

Circular Letter No. 290

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Editorial

**JESUS DIDN'T SAY
“I AM FINISHED.”
HE SAID
“IT IS FINISHED.”
HE WAS JUST GETTING STARTED**

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters

Back in April, on Good Friday, when Christians all over the world were remembering how Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion and so laid down His life for us all; a friend of mine posted the above message on a Christian Facebook site. The point of the message was of course, to show that Jesus Christ was not finished when He was crucified but that His work had hardly begun for He has yet to bring in the Kingdom of God and reign for Him as the King of Righteousness over all the earth as He taught His disciples in the Lord's Prayer – “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is now done in heaven.” This is the central message throughout the New Testament along with the forgiveness of our sins, and can be seen also in Old Testament teachings. Even now, Jesus Christ is our High Priest in the presence of God, hearing our prayers and interceding for us throughout our lives at this present time.

So while all this is true, what I wish to consider today is the words of Jesus Christ, “It is finished.” I feel sure there is a better understanding of the original Greek word than is indicated here by “finished.” In Strong's Concordance of the Bible we see the original Greek word for “finished” is “*teleo*” and we find it is also translated into other words such as ‘accomplish’, ‘conclude,’ ‘discharge a debt,’ ‘fill-up’, ‘paid’, etc.

Now let us go back to the evening before the crucifixion, to the prayer of Jesus as recorded in John chapter 17 where we find Him pouring out His heart to His Father knowing that His days of preaching had ended and the next morning He faced the dreadful ordeal of crucifixion. In verse 4 of chapter 17 Jesus said, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.” Having said to His Father He had finished the work He had been given why would He say the same to those people within hearing at the foot of the cross just moments before He died?

First of all, we find these two words, both translated “finished” are spelt a little differently in the Greek. In His prayer to His Father Jesus used the Greek word “*teleioo*” but while on the cross Jesus used the Greek word “*teleo*”

Now I am no scholar of the ancient Greek language, but I would expect if the spelling is a little different then the meaning would also be a little different, and this is what we find in Strong's Concordance for here we have as possible meanings for '*teleioo*', words such as 'accomplished', 'consecrated' or 'made perfect.' So while in prayer to His Father Jesus said He had finished or accomplished the work He had been given and done it perfectly, but we ask 'what then of the crucifixion, was not this a work which Jesus Christ was required to accomplish in order to fulfil all His Father had commanded Him?

No, I don't believe it is. Some have said that if Jesus had refused to be crucified then He would have been a sinner, but Jesus said of Himself "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:25). This shows that Jesus had a choice, and again Jesus said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53). God would not provide twelve legions of angels to help Jesus Christ sin! Therefore being crucified was not something God had commanded Jesus to accept, but it was what Jesus Christ chose to do.

My understanding, then, of these events is that Jesus Christ had completed or finished or accomplished all that His Father had asked Him to do by preaching the gospel message to the people of Israel along with many miracles proving His authority, but it was Jesus' own choice to lay down His life for the life of the world, and this He did the very next day. It was for us that He chose to die because He loved us even as sinners, and He did it "for the joy that was set before him, enduring the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2), and we read, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews 2:10),

But why do I believe "paid" a more suitable word than "finished" on this occasion? I wish to explain why. Throughout the New Testament, whenever the death of Jesus Christ is referred to or discussed, it is not only as a sacrifice but more frequently it is said to be a ransom or redemption or even compared to a commercial transaction such as a purchase or a price paid.

So let us first consider what a true sacrifice is (I mentioned 'true' for today there are many definitions of the word 'sacrifice') – it is the "giving up of something of value for the sake of some other consideration" and so far as Jesus Christ was concerned He lay down His life so that we could have life. In Mark 10:45 we read, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It has been said that if Jesus gave up His life for us then He should never have lived again afterwards. But is this a real problem? Not if we look at the different words for 'life' which are used in the original Greek. For Jesus lay down His life on the cross when His blood was shed by the fatal spear thrust (John 19:34), and this He never received back again but we learn that He rose again with spirit life and this is a different word in the Greek. Our natural life is, in the Greek language '*psuche*' while the spirit life is '*zoe*'.

In John 10:10 & 11, Jesus tells us, "I am come that they might have life (*zoe*), and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life (*psuche*) for the sheep. Here we have the same distinction between the two words, but please note that '*zoe*' is spirit life which we can have in a small measure even now and more abundantly in the future; our natural life is *psuche* which we received from our forefathers.

In Acts 20:28, Paul tells the Church leaders, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." From this we see that the giving of His life Jesus purchased the church so that they now belong to Him.

Paul adds more to our picture, in Romans 5:18 & 19, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (*zoe*). For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The offence of one is the sin of Adam from whom we received our present condemned life (*psuche*). Before Adam and Eve started a family they knew that if

they broke the commandment of God not to eat of a certain tree they would be put to death that day but when they broke the commandment they were spared the sentence of death, continued to live - but remained under the condemnation, so when they begat children the life they passed down to them remained under condemnation also. This did not make their children sinners nor did it make them sinful or guilty, but it was done so that all who came to Jesus Christ could receive the blessing of life through Him who was the one man by whom many are made (or counted as) righteous.

Paul confirms our position in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" and this shows He died instead us, for had Adam been put to death the day he transgressed there would be no offspring of his to populate the earth. It is in this sense that Jesus took Adam's place in death and which provides us with our natural lives today. We still have to come into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ through baptism into His death. (Romans 6:3).

For those who come to Jesus He asks that we should do as He did - John 15:12-14 – "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

So we have a firm answer to what Jesus accomplished in the parable He told in Matthew 13:45 & 46 "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Never was so much owed by so many to one Just man - Jesus Christ our Lord

With Love in Him to all our readers, Russell

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD,
plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."
Jeremiah 29:11

GOD OUR HELP

All mankind's history is full of war, war and war again. What is often forgotten is that, in the end, it is not soldiers, not armaments, but God who decides the outcome of battles. He does not necessarily intervene in any spectacular manner - He rarely does - but from the human point of view little seemingly trivial things, such as a hail or a thunderstorm, or even the glare of the sun blazing into the soldiers eye and thus putting them into a disadvantage against their opponents, these apparently minor events often have decided the battle.

