

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 64

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Greetings of love in the name of Jesus.

We hope you will approve of the new front cover of this issue, it is on similar lines to the one our late Bro. Fred Pearce used to send out some years ago, it was felt that a change of wording was called for seeing that the paper now contains more in the way of doctrine, for as most of you will know the 'Comforter' started out as a supplementary to Bro. Brady's excellent Circular Letter and was for the up-building of brethren and sisters only, which was much appreciated by all but as both editors have had to give up their labours in this field for health reasons; it was felt that the paper should include matter in our endeavour to preach the Gospel "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

During the past month we received a letter from Bro. J. Hold, Toowoomba, Australia informing us that in the last few years about half the members of the Ecclesia where he met (they number 20) have come out in protest against error in Christadelphian doctrine. We are sure you will all be encouraged to have this good news and we send a warm Greeting to them on behalf of us all and may they rejoice with us in the glorious hope we have.

Both Sister May Lockett and Brother Leo Dreifuss have been ill during the very cold spell we wish them and any others we don't know about a full recovery.

Brother and Sister Phil and Rene Parry wish to convey their kindest regards to all the Brethren and Sisters and may our Heavenly Father's blessing and comfort be with them.

In this month's issue we come to the conclusion of Brother Brady's interesting book "What God hath Cleansed," also there is an article by Bro. Parry entitled "Better things than that of Abel."

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

With Sincere love in Him, your Bro. and Sis. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

continued from February.

“What God Hath Cleansed”

by Ernest Brady

The basis of his theory and conclusions appear to be disgust with human nature in general; the conviction that human flesh is intrinsically evil, unclean and full of sin; that flesh is in fact the devil. As long as that conviction remained the vague generalised doctrine of Sin-in-the-flesh as held in common by the Roman Catholic Church and Christadelphians, even though it is false and God-dishonouring, it would not perhaps warrant the ugly word we have applied. But when, with unquestionable logic he proceeds in cold blood to the affirmation that Jesus was sin, that the devil died upon Calvary, then he has placed himself beyond any defence of well-intentioned ignorance.

This is a case in which, as one writer has said, “Where the premises are false the best logician is the least safe guide.” Jesus was begotten of God, and one who says Jesus was sin is making God the Creator of Sin. Jesus was God’s Son and anyone who affirms that when He died upon the Cross the devil hung there, dead, makes the Almighty God the father of the devil. If this is not that awful sin which Jesus warned the Scribes and Pharisees against, words have no longer any meaning. There may be people whose minds are not equal to the task of following out the implications of the belief that human flesh is literally physically defiled, or who do not immediately appreciate how such a false theory affects Christ in His relationship to God and as a sacrifice for sin, but there can surely be few so un-discerning as to fail to see the foul quagmire into which they are being led by this blind doctor of a false philosophy. Even Roman Catholics are in a better case; they hold the same false doctrine of original sin as A.D.Norris, but they have the grace to recognise that it was impossible that God’s Son should be defiled or unclean and to escape from their dilemma they have invented the Immaculate Conception.

Christadelphians invent an equally unscriptural way to escape, by making a distinction between Jesus’ nature and His character, saying He was physically unclean but morally spotless. Years ago Andrew Wilson likened their doctrine of Christ to a conjuring trick a black and white rabbit; when His nature or flesh is under discussion they produce the black one, but when it is His character, they pop up the white one. Some people regard such a simile as frivolous and undignified but one must admit its pointedness. We find the same thing in A.D.Norris’s book. We have dealt with his statement on page 76 that “his nature... bore the stamp of rebellion against God.” This is the black rabbit. Then on page 61 he speaks of “the likeness stamped upon the being of the Son of God.” This is the white one. The truth is that Jesus was a man and as much a unified personality as other men; the only difference was that whereas our life came via a human father His life came direct from a Divine Father. If this resulted in him bearing the stamp of rebellion against God, and vice-versa; Mr. Norris cannot have it both ways. The fact is that both expressions are nothing but meaningless jargon to conceal his own inability to explain his doctrine. We have given our explanation in “God-manifestation.” Jesus also has disposed finally of this ridiculous idea that a man can consist of two opposite and opposed natures. He reproved the Scribes for the same foolishness in the following verses of the chapter (Matthew 12) we have been dealing with, and His words apply with even greater force to those to-day who say that His nature was defiled and full of sin, but His moral character holy. “Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt.” v 55. “An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit. By their fruits ye shall know them.” This again is a simple sort of logic with which the teaching of Jesus abounds, and if it was applied it would have prevented A.D.Norris speaking of Jesus’ flesh bearing the stamp of rebellion against God. If we judge the tree by its fruits, then the tree which produced the life of Jesus as its fruits was a good tree. If the flesh of Jesus was full of evil, the seat of potential sin, the tree was corrupt and could produce only evil fruit. So let us have an end of this mixing of incompatible opposites, thus unscriptural hotch-potch of physical sin and moral good; either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt,

