

*The Defilement
of
Human Nature
And
It's Cleansing In Christ*

*THE CRISTADELPHIAN
POSITION
VINDICATED*

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INTRODUCTION

In the well known passage of John 3:16, we read of how “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”. So it is, that when we consider the subject of the Atonement and the wonderful things accomplished in the Sacrifice of our Lord, we see Love made manifest (*1Jno 4:9*), the Love of Almighty God extended to all mankind if they would but take hold of it and believe in the things He has done. But this Love ought not to be one way, for as brethren of the Lord Jesus, we should reciprocate that love - we must “love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might”, even as our Master commanded (*Mat 22:39*). And we must also love the One who died for us, for it is written, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema” (*1Cor 16:22*).

But it is one of the bitter perversities of the human condition that the subject which should be the root of so much love, has instead been the object of so much strife, even amongst those who profess to be Christ’s Brethren. Constantly, even since Apostolic times (*1Jno 4:2*), there has been much contention brought about by false teachers who deny fundamental elements of our Lord’s work and sacrifice. And in our day, things have been no different. Towards the end of 1998, a treatise entitled “*The Divine Plan - A Reappraisal of some Christadelphian Traditions*”, was presented to the brotherhood by CE Cave, a work that seeks to fatally undermine the whole purpose of the work of God in Christ, as understood by Christadelphians for 150+ years. It’s central purpose is to undermine clause 5 of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, (an epitome of basic Bible teachings, which form the basis of the Christadelphian basis of fellowship), calling it “a lie” (*addendum*), and “a fiction” (*p 11*), and to declare that what the writer calls a “Christadelphian supposition” concerning the Lord’s Sacrifice is “false and demeaning of our Saviour”.

Following the circulation of this work, in obedience to the command of Scripture, to “earnestly contend for the faith” (*Jude 3*), which was under attack from within, and in response to those who did not appreciate the seriousness of the vital points being attacked, a Rejoinder was published and distributed in February 1999, entitled, “*A Reappraisal of some Christadelphian Traditions REFUTED BY SCRIPTURE – The Outpourings of Heresy Exposed*”. Further to the issuing of this rejoinder, we received notice from the Recording Brother of Bridlington Ecclesia, that CE Cave had been withdrawn from due to his denial of fundamental Truths of Scripture.

But although the source of the problem had been Scripturally dealt with, Mr Cave’s treatise has left an impression on the minds of some readers, some of whom accepted his heresies, others being evidently uncognisant of the seri-

ousness of the issues, regarding it simply as “a discussion document”. Therefore, a series of articles was produced in “*The Testimony*” magazine (June - Sept 1999) dealing with the central points he raised, restating the scriptural foundation for what Christadelphians have accepted as Truth for 150+ years. These articles are reproduced herein, for the benefit of all, to help both young and old increase their understanding of the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, and develop their appreciation thereof, that they might seek to reciprocate the Master’s love in laying down his life for his friends. It is our hope and prayer that CE Cave will reconsider his position, and return to the Truth of Scripture, whilst there is yet time. And we yearn for the dawning of a new Age, when all contentions and controversy shall cease, as the Sun of Righteousness shall arise to spread abroad the knowledge of the Glory of God, and every work of darkness shall fade away (*Mal 4:2, 2Cor 4:6, Hab 2:14*).

CREATION BEFORE THE FALL

When we survey the world around us, we see the depths of moral depravity; the culmination of nearly 6,000 years of man’s rebellion against God - a world of wickedness, violence and corruption. But in addition to the moral corruption of man, even when we behold things in Creation, we have before us a scene which is no longer in the “very good” state in which it was originally formed by Angelic hands. Rather, we see in operation a principle of corruption, affecting every aspect of life, both animal and vegetable; an inexorable process of decay bringing about the ultimate dissolution of everything living into nothing but dust and ashes. Truly, the Apostle was inspired to write of this miserable picture, familiar to each one of us; “... we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now” (*Rom 8:22*).

What a striking contrast this is when compared with the original state of Creation. Then, “very good”, but now, groaning and travailing in pain. What a contrast to the delightful garden into which the first human pair were placed for their enjoyment, and for God’s Glory. But we know only too well that this catastrophic change came about as a direct consequence of the transgression of man. The penalty for disobedience to God’s law is recorded in Genesis 3, where in verse 19, Adam was told, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”. And so the process of corruption began, with travail and suffering as part of that process. But the consequence of Adam’s offence was a condemnation which affected the whole of Creation, not just man. For instance, we read that the ground was cursed, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake ... thorns and thistles shall it bring forth ...” (*Gen 3:17,18*). And all animals were cursed, as the Lord said to the Serpent, who bore a greater condemnation: “thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field”.

DEATH REALLY IS “THE WAGES OF SIN”

The consequence of Man’s transgression then, had a profound effect upon all of Creation, as a process of decay, hitherto unknown had begun, bringing about the death of all living things. But there are those who claim that death was originally an essential element of Creation. They would have us believe that Adam was created in a mortal state, and that he needed to be kept alive by the life-giving properties of the Tree of Life. And as evidence that death was an essential part of Creation, they look at the cycle of life, death and decay that exists today, and point out that certain insects have a life span of only a few days, and certain predators can only survive by eating other animals. Yet surely there is something wrong with looking at conditions in the earth after nearly 6,000 years of decay, and assuming that things were the same in the Edenic Paradise? And especially without any Scriptural evidence that this was the case? But this also overlooks plain Bible teaching that all of Creation is under a curse, affecting everything living, as a consequence of Sin. We shall consider the Tree of Life in our next study; but firstly we need to address the question; could there really have been decay and corruption in the earth, particularly in Man before the entrance of sin?

This is an idea which Christadelphians have always resisted, and with good reason. For if we say that Adam was created inherently mortal, then that would mean that mortality, and all that it involves had *nothing* to do with the entrance of sin. It would be to say that transgression had no effect upon the nature of Adam, and that that death is not the wages for sin (*Rom 6:23*), for the process of death was working in Adam prior to transgression; only being arrested by the partaking of a particular life-sustaining fruit. And if we say that the sentence of death was simply that Adam was barred from the Tree of Life, as some would contend, then this would mean that the only condemnation of sin, was that Adam could no longer eat a particular type of food! But the plain teaching of Scripture is very different.

In *Rom 5:12*, we read that “... by one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*, and death passed upon all men”. “Death”, then is something which came about “by”, or because of sin. It “passed upon all men”, which demonstrates that primarily, it is not so much the *event* of death being spoken of here, as the *process* of death, or “mortality” which was transmitted to all of Adam’s posterity. Because of Adam’s sin, an active principle, or law, of corruption came into operation as God’s righteous sentence of condemnation was passed, something which was a hereditary condition affecting all who came from his loins. This essential Truth is succinctly expressed by the BASF, speaking of the violation of the Divine Command, “That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken - a sentence which defiled and *became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity*” (*Clause V*).

So then, death really is wages for the work of sin, for it is testified: “the soul that sinneth, it shall die (*Ezek 18:4,20*). The simple truth as revealed by Scripture, is that by transgression, Adam earned the wages of death. Death did not have a hold of him before sin, for wages are not usually paid in the absence of work! But because *the condition of Adam’s nature was physically altered* with the commencement of decay within him; all his progeny were also born in this decaying condition. It is in this way that death “passed upon all men”, as we are told elsewhere, speaking of the remedy in Christ: “since *by man came death*, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as *in Adam all die*, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (*1Cor 15:21,22*). All who are “in Adam”, through birth inherit death as a consequence of his work of sin, but all who are “in Christ”, through rebirth (*Jno 3:3-6*) by faith and baptism, shall be resurrected or “made alive” as a consequence of his work of righteousness.

ADAM WAS CREATED NEITHER MORTAL NOR IMMORTAL

So then, before sin entered into the world, man was not mortal; he did not have the inworking of death in him. But neither was he immortal! We know this, for in Scripture, immortality is presented as being a gift of God, granted after a probationary period of trial - and in any case, an immortal being cannot become mortal, and die. The only possibility we are left with then, is that Adam and Eve before the Fall, were neither mortal, nor immortal; they were *in an intermediary state of an undying living*. Bro Thomas speaks of this in *Elpis Israel*:

“The truth is in few words, man was created with a nature endowed with certain susceptibilities. He was capable of death; and capable of endless life; but, whether he should merge into mortality; or by physical change be clothed with immortality, was predicated on his choosing to do good or evil. Capacity must not be confounded with impletion. A vessel may be capable of holding a pint of fluid; but it does not therefore follow that there is a pint in it, or any at all. In the Paradise of Eden, mortality and immortality were set before the man and his companion. They were external to them. They were to avoid the former, and seek after the latter, by obedience to the law of God. *They were capable of being filled with either; but with which depended on their actions ...*” (*Elpis Israel P 73*).