Let us consider a few instances where God, by His intervention, won decisive battles for His people, the children of Israel. There are two good examples found in the book of Joshua. Now the Israelites were just about to enter the holy land. They were to be a forerunner of the Kingdom of God and had they kept to the covenant made under Moses, the world's history might have been a very different one. So it will be readily understood how essential it was that these battles which, remember were God's battles, should be really decisively won, once and for all. They were forerunners of the yet future battles which finally end when the Lord Jesus Christ, with His saints, will rule the kingdoms of this world.

The first example was the fall of Jericho when her walls just fell down flat. What conquest could have been simpler? It was probably an earthquake, but whatever it was it is not ours to ask how God brings about a thing. And this was soon followed by another even more decisive battle against a whole confederacy of opposing armies: the time when the sun and the moon stood still for a whole day. First the Lord cast great hailstones on the armies opposing Joshua. Then it was that that unique miracle happened to give Joshua time to do the mopping up operations before the enemy could re-array themselves.

Another case of God using the forces of nature. These were the only recorded miracles where God actually intervened in the courses of the heavenly bodies. It is the cause of much speculation among those scientists who do not recognise that the beginning of wisdom is to know God. Nobody knows how God does it; all we need to know is that He did it. However, astronomical records confirm that if we add the time of Joshua's 'long day' as it is now referred to, to the time delay at King Hezekiah's time when the sun dial of Ahaz went backwards, these two delays just about add up to a twenty-four hour day. A good example to show God's power and prerogative to intervene with the laws of nature to fulfil His supreme purpose.

We next come to what we read early on in the first book of Samuel. The Israelites had just suffered a major defeat when the ark of God was taken. This by itself was the result of their sinful living. The ark, however, was not to the Philistines benefit. They suffered all kinds of plagues and misfortunes and were only too glad to get rid of it.

Then we read how Samuel gathered the children of Israel together at Mizpeh, and after sincere prayer and admission of their guilt by the Israelites, there was a battle where God decisively intervened by means of a great thunderstorm. From this time forward, not all at once, there were still setbacks, but Israel gradually gained the upper hand over the Philistines.

Finally, we move forward to the reign of Hezekiah. The king of Assyria had just taken captive the ten tribes of Israel - again the result of their own sins - and conquered some cities of Judah. Everybody expected Jerusalem to fall next. But man's thoughts are not God's thoughts. And did the children of Israel need to fight? No! They lost not one single man. God did it all for them; when they looked for their enemy in the morning, they were all dead men.

Before we conclude let us consider an example of our own time. We all remember the disaster of Dunkirk when the British expeditionary force was trapped yet a large part of it got out, though many did not make it. Now from the human point this was due in part to Hitler's folly. There were plenty of tanks ready to wipe out the entire British force, but Hitler, in his madness, insisted that the air-force should do it. However, because of prevailing cloud conditions, the air-force had to stay grounded while the tanks had to stand there inactive, not allowed to move. How many realise the hand of God in this, by means no more complicated but a cloudy sky?

And what about us? Do not the angels of the Lord encamp around all that fear Him? And this includes us. Not by spectacular miracle during this age before the return of the Lord, but nevertheless, we can be sure that in difficult situations, when we trust in the Lord, there are invincible powers helping us and keeping us from sinning, at the same time giving us the necessary wisdom to deal with the situation.

Let us close with the closing by Jude:-

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Brother Leo Dreifuss.

Better Things Than That Of Abel.

Hebrews 11:4 and 12:24

Man's separation from God due to sin has not only shown the love of a just and merciful Creator but also His supremacy and Holiness in demanding through His revealed word and judgment that He will be sanctified in those that draw nigh unto Him. This is to say, man must acknowledge his estrangement or alienation by accepting God's way of approach and reconciliation and this we find throughout the scriptures to be associated with the shedding of blood, but most important; only in the way required by the Creator. Adam's sin merited death by the shedding of his blood, because the life of all animal creation

including human, is in the blood which circulates throughout the body keeping every member and particle of the flesh energised through the introduction of food and oxygen combined. Thus the language of scripture from Genesis to Revelation in connection with blood is so important because it relates to life and death in God's foreknowledge and plan from the beginning of the Adamic transgression, thus the Divine prerogative from that time is contained in the words, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins," - Hebrews 9:22.

We are reminded by Solomon in Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Adam, Eve, and Cain were the first examples of this, the latter in his ultimate regret because he repented not at the counsel of God and refused the way of redemption and salvation, thus despising God's supremacy or dominion, an error Jude describes a few thousand years later as, "The way of Cain," in referring to the conduct of evil men.

The covering of fig leaves was the way that seemed right to Adam and Eve, but hiding sin does not justify, neither can it be hid from God, as Adam admitted when he said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked: and I hid myself." This despite the fact that he was already covered by the fig leaves and proof that there was more to it than an outward appearance; I feel sure Adam believed he was hearing the voice of the approaching executioner of the sentence he had incurred - "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve regarded themselves as legally dead already, but they were to witness the love and compassion of a just and merciful Creator in sparing their lives with the life of the typical lamb as a substitute which pointed forward to the antitypical Lamb of God even Jesus. As Creator, God had the right to do this with the animals, to make Atonement, and speaking later to the children of Israel He confirmed that in regard to the blood of clean animals "I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls".