AMERICARTA

Since the foregoing pages were put into the printer’s hands, several very significant matters have come to our notice. The first is an editorial headed “A Cracked Trumpet” in The Christadelphian for

March 1955. From this it appears that John Carter has been subjected to considerable criticism on account of the position he took up in his United States tour in order to bring about reunion. On his own admission he has been charged with having “gone off the rails,” being “unfaithful to those who preceded him,” even “that he is not truthful,” and he quotes a letter saying: “But Bro. Carter, lately you are sounding a cracked trumpet... which will lead to error.” Knowing the good work done by the late A.D.Strickler and the strength of the opposition to “sinful-flesh” in the U.S., we have certainly been puzzled by the diplomatic success attending John Carter’s trip, and have wondered how it was achieved. The second matter of interest suggests the answer. This was a personal letter from a Christadelphian in California; it is too long to reproduce in full but the following extracts give a fair summary of its import:-

“Dear Friend, There has come into my possession a booklet written by yourself entitled “Carterdelphia - a new apostasy.” Now I hasten to remark that, while I am not in agreement with you on the nature and sacrifice of Christ, I do agree with you to the extent that John Carter and his associates are fast corrupting Christadelphian doctrine with their philosophy... they are drifting towards evolution and modernism... the famous (or should I say, infamous) address which John Carter delivered all over the U.S. and Canada, and later at the Jersey City Reunion Conference, was nothing more than a carefully worded discourse so framed as to be acceptable both to clean flesh advocates and Bereans... the Strickler group later said:

“It writes out everything Bro. Carter has ever said on the subject previously... Recently it was revealed that a large group at Boston (and doubtless they are but a few of the many in the Central group in America) were still teaching the Strickler clean flesh doctrines. This caused a hue and cry from some of the Bereans who had gone into fellowship with them, but Carter came to their defence and appears to have settled the matter by an expert job of whitewashing... It is possible you are overlooking the fact that you have many adherents to your doctrine in Central fellowship, and that you and John Carter are not as far apart as you think.”

Yours sincerely...

If we could really think there was any truth in that last phrase, we would cut off our hand before we would say anything which might be regarded as a rebuff. The last thing we would wish is to quench the smoking flax, but we are bound to say we think our correspondent misreads the evidence. Whatever he may have said in the United States, so far as we can see John Carter is completely hostile to us and all we stand for. Our literature is proscribed, our members are maligned, and instant action is taken to disfellowship anyone who voices our views. There is an instance of this in the very issue we are quoting from, in the Birmingham (Erdington) intelligence, and the hostility is not confined to the Central fellowship, for the same person was asked by the Suffolk St. fellowship to refrain from distributing his own essay on the subject. To what an amazing state the Christadelphian world has come. As our correspondent says, we may have many adherents in the U.S. unknown to us, though as we said in regard to those in Australia, we cannot see how anyone can honestly claim to believe as we do and yet be content to call themselves Christadelphians. There may also be some in the Central fellowship here who lean to our view but we have hitherto seen no reason to suppose John Carter is amongst them. Our diagnosis of the situation would rather be that there are many in his fellowship, including himself, who will try as they will, can find no way to refute our teaching and have been reduced to closing their eyes and ears. It may well be, and the contents of the March editorial lend colour to the possibility, that the strength of the opposition to “sinful flesh” and Clause 5 which John Carter encountered abroad has increased his respect for the so-called clean flesh heresy and forced him to moderate his hostility, but we do not feel we shall be doing him an injustice if we regard him as motivated more by expediency than conviction, since there is and will ever remain, an irreconcilable conflict ‘between what the Statement of Faith lays down and what we believe to be the truth.

