

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 112

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## Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you for your letters and your appreciation for the articles on resurrection and judgement; and there are more this month in "Proving 'Anastasis' Untrue" and "Further Comment on 'Anastasis'."

I have been trying to get a copy of 'Anastasis' for some months but without any success. The Christadelphian Office in Birmingham has been out of stock of this title for several years and though they recommended I tried some other sources no one seems to know it any more. I was even told that the most likely place to find a copy was in Australia!

It was pleasing to hear that Brother Harvey and Sister Evelyn Linggood were able to visit Sister May Lockett on her hundredth birthday and they report that though she is frail she is fairly well.

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief..." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4.

The political scene throughout the world continues in such turmoil that one wonders if there can ever be a cry of peace and safety, for there cannot be universal peace for we hear of "wars and rumours of wars". So many have doubted whether it was meant to be understood as a cry of peace and safety or rather a cry for peace and safety, that "the desire of all nations shall come." Haggai 2:7. It is my opinion that there will yet be a cry of peace and safety, though short-lived, for the destruction which follows will be the time of "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). The reason I think it is likely to be a cry of peace and safety is because Bible prophecy here centres upon Israel and her people and this is the only part of the world where this cry need apply. Events in such far flung places as South America, South Africa, and the Far East have no direct bearing upon this prophecy though they will be caught up in the world shattering events which follow for "Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32.

With Sincere Love to all, in the Master's Service, Russell Gregory

## A Witness To The Truth

Some months ago I wrote to Sister Muriel Stormont to ask if she had a story to tell of how she came to belong to the Nazarene Fellowship but, she says she never thought anyone would be interested in her story. However in the correspondence that has followed she writes to say that it was at the age of 15 or 16, she cannot remember which, she had asked her father some questions which had embarrassed him regarding Revelation 20:5 & 6, but her father was not easy to talk to and, she writes, “Anyway, who was I?”

She continues, “I was baptised at the age of 16 and given the right hand of fellowship. At this time all I had ever read was the Bible and I did not know that some of my understanding was contrary to the Statement of Faith for it was not until I was in my early thirties when my children were fairly grown, I read the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith for the first time, and found to my horror that I did not believe it, nor all the doctrines to be rejected! The reason I read it then was because my eldest daughter, Carol, had a friend who had studied to be a minister, and would not be ordained as it would limit his scope of speaking. He called us Thomasites, and asked Carol if she had read her Statement of Faith. Carol spoke to me about it, and it was then that I read it for the first time. She is not a Christadelphian, but a member of the “Fellowship Bible Church.”

Sister Muriel also writes of her daughter, Jeanie, who was going to be refused baptism because she did not believe that Jesus came from the tomb with His mortality. “Her father and I had taught her otherwise, as it was common sense! Her husband was brought up a Catholic, but had changed.”

“Before I knew about the Nazarenes I believed the same things from my teens”, Sister Muriel writes, and, “the first I knew about them was when someone sent me a copy of “Too True to be New” by Brother Ernest Brady; I don’t know who sent it as it came without a word, but it opened my eyes to certain facts and all became clearer to me. I was happy to receive it and to know that I was not alone in seeing these things in God’s Word.”

“Before that it had taken me years of checking and searching the Bible to make sure I was correct on certain points regarding the resurrection as well as other aspects of the faith.”

Surely this searching of the scriptures and the comparing scripture with scripture is an exhortation for us all, and Sister Muriel goes on to say that “Christadelphians should be taught that they must not tolerate falsehood in their Statement of Faith.” And she concludes, “I know it is difficult to find that you differ from the Statement of Faith, but we must decide where our loyalty lies, with God, or with people; with a man made creed, or with the Word of God.”

Thank you, Sister Muriel, for your story. I do hope you won’t mind me telling all our readers that all this was a long time ago, and that now you have seventeen grandchildren and twenty-one great-grand children!

Russell.

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## Rightly Understanding The Scriptures

This is the substance of a Bible Address given by Bro. G.L.Dreifuss to his fellow workers at a lunch time discussion class during the 1940’s. A reading of 2 Peter, chapter one will form a good introduction.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” So said Jesus to His disciples. So we see that the privilege of obtaining eternal life depends on knowing God and Christ and what has been revealed to us by them.

The only source to turn to for this information is His word as left on record in the Bible. This was written by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit, and so its contents do not consist of ideas of men, but of God's thoughts. As the Apostle Peter also wrote to the early churches, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of men; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:20 & 21.

But for the right understanding of the scriptures, knowledge of the Old Testament is as important as that of the New. In fact, once we comprehend the link between Old and New Testaments, we have much of the clue to the complete understanding of the Word of God. So in this essay we shall briefly survey a few events and prophecies mentioned in the Old Testament and referred to again in the New.

In the first book of the Bible we read after a short account of the creation how Adam and Eve sinned, of their attempt to cover themselves with fig-leaves, and of God's making them animal skins for their covering instead. This teaches right from the start an important lesson, which is borne out by later incidents in the Bible and which cannot be impressed too strongly: when man has sinned, God is eager and willing to forgive. But it must be on His terms, what God says man must do, not what man thinks.

But let us pursue the history given in the Book of Genesis a little further. We learn next of Cain and Abel. They both brought an offering to God. We are told that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, and that the Lord had not respect to his offering; that Abel brought sheep of his flock, and that the Lord had respect to his offering. And we ask: Why? Before we attempt to answer this question, we ought to point out two important principles to be applied always when trying to get any information from the Bible and to study it properly. The first is: that the Bible is full of cross references. An incident or a prophecy dealt with at one place is referred to again at another where least expected. We shall find several examples of this as we go on. For now, let us point out that this being so, then in order to understand the Bible really completely and thoroughly, it is indispensable to read it right through from the beginning to end, not once, but several times. The second principle is, that many things mentioned in Scripture have a twofold meaning: the obvious one which appears just from a superficial reading of it, and also a more hidden meaning which is only revealed much later in Scripture, and which we can only, therefore get to know by reading through the whole of the Bible. For example, we read early on in Genesis of two trees that were in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life. And we are told that when Adam and Eve sinned they partook of the first, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and as a consequence God withheld from them the Tree of Life by driving them out of the Garden. Now this Tree of Life is mentioned again in the very last chapter of the Bible, the last chapter of the Book of Revelation given by Christ Himself. This last chapter gives a description of the throne of God in the Kingdom finally to be established on earth, and an invitation to anybody willing to avail himself of a place in that Kingdom.

This is what we are told of the Tree of Life, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22: 1 & 2. And as a further cross reference we go back again to the Old Testament where the prophet Ezekiel described a vision very similar to the one just referred to in the Book of Revelation. This is the vision of the Temple in Jerusalem, restored after the return of Christ, which we hope, will shortly come to pass. Again we read of waters issuing out of the midst of the Temple of God. These waters are to be endowed with a life giving force. We read of trees at the bank of the river. This is what we are told of these trees in Ezekiel, "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side shall grow all trees for meat whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" Ezekiel 47:12.

So then, from all these dispersed statements we learn this: In the future Kingdom the throne of God, with the Temple, occupies the centre, and from it issues a river that contains some life-giving force. On its bank there is a tree (several trees, in Ezekiel's vision: but this is no contradiction, because Ezekiel's vision refers to a different time), and this tree bears fresh fruit every month, and its leaves are connected with power of healing. All this information we get by putting all the statements of this life-giving tree together. So, here

again, is an example to show the necessity to read the whole Bible, because then only are we in a position to know where to find all that is taught therein on a particular subject. Also, the Book of Revelation, from which we took one quotation, is a book full of symbolic language, although not a single symbol used is in any way mysterious: they are all explained in earlier books of the Bible, if we only know where to look for them. It is not easy to say whether the tree is one of the many symbols, or whether there will, in fact, be such a tree in the New Jerusalem to be established. One thing is certain, that is that the tree mentioned in Genesis was, at any rate, an actual tree, though no details about it are revealed. And so we see how this tree, mentioned in the Book of Genesis, eventually became a symbol of eternal life and of healing. Finally, the waters which we have seen to issue from the throne and the Temple of God, are tied up with the description of the garden of Eden in Genesis, where we read that a river went out from Eden to water the garden, which divided into four, flowing roughly north, south, east and west. So all these statements, apparently taken at random, dovetail together. They all show one and the same pattern, the centre of which is occupied by the Glory of God, and every time it is mentioned we read of a river, a tree and the idea of eternal life and health connected with it.