So, the first man was created a living being - made with a capacity to become mortal and die in the event of transgression, or to be transformed to immortality following a probationary period of obedience, and live for ever. And we know what took place: Adam transgressed and dying, he did surely die. But to the thinking Bible student, this leads on to another line of enquiry. As Adam was not immortal, is it possible that after a prolonged period, he might eventually die, if the transgression had never taken place, and if the Lord had

not transformed his nature into immortality?

COULD ADAM HAVE DIED IN THE ABSENCE OF SIN?

This is one of those “What if?” questions, which it is not wise to dogmatise upon, but is interesting to consider. As far as the Scriptures themselves are concerned, Adam did sin, and we know what followed - they do not give details on what might have been under different circumstances. But nevertheless, it is interesting to consider. Bro. Thomas gives his thoughts on this question both in *Elpis Israel*, and also in a further article appearing in “*The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*”, July 1885, entitled “*Our Terrestrial System before the Fall*”. In both of these, he makes the suggestion, that although as we have seen, there was no *active process* of decay in operation within Adam or Eve before the fall as there is at present, because the animal body with which they were created is not designed for an endless existence without a change, *it would eventually wear out*. Thus, in *Elpis Israel*, speaking of the hypothesis “if they had not sinned they would nevertheless have died”, we read: “*It is probable they would after a long time, if no further change had been operated upon their nature. But the Tree of Life seems to have been provided for the purpose of this change being effected, through the eating of it’s fruit, if they had proved themselves worthy of the favour*” (Page 72). And in *Our Terrestrial System Before the Fall*, he wrote: “Adam and Eve, and all the other animals born of the earth with themselves, *would have died and gone to corruption, if there had been no transgression, provided that there had been no further interference with the physical system than Moses records in his history of the Six Days*”.

The suggestion is then, that the “animal body” with which Man was created, would only be capable of existing in it’s pristine condition for a certain period. It was not designed for eternity, and would eventually wear out - a very different thing to saying that Adam was created as a decaying creature, with an active principle of corruption as part of his physical make-up. And also, it ought to be pointed out that in any case this is more of an academic consideration than anything else - *in actual fact, it could never happen*. In Eden, Adam and Eve had only two options placed before them - neither of which would permit the supposed natural dissolution of their animal nature into corruption. Either they would remain faithful, and after a period of probation be granted immortality (as we shall see in our next article), *or* they would disobey, and be placed under the sentence of death. Under this consideration therefore, the issue of what may, or may not have happened had there been no sin, or no transformation into immortality, is really a non-question, for this option could never have taken place. Indeed, Bro Thomas recognises this in the quotations above; suggesting Adam’s body could wear out in the absence of sin, *if* it had not been changed to Immortality by God. Again, in 1852, he wrote concerning the nature of animals, “These did not sin, yet they returned to dust whence they came. *So probably would Adam, if* he had been

left to the ordinary course of things as they were. ***But he would not have returned to dust if he had continued obedient*** (*Tempter and Tempted, The Herald of the Kingdom, 1852*).

The present writer's thoughts are that whilst Bro. Thomas' suggestion sounds plausible, and does not contradict the BASF, there is another possibility. As Adam and Eve were created in a "very good" state, they would remain in such condition, unless the appearance of sin would change things, as it duly did. It is quite possible therefore, that the bodies of Adam and Eve, being sustained by the "breath of life" (*Gen 2:7*), and having no active principle of corruption within them, could have maintained an undying existence indefinitely. This is not to say that they were immortal, but that they would live for however long the Lord wished them to before the rewarding of faithfulness, with the possibility of death occurring at any point, consequent to the introduction of sin. We have seen that the possibility of Adam's death because of his body wearing out was not an option anyway, and this suggestion would at least allow for a probationary period of any length of time prior to the reward of immortality.

But on this particular matter, the Scriptures do not speak specifically, and therefore it is unwise to dogmatise. What the Scriptures do reveal is that Adam became a dying creature *subsequent to, and because of* his action of sin; and with that we must be content.

A MENTAL CHANGE CAUSED BY TRANSGRESSION

When considering the nature of Adam before the Fall, we need also to reflect upon the changed circumstances, brought about by sin. The transgression consisted of the consumption of a particular proscribed fruit, and its consequence was that "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (*Gen 3:7*). From this, it would appear that the ingestion of the fruit had a most dramatic effect upon the eaters. And this is confirmed by the Angelic representative of the Most High who walked in the Garden, for he directly attributed their sense of nakedness to their act of eating: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (*Gen 3:11*).

So then, a mental change was produced both in Adam and Eve, resulting in a perception of carnal nakedness which did not exist prior to their eating from the forbidden tree, something was directly attributed by the Elohim to that eating. This might suggest that there was something in the fruit itself, which when ingested into their system, would operate upon their minds, and inflame the faculties controlling their propensities, changing their legitimate use into habits of an immoral order, called lusts. There was a process: Eve accepted the serpent's reasoning, and so began to think in a way which was at enmity with the Mind of God - she looked upon the forbidden Tree as a

means of satisfying her desires in a proscribed way. And then she transgressed, and ate of that tree. Having adopted the mind, or thinking of the serpent; she then taught her husband to do as she did (*Gen 3:17*), and he partook of the forbidden fruit also, the consequence being: “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”. Now from these words; we are not to suppose that they previously were unaware that they wore no clothes! Rather, their eyes having been opened, they saw things in a way which they have never considered before - they now had a carnal awareness of their nakedness. The serpent-mind they had willingly adopted became enfixed in them, and their minds thus having become carnal; they looked upon each other’s nakedness in a carnal way.

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

The Tree was styled the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which in itself is suggestive that the effect of it’s fruits would impart a knowledge, or awareness which they previously did not have. Prior to eating from this tree, both Adam, and Eve would have only fulfilled their desires in legitimate ways - it would never have occurred to them to fulfil them in ways against the principles of God. For example, Adam was placed into the Garden “to dress it and to keep it” (*Gen 2:15*), and that would have been his desire; he knew no other way; he would never have thought of the possibility of refusing to keep the garden, and do something else instead! The only way of transgression, or rebellion they were aware of, (because of the law of God - *cp Rom 7:7*) would be to eat from the forbidden tree - and they could never even have conceived the idea of *actually doing* this, if it hadn’t been presented to them by the Serpent! But consequent to eating of the fruit, they had a Knowledge of Good and Evil. As we might say, they lost their innocence. Before their eating, they just didn’t have it in them to rebel. But after, they had a new awareness, for they knew that there were other possibilities to be sought out - many and varied ways in which they could cease reflecting the image and likeness of their Maker, and live a life of rebellion and wickedness. As Solomon was inspired to write: “Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but *they have sought out* many inventions” (*Ecc1 7:29*). The original state of Man was “very good”, and “upright”. Yet consequent to eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they had the capacity to *seek out* many new and varied ways in which to unlawfully satisfy their lusts; and this they duly did.

Prior to their eating, they knew only good, but the consequence of eating from the tree, was that they had a knowledge of both good and evil; and having embraced the mind of the serpent, they naturally sought out that which was evil. In short, they willingly adopted the carnal mind from the serpent; and it became enfixed in them by the nature of their transgression - by the fruit they ate; so that they began to look upon everything around them; even their own bodies, in a carnal way.

A PHYSICAL CHANGE CAUSED BY TRANSGRESSION

The sentence of God was death to those who partook of this tree: “in the day that thou eat thereof, *thou shalt surely die*”. But it is important for us to realise that when the process of death commenced in Adam, *his nature itself was not changed* - the nature was the same; it was *the condition* of the nature that altered. Although, as we have seen, there was no process of decay within Man before the Fall, nevertheless, both Adam, and Eve were created with the *latent capability for death to begin* in them, in the event of sin. In Genesis, we read of no miraculous change taking place when the sentence of death was passed upon Adam. And there was no new entity introduced; the Creator did not put death into man, as if it were some kind of chemical that we can analyse under a microscope, or isolate in a test tube. As Bro Thomas wrote in the article cited above; “*there was no miracle wrought in executing the sentence under which Adam and Eve placed themselves. That is, there was no new physical principle infused into their nature that was not there before they transgressed*”. Similarly, Bro Roberts wrote in answer to a correspondent “Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is *no evidence of this whatsoever*, and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his maker, but *not in the nature of his organisation* ... What was the difference between his position before disobedience and his position after? Simply this; that in the one case he was a living soul or natural body in probation for immortality; and in the other, he was a living soul or natural body *under sentence of death*. He was a living soul, or natural body in both cases.” (*The Ambassador of the Coming Age, 1869, p 85*).