As the reader will have seen, the sole purpose of this book has been to high-light the utter and complete contrast between our conception of the nature of man and the sacrifice of Christ and that revealed by John Carter in the pages of the Christadelphian. And only his renunciation of the errors which we have described earlier as seven unclean spirits of doctrine could bring us into line. Whether this is a likely event is a matter of opinion; if as it appears to our American correspondent, a member of his own fellowship having no reason so far as we know, to misrepresent him, he has given the impression

of being prepared to tolerate our view, perhaps this indicates that he is moving in the right direction, but he will have to make some very big meals of his own words and deal with some very difficult characters before peace reigns. His duty as an editor, perhaps even pure interest, no doubt compels him to study carefully the literature circulated by The Nazarene Fellowship, and while it must often be very little to his liking, there can be no question that its unanswerable logic and lucid reasoning will get through to the mind eventually in spite of everything, and without boasting we believe it can truthfully be said that generally speaking there is more plain, simple and straightforward application of Scripture and bold factual argument on almost any page of Nazarene literature than in many a whole book. The reason for this is not far to seek, we have the Truth, and however it may be turned about and from whatever angle we approach it, it stands up firm and clear and unassailable.

We do not need to be careful of what we say in one context, or how we say it, for fear of contradicting ourselves in another; this is the bugbear of The Christadelphian and no doubt even a man in the difficult position of its editor is incapable of complete imperviousness to that which proceeds out of the mouth of babes and sucklings if it be truth. It certainly appears now that the writer who charged John Carter with sounding a cracked trumpet was not too wide of the mark. His editorial apology (p 107) contains what we have never seen before in The Christadelphian – quotations from the works of both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, wherein they both admit that man was corruptible at his creation and before he sinned. Bro. Fred Pearce, of Newbridge, has been patiently plugging these passages for nearly 20 years, as evidence of the fundamental contradiction in Christadelphian teaching, but hitherto their very existence has been ignored or else they have been dismissed as temporary aberrations on the part of their authors.

It has been a surprise to us, and it will have been an unpleasant shock to many of his own following, to see them now produced by John Carter with the avowed object of justifying the position he took up in the United States. Whether the use of these quotations indicates a change of mind or whether he has produced them simply to escape from an awkward predicament it is impossible to say, but from our point of view the mere fact that he has advanced them is a most tremendous victory. We can only wonder to what extent he realised the admissions he was making when he wrote the following paragraph:-

“Secondly, we did not quote the ‘one occasion Dr. Thomas contradicted Himself.’ We quoted from Elpis Israel, which has just passed its hundred years of circulation. We suggested some of his language in two adjoining paragraphs was not free from difficulty: ‘It is probable Adam and Eve would have died after a long time’ - and mark the added words, ‘if no further change had been operated upon their nature.’ ‘The animal nature will sooner or later dissolve. We may admit the corruptibility and consequent mortality, of their nature, without saying that they were mortal’ - in other words, unless a word is used in two senses, which indeed may be, they were two opposite things at the same time. Our point is, we are wise to accept what is written: man was a ‘natural body’ when made. (I Corinthians 15:44-5)”

How often have we been vilified for saying no more than this:- “not free from difficulty” is only a euphemism for “contradictory,” and suggesting the wisdom of accepting what is written? The first leaflet we wrote said little more than this, yet John Carter spoke of it as the work of ‘a renegade brother.’ The points he has made in the above extract are what we have advanced in controversy with W.F.Barling, and anyone who can refer to his articles “Redemption in Christ” published by John Carter in 1946, will find them described as “plausible but specious.” How that John Carter has discovered that man was a “natural body” when made and is prepared to admit his corruptibility even before he sinned, and that even had he remained obedient he would probably “have died after a long time,” perhaps even Fred Barling will be prepared to admit that they are rather more “plausible” and less “specious” than he thought. Unfortunately for John Carter’s future peace as an editor, his admissions are in complete opposition to the Statement of Faith and to the commonly accepted idea of what the Doctor and R.Roberts taught. We think that consciously (as we could wish) or unconsciously (which may serve) he is giving expression to what he has learned from the work of Edward Turney and the Clean Flesh controversy. God be praised if this is the case; we think, however that at present he may be going through a similar process to ourselves some twelve years ago - the painful one of realising that we have been wrong. He can see the force of our reasoning with half his mind, and has so far accepted it as to be

