

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 266

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2014

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### Note regarding The Christadelphian Lamp

The Christadelphian Lamp commenced in November 1873 as a monthly magazine edited by Brother Edward Turney. These magazines were later bound into annual volumes.

I have now commenced printing Volume One but am not able to present them in annual volumes due to cost. However they will be available to anyone who wishes to receive them as originally presented, as monthly issues. These will be in the same format as our Circular Letters.

In the near future I also hope to publish these in our website so they will be available to everyone.

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### Editorial

One day “the disciples came to Jesus privately” and asked when would He set up His Kingdom. Here is part of His reply:-

“As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37 – 39).

There is nothing remarkable about the events which Jesus describes for they are normal everyday occurrences and always have been. So what was the point Jesus is making? It is that the world in general is not going to recognise the events leading up to the last days of man’s rule. As it was in the days of Noah they “knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.”

Turning to Luke 17:28, we find Jesus added a little more to the story:-

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

Once again Jesus mentions similar common events. However, like the flood, the raining of fire and brimstone was sudden and unexpected – and about this Jesus said, “Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” That is, sudden and unexpected judgments from God.

Do all Christian denominations expect Jesus to return? One would perhaps expect they would long for Jesus to come back and reign in peace over all the earth, after all He did ask us to pray “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on the earth as it is now done in heaven.” So it is somewhat surprising to find the largest Christian denomination of all rejects the idea and say Jesus’ return in this fashion is a myth! Humbrecht, a Roman Catholic theologian, provides a typical response to those looking for Jesus. He sees the coming of Jesus as a call to

"keep working to better establish the kingdom of God, to get it where it's supposed to be . . . We've got a lot of work to do to get it right, and we need to keep working with the Lord and the grace that's been given us to be putting the world back in order."

Those who preach and say they want to make the world a better place are deceiving themselves and their congregations. This is all about mankind improving the world and asking God to help them! What presumption! It is the work of God in Christ to establish the Kingdom. Only God has the power to bring peace on the earth. Let us have faith in what He has promised to do for the faithful.

Also there will be others who will ask, “Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” (2 Peter 3:4).

Nevertheless Jesus will return as the angels said to the disciples - Acts 1:11, “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

There are Bible prophecies which are unique and unmistakable. One of the principle ones to be fulfilled was the establishment of Israel as a nation 66 years ago, so let’s go back for a moment 2,600 years to the last of their own kings to rule in Jerusalem. We read of his end in Ezekiel 21:25 - 27:-

“And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

The One who is to come and whose right it is to rule from Jerusalem is of course, Jesus the King of the Jews and Son of God. The Jewish nation has suffered extremely for rejecting Jesus and after crucifying Him they have been scattered throughout the world yet they have kept their identity. For nearly two thousand years they have been persecuted and hated of all peoples yet surviving, and so in 1948 they were able to establish themselves in their old land, the Promised Land. Today they are still despised by most of the world and hated especially by Muslims who greatly outnumber them, nevertheless they remain wonderfully confident in their own ability to defend themselves against all odds.

In the Old Testament we have the history of Israel; how they rebelled against all that was good. They are described as a stiff-necked people and, in spite of this, God was very patient and longsuffering with them. He corrected them severely from time to time until there was no other way but to forsake them. We have an example of this in 2 Chronicles 36:15,16, “And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

But God has not finished with the Jews as they are yet to be restored and established safely in their own land with Jesus as their King and this they have still to accept, for they do not at present acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, but when Jesus makes Himself known to them they will ask, “What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” (Zechariah 13:6).

So what are we to expect? The Jews are back in a small part of their Promised Land but they are not dwelling safely, neither is there any peace. In Luke 21:25 – 27, Jesus tells us -

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Much of this is symbolic language; for example the “sun, moon and stars maybe symbolic of Israel (see Genesis 37:9, 10); the sea and the waves roaring are symbolic of warfare. The word “perplexity” means “no way out.” It is this last fact that is particularly relevant to the present situation in Israel. There is no way out of the present dilemma facing the United Nations. Islam in general wants Israel wiped off the map and with increasing development of arms they are well capable of doing this. Apart from this there are many other peoples who dislike the Jews and wouldn’t care if they were wiped out. What hope has Israel of surviving an attack? The attack will come and Israel will have no chance of survival except by the grace of God, for it will be at such a point as this that He will intervene.

Jesus tells us, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” This, I believe, is the moment when the faithful, those whom Jesus accounts worthy, are taken away. –

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” - Matthew 24:40-42,

Finally, Psalm 2 is interesting,

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Love to all. Russell

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## **BIBLE REDEMPTION.**

BIBLE redemption is presented to us under three heads or essential points, which must be clearly understood and distinguished before the scheme as a whole can be discerned. These points are - 1st, those to be redeemed; 2nd, the redeemer, and 3rd, the ransom or price.

1st. - Those to be redeemed. Those embraced in the Divine scheme are the descendants of Adam, one and all, himself included; because all, without exception or distinction, were involved in the sin and consequences of one transgression. The consequences of one transgression are defined by the sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

In the absence of any scheme of redemption, it is manifest that Adam and all his posterity would have returned to, and eternally remained in dust. There was no eye that could pity or power that could save from the just sentence of Almighty power.

The only one who could meet the case of the guilty pair was the Almighty Father Himself. His goodness, power, and wisdom were equal to their circumstances. He therefore devised and resolved upon a plan whereby He could be just, and the Justifier of everyone who accepted of His favour. The evidence of the Father's determination to redeem is found in the statement He made before passing sentence, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." While in making coats of skin to cover them, He illustrated to their senses how He would effect their redemption. The promise given, and the illustration of its fulfilment in covering them with the skins of animals, which He either slew himself or caused to be slain, clearly shews that redemption was not simply a promise, but a promise typically fulfilled. It seems fair, therefore, to conclude that in these transactions the Almighty typically redeemed the human family, so that they henceforth stood before Him as covered from their transgression. He did not any more look upon their nakedness, but upon their coverings, which had been worn by innocent victims, whose blood had been shed for them. The Redeemer, therefore, was none other than He who caused the animals to be slain, and made their skin into coverings for the transgressors of His law.

This brings us to the consideration of the ransom. The typical ransom was the life of a lamb or lambs without blemish or spot. The real or antitypical ransom was the Lamb of God, or, as expressed by Peter, in writing to his brethren, "Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." The ransom must be the property of the ransomer or redeemer, otherwise the purchase could not be effected. It believed Jesus, therefore, to be the exclusive property of His Father in the matter of disposing of Him in any way He pleased. That such was the case is demonstrated by the pre-ordaining promise of a son given at first, and by the repeated after amplifications of it, detailing the time, manner, cause, and place of his birth, not one of which could have been either arranged or accomplished by any other being but the Almighty Himself. Jesus was not His own father. He did not preserve Himself from the jealousy of Herod; He did not educate Himself; He did not please Himself nor keep His own interests before His Father's. The ransom being neither a dumb animal, which knew nothing of the reason for which it was put to death, nor silver and gold, but a living, intelligent man, who had during his whole life pleased His Father, He could not be put to death by His Father as an act of justice. No clause in the Mosaic Law, or any other, commanded a son to die simply because his father wished him. Jesus Himself said, I have power to lay down my life. He did not lay down His life reluctantly as a matter of duty, but, as a freewill offering. He delighted to do His Father's will, because He knew that nothing short of His voluntarily giving up of His life could put away sin, or atone for the guilt of the first man. While Jesus had absolute power to allow or prevent men from taking His life from Him, He had no power to raise Himself from the dead. This was an act of favour on the part of the Redeemer similar to the act of His begetting in the womb of Mary. Hence, the Father said to Him on the morning when He raised Him,

"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." These three steps form the three-fold cord by which the Almighty kinsman has perfected His scheme of redemption, viz., His promise of a seed or Son to the woman. His word, or promise, made flesh when a child was born, and His begetting from the dead of this Son, who is consecrated for evermore the only name through whom any son or daughter of Adam can obtain redemption from sin and all its consequences, and become heirs of the eternal life promised before the foundation of the world.