But although there was no new entity infused into the nature of man to make him become mortal, there was a distinct physical difference between Adam before the Fall, and Adam after. The nature was the same as Bro Roberts shows; but the *condition* of that nature was dramatically changed. If we were to analyse Adam before and after the Fall under a microscope, the difference we would see after, is a principle of decay at work. We would see cells dying. That is, we would see the inworking of death, a process which had commenced because of disobedience.

As there was no miraculous change, and no new physical element of “death” placed in Man, Adam must therefore have been created with a *latent capability* for corruption to begin within him, something which would only come into operation as a punishment for sin. Man was made according to the Creator’s foreknowledge that transgression would take place, and had as part of his physical make-up, the potential for death to occur under these circumstances. This is what Bro Thomas taught in his article: “If they had continued obedient, death, *though lurking within them*, would not have been allowed to enter the world; it *would have had no victims*. But they transgressed - their thinking became perverse, or contrary to the letter of the Word

of God, and their practice like it - they sinned; and *the physical tendency of their animal nature to dissolution became "the law of sin and death within them"*. But what began this "physical tendency ... to dissolution"? What was it that initiated the process of decay? Could it have been another quality of the fruit they had eaten? It would certainly seem appropriate; a Tree of Life, and a Tree of Death. But be that as it may; death came upon man as the consequence of his sin, as he was forewarned. Whatever the means was that the Creator chose to bring about the death of man, the sentence of condemnation was given " ... dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (*Gen 3:19*). This was the sentence of death "which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity", as the BASF expresses it (*Clause V*). The sentence was the judgement of condemnation pronounced; the effect of that judgement, was the initiation of a process of mortality; thus the sentence became a physical law, which it is the misfortune for all the sons of Adam to inherit.

We said earlier that an element of caution needs to be exercised when dealing with "What if ... ?" questions in Scripture, and in this study we have considered a number of suggestions as to the state and condition of Creation, particularly man, before the Fall. But as we shall see in later articles, there are certain essential principles for us to recognise, in order to understand the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless we can understand what it is that we are to be saved from, we will not understand how, or why we need salvation. And on these essential points, the Word of God is clear. Mortality; that is, the active principle, or "law" of decay within our physical bodies, was not in operation before the Fall. Death was introduced into the world by the transgression of man, and before the Fall, even though we may speculate as to what may, or may not have happened without Divine intervention, as Bro Thomas taught, Death "would have had no victims".

The whole point of the Sacrifice of Christ, then, being the Divinely provided remedy for this lamentable state of affairs, is that sin might be forgiven, and removed, in order that the death which it brought might be "swallowed up in victory". Man has innately within him, "sin in the flesh" (*Rom 8:3*), or the Serpent Mind in embryo; impulses which entice the possessors thereof into transgression. This as we saw, came about through transgression, and the eating of the forbidden tree - through the acceptance and obedience to the Serpent's reasoning, understood and believed. The victory in Christ then, as we shall see, involves one strengthened to overcome the Serpent Mind inherent in all Adam's progeny, and render perfect obedience to God. Death being the consequence of Sin, when Sin was thus overcome, its effects could then be dealt with, and the way was made open for resurrection, and the bestowal of immortality. And in considering these wonderful things, well might we rejoice with the Apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1Cor 15:54-57*).

THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE TREE OF LIFE

In the previous article, we considered the condition of Creation before the Fall, when the first human pair were placed in the paradise prepared for them by their Maker. Adam was formed in a “very good” state, and was therefore free from any form of defilement, or decay. We demonstrated that he was not created a dying creature, but as the Apostle declared, death entered into the world subsequent to, and as a consequence of transgression (*Rom 6:12*).

But there are those who feel that Adam was created mortal and they teach that it was necessary for Adam to eat of the Tree of Life in order to arrest the decaying process which was inherently within him. As the Divine command was “of every tree thou mayest freely eat” (*Gen 2:16*), and as “every”, here must include the Tree of Life, so it is said, they must have eaten of this also. Yet, as we shall show, this is no more than supposition, as nowhere in Scripture is the Tree of Life spoken of in this way.

ADAM DID NOT EAT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE

Although it does not in itself prove our case, it should be pointed out that this is not a new idea by any means, it has been around for many years, and is a theory which Christadelphians have long resisted. In 1896, Bro Roberts spoke of it, calling it: “a plausible theory to the effect that we do not inherit death from Adam by any physical law, but merely by denial of access to the tree of life; that the sentence of death took no effect on Adam’s body, and therefore not in ours: that, in fact, we are the “very good” and uncursed Adamic nature ... that our nature is not an unclean and sinful nature: that there is no such thing as sin in the flesh ... *it is the old doctrine of Renunciationism in a new form. It is worse than Renunciationism ... while apparently an innocuous and harmless theory, it fatally corrupts and upsets and perverts the truth at its very threshold ...*” (*The Christadelphian, July 1896*).

These are strong words, even for Bro Roberts’ day! But when we carefully consider the logic of his reasoning, these words are fully justified. For, if Adam was created subject to decay already, then the wages of sin would not be death (*Rom 6:23*), but merely the exclusion from a particular life-sustaining fruit. This would then mean that the nature of man is not in itself under condemnation, as the Scriptures teach, but is still in the “very good” state in which it was first formed. And this would seriously undermine our understanding of how we are affected by Adam’s sin, for rather than inheriting a defiled, condemned nature, as Christadelphians have always believed (and as the Bible teaches, as we shall see in the next study), the only way in which we can be under condemnation is in some “legal” sense; because of Adam’s sin, we can’t eat from the tree! And this would totally nullify our under-

standing of the Sacrifice of Christ, for he would not need to overcome *the diabolos* in our sinful nature (*Heb 2:14*), and so overcome death itself, to stand before God as our representative (*Heb 9:24*). Rather, as our nature itself would not be the problem, he must have died as some kind of substitute, to suffer our punishment so that we might walk free. And these beliefs are held in great sincerity - by some of the churches around us. So then, although it may seem to be an “innocuous” suggestion, as Bro. Roberts wrote, it has serious ramifications which negates the whole of Scripture teaching concerning the Atonement.

What then, do the Scriptures teach? It is true that the Lord gave permission for Adam to eat “of every tree of the garden”, but nowhere in Scripture are we told Adam actually ate from the Tree of Life. At best, this can be no more than an inference. Permission was given, but nowhere are we told that Adam actually did eat from every single tree which existed in the garden. And in any case, the expression “of every tree”, does not mean any tree without exception - it did not include the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Lord said “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it ...*” (*Gen 2:16,17*). When Adam was given permission to eat “of every tree”, as we shall see, this meant every tree which was placed in the garden for food, not every tree which existed - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not formed for food, and was not to be so used.

But the Tree of Life was not formed for Adam to feed upon either! This is clear from *Gen 2:9*, where a distinction is made between trees for food, and those other two unique trees: “And out of the ground made Yahweh Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life *also* in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil”. The Lord made trees for food, and “the Tree of Life *also*”, that is, in addition to, and distinct from the other trees. Thus, God allowed Adam to eat of any food-bearing tree, but this did not include the Tree of Life, or the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which were in different categories of their own.

Again, we read of the Tree of Life in *Gen 3:22*, following the transgression of our first parents, and the subsequent covering of their nakedness: “And Yahweh Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and *live for ever*: Therefore Yahweh Elohim sent him forth from the Garden of Eden ...”. Here, the Tree is spoken of as giving everlasting life, and clearly if the Tree of Life gave immortality, then Adam couldn’t have eaten from it, or else he would still be alive! And in addition to this, the phrase “lest he ... take *also* of the tree of life” is used, which would also imply that he hadn’t previously eaten of the tree.

THE "EVIDENCE AGAINST" EXAMINED

But against this, those who press the idea tell us that although the Hebrew word for "also" is usually translated in this way, it can also mean "again", which would suggest that Adam had eaten of the tree, and that he was being prevented from doing so *again*. And as to the Tree of life giving everlasting life, they tell us that the Hebrew word translated "ever", (as in "live for ever"), does not in itself contain the idea of eternity, (although it can be used in this sense), but it literally means a time of unspecified duration, and can also be used for short time periods. So, the Tree had previously been eaten, we are told, the eating of which gave them life for a limited period, which meant they had to keep eating of it at intervals to prevent death. Thus, the sentence against Adam needed only to be exclusion from this type of food, and he would naturally die.

But again, there are clear errors in this reasoning. Firstly, it is recognised that the AV rendering of these words is in accordance with the meaning that they can carry. And secondly, it is also recognised that the AV rendering is the usual way these words are translated - thus the case is far from proved. But in addition to this, there is a third point - surely there is something wrong with building a doctrinal structure, the logical outcome of which undermines fundamental points of our faith, upon a foundation which is no stronger than the *possible* meaning of two Hebrew words?