able to compromise with American "Clean Flesh", but with the other half he clings, like his predecessors, to physical 'sin-in-the-flesh.' He says Dr. Thomas's words are "not free from difficulty" but he does not help his readers to the extent of suggesting how the difficulty can be removed; obviously because either he does not know and cannot, or because, if he knows, he dare not. He falls back on a cliché, the wisdom of accepting what is written, that man was created "a natural body." This is not even honestly discharging his duties as an editor to his readers, far less of an elder and teacher of his flock. As we have shown in "Death for Sin" earlier and in the pamphlet "Too True to be new," if we have the wisdom to accept what is written we shall have to abandon the idea that corruptibility is the penalty for sin. After quoting Dr. Thomas' words admitting that Adam would have probably died after a long time (and was not 950 years a long time? - E.B.), John Carter goes on: "When created man was very good, as God declared. He was tried by an external tempter and failed, and then realised shame and guilt and fear of God." Now, we can agree 100% with this; it is Scripture. But what about the Statement of Faith's "implantation of physical decay giving a bias in the direction of sin and working out dissolution and death"? What about W.F.Barling's "physically infected flesh and vitiated nature"? What about A.D.Norris's "fountain of sin" and "flesh in rebellion"? What a position the editor is in. He says again in Dr. Thomas's words: "Mortality and immortality were set before them as possibilities." True again; but then he says: "This has the support of Paul, for he says: "by man came death." This is laughable. He knows that his readers, and himself until now, believe that this refers to natural death, or corruptibility, and the very purpose of his quotation from Dr. Thomas is to show that corruptibility and eventual natural death were man's condition at his creation and before he sinned. Perhaps he has his tongue in his cheek; he is certainly either disingenuous in the extreme or unbelievably naive. Does he make the least attempt to meet the questionings in the minds of his readers? Not a bit of it. He says: "on these facts we must insist and will continue to do so", and instantly goes on to quote one of the several passages in which Robert Roberts also wrote in the same devastatingly contradictory fashion. He says: "But the first editor, at the end of a life of contention, and not long after he had penned the synopsis in which he says: "Death... was not inherent in him before sentence," also wrote: "Man's state after creation - he was a living soul or natural body of life, maintained in being by the action of the air through the lungs like us...would he have died if left alone, unchanged, in that state if he had not sinned? Who can tell? The testimony is that death came by sin; but the fact also is that, not being a spiritual body, he was presumably not immortal. Are we going to insist upon an opinion, on a point like this, about which no man can be certain? We shall act unwarrantably if we do so." The mind that produced that, like the mind that reproduced it, was in a state of complete confusion and manifests a total failure to distinguish between man's natural condition and his relationship to God. There is only one solution, which we have given in Section II; the death which came by sin was not natural death or corruptibility, but sentence of execution, a judicial death, involving alienation from God and eventual violent extinction.

Remember this is the Editor of the Christadelphian, writing in March 1955 and quoting these extracts to defend his present or expressed views, in which it is confessed that the basic point of Christadelphian doctrine concerning man's nature is "a matter of opinion about which no man can be certain." Where this places Dick Bull, Peter Barnard, Bill Woodley, Les Jennings and old uncle Tom Cobby and all, who insist that natural death is the wages of sin, they will have to decide for themselves, but their old grey mare certainly looks like the deadest kind of cat's meat.

The third matter to which we must refer is a short note in the April "Christadelphian" (p.145) concerning a 5d. pamphlet written by A.D.Norris entitled "What we stand for." We have dealt at some length with what Christadelphians will stand for from this author, in "Doctrine of Devils," so that it is interesting to note that even John Carter regards this as unsuitable for his pages and takes exception to one sentence, which he quotes in a footnote, as follows: - "When Adam sinned he was condemned both to a death in the sight of God and to a physical death. The decree was "thou shall surely die; dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return." What this sentence really means we cannot say - and we very much doubt whether even its author could either. We have before remarked that A.D.Norris is rather addicted to expressions which upon analysis prove to be pompous rhetoric. However, it presumably conveys something to John Carter, since he cannot agree with it. We feel sure this is highly significant but must confess that it is beyond us to say exactly what it is significant of. What makes it interesting from our point of view is that it indicates a tendency on the part of the Editor to be somewhat cautious of A.D.Norris, and we can only regard this with approval. Whether there is any rift between them we do

not know, but it will be very remarkable if John Carter's March editorial does not produce some startling changes. The drift of A.D.Norris's mind proves that his spiritual home is the Roman Catholic Church, and it would not surprise us if, like some other crackpot intellectuals he ended up there.

LAST WORD.

"No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." I Corinthians ch.12 v 5.