Redemption is a gift. - We cannot suppose of a compulsory gift. The Father was not compelled to give a son; neither, after having one, was He compelled to give Him up to death nor, after being dead, was He compelled to raise Him up again. These separate acts of favour have one source - the favour of God. Jesus Christ was not compelled to give Himself up to death for us. He freely gave Himself. Compulsion implies the power to enforce a demand. If the Father had compelled Jesus to give Himself up, or even backed His expressed will with a threat in case of non-compliance, the value of His self-sacrifice would have been destroyed. The act of Jesus, therefore, was a free-will offering. Jesus could neither demand nor compel His Father to raise Him from the dead. To demand is to assert a right. This Jesus could not do, inasmuch as He voluntarily gave up His life for those who deserved to die. While lying in the grave, He lay there in vindication of His Father's honour, and for this voluntary act of submission, God has exalted Him, and given

Him a name which is above every name, that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is the Lord (possessor of the earth, with all its peoples and nations) to the glory of God the Father. From what has been written, it is manifest how God can be just, and also the Justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus as His ransom for the salvation of His sons who have rebelled against Him. He will not compel men to be saved any more than He compelled Jesus to die the just for the unjust, but He wishes the salvation of all, and has given ample evidence of power to do all His good pleasure.

Concerning this matter, the Apostle says “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit – that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The last phrase in this quotation illustrates the perfect character of God’s scheme of redemption. God is reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The world is in trespasses, but God does not impute them. This shows that they have been sacrificially removed, and that all that is necessary on the part of the world is, to know what He has done, and accept of His reconciliation. For He hath made Him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The elliptical phrase “Made Him sin,” has given rise to the idea that Jesus Christ was made sin by being bora of a woman. A more unreasonable construction of the Apostle’s words could scarce be conceived. Human nature is not sin; neither is it a sinful thing to be born; and, besides, it was after Jesus had passed with success through trial that he was made sin. This clearly shows that He was made an offering for sin, or a sin-offering, but to have made Him sin in the manner supposed, would have defeated the purpose for which He was born.

Brother William Ellis.

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**We thank Brother Timothy Temilola for sending us this interesting item**

## **The Flag of Israel**

### **Origins of the Flag of Israel are Torah-Based!**

Did you know that the roots and origins of the flag of Israel can be found in the Torah? Rabbi Ari Enkin explains how the official flag of Israel represents Jewish values.

The familiar blue and white flag with the Star of David in the middle is the official flag and primary symbol of the State of Israel. It was signed into law on October 28, 1948 – five months after the establishment of the State of Israel. It seems that the flag of Israel made its first appearance, in the form that we are all familiar with today, in 1891 as the flag of the Zionist movement.

The flag of Israel was intended to represent the talit, the Jewish prayer shawl, which often takes the form of blue stripes on a white background. The Magen David, the Star of David, of course, is an ancient Jewish symbol. Worthy of an article in its own right, some suggest that the Magen David was first used by King David himself or by his son, King Solomon.

What we have, therefore, are two ancient, well-known and prominent Jewish symbols that come together to serve as the flag of the State of Israel. This sentiment was expressed by David Wolffsohn (1856–1914), one of the early Zionist leaders responsible for the flag becoming official. He wrote:

“At the behest of our leader Herzl, I came to Basle to make preparations for the Zionist Congress. Among many other problems that occupied me then was one that contained something of the essence of the Jewish problem. What flag would we hang in the Congress Hall? Then an idea struck me. We have a flag — and it is blue and white. The talit with which we wrap ourselves when we pray: that is our symbol.

Let us take this talit from its bag and unroll it before the eyes of Israel and the eyes of all nations. So I ordered a blue and white flag with the Shield of David painted upon it. That is how the national flag that flew over Congress Hall came into being.”

## The Flag of Israel Truly Represents the Jewish State

Blue is a prominent and frequently reoccurring colour of the bible, known as techelet. For example, the strings of tzitzit are supposed to include a blue thread. Why exactly this blue thread is rarely worn today is a topic beyond the scope of this article. However, it is in memory of the blue string that blue stripes began to be woven into the Tallit. So too, the clothing of the Kohanim (priests) included the biblical blue as did many of the implements and utensils of the Tabernacle.

The flag of Israel, with authentically Jewish symbols, flies prominently at the Western Wall.

As we can see, blue has always been a special colour in Judaism. It is the colour of the sky and sea – the primary creations of “the Heavens and the Earth.” We are taught that God’s throne is blue like the sky.

Blue is also the primary colour of Kabbalah, as it is said to ward off the “Evil Eye.” Those who have visited the mystical city of Tzfat (Safed) can attest to the prominent appearance of the colour blue throughout the city.

It is interesting to note that Israel holds the world record for the largest national flag ever displayed. The 2007 World Record Flag, which was unveiled near Masada, was manufactured in the Philippines and measured 660 x 100 meters (2,165 x 330 feet) and weighed 5.2 metric tones. It was produced by one of Israel’s greatest non-Jewish friends, Grace Galindez-Gupana, as a gesture of support for Israel.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE LAW AND THE PASSOVER.

IN the religious systems of our day, little or nothing is observable which shews any connection between them and the religion taught by the great Jewish legislator, and but for the fact that we sometimes hear his name mentioned, though only as a mighty leader of an antiquated school, there would be no indication that what is termed the Christianity of the nineteenth century had the slightest relationship to the Mosaic law. Indeed, it may be said of the moderns that, in their eyes Moses and his law belong to that past no part of which is ever to be re-produced

We do them no injustice in asserting that their respect for Moses is scarcely more than for any other grand historical character, and that their esteem for his writings is not strong enough to stimulate them to their serious perusal. We may, without hesitation, venture still farther, and say that now-a-days it is thought undesirable to encourage the study of the Pentateuch, as if understood no benefit could ensue, inasmuch as Christianity has so far superseded even the best, with its teachings as to render acquaintance with them of no practical value. Such, I think, is an impartial representation of the position now held by “the wise in their own eyes, and the prudent in their own sight.” As a contrast to this state of things, it is highly gratifying to perceive that the earth still retains some to whom those wonderful records are of more value than “the bread which perisheth,” and who look upon them as the mystical conservators of “the form of the knowledge and of the truth” which shall yet govern the nations of the world, and teach them wisdom without the fashionable aids and accomplishments of lead and steel.

With regard to the law, as a whole, it is worthy of remark that no other code ever wrought such lasting and astonishing effects upon any people or nation, nor could it ever be affirmed of any other law that it did not fail to guide its recipients satisfactorily in every situation and circumstance which time led them to experience, while they remained obedient to its enactments. But the testimony of Israel is, “There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass.” Joshua xxi. 45.

