

From Death to Life



President's Desk

Once again I was privileged to attend the Triennial Session of the Advent Christian General Conference of America on behalf of the Conditional Immortality Association. I went with Ernie Schache to a wonderful, inspiring time of fellowship held at the Founders Inn, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Three things stuck in my mind after my first trip to the U.S. three years ago. The first thing was the enormity of the meals we were eating. The second thing was the enormity of America itself as a country. The third and most significant thing was the enormity of the commitment that "Advent Christians" all around the world have made to the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:16-20).

Some things never change! We had ample opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones over a meal together. I am glad the airlines weigh the luggage and not the passengers. Last time the Conference was in California on the coast nearest home. This time we had to go all the way to Virginia on the other coast. That alone underscored my impression of the size of the United States. The events of 9 / 11 have not made Americans any less hospitable nor have they made Advent Christians in America any less committed to a vision of making disciples, not only converts, in obedience to the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:16-20).

The Advent Christian General Conference began on Thursday, June 20th, with a Denominational Women's Conference to which - for obvious reasons - Ernie and I were not invited. Next was a Leadership Conference, including the opportunity to attend the training seminar "Growing a Healthy Church". This would be a worthwhile seminar to run in New Zealand! The Conference itself was a mixture of business sessions, workshops, and evening speakers. All of this (even the business) was interesting and inspiring.

The Conference was followed by a special Mentoring Session for the overseas guests on the 26th and 27th. During this session we heard



Pastor David Burge

teaching on a number of topics important to Advent Christian work around the world. This included sessions on strategy, leadership development and on Advent Christian / Conditional Immortality doctrine and history. We discussed finances and biblical

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Three Pioneer Leaders of Conditional Immortality in New Zealand.

By Rev Don Dickson

Deuteronomy 8:1-3.
“Israel, do you want to go into the land the Lord promised to your ancestors? Do you want to capture it, live there, and become a powerful nation? Then be sure to obey every command I am giving you. Don’t forget how the Lord your God has led you through the desert for the past forty years. He wanted to find out if you were truly willing to obey him and depend on him, so he made you go hungry. Then he gave you manna, a kind of food your ancestors had never heard about. The Lord was teaching you that people needed more than food to live – they need every word that the Lord has spoken.”

Key verses for an Annual Meeting:

“Don’t forget how the Lord your God has led you.”
(Deuteronomy 8:2)

“Without faith no one can please God. We must believe that God is real and that he rewards everyone who searches for him.”
(Hebrews 11:6)

I have been asked to share concerning the early days of our Association in New Zealand. To do so is to go back to the 19th century. We live in the 21st century and it may well be asked what is the relevance for today of

exploring the past? To begin with, the Scriptures reminds us *“Don’t forget. Don’t forget what the Lord did in the olden days.”* We can learn lessons of faith from the pioneers of our Association as we in faith explore God’s purposes today.

In my lifetime I have observed a growing openness to Conditional Immortality among Bible Teachers and pastors. Many leaders are searching for God’s truth concerning the Resurrection and if we have a humble spirit there are some insights that we can share. For many folk there is confusion as to what to believe about Resurrection, for the emphasis in churches today is on Christian experience rather than on Christian hope and doctrine.

Let me give you some examples:

The Roman Catholic Church has a strong tradition of teaching about the immortality of the soul and the intermediate state of the believer. Yet in recent months New Zealand Catholic leaders have gone and dug up the Bones of Bishop Pompallier in France and carried them from one end of New Zealand to the other. The secular press seemed to be somewhat confused as to the meaning of all this. What exactly was

being taken from place to place on this pilgrimage? The reported statements from the religious and the Bishops gave the idea that it was Pompallier that was being carried around. He was coming home to where his life’s work had been spent. We didn’t hear about Pompallier being in an intermediate state or in heaven. He was being brought home to New Zealand to be with us even though he is dead. Nowhere did I hear or read questions about the theology of all this?

The Rev. Rob Yule, Moderator of the New Zealand Presbyterian Church, is a New Zealander who has recently articulated about the Resurrection and the after life. He has written a fascinating booklet on *“The Return of Jesus.”*¹ Here he comes close to Conditional Immortality. He writes, “For centuries the church’s official eschatology has been more influenced by the Platonic notion of a soul endowed with intrinsic immortality than by the distinctively biblical witness to the resurrection of the body. The New Testament, by contrast, asserts that only God possesses immortality (1 Timothy 6:16).” “Human beings,” Rob Yule asserts, “do not have intrinsic or inherent immortality but only conditional immortality.”²

However, Yule goes beyond the Scriptures reverting to traditional interpretations with a little of his own by stating "Heaven is like a waiting room, where they are 'with Jesus' until they return with Him to earth and are reunited with their bodies at the resurrection. Believers who die will accompany Jesus from heaven to earth at His return -, and it is here on a renewed earth, not in heaven, that we will be with the Lord forever."³ What survives in the waiting room of heaven is not clear. I believe that this is typical of many Evangelical leaders who are searching for the meaning of the Resurrection.

A third example concerning the contemporary searching Christian hope was the funeral service of the Queen Mother seen live on Television by millions around the world. I thought the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Carey gave a very suitable short statement of Christian hope. He spoke of Resurrection for Christ's followers. But the question remains in the minds of the viewers – "Where is the Queen Mother now? She sleeps in the vault at Windsor? How will she get to heaven?"

Tonight I want to share the witnessing faith of three New Zealand Pioneers of our Association. They are the Rev. George Brown, Pastor George Aldridge and the Rev. Charles Crisp Brown. These Christian leaders were all from the United Kingdom.

In the last decades of the 19th Century in the United Kingdom there was a lively debate concerning conditional Immortality. The doctrine was not something new but a revival of a doctrine earnestly debated by the Puritans and Separatists of the 17th Century. Conditionalists held that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was a notion of Greek philosophers that had invaded the Church. In particular Conditional Immortality exposed the absurdity of perpetual hell fire and purgatory that the doctrine of the immortal soul encouraged. Conditionalists saw the Christian Gospel as offering life in quality through Christ in contrast to the death culture of paganism.

However many Christians saw the doctrine of Conditional Immortality as a heresy to be rooted out. So the Anglican Church Missionary Society in England expelled their veteran missionary in Japan, a Mr. Denning, for denying the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of endless misery. It was left to a group of Cambridge University staff and students to advocate the tolerance of Denning's views and raise funds to keep this missionary working in Japan.

About this time the Belfast Baptist Church excommunicated five persons for espousing Conditional Immortality. They were also forbidden to teach Sunday School. At the General Baptist Chapel, Grantham, a Member's

Meeting passed this resolution: "All who hold the doctrine that the soul is not immortal and the annihilation of the wicked must resign within seven days or their names will be wiped out of the church books." Twelve members resigned. The churches of the Congregational Union were more understanding of Conditionalist doctrine for they elected, with a large majority, the Rev Ed. White, a Conditionalist preacher and writer, as Chairman of the Congregationalist Union in 1886.

(a). The Rev. George Brown. In September 1878, at the invitation of the Rev. George Brown, an inter-denominational group of leaders met at the Mint Lane Baptist Church, Lincoln, to found the Conditional Immortality Association. The Rev. Dr. Leask edited a magazine called *The Rainbow*, which contained Bible Studies from a Conditionalist perspective. The name of the United Kingdom publication was later changed to *The Bible Standard*.

The arrival in 1880 of the Rev. George Brown in Auckland from the Mint Lane Baptist Church in Lincoln resulted in the founding of the New Zealand edition of *The Bible Standard*. In the first issue he stated the purpose of the magazine: "*Our purpose is to present a living Christ to a dying world and call men's attention to the fact that their thirst for a future life, for immortality can*

only be satisfied in Christ. Which is better? Error with ease or truth at all hazard, or at any cost? Peace in the church with two or three rotten planks in our ship of doctrine or agitation enough to hunt out and haul out the dead timber and put in the solid oak where the dire effect is seen? Is not God's honour something and is it not at stake? Here are two grand pillars of revelation: God only has immortality: the soul that sinneth it shall surely die."