It will no doubt have come as a shock to many in-offensive people to find their faith criticised from so many directions. Like the writer, they may have grown up with the idea that their beliefs are synonymous with the word of God and they will have come to regard what is spoken of as "The Truth" as unassailable. The substance, however, of much of the matter in this book has been the subject of discussion and controversy in Christadelphian circles from the very beginning, and little of it is really new. If it comes as a surprise to the reader the blame must lie with those leaders who have used every device to prevent "the rank and file" from obtaining a fair and unbiased view of any point which might lead them to question their position. All that the writer has done is to bring together the various matters which have caused strife from time to time and which still constantly crop up and show how they all stem from a single false principle and all converge in the most astonishing and hopeless misconception of all time.

We have tried to show that the real cause of the trouble is the Statement of Faith and so long is this remains the definition of Christadelphianism, so long will strife continue and so long will it be required of faithful men that they cry aloud and spare not. Even today, when a brother or a sister or a group realise what Christadelphianism commits them to and ask questions in their ecclesia, they are either silenced by terrible warnings or threats of withdrawal or, if they persist and are finally disfellowshipped, all that is published is that they no longer uphold the Truth and the rumour is spread that they believe Christ had a different nature. No one lets the cat out of the bag that this is just a bogey-man to prevent the children asking awkward questions about how sin can be literally in flesh or why Christ had to die for Himself.

We are sometimes asked why, instead of constantly attacking Christadelphian teaching, we do not content ourselves with a simple positive statement of the beliefs of the Nazarene Fellowship. There are two answers:

(1) We have done so repeatedly but it so frequently happens that a Christadelphian hearing or reading it says: "But that is exactly what I believe;" it is only when the implications of their own principles are forced home upon them that it is apparent that there is a gulf as wide as an ocean between us.

(2) We concentrate upon Christadelphians because in the present world they are the people who most stand in need of the enlightenment we can give.

They are the counterpart or parallel of the Jews of Christ's day. The Jews rejected the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. Similarly, Christadelphians reject the true Christ - the Holy One and the Just, preferring one under the same curse as themselves, one who was made sin, one who was the embodiment of Satan. People who believe such things are in worse case than the unenlightened. (Hebrews 10:29). Therefore we believe they, above all, stand in need of the ministrations of those who can show them the true Prince of Life and the meaning of His Sacrifice.

It is not therefore out of any personal feeling or love of controversy that we have criticised the statements and beliefs of Christadelphians, but purely from the necessities of the case. If we had argued as a theoretical case, that the logical outcome of the doctrine that sin was literally in the flesh of Jesus is that it was the Devil who died upon the Cross, most Christadelphians would have scoffed at the suggestion. Indeed, we made the experiment and put the question to a Christadelphian friend, who by the way has no leanings towards our view, asking what he would say of anyone who affirmed that when Jesus died, the devil hung there, dead. He replied: "I should say anyone who said that was mad." That is why it is necessary for us to quote and reiterate the actual words of the Christadelphian who says it, and even though we have produced the evidence and given the source and context there will still be many

who disbelieve it and say we are twisting things and indulging in personalities. It does not matter that possibly very few will ever read "Understanding the Bible," or that even a majority might reject A.D.Norris's conclusions. The thing that is significant is that they are the conclusions of a responsible Christadelphian from Christadelphian principles and as such we have no alternative but to expose and resist them by every means at our command.

The truth about clean flesh is that the so-called heretics do not believe that the flesh of Jesus was any different from ours; as we have shown, the boot is on the other leg. In the explanation of how Jesus, by his birth, received a special strength to enable him to overcome sin, they are actually guilty of the very thing they charge us with. We do not believe that flesh as such is either clean or un-clean; men who are under condemnation because of sin are unclean in a legal sense; men who are no longer under condemnation and whose sins are forgiven are clean in a legal sense. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." John 15:10. Jesus was never either a sinner or under condemnation and it is therefore quite wrong to affirm of Him that "He was as unclean as those whom He came to save." That is why the Apostle Paul says: "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit calleth Jesus accursed." It is infinitely worse; it is unforgivable to say that He was the Diabolos. This is the monumental error of Christadelphianism; it has never been more clearly demonstrated than in the work referred to in the last chapter and we dare to predict that those who consciously hold it will not find acceptance at His return by the One whom it so grievously dishonours, while even those who disapprove but fail to make their protests heard will have cause for sorrow.