This, incidentally, shows the Divine inspiration of Scripture, for the writers of all these books lived many centuries apart. We shall now apply these principles to answer our first question: Why was Cain's offering of the fruits of the ground rejected, and why was Abel's offering of the firstlings of the flock accepted? Let us look then, where the matter is mentioned again, and we find that about Abel in the epistle to the early Hebrew believers. 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." From this we see that faith, and the kind of sacrifice brought, both have something to do with it. Note also the clause, "By which faith he obtained witness that he was righteous..." From this we see how we must go about to please God, first I faith, then doing what God commands us.

Let us now pursue these two subjects separately; Faith and Sacrifice. Let us take the second first. The bringing of animal sacrifices occupies a central part of the Old Testament, not only in the Law of Moses, for it is much older than that. In fact, we can trace it back to the fall of man in Eden. For when God clothed the first pair with skins, some animal must have been slain. Furthermore, all men on record long before Moses, of whom it is recorded they were approved of God, brought an animal sacrifice, at least once. In fact, the promises of blessings which God made to all His righteous servants were confirmed in that God showed, in some visible manner, that He accepted their sacrifice. But all these were animal sacrifices. Sacrifices of the fruits of the field are only exceptional and were commanded in the Law of Moses as thank offerings. But the sacrifice as a means of forgiveness of sin was always an animal offering, and under the Law of Moses it was a strict commandment that the blood of the animal was to be poured out to the ground. So then, the acceptable sin offering in the sight of God is an animal. That was why Abel had offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and that was why God witnessed that he was righteous. It is vital to realise that these sacrifices and the shedding of blood were not just ancient customs, which somehow at the time of Christ had become out of date. Their meaning is fully revealed in the New Testament, and without this revelation we cannot possibly understand the mission of Christ. First of all then, let us look into the kind of sacrifice, the sacrifice necessary to obtain God's pardon for a sin committed was a lamb without blemish, so the children of Israel were commanded by Moses. And John the Baptist introduced Christ as "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. Also in the book of Revelation we read of the throne of God and the Lamb, which again refers to Christ. So it is evident that these lambs pointed to Christ. His blood was shed when Roman soldiers pierced His side on Calvary, and although the Roman soldiers did not know it, this was not just something that happened by chance, for this was the way that Christ should reconcile the world to God, and this was the plan of God ever since the first pair sinned: that is, ever since God's forgiveness for sin became necessary. This is why John introduces Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, for the whole of Adam's posterity suffered as a consequence of his sin. The writer to the Hebrews deals with the meaning of these sacrifices and how they pointed to Christ in great detail. Space does not permit us to go into it in detail, but we must give just one verse from it, showing the necessity of the shedding of blood, part of the law of Moses. We are told in Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." Cain, who brought of the fruit, cannot possibly have shed blood. One of the first principles in God's dealings with man is that we can obtain His favour only if we come to Him on His terms, and that in faith that if we do our part, the promises which God made for those who love Him He is able and willing to fulfil.

This brings us now to the second part of the question of the sacrifice of Abel: his faith. For the inspired writer of the letter to the Hebrews leaves us in no doubt that Abel's faith played an essential part, and was just as important as the actual sacrifice itself; in fact, the promises made by God to those who faithfully serve Him and who accept them in faith is the second important theme, besides the one on sacrifice, running right through the Bible. In a very vague way Christ was intimated to Adam and Eve after they sinned, for God promised them a seed who would bruise the head of the serpent, the cause of the first sin. More promises were made to Abraham. He said to Abraham that in his seed would all nations be blessed, and that his seed would become an innumerable multitude. God made this promise at a time when his wife, Sarah, was already old, and He fulfilled it in that Sarah through a miracle, bare him a son in her old age. But Abraham believed God long before this was fulfilled. He knew that with God nothing is impossible, and he believed God when a messenger told him that Sarah herself would have a son, though at that time she was at least 90 years of age. This is an important statement: "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Genesis 15:6. Why this statement is so important is revealed in the New Testament, especially in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. In the latter, Paul repeats this very verse to show that, in his own words, "they that are of faith the same are the children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:6 and 7). Space permits us to give only a summary of what Paul has to say on this righteousness by faith. Christ is not only the Son of God, but also the son of Mary, who was a Jewess. Hence this is the seed of Abraham in whom all nations are to be blessed. And Paul goes on to show that if we show the childlike undoubting faith of Abraham, not regarding anything God promised as impossible, though not the natural seed of Abraham, are Abraham's seed by adoption, and at the same time belong to Christ.

Christ, by the way, is not only the seed of Abraham, He is also the seed promised in Eden, and earlier we have seen that He is also the Lamb, the offering for sin.

So again we have seen how the Old and New Testaments dovetail together, one common thread running through them both. We can now get perhaps an insight into an observation made earlier in this essay, namely, that on important occasions. God always confirmed His promises by showing visibly that He accepted the sacrifices brought by His servants. The important thing is that both sacrifice and promises are related to Christ; He is the centre of both, and indeed all past history was determined by God with the final object of setting up His Kingdom with His own Son as King. And not King only, but the one who personally undid the harm done when the first pair sinned, for He it is who reconciled the world to God by giving His own life and took our sins upon Himself who was sinless.

Space does not permit us to deal with the later revelations about Christ by the prophets. Let us just say that in the last book of the Old Testament, it is clearly shown that at a time not too distant. God will regather His chosen people, Israel, into the Holy Land, and the Kingdom of God is there to be established, with the ancient nation of Israel restored and Christ the ruler of Israel, and indeed of all the other nations. This is the Kingdom of God preached by Christ and His Apostles. So then, the connection between the Old and New Testaments, so vital to the understanding of Scripture is this:

1. The shedding of blood is absolutely necessary for the remission of sins. The animals so killed were symbols of Christ who came to reconcile the world to God by giving His own life-blood.
2. The promises of eternal life are to those who serve God in a childlike faith, counting nothing impossible with Him. These promises centre round Christ, and the future Kingdom of the faithful ones who, by that time, will have obtained eternal life, symbolised by the trees of which we spoke earlier. They will gain this life by the resurrection from the dead. They are also regarded as the children of Abraham to whom these promises were first made.

Allow me to close with an appeal to the reader to read the whole Bible; gradually, but systematically, preferably a portion daily according to some plan. There are many printed Bible guides in use, they all have their "fors" and 'againsts', but any one will serve its purpose as long as it takes you through the whole Bible. Only so is it possible to become acquainted with the Word of God. That many may get this vital knowledge of what God has left on record for those desiring His favour, is the writer's earnest prayer. Anybody interested to know more about these matters is heartily invited to write to the writer whose name and address appears at the end of this essay.

“Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord...” Jeremiah 9:23 and 24.

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” Micah 6:8.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever. Amen.” Romans 11:33 to 36.

G.L.Dreifuss.

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## Proving “Anastasis” Untrue

The resurrection of the dead is to the Christian a theme of the greatest interest and joyful expectation. On it his hope of eternal life and glory in the Kingdom of God depends. “If the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised, and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” 1 Corinthians 15:16-18.

Within the belief of the grand doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, there have, however, arisen several minor issues. To one of these we now request the reader’s attention, namely, whether those who fall asleep in Jesus, shall, at His coming, rise from the dead immortal and incorruptible; or come forth in mortality, and remain so till approved at the judgement seat of Christ. The latter idea is held by those who call themselves Christadelphians; and is one of their fundamental and distinguishing tenets. To show that this mortal resurrection theory is not only without foundation in Scripture, but also at variance with its explicit deliverances is the purpose of the following paragraphs; how far our effort has been successful the reader must decide for himself.

It is well to notice at the outset that the advocates of the theory in question produce no passage of Scripture which expresses in distinct terms the doctrine that the dead in Christ are resurrected in mortal bodies; they rest their contention on reasonings, inferences from considerations, and passages of Scripture not directly bearing on the point, and to which the express statements of Scripture are made to bend in a manner shortly to be stated and examined.