The Bible Standard was open to various writers. One early contributor was J. French who wrote: "The greatest proof of God's love is the natural mortality of man. To believe man is immortal and having fallen doomed to eternal punishment is a frightful belief. The question of the hour is: 'Will man burn forever? Will he burn good? Or will he burn out?' How beautiful is the plan of God's salvation: 'Christ is our life and Christ is the King.'"⁴

Now the Rev George Brown, like Thomas Spurgeon, had come to Auckland along with many others because of a chest ailment. But unlike Spurgeon, Brown was not welcome at the Auckland Baptist Church because of his theological views. As a result Brown joined with a small group of baptised believers meeting in the Temperance Hall. Before long he was their honorary leader and by November 1880 he had organised them

into a church. Attendance grew. The Sunday evening services moved to the Choral Hall and then to the larger Opera House. At this time the Opera House was the largest auditorium in Auckland.

George Brown's Auckland ministry proved to be even more effective than it had been in the United Kingdom. At Lincoln, England 220 members had been added to the Church roll in three years. In Auckland by 1884 a congregation of around 1400 attended every Sunday night - the largest evening congregation in the city at that time. Two thousand attended Brown's last service in Auckland. They even crowded in on the stage. *The Bible Standard* records that 25 persons came forward at the close of the service for baptism. His farewell words were significant:

"I came to Auckland four years ago and no pulpit was open to me. But by God's help I do not leave discouraged for I made known to the people of this beautiful city 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'." He had been glad in Auckland to have opposed the mouths of some hot brained, cold hearted preachers of hell torments. The people of Auckland now know better and simply would not have it. But while condemning the horrible dogma of eternal torment he warned his hearers of the righteous judgement of God."⁵

George Brown left Auckland for a short preaching visit to Boston, U.S.A., and then he went to Melbourne, Australia, where he had an extensive Bible Teaching and evangelistic ministry, which included experimenting with Christian communes. He ended his ministry as Pastor of a United Kingdom Baptist Church, dying in harness in his fifties.

However, his Auckland ministry continues today in the sense that he was the driving force for this Association: October 14th 1882 The New Zealand Evangelistic and Publication Society was formed. George Brown was the first President. Note the emphasis on Evangelism. Condition Immortality was to encourage evangelism.

Under George Brown's leadership the Association was active in horse drawn caravan and tent missions in the immediate closely settled rural areas of Auckland – Papakura, Pukekohe, Tuakau, Pokeno, Bombay, and Drury. Regular meetings were established at Papakura, Bombay and Drury. Later preaching services were held in a barn at Runciman.

Who did the preaching? At first George Brown did a lot of the preaching together with capable lay folk. Thames received a visit as early as November 1880 quickly followed by Hamilton, Port Albert, Helensville, Whangarei and Napier. At

Port Albert a church was built in April 1881. This was erected on land given by S.B.Lush who had been under the ministry of Dr. Leask in the United Kingdom.

But being as good as an evangelist as he was George Brown realised that the responses being so encouraging a team ministry was necessary. So he advertised for workers in the English *Bible Standard*. No salary was offered – only board and keep. It was three years before George Brown himself received a payment (they gave him a bag of sovereigns.) He was supported by his dairy farm in Mangere, where he had no doubt hired help. As a result of the advertising for assistance E.H.Taylor arrived in Auckland in April 1882 and George Aldridge in June 1882. Taylor was soon based in Thames and Aldridge in Hamilton.

(b) Pastor George Aldridge. The second president of this Association 1884,

George Aldridge had been active in the leadership of the Sion Baptist Chapel, Bradford. The fervour of his youthful preaching had attracted the notice of C.H. Spurgeon who had invited him to consider the Baptist ministry. However Aldridge was an earnest advocate of Conditional Immortality and in 1876 on account of his views he, together with George Mackay, another capable leader, was asked to

withdraw from leadership at Sion Chapel.

George Mackay found opportunities elsewhere in the Baptist Union and had good ministries in London at Devonshire Square becoming President of the London Baptist Association. George Aldridge on the other hand answered the advertisement to come to Auckland. At the age of twenty-eight, together with his wife and family, he set out for Auckland. He had known George Brown in the United Kingdom and was confident in the Lord's leading.

In 1883 the *Waikato Times* reports George Aldridge speaking in the Public Hall in Hamilton on "Man's Nature. Is he Mortal or Immortal?" The newspaper reports strong arguments were given in support of Conditional Immortality. "The Bible" Aldridge contended, "nowhere gives warrant for man's immortality except through Jesus Christ." The newspaper commented: Mr Aldridge's manner is exceptionally good, his diction is choice and appropriate and he modulates his voice with skill and judgement. The lecture was one of the best we have heard in the Waikato.⁶ The lectures were honoured by the Lord, for on Christmas Day 1883, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, eleven converts were baptised in the Waikato River. The first recorded baptisms in that river.⁷

With results like that it is no surprise to find that when

George Brown left New Zealand George Aldridge was called to continue the work in Auckland. Unlike George Brown's Auckland ministry of four years George Aldridge was to have a ministry of 42 years – until his death as a result of an accident. A large chapel was built in West St., Newton although the Opera House was sometimes used, and later the Town Hall. As well as leading the congregation he became the editor of *The Bible Standard*.

As editor of *The Bible Standard* he exposed what he considered to be the shallow and non-biblical Christianity. For instance, after hearing that Pastor Tom Spurgeon in a special memorial service for his father had declared that C.H. Spurgeon's death was a birthday into a better life, and that during the service a letter from C.H. Spurgeon's wife was read. "My beloved husband is still welcoming into the land of rest his own converts." Aldridge commented, "This is a fine little romance built on nothing. C.H. Spurgeon sleeps in Jesus, waiting His Master's call to life."⁸

As the world changed George Aldridge was able to grasp the new opportunities of preaching the good news of "Life only in Christ." In Auckland, he was one of the first Christian broadcasters through 1YB. My grandfather down in Taranaki heard these broadcasts and travelled to the West St

Church to be baptised into Christ as a believer. This in time lead, indirectly, to my own baptism in New Plymouth. In the early days of radio it was considered by conservative Christians somewhat worldly to actually broadcast a Sunday service. Aldridge was able to break out of the mould to fearlessly proclaim Christ.

He was good at debating, which prior to World War 1, was of considerable public interest. Above all he was earnestly evangelistic. Like George Brown he called for new disciples and baptisms. In the official West St history there is an interesting paragraph, which sums up the blessing in evangelism during 1889 before the building of the church. "In spite of difficult times, the church is experiencing great happiness. Each Sunday morning there are some who give themselves to the Lord in the waters of baptism"⁹

The gospel witness continued in the new building. On the first Sunday in the new building, July 31 1898, a large number on a cold wintry Sunday morning gathered around the Lord's Table. There was no sermon – the people worshipped and gave testimonies of the Lord's kindness. In the evening to a congregation of around 600 George Aldridge preached on "The Cross of Christ."

The extent of George Aldridge's influence can be seen in the messages sent

to his funeral service in 1926. There were many from Church Leaders of all denominations. One significant tribute was from Stephen Page, Secretary of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle who wrote: "George Aldridge's name will ever rank high amongst those who helped to make this city and its spiritual force what it is today."¹⁰ This tribute is a marked contrast to what was being said about George Aldridge by the Tabernacle and other Baptist leaders in the 1880's.

(c) The Rev. Charles Crisp Brown (Association President 1916).

The Rev. C.C. Brown came to Dunedin after service with the Baptist Missionary Society in Calcutta. His wife had worked in zenannas. Having trained in Spurgeon's College he arrived with a letter of introduction from C.H. Spurgeon. At first he assisted in Dunedin and then in 1885 he was called to the pastorate of the Timaru Baptist Church. Here he acceptably taught Conditional Immortality. However, his views collided with the teachings of many Baptist pastors who wrote for the *New Zealand Baptist*. He was frustrated in not being allowed, by the Editor, to have a response published.

For instance an article in the *New Zealand Baptist* of September 1884 had declared – "Death to God's people is but a ferryboat. Every day and every hour the

boat pushes off with some of the saints and returns for more." To the Conditionalist such poetic language was remarkable for its lack of biblical content.