Notwithstanding its admirable construction and adaptation to the requirements of its subjects, there is a sense in which it was imperfect, that it could not bestow immortality. Paul refers to this in his epistle to the Hebrews, where he also intimates that it will be resuscitated with certain modifications: chapters vii. and viii.

Some erroneously suppose that the law of Moses was only suitable to Jews. But it may be asked, in what were Jews different from Gentiles? The distinctions and peculiarities found among them, it may readily be conceded, are traceable to the strange separative power of the law. It would, therefore, appear that the same law might have produced results equally remarkable and beneficial, had it been promulgated to any, or all the people of the earth. This inference seems to be supported by fact, and it harmonizes with the predicted reproduction of the law for the government of all nations.

The exodus was not limited to those of the circumcision. The great company at its departure from the land of bondage, included no small number who had not been subjected to this singular and significant rite. And these were ruled by the same law. I do not aver that they entered fully into the ceremonies of Israel, being uncircumcised, but it will not be alleged that there was anything in the act of circumcision which rendered the whole code beneficial to its subjects. For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Circumcision was the initiative ceremony, without it no man could be properly under the law.

It seems to me, that in the beginning of Israel's formation as the "chosen" nation, there was any earnest given of the "good things to come" upon all the families of the earth, for the import of the following passage is found in other words iterated and reiterated in the ninth and fifteenth chapters of the book of Numbers. "One law shall be to him that is home born, and to the stranger that sojourneth among you." Exodus xii. 49. From these testimonies, it may be safely concluded that Moses' law is eminently suitable for the government of mankind at large, a few points perhaps excepted. To go fully into what is termed the philosophy of the law, would be beyond the original design of this article. It may, however, be permissible to make a general observation upon that phase of the subject.

The wisdom of the law was beautifully manifested in its power for the restraining and subjugation of the dominant passion in the heart of man, viz., selfishness or covetousness. This is manifest from its salutary and original demand, with respect to property, to service, and to land. One or two texts will suffice; the reader will find the general topic a profitable and interesting study. The law said, "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God, for I am the Lord thy God." No indiscretion relative to service, property, or estate, could entail on the thoughtless or ignorant an interminable loss. At the farthest, the evil which might have resulted would be abolished in the fiftieth year, if not previously obviated. Touching servants it was enacted that "if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he and his children with him." Lev. xxv. 54. As regards estate, we find the following regulation: "But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that bought it, until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession." Lev. xxv.28.

Were these acts universally applied we may imagine what an astonishing and a happy change would speedily be effected in the desires and propensities of all the inhabitants of the earth. Covetousness, that insatiable worm which now preys upon the vitals of society, would soon perish of hunger, and society, instead of presenting, morally speaking, a gaunt and haggard aspect, would stand in its integrity erect like the fir tree, and would flourish like the willow of the brook. Upon the general question the interested reader may consult the following texts. Lev. xxv. 8, 17, 25, 54. - xxvii. 14, 24. Num. xxxvi. 4. Ish. Ixi. 1, 2. Ezkl. xlvi. 17. Lam. iv. 17, 19. We have the authority of the prophet Ezekiel for saying that this arrangement, so obviously wise, will again come into force. Pointing, as I conceive to the time when Jesus Christ, that great prophet like unto Moses, shall rule among men, Ezekiel testifies, "but if he (the prince) give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince." Ezkl. xlvi. 17. Leaving these general remarks, let us endeavour to arrive at the teaching of particular institutions, and first let us consider what is written upon the subject of

## **THE PASSOVER,**

Even at this distance of time, a distance of several thousand years, there is a fact in connection with flits ordinance which almost chills our blood to contemplate. There is no parallel to it, either in profane or sacred history. No such event has marked the beginning of any other epoch, or the establishment of any other nation. After the event, however, and in view of the surprising past, and yet more surprising future of the people on whose account it transpired, it seems only fitting that some marvellous occurrence should

inaugurate what has been, and what will be again, the most powerful, wise, dreaded, and glorious commonwealth since the day on which Jehovah said, "Let us make man in our image."

The Israel of the present day, though life-destroying ignorance of the spiritual significance and bearing of that awful event, well remember the terror with which Jehovah's angel "passed through to the habitations of the Egyptians, and the mercy with which he "passed over" theirs. The important truth that the God of Israel is a God of judgment, as well as a God of mercy, was there most sternly and impressively inculcated. And if we may regard the spiritual condition of Egypt as a type of the degradation of "this present evil world," we must tremble at the expectation of the coming lessons, by which alone the universal mind can be taught the righteousness of God, Isaiah xxvi. 9.

The exemption from physical blemish which Jehovah prescribed in the consecrated lamb, might have indicated to the thoughtful Israelite, that omnipotence is the associate of absolute perfection; and this reflection might have led him to measure his own weakness and strength, by his neglect of, and his obedience to, the divine will. Such, at least, appears to have been the instruction inscribed on the pages of that symbolic book, the Mosaic ritual. But it would be unreasonable to expect that an ancient son of Abraham should have discerned several things to which the light of the New Testament gives a beautiful prominence and perspicuity.

In the yearly offering of the paschal lamb, there can be no doubt that every intelligent son of Israel enjoyed the retrospect of the deliverance of his ancestors, but it is scarcely credible that the spotless victim afforded him even a glimpse of future and complete deliverance through the faultlessness of his promised king. Yet by us, who have beheld the subsequent light of facts apostolically treated, not the shadow of a doubt can be entertained that such is the true interpretation of the enigmatical ceremony. To his brethren of the house of Israel after the spirit, and not after the letter, Paul wrote, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." And was not this to obtain redemption for us? Was not this to bring us out of the "iron furnace"? Yes. By His lamb-like death He dealt a mortal blow on our strong enemy (represented by the first born of Egypt), and henceforth, from sin we are "free indeed." Let us not then abuse our great "liberty," but "let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven (of the traditions of men, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth:" 1 Co. v. 7, 8.

Having "made a covenant" with Jehovah "by sacrifice," even the sacrifice of His own spotless Lamb, we are called upon to look diligently to our "house," which is now "an habitation for the spirit" that it be not defiled with the old leaven, for whoso defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy" 1Co.iii.16. Nor should we forget the duration of the feast, - Seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread." Does not this number denote "the (whole) time of our sojourning?" Is it not intended to convey that we must "hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end?" Heb. iii. 6. Such continuance in well doing we are assured is indispensable to the attainment of "the rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Paul's exhortations in moral philosophy may be looked upon as expositions of the startling dramas of Mosaic days. Were it not for the epistles, much must have been left to conjecture. But, how interesting, and sometimes dreadful do they become when joined to the concise and clear allusions and comments of the great apostle. The obvious lesson to be gathered from this is, the immense importance of due attention to "whatsoever things were written aforetime." We should become as it were Jews of the ancient type as respects reverence for their own Scriptures. The fashions of this world pass away. The people delight to tell and hear some new thing; so long as it wears the aspect of novelty, its absurdity passes unchallenged. But you cannot gain the friendship of the world by reverting to the old ways. "They are gone out of date, they are become obsolete," cries the world of religious fashion, "they are not suitable to the requirements of the present day."