The quotations we make are from “Anastasis”, a treatise by the late John Thomas, M.D and held in the highest repute by Christadelphians. The only attempt at producing direct Scripture testimony in that treatise, in favour of its doctrine, is the citation of the following passages - Romans 8:11, 2 Corinthians 4:10, 11 & 5:4. Regarding the first proof passage, “God who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you,” the comment is as follows - “Did Paul mean ‘the mortal bodies’ called saints, living at the time he penned these words? If he did, were they ever quickened? No! Instead of having life imparted to their mortal bodies, they lost even the life they had in common with all flesh. And where are said mortal bodies now? Body is a congeries of organs in the image of Deity. Where are these bodies? They are nowhere! Only a little dust remains in sheol; and unorganised dust is not a body. What, then, is necessary that Paul’s words come to pass? Manifestly, that the saints re-appear in mortal bodies? so that, when they have come forth corruptible and mortal, “This corruptible’ may ‘put on incorruption’, and ‘this mortal’ may ‘put on immortality,’ by the Spirit or power of Deity, who quickens.” (Anastasis, page 29.)

The whole force of this comment lies in the assumed necessity that the mortal bodies mentioned must be post-resurrectional. That necessity, we maintain, does not exist. All that is necessary to the fulfilment of the Apostle’s words is simply that the persons addressed be made alive by the Spirit of God, who raised up

the Christ from the dead. They were indeed living then, so that the “making alive” predicted must refer to another life than that of which they were in possession. The use of the phrase “mortal bodies” leads us to believe that the making alive promised refers to that immortal life which is to be conferred on the faithful at the resurrection from amongst the dead. The Apostle uses the “mortal bodies” in a former part of his letter, chapter 6, verse 12, “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Surely it will not be contended that he is referring here to a post-resurrectional body, and surely it is reasonable to understand him to use the same words in the same sense, in the same letter. Every careful student of the Bible is aware that the term body, like the term, soul, is sometimes used to denote personality simply, as in the following instances - “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1. “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” Ephesians 5:28. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” 1 Corinthians 6:19.

Compare with, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” Corinthians 3:16. So also in the words already quoted, “Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies.” Compare with the immediately preceding verse, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:11 and 12). We hold that in the light of scripture usage, and of the context, the words, “If the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” are parallel to those in 1 Corinthians 6:14, “God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.”

The second proof passage adduced is 2 Corinthians 4:10 and 11, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh.” These statements are applied to the post-resurrectional bodies of the saints - the phrase, “the life of Jesus” is held to signify “His mortal example” and “the life-power of His resurrection,” and that “Paul’s teaching requires that both these be manifested in our mortal flesh.” “But,” says the author, “where is the ‘mortal flesh’ of the saints of past generations in which the resurrection life of Jesus may be manifested? There is no flesh pertaining to them in existence. Nothing of them remains but their characters recorded in the Divine Register, and a little dust. Is it not evident, then, that ‘mortal flesh’ must be created, and pre-resurrectional consciousness flashed upon it, that the saints of Rome and Corinth may experience the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh?” Anastasis page 29.

The reader will perceive that the inference which is said to be “evident” depends on the assumption that the phrase, “the life of Jesus,” means “the life-power of His resurrection”; but this is nothing short of putting a meaning into words in order to take it out again. It is only trifling with the reasoning to produce a statement in proof of a doctrine which does not express that doctrine, or which requires to have a meaning put upon it which answers the deduction sought to be drawn from that meaning! The assumption is the more remarkable, that not a single reason is given for understanding “the life of Jesus” to mean “the life-power of His resurrection”; while, on the other hand, three passages are cited as illustrative of the use of the phrase, as expressive of the conduct of the Lord in the days of His flesh, viz.- Romans 6:4 and 5; 8:29; Philippians 3:10. Why have we examples of the use of the phrase in the first sense cited, and only an assumption in favour of the other sense, though it has to sustain the weight of the argument? Why?

We submit to the reader that the plain sense of the Apostle’s language is, that he and his fellow apostles were anxiously following a course of conduct which would make manifest the life of Jesus in their present condition, “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” The same body, or mortal flesh, which bore about the dying of the Lord Jesus, was to make manifest the life of Jesus. Yes!, the same body, “whether by life or by death.” Philippians 1:20. “Paul’s teaching” does not require that a new mortal body be made wherein to manifest the life of Jesus; but it is expressive of his intense anxiety to make manifest the life of Jesus in his present mortal flesh, amid troubles, persecutions, distress, ostracism, and death, sustained by the hope that He who raised up the Lord Jesus, should also raise up him by Jesus, along with those faithful ones of whom he could hopefully say, “So, then, death worketh in us, but life in you.”

The third proof passage presented in Anastasis is 2 Corinthians 5:4, “We would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life,” and the comment is the following, “The thing to be clothed upon is ‘*to thnetos*’ – the mortal, which is another word for mortal flesh, or mortal body, or body of death. This is the thing to be clothed upon with the house from heaven; or, in other words, incorruptibility and life. But where is the mortal thing to be swallowed up? The dust in sheol is not mortal, being devoid of any kind of life... It is evident then, that the thing that comes forth from the grave must be mortal flesh, or body; and that it is this which is ‘clothed upon’ to put on incorruptibility and life, in being quickened after judgement.” Page 30.

Here again the point to be proved is assumed, namely, that the mortality that shall be swallowed up of life must be mortality after resurrection. Let the reader turn to the New Testament, and read the passages in the light of the context: “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed upon we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

These words express the Apostle’s desire, in common with those to whom he was writing; but he expresses no knowledge of another mortal house to be possessed between that which he had, and the house which is from heaven. “For in this tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.” There is no allusion here to a resurrected mortal house from the dust of sheol. The Apostle expresses his confidence that the dissolution of his present earthly tabernacle would be followed by the possession of a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, therefore, under the weight of mortality he groaned, earnestly desiring to be clothed in immortality, that the mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

We, therefore, respectfully reject as proofs of the doctrine that the dead in Christ shall come forth from their graves in a mortal condition, passages of Scripture which are silent regarding it; and which make very good sense in view of the belief that the dead in Christ shall, at His coming, be clothed in immortality, without the intervention of a second mortal body - that they shall “awake in His likeness.”

Ws now call the reader’s attention to the fact that the Scriptures explicitly affirm that “those who are counted worthy to obtain the resurrection from among the dead cannot die any more”; that they “who have part in the first resurrection,” are beyond the power of the “second death.”

In 1 Corinthians 15:52, we are informed that “the dead shall be raised incorruptible.” Understanding that the Apostle means “the dead in Christ,” we have here a most explicit testimony that the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we might have expected that the matter would be considered by all who rely on Apostolic authority as put beyond controversy.

The teachers of the mortal resurrection theory, however, contend that the word “raised” here, means “re-built,” that the dead in Christ, as well as others, “stand up” mortal, to be afterwards re-built incorruptible (Anastasis pp. 33 and 34). According to this exposition, it is the living persons who are to be raised, or re-built incorruptible; but it is not the living persons the Apostle is speaking of when he says, “The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

In support of the rendering of the verb “*egeiro*” by ‘re-built’, we are referred to one instance of its use in that sense, and the only instance we think which can be found in the New Testament, John 2:19 to 21. Jesus said to the Jews who asked a sign from Him, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body.” Our readers will observe that in the text the word in question is used in two different senses, by two different parties, our Lord and His stupid auditors. They used the word ‘*egeiro*’ in the sense of build; He in the sense of raise. The Jews so used the word because they misunderstood the subject to which the Lord had applied it. They understood not that He spoke of the temple of His body, and its resurrection from the dead. But if they were thinking of a process. He was not. Our Lord knew that He would rise, or be raised on the third day. Jesus did not foretell that three days would be occupied in raising the temple of His body, but after three days/or on the third He would “raise it up.” We

are not denying that ‘*egeiro*’ may be applied to the building of a house, just as our word raise may be; but such a use of the word raise is no less of a secondary kind than is the same application of the Greek *egeiro*. Neither of the terms necessarily denotes a process. And we maintain that the Apostle, in Corinthians 15:52, uses the word “raise” in the same sense as our Lord did when He spoke of His rising, or being raised on the third day. In confirmation of this we refer to Paul’s use of the term in Acts 10:39 and 40; “Whom they slew and hanged on a tree, him God raised up the third day.”