As a body, we have long recognised that the correct way of understanding Bible teaching, and learning doctrines, is by "comparing Scripture with Scripture". So then, to learn about the Tree of Life, we need to consider what other parts of Scripture tell us.

A REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS

In the Apocalypse, the Tree of Life is used to represent the reward given to the faithful: "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (*Rev 2:7*). Here, being permitted to eat of the Tree of Life is used as a representation of the reward given to those who have "overcome" a period of trial. This clearly contrasts with the expulsion from the Edenic paradise of those who failed to overcome, in order to prevent them from partaking of the life-giving Tree, and also suggests to us that had Adam overcome, he also would be permitted to eat from the Tree, as a reward for his faithfulness.

We read of this antitypical tree again in *Rev 22:14*: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life ... ". Similarly, we have another contrast with those who did not obey God's commandment; they did not have a right to the tree of life, and were driven from it's presence.

So then, from these two passages, we learn that as a symbol in the Apocalypse, the eating of the Tree of Life speaks of a reward given to those who endure and overcome a period of trial, who obey the commandments of God. Thus, it speaks of the bestowal of Immortality by the Lord Jesus Christ upon his brethren. We would suggest that if in Eden, the Tree was not present for this purpose, it would not be an appropriate symbol in the Apocalypse.

When we consider the literal Tree in Eden, every indication suggests that its existence was ready for the rewarding of man's faithfulness (had he obeyed the Divine Command), with the bestowal of Immortality. Indeed, its very name, (the "Tree of Lives", as it could be better rendered) is suggestive of this, it would give life to all those who would partake of it. In this, it stands as a great contrast to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which would cause death to those who transgressed the command in partaking of it. How appropriate for there to be a Tree which would give life consequent to obedience, and a Tree which would be the cause of death to those who transgressed.

This appears to be the reasoning of Bro. Thomas, for speaking of the Tree of Life in *Elpis Israel*, he wrote: "Its fruit, however, was of a quality entirely opposite to that of which they had eaten. Both trees bore good fruit; but that of the Tree of Life had the quality of perpetuating the living existence of the eater for ever ... It is probable that, had he (i.e. Adam) been obedient to the law of the Tree of Knowledge, *he would have been permitted to eat of the Tree of life*, after he had fulfilled his destiny as an animal man; and, instead of dying away into dust, have been "changed in the twinkling of an eye" (*E.I. p70*).

What this means, is that Adam and Eve had immortality to look forward to, had they remained obedient. But following the Fall, access to the Tree was barred, and the sinful pair were thrust out from its presence. We can only begin to imagine how Adam and Eve must have felt outside of the Paradise in Eden, knowing they were to lead a life of travail and suffering, as dying they would surely die. At one time, they were faced with the prospect of being like the Elohim in nature - if they had obeyed, but now all was vanity as they were denied access to the Tree of Life, and condemned to return to the ground from whence they came.

But this hope was only deferred, not removed altogether! The Lord, in His Kindness and Mercy had ordained a "Way" back to the Tree, which was preserved by the Cherubim, and Flaming Sword, placed at the entrance to the garden (*Gen 3:24*). And, even before their expulsion from Eden, both Adam and Eve were taught the need for Sacrifice in order to provide a covering (atonement) for sin, a practice they were to continue at the entrance to the Way, as we learn from the opening verses of Gen 4.

This situation is aptly described in Proverbs thus: “*Hope deferred* maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is *a tree of life*” (Prov 13:12). Despite the sickness of heart Adam would experience because of the condemnation of death, he nevertheless had a hope of life. As He stood at the entrance to the Garden (which was also the place where “the Way of the Tree of Life” began), to offer his Sacrifice, it is quite possible that he would be able to look beyond the sword of fire, wielded by the Cherubim of Glory, along “the Way”, to the Tree in the distance, yielding it’s life-giving fruits. Indeed, the role of the Cherubim to “keep”, or “preserve” the way (Gen 3:24) would suggest this, for the record states that it wasn’t simply the entrance to the way, but *the way itself*, which was preserved. The features of the Cherubim would teach him what he must become, being a depiction of the glorified Body of Christ (Ezek 1). And the fiery sword, being the means by which the Way was preserved would teach that he, as all who seek “glory and honour and immortality” (Rom 2:7) have the duty to preserve the Way of God (Ps 119:33-35, cont Gen 6:12) by the effective use of the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph 6:17), cutting down the high things which exalt themselves against the knowledge of the Truth (2Cor 10:5). And being a Fiery sword, as well as speaking of the bright flame of the Word, it would also teach him that keeping the true Way is often accompanied with a fiery trial (1Pet 4:12) of affliction.

And so as Adam gazed past these things, along the “Way” to the Tree which was “afar off” (Cp Heb 11:13), in the midst of the Garden, he would be able to look beyond his sentence of death, and all that it entailed, past the depiction of what he must do to be saved, to the glory which lay ahead. And this place itself, being a place of Sacrifice, would teach that the means to access the things that this tree offered would ultimately be provided by the One who had the power to overcome, through death, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE TREE OF LIFE ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE

The fruits of the work of Christ, is that a means is provided for those who would seek to “overcome” to access the antitypical Tree of life. Thus, we read in Prov 11:30 “The fruit of the righteous (*or, Righteous One*) is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise”. The Lord Jesus is the One who is righteous and wise, and who is able to win (or “take”, as the word means), souls from the bondage of death, that they may be redeemed by his Sacrifice. Having truly “overcome”, he is himself the Antitypical Tree of which believers must partake in order to be ultimately glorified in immortality. As he said, “he that *eateth* my flesh, and drinketh my blood, *hath eternal life*”, and again, in a clear allusion to Gen 3:22, “he that *eateth* this bread *shall live for ever*” (Jno 6:54,58).

Here, we need to appreciate that the Lord is speaking as the Word made flesh (Jno 1:14). To partake of the True bread of life, which is the Lord Jesus as

the antitypical Manna, is to consume the spiritual nourishment which comes from him, and this is the Word which he spoke. As it is written “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (*Mat 4:4*). The Words which proceed from God, then as spoken through His Son, and others constitute this Spiritual bread, which we must be partakers of. And the Lord Jesus, being the Word made flesh is an embodiment of that Word, the fulfilment of the things testified in the Oracles of God concerning him. Thus, to feed upon the word which testifies of the Saviour, is to feed upon the Saviour Himself. To feed upon this word, is to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ (*Jno 6:56*), which will enable us to partake of the everlasting life he is able to impart, for to partake of him, is to partake of the Antitypical Tree of Life.

The Word of God, then, being the Word of life, those whose tongues are guided by, and influenced by it, themselves are able to impart words of life. As it is written: “a wholesome tongue is a Tree of Life” (*Prov 15:4*), words which have their fullest application to the Lord Jesus, whose words truly can give life to the hearers. But, this being so, it is not surprising for us to find the Tree of Life being spoken of in connection with the wisdom which comes from hearkening to these words. Thus, we read in *Prov 3* of the wisdom of God, “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her” (*Prov 3:17,18*). Wisdom, then, is a Tree of Life to those who are able, and willing to grasp hold of her. Being a Tree of Life, her “ways”, and her “paths” are paths of the Tree of Life (*cp Gen 3:24*) along which a person must walk in order to find life, and peace, a peace which “passeth all understanding” (*Phil 4:7*).

The ways of wisdom collectively form the “narrow” way which the Lord informs us leads us to life, as opposed to the “broad” way which leads to destruction. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (*Mat 7:14*).

Just as Adam and Eve were faced with two trees, a tree of life, and a tree of death to those who partook of them, so their progeny are faced with two ways. And just as Adam was led by his wife to walk the path to the tree of death; this is the way the multitudes have chosen ever since; a way of wilful disobedience to the will of their Maker. The other way is a way, which must be sought for. Although it is partly obscured by the traditions of men, it is being kept open, by those who wield the sword of the spirit, in cutting away the thorns of apostasy. This way, although it must be diligently sought for in these days of corruptness and evil, is a *narrow* way. And being narrow, it is not designed to accommodate the ignorant multitudes who follow every whim and fancy of man, but those few who would walk it in faith, looking to

the end, beyond the trial of this life, to the vision of the Tree of Life in the Kingdom, even the Lord Jesus himself (*Heb 12:1,2*).

A FURTHER POINT

But there is a further point to consider. The question naturally arises, “If the Tree of Life gave Immortality, why didn’t Adam and Eve simply go to that tree, and eat from it after the Fall?” Indeed, it would seem that they did have opportunity to go to the tree, as after they transgressed, and before their appearance before God, there was a time when they were hiding in the trees of the Garden. A possible explanation, is that there was no fruit on that tree for them to eat, for the Scriptures say nothing about it yielding fruit, prior to transgression. In Gen 1:14, we read that there were “seasons”, and we know that trees bear fruit according to their particular season. In “very good” conditions, trees would give fruit at their appointed time. And as the Tree of Life was designed for the reward of faithfulness, a season for it to bear fruit, surely would be when faith had been shown? And being a Type of Eternal Life in Christ, to those who are in need of healing from mortality, in the event of transgression taking place, another season for it to bear fruit would surely be after transgression, and after a way of reconciliation had been appointed? If there were fruit on this tree, we would suppose that there would be great urgency to drive man out from before it. Yet, in Genesis 3, we find that this was the *last* thing to be done, immediately following the appointment of Sacrifice.

