with those who wished to use terrorism to drive the British out.

By 1947 Britain had had enough and sought help from the recently formed United Nations Organisation who accepted the idea to partitioning Palestine into a zone for the Jews (Israel) and a zone for the Arabs (Palestine). With this assurance the British withdrew from the region on May 14th 1948.

Israel immediately formed their own government and within a day or two the new "Land of Israel" was attacked by Arab nations including well-armed troops from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. Hugely out-numbered, and with almost no weapons with which to fight, Israel used whatever they could find and the refugees with no training defended themselves and after nine months, miraculously, Israel was the victor – to the astonishment of the world.

Thank God. This was prophecy fulfilled - but the end is not yet.

Brother Russell Gregory

Finally, two interesting prophecies from the Bible:-

1 Chronicles 16:34 to 36, "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Say also: "Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and rescue us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said Amen! and praised the Lord."

Psalms 2, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be

instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

A Lesson From Samson

“by Bro. Leo Dreifuss

Among the personalities of the Bible Samson occupies a rather unusual position.

We usually think of God’s servants, in the Old Testament at any rate, as prophets, or as great leaders, such as Moses or David. We usually think of them as having visions of God, or some other direct communication with God on special occasions. But no such events are recorded about Samson.

The gift that God had given him for His work was somewhat unusual: that of superb physical strength. The gift of God always varied from person to person according to need and the task to be carried out. In the New Testament Church there were different gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as healing, teaching, prophesy, interpretation of tongues etc. Samson was endowed with this unusual strength for the purpose of delivering Israel from the Philistines.

The first we learn of him is that from his birth he was dedicated to the Lord. There was no razor to come upon his head. (Numbers 6:5). He was to be a Nazarite all his life. A Nazarite was a person who for a certain time took it upon himself not to shave his head, not to drink any wine, and to devote those days especially to the service of God. At the end of this specified period he went to the priest, brought a number of sacrifices prescribed in the Law of Moses and ceremonially shaved his head. But Samson was to be a Nazarite all his life and no razor was ever to touch him.

The first recorded incident in his life occurred when he persuaded his parents to get him a Philistine girl to wife. It was a grief of heart to his parents, but they were ignorant of the full facts of the case until later: namely that Samson merely sought an occasion against the Philistines, and so really did God’s work, though his parents could not be told of all the true facts. Had they been told of his real motive for wanting that girl the marriage may not have taken place, and Samson’s scheme would have been frustrated.

And then comes his first display of strength when a lion met him and he rent it. Shortly afterwards a swarm of bees and honey was found in the carcase of the lion. He ate it and also gave his parents of it. This provided the occasion for the quarrel which he sought with the Philistines. We read of how he put forth a riddle which they could not solve in Judges 14:5 – 9. He told his wife eventually, who then told her people. And so Samson slew thirty Philistines using the spoil he took from them to give his pledge to the Philistines for expounding his riddle. After this followed incident upon incident in which Samson wrought havoc among the Philistines’ lives and property, from burning up their cornfields to lifting off heavy gates of fortifications which guarded the towns in those days, or slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass.

The account of his life then tells us of his affair with Delilah, another Philistine woman. The motive appears to have been the same as that of his marriage - to seek a quarrel with the Philistines. Delilah tried to find the secret of his great strength. For some time he did not tell her the truth; but by sheer persistence she eventually prevailed, and he told her all. We know the sad end. Delilah caused him to sleep and got a man to shave off the seven locks of his head. So his strength departed from him. The Philistines “bound and blinded him, and made a great feast in honour of one of their heathen deities. But their temple was built on pillars: they brought in Samson to make them sport. Samson begged a lad to guide his hands towards these pillars and prayed to God that his strength would come back to him just once more. God heard him and with a mighty heave he brought down their temple with all the people in it upon himself, so that at his death he killed even more Philistines than while alive.

Unlike any other great persons in the Bible there is no record of any direct communication between God and Samson; no direct command to do a certain thing at a certain time or in a certain manner. Rather does it appear that God gave him that one gift of superb strength and commissioned him to use it against the Philistines as and when opportunity arose. And it is evident that Samson certainly used this gift very well in the work God had assigned him to do.

All of us have different gifts. We are not all speakers or able preachers, but we all have some ability in one direction or another, and God knows our limitations and does not expect the impossible. If we can say that we always use our gifts and abilities according to the will of God and not to our own selfish ends then we need not be afraid of facing our Master when the time comes.