It would be easy to show from occurrences of the word in question, in the New Testament, that the sense we are contending for is the proper one, but we content ourselves, in the meantime, to refer to Paul’s use of it in 1 Corinthians 15. Throughout this chapter the verb raised, in various tenses, is frequently applied to Christ and to those who had fallen asleep in Him. The nature of the argument demands that it be understood as applying to both parties in the same sense, for the raising of those who are Christ’s, is made to depend on the fact of the Christ having been raised. Thus, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain”, “but now is Christ risen (or raised).” In the opening sentences of the chapter, the Apostle states that one of the first things he had delivered to them was that Christ rose, or had been raised, the third day according to the Scriptures. The question suggests itself, rose from what? Answer, “rose from the dead - from amongst the dead ones” (*ek nekron*, verse 12). The rising, or resurrection of dead persons was the question at issue. Some amongst them had said, “There is no resurrection of dead persons” (verse 12). The Apostle in proving that there is, refers to the fact that they had gladly received his messages that the Christ had been raised from the dead; and from the resurrection of Christ he demonstrates not only the fact of resurrection, but also the hope of a similar resurrection for all who are His at His coming.

But if the raising of the dead, mentioned in verse 52, be such a process of “building up” as is described in Anastasis, consisting of several stages and transitions, and occupying, it may be, years in its development, how can the rising of Christ on the third day be demonstrative proof of such a building up as that? In the first case, it is the raising of a dead person to life from among dead persons; in the second case, it is the raising of living persons to a higher state of being, for according to Anastasis it is not the dead body concerning which the raising is predicted. “It is the sprout body (i.e., the body of organized dust made alive by the breath of life) that is transformed; there being no other body in the grave or out of it for transformation” Pages 36 and 37.

If this be the case, what becomes of the Apostle’s reasoning; or with what propriety can Jesus be termed “the first-fruits of them that sleep”?

Anastasis, however, anticipates our objections, by affirming that the raising of Jesus was not completed on the morning of the first day of the week. “When Mary saw Him in the garden He had not been quickened, for He told her then not to touch Him, because He had not yet ascended to His Father, who was His Ail, strength or power (John 20:17)... Sometime in the interval, between the dawn and the evening of the resurrection day, the cause for the interdict “Touch me not”, must have been removed; in other words, the ascent from the lower nature, begotten to incipient life in the tomb, to the Father, ‘who is Spirit,’ must then have taken place.” Pages 17 and 18.

The reader will observe that in the passage just quoted, the terms “quickened” and “ascended to His Father” are used synonymously. This is surely a “private interpretation” of Scripture. Reference to a Concordance will show that the proper meaning of the word ‘quickened’, throughout the scriptures, is ‘made alive’; this also is true of the Greek verb so translated. If the reader of Anastasis would substitute ‘made alive’, ‘make alive’, etc. for ‘quickened’, ‘quicken’, etc., in all their occurrences, in that Treatise he would often have difficulty in making sense of what he is reading.

The Swedenborgian use of the word ‘ascend’, where our Lord said to Mary, “Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father,” avails nothing to the argument that the resurrection of Jesus was not then completed, seeing that the other women, on their way from the sepulchre to tell the disciples that the Lord had risen, were not only allowed by the Lord to touch Him, but also to hold Him by the feet without one word of remonstrance or “interdict”. (Matthew 28:9).

That the rising of Jesus was a completed fact at the dawn of the first day of the week, was explicitly told by the angel of the Lord to the women at the sepulchre. “Very early in the morning they came to the

sepulchre,” and entering in found not the body of Jesus. Then it was that the heavenly messenger announced the glorious truth - “He is not here; for He is risen as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay.” Matthew 28:6. Yes! Risen! or Raised (*egerthe*). The process had been completed; rather should we say, the fact had been accomplished, “very early in the morning while it was yet dark.”

Again we fall back on our previous position, in the same sense that Jesus was raised from amongst the dead ones, should we understand the word ‘raised,’ when we read, “the dead shall be raised incorruptible.” In the context, the terms “raised”, “risen,” “rose from the dead,” “resurrection,” “resurrection of the dead,” are used synonymously. Thus, “If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.” Verses 12 and 13. The whole of the confusion arises from overlooking the fact, that it is the dead who are to be resurrected, rise or be raised. And when we ask the question at the Scriptures, shall the dead in Christ be raised corruptible or incorruptible? The only direct answer we get is, “The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

The primary import of the verb *egeiro*, and a common use of it in the New Testament, is to wake, to arouse from sleep. (See Matthew 8:25; Mark 4:27; Acts 12:7). Considering that the dead are often spoken of in Scripture as being “asleep”, there is a beautiful propriety in using this verb to describe the resurrection of the dead. It is the awaking of those who sleep in Jesus; and the awaking of “those who are asleep in the dust of the earth,” is equal to their being resurrected. But it is sleepers who are to be awaked; it is the dead who are to be raised. Here the hope of King David recurs to our mind, “As for me, I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.”

In the clearest manner possible, the Apostle Paul teaches the opposite of the “mortal resurrection” theory, when he affirms that, “the dead”, i.e., the dead in Christ, “shall be raised incorruptible.” To every candid reader we submit that had the Apostle wished to express the idea that the dead in Christ came forth from sheol in a deathless condition, he could not more effectively have done so than by the words he has employed, “The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

In reading Anastasis, we are impressed with the idea that its writer was often hard driven in his argument; the necessities of the case led him to adopt unwarrantable renderings of the language of Scripture. Here is a sample: commenting on 1 Corinthians 15:35, “But some man will say. How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?” Anastasis tells us that, “there is no word for ‘with’ in the original. The words are in the dative case, the sign for which is ‘to’ or ‘for’. They are to come forth from their graves for something..... As Paul put the inquiry, it was not to know with what body they come forth, but for what body, when the building shall be complete.”

To this we reply: It is indeed true that there is “no word for ‘with’ in the original,” neither is there any word for ‘to’ or ‘for’. But the words are in the dative case, the sign of which is ‘to’ or ‘for’. That is, the dative case expresses the idea of ‘to’ or ‘for’, without the use of a preposition. That is true, but it is not the whole truth; and the translators of the Authorised Version were good enough Greek scholars to know that the Greek dative expresses not only the idea of ‘to’ or ‘for’, but also ‘by,’ ‘in,’ and ‘with,’ when the sense requires it. “The dative, among other significations, is used to denote the ‘being with’, ‘associating’ ‘accompanying,’ when connected with the verb of ‘going,’ or ‘coming.’ E.g., “The Athenians came with no small number, an army, with soldiers, and...” - if the reader substitutes ‘to’ or ‘for’, for ‘with’ in this quotation he will alter the sense considerably; yet there is no word for ‘with’ in the original, which is the dative case.

Again: “The mode or manner wherein anything takes place, is in the dative.” “Very frequently, with verbs, coming, going, - that whereby the person comes, or is accompanied - is in the dative.” The reader will perceive that these rules apply exactly to the passage, “How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?”

That the dative does not always express the idea of ‘to’ or ‘for’, the following quotations from the New Testament will show: “I pray thee to hear us briefly of thy clemency,” i.e., with clemency (Acts 24:4). “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). “By faith ye stand” (2 Corinthians 1:24). “Lest they should see with their eyes, and here with their ears, and...” (Acts 28: 27).