Adam and Eve accepted their redemption in this way, and their faith in putting on the skins provided through the shedding of blood, was accounted to them for righteousness, but in the ultimate, as with us, Jesus is the Lord our Righteousness. Abel also learned these things and accepted them, but not so Cain. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground (not necessarily the firstfruits) an offering unto the Lord which he undoubtedly thought would do. But evidently it was not acceptable to God for some good reason, whereas Abel sacrificed the firstling of his flock, through faith, and it was accepted, as we read in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Yes, Abel is even spoken of by our Lord Jesus himself and testified as being righteous though he knew it was through the merits of his own sacrifice on Calvary, thus our Lord does not diminish the faith of any whom he has justified. On the other hand He is not slow to condemn those whom He regarded like Cain as the seed of the serpent in the figurative sense, and addresses them "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

It is interesting to quote Dr. Adam Clarke's commentary at this point: - They were serpents and the offspring of serpents; this refers to Matthew 23:31, they confessed that they were the children of those who murdered the prophets; and they are now going to murder Christ and his followers, to shew that they have not degenerated - an accursed seed, of an accursed breed. In other words they had not lost the qualities that are normal and desirable or proper to its kind. (v 34). To show how my prediction, Ye will fill up the measure of your fathers, shall be verified, Behold, I send (I am just going to commission them) prophets, etc. and some ye will kill (with legal process) and some ye will crucify, pretend to try and find guilty, and deliver them into the hands of the Romans, who shall, through you, thus put them to death. See Luke 11:49. By prophets, wise men, and Scribes, our Lord intends the evangelists, apostles, deacons, etc, who should be employed in proclaiming his gospel; men who should equal the ancient prophets, their wise men, and Scribes, in all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

The national punishment of all the innocent blood which had been shed in the land, shall speedily come upon you; from the blood of Abel the just, the first prophet and preacher of righteousness, Hebrews 11:4, to the “blood of Zachariah, the son of Barachiah. It is likely that our Lord refers to the murder of Zachariah, mentioned in II Chronicles 24:21 and 22, who when dying as a result of being stoned by the people at the king’s commandment, in the court of the house of the Lord said, “The Lord look upon and requite it” vs. 21 and 22. It may be objected that this Zachariah was called the son of Jehoiada, but there are many instances of double names in scripture, sometimes the person was called by one, sometimes by the other. So Matthew is called Levi, and Simon called Peter, and Lebbeus was called Thaddeus. Jerome says that in the gospel of the Nazarenes, it was Jehoiada instead of Barachiah. That Jehoiada and Barachiah have the very same meaning, “the praise of Jehovah.” He says also that retribution came upon king Johash and all those responsible for the death of Zachariah II Chronicles 24: 23-25 so whether there was another Zachariah (other than this one), to which Jesus referred is open for question of course.

One important Divine principle I noticed when reading 2 Chronicles 25:5 and 4 was the action and also the respect king Amaziah exhibited for the commandment in the book of the Law of Moses, “Now it came to pass when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, the fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.” In view therefore of this and what Jesus Himself said concerning Abel could any person dare to suggest or go so far as to state there was no injustice in Abel’s death by murderous Cain? It should be observed also that death came upon Abel before those who had committed the sin worthy of death, so apart from his dying for righteousness sake it would have been unjust for Abel to have died a natural death before his parents, if natural death were the penalty for Adam’s sin, and this might easily have been the case with some of Adam and Eve’s posterity of whom there is no mention in the scriptures.

There is equality in God’s dealings with man, the penalty for sin was equal to Adam, and Eve and shown to them as death by blood-shedding (inflicted), not a gradual process of decay where time and chance happeneth to all but some suffer more than others. It was shown and taught to Adam and Eve and their posterity that life forfeited to sin either required the life-blood of the sinner or that of a substitute whose life was not forfeited. Abel was righteous by means of his faith in the more excellent sacrifice which he saw as the seed of the woman and the antitypical Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world; the blood of the sacrifice he offered, neither his own blood, shed by Cain, could accomplish what Jesus did upon the cross as the writer to the Hebrews has explained.

The blood of bulls and goats were only types and could never take away sin, and therefore had to be continually offered, but this man Jesus, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. See Hebrews ch. 10. We are asked by the same writer in ch.12 to consider the great cloud of witnesses by whom we are encompassed and of whose faith he has written in ch. 11 and above all to consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. We have not yet resisted unto the shedding of our blood in our striving against sin, as indeed Jesus did and also Abel and many more, so do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of him: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

The writer contrasts the position or status of the Christian believers in this twelfth chapter in relation to the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, v.18 - “Ye are not yet come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. And things they could not endure, and which made even Moses fear and quake.” This is not the position of those who are in Christ “For they are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God” - To the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn, which are written or enrolled in heaven, “To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.” I must confess that at one time I believed the writer to Hebrews was referring to Abel’s own blood shed by his brother Cain, probably because I was taught by others who believed the same, but I have since come to realise that this is not what is meant, especially in view of the context of the whole Epistle which is to explain the sacrifices from Genesis to the One Supreme sacrifice which they foreshadowed. We have certainly not passed the investigation stage as some people have chosen to think and say, we can always find treasures below the surface of the Word of God if we refuse to read superficially and indiscriminately.

Again I would like to quote Adam Clarke's commentary as follows:- "God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and was well pleased with it; for Abel was a righteous man, and offered his sacrifice by faith in the great promise. But the blood of Christ's sacrifice was infinitely more precious than the blood of Abel's sacrifice; as Jesus is infinitely greater than Abel, and the blood of Christ avails for the sins of the whole world, whereas the blood of Abel's sacrifice could only avail for himself." Adam Clarke goes on concerning my mistaken view, which he says many have held so I will not repeat it but take up his remarks further on as follows; "Many have supposed that the blood of Abel means here the blood that was shed by Cain in the murder of this holy man; and that the blood of Jesus speaks better things, because the blood of Abel called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ for pardon; this interpretation reflects little credit on the understanding of the apostle. The truth is the sacrifice offered by Abel is that which is intended; that, as we have already seen, was pleasing in the sight of God, and was accepted in behalf of him who offered it; but the blood of Christ is infinitely more acceptable with God; it was shed for the whole human race, and cleanses all who believe from all unrighteousness'.