The appalling judgments written in the old institutions of the Bible are, now as ever, unheeded. Self-complacent professors refer them to anybody but themselves; their language is, "they may be for Jews or heathen," "but to us they have no relation." "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecl. viii. 11. But to His brethren, said Jesus, "Ye are not of the world." These things, therefore, must not be disregarded or slighted by us, they are designed to be as lamps to our feet, and as lights to our path, to preserve us from the way of evil, and to help us to walk in the way of truth. The world neglects them, and is therefore stumbling in

darkness and in danger of the pit-falls of eternal death. As the truths and injunctions of the sacred oracles are present to our minds, so shall we fear and acknowledge God. To forget them is to treat the Deity as if He had fallen asleep. But He sleepeth not, neither can He forget.

While we were in that state “which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt,” “Christ our passover was slain for us.” We then girded ourselves for the long and arduous march. The great and terrible wilderness was before us, and beyond it the land, which is “the glory of all lands.” In our march we find that our enemies are not all without. Many are actually in the camp. Our onward course involves “a great fight of afflictions;” it is a “continued warfare.” How shall we be upheld? By remembering the name. That is the subject of our hope. It is a great and powerful name, it is also a fearful name. This name is not an abstraction. It is a body. It is a reality. Can we discern it? It is “the name of the Lord.” It is His body. It has been broken. Have we understood the import of those words? That body tasted death for every man. Are we of it? Have we been put to death? Is the old man crucified? Not if its works are visible. Let us “Keep in memory” the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread. –

Brother Edward Turney

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**The following thread was started on Christadelphians Worldwide on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

**Rene** :- People claim that the Lord's death automatically forgave the sins of the world, but is it true? Well, it seems that the Lord has no idea that He died for everyone in the world.

Jesus said, “I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours” John 17:9

**Janine** :- <<People claim that the Lord's death automatically forgave the sins of the world...but, is it true? >> No, that's not true! It is clear that Jesus died for all people that their sins might be forgiven. We have that declared in quotes like these: Romans 5:6, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit...”

BUT our forgiveness is not "automatic." Our forgiveness is dependent on our repentance. Jesus' death is meant to help us to come to repentance. As Jesus was nailed to the cross, we too nail him there (figuratively) every time we sin ("as you did it to the least of these my brothers you did it to me") therefore his death was that we might see how our sin was borne by Jesus and draw us to our knees in humble repentance. It is this which results in our forgiveness.

**Janine** :- We can say as an over-arching principle that Jesus died for the sins of the world, but it's a sweeping statement which doesn't explain the detail. The reality is that our forgiveness occurs at an individual level when we associate with Jesus' death and we repent of our sins. It has the potential to affect the whole world, but not all will respond to it.

The reality is that forgiveness occurred prior to Jesus' death so whilst it was an incredibly tragic occasion which was meant to impact our hearts at a profound level, it was not meant to be some transaction between heaven and earth.

We have clear scriptural evidence that David was forgiven well before Jesus lived on this earth. Forgiveness is not dependent on Jesus. However; Jesus' death was meant to have far more impact on us (than the blood of bulls and goats) that we might realize the importance of repentance and do something about repenting of our sin. That is how we are forgiven.

**Beverley** :- And another qualifying factor for the Father to forgive us, is that we will be forgiven in the measure that we forgive others. That is in the same sense as "as ye did it to the least of my brethren ye have done it unto me". I often wonder if the forgiveness we give to others is the hardest thing to do in our relationships with these his brethren.

**Janine** :- Yes, good point, Beverley.

**Barbara**:- Many are called but few are chosen

**Phil** :- But Barbara the many called are they baptized (as distinct from Christening ) or not?

**Barbara** :- That I can't answer

**Phil** :- Surely that is the key to your comment.

**Barbara**:- The key is those whom God has given him

**Phil**:- He that believes and is baptised shall be saved . . . with baptism with knowledge and understanding they will be saved so Barbara I ask again who are the many you comment on?

**Barbara:-** I was just answering a simple question, I know you have to be baptised.

**Phil:-** Ok love you in Christ but don't worry about the many, ensure your own salvation in reading the word and in prayer.

**Geoffrey:-** If Jesus didn't know about something, it doesn't mean it won't happen. Jesus didn't know the day nor the hour when the end of the world would come. God doesn't tell us everything. The Bible is not a source of ultimate truth about everything.

**Michael:-** That is why no one knows the time or the hour, as he will come like a thief in the night, and this is what the signs of the times are for. There is no time for fence sitters

Rene de Vera:- If Jesus did not die for the sins of the world (automatically), and the Lord's prayers and intercession reserves only for all man whom God gave to Jesus, then what is the process of God in giving man to Jesus

**Clive:-** Romans 8 v 29 – 30, “For who he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified, & Ephesians 1 v 3 – 14, “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

**Rene:-** Did anyone ever notice what the Lord said? He said . . . His intercession will be available ONLY to those whom God gave to Jesus.

How can man be given to Jesus by God? What is the process?

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you.” – John 17:9.

**John:-** John 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message"

**Barbara:-** You are correct Rene.

**Barbara:-** It is only those whom come to the knowledge of God through Christ, teachings, most of the world do not even question why they are here, or bother about God.

**John:-** Absolutely - but coming to a knowledge of God is really just the start - if we are to be Christ's possession it is also important to allow the spirit of Christ to bear fruit in our lives Galatians 5:22-25 KJV “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

**Mike:-** Interesting angle but I believe John 3:16 expresses the heart of God on the subject. Not automatic - we have to accept it but it is there for ALL.

**Rene:-** John D, based on John 17:20 those whom God gave to Jesus also heard the message from those whom Jesus sent. "I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message"

**Rene:-** In reality, when Jesus made a declaration on John 17:9, He specifically mentioned those people of his time and those who will hear the message from the one whom Jesus sent and those people are all long gone for almost 1900 years. Now how can we be given to God? If God will not send someone to give us the message of reconciliation on our time?

**For some reason I was unable to post my comments even though logged in, but I give them here as follows:-**

**Russell:-** In his opening post, Rene states that some people say Jesus' death automatically forgives all people. It is evident he does not believe this but he seeks discussion with others. All agree that it is not true and Janine shows in her post that Jesus death makes forgiveness available to all people but not all people will avail themselves of it.

After further discussion and comment, Rene asks, "If Jesus did not die for the sins of the world (automatically), and the Lord's prayers and intercession reserves only for all man whom God gave to Jesus, then what is the process of God in giving man to Jesus?"

In response, Clive quotes Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:3-14, but Rene has something different in mind and so asks if anyone has ever noticed that Jesus said His intercession will be available ONLY to those whom God gave to Him.

Here Rene seems to be putting an interpretation on the words of Jesus limiting His meaning to only those living at the time of Jesus while here on earth, and in his final post Rene makes the point "In reality, when Jesus made a declaration on John 17:9, He specifically mentioned those people of his time and those who will hear the message from the one whom Jesus sent and those people are all long gone for almost 1900 years. Now how can we be given to God? If God will not send someone to give us the message of reconciliation on our time?"

And here we come to the end of this thread for no one replied.

My answer to Rene is that the message Jesus gave to His apostles is recorded for us in the Bible. We do not need more Apostles today.