With these criteria before him, the reader can be at no loss to determine whether the authorised translation on 1 Corinthians 15:35 is not preferable to that given in Anastasis, which entirely overlooks the fact that the question “How are the dead raised, etc., is a cavil by a supposed objector to the idea of the resurrection of the dead. The objector does not enquire whether the dead shall rise mortal or immortal. He denied any resurrection of the dead, and regarded it as an absurdity. His cavilling query amounts to this - “How can the dead be raised, and with what body can they possibly come?” The Apostle had closed his argument for the resurrection of the dead, when he suggested the objection. Keeping in mind that its emphasis is on the word dead, the force of the reply becomes manifest. “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and, in sowing grain, you sow not the body which shall be, but naked grain; but God giveth that bare grain - which dies - a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed its own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, etc.” The point of the objection lay in the fact that the body was dead when laid in the grave, and the Apostle meets the objection by pointing to the fact that the dead are no more lifeless than the grain which the objectors might sow must become before it could be made alive as a plant; and he proceeds to affirm that the same God which gives a plant-body to the dead seed, would raise up the body of the dead saint incorruptible, glorious powerful and spiritual.

Such, we apprehend, is the sense in which the Apostle uses the illustration of grain-sowing, and its results. The illustration has all the beauty, appropriateness and force of truth. Standing at the grave’s mouth, while the dead saint is being covered from our sight, and looking hopefully forward to that glad morning when the voice of the Beloved shall be heard calling, “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!” - how true and forcible the language of the Apostle appears. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

Anastasis, however, alters all this; there we are informed that sown should be sprouted. Thus, it is sprouted in corruption, it is built, reared up, or raised, in incorruption. The reason given for transforming sown into sprouted is that “In the active voice ‘*speiro*’ signifies to scatter, as when seed is sown upon the earth; but in the passive voice it signifies to spring, or to be born”!

In reference to this remarkable use of the passive voice of *speiro*, we call the reader’s attention to the fact that, while the verb occurs in the New Testament nine times in the passive voice, in no other instance can it have such a meaning. The occurrences referred to are these: Matthew 8:19; Mark 4:15 (twice), 16,18,20, 31, & 32; James 3:18. In all these instances, not spring, or sprout, but sown, is the only sense that will stand. Again, in accordance with the usage, and the common laws of language, we claim that as *speiro* in the active voice signifies ‘to sow’ its meaning in the passive voice is ‘to be sown’, in 1 Corinthians 15:43,44.

The writer of Anastasis, however, refers us to Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon. Thither we have gone, and what have we found? *Speiro* - 1. To sow seed. 2. To sow a field. 3. Metaphorically, to sow children, i.e., engender, beget; Pass: to spring, or be born. 4. Generally, to scatter like seed, strew, throw about; of liquids, to scatter or sprinkle; Pass: to be scattered or dispersed. Now it is to be noticed that it is only under the third and metaphorical meaning that spring is given as a meaning; and that there it is limited to the sense of be born. The metaphorical use, in the active voice, is to sow children, i.e., to beget; the passive voice, to spring, or be born. And the metaphorical sense, according to Liddell and Scott, is taken from a passage in Sophocles, a Greek poet. Poets are allowed considerable latitude in their use of words; it is not to be wondered at that, in referring to a person’s birthplace, a poet should describe it as the place where he was sown. But, supposing that the poet really used the word in the sense of spring, or be born, is it warrantable to hold that Paul used the verb after the mode of a Greek dramatist, rather than in accordance with the practice of the penmen of the New Testament? Why run about for significations of *speiretai*? Why not be content with its New Testament usage, in its passive as well as in its active voice? What but the necessities of his theory could lead the writer of Anastasis to say that Paul used the word in this out-of-the-way sense? We are the more astonished at his conduct here, from the fact that in another work, in referring to the body of the newly-risen Christ, he employs the language of 1 Corinthians 15:42 & 45, in its proper sense. Thus, “It was sown in corruption though not permitted to see corruption; it was raised in incorruptibility; it was sown in dishonour, it was raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it was raised in

power; it was sown a soul-body, it was raised a spirit-body, incorruptible, glorious and powerful.” (Eureka volume 1 pages 14 & 15).

Anastasis concludes with a quotation from Tertullian. Did the writer forget that he had elsewhere written - “Tertullian wrote much, but of little account”? (Eureka, page 339).

We have bestowed so much attention on the treatise so often named in this paper, because of the importance attached to it by the adherents of its doctrine in Britain and America. Let us now return to the words and reasoning of the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 15:42 to 44, and context.

The Apostle is contrasting the condition of the body of the believer now, with that which he shall have when raised from the grave. He treats only of two bodies, the natural, and the spiritual. “There is a natural and there is a spiritual body; and so it is written. The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit”; and the analogy is: “As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Viewed in the light of the context, the natural beauty and force of the language of the common version is in harmony with the import of the New Testament usage of the original, and the whole deliverance of the Apostle in the transcendent theme. The Resurrection of the Dead.

To this understanding of the Apostle’s teaching it has been objected, that it contradicts his teaching in 2 Corinthians 5:10, where he says, “We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,” inasmuch as being raised from the grave incorruptible, involves the conferring of the reward before the person is tried. Any weight which this objection may carry rests on the supposition that the tribunal of Christ is exactly similar to the tribunal of men. But this is not so; for, while in human court of judicature the judge is supposed to be ignorant of the merits of each case till the evidence is laid before him, the Judge of all the earth is perfectly acquainted with the history of each who stands before Him; and for whatever purpose He cites them to His judgement seat it cannot be to determine their worthiness; therefore, in that respect, there is no incongruity in those who are Christ’s at His coming being raised incorruptible, and yet appearing subsequently before the judgement seat.

Moreover, the language of 2 Corinthians 5:10 involves the idea of gradation in the rewards received, according to deeds done in the body; but no one can receive more of eternal life than another. So far as concerns incorruptibility every member of the body of Christ at His coming will be on a par; yet we know full well that the honours and rewards to be conferred on the faithful in Christ Jesus shall vary in number and degree according to the merits of each individual case.

As in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard each one received a penny, whether he had borne the burden and heat of the day or had laboured but one hour; so those who are Christ’s at His coming shall each one receive the gift of eternal life - the young disciple who, at the last hour of the day of salvation, put on the Lord Jesus, and the veteran who from youth to old age has fought “the good fight”; yet the place and position of these in the glorious Kingdom of God shall differ immensely from each other. And so the Judge heralds His advent cry: “Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” And all this is in perfect accord with the apostolic deliverance - “The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

In further confirmation of this truth see the words of our Lord in Luke 20: 35 & 36, “They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from amongst the dead, cannot die any more. but are equal to the angels.” And Revelation 20:6, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17, the Apostle writes to the same effect, “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This teaching of the Apostle is directly opposed to the doctrine that the dead in Christ rise in mortal bodies; but is in complete harmony with his glowing words in 1 Corinthians 15: 51 & 52, “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” As in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 & 17, two

companies are spoken of - "the dead in Christ," and "those who are alive and remain" - so here; and both companies share the same glorious being and destiny; the dead raised incorruptible, and the living changed while alive; and thus, together, they meet the Lord in the air. One incorruptible band, to be associated for ever with the ever-living Redeemer. Blessed hope! Transcendent destiny!

So far from having to be tried for his life at the judgement seat of Christ, the Christian has his name inscribed in the book of life even now. Else what meant those gracious words: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels"? Revelation 3:5.

That each reader of this paper may, through the mercy of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, be a partaker of such glory, honour, and immortality is the earnest desire of the writer.

Note: Ever since Anastasis was published, the Christadelphians have demanded of applicants for baptism, and also for "fellowship" that they believe in the doctrine therein taught by Dr Thomas - that the righteous are to be "raised mortal" at the Coming of Christ. It therefore behoves all of that way of thinking, who may happen to see the foregoing examination of it, to enter a defence of their action.

Brother William Laing.

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## Love Of The Truth

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Apostle John wrote, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." 3 John 1:4. Whilst these words express the mind of John, we know that he wrote by Divine inspiration, writing the things that God also rejoiced in. Thus we have it that God has no greater joy than to hear or see that His children walk in Truth. Do we believe this? Or do we believe that the Father reaps joy from anything less?

It is also written, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that comes to repentance, Luke 15:7, but this is not our Heavenly Father's greatest joy, only the beginning of it, and it becomes faith on our part and a greater joy to Him when we take Him at His word and act upon it. John's third epistle should be enough to establish the importance of ones walk in Truth in the sight of God. Therefore, whatsoever is important to our Father, must also be to us. There is no book in the Scriptures which does not bring out this fact, and we will consider a few.