Back in 1882 Thomas Spurgeon had written in the *New Zealand Baptist* "Who but the blind can fail to see unquenchable fire even in Christ's teaching?" By 1887 the tone of the *New Zealand Baptist* had become aggressive as it recorded the Baptist Conference Resolution of 1887. "This Baptist Union regrets to know that the Rev. C.C. Brown holds and gives prominence to the distinctive views of the body represented by Mr. Aldridge and considers it right to declare that such views are not in accordance with the views of the Union." Prior to this there had been considerable discussion about Conditional Immortality in the pages of the *Baptist*. Of course at this time the Baptist Union was very new and anxious to preserve its unity. They were mindful of the fact that the Rev C.H. Spurgeon had withdrawn the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London from the British Baptist Union. So when a request came from the Auckland Tabernacle, itself under some tension from the rival baptistic group under Pastor Aldridge, they took note.

Dr. Martin Sutherland has written an article for a British Baptist publication entitled *Downgrade Downunder*¹¹

concerning the influence of the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle. The Tabernacle desired that the Rev. C.C. Brown be made to withdraw from the Baptist Union. They had a victory. At the Baptist conference of November 1888 with Thomas Spurgeon in the chair the Conference moved a motion of expulsion. It read: "That in the judgement of this assembly the Rev. C.C. Brown has so far identified himself with another denomination that he ought no longer to continue a member of the Union and that therefore he be and is requested to withdraw." This was carried by 31 votes to 5. The *Timaru Herald* reported all this with excitement under a banner headline "Welcome home to Timaru."¹²

By 1892 the Baptist Union was having to change its mind. The Timaru Church, the second largest Baptist Church in Canterbury, evangelistic and growing, was a leading light in the Canterbury Baptist Association. Baptist leaders were having to recognise that provincial Baptists were feeling that a clique of urban Baptists was running the Baptist Union. They were demanding that the Timaru Church and its pastor be re-admitted. Also by 1892 the Rev Thomas Spurgeon had left the Tabernacle and they had a new minister who himself was causing them problems. So the Baptist Conference re-admitted the Rev Brown and the Timaru Church.

The Resolution of 1892 meant that as New Zealand Baptists were about to enter the twentieth century, the Baptist Union was open to any pastor holding Conditional Immortality and able to uphold the Union Constitution.

The Rev. C.C. Brown later moved to Rotorua and for eighteen years served as a teacher in Maori schools before retiring to Auckland's North Shore. During this time he was active in the affairs of this Association. The old West St building had a plaque on the wall to his memory.

Three pioneers of the Gospel of Life only in Christ – George Brown, George Aldridge and Charles Crisp Brown – all suffered rejection from the communities of faith from which they had sprung. But the Lord blessed their ministries and their faithfulness to His Word. Today we face opposition of another kind. We live in a society that doesn't know the Bible and is fast moving away from Christian values. At the last census over a million New Zealanders claimed to have no religion at all. If our Association is to have a future we have to address the New Zealand problem of secular humanism and its spiritual vacuum. Our understanding of Conditional Immortality ought to alert us to the fact that our society and in deed the whole world is dying. The pioneers called our Association Evangelistic. A

later generation removed that word, but surely not the calling of the Great Commission.

Carey Park is an investment in Youth Evangelism. So is our overseas partnership with Advent Christian Missions. Should we be doing more? Can we do more? There is urgency – our friends are dying.

Jesus said:

"Be alert!

You don't know when the Master of the House will come back.

It could be at midnight or before dawn, or in the morning.

But if He comes suddenly don't let Him find you asleep."¹³

(Footnotes)

¹ Rob Yule, *The Return of Jesus* Affirm Publications, Auckland 1998.

² Yule, pg. 18.

³ Yule, pg. 17.

⁴ *The Bible Standard* April 1882.

⁵ *The Bible Standard* July 1884.

⁶ *The Bible Standard* July 1883.

⁷ *The Bible Standard* February 1884.

⁸ *The Bible Standard* May 1894.

⁹ *Jubilee Souvenir of the Church of Christ West St. 1930*, pg 21.

¹⁰ *The Bible Standard* November 1926

¹¹ Martin Sutherland.

Downgrade Downunder. *The Baptist Quarterly* vol. 37 no.7.

¹² *Timaru Herald* November 1888.

¹³ Mark 13:35-36

Fire and Flood

How the New Testament Uses the First Testament to Teach on Final Punishment

(part two) G. Andrew Peoples

Mark 9:43-48

This is Mark's first reference to *Gehenna*, translated "hell," but perhaps better left untranslated (being a proper noun). This is a well-known passage used to support the doctrine of eternal torment, for a fairly obvious reason. Jesus warns His listeners about the possibility of going into *Gehenna*, "where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." On the basis of this saying in Mark, William Crockett claims that "There is no doubt that the New Testament writers expected extended suffering to take place in the next age."¹ However, before any reasonable conclusion about its meaning can be made, the background of this saying must be fully taken into account. This is a direct quote from Isaiah chapter 66

The LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to pay back his anger in fury, and his rebuke in flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD execute judgement, and by his sword, on all flesh; and those slain by the LORD will be many. From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD. And they shall go out and look at the dead bodies of the people who have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their

fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh. (Isaiah 66:15-16, 23-24)

Here, eternal torment is not present. Instead, what is in view is a scene of God's enemies having been killed off, and now all that remains is a pile of corpses, being consumed by maggots and fire, a scene of disgust and abhorrence. How does this bear on Jesus' use of verse 24 in Mark's Gospel? It seems that at the very least, it can be said that it isn't obvious that Jesus' saying requires us to see Him as teaching eternal torment. Commenting on Mark 9:48, R. Alan Cole notes that The Old Testament context (Is. 66:24) helps to explain this solemn imagery. It has reference in Isaiah to "the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me."

Gehenna, the eternally smouldering rubbish-dump outside Jerusalem, is the symbol of the final state of those who have rebelled against God, amongst whom Jesus warns us that we may find ourselves, unless we enter God's *kingdom* (verse 47), equated with *life* (verse 45).² Reflecting on the way this passage is frequently used in traditional theology, Douglas Hare advises us that "It is clear in the Isaiah

passage that the apostates whose worm and fire are unending are 'dead bodies.' There is no suggestion that these evil persons will *suffer* eternally; their carcasses will remain indefinitely as a reminder of their rebellion against God."³

While it appears to be true that eternal suffering is not in view, even here, it seems we are being asked to swallow too large a camel. How can carcasses "remain indefinitely" – especially those being consumed by maggots and/or fire? In Isaiah, it would be a reasonable inference that we are being shown how such language can be used – to stress permanence and irreversibility. The traditionalist usage of this passage in response has been less than satisfying. Often in traditional defenses of eternal torment, the verse is quoted without comment as though its meaning does not need expounding. It is generally treated in isolation from the text Jesus is quoting from Isaiah.

When Edward Fudge, for example, makes the observation that the worm in this picture "is a devouring worm, and what it eats – in Isaiah's picture here quoted without amendment – is already dead,"⁴ Robert Peterson's retort comes as a

surprise: Once more Fudge **imposes** his annihilationist reading of the Old Testament upon the New Testament texts. Does this sufficiently explain Jesus' word about the worm's not dying? Would the worm not die when it had consumed its host? Should not a conditionalist theologian address the traditionalist arguments arising out of the text? [emphasis added]⁵

To use an understanding of the meaning of Isaiah to interpret these words of Jesus then is an *imposition*, which does not allow one to understand this New Testament passage properly. The apparent assumption is that we must treat these words of Jesus as though they do not mean what Isaiah meant. To be sure, taking Isaiah into account (as Jesus clearly did by *quoting* it) makes it more difficult to find eternal torment in these words of Jesus, but that hardly makes it inappropriate to do so (unless of course our aim all along was to find eternal torment here). When contemporary preachers quote the New Testament to teach on a particular doctrine, we do not reject what they say on the grounds that they are "imposing" a New Testament understanding upon an issue. On the contrary, what they say will indeed be bolstered by the authority of the New Testament. We would suggest that we should apply the same standard to Jesus' use of Isaiah.