Jesus message is for people of all ages. We have only to read a little further on in Jesus prayer to His Father, where we read (John 17:20), "However, I do not ask concerning only these, but also concerning those who put their trust in me through their message, that they will all be one. Just as you, Father, are in intimate relationship with me and I am in intimate relationship with you, I ask that they may be in intimate relationship with us, so that the world will believe that you sent me..." (The Kingdom of God Version)

The teachings of the apostles shows this consistently throughout the New Testament. But there is more than this because the crucifixion of Jesus concerns all people even before He was born. In particular, it concerns Adam, for Adam was warned that in the day he transgressed God's commandment, he would die. When Adam transgressed the commandment he expected to be put to death and tried to hide away from God. What God had not told him was that He had a plan of redemption ready through forgiveness. And forgiveness was to involve His only begotten Son, Jesus, who was yet to be born - "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). But the immediate requirement of God was that there should be a sacrifice of a sheep (most likely) whereby Adam's sin was provisionally and symbolically covered over. This forgiveness of Adam did not give him eternal life but an extension of his natural life so that he did not die in the day of his transgression. He was provisionally redeemed by the sacrifice but it needed the sacrifice of The Son of God "to take away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). No to cover it over, but to take it away.

This redemption of Adam, and all his descendants, took place on Calvary; redemption does not give eternal life. Our present life is our redeemed life.

[Before anyone challenges this fact I wish to point out that in the Greek language the word for redemption is also translated "deliver" as for example in Hebrews 11: 35, "not accepting deliverance (or redemption); that they might obtain a better resurrection." Obviously these faithful people had received redemption but they did not accept deliverance even as Jesus did not, but chose rather to go to the cross for our sakes. So when we read for example, "Look up for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28) the better expression would be "look up for your deliverance draweth nigh."]

What this, our redeemed life, gives us is the opportunity to enter into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus sacrifice. At the Last Supper Jesus said "This is the New Covenant in my blood" and here we have the reason for baptism into Jesus death. "Jesus, our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Those baptised into Jesus death come into covenant relationship with God and if they remain faithful they are assured of life eternal in the first resurrection - (Revelation 20:6). All these belong to Christ for God has given them to Him.

Hebrews 9:15 confirms that all Adam's descendants are brought together in the sacrifice of Jesus - "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the

transgressions that were under the first testament.” The first, or old covenant was that given to Israel by which they were united as a nation – the covenant of circumcision.

Lastly - the picture of a purchase - is that they have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ and ye are not your own.

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

**The above thread ‘dried up’ and so a few days later Rene, not being satisfied, started another one:-**

**Rene:-**

“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring these also, and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd” - John 10:16.

Are you the "other sheep" of Christ? Do you belong to the "One Flock" that Jesus prophesied led by the appointed One Shepherd? If not, then it is time for us to understand that salvation and blessing from God can only be obtained by anyone if God will bring them to the One Flock and become the Lord's Other Sheep on our time.

**Mike:-** I do. The "other sheep" reminds me of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Beyond the 144,000 are these other sheep. There is only one flock, one shepherd, Jesus, and there are no divisions in His flock.

**Rene:-** Hi Mike, it is true that there was only one flock or one fold of the sheep in the first century. This One Flock of the sheep was the Jews and the gentiles whom God called.

But the other sheep will NOT be part of the first century fold. The other sheep will be a future salvation of mankind.... how can we be sure? Jesus prophesied that The Other sheep will become One Flock led by One shepherd. There is a wisdom in v. 16 if we would understand the message of the Lord on why they, the other sheep need to become one flock lead by the appointed one shepherd and why not simply join the Fold of the sheep, though majority are the gentiles, but still the organization still exist, though it became idol worshipers but the point is, the fold/Church still exist from day 30 AD to 2014 AD.

John 10:16 will shed lots of lights and understanding regarding salvation that awaits mankind on our time if your will study it thoroughly. - “I have other sheep and they will become one flock with one Shepherd” John 10:16.

**David:-** I think "other sheep" are the Gentiles and they are brought in with the Jews to make "one fold" with "one shepherd"

**Mike:-** Thanks for the heads up. Gentiles makes sense.

**Rene:-** If the Gentiles (by themselves) become One Flock and led by the appointed One Shepherd... then the prophecy belongs to them. But history made it clear that the Jews and the Gentiles belongs to the One flock or one Fold that Jesus built, wherein the Other sheep will not be part of. How can we be sure that they will NOT be part of the first century Church or fold? The Lord testifies - “I have other sheep and they will become one flock with one Shepherd” John 10:16.

**Rene:-** The formation of the Other Sheep of Christ into One Flock is a solid evidence that they will not be in that era... but a future means of salvation prepared by the Lord to mankind.

**Again my notes which I was unable to post:-**

**Russell:-** Jesus only ever preached to the Jews, and never preached to Gentiles (with the possible exception of the woman at the well of Samaria who was of mixed race. Half Jewish or not, she was looking for the Messiah and she also asked Jesus if He was greater than their father Jacob who had given them the well? – John 4:12 and 25. Therefore the “other sheep” of whom Jesus spoke were the Gentiles converts to whom the

Apostles preached and later the gospel was spread by disciples throughout all ages since. While in Matthew 24:14, Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

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## OUR OPINION OF CREEDS.

HAVING received of late several printed forms of creeds, we take occasion to express our opinion upon such documents in general, proceed from where they may. No form of faith was ever printed that was not found fault with, either as containing too much, or not enough, to say nothing about the endless disputes upon the wording of this or that proposition. And nothing is more objectionable than repairing and revising a form of faith. Whatever needs this is imperfect or incomplete. Creeds have been, and are still, among the curses of ecclesiastical experience. History abundantly shews that a form of faith is a bone of contention, and generally fares like a political treaty - is torn up and burnt after much disturbance. All printed forms of faith are like water, coloured more or less with the channels through which they pass; some are tinged and impregnated with one element and borne with another, the clearness and parity being thereby affected. If men are not content with the Scriptures, nothing else will please them long, and if they are, nothing else is needful. As disputes will arise, let them be upon the original itself, not upon some secondary and man-framed basis. To make a separate form of faith insensibly lowers our esteem for the Bible, while it cannot give that reverence to it which we all feel for that great Book. Popish Breviaries, Imitations, Protestant Prayer Books, and Catechisms, are all the out-growth of the creed-concocting propensity, and the prime end of all these is the enforcing of their own diverse notions rather than a search of, and an abiding in, the Inspired Word alone. Business rules are more or less necessary; but give us no form of faith but the Bible. This is sufficient "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Brother Edward Turney. November 1874

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## MEPHIBOSHETH

There is no doctrine that so powerfully helps one to maintain his separation from the world as this hope of the Lord's return. During the time of King David's exile, when a usurper reigned in Jerusalem, we read of at least one man in the city whose heart was true to the absent King. That was Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

Where the King had gone he could not follow, for he was lame in both feet. But his heart was ever with him beyond Jordan. He might have made a name for himself by joining the side of Absalom, and then bidding his time till the house of Israel restored to him the kingdom of his father (2 Samuel 16:3). Absalom was moreover a goodly man; and there was beauty in him that men should desire him; and he had promised reforms in the government that would satisfy everybody. (2 Samuel 14:25, 15:1-6). Would it not be better to settle down and accept his rule, and join in the general rejoicing?