So then, the presence of the Tree of Life in the Garden taught Adam and his wife that if they were faithful, their faithfulness would be rewarded. But even in the event of their transgression, there would be a Way of Life provided - on God’s terms, as it duly was. The expulsion of Adam and his wife from the Garden taught that the way of life can only be accessed by the means of God’s appointing. Thus, the tree stands as a powerful exhortation to us, not to devise fables which contradict the main thrust of Scripture, not to walk along the broad way that leads to destruction, but rather to understand and accept the way of Salvation, as appointed by the Lord Himself. We must seek wisdom, and then walk in it’s ways, which are the ways to the Tree of Life. And then, if we show ourselves to be faithful, if we “keep” God’s ways, if we seek to “overcome” sin, then by God’s grace, when the Lord returns, we might partake of the Antitypical Tree, and so be “partakers of the divine nature” even as the Lord has promised (*2Pet 1:4*).

THE DEFILEMENT OF HUMAN NATURE

In order for us to understand the Atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need recognise the catastrophic effect that Adam's transgression had on the rest of the human race - to put it simply, we won't understand the solution we have in Christ, if we don't understand the problem we inherit from Adam. In Rom 5:12, we read of the consequence of Adam's sin: "by one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*; and so death passed upon all men". And again, in 1 Cor 15:21, we are informed that "... since *by man came death*, by man came also the resurrection of the dead...". As we have seen in previous articles, this proves that death really is the "wages of sin" (*Rom 6:23*), and was not therefore inherently in Adam from his Creation. But the "death" being referred to here is not so much the *event* of death, but the *process* of death, which works within each one of us. It "passed upon all men", which proves it to be a hereditary condition. Thus, the sentence passed upon Adam became a physical principle, or law, which was inherited by all who came from him. As the BASF so succinctly expresses it, the sentence given against Adam was "a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity" (*Clause V*). This is the condemnation which we bear from Adam, as it is written "... by the offence of One judgement came upon all men *to condemnation ...*" (*Rom 5:18*).

This is a vital point to note; the condemnation we bear is *not* a legal judgement whereby we are punished for the offence of another. Rather, it is the *physical inheritance* of the nature of Adam, placed under the condemnation of death because of sin. The reality is a process of corruption at work within us, which will eventually bring us to the grave. And this process working within us is described as "death" itself in Rom 5, because the culmination of that process is the event of death. The event cannot exist without the cause - the resolution of our entire Being into dust is the culmination of the "death" we physically inherit from Adam.

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

But with the principle, or "law" of death, we also inherit what the Apostle terms "the law of sin" (*Rom 7:25*), a principle of moral corruption. We have within us "the motions of sins" (*Rom 7:5*), which we are "without strength" (*Rom 5:6*) to overcome. It is that which has the power of death, styled apostolically "*the diabolos*", or in the AV "the devil" (*Heb 2:14*). It is a bias, or propensity to transgress, and by the same principle as the inworking of "death" we inherit is so called, (i.e. the cause is described in terms of its effect) because it is a principle which inevitably culminates in Sin, it is described in Scripture as, "Sin" (*Rom 7:17*), or "sin in the flesh" (*Rom 8:3*). Just as we inherit "death", so we inherit "sin", and it is seen to be sin by the works it produces (*Rom 7:13, cp Mat 7:16-18*). We do not inherit Adam's so-

called “Original sin”, bearing the punishment for his crime as the Churches teach (for such an idea is refuted in Scripture - see Ezek 18:20, Rom 5:14) but rather, it is our misfortune to inherit an in-built propensity to transgress. It is in this sense that we read: “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (*Rom 5:19*). That is, as a consequence of Adam’s offence, all of his progeny are born into a state of affairs whereby it is inevitable that they also become sinners, as they inherit his, sinful nature.

So then, we have as part of our physical make up by inheritance, two principles, or laws - one leading to moral corruption, one leading to physical corruption. In Scriptural terms, these two components are collectively referred to as “the Law of sin and death” (*Rom 8:2*), from which we are freed in Christ Jesus. But notice the order here, this law is made up of two components, *sin being mentioned first*. First there is sin, secondly there is death, which is the Lord’s judgement upon that sin. It is a principle of Scripture, that God rightly requires all who share Adam’s sinful nature to be condemned to the grave. We shall see this in our next article, that part of the declaration of God’s righteousness made by the Lord Jesus Christ (*Rom 3:25*) was the demonstration that God rightly required the condemnation to the grave of human nature, in it’s condition of sinfulness. And it was “through death, that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (*Heb 2:14*). It was in his death that Christ destroyed sin in the flesh, *the diabolos*, that which “crosses over, or causes to cross over” (*Eureka Vol 1 p 249*), that is, to cause to trespass, or transgress the commands of God. And so, when he rose from the dead, he was “freed from sin” (*Rom 6:7*), having been given Immortality, so that he might now be “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (*Heb 7:26*).

From the above, we can see that we do not die because of Adam’s sin, as some claim, but rather from *that which ensues from it*. We have a nature which is physically defiled by sin in the sight of God, a nature which is under condemnation. And we become worthy of that condemnation, when we transgress individually, and earn the wages of death.

HUMAN NATURE IS DEFILED BY SIN

The scriptures are clear that a person is considered to be “unclean”, or “defiled” by God because of evil works. Thus, we read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ “That which cometh out of the man, *that defileth the man*. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these things come from within, and defile the man” (*Mark 7:23*). Therefore we become defiled by the sins we commit. But some seem to be blinded by this to the fact that our nature is in itself “unclean”. They say that the only thing which causes defilement is individual transgression.

But this cannot be the case, for the Lord here teaches that these defiling works “come from *within*”. Are we to suggest that when “within” they are clean, but when outside they are unclean? The truth of the matter, is that wicked works, such as those the Lord enumerates come from submitting ourselves to “law of sin” (*Rom 7:25*), the *diabolos*, which dwells within each of us. Thus, the Apostle exhorts: “let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (*Rom 6:12*). And again, in the same chapter, he describes this “sin” which reigns in the disobedient, as “uncleanness”: “as ye have yielded your members servants to *uncleanness* and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (*Rom 6:19*). Defiling works then, are produced by yielding ourselves “servants to uncleanness”, and willingly doing things contrary to the will of God.

The description of “uncleanness”, or “defilement” in Scripture does not speak of literal dirt, “the filth of the flesh” (*1Pet 3:21*). Rather, it describes how we stand in the eyes of our Maker; it is descriptive of a condition of sinfulness. The Lord does not regard us as being transgressors just because we have sin in the flesh within us; only when we actually transgress do we become worthy of the wages of death. And this is the point of what the Lord is teaching here. Yes, we have something which the Lord views as an “uncleanness” within us, for our flesh is hereditarily defiled. But only when we yield ourselves “servants to uncleanness” in transgression, do we become morally defiled before Him. This is the truth of the matter; all those evil works which the Lord enumerates as coming from the uncleanness “within”, cause us to become morally defiled before the Lord God, our Maker.

Human nature is defiled by sin, even from birth. Thus in Job 14:4, we read “Who can bring a clean thing out of *an unclean*? Not one.” So it is, that even before a child can be regarded as being sinful in its own right, having done neither good, nor evil (*Rom 9:11*), being drawn from the womb, it is “unclean”, having “the law of sin and death” residing within it. This is why babies sometimes die, even in the womb; not because of their own sins, but because of the nature it is their misfortune to inherit. They inherit “the law of sin”, and with it *must* come the sentence of death, for God cannot tolerate the endless existence of the *diabolos*. And when we begin to realise these truths, we realise how helpless we are to save ourselves.

UNENLIGHTENED MAN CAN PRODUCE NO GOOD THING

Even from birth, sin in the flesh begins to assert itself, leading it’s possessors into iniquity. And so we read “the wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (*Psalms 58:3*). And the Apostle likewise teaches: “... in time past ye walked according to ... the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience among whom also we

all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature (*Gr. from birth*) the children of wrath, even as others” (*Eph 2:3*). Even from birth, we begin to be led astray by the desires of the flesh, making us deserving only of the wrath of God for the sins we inevitably commit.