Larry Dixon, in response to the suggestion that the fire of Mark 9 might be a consuming, rather than a tormenting one,

quotes Alan Gomes, and leaves it there as an adequate rebuttal.⁶ Gomes' response elucidates the way traditionalists read this text: Worms are able to live as long as there is food for them to consume. Once their food supply has been consumed, the worms eventually die. But the torments of hell are likened to *undying*, not dying worms. This is because their supply of food – the wicked, never ceases.⁷

Lest it be thought that this is only the peculiarity of one defender of eternal torment, this identical argument is marshaled in the semi-official statement of the Master's Seminary⁸, where Richard Mayhue reasons, "The 'unquenchable fire' of 9:43 must have an endless supply of fuel (otherwise it would be quenchable), which would be impossible if one took the annihilation view. Since the worm does not die, it implies an endless supply of food which could not be with the annihilation view."⁹

The argument then seems to be:

- 1.) Worms require food or they *will* die
- 2.) This text in Mark says that the worms in hell (be they literal or metaphorical) will *not* die
- 3.) Therefore this shows (either literally or by way of metaphor) that the lost people in hell will never be consumed/destroyed

But clearly such an argument impugns the way Scripture itself uses such language. It would imply, for example, that Isaiah was wrong to use this language in connection with the corpses of God's slain

enemies. It also entails an absurdity. One might ask – what are the worms doing? Gomes calls the wicked "food" for the worms, so it would seem he thinks the worms are eating. But if they are actually eating, and if (as Gomes asserts) the food source will never be dissipated, what we need to further posit is that either the unsaved are eternally growing in hell to replace the tissue that the worms have eaten, or that when people go to hell they acquire infinite body mass so that regardless of how much is eaten, more food for the worms will always remain. Likewise with the comment Mayhue makes about the fire. If the unsaved really are the "fuel" that sustains the fire then in order for them to provide a perpetually undepleted source of fuel they would quite simply have to keep producing more material to be burned or they would need to have infinite mass. In response Gomes and Mayhue might object to such a bizarre literalism, but to use a playground retort – they started it.

The absurdities do not arise if we allow the Scriptural use of the terminology to guide our interpretation of it. It appears that the mere appearance of reference to fire that is not quenched calls to mind a familiar view of hell that involves fire, and that view is then found in the statement itself. Robert L. Thomas demonstrates this for example when he says, while defending eternal torment, that "[t]he picture of being

Carey Park Report

Phew. Its time to catch our breath! Carey Park has been a very busy place lately and we now begin a period of 5 weeks with only weekend bookings coming in – A great chance to catch up on maintenance and begin some renovations! As well as the usual school and church groups coming in we have had a soccer camp, a working group from YWAM, a Teen Mania group from the USA, a water polo team, a TYLA Police programme for kids and the most interesting of all – a film crew from the USA.

The film crew spent two weeks turning Carey Park into Rarotonga! We had numerous Whares, canoes, cattle, goats, coconuts... that really made us all feel like we'd been transported over to the Islands (the cold, wet



weather however soon squashed those dreams!) – at one stage they had a 700,000watt light throwing lightening up into the sky – most impressive!

Our ministry camps still continue to be our highlight – the soccer camp run by Kim Beale went well with numerous kids either making

first time or renewed commitments to God. The last kids and Teen camps were also a hit. Lots of fun, lots of hard work, and a great opportunity to tell others about the most important thing in life! It is such a privilege to have these opportunities to share Christ with kids and the team here are all looking forwards to our next lot of camps. Coming up we have Father and Son, Mother and Daughter, Teens, Kids, and something new is our family camp at the end of the year. We pray that God will continue to use these camps for the furthering of His Kingdom.

A few of us recently went to the CCNZ conference in Wellington – a fantastic time was had by all with some great seminars to attend.





was important but rather God who works through whomever He chooses – may the great works that have gone on here in the past continue to take place for the glory of God our Father.

Thank you everyone for all your support; please continue to pray for us, in particular that there would be a great response to our ministry camps.

We were also suitably challenged by the guest speakers Darryl and Sue Gardiner of YFC about the choices we make, about doing what's 'right', about sticking at it even when the going gets tough and about the great commission which was a command and not a choice. We all came back with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for what we do.

We have once again been very blessed with funding from the ASB trust for materials and equipment to upgrade our facilities. We are looking forwards to a new toilet block, staff room, field drainage, video equipment, sports equipment and more. We still require all the manpower to carry out the renovations so if any of you have a spare day, you'd be most welcome – we provide great lunches!

This is my first CIA report and my first term as the new Director of Carey Park. I am very thankful for the 2 years I spent here prior to this appointment under the direction of Tim Long. The names may have changed, but one thing will never change and that is our purpose – to see the work of God being done in peoples lives as we present the Christian Gospel to them. Our chairman referred to it as the "Elijah/Elisha" stage – It was not Elijah or Elisha that

Yours in Christ

Cameron Dick
Carey Park Director



Correspondence

My very dear brother Carl Josephson,

Thank you for your well wished message which I have received today. It was really exciting to hear that you received our letter sent to you some time. Please thank you for all that you are doing for the Lord's Glory in the country. We heartily and eternally encourage you to continue.

Please when you print these photos in your next issue of our good Newsletter. I would love you mention that:

If any one feels to help us some assistance.

We plead to the Lord's people to assist us as a mushrooming church in this country in order to.

1. Get registered for a settled ministry
2. To be able to build church office for administration
3. To be able to put up praise and worship centres.
4. Also our pastor's remuneration.

Thank you brother Carl Josephson for making these needs known to our brothers and sisters who wish us well.

This needs brethren call for a high priority. Be blessed today.

In Christ your,
Simeon
KENYA



Pastor Simeon Rianga (left) & Pastor Adriano Ombeo (white shoes) busy at the outreach meeting 24 March 02



Women queuing for baptism on 14 April 02



This older man coming out of the water is over 80 years old.

Pastors Simeon and Adriano preparing for the baptisms



Rain on the Saturday of the crusade meeting at Mogenda didn't dampen the enthusiasm of Simeon

Pastor Simeon Rianga can be contacted at
The Advent Christian Church in Kenya
Riouse Mission, PO Box 68
Nyamarambe-Kish - Kenya

Fire and Flood

Cont'd from p10

victimized by worms whose appetites will never be satisfied and of **a fire that will never run out of fuel** is repulsive beyond imagination" [emphasis added].¹⁰ It may indeed be repulsive, but the truth is that this passage doesn't refer to a "fire that will never run out of fuel," it refers to a fire that will never be quenched. Thomas might *think* that this entails a fire that will never run out of fuel, but no such meaning is intrinsically present in the words, especially when their usage elsewhere in Scripture is considered (as we will shortly see). A fire that is not quenched" is one that is allowed to burn unrestrained (i.e. "unquenched") until it has consumed the object being burnt.

This is exactly how such language is used, for example, in Ezekiel 20:47-48. *Say to the forest of the Negeb, Hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord God, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. All flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.*

It seems clear enough that what is in view (whether the picture itself is literal or figurative) is a blazing fire that will destroy the forest, and nobody is going to save the forest, because the fire will not be quenched by anyone. An unquenched fire is simply one

that is not prematurely snuffed out. This has no implications for whether or not the fire will *last forever*. Apart from common sense then, we have good Scriptural precedent in Isaiah 66 and Ezekiel 20 for understanding it this way.