Finally one more thought. Things went wrong after he had told Delilah the secret of his strength. It is true he was under strong pressure. But the Nazarite vow and the Nazarite life were very solemn things, and like everything else dedicated to divine service at the tabernacle, not to be trifled with. Samson's great mistake was that he betrayed such a solemn secret to a heathen people most ignorant and rebellious against God.

We are told in the New Testament "not to cast our pearls before swine" and although Samson lived long before this was written, the principle applied in all ages to all divine matters, and in this respect Samson failed. As in the cases of Adam, Solomon and king Ahab, it was their wives who were the cause of their down fall. How appropriate then is the exhortation to the Christian not to be unequally yoked with the unbeliever. The command applied equally to the nation of Israel to whom intermarriage with the surrounding heathen people was prohibited.

The motive of Samson's marriages was probably sincere enough - as with his first marriage to seek an occasion against the Philistines. But he must have known that Delilah was not loyal to him, for she was in communication with the Philistines before to entice him to tell her his secret. In giving such a solemn matter away he had gone too far. We live in a world of unbelief, among people who admit disbelief in God and who sneer at His word. By all means we must try to convert them where opportunity arises, but until there is some evidence of this let us beware how we talk to them. Let us guard against talking of divine matters in a manner that merely encourages them to scoff at it.

Speaking The Truth In Love

I recently alluded to the desirableness of our literature being as free as possible from any semblance of abuse of our contemporaries in the religious world. It has since occurred to me that our discussions one with another are even more liable to be marked by this error, and that a consideration of the precept and example of our Lord and His apostles might help to guard us all from falling into it. From the extreme readiness with which the tongue obeys the impulses of the heart, especially in those of an ardent temperament, the utterance of a hasty, foolish, or abusive word – perhaps with a touch of the sarcastic or the satirical to lend it greater force and edge – is not excusable, even more so the deliberate ill-natured outpourings which are too often allowed to flow from the pen, and to pass without compunction or correction through the press.

The abuse of speech is without excuse, and should receive the disapproval of every one who professes the name of the meek and lowly Jesus. It should be eschewed to the uttermost in all our communications.

The character of our Lord as seen in His life during "the days of his flesh" is strongly marked by meekness and moderation. The apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians (2 Epistle 10:1) speaks of "The meekness and gentleness of Christ." And it is this character which our Lord claims as peculiarly His own in these well-known words :- "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest upon your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The Saviour’s example of meekness and lowliness of heart is here commended by Himself for our imitation and for the imitation of all who would be His disciples - “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.” And let it be noted that although He says “Take my yoke upon you,” it is not simply a yoke which He had constructed for their use; but a yoke which He takes upon Himself. Its full force and meaning is: Take upon you the yoke which I have taken, for He adds “and learn of me.” Take me for your example - I am not asking you to do anything which I shrink from doing myself. And the reason He gives - “For I am meek and lowly in heart” - shows that these qualities are necessary to the bearing of the yoke which Jesus bore - for the glory of God and the good of man.

The Apostles were fully alive to the importance of these qualities as exemplified in the life of their Master for the imitation of His disciples. For example, Paul - “Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of a god, did not count the being like a god a thing to be eagerly grasped, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant. Being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

And Peter to the same effect: - “What glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sin in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” (1 Peter 2:20-23).

But there are some sayings of Jesus on record from which it has been inferred both by friends and foes, that Jesus indulged on occasions the spirit of reviling and threatening, and that even in circumstances when He had received no provocation by similar treatment of Himself. For example He said; “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.” “Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?” “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe and mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appeared beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!” (Matthew 23)

Now this language is consistent with the alleged “meekness and gentleness of Christ,” or it is not. It is a well-known fact that mere words do not fully and clearly convey the spirit of him who uses them. Language originally spoken, and afterwards committed to writing is in an important respect a different thing to the reader from what it was to those who heard it. The effect depends not so much on the words employed as on the tones of the voice, and even the gestures of the body, with which they are uttered. The words in question considered merely as written words are capable of expressing harsh denunciation or tenderest commiseration. I have heard it related of the late Dr. Channing that a person once founded an objection to the character of Jesus on these words, and was entirely silenced by the Dr. giving utterance to the words in tones of commiseration. And any one may satisfy himself by experiment, that these words can be uttered so as to manifest the compassionate spirit of Jesus, or a spirit entirely foreign to His heart of hearts which of these we are to impute to the meek and lowly one no candid mind will hesitate to determine.