Not so, reasoned Mephibosheth, for there was another King whose right it was to reign, one who had shown to Mephibosheth the "kindness of God," causing him to even eat bread continually at his table as one of the King's sons. And now that the King's inheritance was in the hands of another, Mephibosheth at least would not help to divide the spoils. Nay, rather, so long as the King was absent, and rejected, he would find his truest joy in having fellowship with him in his sufferings, whilst longing for the day of his return.

And so he neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the King departed until the day he came again in peace. And when he did come at last, and the night of weeping ended, Mephibosheth found his Joy and satisfaction not in considering his own exalted state, but in beholding the joy and satisfaction of his King. What though during these times of trial Mephibosheth's

name had been slandered and his life misjudged? What though a treacherous servant had robbed him of half his goods?

“Let him take all” cried Mephibosheth, for indeed nothing now was of any account in comparison with the joy of seeing the King again in peace in his own house.

And surely for us in these last days this story tells its lesson. For there is another King, one Jesus (Acts 17:7), the One whose right it is to reign. He is in a “far country,” an outcast from the world, and in His absence the world is making spoil of His inheritance. But He too has his Mephibosheths. They are out of tune with the present age, and out of touch with the spirit of this age altogether. They live in the past and in the future. “Oh what joy for us to win Life to serve this King from heaven.”

(To read the history of Mephibosheth, see 2 Samuel 9:1-13, 16:1-4, 19:24-30, and 21:1-7)

Brother A.H.Broughton.

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## SCRIPTURE SIMILES, OR EMBLEMS, BY SARAH ROGERS.

*o I.- “Keep me as the apple of the eye.” – Psl. XVII. 8.*

THE pupil, or apple of the eye is kept, or protected by: -

1st. The strong ‘bony socket which surrounds the eye and wards off any blow.

2nd. The very sensitive lashes which look out for danger.

3rd. The eyelids which close as soon as the lashes are touched, and when we sleep.

4th. The soft cushion of fat on which the ball rests.

### NATURAL PICTURE.

Amazing skill! to place so great a power  
Within so small a spot,  
And wisdom vast! to fix the tender nerve  
Where harm easily comes not.  
If more diffused, or more exposed, ‘twould be  
Our constant work to tend  
A boon so rare, that, in our daily life,  
Such countless joys attend.

Mark, how protected is the priceless gem,  
In bony socket hard,  
That breaks the blow, repels each deadly foe,  
And so the eye doth guard.  
Lashes, like faithful sentinels that stand  
For ever on the watch,  
Ready to give the alarm of danger near,  
Upon the slightest touch.

The telegraphic hairs the message take,  
At once down drops the lid,  
So exquisitely contriv’d that safely now,  
From harm the eye is hid.  
Pillowed on fleshy softness lies the ball,

A nursling safe and warm,  
Ungentle touch its slumber cannot break,  
Nor sudden shock, alarm.

#### SPIRITUAL PICTURE.

And may I pray to be kept as the eye  
Am I so great a gem?  
Yes, for the Saviour died that I might shine  
In His bright diadem.

Keep then, with Thy vast strength, my feeble will,  
Give Thou the Shield of Faith  
That shall resist the tempter's fiery darts,  
And conquer even death.

Be Thou my Watch-tower too, and tell me when  
The enemy is nigh,  
That I may run to Thee, and be secure,  
As in Thine arms I lie.

Shut safe within those "everlasting arms,"  
Sin cannot touch me there;  
Nor treacherous, wary foe shall fiercely smite,  
Or tempt me unaware.

Be Thou my strength, my Watch-tower, Hiding-place,  
My Guard, - and welcome Rest,  
When safe at last within Immanuel's land  
I stand among the blest.

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### SINCERITY.

THE word which forms the subject of this essay springs from two Latin words - *sine*; without; *cera*, wax. The literal meaning is, therefore, *without wax*. From Roman history we learn that the words *sine cera* were inserted in making contracts for statues, and signified that the figures were to be free from flaws and perfect. This was done on account of the trickery of certain sculptors, who invented a sort of wax, or cement, which they used to fill in the defective places of their work, so as to hide the cracks or holes, and give it the appearance of faultlessness. In time, however, the wax or cement, not being able to resist the action of the air and other influences, dropped out, and the fraud was exposed.

We do not employ the word sincerity in this literal way; still it is understood to mean honesty of intention, and the absence of all flattery and deceit. Nothing renders a person more estimable than sincerity, and nothing more disliked than insincerity, whatever other excellent qualities he or she possesses. But time and the effect of adverse circumstances are requisite to make a thorough test. To speak according to the figure mentioned above, the wax looks so much like the stone; is so hard, and lasts so long, that it is unsafe to be hasty in forming our conclusions. Selfishness and duplicity may appear in another dress; may be attired in the garb of benevolence, and as we cannot at first discern the real motive of what in itself is a good word or a good act, we trust until we find we are betrayed. But once thoroughly undeceived it is difficult to be again snared by the same person.

In trade how easy and pleasant our business is where we are sure of sincerity. Much time is saved, much energy and precaution, otherwise needful to shield ourselves in treating with men who lack honour, and whose last thought is to do unto others as they would be done unto; who, in every bargain, are striving for more than a just profit; who serve their friends like sheep, fleece them at every opportunity. The faces insincerity assumes are legion; we cannot attempt to present even a bare catalogue of them here. A look may be a lie; anything or any manner, in fact, which is resorted to with the intention to deceive is equivalent to a falsehood. Hence how numerous are the crimes of which the law cannot possibly take hold. But a sincere man is above law. He would spurn the thought of misrepresentation, however slight, of undue advantage however small, just as much as he would spurn the deed of a pickpocket. The things are in reality the same. Viewed in this light how many akin to pickpockets are there not in every city? Many, too, who sit to judge others, who affect judicial titles, and who would be ready to institute a charge of libel on the smallest aspersion upon their "honour" as merchants or trader. But though these though successful for a while, though they may even rise to financial eminence, be accounted great by their fellow citizens, and in divers ways flourish like the green bay tree, still there is an Eye that sees, an Ear that hears, and a Voice that pronounces sentence; their ways, sooner or later will be known, and being known, will as surely be execrated; while the memory of the just, however humble, will be revered and blessed; an eternal signal to guide posterity in the way of sincerity and truth.

But it is not alone of the sincerity of the world that we have to speak; it is on "godly sincerity" we desire to enlarge. When a man, "well reported of without," embraces the gospel, he is, as it were, doubly worthy. He was a worthy man while outside; he does not leave his worthiness at the door of the sanctuary, but enters invested with it all. Being within the holy place he is attired with another robe; the righteousness of his Lord and Master. From moral impurity such a man needs not to be cleansed, like Cornelius of old, he is already respected of God. How few, alas! of this class are to be found in the holy place. The gospel commandments can cleanse the filthy, it is true, if they are duly applied; but where there is pretence or hypocrisy the "old man" stalks freely within, draped in the thin half-transparent sacerdotal robe; passes for a king and priest God; deplores and excuses his short comings, charging them heavily to the account of "the old man," whom he ought to have "put off with all his deeds." Sincerity would, indeed, have first put him off, but how frequently do we see him merely covered over with a semblance of the new garment; the counterfeit, however, always fits most awkwardly as "a cloak." The ugly plaits and seams of the old clothing stick out; the soft covering of the sheep betrays rather than hides the ridges and hard angles of the bony wolf. Violence and greediness are the more remarkable when seen protruding from beneath an exterior so peaceful, smooth, and warm.