When Judah faced invasion and defeat, leading to captivity. God spoke to Jeremiah, (chapter 5, verse 1), saying, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." Think on this; if Jeremiah could have found just one man that sought truth that would be sufficient for God to pardon the nation. What Love! What Mercy! From this we learn, not only the importance of the Truth, but the importance also of them that seek it. We know from our reading of Jeremiah that no one could be found, a fact that causes us to wonder how many cities in the world today could present such a man if the call went forth. We live in the time recorded in 2 Timothy 4:3 & 4, when men have turned their ears from the truth and turned them to fables. They heap to themselves teachers who tell them what they want to hear, just like Judah, "They bend their tongues like their bow for lies, but they are not valiant for the Truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:3. What joy then does our Father have, as daily like Judah of old, the world follows after these teachers and their lies? Can He find pleasure with something because they declare it to be His Truth? We know it is not so.

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and without waiting for an answer, he walked away. How near he had come without finding it! At that moment in time Truth was next to him. If he had waited for an answer our Lord could have said to him, as He had said to His disciples a few hours earlier, "I am the Truth. John 14:6.

To lay hold of Christ is to lay hold of Truth, yet there is a danger, for many false Christs have arisen. Matthew 24:24. These are not the Truth and therefore cannot save, nor does God have any joy in them. What is the secret, then? It is this, it is needful to face up to this declaration, for “NO LIE IS OF THE TRUTH” (1 John 2:21).

The basic definition of Truth is: that which accords with the facts in the case. This definition is so simple and honest yet it is put aside and another adopted in its place, which is: it makes no difference what one believes as long as one is sincere. The fact that God has spoken makes no difference to them, thereby they manifest they have no love for the Truth.

We all know many, who themselves are good-living people, but who follow after what other men have said, not heeding the statement “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20.

It is everyone’s duty to discover for themselves what is required; it is “rightly dividing the word of Truth” 2 Timothy 2:15, and thereafter to walk in it, bringing joy unto our Heavenly Father. So let us walk.

Brother Eric Moore.

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## Further Comment On ‘Anastasis’

Some vital aspects of “Anastasis”, written by Dr John Thomas and here reviewed by Brother Phil Parry, exposing the stark reality and position of those who accept it without question or positive scriptural proof.

Dr Thomas unfortunately confuses the issue from the beginning of the above treatise by calling the resurrection of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15, as the resurrection of the just and the unjust simultaneously to judgement, which is untrue, to quote Dr Thomas’s own phraseology “Not the form of sound words spoken by the Apostle Paul.” Thus at the outset Dr Thomas throws a spanner in the works and causes utter chaos and confusion of his own so-called exposition. As shown in verse 49, Paul speaks of the worthy saints at the coming of Christ asleep or alive at the time, “And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” “Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption”, yet Dr Thomas goes to great lengths to prove the opposite is the case of those who have been begotten to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, by stating that the dead stand again in bodies like unto Adam when first created (corruptible, as he affirms in Elpis Israel) and that if approved in character at the Assize of Christ, inherit incorruption.

Surely they are with Christ in the incorruptible nature necessary to exist in such an exalted position, even heaven itself I venture to suggest? See Hebrews 6:19 and 20; also 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. They come forth to receive a kingdom which cannot be moved, an inheritance as incorporated in the promises to Abraham which is in addition to eternal and incorruptible life to which they are already have right through the merits of Christ. Dr Thomas unjustifiably pours ridicule upon certain people contemporary with him and alludes to them as believing that the righteous shoot forth from the earth like skyrocketing incorruptible and immortal. We have only his words for this, but I think that these people were of sufficient intelligence to know that incorruptible beings would be more capable of coming from the earth in a dignified, resplendent, and glorious manner and in uniformity with the faithful about to be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye to incorruptibility, ascend together to meet the Lord in the air to be ever with Him.

Most people who have read the works of Dr Thomas would admit that it is a wearisome task to follow him as he has such a habit of digression that the points he wishes to stress and the contradictions of Which he is guilty together with his misuse of the context, is lost to the reader unless he is unbiased and a sincere student and discriminator of the scriptures of truth. At this point I would recommend the reading of “Proving

Anastasis Untrue” by William Laing which is contained in the booklet “Redemption, Resurrection and Judgement” compiled by the Nazarene Fellowship free of charge, and exposes to what extent the Dr. wrests the scriptures from their context to uphold his mistaken views and expressing them as the form of sound words spoken by Paul, that none dare challenge him.

How reliable the Dr. is can be seen on pages 31 and 32 of “Anastasis” where he refers to the great white throne etc.; and he includes Paul and the Roman and Corinthian saints as standing before a judgement seat at the end of a thousand years in which the second death is also operative whereas Paul himself has part in the first resurrection in which the second death is not operative being only concerned with the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb.

Consistent diehard Christadelphians are also guilty of this error. Dr Thomas goes on to quote 1 Peter 4:17 and 18, and connects this same “last judgement” as identical with the judgement Peter speaks of as beginning at the Household of God. This is indeed a gross example of mishandling of the word of the Spirit. Read the work to which I have referred you and you will see more examples, also of what an unnecessary “spanner” thrown into the works can do, that is, judgement for incorruptible life of those whose names are already in the Book of Life. Dr Thomas says “It is understood, that the good to be rendered through the body is incorruptibility and life,” a reaping of the spirit, life everlasting. This may be the Drs. understanding, and if so, what of the unfaithful, seeing that in the Christadelphian viewpoint they have already suffered the death passed upon all men which they affirm was natural decay and return to dust?

On page 32 of “Anastasis” Dr Thomas exposes this Christadelphian error and proves the teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship concerning the death due to Adam as being correct and scriptural; that the inflicted death Jesus suffered was the death Adam incurred by sin and from which he was spared. Eternal Life is the gift of God and is not rendered in accordance of works, but by grace and holding fast the Name of Jesus unto the end, but there are varying degrees of reward in accordance with our moral stewardship in the household of God in addition to eternal life. William Laing has dealt with “Anastasis” very scripturally and efficiently, so I want to be as brief as possible in dealing with a few aspects. Dr Thomas praises the apostle Paul as a botanist and then damps it by misrepresenting Paul’s teaching on the subject. My understanding of Paul’s teaching is that when you sow for example a carrot seed you are not sowing the completely grown and developed carrot but something that does not resemble it in the slightest. This applies to most seeds but if they are infertile they will not germinate and eventually become the complete body the Creator ordained through His laws of Nature. So also, if we sow now to the Spirit the nucleus of that Spirit will be in us when we are placed in the earth asleep in Christ and at the appointed time, and hearing the voice of the Archangel and the trumpet of God, will come forth a complete Spirit Body to inherit eternity.

Those who have sown to the flesh after enlightenment are infertile and void of germination and although they have died naturally they have by their works despised the spirit of grace and counted the blood wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing thus making the efficacy of Christ’s death as a substitute of non effect for themselves and consequently are resurrected in the same corruptible nature together with identical character as when sown, to partake after judgement, of the death due to the sinner which is inflicted and judicial.

To the former Christ is the Resurrection and the Life and when Christ who is their life shall appear, they also will appear with Him in glory. To the latter Christ is the resurrection but not the life, they having forfeited it by sowing to the mind of the flesh and having forfeited that life given through the sacrifice of Christ, it must be returned by judicial death, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is what I believe to be the scriptural teaching of the resurrection of the just at the coming of Christ and the unjust a thousand years later.

Anyone reading page 36 of “Anastasis” should be genuinely shocked by Dr Thomas’s distortion of Paul’s teaching and meaning in order to support his invented theory of “three-stage-process” of resurrection. Dr Thomas says that Paul illustrates this “three-stage-process”, but he does nothing of the kind. Paul speaks only of a seed sown and the body or complete plant which it has pleased God to ordain for it; he says nothing about a “sprout body”. What Dr Thomas terms a “sprout body” is a part of the body that shall be, not a complete and separate body, and Paul knew this and was indeed a more intelligent botanist than Dr Thomas and his supporters would want to admit. But here again Paul is only illustrating the body of a faithful saint

planted in the ground awaiting resurrection to appear with Christ, he is not concerned here with the unfaithful or a judicial court of assize, it is Dr Thomas who is adding to and not accepting the form of sound words expressed by the Apostle. His three stage simultaneous appearing of just and unjust before the judgement seat of Christ is a spanner in the work.