We can be grateful for the work of men like Adam Clarke provided we are on guard against some of the popular theories and beliefs they held regarding the immortality of the soul. Supernatural Devil, and other errors held by the apostate churches but even this can be offset against the people who believe in sin-in-the-flesh, and that Christ's sacrifice was no better than that of Abel if as excellent, in view of the fact that he Jesus, was as unclean as those he came to save. At least Adam Clarke understood the significance and efficacy of the blood of Christ, and where he has not probably explained it to the full we can be thankful for the past controversies in the persons of Edward Turney, A and L Wilson, F.J.Pearce, Ernest Brady, to name but a few, who have brought it to light so that we may appreciate the great love of God had for the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish. God commendeth his love toward us says the apostle, in that while we were yet "constituted sinners" or in fact, sinners through ignorance, Christ died for us. For if, says the apostle, while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life,

Adam and Eve were reconciled through God's provisional covering, the shedding of blood, while they were enemies or sinners and this involved Cain and Abel and all who were in the loins of Adam when he sinned, thus all natural existence is due to God's Love and the antitypical sacrifice of His Son, but eternal life involves a faith demonstrated by individual acceptance of why Christ died and why He was raised. God did not provide the coats of skins to prevent them from dying a death which was natural to their being, but to save them suffering an inflicted death by blood-shedding, which they had incurred by sin, and that by a renewed existence and faith they might continue their probationary life relative to their nature of corruptibility which had never changed. Thus, Jesus did not owe His existence to Adam but on the contrary Adam owed his to Jesus, through the foreknowledge and provision of God of course.

"The federal principle," "substitution;" are not unscriptural terms when seen and explained by the apostle Paul, it is the erroneous doctrine of original sin wrongly attributed to Paul, which blinds the minds of people already the subjects of such indoctrination, thus they read into his writings things that are not there, but are the seeds of erroneous doctrine other men void of understanding, have implanted in their minds. An example of this can be seen in the mistaken view that natural death by a physical law of decay, was the death Adam incurred by sin, and is a physical condemnation which passed upon all men. To abrogate such a law would mean that Jesus should have lived at least as long as Adam, 930 years to be exact, and then have died by natural causes relevant to his decaying nature, and be raised from death because he had committed no sin. (This in fact is how Clause VIII of the B.A.S.F. should be understood in view of natural death as a penalty for sin. But evidently this cannot be the death required by the righteousness of God because the following Clause IX states that Jesus suffered that mode of death, by blood-shedding - (an inflicted death. Not satisfied with this contradiction Clause X states that Jesus shared with all men the death which passed upon them by partaking of their physical nature. This is not a true statement in regard to natural death because Jesus did not suffer or share in it). Jesus did indeed suffer the death which passed upon Adam and all men, by suffering it in their stead; this was an inflicted or judicial death, not due to Himself, He not being in the loins of Adam, and also a righteous man, He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, and not, as some believe and teach, to shew or demonstrate God's repugnance of human nature and that there was no injustice in his death. If it were so in the case of Jesus then it was more so in the case of Abel, yet Jesus condemns outright the murder of Abel how much more than his own murder by wicked hands which the blasphemous Clause XII describes

as the instruments of God? Have they never considered Romans 6:15? Despite the many scriptural references at the foot of Clause VIII which are meant to mislead, the believers and upholders of this Clause cannot prove that Jesus has abrogated the law of condemnation for them, because they affirm it was a physical law in their nature and it is obvious immersion in, and rising from water cannot remove a physical law, drowning can do that. A true candidate for Baptism into Christ is not expected to drown but to rise in newness of life, so it can only be by burial or symbolic death into Christ, and rising in newness of life in the likeness of His resurrection, not in our case in incorruptible life, but as new creatures having that right if faithful to our calling. The Apostle declares therefore that if we have not put off the old man and put on the new, we are not in Christ nor risen with Him, we are yet in our sins; and this is where the believers in physical condemnation must find themselves. Thank God for His Only Begotten Son! Thank God and His Son for The Blood of Sprinkling that Speaketh Better Things than That of Abel. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Bro. Phil Parry.

THE GOSPEL AS WE UNDERSTAND IT

The Nazarene Fellowship has no constitution, creed or statement of faith outside the pages of the Bible. It has reached its present understanding by reading and discussion of Scripture and study of any and every variety of opinion, past and present. If or when anyone feels that he can show that any point is in conflict with reason or revelation, we are glad to discuss it, for if we are wrong our chief concern is to get it right, but we do not attach much value to tradition.

The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God

The visible world and every form of life in it was created in the beginning by the Eternal God. Within the limits of the natural laws by which they are governed, all things, including man, remain as they were created, very good. (Genesis 1:31).

Man is a corruptible creature with the same physical nature as the lower animals, but being made in the image of God he has a free will and the capacity for reason. To develop character he had to experience good and evil, and for this purpose Adam was placed under law. By disobedience he brought himself under sentence of death. This was man's first lesson in religion - that sinners deserve to die. His second lesson was that God was merciful, because he was spared the judicial death he had incurred.

God's ultimate purpose revealed in the Bible, is to bring the whole creation to perfection under the reign of Jesus Christ, and establish it for ever in accordance with the promise made to Abraham. This is the Hope of Israel - the true Gospel.

The selection of a people worthy to take part in that purpose has been proceeding throughout history by the preaching of this Gospel, and will continue until the literal return of Christ to the earth from His present dwelling with the Father.

Those who by faith and obedience have shown themselves acceptable to God are recorded in the Book of Life and will be called from their graves in incorruptible nature as the heirs of everlasting life, to live and reign with Christ in eternity. This is the resurrection of the righteous.

The Things Concerning The Name of Jesus Christ

The rite of sacrifice introduced in Eden and defined in the Law of Moses, teaches God's way and calls for the exercise of that faith by which He is honoured. In making an offering in which the life of an animal was taken away by bloodshedding, the sinner acknowledged his guilt and unfitness to live and recognised that he could only be saved by reason of God's mercy.

But animal sacrifices were only a temporary expedient and could not give effective deliverance because the life of an animal was not a true equivalent for the life of a man; they pointed to the sacrifice of Christ.

The life which had been lost by sin could only be redeemed by a human life. No descendant of Adam could give his life as a ransom, since the life of every natural born man is a continuation of the life which was forfeited, and thus death as a deferred penalty or debt hangs over the human race. Therefore it is evident that man could only be saved from extinction by one whose life was not derived by natural descent, who was not a sinner and who was prepared voluntarily to sacrifice himself. Such was Jesus. As a child of Mary He was a man of flesh and blood, related to the race and of exactly the same corruptible nature, but as Son of God His life came to Him direct from the Source.

In His temptations and physical sufferings, Jesus proved that human nature of itself is not in any way defective, and showed by His example that obedience to the commandments is in fact within the capacity of everyone. Conscience serves to convict us all as sinners personally, but in order that mercy might prevail and one redemptive sacrifice redeem a multitude of people, God regards all Adam's descendants as having lost their life in his and become alienated with him. This is the federal principle.