It is worthy of remark that the word “Woe” in the above quotations which seems to aggravate the apparent severity of the speaker, is capable of being rendered “Alas,” as it actually is in Rev. 18:10, 16,

19. Hence it might be read, “Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” And I observe that in Newcome’s version all the occurrences of this word as used by our Lord are rendered by the word “Alas.”

Besides this, there is one instance in which our Lord used this word where it cannot have the denunciatory sense. It occurs in Matthew 22:19, - “But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.” It will be acknowledged by all that the word “woe” must have the commiserative sense here. This is sufficient to show from our Lord’s own usage, that it may also have this sense in His rebuke of the Pharisees.

In regard to the charges of hypocrisy, foolishness, blindness, &c., and the epithets “serpents” and “generation of vipers,” the first question that arises is, was this an infallibly true description of the parties spoken of: for it must not be overlooked that there is no evidence in the passage that they were present and directly addressed by our Lord. The correctness of the description has never been called in question by any. So far as the matters of fact mentioned, are concerned it was notorious to the mass of the people that He spoke the truth. And so far as He attributed motives, as when he said “and for a pretence make long prayers,” and used the general term “hypocrites,” our Lord who “knew what is in man,” infallibly knew that the epithets He employed and the motives He imputed, were truly applicable to the parties He described. Besides, He knew precisely the effect His words would have on the minds of his hearers, who were “the multitude.” He also knew that the mental and moral condition of the Pharisees themselves, even had they been present, would not be thereby injuriously affected.

Now it is just at this point that the bearing of Jesus’ example on us becomes manifest. Before we can plead His example as a warrant for stigmatising our contemporaries, we must be able to fulfil the conditions referred to. We must be infallibly certain of the absolute truthfulness of the epithets and accusations we apply to those around us, and we must be quite sure that our application of them shall not have the effect of hardening in unbelief and disobedience, and that the greater course not have resulted in wakening enquiry and an interest in the truth. These conditions I am afraid can be fulfilled by none of us; and hence the example of Jesus must be limited for us to His imitable qualities. Jesus “knew what was in man.” We hardly know ourselves, much less our fellowmen. We are, nevertheless, prone to perceive a mote in our brother’s eye, while oblivious of the beam in our own. How true the lines of the Scottish bard, so often quoted: -

“O wad some Power the giftie gi’e us,
To see oursel’s as ithers see us,
It wad fra’e mony a blunder free us,
An’ fulish notion.

This weakness of the flesh may well account for the many apostolic exhortations to meekness and gentleness. These qualities are enumerated among the fruits of the Spirit in Gal. 5. More at length Paul thus exhorts - “Put them in mind . . . to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.” (Titus 3:1-2). This is both comprehensive and specific. It touches the Christian disciple as every point of contact with his fellowmen, and lays upon him a prohibition against every approach to coarseness whether in the form of sarcasm, satire, scorn, contempt, taunt, or ridicule. “Showing all meekness unto all men,” is incompatible with the above manifestations, and cannot be neglected in our intercourse with the world, without serious detriment to our own character, and to the truth we profess, and through these to “that worthy name by which we are called.”

But the apostle is even more specific; for in regard to efforts for the enlightenment of the ignorant, he says: - “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” (2 Timothy 2:24-25). Peter, to the same effect, says, - “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

The violation of these precepts by these precepts by the abuse of speech is much dwelt on by the apostles: -

“The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.”

“If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man’s religion is vain.”

“Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

The bridle is used not merely to stop the animal to which it is applied; but chiefly to regulate and control it while in motion. So must the would-be religious man regulate the movements of his tongue, and when occasion requires bring that fiery steed to a stand. Speech “seasoned with salt” is by no means equivalent to being spiced with pepper and mustard. Nor does it merely mean, as some think, that speech is to be preserved incorrupt. It is simply as it reads “seasoned,” that is, made palatable, like certain kinds of food. Speech to be of this sort must have nothing about it that would render the thoughts conveyed unnecessarily offensive to the hearers. The truth is in itself unpalatable to many, but its distastefulness must not be increased by the bitterness of speech and tone by which it is sought to be conveyed. Our speech must “Be always with grace,” or graciousness, not merely while we are speaking to an audience with whom we are at one, but “ALWAYS ;” even when we are engaged in controverting the most cherished views and opinions of our fellow men.