This being the defiled state of human nature, man left to his own devices can produce nothing but works of evil and wickedness, the proof of which is amply demonstrated in the world around us. As the Apostle declared “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth *no good thing*: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (*Rom 7:18*). No good thing being in us, left to our own devices, no good thing can come out of us, only works of defilement. But although by nature, he had “no good thing” inherently within him, the Apostle had taken into his mind another law; the Law of God. And as there is enmity between the Law of God, and the carnal mind (*Rom 8:7*), he experienced a warfare within himself between the two: “I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, *warring against the law of my mind ...*” (*Rom 7:23*).

THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

There is then a power which is available to us, to assist us in overcoming *the diabolos* - the Word of God, which is “the power of God unto Salvation” (*Rom 1:16, 1Cor 1:18, Heb 4:12*). It is “by taking heed thereto” that we might “cleanse our way” (*Ps 119:9*), for it is by absorbing the principles thereof into our way of thinking, that it cleanses our mind (*Eph 5:26,27*), so that we begin to turn away from the ways of sin, to act and think more in harmony with the ways of our Maker. In *Jas 1:21*, we are exhorted: “wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and *receive with meekness the engrafted word* which is able to save your souls”. We must seek to have the Word of God implanted into our minds, to give us the strength to resist sin. But the implanting of the Word of God is a voluntary action. The “carnal mind”, that is the natural mind in all its sinfulness, came about through the voluntary action of our first parents, who, of their own volition allowed the word of the Serpent to become implanted into their mind, something which became enfixed, and passed to all their descendants. And it is one of the beauties of the Divine arrangement, that *of our own volition*, we can receive, and implant in our minds, a powerful weapon in contending with sin, that we might develop a spiritual mind, a mind more like that of the God we serve.

This Word thus received, is a powerful influence in combating the serpent mind within us, but even with this we can never fully overcome - only the Lord Jesus could do that. When the Apostle described the conflict in his mind, he spoke of a warfare *he was losing*: “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and *bringing me into captivity to*

the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom 7:23). Even the Apostle Paul found himself being drawn captive by sin - how much more we also? Even with the power of the Word, the innate impulses to disobey are too strong for us - we are “without strength” to save ourselves from sin. But the final victory is yet future, when the Lord shall transform our weak, and sinful bodies to be fashioned like unto his glorious body (*Phil 3:21*), immortal, and free from sin. The Lord has provided the means through His Word for us to change our vile minds in measure, to correspond more with His Ways - if we choose to do so. And if we do this, and declare war on the greatest enemy of mankind; He has guaranteed us the victory, through the Captain of our Salvation, who shall change our vile bodies, and bestow Immortality upon his faithful fellow soldiers.

UNCLEANNES UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES

Under the Law of Moses, there was an uncleanness which was not as a direct result of transgression. A woman was unclean due to childbirth (*Lev 12*). Lepers were unclean not simply because they had transgressed, but because of their disease (*Lev 14:18-31*). The High Priest had to be cleansed at his consecration (*Lev 8:34*), as well as for his transgressions. And in addition to this, Atonement was made for inanimate objects, which were regarded as being unclean: the Holy Place (*Lev 16:20*), the Most Holy place (*Lev 16:16*), the Tabernacle itself (*Lev 16:33*), the Golden Altar (*Ex 30:10*) and the Brasen Altar (*Ex 29:36*).

In these cases, uncleanness was not simply to do with acts of sin, but *association* with transgression “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins” (*Lev 16:16*). The people were not simply transgressors, they were unclean, for they had the disease of sin as part of their nature (*Rom 7:17, 8:3*). And even inanimate objects became unclean by association with the uncleanness of the people.

JESUS CHRIST - THE SUBSTANCE OF THE LAW

All of these points of the Mosaic system of things were “patterns” of things yet to come in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 9:22, we read that “almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; *but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these*”. The shadowy institution of the Law was the Type, but what are “the heavenly things themselves” which also needed purification by Sacrifice? The Lord Jesus was the antitypical temple (*Jno 2:18-21*), Altar (*Heb 13:10*), High Priest (*Heb 4:14*), Sacrifice (*Jno 1:29*), and Mercy Seat (*Rom 3:25*). Therefore, he must be the substance of the “patterns” of the Law - he, and his brethren he came to save, are the “heavenly things themselves”, purified by “better sacrifices”.

Just as we are defiled in the sight of God, having a sinful nature by inheritance, the Lord Jesus also, being “made of a woman” (*Gal 4:4*) “also himself likewise took part of the same” (*Heb 2:14*). He inherited the defilement of sin, for he was “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*Rom 8:3*), that he might destroy *the diabolos* in himself. The Lord Jesus, although morally perfect, having never once transgressed, because of the nature he bare, nevertheless needed to be cleansed by his own sacrifice in order to enter into the Antitypical Holy of Holies. This is the Testimony of Scripture: “Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but *by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption*” (*Heb 9:12 Note: “for us” is not in the Greek*).

As the Antitypical High Priest, following the pattern of the Law of Moses, the Lord had to offer for himself first, in order that he could then make reconciliation for the sins of the people. The Lord Jesus is the One “who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for *this he did once*, when he offered up himself” (*Heb 7:27*). Notice here, this he did *once*, that is offer for himself, and then for the people. The Lord did not need to offer up two sacrifices, as did the High Priest under the Law, for he achieved both effects, in his *one* great sacrifice. The simple fact is that just as his brethren have the defilement of “sin in the flesh”, so did he. And in order for Him to appear in the presence of his Father as the antitypical High Priest “for us”, this defilement had to be removed, as we shall consider in more detail in our next article, if the Lord Will. The fact that everything accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ was “for us”, should never blind us to the fact that *it was for himself first, in order that it might be “for us”*. Unless the Lord destroyed *the diabolos* in himself through death, there was no scope for it to be ultimately removed in us.

AN OBJECTION CONSIDERED

In the verse cited above; we read of how, under the Law, the High Priest offered up “first for his own sins, and then for the people’s”. And the Apostolic commentary said that “*this he did once*”, in speaking of how the Lord Jesus offered for his sin-nature, then for his people. But against this, it is sometimes said that it is wrong to claim that a sacrifice for transgressions under the Law of Moses represents a sacrifice for nature - they are two different things. And it is further added, that in any case, under the Law, there were no sacrifices for nature, only for transgressions. Then, it is further reasoned, that as Sacrifice is only for transgressions, the Lord Jesus, who never transgressed, did not need sacrifice for himself to be cleansed. But apart from denying the clear teaching of the verses cited above, this really misses the whole point of the Mosaic Sacrificial system.

Under the law, although “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (*Heb 10:4*), a person could receive forgiveness through faith in what the sacrifices pointed forward to (*Gal 3:24*). Their sins were taken away, not through any value these sacrifices had in themselves, but because they represented the Lord Jesus Christ, who died “for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant” (*Heb 9:15*). But even though a person’s sins were taken away through the faithful offering of these sacrifices; the root problem, i.e. *the diabolos*, alias sin in the flesh, could *never* be dealt with by Law. “The law *made nothing perfect*, but was an introduction of a better hope” (*Heb 7:19, Tyndale*). We have already seen that the condemnation we are under from Adam is physical. The Law of sin and death is physical, and can never be removed until the transformation of nature at the judgement seat. That is why there was no sacrifice for nature under the Law; there is no process of cleansing that can somehow make *the diabolos* acceptable with God; it must be “condemned”, and “destroyed”, something the Law could never do - a physical problem cannot be removed simply by legislating a law against it. But the Sacrifice of Christ was a “greater” sacrifice. The Lord Jesus had *the diabolos* within himself, and so “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” (*Rom 8:3*). Because of the inherent weakness of the flesh, a man living under the Law could never render perfect obedience, and so the root problem went uncondemned - it was never overcome. Rather, the Law condemned the man as a sinner, as sin in the flesh reigned in him. Yet God could, and did condemn “sin in the flesh” of His Son, in whom it resided during his days of mortality, by taking it to the cross, and destroying it in death.

THE LORD’S VICTORY OVER SIN FORESHADOWED

But as no sacrifice under the Law could possibly be for the cleansing of nature for this reason, how then could the Law foreshadow the Lord’s victory over *the diabolos* in himself first, that he might then provide a foundation for the victory of others? How appropriate it was that on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest after the order of Aaron, should offer first for his own sins, then for those of his people. Acts of transgression are but the outward manifestations of an inward problem, a problem which the Lord fully overcame. But the cleansing of the Lord Jesus was enacted under the Mosaic system by a sinner, who *did* need a sacrifice for transgression. How appropriate then, in the shadowy representation of the Law, for the sinner being to be cleansed from his sin first, in order that he might then fulfil his office for the people.