When He allowed His murderers to nail Him to the Cross, Jesus submitted to a penalty He did not deserve and a condemnation which was utterly unjust in order to cancel, by the surrender of His own life, the debt owed by sinners. Jesus paid at Calvary the debt incurred in Eden. Had it been inflicted upon the sinner he would have perished and the human race would never have been. Jesus, being sinless, was able to suffer the death and not perish; and being raised from the grave in incorruptible spirit nature He ascended to His Father and now awaits the appointed time for His return to reign upon the earth. Thus God provided in His own Son the one all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, a life for a life, and purchased back to Himself all those who put on the name of Jesus who are alienated from Him by sin.

Jesus, as the Heir of all things and God's representative on earth, in carrying out His Father's plan for our salvation by laying down his life as our substitute, upheld justice and law by meeting its claim and at the same time demonstrated supreme love and mercy.

To believe these things and to be immersed in water as a symbol of the death which Jesus suffered for us literally is Christian Baptism, and is the condition of forgiveness of sins and acceptance into the Kingdom of God.

Things We Do Not Believe

It sometimes happens that people read or hear these explanations and realise that they are reasonable and scriptural, and they imagine that they are what they actually believe themselves, whereas, in fact, they hold views which are quite incompatible with them. We therefore append a list of some of the things which we consider are destructive to the true Gospel: -

We do not believe in Immortal Souls, Heaven-going, or a Personal devil.

We do not believe in the Trinity, that Jesus pre-existed or that He had Divine Nature.

We do not believe in Original Sin, or changed nature.

We do not believe in Sin-in-the-flesh or that people are born sinful.

We do not believe that natural death is the wages of sin.

We do not believe that Jesus died for Himself.

We do not believe that those asleep in Christ will rise mortal.

We do not believe in Christening

We do not believe that immersion for personal sins without recognition of the federal principle is Christian Baptism.

Ernest Brady. June 1957

Psalm 34

“I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him. O fear the LORD, you his holy ones, for those who fear him have no want.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR FAITH?

In British Protestant magazines and books, when records of martyrdom for Christ are reprinted it is customary to confine them to the British scene, and it is too readily forgotten that in the 16th century the Continent of Europe produced martyrs in abundance. Not a few of them were known as Anabaptists who stood apart from Lutherans and Calvinists, and sometimes suffered at their hands as well as the hands of Romanists. It is sadly recorded that `tens of thousands of Dutch Anabaptists' died violent deaths.

In the 17th century Hanserd Knollys, a native of Lincolnshire, educated at the University of Cambridge, was prominent in urging Baptist principles, and in 1845 a Society named after him, the Hanserd Knollys Society, was founded to republish early Baptist writings. Among its publications is *A Alarlyrology of the Churches of Christ, commonly called Baptists, during the Era of the Reformation* (translated from the Dutch of T. J. Van Braght). The following account - the martyrdom of Weynken Claes' Daughter - well illustrates the nature of the charges brought against Protestants by Romanists in Reformation days. And let it be remembered that such matters (for they bear closely on Christian doctrine) are not irrelevant in 20th-century .days.]

Weynken was brought before Count Van Hoogstraten, Stadtholder of Holland, in mid-November, 1527 :-

Question: If you do not speak and turn away from your error, an intolerable death awaits you.

Answer: If the power is given you from above, I am prepared to suffer.

Question: Are you not then afraid of death which you have not tasted?

Answer: True; but I shall never *taste* of death, for Christ says, 'If any man keep my words, shall he never taste of death'. The rich man tasted death and shall forever taste thereof.

Question: What do you hold concerning the sacrament [i.e. the Mass]?

Answer: I hold your sacrament to be flour and bread, and where you hold it to be a God [i.e. by transubstantiation], I say that it is your devil.

Question: What do you think concerning the saints?

Answer: I know no other mediator than Christ.

Question: You must die if you hold to this.

Answer: I am already dead.

Question: You are dead? How then can you speak?

Answer: The Spirit lives in me; the Lord is in me, and I am in Him.

Question: Will you have a confessor or not?

Answer:. I have Christ; to Him I confess but if I have offended any one, I will gladly entreat Him forgive me.

Question: Who has taught you this opinion? and how have you come by it?

Answer: The Lord who calls all men to Him! I am one of His sheep; therefore I hear His voice.

Question: Are you alone then called?

Answer: Oh no! for the Lord calls to Him all that are heavy laden.

After many such exchanges, Weynken was again led to the dungeon and during the two following days, was entreated and tempted by many persons, namely, by monks, priests, and women, and by her nearest friends. One woman said to her, 'Can you not *think* as you please, so that you should not die?' She replied, 'I am compelled and commanded to speak, so that I cannot be silent. If tomorrow they burn me or put me in a sack, that is all one to me. If it be the Lord's appointment, it must come to pass, not otherwise. I will cleave to the Lord. It distresses me to see all these clever men so blinded. I will pray to the Lord for them.'

There came also two Dominican (Black) friars to her, the one as father confessor, the other as an instructor, and the following words were spoken:

Friar: (placing a crucifix before her): See, here is the Lord your God.

Weynken: That is not my God. It is another cross by which I am redeemed. That is a wooden God; throw it into the fire and warm yourself by it.

Friar: If you will receive the sacrament, I will readily give it you.

Weynken: What God would you give me: one that is perishable and that is bought for a farthing? In your sacrament you crucify God afresh.

Friar: Methinks you are beside yourself.

Weynken: That I cannot help; the Lord my God to whom be eternal honour, praise and thanks, has given it me so to be.

Friar: What do you think of the holy unction?

Weynken: Oil is good in a salad, or to smear your shoes with.

Brought again before the court, *as* she entered the hall a monk held a crucifix before her face, saying, 'Recant before the sentence is pronounced'. Turning from the crucifix she replied, 'I cleave to my Lord and my God. Neither death nor life shall separate me from Him.' The Chancellor then read that she was found obstinate and obstinacy must not go unpunished. She must be burnt to ashes and all her property confiscated. She replied: 'If it is now all done, I pray all of you, that if I have injured or provoked any one, you will forgive me'. As she left the court a monk engaged her in further conversation:

Monk (presumably holding out to her a crucifix): Kiss now, once, the Lord your God.