If this is the case, then Morna Hooker is surely right when he says of Mark 9, "It should be noted that nothing is said here about eternal punishment: on the contrary, the image seems to be one of annihilation, in contrast to life; it is the fire, and not the torment, which is unquenchable."¹¹

2 Peter 2:6

Here we read that "by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes [God] condemned them to extinction and made them an example of what is coming to the ungodly." It is not at all difficult to see why a reasonable person might conclude that Sodom and Gomorrah are actually an example of *what is going to happen* to the ungodly, namely, condemnation to extinction. After all, this is exactly what the text says. "The word *tephrōsas*, 'turning into ashes' or 'covering with ashes,' is unique in the Bible, but is used by Dio Cassius (lxxvi) in his account of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 when Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried in lava."¹² There isn't any disagreement as to the kind of fate being described with regard to Sodom – complete destruction. The question then becomes – What good grounds do we have for exegeting this text in a way *other* than what would appear

to be a "literal" one. Granted, there are many texts of Scripture that, in the final analysis, do not say what they might appear to say at first glance. Is this such a passage? Apparently Robert Peterson believes that there is reason to think so: "Taken in isolation it is possible to understand Peter's words as teaching annihilationism. Nevertheless, we ought not to do so. It is better to take Peter's words as more generally predicting the downfall of the wicked than to understand them as foretelling their precise fate – reduction to ashes."¹³ The frustrating aspect of responding to such a claim is that no grounds are given for it. How is this interpretation "better," given that the annihilationist interpretation of this text appears, as Peterson comes close to conceding, to be the most natural one? Reflecting on Peterson's comment, Fudge says, "If Peter could hear the conversation, he would probably scratch his head and wonder how he could have possibly written more plainly."¹⁴ The impression one gets via a survey of the literature on this verse is that the commentators, annihilationist or not, offer a treatment of this passage that strongly favours annihilationism, the annihilationist writers on final punishment gladly use it as a powerful proof text, and the defenders of eternal torment write as though it did not exist.

2 Peter 3:3 -13

Here Peter is responding to those who doubt the return of Christ, because He is delaying for such a long time. Peter

responds by recalling a historical example of God's intervention and judgement, and goes on to assure his readers that God will indeed do so again. The crux comes in verses 5-7.

They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of the godless.

One initial difficulty is the appearance that the heavens and the earth perished in the flood, and now we have another heavens and earth. What might this mean? Surely the *kosmos* was not destroyed in the flood, yet this is the very word translated "world" here. Kistemaker notes that "The words *heaven and earth* must be understood as a pair that is mentioned in one breath. With this expression, he tells the reader to recall the creation account in Genesis. The use of the plural *heavens* unmistakably reveals the hand of a Jew."¹⁵ The Jewish mind was not so preoccupied metaphysical exactness as the Greek. There was a far greater concern with order than substance. Michael Green offers a solution to what appears to our modern eyes to be an oddity: "But *kosmos* probably means order, as opposed to primordial chaos, and Peter may mean no more than that the orderliness, the continuity of nature, was broken up by the flood. Perhaps *kosmos* simply means 'the world of men', as

it does in an identical context in ii. 5. Peter would then mean that human life perished. There is nothing here to suggest that that the whole earth was destroyed by the flood, let alone the heavens as well."¹⁶

The world of sinful humanity was obliterated (dare we say *annihilated*?) in the flood of Noah's day, and Peter's warning seems to be, "God did it once, He will do it again."

"This day of judgment (2:9) or day of the Lord (3:10) not only transforms the present form of God's creation. It also cleanses the earth of the wicked people who inhabit this planet. God exercises patience, but when his forbearance has come to an end, he pronounces divine judgment upon the scoffers. Their time for destruction has arrived and consequently they receive their due reward."¹⁷

The term used to tell us that those in the flood were "destroyed" is *apollumi*, the same Greek word used elsewhere to speak of final punishment (e.g. Matthew 10:28, where we read that God is able to "destroy body and soul in Gehenna"). The word translated "destruction" in verse 7 to refer to the destruction of the ungodly when Christ returns is *apōleia*, which is simply a noun derived from *apollumi* (just as the English word "destruction" derives from "destroy"). Given that these terms are set side by side, the *destruction* of those who died in the flood, and the *destruction* of the godless when Jesus returns, it is hard to see how we can ascribe a radically different

meaning to each of these terms.

Carson concedes that there is an at least reasonable case to be made for annihilationism by appealing to the biblical texts that speak of the destruction of the finally unsaved. He admits while describing the annihilationist view, listing 2 Peter 3:7 as an example, "Fair exegesis of the words involved suggests *total* destruction, i.e., cessation of existence."¹⁸ But ultimately Carson rejects such arguments, calling them "too hasty."¹⁹ "The *apōleia* word-group," he explains, "has a range of meanings, depending on the context." While it might literally refer to destruction, it need not always have this meaning in some contexts. He points to examples where this is the case: The "lost" son and lost coin of Luke 15, the "ruined" wineskins of Matthew 9:17 and similar examples. None of these things is simply "destroyed," so we might legitimately read *apōleia* as referring to ruin or loss, and not complete destruction.²⁰

Carson has undermined himself here, committing what he elsewhere categorizes as an *Exegetical Fallacy*, one that he calls the "unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field." This fallacy "lies in the assumption that the meaning of a word in a specific context is much broader than the context itself allows and may bring with it the word's entire semantic range. This step is sometimes called illegitimate totality transfer."²¹ He commits the fallacy as follows. He listed 2 Peter 3:7 as an example of a

“destruction” text used by annihilationists. He then argued that the *apōleia* word group has a much wider semantic range than this meaning, and it can mean loss, ruin, waste etc., depending on the context in which it appears. The obvious implication is that *in this text*, which is cited by annihilationists as supporting annihilationism, the word *apōleia* can mean ruin, or loss or waste or something else, over and against “destruction.” But this is not the case if, as Carson pointed out, the context is to be the determining factor in which meaning we find in the word. Peter has just used the verb to refer to what the flood did to those living long ago, now in the same breath he uses the noun to refer to what God will do in the future to the godless. To avoid the meaning of destruction (which is clearly the meaning present in the context, as seen from the flood example), Carson would have us read the word with its fullest semantic range in mind so that we can select something like “ruin” or “loss” instead. The presence of the Scriptural precedent for destruction is the factor that tips the scales against this possibility. For this reason it might be suggested that the reason traditional interpreters have not seen that this passage points to the final destruction of the unsaved is that they have not allowed the New Testament’s use of the earlier Scripture to be heard against the backdrop of their own systematic theology.

(PART THREE NEXT ISSUE)

(Footnotes)

- ¹ William V. Crockett, “The Metaphorical View,” William V. Crockett (ed.), *Four Views on Hell* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 71.
- ² R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1989, 2nd ed.), 224.
- ³ Douglas R. A. Hare, *Mark*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 117-118.
- ⁴ Edward W. Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994, 2nd ed.), 114.
- ⁵ Robert Peterson, “The Hermeneutics of Annihilation: The Theological Method of Edward Fudge,” in Michael Bauman and David Hall (eds.), *Evangelical Hermeneutics: Selected Essays from the 1994 Evangelical Theological Society Convention* (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1995), 201.
- ⁶ Dixon, *The Other Side*, 80.
- ⁷ Alan W. Gomes, Evangelicals and the Annihilation of Hell, Part Two, *Christian Research Journal* (Summer 1991), 11.
- ⁸ This statement is being referred to as a “semi-official” statement on the part of The Master’s Seminary because it comes from an issue of the Master’s Seminary Journal dedicated to the topic of Eternal Punishment where faculty members of The Master’s Seminary contributed all the articles, all of which come to the same conclusion (i.e. that eternal torment is true and any opposing view is false). It seems clear that the intention of the journal issue was an effort on the part of TMS to espouse its position (not that there is anything wrong with this in itself of course). As an aside to the comments Mayue makes, we suggest that his grasp of the physics of fire is somewhat lacking. It is patently absurd to say “The “unquenchable fire” of 9:43 must have an endless supply of fuel (otherwise it would be quenchable).” No matter *how* much fuel a fire might have to consume, we could still conceive of the fire being quenched (i.e. put out) before it does so. Mayhue seems to think that when a fire “runs out of fuel,” it has thereby been “quenched,” and vice versa.
- ⁹ Richard L. Mayhue, “Hell: Never, Forever, or Just For a While?” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 9:2 (1998), 138.
- ¹⁰ Robert L. Thomas, “Jesus’ View of Eternal Punishment,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 9:2 (1998), 164.
- ¹¹ Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: A & C Black, 1991), 232.
- ¹² Michael Green, *The Second General Epistle of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: The Tyndale Press, 1968), 100.
- ¹³ Robert Peterson, “The Case for Traditionalism,” in Robert Peterson and Edward Fudge, *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 156.
- ¹⁴ Edward Fudge, “A Conditionalist Response to Traditionalism,” in *Ibid.*, 200.
- ¹⁵ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 328.
- ¹⁶ Michael Green, *The Second General Epistle of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*, 131.
- ¹⁷ Kistemaker, *Peter and Jude*, 330-331.