Sincerity, like all other things, can be cultivated. We should tend it carefully in conversation. It is a sin to bestow praise in order to receive the same again; and extravagant praise is perhaps, more frequently the sign of insincerity than of bad judgment. It may be an indication of envy too. Paul, for himself and certain co-labourers, ventured a very high standard of comparison in this matter; in his second epistle to the believers at Corinth, he writes: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity . . . we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you ward" (i. 12). God-like sincerity is what the apostle declares they had practised. God deceives no one, tempts no one. He is not "crafty," but ever commends Himself to us, by the openness of His dealings. Men would sometimes rob God; but He hates robbery and deception. Paul, as a Jew, had deceived no one; he states that he walked in the righteousness of the law blameless. As a Christian, he could say he behaved holily and justly. There was no pandering to rich men; no purchase of esteem at the expense of the good, nor of the evil; no self-exaltation by unjust and malicious comparisons; no aiming at power on the ruin of righteous reputations; but industry, simplicity, frankness; ready and equal co-operation; a disposition to honour others, coupled with gentleness and quietness of behaviour. All this we gather from the apostle's letters. Paul was not an excitable impetuous Christian; but there was a

“burning fire” in his heart which kept him all a-glow, and warmed all who remained long near him. It was a steady heat; not the fitful blazing of chaff and thorns, sometimes mounting high and crackling loud, then smouldering and black with smoke.

As Christians, our daily food should be unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. This is that which came down from heaven, whereof if men eat they shall not die. That is, if they continue to eat, they shall never be accounted dead by God; though in dust, they live to Him. Nothing dies that is not corrupt, and sincerity is one of the beautiful evergreens of the moral world; a choice plant in the paradise of God.

Of all kinds of insincerity the worst is the insincerity of love. This sounds like contradiction; but it means feigned love; it means, wearing the aspect of love without the reality, yea, often fostering hatred in its place. This is detestable. The Divine admonition is, “Let love be without dissimulation.” The French are proverbially insincere; guilty of the strongest professions on the slightest foundation, and they are, in consequence, generally distrusted; not that other nations are free from this falsity. More or less, the vice exists wherever men exist; but what shall we say of those who profess before God and man to have laid aside all this; those, too, who claim to be considered patterns for the imitation of others - this is hypocrisy of the deepest dye. Take a lesson from little children; seldom it is that they deceive. If they dislike you, they do not pretend to love you; but quickly give some sign that your room is preferable to your company. We feel this happy influence; grown up people, who cheat and trick each other, never, or very rarely, dissemble with children. It is their frankness that makes the society of children so charming, even when they say they do not like you. “Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children.” Be what you seem, and seem what you are; never profess love, friendship, praise, and so forth, to gain an end, when you feel aversion; perhaps, disgust. Let us not forget that sincerity has nothing in it contrary to courtesy, so that there is no need to be offensive in our manners because we are true to our feeling’s and judgment.

Brother Edward Turney.

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**The following article, written by G.V.Grocott, a Christadelphian, was sent to me by a reader of the Circular Letter with a request for comment. My observations are in italics.**

## **Christ As A Sacrifice**

The English word "sacrifice" literally means "holy act" or "work of holiness" (from Latin *sacra*, holy; and *facio*, to make or do). In the Bible (which is a much better guide to meaning) in both Old and New Testaments, the original word for sacrifice (Heb: *zebach*; Gr: *thusia*) means "a slaying, a putting to death of that which is the cause of death."

The modern, common meaning - the giving up of something for the sake of a higher purpose - is a secondary and derived meaning, and must be kept secondary (though it is a correct description, as far as it goes, of the "holy work" that was Christ in his entirety).

What God's eternal wisdom required to open the way of life was not shed blood as such - it was the reality that the blood represented: the perfect life poured out wholly unto God.

The essence is in the perfection, rather than in the slaying. The slaying is simply the termination and culmination of the perfection, bringing the perfecting process to a head, and completing it.

The sacrificial death of Christ was the most important event in history: it was the most necessary event: it was the most beautiful event: it was the most meaningful event.

It was not just the arbitrary exaction of purposeless tragedy and suffering. It was not the orthodox Church idea of punishing and torturing the innocent so that the guilty might escape. That idea is a travesty on the justice, righteousness, and love of God. It was the supreme manifestation of the love of God and the love of Christ: for each other, and for mankind.

It was the glorious culmination and apex of eternal perfection being worked out on a plane and a level far above our normal conceptions. In it we observe with awe the workings of eternity and divinity.

It was the loving, all-wise Father accomplishing the dreadful but necessary and beneficial disciplining and perfecting and glorifying of the loving, submissive, obedient Son.

It was the climax and conclusion of the supreme battle of the ages between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness, between good and evil, between Christ and the Devil - the diabolos, the motions of sin, the destroyer of mankind. And the victory was Christ's, strengthened by God.

The conflict had to be right unto death. If the lovingly offered life were just allowed to run its course to natural death, then the element of choosing God's will over the "my" will is not carried to its ultimate point. Nor would it involve the ultimate, supreme, beautiful act of perfect self-emptying and self-surrender. Furthermore, a natural death would not have been a condemnation - a judgment, a sentencing to death - of the sin-body. This too was part of the necessary total picture of the perfection.

Let us not look upon the question of Christ needing or benefiting from his own offering, as of some ritual or act external to, and separable from, himself. The sacrificial death was simply the inseparable completion and perfecting of the total sacrifice that Christ himself was in his entirety. We cannot separate Christ from his sacrifice. Christ as a sacrifice, a whole burnt offering, a sin offering, a joyful, freewill peace offering - from birth to lovingly-yielded-up life - is the essential nucleus of the whole Divine purpose. If we try to take this beautiful picture apart into its component pieces, we completely destroy it.

We cannot separate Christ from mankind: he IS mankind - focalized and summarized and idealized.

We cannot separate Christ from his offering: he IS his offering - without his offering he would not be Christ at all.

We cannot separate Christ's sacrificial LIFE from his sacrificial DEATH, which was but the apex and culmination of that life. They are inseparable parts of one wonderful, perfect whole: a complete, indivisible unity. .

We cannot separate sin in the flesh from sin manifested in action. They are but subdivisions of the basic sin constitution that must be swept away.

We cannot separate Christ from the benefits of his offering: because what he wrought, he wrought for ALL MANKIND, of and with whom he was inseparably one.

Paul's inspired remarks on his perfecting go to the heart of the subject, and reveal its beauty and its wisdom (Heb. 5:7-9) - "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered. And being MADE PERFECT, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Paul says further (Heb. 2:10) - "It became Him (that is, it was fitting and appropriate for God), in bringing many sons into glory, to make the Captain of their salvation PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING."

Perfection through suffering is the way to Divine glory: and Jesus was the Head and Forerunner, in this as in everything. He had first to be made perfect himself: to be cleansed and purified, and perfected by his own perfect offering of obedience even unto suffering and death.