Weynken: That is not my Lord.

Monk: Call upon our dear Lady that she might pray for you.

Weynken: Our Lady is happy in repose with God. We have Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father; He intercedes for us. My Lord God is in me and I in Him.

Monk: Do you not dread the ordeal you must suffer in the fire?

Weynken: Not I, for I know how I stand with my God.

This done, she assisted the executioner to put the gunpowder into her bosom. After this she proceeded cheerfully, as if she were going to a festival. Her countenance was not once moved at the sight of the fire. The executioner made ready a cord to strangle her. Removing her neckerchief she herself fastened the strap round her neck. Again the monk spoke: Are you not sorry that you have erred? She answered; I erred formerly; for that I am sorry. But this is no error, it is the right way; I cleave to God. This said, she cast down her eyes and closed them as if she had fallen asleep.

The Parable of The Tares.

The disciples of Jesus asked Him, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field"; He then enumerated all the points that had significance. Matthew 13:37 – 43,

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. The son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father".

At once differences in application between this parable and the parable of the Sower appear. Jesus here defines the Sower. Also in the Sower parable the seed was the Word of the Kingdom; here the seed are the individuals, good or bad. Those differences have to be kept in mind.

The field is the world, Jesus explains for a right understanding of the parable, we must not change the world into the church. And since the Son of Man is the Sower the starting point of the parable is His own ministry; to which we perhaps add the work of those who were specifically appointed thereto and endowed with power for the carrying of His message throughout the world.

After the sowing of the wheat an enemy sows tares in the same field. Other sowers began their work but what they sowed was a counterfeit of the wheat. It resembled the wheat but was harmful and useless. The Wheat JESUS said were the children of the Kingdom; the darnel children of the wicked one. Yet the latter had professions, which corresponded to the former. Thus viewed the parable is a prediction of the growth of a system, which would counterfeit the truths taught by Jesus, which would claim to be His church but which would be of `the wicked-One."

In his last letter Paul warns Timothy of perils to come, when men would have a form of godliness, but deny its power. When sound doctrine would not be endured and fables would be followed. He further indicates that this apostasy would assume the form of a counterfeit of the true. "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moss so do these men resist the truth; men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the Faith". How did the Egyptian magicians resist Moses? By imitating his work, by repeating as far as they could the wonders that he had done. So again would truth be resisted and error established.

No reader of the New Testament epistles and of the Apocalypse (Revelation) can miss the repeated notes of warning which all sound. The warning is not merely of the trials and difficulties that then clouded the sky but the writers look forward to a fuller development of the evils they combated.

The atmospheric is charged with the portent of future storm. The history of Christendom could not have been different from what it is and the prediction of the apostles be fulfilled. In a very short time after the apostles day the mysteries which so captivated men's minds in the pagan world had so corrupted the teaching the mysteries which so captivated men's minds in the pagan world had so corrupted the teaching of the apostles that a pagan would have felt at home in one of the ecclesiastical buildings while the apostles would have been strangers!

Brother James Hembling.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, They shall prosper that love thee"

Behold the Goodness and the Severity of God

“And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7)

We believe this statement of Scripture, and all that appertains to it. When reading the Bible we look for common sense and avoid superstition as God asks of us – “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 1:18).

In Romans 11:22 read, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

Adam was created corruptible with flesh and blood like all the animals but more than this he was given the ability to reason and to discern between right and wrong. In order to develop character he was placed under a law and this gave him choice to obey or disobey, that is, to please God or not. The penalty for disobeying God was that he would be put to death that day.

Adam was created with a flesh and blood constitution in which it was never intended he should live for ever in such a condition for we read in 1 Corinthians 15:50, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” So if Adam had remained faithful and obedient to God all the days of his probation he would not have inherited eternal life until his nature was changed to an incorruptible one. But Adam together with his wife Eve were disobedient and were immediately afraid of the consequence – they expected to be put to death and so they hid away from God. But that was useless; God knew where they were and to their great relief they were allowed to live - but not in Eden. God killed a lamb from which He made coats of skin to provide them with a covering which was symbolic of the covering over of their sin. This was the first sacrifice for sin. No change of Adam's nature is mentioned or needed for them to continue their probation even though there circumstances were different. The sacrifice of the lamb was insufficient to satisfy the Law of Sin and Death they were under. It was only a temporary covering over of their sin that had been provided and this still needed to be taken away at some time and until then they were considered as under condemnation and in need of redemption.

How do we know this? In Genesis 3:15 we have the answer but this is not simple to follow and seems a little odd when we first come across it, here God is promising someone to come and put matters right by destroying the serpent with a bruise to the head (fatal) yet the seed of the woman would first suffer a bruise to the heel from which he would soon recover.

We can link this with John 3:16 where we are told “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This could only mean one thing; that Adam did not suffer the penalty for his sin. He was never put to death.

What Paul expresses in the first of Corinthians is no new doctrine but one that is proved in Genesis, is in the words of John – the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, for was not the typical lamb slain by God in the place of Adam, proving beyond all doubt that he could have and would have been slain but for the great love, mercy and grace of God.

The lamb slain in Eden was free from any law or guilt, yet bodily was of the same animal make-up, so it would have been foolish to suggest that the lamb or any of the animal creation would have lived for ever. Blood is the vehicle of life for a corruptible creation, not merely of man but all of the animal creation. This teaching is emphasised throughout the Old Testament and confirmed in the New.

Jesus taught that the New Creation would be flesh and bone energised by Spirit - without blood, and without the need for it. Man, however, in his present, created state, cannot live without blood; if he loses it

he dies and corruption sets in, and unless during his lifetime he has been enlightened by God and been redeemed by Christ and reconciled, he will never know what it is to really live.

It is significant that Jesus lost His blood when the Roman soldier pierced His side and out gushed blood and water. Did He have need of it again? Certainly not; yet according to some Jesus was raised in a corruptible state, but this is not in harmony with Scripture for Jesus could not give His life for the sheep and receive the same back again. Read verse 14 of Hebrews chapter 2 and you will see that He was made flesh and blood so the He could, although obedient, be put to death.