- ¹⁸ Don Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 519.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 522.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Don Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 62.
- ²² Shedd, *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, 76-77.
- ²³ Larry Dixon, *The Other Side of the Good News*, 86.
- ²⁴ A valid way to express the relationship between hell, eternal fire and Jude might go like this:
1.) Hell is eternal fire, 2.) Jude refers to hell, 3.) Therefore Jude is referring to eternal fire. Although valid (i.e. the conclusion follows deductively from the premises), this argument would not be sound (i.e. the premises and conclusion are true). Obviously Jude does not refer to “hell,” he refers to “eternal fire,” and whether or not eternal fire in this context means “hell” is one of the very things in dispute.
- ²⁵ Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (New York: MacMillan, 1978, 5th ed.), 251.
- ²⁶ While on the surface of it this might sound almost reasonable, it would in fact entail quite absurd hermeneutics if we applied it consistently. We might conclude (as some in history have), for example, that the disciples had a formula of Church-State relations in mind when they said, “here are two swords” (Lk 22:38). Or we might conclude that whenever a person is said to be in the presence of God (e.g. Ex 18:12; Deut 12:7; Ac 10:33) they have temporarily died and gone to heaven.
- ²⁷ While a full exegesis of this text would be beyond the scope of this work, two things can be noted:
1.) This saying in Matthew is a parallel of the text Mark 9 treated earlier in this paper, which suggests final death rather than eternal torment
2.) Going into the “eternal fire” in this text is set in contrast to entering “life” which could easily be taken to affirm the annihilationist view that going into the eternal fire signifies the second and eternal “death.”
- ²⁸ R., Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Peter, St John and St Jude* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1945), 625, cited in Edward Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes*, 179.
- ²⁹ H. Bietenhard, “Fire,” in C. Brown (ed.), *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1975), vol. 1, 657, cited in Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes*, 180.
- ³⁰ This literal wording is considerably obscured by the NIV, which inserts “of those who,” reading “They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.” This addition can give the misleading impression that the Sodomites *themselves* did not undergo such a fire at the time. .
- ³¹ J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder, 1963), 173.
- ³² For some examples, see Col, 2:15; Matt 1:19; Heb 4:11, 9:9; John 13:15; James 5:10; 1 Pet 2:6. This fact is pointed out by Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes*, 180.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ³⁴ J. Arthur Baird, *The Justice of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, New Testament Library (London: SCM, 1963), 233.

The Intermediate State

in Paul

Part Ten

by Carl Josephson

In the last issue we took a look at the background to 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, concluding that Paul's reference to the 'inner man' in 4:16 does not show Paul thought in terms of a Greek dualism of body and soul, but rather an eschatological dualism with God in Christ beginning the new creation here and now by His Holy Spirit in each believer. With that in mind we come to chapter 5.

Interpretations.

There are several competing ideas as to what the basic meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 is. Gillman suggests there are three broad categories that interpretations of 2 Corinthians can be classified under.¹ They are:

- a) A change or development in Paul's thinking.
- b) A change of subject as compared with 1 Corinthians 15.
- c) A basic consistency between 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5.

We will examine each in turn.

a) The first approach focuses on a change or development in Pauline thinking and is often linked with the suggestion that Paul has had a close encounter with death (2 Cor. 1:8) in which he is challenged or even forced to re-evaluate his own position with regards the *parousia*. C.H. Dodd

speaks of a 'spiritual crisis' or even 'a sort of second conversion'.² Whereas earlier Paul had been confident that he would be alive at the *parousia* (1 Thess. 4:15 "we who are alive", 1 Cor. 15:51 "we will not all die") now that seems less likely. Faced with his own pending death before then, it is alleged that Paul looks once again at his eschatology and modifies his understanding of what happens. The passage in question is then interpreted in this light and three alternatives are offered:

- (i) Receipt of the resurrection body immediately upon death. (So F.F. Bruce,³ M. Harris⁴)
- (ii) Disembodied (naked, 5:3) existence between death and the *parousia*
- (iii) Receipt of a temporary body until the *parousia*.

There are substantial objections to these three views. Firstly, although Paul has this close encounter with death as recorded in 2 Corinthians 1:8 there is nothing to suggest that this was substantively different from a number of other such encounters (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:30-32; Acts 14:19). The point of 2 Corinthians 1:8 is not to explain why he has modified his eschatology but so that his readers would not be 'uninformed' (v8). Paul wanted them to be informed so that they would support him

- "as you help us by your prayers" (v11) - and perhaps most importantly - "in order that we might not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead" (v9). The experience has not altered his understanding but, if anything, has deepened his faith and reliance on God.⁵ In the immediate context of Paul's despair he writes of 'consolation (v7) and 'hope' (v10) foreshadowing 4:8-9 in which he writes of being "afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed." So we conclude, contra Dodd, that there is no significant spiritual crisis, and certainly not a 'second conversion.'

Secondly, there is no intimation in the whole letter that he is modifying anything nor teaching anything different from what he has always taught.⁶ Having written extensively about his eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 less than two years earlier⁷ it seems highly unlikely that he would modify his position without clearly saying so. Indeed the opening words of this passage are 'For we know', suggesting an agreed understanding between Paul and his audience that may indicate "material common to the early Christian tradition"⁸ (although we acknowledge it could simply be an expression

of the confidence that Paul has in his own understanding of the future).. What is more, it is questionable whether the interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5 that sees resurrection at death can be simply called 'modifying'. W.L. Knox speaks of a "complete revision of Pauline eschatology in a Hellenistic sense."⁹ W.D. Davies rejects that, instead suggesting "reconciliation to experience."¹⁰ We question Davies conclusion that the process of resurrection is completed at death and ask how Paul's 'experience' can inform this particular area of theology. The only one who had experienced resurrection was Christ himself and Paul had had his encounter with the risen Christ near Damascus long before he wrote 1 Corinthians 15. The alleged close call with death in 2 Corinthians 1:8 is not an experience of resurrection and, as we have suggested, is not vastly different from other experiences Paul had had.

Further, the alleged changes seem much more like contradiction than modification.¹¹ And again, later passages dealing with the same theme (e.g. Rom. 8:22-24; Phil. 3:20f) offer "no indication of his 'new insights'".¹² So at most we might be able to say that Paul modified his thinking on his own personal survival until the *parousia*, but not his theology.

(i) In defense of his view that the resurrection body is received at death Murray Harris writes, "the moment when the consolation is needed must be the moment

when the consolation is given, and the consolation received at death cannot simply be identical with the assurance of the future acquisition of the resurrection body already possessed during life."¹³ However Paul has already dealt with this question (albeit from the point of view of those still alive rather than those facing death themselves) in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, and the consolation offered is that most assuredly fixed in the resurrection at the *parousia*. Any consolation for those facing death or actually dying themselves (rather than those grieving for others) comes in the form of knowing that Christ is first fruits and that they will be 'in Christ' (1 Cor. 15:18) which may be part of the thought behind 'with Christ' (Phil. 1: 23).

Bruce acknowledges that this new body is the same as the 'spiritual body' of 1 Corinthians 15:44 (the receipt of which Paul clearly links with the *parousia*) but understands that Paul, facing the reality of impending death, concentrated his mind on the question of whether it was "conceivable that those who were united, right now in mortal life, with the risen and ever-living Christ, should have this union interrupted, even temporarily, by bodily death?"¹⁴ Paul's conclusion, according to Bruce, is that what Paul "craved, and received, was the assurance that absence from this earthly body would mean being 'at home' with the Lord, without any waiting interval."¹⁵ We challenge the conclusion on the grounds (as discussed

below) that time is the very factor that is absent from this passage.¹⁶ Bruce gets very close to advocating a sort of 'situational theology' where theology is informed by situation. We ask, following Lincoln, why the assurance Paul offers in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15¹⁷ should be "any different when his own consolation is to the fore?"¹⁸ As Yates says, "If consolation must be given at the very point of need, theology becomes subordinate to human desire."¹⁹

We question whether consolation is a major topic of the passage anyway. As Furnish has noted, the theme of chapters 4 and 5 is "the meaning of apostolic suffering."²⁰ This being the case, consolation is secondary and we understand Paul's emphasis being rather on faith and hope. Further, consolation can be built on future hope and it is our conclusion that Harris is overstating the point here to suggest that it must take place at the moment needed. There is a growing understanding throughout the New Testament at least, that trust is placed primarily in God not in circumstance,²¹ with death being the ultimate 'test'. In fact the cross demonstrates the point Paul is trying to make here – that God's triumph and victory arises out of apparent defeat, or, as Gerald Borchert puts it, "suffering and death is the means by which triumph is actually achieved (2 Cor. 2:12-17)."²² The dying person is not primarily to look for consolation but to God in Christ.