The following extracts from Solomon are much to the point, and are worthy of being kept in mind: -

“The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom; but the froward tongue shall be cut off.”

“A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.”

“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.”

“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health.”

“He that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.”

“Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles.”

“By long forbearing is a prince persuaded; and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.”

One great source of ungracious speech is the want of respect for others. We imagine that persons who are wrong in some things have no redeeming qualities whatever. But the fact is that there are few who are wholly unworthy of respect. Persons, principles and institutions have a nobler as well as an inferior aspect; and it is by shutting our eyes to the former, and always contemplating the latter, that we fail to treat them with that respect they deserve. How true the lines of the poet in this respect:

“The darkest night that shrouds the sky
Of beauty hath a share;
The blackest heart hath signs to tell
That God still lingers there !”

There is one class of men who are often the objects of our criticism, and upon whom we are sometimes disposed to pour contempt and ridicule, namely - the clergy. We apply to them the designation applied by Jesus to the teachers of the people in His day - “Blind leaders of the blind.” But we are apt to forget that even this term recognises the sincerity of those so described. If they are “leaders of the blind,” they are blind themselves, and liable to fall into the ditch with their followers. Of course, they think and assay they are, but the fact is they don’t see. This element of conscientious conviction is surely entitled to some respect. I am afraid there is too often the gratification of an innate love of sarcasm and ridicule, for their own sake, at the bottom of our invective against those who differ from us. This is the most unworthy motive that can be conceived: and if it exists in any one, it should be guarded against with jealous care.

And let us not suppose that a meek and gentle style of speech is in the least incompatible with the most distinct and faithful advocacy of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” The thing may seem difficult to some, but it is far from being impracticable.

Brethren, let us consider these things, and if we approve them, let us keep them in mind, especially when we come into personal contact, and receive rough usage from our contemporaries. Let us remember

that, while we are not responsible for the consequences of plainly and firmly maintaining the defence of the Gospel, we are responsible for the consequences of the spirit with which we do so. While we strive to be as wise as serpents – in the wisdom of God – let us bear in mind that the same authority enjoins us to be “harmless as doves.” The apostle puts the whole matter in a nutshell in the following exhortation: -

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.”

J. Cameron. Edinburgh,

Was Christ Human and Divine?

A reply to an enquirer who writes:-

“My difficulty is in reconciling Jesus’ divinity with His humanity. Most of the new translations refer to His being of divine nature and emptying Himself so as to take on human nature. I refer mainly to Philippians 2:5 in Weymouth, Moffatt; and the New Bible says, “The divine nature was His from the first.” Now my problem is how could He have emptied Himself of the divine nature if He did not pre-exist to occupy it at first? Perhaps I have a wrong conception of human nature and divine nature.”

My dear Brother, Loving greetings in Jesus Name and thanks for your letter of the 26th. I am pleased to know you were interested in the Circular Letter and will be glad to answer your question to the best of my ability.

If you can accept it, the way out of your difficulty is perfectly easy - it is to realise that in His life in the flesh Jesus had no divinity in the sense generally believed, so that the problem of reconciling divine nature with human nature does not arise.

I know the passages of scripture which are relied upon by those - the great majority of Christians - who believe either in the pre-existence of Jesus or in His divinity or both, and although I cannot in all cases go back to the Greek or Hebrew and say exactly how they ought to be translated, I am quite satisfied from the simple factual evidence given us in our own tongue that no one is justified in believing that Jesus existed in any shape or form before He was born or that He has a nature which was a mixture of human and divine. The explanation of such passages is that He existed in the mind and purpose of God as a building may exist in the mind of an architect or in his drawing before it is commenced and that when He came He was in Himself and in His teaching a manifestation or revelation of God.

In my view this is not a difficult problem at all; it has been made difficult by those who mix up things that ought to be kept separate and confuse physical nature with inheritance and flesh with relationship.

All we need to do is keep in mind that Jesus was a man; and if a man than not a half-man half-God being. To me, the value of the Gospels is that the accounts of His birth, life and death prove this fact - as John says, The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth - and I am certain that the views held by modern Churchmen and by Christadelphians would have been denounced by the Apostles as heresy, because they knew that Jesus was a man, not a half god.