Would you say that Adam was created any different to Jesus Christ, or would you say that the same impulses were not felt by them both; the difference being that Adam failed whereas Christ overcame? It may be suggested that Christ had no partner to tempt Him, but we should be wrong for the disciples will constitute His bride and future wife, yet Peter tempted or tried Him and received the rebuke, "Get thee behind me satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God but of men." (Matthew 16:23).

None of us with knowledge of the scripture would deny the importance that is placed on blood throughout the Old Testament scriptures. What is the reason for it? It is the means of transportation of life. It carries the life through the body of a corruptible being, i.e. one that is capable of dying, though not necessarily one who is subject to the law of sin and death, for such was the position of Adam before he was given the law but never intended to be a finished creature, that is, perfection was something he must attain to and receive through probation. Never does the Scripture teach or imply that man was any different physically before or after he sinned. There is no indication his flesh was changed in any way.

If Adam had received what was his due he would have suffered the violent death which the lamb suffered in his stead. He did not however suffer the wages of sin otherwise Eve would never have given birth to sons and daughters and the human race would never have been. But even though this did not happen, it could not alter the fact the law had been broken and that the unborn race in the loins of Adam had been sold under sin. As Paul says of himself, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Romans 7:14.

What did God do under these circumstances? He made provision through the lamb He slew in Eden. The shed blood is the emphasis of sinfulness. This is how the lamb died, and also the Son of God whom it foreshadowed and which John declared to be the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

Some say that Adam received the wages of sin 930 years later when he died a natural death through old age. But they are not consistent in their beliefs, much less in harmony with the Bible doctrine and it is quite easy to see why they distort the facts in this manner. It is, however like a person who has told a lie and is forced to tell a hundred more to make his first lie appear true. They have to keep Adam alive long enough to produce the human race through sons and daughters. Ask them if Adam was forgiven and they say, "we cannot be certain; he will be raised from the dead and appear before the judgment seat of Christ before he knows."

Even Dr Thomas admits that Adam, if he had not sinned was not created in a physical state that could live for ever but would need a change. He agrees in his writings that Adam was created flesh and blood, with the same impulses within him to obey or disobey the Divine Law – the same impulses that now govern our lives and which influence us one way or the other by the extent of our knowledge of God's laws and how we respond to them.

Christ died for us, the Just for the unjust. Did He not die in our stead? That is, did He not die the judicial death like the type before Him – the lamb slain in Eden? All under the Law of Moses knew that the lamb slain as a sin-offering died in place of the offerer symbolically bearing their guilt. But God laid on Him (Jesus) the sin of us all (Isaiah 53:4-6), "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Was Jesus Christ our Representative? No. Was He God's Representative? Yes. Some would have it the other way round and then get confused. Jesus Christ laid down His life as the ransom and there

instead of us, the Just for the unjust. He died in Adam's stead as John the Baptist declared – "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. By taking away the sin of the world it is to be understood that Jesus bore the guilt of the sinner. If this is not the understanding then why did Jesus allow Himself to be crucified? He said He had paid the price and now we owe Him our lives. Every purchase is a substitution, and a ransom is the purchase price of redemption. Adam, the first son of God had sold himself to Sin; his Brother, Jesus Christ the second Adam, chose to lay down His life to redeem him. Our Redemption took place on Calvary's cross. Jesus died to purchase Adam back to His Father – and not only Adam but all Adam's offspring too for they had received Adam's forfeited life.

One writer claimed that "If there had been a Jew who had kept the law perfectly he could have done what Jesus had done." No, he could not! Everyone has descended from Adam - except Jesus Christ who had His life direct from His Father and it was not passed down from Adam; the Virgin Birth ensured this. His body was the same as any son of Adam but His life in the blood did not come from Adam. It is a scientific fact that life is passed down from father to child and never from the mother. During a healthy and normal pregnancy the mother's blood does not mix with the blood of the foetus in her womb. Therefore the life of Jesus could not be the same life as in Mary's blood but a new life similar to the life which God gave to the first Adam but never forfeited to sin. The life of everyone else was already sold to Sin and no value with which to pay the purchase price of Adam and his descendants.

We are told in the Bible that there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood and this is distasteful to some but there is no alternative and Jesus Christ was the gift of God to mankind and it was Jesus' great love for us that He laid down His own life allowing His life to be shed on the cross, despising the shame and demonstrating tremendous courage and determination in order that He could forgive the faithful by taking on Himself their punishment and bring all the faithful to God.

Adam's death at the end of 930 years was not the punishment for his sin for the animal slain by God in Eden provided the covering for his sin; a temporary covering until Jesus came to take it away. Adam's life was extended thus allowing him to produce sons and daughters.

Christ is our Passover and when we consider the First Passover in Egypt we can see the reason why. Abraham's family who became known as Israel after his grandson, and had gone to live in Egypt but kept themselves apart from the Egyptians who worshipped many gods while the Israelites worshipped the One true God, the Creator of all things. In the course of time the Israelites grew in numbers and the new Pharaohs ruled until the Egyptians became afraid the Israelites might overrule them and to prevent this they made slaves of the Israelites. This continued for many years until God chose to free the Israelites from their slavery which had become very severe and cruel. It is not our purpose to tell the whole story here but to highlight certain events. The ten plagues on Egypt followed and this brought the nation to its knees but the ruling Pharaoh was hard-hearted until the end and this end came about when all the first-born of the people and the cattle died in one night and in desperation Pharaoh drove out the Israelites into the wilderness.

However God had told the Israelites the day before to be prepared to leave. That night every household was to sacrifice a lamb, spread some of its blood on their doorposts and lintel and no one was to leave the house until the morning. During the night the destroying angel of the Lord smote the firstborn in every house where there was no blood of a sacrificed lamb on the door posts and lintel but passed over every house where this was seen – hence it was called The Passover and all the faithful were spared. The people were to eat of the lamb and be ready to leave in haste so they had their shoes on the feet for when they had to flee.