Then, having himself obtained redemption and release from the sin-constitution and its condemnation, God in mercy offers salvation to all who repudiate themselves and their own will and desires (as he did), and become and remain part of him in the appointed way - by baptism and lifelong obedience unto death -

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

"He that shall endure unto the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

"He is the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

Brother G.V.Growcott

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## **A Critique of the Bro. G.V.Growcott's Article "Christ as a Sacrifice"**

While the first part of the first paragraph is correct as regards the meaning of sacrifice, the last few words of this paragraph are not true. The original word for sacrifice in the Bible does not mean "a putting to death of that which is the cause of death." One may well wonder why G.V.Growcott should wish to say it is. It is always well to question doubtful claims. Following on from this, the next claim, that "giving up of something for the sake of a higher purpose" G.V.Growcott says is "a secondary and derived meaning." This also, is not true. It is not a secondary meaning neither is it a derived meaning. It is the true meaning and always has been; it is essential to God's requirements regarding sacrifices, and this was demonstrated by God in the sacrifice of an animal to cover Adam's transgression.

Yet another incorrect statement is seen in which G.V.Growcott wishes us to believe that "God's eternal wisdom required to open the way of life was not shed blood as such..." Was it not? The writer to the Hebrews tells us (9:22), "without shedding of blood is no remission (i.e. forgiveness of sins). But then G.V.Growcott goes on to say God required "the reality that the blood represented: the perfect life poured out wholly unto God." To me this verbosity says that God did require the shedding of blood. Wouldn't it have been better to say that 'Jesus sacrifice would have been of no value had He been a sinner; and that by living a perfect life He made Himself acceptable to His Father as a sacrifice without blemish or spot?

In his next paragraph G.V.Growcott says that "The essence is in perfection, rather than in the slaying." From what I have shown one will see you cannot separate the two in this way. Both the perfection and the free-will offering of Himself were all that God wished for and received of His Son. But to use the word "simply" with regard to the "termination and slaying" of Jesus is inappropriate. We are considering the greatest event the world has yet seen – the crucifixion of the Son of God as the free-will offering for the salvation of the faithful, showing such love, both of God and of Jesus that the world can scarcely comprehend. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). "Simply" used in this context does not fit.

G.V.Growcott next tells us that "the sacrificial death of Christ was the most important event in history" and I am sure every Christian would agree with this. In the next four or five paragraphs the writer extolls the virtues of the work of Jesus - much of which is written in fancy language giving an appearance of depth and cleverness which he apparently feels it is necessary to use.

But when the writer refers to the Father accomplishing the perfecting of Jesus, I feel he has again overstepped the mark. It was Jesus who chose to live to perfection so we must give honour where honour is due and not diminish His accomplishment. He would have us do the same, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), but we all sadly don't feel the need or urgency as we ought. That we are not perfect is our fault. But there was no fault with Jesus.

It would give me much pleasure to agree with more of this writer's exposition but this cannot be for his next claim is that Jesus was strengthened by God to overcome all temptation! If God strengthened Jesus in this way then Jesus was just a puppet with God pulling the strings! No! The victory was Christ's. He chose to

obey His Father's will in all things – “Not my but Thine be done.” (Luke 21:42). The fact that Jesus was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15), gives the lie to this writer's claim.

The next paragraph (beginning with “The conflict had to be right unto death”), calls for some clarification, for do not Christadelphians often quote from Paul's writings? We read in Romans 5:12, “As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin so death passed upon all for that all have sinned.” And do not Christadelphians then say that this death is the condemnation which passed upon all men? How is it then that the writer says here that a natural death for Jesus would not have been a condemnation – a judgment, a sentencing to death? This is a direct contradiction of the BASF which he claims to uphold and teach as essential to his beliefs.

Speaking of the sin-body of Jesus is another point of dispute. The phrase “sinful flesh” occurs once only in the Bible and it is in Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Many, many times have Christadelphians been told that these words “sinful flesh” were never written by Paul or anyone else. In the original Greek, the word translated “sinful” is wrong. This is a well-known fact and was shown to be a bad translation well over a hundred years ago? So why do all, or almost all translators keep repeating this misleading error? I feel there can be no other reason than that all of Christendom, including Christadelphians, are content to believe in defiled flesh of mankind ever since Adam transgressed in the Garden of Eden. However, Paul in writing to the Romans said that God sent his own Son “in the likeness of sin's flesh” and there is a big difference between “sin's flesh” and “sinful flesh.” The one is flesh belonging to sin and the other is flesh full of sin. Now if Jesus had to be flesh full of sin, what is the significance of the word “likeness”? But if we change this to read as Paul wrote it to his readers and ask If Jesus was flesh belonging to sin (as a master) then the “likeness” which was applied to Jesus shows He did not belong to sin as a master – for, indeed, He belonged to His Father, whereas we belong to Adam as our father, who sold us into the bondage of sin when he transgressed in Eden. Paul was showing the difference between Jesus and the rest of mankind as to ownership.

G.V.Growcott next says, We cannot separate Christ from the benefits of His offering: because what He wrought, He wrought for ALL MANKIND, of and with whom He was inseparably one.” No! No! No! Jesus was not inseparably one with all mankind. He was a man related to us as a Kinsman. This is illustrated in the Law of Moses in dealing with slaves. A Jew who has fallen on hard times could give himself to be the slave of a fellow Jew. This provided him with food and shelter for himself and if married, for his wife and children who were taken into slavery with him. Should a near kinsman take pity on this person or family, he could pay the necessary ransom for his release. This is precisely what Jesus did for Adam's family. He bought them out of slavery. He paid the ransom price. He lay down His life to pay for Adam's life. A natural life for a natural life. Our present life is out redeemed life. Jesus did not die for Himself but only for His kinsmen. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” Jesus was no doubt speaking of Himself here and that if He did not offer His life as a Ransom He would “abide alone,” but out of love for His fellow man, being bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, “He gave His life a ransom for all.” “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.” Therefore Jesus did not die for Himself but for those faithful in covenant with God through Him.

Finally, I wish to note an important omission for nowhere in Growcott's article do we see any connection between Adam and the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. I am aware that the title of the article is “Christ as a Sacrifice” but to leave out the reason for the sacrifice of Jesus leaves a huge gap in the mind of the reader.

What lengths people will go to to avoid the idea of substitution. The notion that God punished Jesus so that the sinner should go free is wrong, very wrong, as the writer says, “That idea is a travesty on the justice, righteousness, and love of God.” But that does not rule out true substitution. We must not rule out the fact that Jesus gave Himself in place of Adam. The sentence on Adam was that “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and this sentence was not carried out, but instead, Adam was forgiven, pending the offering of Jesus in sacrifice as the “Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.”

Those who say all substitution is wrong have to consider John 11:49 – 53, “And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.”

Although it was the High Priest speaking these words, they were not his words but God’s “this he spake not of himself...” Caiaphas said it was expedient or profitable that one man – Jesus – should die rather than the whole nation dying under Roman oppression, which could well have been the case if the Jews were not kept in order. King Herod (the Great) was no doubt the cruellest king of his time. He was never slow to severely punish and destroy any who offended him in any way. If the Jews had not slain Jesus and the people had followed Him as the Jewish authorities feared they would, King Herod would have killed many thousands of them to restore his power.

John explains more, for he goes on to say, it was not just that nation that Jesus was dying for (or instead of) but in doing so He should gather together all the children of God. It is evident for those who are willing to see, that God, by putting the words into the mouth of Caiaphas was declaring that Jesus died in order to save the faithful. Had Jesus not have given His life a ransom for many then the faithful had no hope of eternal life.

Brother Russell Gregory

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