In the Epistle of John, chapter 4, verses 2 and 15, there is what I think is the basic confession of faith: “Hereby know ye the spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” and “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.” To believe that Jesus was partly divine appears to me to constitute a denial that He came in the

flesh, for we are flesh and we are not mixture of human and divine nature, so how could Jesus have been that, seeing He was also a man of flesh like ourselves?

Do not misunderstand me; there is, of course, a vast difference between Jesus and other men and this is the counterpart of the true confession just mentioned - that He is the Son of God. What we have to understand is the true significance of the one vital fact which alone can harmonise these two apparently contradictory facts. If we deduce that His being the Son of God implies that His nature was partly divine and therefore different from ours we are denying that He came in the flesh; on the other hand if we conclude that His nature must have been unclean and condemned because it was like ours, we are in effect denying that He was the Son of God. What is the solution? It is that the virgin birth accounts for the origin of His life, not for His nature. His physical being came from His mother and was therefore the same flesh and blood as hers, but His life came from God, not from a child of Adam. This is the great mystery revealed by the Gospel, so wonderfully enlightening and logical when it is properly understood but so woefully destructive when it is misapplied.

This is the point - the purpose of the virgin birth was not to produce a man of superior nature, because such a one could not be said to be made in all points like His brethren - could not in fact be a true man at all. The purpose was to produce a man in a different legal position from all others, a man not under the condemnation brought into effect by Adam and passing upon all his children. I need not go further into this as it is fully dealt with in our literature and no doubt you are familiar with it, but I hope I have been able to explain how we look at this question of Jesus' nature. I shall be sending you a copy of Edward Turney's lecture when it is ready and he deals with it very fully and clearly, and if you keep in mind the distinction between physical flesh and the abstract conceptions of name and ownership I think you will soon pick your way through the difficulties.

Now I will deal with the particular passage you mentioned, namely Philippians 2:5. and explain how I think it should be understood. As you say, the translators and especially the N.E.B. leave no doubt of their view that it teaches that Jesus had a former existence in heaven, that He emptied Himself of divine nature in order to take on human nature and so on - I attach no importance whatsoever to any of them. Without exception, before they start their work of translation they are believers in some degree in Trinitarianism or that Jesus had divine nature, and consequently however honest their intentions any passage which will bear it will tend to be coloured with their view simply because they have never considered any other.

I quite enjoy reading the N.E.B. but it falls very far short of being an accurate translation and in this place in particular it is a gloss which is quite unwarranted. There is not one atom of evidence in the original Greek for the translation, "the divine nature was His from the first" nor for the words "assuming the nature of a slave." There is no word in the Greek for nature, as you can verify from an interlinear word for word translation like the Diaglott, and our A.V. rendering "the form of God" and "for form of a servant" is far better. The very words of the second phrase ought to have warned they were out of their depth, for why the "nature" of a slave? What is the difference between the nature of a slave and any other man? Divine nature may be a proper conception when it relates to God, but why set it against "the nature of a slave"? - why not the nature of man? The fact is, of course, that they could not do so because the Apostle had already spoken of this in the words (A.V.) "and being found in fashion as a man," or as they say, "made in the likeness of a man" - that is to say, when He was a man, He assumed the nature of a slave. How could He assume what He already had? The fact of the matter is there is nothing whatever about nature in the passage.

As in other matters, we can best get at the correct meaning of a passage by taking into account the argument or purpose of the whole passage. In Philippians 2 Paul is exhorting the members of the church to behave themselves as true Christians should and show the spirit of Christ, "Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Now I think you will agree that it would neither be to the point, nor helpful to his readers for Paul to introduce the question of Christ's physical nature at this point. On the contrary it would have been the worst sort of encouragement to the Philippians to manifest the mind of Christ if He had gone on to tell them that Jesus' nature was divine from the first and that He had only put it off temporarily. They would have said to themselves, as would any logical mind, such a one is no true pattern or example! How different, and how much more to the point, if Paul had drawn their attention to

Jesus' high standing and pre-existence as the Son of God and then reminded them that He had foregone His just claim to the honour and authority of a Prince and had made Himself their servant? And this is in fact exactly what Paul did - he said nothing about divine nature at all.