In Dr Thomas's definition we see standing before the judgement seat of Christ the just and unjust awakened from sheol in bodies like Adam's before transgression, and also just and unjust of those alive and remaining at His coming in what he terms in accordance with Christadelphian teaching, bodies of sin, or having "sin-in-the-flesh." What should be the reaction of such a gathering who have had their pre-resurrectional identity flashed upon their minds? These would, assuming they were Christadelphians, believe they were beings of changed, or sinful flesh, but they would be mistaken; the alive and remain class would believe the same, if Christadelphians, and would be correct, in accordance with their Statement of Faith.

Could this be classed as an impartial judgement when in the Christadelphian viewpoint some are being judged in a nature in which their characters were not formed? And would not the former class be violating the "doctrine to be rejected, i.e. that there is no "sin in the flesh" by appearing with their brethren in that very physical state, like Adam at creation? Perhaps God remembered to flash the pre-resurrectional identity upon the subjects but forgot to add the defiling ingredient of "sin-in-the-flesh." No, it is Dr Thomas who forgot about this, having at one disputed such a doctrine together with Robert Roberts, and declaring that the evidence of such a doctrine was absent from the scriptures. John Carter also disputed such a doctrine in the Christadelphian Magazine 1958, yet it is still believed and contended for. Thus this ridiculous situation of two kinds of corruptible bodies standing before the judgement seat of Christ is permitted to remain as a mockery of Truth - a mockery of the Creator's wisdom.

The Creator never did defile Adams nature or cause sin to invade his nature as a physical law of his being, capable of transgression also to his posterity. This is the doctrine of "original sin" introduced by Roman Catholicism and a condition of acceptance into the Christadelphian Body. Those who have drunken of the wine of this cup should not be present at the first appearing of Christ to His faithful brethren unless they purge their minds of its deceitful effects. What then is the position in view of statements made by Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts? Dr Thomas, in Eureka volume 3, page 587, writes "Passing through the grave cleanses no one, they who emerge thence come forth with the same nature they carried into it and therefore their coming forth is a resurrection." Dr Thomas again: "Sin had to be condemned in the nature which transgressed." We reply:- "Jesus was in the likeness of the nature which transgressed, which was very good nature, and Jesus in that same nature which transgressed showed His condemnation of sin by obedience to His Father where Adam failed." Dr Thomas is here supporting the very view which we uphold, that there was not the slightest change in Adam's nature after he sinned. We can quote R. Roberts also as supporting that view. What made these men contradict their earlier and truthful statements? Obstacles of their own choosing, pride and prejudice, drinking the cup of the Babylonian Harlot and becoming drugged by her false teaching. Robert Roberts, in attacking Edward Turney, stated "It is a marvellous piece of new-born wisdom to say that sinful applies to the character but not to the substance that produces the character." (Slain Lamb). Yet Dr Thomas refutes this by showing the resurrected sinful of character appearing at the judgement seat in newly created bodies like Adam's at his creation, thus refuting the "sinful-flesh" theory contended for so tenaciously in their later writings, also contradicting "Anastasis" and the "process resurrection." How can such a concoction of self contradiction by two so-called intelligent men purporting to be expounders of the Gospel of the Kingdom be held forth as the Faith once delivered to the saints? It demands analysis. Are there any Christadelphians left honest enough to face the challenge? The comparison of such contradictory and self-destructive statements upon simple scriptural doctrines should be sufficient to convince any independent mind of the need for investigation. Indiscriminate believers of Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts owe it to us and themselves! They owe it to the writer to the Hebrews - chapter 11 verses 39 and 40, "These all having obtained a good report through faith." The good report according to faith manifested by works of these people has already been obtained through the Lord, the righteous Judge, who afterwards committed all judgement to His Son, who, in illustrating the resurrection of Life as opposed to corruption, declared, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush ... I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," They are not in His sight "dead" but live unto Him, awaiting physical and meritorial receipt of the promise together with those of like faith, which is eternal salvation unto all that obey its author, not a second judgement.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

Dr Thomas, “Passing through the grave cleanses no one,” “they who emerge thence come forth with the same nature and identity they carried into it.”

If condemnation is a physical law as well as a moral one of his being, how can a supporter of Clause 5 of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith expect anything but condemnation at the judgement seat of Christ? Baptism does not operate physically, but legally and symbolically, through faith - a passing out of Adam into Christ, a passing from death to Life. The faithful saint has no doubts or qualms but rejoices that the “Abrahamic dead” are raised incorruptible and live unto Yahweh.

Brother Phil Parry. (1983)

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## Faith

Above all things we must have faith in God for He will never let us down. But there are degrees of faith. All have not faith in the same measure; we strive always for a greater measure.

There is a deep lesson in the old story of the little girl who, after a special service of prayer for rain in a dry season implicitly believed that rain would fall and took out her umbrella.

What do we mean by faith in God? That we should trust Him? Yes, but trust Him to do what? To take care for you or for your family if you neglect the necessary care? What difference will faith make if your business looks like collapsing? In the threat of an air-raid? During a dire illness at home? If you are out of work? It will make all the difference to our attitude. Without faith we should be fearful, with faith in God we have courage to face all things.

Faith in God, ultimately, means faith in what He has promised. Some have faith in Him to do things which He has not promised to do. Such misplaced faith may be of help for a time, but it is not of help when most needed. Some believe that the brethren and sisters of Christ will not suffer from the results of air-raids. Whereas I respect their sincerity I, myself, cannot see where He has made any such promise. Job declared, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” That is the faith, and to stand the test is our aim.

He has promised to bring us through the evil days. That is not the same thing as keeping the evil day away. Jacob was not spared the effects of famine, nor was Daniel spared affliction. We can remember that “He’ll give thee strength whate’er betide thee and bring thee through the evil days.”

We may, as do Christian Scientists, decline the help of a physician, and our faith may be disappointed. We must be “workers together with Him.” God has not promised to do for us what we should do for ourselves. It is not a question of what God can do. We do not doubt the power of God. It is a question of what God wills to do according to His own judgement.

J. B.

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“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.” Psalm 34:7,8,&9.

## Christ and Melchisedec

“For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, a Priest of the Most High God.” That which is especially worthy of notice here, is that Melchisedec is the first instance we have of a person specially set apart for the office of the Priesthood. Sacrifices, as we know, are part of an aboriginal institution, commencing with the expulsion from Paradise and surviving the desolation of the deluge. But the persons who offered up the victims in the earlier ages of the world were not priests, that is, were never consecrated to such an employment as a distinctive office, but only performed this, as they did other religious services, in their capacity as heads of families; by the act of sacrifice expressing their faith in the great Atonement. Here however, is the case of one who, though a king ruling among his neighbours as a king, appears before us as solemnly designated to the office of the priesthood; is regarded by Abraham as entitled to all the prerogatives pertaining to the holy office; is allowed to claim a fixed proportion of the spoils taken from the enemy, not because he is King of Salem but because he is the priest of the Most High God.

All this adds to the eminence of Melchisedec’s typical priesthood. He is not one of a line of priests succeeding to the office in a certain family order. He is not one invested with authority by the hands of others, acting under the prescribed rules of any ecclesiastical authority. He is one who, long before the Levitical Priesthood had any beginning, stands alone in a strange country, challenging homage from one of the greatest of antiquity, as an ordained priest of God. In all this we see at once certain resembling features to the priesthood of Christ. He is not descended from any family line of priests. He receives no imposition of hands from men designating Him to the sacred office. Yet there rests upon Him the tokens of a Holy consecration: The opened heavens testify to the indwelling in Him of the power of the Lord’s anointed. The spirit of the Lord without measure is given unto Him, when He made His soul an offering for sin; when He had borne the sins of many; when He poured out His soul unto death, believing souls did homage at the foot of the cross, exercising faith in the great oblation, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Here observe one office of the typical high priest which is mentioned by the apostle, “Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.” Surely this is a work which specially belongs to the true Melchisedec. Benediction seems never to have been off the lips of Christ. With promises of blessing He opened His Sermon on the Mount; with hands of blessing He called little children to His embrace; with uplifted voice of blessing He was borne away on the ascension cloud; and when He shall come again to welcome, claim and receive His own. His language to them will be, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Yes, blessing was the first act of the Redeemer, after He had gone to heaven. Unto you first God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, and never will He lay down that glorious prerogative till we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him.