(ii) The next alternative, disembodied existence in the intermediate state, is so contrary to Paul's anthropology that at the very least it must be suspect. "The objection to this whole approach is that it presupposes an anthropological dualism absent from Paul elsewhere and that it is, in the present context, an awkward solution at best."²³ Further, the two references that are taken to refer to the soul (. [naked - v3] and [unclothed - v4] are both rejected by Paul.²⁴ We agree with Glasson when he writes concerning this passage that Paul has remained "faithful to the Hebraic tradition,"²⁵ and we therefore reject this option.

(iii) The third proposition, that of receipt of a temporary body was hesitantly adopted by Calvin²⁶ but is clearly refuted in the main text itself²⁷ where Paul writes that the building is 'from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (v1). The whole emphasis of the passage is to contrast the temporality of this life with the permanence of the next, not that there is another temporary stage. The preceding verse also makes the point, contrasting the temporal, which can be seen, with the eternal, which cannot (4:18).

b) A second general approach is to suggest that 2 Corinthians 5 deals with a different subject, the body of Christ as a collective reality, rather than an individual's body, which is the subject of 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4. Certainly the context of 2 Corinthians 5,

as outlined above, is distinctive from other passages dealing with the same general theme, so the focus or the point of what Paul is saying is different. But theories that postulate both immediate resurrection for the believer upon death and yet some corporate resurrection at the *parousia* are generally vague and confusing. Retreat into claims of Paul holding paradoxical views are then postulated.²⁸ While we may need to resort to this if there is no other solution it is preferable to seek first for consistency.

c) The third approach Gillman identifies is that there is a "basic underlying consistency" between 2 Corinthians 5 and Paul's earlier teaching.²⁹ This consistency, he argues, is that "bodily transformation, explicit in 1 Cor. 15:50-57, is implicit in 2 Cor. 5:1-5."³⁰ However he goes on to warn against pressing "both passages (1 Cor. 15 & 2 Cor. 5) for systematic answers to such questions as *when* the resurrection body is received..., *what* the nature of the interim state is, or *how* the transformation of the earthly body takes place."³¹ In particular "2 Corinthians 5 does not address the modern readers' questions of when, what, or how, nor is anything said about the intermediate state."³² Because the existent Corinthian correspondence was written over a relatively short period (about 2 years) it would be surprising if Paul could not assume that the information he had imparted in the earlier letter (1 Corinthians), concerning the nature of the resurrection, was

understood as the background to the discussion he now undertakes.

And herein lies a major key to understanding 2 Corinthians 5. If in fact it is assuming a background understanding from 1 Corinthians, and if it is not addressing issues of timing, and if it does not say anything about the intermediate state then much of the debate is over. It is therefore necessary to investigate this more thoroughly.

Comparison with Romans 8.

Similarities between this whole passage (4:7-5:10) and Romans 8 have been noted by many.³³ In Romans 8 Paul is also dealing with the tension of living in the two ages, in particular the suffering now compared with the future glory. Listed below are some of the parallels:

a) Suffering and Glory.

Romans 8:18 - I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 - For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure.

b) Groaning in anticipation.

Romans 8:23 - we groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

2 Corinthians 5:2 - For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.

c) Faith and Sight.

Romans 8:25 - we hope for what we do not see.

2 Corinthians 4:18 - because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen.

2 Corinthians 5:7 - for we walk by faith, not by sight.

d) Being Put to Death.

Romans 8:36 - For your sake we are being killed all day long.

2 Corinthians 4:10-12 - always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

In addition there are lists of hardships in both passages (Rom 8:35,38; 2 Cor 4:8-9) and there is the underlying motif of hope despite appearance.

The dating of 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans is significant. The order of composition is 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, then Romans. Because Romans was written at a later date it is reasonable to measure the alleged change from 1 Corinthians 15 to 2 Corinthians 5, against the similarities in thought between Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15. In particular both Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15 seek redemption for the whole of creation (Romans 8:21 cf. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28) and place that together with our redemption. This "focuses God's redemptive action upon the parousia"³⁴ and, we contend, shows Paul's thinking in the earlier passage (1 Cor. 15) and the later

passage (Rom. 8) is consistent and we should therefore seek that same consistency in the 'middle' passage (2 Cor. 5). These parallels help form the background, indicating that Paul is not speaking in isolation here but rather dealing with similar themes from varying perspectives, and assuming that they have a basic grasp of his argument in 1 Corinthians 15. With that in mind we will look more closely at 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.

(Footnotes)

¹ Gillman, 439.

² C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: University Press, 1953) 81.

³ F.F. Bruce, "Paul and Immortality" 457-472.

⁴ M. Harris, *Raised Immortal*.

⁵ Cf. Furnish, 293, "We also have Paul's own word that the whole experience in Asia had deepened his confidence in God and had enabled him to be hopeful that God would rescue him as well from future dangers (1:9b-10). That had turned out to be a renewing and uplifting experience for him, not a depressing one."

⁶ John Yates, "Immediate or Intermediate? The State of the Believer upon Death." *Churchman* 101 no 4 (1987) 310-322, at 311. Cf. Osei-Bonsu, "Does 2 Cor. 5.." 88.

⁷ F.F. Bruce, "Paul and Immortality" 467, writes that "probably not more than a year separated the writing of the two letters." Also Lincoln, 64, "approximately a year."

⁸ Yates, 311.

⁹ W.L. Knox, *St Paul and the Church of the Gentiles at Corinth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961, c1939, 128.

¹⁰ Davies, 314-318.

¹¹ So Lincoln, 64. Also Osei-Bonsu, "Does 2 Cor. 5." 81, "Such an interpretation of 2 Cor 5.1-10 [receipt of the resurrection body at death] is irreconcilable with the Pauline teaching that the resurrection body is received at the *Parousia*." [Emphasis added].

¹² Lincoln, 65

¹³ M. Harris, "The Interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:1-10 and Its Place in Pauline Eschatology" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1970) 78, cited in Osei-Bonsu, "Intermediate State," 178-9.

¹⁴ Bruce, *Paul on Immortality*, 471.

¹⁵ Bruce, *Paul on Immortality*, 471.

¹⁶ So Lincoln, 63-64.

¹⁷ The consolation offered there is that 'the dead in Christ will rise first' (1 Thess. 4:16) and 'the dead will be raised imperishable' (1 Cor. 15:52) which are linked with the *parousia* (1 Thess. 4:15; 1 Cor. 15:23) and the trumpet (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52).

¹⁸ Lincoln, 64.

¹⁹ Yates, 312.

²⁰ Furnish, 294.

²¹ The cross being the ultimate example of unfavourable circumstance being God's will.

²² Gerald Borchert, "Introduction to 2 Corinthians," *Review and Expositor*, 86 (1989) 313-324, at 319.

²³ Ellis, 219.

²⁴ See discussion below.

²⁵ Glasson, 145.

²⁶ So Glasson, 154.

²⁷ So Cassidy, 214.

²⁸ Eg. Guy.

²⁹ Gillman, 440.

³⁰ Gillman, 442.

³¹ Gillman, 441

³² Gillman, 441-2

³³ Eg. Ellis, 212.

³⁴ Ellis, 213.

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PRESIDENT'S DESK
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stewardship. We discussed how we can all help each other in the work of world-wide mission.