The Authorised Version and the Emphatic Diaglott translate the word "*morphe*" as "form"; it is only used 3 times and never to mean "nature" - this word nature, as in 2 Peter 1:4, "The divine nature" is "*phusis*" so that if this had been what Paul was speaking about in Philippians 2 this is the word he should have used and not "*morphe*." This word means form or appearance; the Dictionary says "Form - visible aspect; mode in which a thing exists or manifests itself; fashion or mould." This is certainly its proper meaning as used in this passage; we should say to-day probably "status" or "standing." It is a certain fact that never while on earth did Jesus have divine nature; but what He had, from His birth the status of Son of God. He was the heir of the world and the representative of His Father on earth. As He said to Philip, "Have I been so long with you and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This is the sense in which He was in the form of God; and if He had chosen to put His own right first He was entitled to claim His inheritance and the protection of the angels, counting it not robbery to be equal with God - in the same sense as any son is of similar status to his father. But He did not do so; instead He made Himself of no reputation (again implying status and not nature, for reputation has to do with character and standing, not physical condition) and humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the Cross. He could not have done so had He not been as Paul says, "found in fashion as a man" or as the Emphatic Diaglott renders it "Made in the likeness of men." This is what was accomplished by His birth of Mary - it made Him the same flesh and blood corruptible human nature as His brothers and sisters and therefore capable of death but not destined to death. But being the only Begotten Son of God inherited a status higher than the angels and a birthright which placed Him above all others - do you follow - not a higher nature but a higher name - just as the son of our monarch is the same flesh and blood as other men but legally their sovereign.

It is this high standing and reputation, belonging to Jesus by right, which He surrendered when He took upon Himself the form of a servant. As I see it, in Philippians, Paul is only re-stating the teaching of Jesus when He washed the disciples' feet. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He was come from God, and went to God... Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet... For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." So when Paul speaks of Jesus as assuming the form of a servant in the example he gave, he is not suggesting that Jesus was formerly in some way part of the Deity in heaven but changed Himself into a man at His birth, nor that He was a mixture of divine nature and human nature; he was showing how Jesus in His life had humbled Himself from His high standing even to the loss of life itself as a condemned criminal in order to serve and to save mankind.

Amongst all the various aspects of error into which the Christadelphian doctrine of sinful flesh leads, I think perhaps this one is the worst, because it robs Christ of His honour. To believe that the purpose of His being begotten by God was to give Him a partially divine nature and this to endow Him with the superior strength necessary to overcome temptation not only takes from Him all credit for His victory over sin but makes a mockery of God's justice in putting Him forward as our example.

If I have not cleared up any point to your satisfaction I hope you will let me know and I will try again. I am very pleased you are pursuing the subject and not allowing yourself to be frightened off by the fact that the vast majority of Christadelphians seem to be untroubled by it. Some may be, but personally I think from things I have heard that many of the leaders know that the statement of faith is wrong but they cannot face the trouble that such an admission would cause, and they therefore satisfy themselves by what they term "mental reservations." You are fortunate in having men like Bro. Williams and Bro. Rowley available to talk to, and I hope you will keep in touch with them and discuss any problem you have with them - they have no axe to grind and neither have I - all that matters to us is the truth and if your aim is the same there can be no doubt about the outcome.

With sincere good wishes and prayers for your guidance,

Yours in Jesus name, Ernest Brady.

Gleanings from some Internet Forums

Carmel: COMPASSION !!! Please balance your excitement about your belief that prophecy is being fulfilled with compassion. These are very distressing times for some people. Race hate crimes have become more common in the UK since the Brexit vote. People living here who are not both white and British may be feeling very vulnerable. Some mixed race families are feeling torn apart. There is a lot of poverty in the UK and ,it is hard to predict what impact Brexit will have on the poor, (or the rich.) If you have looked to the UK's departure from the EU can I ask that you also look to the people who may be suffering and provide some practical support for them. Please remember the UK in your prayers, we have no way of knowing if Brexit will bring about changes for the better or worse and many people here are feeling apprehensive.

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At most Summer Camps for young people there are usually a number of rules and regulations to be observed and in some cases people have to sign an agreement that they will observe these, but there is at least one Summer Camp that is different and attendee reports “At our Summer Camp this year, attended each year by many people of all ages, the Organiser stood up at the front and said,

“As you know over the years we haven’t had any rules - just one, - be as Christ to each other”

And the result? - Not one single problem during the week.

Think about it, think about it, think about these things, whatever you have learned from God. Think about it, practising it every single day and God, the God of peace will be with you.

* * * * *

King Solomon said to his children:-

“Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

Proverbs chapter 4:1 to 9.