The Free-life theory does not imply that the life of Jesus was intrinsically any different from the life of any other man. It simply means that the Son of God He was born free from the legal disability or alienation which passes upon all whose life is derived from Adam. Jesus was the seed of the woman, raised up by a miracle as a member of the human family, and it is therefore correct to speak of Him as the Son of Man. It is not correct to speak of Him as the Son of Adam for the simple reason that God was His Father. No man ever had two fathers, and a person's life, name and inheritance comes from his father. Since there is only one kind of flesh of man, and the same kind of breath and life animates them all, in all physical respects Jesus was identical with all other men. Morally, He was superior to all other men, because He did no sin, but it was not this moral superiority which He sacrificed on the Cross; it enabled Him to retain the right to the life which He received at His birth and proved Him a perfect man. "Being made perfect (by His life of trial) He became the author of eternal salvation." The vital fact which alone qualified Him to surrender Himself as an offering for the sin of the world, was the fact that His life was unforfeited and was His own to give.

If belief of these facts constitutes Heresy, then we are heretics and happy to be so. But we are persuaded that anyone who has read these pages and will think about even such a familiar passage as that with which we conclude them, will be bound to admit that Clean Flesh is not so black as it is painted.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich (in His inheritance, as the Son of God), yet for our sakes He became poor (when He gave up that life which was His own) that we through His poverty, might become rich".

DID JESUS KNOW THE ESSENES?

Professor David Flusser feels he did. At an International Congress on Biblical Archaeology in Jerusalem during 1984 dealing with the influence of the Dead Sea sect on Christianity he said "It is sure that Jesus knew the Essenes position, not only through John the Baptist, a dissident Essene, but that he met the Essenes themselves." The direct reference to the sect, said Flusser, in the Christian Bible is contained in Luke ch. 16 v 8 where Jesus says "The children of the world are wiser than the sons of light." The Essenes styled themselves Sons Of Light, it was to them feels the professor that Jesus was referring, "He gives them their honorific title, Sons Of Light but he opposed their harsh ways." The few

concluding words stated the SONS Of LIGHT was taken by the 'second stratum' of Christianity represented by Paul to describe the Christians themselves.

The above was culled from an article in The Mount Zion Reporter, which I feel might provoke a few thoughts when we consider the importance of the matter revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls confirming our Scriptures.

H.Linggood.

Better Things Than That Of Abel.

Hebrews 11:4 and 12:24

Man's alienation from God by Adam's 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 them 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 and demanded 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 the wise man 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 shall 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 25:51, 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 54) 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. II Peter 2:5, 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 21, 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 II 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 speaketh 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, but He did indeed suffer the death which passed upon Adam and all men, by suffering it in their stead, but 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 then 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, only 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. P. Parry.

THEN SAID JESUS, FATHER FORGIVE THEM: FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO

Because this saying of Jesus is omitted in some MSS., can we say, like some, that God did not forgive those murderers? We were talking to a brother on the great theme of God's forgiveness and this saying was the subject, and the conclusion of the one in conversation. I said there was not a sin today that could not be forgiven if repented and confessed from the heart to God through Jesus. While there is

some truth in this statement it is not all the truth -- discrimination must be. If any repented they were forgiven, if they did not, then there was no forgiveness. Jesus said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven -- but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven." John said, that there was "a sin not unto death," and that "There is a sin unto death" (I John 5:16). Are these two quotes referring to the Holy Spirit in the days of the Apostles, and can this apply today? I think that the only sin today that is unto death is the continued rejection of Jesus, We are told, "If any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death" (James 5:20). If it is true that Jesus never said it, there is no reason against the forgiveness of sins, as there are plenty of other scriptures which teach it, neither do all the MSS. omit it. While we know God will not forgive another for our asking, we know that He said, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of My book" (Exodus 52:55), this was an answer to Moses who showed great mercy. We have to recognise that God knows the heart, and vengeance belongs to Him, not to us.

Anyone knowing the history of the Jews and the continuance of God's calling to repentance, cannot fail to see that in the worst cases His hand was outstretched still. Will anyone say under Law was better than being under Grace? But let none think we advocate the idea of so called "Confession" is the right and true repentance when one continues doing as before. If Moses and Paul and others can teach forgiveness, would we say Jesus lacked this great attribute? "Lord lay not this sin to their charge" is Stephen's desire (Acts 7:60). Paul in like manner concerning Alexander (II Timothy 4:14-16). So it is quite reasonable from all angles that it is better to accept it from some of the MSS. and not reject it because some omit it.

From an old Circular Letter.