Observe another act of Melchisedec noticed by the apostle, namely, his receiving a portion of the spoils: “To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all.” No question will be raised here as to the offering spoken of being a dedicated religious offering to God. Melchisedec was too rich to need any gift for his own use, it is an affront to Eastern hospitality to suppose that it was offered as a compensation for his kindness to Abraham and his company. The gift was plainly what the apostle’s argument seems to make it - a recognition by Abraham of God’s hand in his recent successes - a recognition regulated in amount by some traditional standard of the proportion of our goods, which God has a right to, and governed as to the mode of offering by the consideration that it should be directly set apart to the Divine service, Abraham evidently recognised the principle that every man was bound to give of his substance towards the maintenance of a national worship. He had a church in his own house. He commanded his children and his household after him that they should keep the way of the Lord: but leaving to the individual or sectional effort to accomplish what it may. To a priest by whose personal ministrations Abraham could not stately profit, yet he gave a tenth of all. Nor is this reference less noteworthy in its bearing on the general subject of almsgiving, and the proportion of our substance which belongs to God, and which is not at our own disposal at all. Under the gospel we have no binding rule upon the subject. Faith worships by love, and love does not want rules. But there is something in this dedication of a tenth part of their property to religious objects by good men of old time which, to say the least of it is very striking. You will hear people say sometimes, “This dedicated tenth was part of an abrogated Levitical code; but was, in fact a mere form of Jewish poor law.” Here we have proof that it was no such thing. Four hundred years before the law was given Abraham sets apart his tenth

for Christ: whilst a hundred and fifty years later, but long before the giving of the law, we have Jacob vowing a vow to the Lord, "Of all thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth to Thee." How carefully the same practice, especially after any great successes, was kept by David and Solomon, and what a lasting blemish is made to rest on the fame of the good Hezekiah for that he returned not unto the Lord according to the mercy which he had received, I need not stay to recite.

The practical lesson is one which we can all draw for ourselves. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. If we have prospered in the work of our hands; if we are returning after a victory over foes, hindrances and difficulties, and if, above all, Christ our great High Priest, is meeting us with tokens of His benediction, favour and grace, let us give Him a part - and a liberal part - of those our captured spoils. Let one strength, one grace, one outstretched arm, be acknowledged in our deliverances, testifying that on earth we would lay our successes, even as we shall lay our crowns, at the feet of Him who is 'ordained a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' But the parallel between Christ and Melchisedec is pursued further in relation to the mysterious circumstances of their descent.

This Melchisedec is declared to be "without father; mother; without descent, having neither beginning of life nor end of days..." These words cannot of course be understood in their literal sense; nor does the usage of Jewish phraseology require that they be so taken, for there is no record of the person's individual genealogy being preserved. According to Levitical rules, such a failure would prove fatal. This we know from the time of Ezra, as seen in Ezra 11:62, "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore, they were, as polluted, put from the priesthood." In a similar way we are to explain the language that Melchisedec had "neither beginning of life nor end of days" to his priesthood. Of Moses, of Joshua, of David, and other eminent types, we have such accounts, but none of Melchisedec. He starts upon the page of the sacred record as one exercising the mysterious functions of a royal priesthood, shrouding beneath a veil of impenetrable obscurity all the antecedents of his history, as well as all that relates to the end of his days.

The bearing of all this on the apostles argument with the Jews we may see at once. He wished to show that Christ's was absolute, independent, self-originated, and an eternal priesthood. He owed it to no law of human succession at all. Far otherwise, His human genealogy would have been an insuperable bar to His priestly claims, sprung, as He was, from the tribe of Judah, a tribe which by law was excluded from the office. His claim therefore, like that of this mysterious priest in Abraham's time, must have been of some higher and unknown origin. His consecrating unction must have come upon Him direct from heaven. In Him the succession of Aaron's line was set aside. He was made of God, a high priest according to the order of Melchisedec, and let us not fail to notice in passing, the subtle beauty of adaptation which lies enfolded in these inspired words. See how the very language which we can apply to the typical Melchisedec only with limitations of a Jewish gloss, may be applied to the true Melchisedec without any limitations or gloss at all. For, in relation to the great mystery of His incarnation, is He not 'without father'?

In regard to His proper and essential Godhead, is he not 'without mother. Did not Isaiah teach that He was without descent, when he said, "Who shall declare His generation?" When Micah says, "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting," does he not testify that He has "neither beginning of days nor end of life? Thus in relation to Christ's priesthood, we may take the sublime description of our text in all its length, breadth, depth and height. That priesthood has no beginning of days, and till the elect of God shall be gathered in, it shall have no end of life. He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the ancient of days. He is the mighty Father of eternity. "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

This brings us to the last point of the comparison here instituted, namely, that the priesthood of Melchisedec was an intransmissible priesthood, that he had no successor to his office, that a sort of typical perpetuity is attributed to his ministrations because there was no mention in scripture of the time when they ceased. "Made like unto the Son of God, he abideth a priest continually." In all this, argues the apostle. He is a fit representative of the true Melchisedec who abides for ever; who has an unchangeable priesthood, who in all the might and prevalency and sovereignty of an unshared mediation, ever liveth to make intercession for us. He is a priest for ever; a king for ever; and intercessor for ever; with none second to Him, and none like, with none to co-operate, and none to come after, with no interruption and no pause. One is our High Priest, His Name one. There is the same blood to cleanse, there always was; the same voice to plead, there

always was; the same emblem of sacrifice is ever in the midst of the throne; and the same censer is still in the hands of the Holy One to receive the prayers of the saints. “He abideth a priest continually.”

Such are a few points of parallelism between Christ and Melchisedec on which the apostle claims our confidence and rests the title of Christ to our eternal gratitude. In a few words may we observe: in that Christ hath provided the means whereby God may be just, and yet the Justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus; He is the King of Righteousness; in that He is our peace, and hath made our peace and dissipated all trace of displeasure from the Eternal Father’s countenance; He is the King of Peace, in that He hath prepared us an altar, provided a lamb for our sacrifice, ordained a priest to slay. Altar, sacrifice and priest all being found in Himself. He is “Priest of the Most High God,” in that He can challenge all the finite intelligences, whether of earth or heaven, to declare the fathomless mystery of His generation. He is now gone into heaven “to abide a priest continually.”

What more can we say? The whole mediatorial life of our Lord, whether on earth or in heaven assure our hearts before God.

Extract from “THE QUIVER”

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## The Stone Which The Builders Rejected

“The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. - Matthew 21:42.

“For behold, I will bring forth My Servant, the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes (facets): behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts...” Zechariah 3:9.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.....” Revelation 5:11&12.

Power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing sum up all the achievement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No other man had power to compare, for Jesus Christ had the Spirit without measure. John 3:34, “for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”

Riches beyond compare were His alone, for no one but Jesus Christ was able to pay the price of redemption to save mankind from sin’s dominion. 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Jesus Christ was “filled with wisdom”; the wisdom which we, too, can receive by learning of Him, for He “of God, is made unto us wisdom...” 1 Corinthians 1:30.

The strength of Jesus is surely summed up in “I have overcome the world”, John 16:33 as “He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.” Luke 9:51.

Jesus Christ is entitled to the honour His Father has bestowed upon Him. “Jesus Christ who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” 1 Peter 3:22.

The glory of Jesus is His inheritance for He was born to be “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:16.

Blessings are due to Him for He is well spoken of by all those for whom He gave His life, with praises and adoration.

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1 & 2.

Compiled from notes of the late Brother O.E.H.Gregory.