But notice in Hebrews 9:23, “the Heavenly things themselves”, consisting of Christ, and His People were cleansed by “better sacrifices” note this use of the plural - sacrifices. What a beautiful pattern we have in the Law, where the sacrifice for the people was provided by the people (*Lev 16:5*), the blood

of which was mingled with that of the high priest's offering (*Lev 16:18*), and sprinkled on the Altar. Yes, we are cleansed from sin through the Sacrifice of Christ. Yes, the victory is well and truly won by God through him. But we also have our part to play, for if we are to be represented in Christ; we must seek to do as he did. Thus, the Apostle exhorts "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present yourselves a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (*Rom 12:1*). When we consider all that the Lord has gone through for us, it is only "reasonable" for us, like the people under the Law, to also provide a sacrifice. The sacrifice is ourselves, mingled with that of our Lord, as we are "baptized into his death" (*Rom 6:4*). These are the "greater sacrifices" by which the "heavenly things themselves" are cleansed; the Lord Jesus has provided a way of cleansing through himself, and by presenting ourselves as living sacrifices, baptized into his death; we become part of that sacrifice, and so might find cleansing, and forgiveness through him.

We said earlier, in order to understand the solution in Christ, we need to firstly understand the nature of the problem. Put simply, the nature of the problem, is the problem of our nature. As children of Adam, we are defiled by sin and "without strength" to save ourselves. No matter how much effort we make, we continually fail to overcome sin, and rather find ourselves being overcome by it. Well might we lament with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But well might we also rejoice with him, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ... for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (*Rom 7:24-8:2*).

THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

In his first Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle was inspired to write of the Purpose of God in Christ: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1Tim 1:15). So then, it was out of God's Love for the world (*Jno 3:16*) into which His Son was born, that in Christ a way of salvation was provided for sinful man. But that was only part of the work, for in the Divine scheme of things, the salvation of sinners is not an end in itself; rather it is a means of fulfilling the Creator's Greater Overreaching Purpose, which is to populate the entire earth with a single family, each of whom display His Glorious Attributes.

We read of the purpose of the Lord with man in Genesis chapter 1: "And God said, Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness* ... so God created *man in his image*, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (*Gen 1:26*). From this, we learn that the Creator formed beings who were to be in both His Image and Likeness, and that of the Heavenly Host (indicated by the plural "our"). In the natural order of things, sons share the likeness of their father, displaying his characteristics. And as in the natural, so in the spiritual; as a son (*Luke 3:18*), Adam was to be in the image and likeness of his Father-maker.

Out of Adam, the Lord formed Eve, who was therefore also in His Image and Likeness, and whilst they were in their "very good" state, He "blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill (*Heb.*) the earth" (*Gen 1:28*). From these words, we learn that it was from Adam that the Father was to develop a Divine Family, each of whom would be in His Image, filling the entire earth with His Glorious Attributes. Indeed; this is the Father's stated purpose: "as truly as I live, *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh*" (*Num 14:21*) - that is, the earth shall be "inhabited" (*Is 45:18*) with a multitude of sons who reflect the Glory of their Father.

MAN'S FAILURE

Yet Adam failed. We see the evidence of this around us, for rather than being populated with sons of God, the earth is filled with death stricken sinners, who although they are still in the physical image of their Creator (*Jas 3:9*), fail to show His moral likeness. Speaking of what man filled the earth with instead, the Apostle declares: "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is *not of the Father*, but is of the world" (*1Jno 1:16*). Notice this, all that is in the world thus defined, is "*not of the Father*", having degenerated to corruption and wickedness. All that we see around us manifests not the image of the Father, but the lust, and pride of men, who despise, and pervert the Ways of the Most High. In the

days of Noah, the Creator looked upon all that was in the world: “Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (*Gen 6:5*). This is the unrestrained nature of man, filling the earth with all his lusts: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His Way upon the earth” (*Gen 6:12*). Truly it is that all that is in the world is “not of the Father”; for the Father’s Way, the Way to the Antitypical Tree of Life, just as in the days of Noah (*Mat 24:37*), is being corrupted even in our day with the folly, and vanities of men. Yet all of this, it is testified “passeth away”, to make way for that which shall abide for ever (*1Jno 2:17, Heb 12:27*).

The Lord Jesus addressed those who perverted and corrupted the Way of his generation: “ye are of your father the diabolos, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (*Jno 8:44*). The lusts of man then, which comprise “all that is in the world”, are derived not from the Father of the Lord Jesus, but from another source, another “father”, the diabolos and were willingly adopted by those who would become his sons - and this we see in the Genesis record.

The sinful inclinations of man originated in the first instance, not from God, but from the Serpent He created. The Serpent used false reasoning to stimulate Eve to transgress the command of God, and Eve willingly adopted that reasoning, having been “deceived” (*1Tim 2:14*) by it, and transgressed. She then applied what she had learned to teach her husband this new-found “wisdom” who, it is testified hearkened to her voice (*Gen 3:17*), and transgressed also. So it was, that the first humans willingly adopted the reasoning, or mind of the serpent, styled by the Apostle, the “carnal mind”, or thinking of the flesh, which is “enmity against God (*Rom 8:7*). The sentence of death was passed and this, with the incitement to transgress has been transmitted to all who came from the loins of Adam, as “the law of sin and death”, as we have seen in previous articles. The serpent, then was the “father” of all wickedness, and all who manifest his mode of thought are spiritually his children. “He was a murderer from the beginning” (*Jno 8:44*), because it was by seducing Eve, that he caused the death of our first parents, and subsequently all their progeny, who have the *diabolos* inherent within them. Truly it is that all that is in the world is “not of the Father”, but from man, from his carnal thoughts adopted by his own volition from the Serpent.

But man is caught in a cycle of things whereby he cannot save himself. Left to its own devices, it is not possible for sinful flesh to give glory to God, for in it, the Apostle found experimentally, “dwelleth no good thing”. This is why, in the Divine estimation, “the world” is filled with no good thing, but with that which “passeth away”. With no good thing dwelling within man, no good thing can naturally emerge from man; only sinfulness, and corruptness. So it is, that all men are sinners. In their unenlightened state, they are

naturally incapable of doing any other work than what their innate lusts determine, and by their work of sin, they truly become worthy only death as their wages. Truly it is that it was “when we were *yet without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (*Rom 5:6*). Man is caught up in a vicious cycle of mental and physical corruption, and has no strength to break free.

A WAY OF SALVATION

So it is, that in this lamentable state of affairs, the Lord has intervened. “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him” (*Is 59:16, cp 63:5*). Out of His Grace, He has extended His Arm to us (*Is 52:10*), who are unworthy of the least of his Mercies. Out of His Love, he provided even His Only Begotten Son to die - for us “the ungodly” (*Rom 5:6*). But out of appreciation for what has been done for us; we must reverentially enquire into these things. We must seek to understand more fully the principles being worked out in the Atoning work of Christ. How is it that the Sacrifice of Christ can provide salvation? How is it that in the death, and subsequent resurrection of the Son of God, we might be freed from sin?

From considering the nature of the problem, we are now in a position to see logically, what was needed to provide the solution in Christ. In order to reconcile man to God, the great enemy within, the *diabolos*, must be overcome, and finally destroyed. And the only means by which this might be done, is for One who shared our sinful, death stricken nature, with all its’ propensities and lusts to be Divinely strengthened to overcome those lusts, and so mirror the Image of His Father. This was to be the One, described by the Psalmist as “the son of man whom thou *madest strong* for thyself” (*Ps 80:17*). Notice the emphasis here, the Lord Jesus was “the son of *man*”, made strong by God. Being “the son of man”, as his brethren are flesh and blood, and all that entails, “he also himself likewise took part of the same”, as the Apostle declares. But why? Why was it so essential for him to be so identical to us, in sharing our nature? “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the *diabolos*” (*Heb 2:14*). The problem to be overcome is “the law of sin” (*Rom 7:25*), or “him that had the power of death”, styled the *diabolos*. The term “*diabolos*” signifies: “that which crosses over, or causes to cross over” (*Eureka Vol 1, p 249*). It is that which causes us to trespass, or transgress the Divine Command, also called “sin in the flesh”. But how could the Lord destroy it if it were not in him to destroy? And how could it be in him, unless he were also of Adamic descent?

THE LORD JESUS POSSESSED “SIN IN THE FLESH”

There are those who, out of a sincere, but mistaken reverence for the Lord cannot accept that there could be sin in any form in him. But, just as the

Apostle had the *diabolos*, or “sin in the flesh”, so did the Lord Jesus - or else it could not be destroyed there by him. Although he was without transgression; he nevertheless had to have within him the cause of sin, that he might overcome it. He had to share the experience of all men in having sin dwelling within him (*Rom 7:17*), in order that he might be “tempted in all points like as we are”, and overcome those temptations. Otherwise, the Sacrifice of Christ would be no more than a charade. Unless sin existed in the flesh of Christ, it could not be “condemned”, or “destroyed” there. This is the Divine Testimony, that “God sending his own son in *the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh*” (*Rom 8:3*). To truly revere the Son of God, is to accept these facts in all humility, and marvel at the way he overcame, and reflected his Father’s image, despite the weakness, and sinfulness of the flesh he came in.