At midnight the angel of God slew all the firstborn in Egypt and there was a sudden outcry and all the Israelites were forced out and left Egypt to go the Promised Land which we know today as the Land of Israel.

In 1 Corinthians 7:7 we read "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" Even as the lamb slain at Passover when the hard hearted and stubborn Egyptians were severely punished for their cruelty and the people faithful to God were delivered, today we see how the faithful and God-fearing people throughout this faithless world be delivered from the bondage to this age and delivered to the freedom of

the Kingdom of God to be ruled in peace and righteousness with Jesus Christ as King ruling from Jerusalem.

“Praise the Lord all ye nations, praise Him all ye people for His merciful kindness is great toward us and the truth of the Lord endures for ever. Praise ye the LORD.” Psalm 117

The article below by Anne Graham was first published in Circular Letter No. 193 in January 2002 and we feel it needs publishing again as a stark reminder of what is happening in the world today, and why.

Did You Say OK?

Billy Graham’s daughter was being interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayton asked her “How could God let something like this happen? And Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, “I believe that God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we’ve been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman that He is, I believe that He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand that He leaves us alone?”

I know there’s been a lot of e-mails going around in regards to Sept. 11/01 but this really makes you think. If you don’t have time, at least skim through it, but the bottom line is something to think about.

In light of recent events... terrorists attack, school shootings, etc., let’s see, I think it started when Madeline Murray O’Hare (she was murdered, her body was found recently) complained she didn’t want any prayer in our schools, and we said, OK.

Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school... the Bible that says, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, and love thy neighbour as thyself. And we said, OK.

Then Dr Benjamin Spock said we shouldn’t spank our children when they misbehave because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem (Dr Spock’s son committed suicide). And we said, an expert should know what he’s talking about, so we said, OK.

Then someone said teachers and principals better not discipline our children when they misbehave. And the school administrators said no faculty member in this school better touch a student when they misbehave because we don’t want any bad publicity and we surely don’t want to be sued (there’s a big difference between disciplining and touching, beating, smacking, humiliating, kicking, etc.), and we said, OK.

Then someone said, Let’s let our daughters have abortions if they want, and they won’t even have to tell their parents. And we said, OK.

Then some wise school board members said, Since boys will be boys and they’re going to do it anyway, let’s give our sons all the condoms they want, so they can have all the fun they desire and we won’t have to tell their parents they got them at school. And we said, OK.

Then some of our top elected officials said it doesn’t matter what we do in private as long as we do our jobs. And agreeing with them we said it doesn’t matter to me what anyone, including the President, does in private as long as I have a job and the economy is good.

And then someone said, Let’s print magazines with pictures of nude women, call it wholesome, down-to-earth appreciation for the beauty of the female body. And we said, OK. And then someone else took that appreciation a step further and published pictures of nude children, and then stepped further still by making them available on the internet. And we said, OK, they’re entitled to their free speech-

And then the entertainment industry said, let's make TV shows and movies that promote profanity, violence and illicit sex. And let's record music that encourages rape, drugs, murder, suicide and satanic themes. And we said it's just entertainment; it has no adverse effect and nobody takes it seriously anyway, so go right ahead.

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with "WE REAP WHAT WE SOW."

"Dear God, Why didn't you save the little girl killed in her classroom? Sincerely, Concerned student." And the reply "Dear Concerned Student, I am not allowed in schools. Sincerely, God."

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say but question what the Bible says. Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say or do anything the Bible says. Funny how we are quick to Judge but not to be judged.

Funny how we can send a thousand 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace. Funny how someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week.

Are you laughing?

Funny how when you go to forward this message you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe or what they will think of you for sending it to them. Funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

Are you thinking?

Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not, then just discard it... no one will know that you did. But if you discard this thought process, then don't sit back and complain about what a bad shape the world is in!

Ann Lawton-Bending. November 11, 2001

[http://www.ioa.com/~'belleek/bendmg3\(a\)horne.com](http://www.ioa.com/~'belleek/bendmg3(a)horne.com)

Christ Is Coming

Christ is coming! let creation
bid her groans and travail cease;
let the glorious proclamation
hope restore, and faith increase:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come, thou blessèd Prince of Peace.

Earth can now but tell the story
of thy bitter cross and pain;
she shall yet behold thy glory,
when thou comest back to reign:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Let each heart repeat the strain.

Long thine exiles have been pining,
far from rest, and home, and thee;
but in heavenly vesture shining,
they shall soon thy glory see:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Haste the joyous jubilee!

With that blessèd hope before us,
let no harp remain unstrung;
let the mighty advent chorus
onward roll from tongue to tongue:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!

John Ross MacDuff (1818-1895)

Psalm 84:9 to 12,

Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favour and honour. No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Scientists Have Proven that God is Protecting Israel

Nuclear physicist, Gerald Schroeder, a known researcher in the past for The Weizmann Institute and Hebrew University, simply cannot be accused of unscientific thinking. When observing statistics that don't seem all too logical, most of Schroeder's colleagues admit that there was "luck" involved.

Impossible Statistics ?

The existence of the State of Israel, the fact that there were so few casualties from the Scud missiles shot down on Israel during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, all appear, on the surface, to be a stroke of luck. Schroeder, however, refuses to call it "luck." Luck is just not a scientifically sound term. For nuclear physicists like Schroeder, the real answer is that God is protecting His people.

Dr. Schroeder makes the point that many miracles happen in what seems like a very natural manner. The Persian Gulf War in 1991 was an odd war. The States of Israel endured a massive bombing of an enormously powerful missile – the Scud missile – on heavily populated areas in Israel – Tel-Aviv and its surroundings. Not one person was killed from these bombing, though there were wounded. One man experienced a heart attack, and it is unclear if this was connected to the bombing.

One does not need to be a brilliant professor in order to reach the conclusions of Dr. Schroeder. But, it is most reassuring when someone of his stature makes it clear that the rational explanations of the occurrences in the modern State of Israel simply don't hold water.

We don't need to be scared of the repercussions of accepting God's involvement in this world. If it is logical to assume that there is a hand of God in charge of this world, and illogical to assume otherwise, then let's accept that the creation and existence of the State of Israel is one big miracle.

Phil Schneider

Psalm 78:1 to 8

"Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God."