Notice how often I have mentioned the work "around the world" or "world-wide". Personally, I felt God was emphasizing to me the need to become a "world Christian". World Missions are the heart of the Bible story. Our God is a missionary God. He invites all the world's people to know him and to worship him. He is at work at all times and in all things to fulfill this missionary purpose. In the end, God's name will be glorified, God's kingdom will be established, evil and evil do-ers will be destroyed, and the whole world will be

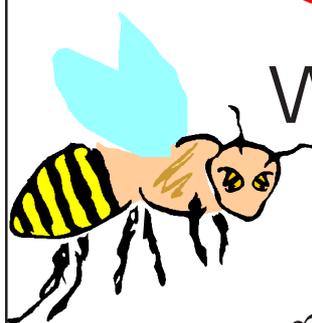
reconciled to Him. I need to have a greater vision for this. Through John, God revealed that some from every nation, tribe, tongue and people will worship him forever. I want to play a part in bringing in this world wide harvest!

As President of the CIA it was exciting to know that our involvement with Advent Christ Missions New Zealand, especially in the sending of Grant Aldridge to the Philippines and now Ernie Schache to India, will be instrumental in bringing some from every nation, tribe, tongue and people to know the Lord of the harvest. It was a privilege to represent you all at the Sunday evening service to commission Ernie and three others for service on various Advent Christian Mission fields.

It was exciting also to meet lots of people who have been impacted by our literature - whether our videos or Warren's book, "Life, Death and Destiny". Many asked about our next project. World wide there seemed to be a hunger for "Conditional Immortality" literature. We were made aware of many folk throughout the world, from both within and outside of the Advent Christian denomination who wanted "Conditional Immortality" literature. Once again, I am convinced there remains a role for New Zealand to play a part through the Conditional Immortality Association in fulfilling the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:16-20).

David Burge
(President)

Carey Park



Working Bee

Bathroom Upgrade

Cabinet Making

Fencing

Painting

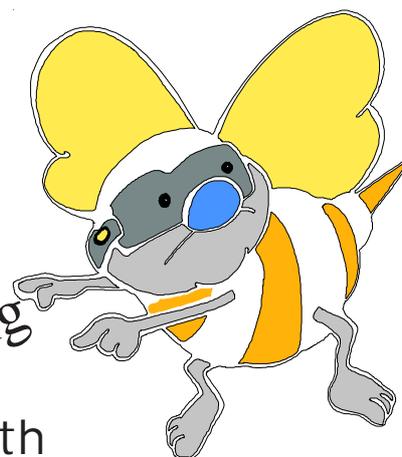
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From Back Cover

Conference of India and Blessed Hope Fellowship. He would commence his Chennai-based role from August 1st allowing time with the Wrights before they departed India for home and their furlough. Following the Wright's return to India in March/April 2003 Ernie will return to NZ for a short period before returning to India on a more permanent basis. He too will take a one-month furlough each year to return home to NZ. The committee based on Ernie's successful 2000 application undertook Processing and recommendation. Publicity and fund raising began following a special June 10th meeting of the committee. A commissioning service was held at Ernie's home church, Owairaka Baptist, in cooperation with ACMNZ on the evening of July 28th. This took the format of a Hymn Sing at Ernie's request.

PACCI Orchard Farm Project: The Philippine Advent Christian Conference has researched and commenced a farming programme utilizing 4.75 hectares of land to grow several local fruits. We obtained a project feasibility study published by PACCI.

The objectives stated are:

- To establish an orchard farm as an income generating project of the PACCI
- To uplift economically all the Pastors and Church workers of the PACCI
- To support church planting and missions for the realization of the goals and objectives of PACCI.

They offer internationals plant sponsorship opportunities as a method of investing in this long-term project. But beyond that there may be potential to assist them in extending their market both locally and perhaps even internationally.

The thrill of this project is that it is their own initiative - we simply have the opportunity to help them help themselves! This is to be encouraged both in the Philippines and in other mission territories.

Financial Matters: Significant amounts continue to be forwarded to projects in both India and the Philippines as our 'focus zones'. Local support for Grant and Ernie is coming in well with salary being provided from ACWM. We are on the way to recovering the costs of getting them to their respective mission posts. The Work Team to Philippines overall broke even financially which was pleasing. Donations are still coming in for OBC Students Blessing Fund and the OBC Building Project. The PACCI Orchard Project has begun attracting donations and funds have already been forwarded towards the project.

Prayer Matters: We are thankful to God for the faithful prayer warriors who meet together every six weeks to bring the needs of the Advent Christian Mission fields worldwide before God in prayer. It is so encouraging seeing prayers answered and hear of many conversions to Christ and baptisms into the body. It seems the Spirit is most definitely working in the ministries we continue to pray for and in the hearts of mankind around the

world. Our prayer meetings will now take an even more focussed bias to the works in Philippines and India with Grant and Ernie being our very own missionaries and informants in those lands. We are very aware of the need to uphold them both in prayer for God's strength, wisdom and protection.

Committee Goals

We aim to:

- Publicise our mission opportunities in new and relevant mediums and formats to attract and challenge a wider base of participants and supporters.
- Release locals and members into missions – long or short term
- Recruit new members to carry on the work from NZ and offer fresh ideas, perspectives and enthusiasm
- Continue to be involved in offering relevant people skills to assist international projects on short term foreign mission trips
- Be involved in encouraging and supporting internationals in developing their own support projects with the resource and skills they already have with a view to self sufficiency
- Offer our own missionaries the best profile and support opportunities we can – through publicity, communications, financial support raising, and most of all prayer.

Garry E. Schäche

Trust Board Chairman

ADVENT CHRISTIAN MISSIONS NEW ZEALAND



Business

Chairmanship: From February 2002 Rob Carr handed chairmanship back to Ernie Schache after temporarily taking over the role, then in June 2002 Garry Schache was elected to the position to succeed Ernie. We are thankful to Ernie for his years of faithful service as Trust Board Chairman.

Committee Members: Prospective members were canvassed with the eventual success of adding three new members to the committee: Sharon Josephson, Scott Tremaine and Paul Look. We are thankful for fresh thinking and enthusiastic additions to the team – an answer to prayers. Of course we welcome anyone interested in being involved in this exciting work and ministry. (Remaining current members as at August 2002: Beryl Ching, Patricia and Rob Carr, Garry Schache)

Philippine Work Team: Grant Aldridge reported on the success of the 2002 Team trip and project undertaken – OBC faculty housing development. The goal was met to have at least one unit occupied prior to leaving for home. Six NZ members joined four from the USA to assist on the project. Team members assisted with carpentry, block laying, plastering, tile grouting, painting, sifting sand and digging.

Helen Schache Memorial Fund: OBC directors decided to

use the fund to set up a permanent Audio Visual Room to house their multi-media equipment required for courses, and in honour of Helen a plaque would be set up.

Work Team planned: A Work Team is planned for 2003 to assist on any of three different development projects in Guindy and/or Madurai. Promotion and recruitment is already under way for this work trip.

Hymn Sing Mission Evening: This was held February 23rd at Takanini Church of Christ to promote the work happening in Philippine and Indian conferences, to report back on the 2002 Philippine Work Team's trip, and to announce and promote a Work Team trip planned for 2003.

Highlights

Grant Aldridge to Philippines: In February 2002 Grant announced his call to serve the Lord in the Philippines, and recommendation and processing by the committee commenced following a special meeting on March 27th. Grant was seconded to Advent Christian World Missions to the position of Business Manager to the Oro Bible College – and commenced on May 1st 2002. Extensive promotion and support raising was undertaken on behalf of Grant and, in cooperation with his local church, a commissioning service was held at Titirangi Baptist on Sunday April 28th following a farewell at the



ACMNZ Prayer Meeting on April 26th. Grant's prompt arrival in the Philippines allowed time with the Walshes before they departed the Philippines for home near the end of May. Grant plans to remain in Philippines a number of years, returning to NZ for one month in every twelve served. Grant filled the position ACWM so desperately needed filled – God's answer to much prayer.

Ernie Schache to India: In June 2002 Ernie announced his desire to serve the Lord on a foreign field and was subsequently seconded by Advent Christian World Missions to the position of Administrator serving the Advent Christian

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