And here, we see the dual origin of our Lord, for the whole work was a work “of the Father”. The flesh by its very nature can produce nothing but evil lusts, and corruptness, and so even the Lord Jesus confessed that “the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ...” (*Jno 5:19*). And again, he said, “Why callest thou me good? *There is none good but one, that is, God*” (*Mat 19:17*). That is, even the Lord Jesus was not “good” of his own self; the goodness which he had, was the Goodness he reflected from God (*Ex 33:19*). The works of the Lord Jesus were his Father’s works, and all that he did was from God (*Jno 14:10*). He was “the son of man”, sharing mortal weakness, yet was “made strong” by his Father, that he might overcome. He was God manifest in sinful human flesh (*1 Tim 3:16, cp 1 Jno 4:2-3*).

Being “the Son of the Highest” the Lord, whilst inheriting the *diabolos* from Mary, also had the capacity to overcome. He was able to resist “the lust of the flesh” (*Gal 5:16*). He inherited qualities from both parents, sin in the flesh from Mary, and the capacity to resist from His Father. He was able to resist the one by the other, and so develop the other, that he was able to testify of himself “he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father” (*Jno 14:9*). He overcame sin throughout his life, being divinely strengthened to do so, and perfectly mirrored the image of the Father whose works he did - not the *diabolos*, but “the Most High”, who created all things.

But the critics say, “this isn’t fair - if Jesus was strengthened to overcome, and we are not; then God expects more from us than from Jesus!” But let the critic be silenced by the fact that all that was accomplished in Christ was “*for us*”, and the reason why the Lord was “made strong”, was for *our* salvation. These thoughts emanate only from the flesh, which takes no pleasure in things Divine; and seeks only to exalt, and justify itself. Let the critic reflect upon the sufferings of Christ leading up to, and including the crucifixion, and then ask again, whether the Lord requires as much of us, as of Christ.

Yet as we have shown previously, we are not altogether helpless, for there is

a power given to us from God, to strengthen us in our warfare against the flesh - the power of the word of God. By its very nature, it has a power intrinsic within itself to war against the serpent-thoughts within us. But whether or not we make use of this power, or indeed receive it into our thoughts, is our choice. Of man's own volition, the word of the serpent was received, and of man's own volition, the word of God can be received, to counter the serpent mind. All this is of the Lord's providing; as it is written: "it is God which *worketh in you* both to will, and to do of his good pleasure" (*Phil 2:13*), and God works in us through His Word "... as it is in truth, the word of God which *effectually worketh also in you* that believe" (*1Thes 2:13*). It is this word which, when believed, creates in us a desire to perform the things of God, and enables us to do it - "both to will, and to do" his good pleasure. So then, by our very nature, we cannot do the good pleasure of God without being illuminated, and strengthened by the power he has provided, vested in the Gospel believed and understood. Truly every aspect of the work of Salvation is of God, not of ourselves, or of our works, "lest any man should boast" (*Eph 2:8*).

THE DESTRUCTION OF SIN IN DEATH

The Lord Jesus then, being the Son of God had the capacity to overcome the temptations within him throughout his life. But sin in the flesh did not just have to be overcome, or suppressed in life; it had to be "destroyed" in death: "he also himself likewise took part of the same; that *through death* he might **destroy** him that had the power of death" (*Heb 2:14*). Testifying of his crucifixion, the Lord said "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (*Jno 3:14*). The serpent lifted up by Moses, was a brazen representation of the source of the afflictions of the Children of Israel, brought about because of disobedience. They were afflicted with serpents whose bite caused death, yet in the Serpent lifted up by Moses, they saw a serpent rendered venomless, and harmless. And it was through looking upon that serpent, they could be healed, and find life.

So it was, when the Lord Jesus was "lifted up" on the stake; there was a public declaration being made. Here was "sinful flesh", exhibited for all to see; yet sin had been rendered powerless by the One who had the strength to overcome. In the nailing of our Lord to the cross, we see before us him that had the power of death bruising the heel of the One who was delivering it the final death-blow (*Gen 3:15, Heb 2:14, Rom 6:10*). Sin in the flesh, is the impulse to transgress, and by definition, it can have no existence in a dead body. Thus it is testified "he that is dead is freed from sin" (*Rom 6:7*). And so it was, that in loving obedience of our Lord in laying down his life, sin was finally overcome and destroyed; the serpent's head was crushed by One whose walk in life was momentarily interrupted by a bruising to the heel (*Gen 3:15*) and the greatest enemy of all mankind was finally extinguished in death.

We saw that “he that is dead is freed from sin”, because in death there is no thought, no impulse to sin, but total cessation of being. But unlike all other men, who remain in the grave because they are worthy of death as transgressors, the Lord Jesus had done no works of sin, and therefore was unworthy of it’s wages. He was unworthy to die, but died nevertheless. As a son of Adam, having “the sentence of death” within himself (*2 Cor 1:9*), he died as the representative of all those who would find life in him. But being unworthy of death, he had to be raised; it would have been a violation of God’s righteousness to keep an innocent man in the grave. As Peter was inspired to say concerning him “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it”. And having been raised from the dead, after his resurrection, the Lord was granted a sinless, immortal nature; a “glorious” body (*Phil 3:21*). Having suffered in the mortal weakness of sinful flesh, he was made pure and undefiled in nature. As the Apostle testified, “he that hath suffered in the flesh *hath ceased from sin*; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (*1 Pet 4:2*). And again, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; *death hath no more dominion over him*. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (*Rom 6:10*).

CHRIST OUR REPRESENTATIVE

So then, as we saw in a previous study, the Lord Jesus was cleansed from sin by his own sacrifice (*Heb 9:23, 7:27*). Before he died, he had “sin in the flesh”; after his resurrection, he was given immortality, having “ceased from sin”. But even though the Lord himself needed to be so cleansed, the whole purpose of it, was that it might be *for us*. The Lord Jesus “died unto sin”, in order that he might appear before God as our representative: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now *to appear in the presence of God for us*” (*Heb 9:24*).

The Lord Jesus appears in the presence of the Almighty as the representative of those who are under the bondage of Sin, yet who seek forgiveness and reconciliation. And as the Almighty beholds the people’s representative, he sees one who is free from sin, who is holy, and undefiled. He beholds only righteousness, the righteousness of Christ - which is in fact God’s own righteousness as declared by him, and not the sins of the people who he represents. Christ is able to be our representative, for he was one of us, who laboured under the dominion of death (*Rom 6:9*), who was a partaker of the infirmities of our nature. Yet he is able to appear before God on our behalf, because he overcame that nature, and can stand before God free from sin.

This then, is how we might find salvation; by identification with Christ; the

One who appears in the presence of God for us. Through no fault of our own, we are born into the family of Adam, who have the diabolos as their father. But if we receive the Word of God, and allow it to work in our members, it will create in us a desire to please God, and it will transform our hearts from darkness into light (*2 Cor 4:6*). If we believe the things testified concerning the Lord Jesus, through Baptism, we can become part of a new family; the family of Christ, with the Most High as our Father. We declare war on sin; and resolve that we will use the power placed at our disposal to bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (*2 Cor 10:5*).

Through the Gospel believed, and acted upon in Baptism, we discard the old, natural way of thinking as filthy rags. We “put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of him that created him*” (*Col 3:10*). Through the Power of God, and the Victory of Christ, we can ultimately succeed where Adam failed. Through identification with the Sacrifice of Christ, we receive forgiveness of sins, and through the absorption of the Word into our minds, we become “renewed in knowledge”, and therefore, morally, and mentally, we begin to reflect the likeness of our Heavenly Father. But yet this is but the beginning of the work - we still need to undergo a change of nature, as well as a change of mind. The diabolos must be destroyed in us, also. And this will be so; for in the day of our Lord’s return, as the apostle declared “he which hath begun a good work in you *will finish it*” (*Phil 1:6, marg*). And again, we read: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God ... but we know that when he shall appear, *we shall be like him*; for we shall see him as he is” (*1Jno 3:2*). That is, we shall truly be in his Image and Likeness, for when God shall appear, as manifested in His Son, he shall “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (*Phil 3:21*), as “death shall be swallowed up in victory” (*1Cor 15:24*).

As we yearn for that great day to come, let us then resolve to fight mightily against the enemy within us, knowing that the victory is guaranteed. Let us confess our sins, and learn to walk in the Way of God, illuminated by the burning brightness of His Word, helping each other, and encouraging each other along the way. For “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (*1Jno 1:7-10*).

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