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ENCLOSURE A copy of our new publication, "Enemies" by Michael Struthers, is enclosed with this issue. This tract traces reconciliation through the Scriptures and shows God's intention to reconcile all mankind.

EDITORIAL

"What about the Dead Sea Scrolls ?"

On a recent visit to the historic city of Lincoln, having some spare time at our disposal we decided to visit the castle, There is not a great deal to see inside Lincoln castle, except for one exhibit, one that is very carefully guarded and kept in a specially darkened room. The exhibit is a very old document, and the way in to the display room is through several outer rooms, the walls of which are covered with illustrations and information about the main document. They show how the liberty and rights of the common man had frequently been disregarded or transgressed by those who held power or authority over him. Some of the illustrations depict scenes of trespass or of unjust government. Others show how this document has been used in framing the laws and constitution of other lands. Probably this one document has had more effect in preserving the rights and liberty of the individual than any other secular writing, for it has been in existence since the year 1215. It is the Magna Carta, or Great Charter, handwritten in Latin and signed by King John at Runnymede in the spring of that year.

There are three other copies of the Magna Carta in existence, and all are carefully preserved, for they form the basis of English law, and contain statements such as "No man shall be deprived of his liberty except by the law of the land, having first been tried by his peers," and it also asserts that the sovereign is subject to the same law.

Old as is the Magna Carta, it is less than half the age of the subject of this editorial, for our main consideration is the collection of documents known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. These were on exhibition in Toronto when we visited that city in 1988, and they were also guarded and shown in a specially darkened room. Great skill had been employed in preparing the ancient text for examination by scholars, and in preserving the material against further deterioration.

These scrolls are a collection of ancient scrolls of the Scriptures and other writings, and were discovered in caves in the Judean wilderness south of Jerusalem over a period of several years, around 1947-49. Many are fragmentary, and considerable scholarship was needed to determine the content of the writings. The scrolls include many books of Hebrew scripture, some almost complete, and others in many fragments. One cave alone yielded more than ten thousand fragments! The first find, in several pieces, was an almost complete copy of the scroll of Isaiah, and later finds included portions of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges, Samuel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and the Psalms. Many fragments of the minor prophets were also found.

As a young man I attended a lecture on these scrolls, given by Professor F.F. Bruce, around 1960. In his summary he said that in all the manuscripts of the Scriptures recovered, there was not one word of difference between them and the received scriptures current with us, except for a small portion of Daniel, of no great significance.

What, then, is the significance of these scrolls ? Many scholars have written at length as to the content, yet have revealed little that was not already known, other than some details of the daily life of the community which originally possessed the scrolls. Is it not of much greater significance that they were discovered at almost the exact time the modern state of Israel was founded ? After almost two thousand years of exile Israel was back in the land, and God, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, draws their attention to the Hebrew scriptures, reminding them of the fathers and the promises, for *He had been mindful of His promises and will surely fulfil them.*

NEWSDESK

IN ENGLAND

HOLIDAY WEEK 1993

AS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED, the annual holiday week will take place at the Centre Parcs Holiday village at Elvedon Forest, Suffolk. The dates are from **Friday, June 11th till Friday June 18th**. The cost will be around £100 plus communal food charge. A deposit of £25-00 should be sent when booking. Write to David Osgood, c/o "G&T", or phone your enquiry.

MEETINGS

MAY '93 Blackheath Birmingham. **United gatherings of believers** have been arranged to take place at the Bible Hall, Park St, Blackheath at 2pm. and 4pm. on **Sundays May 9th and July 11th**.

August '93. The annual residential conference will take place on the week-end of **August 20th** fromy 4pm. **Friday till 9-30am.** on **Monday 23rd**. Tel. 0602-258425 for further details.

JOHN VICKERS We are pleased to report that John, who is correspondent for our Russian outreach, is making a good recovery from the heart attack he suffered in November. We thank our many friends for their prayers and concern on his behalf.

Concordant Bible Society As announced in our Nov. issue, Alan Dalziel is able to supply all publications of the Concordant Publishing Concern to correspondents in Britain. Please write for a publications list if you have not already been sent one.

IN AMERICA.

June '93. A fellowship meeting has been arranged to take place in **Wyndham, Ohio**. Contact **Ted. McDivitt** 9600 Wolf Rd., Wyndham OH 44288. **Phone 216-326-2554**. Write or phone for particulars.

THE NEW *BIRTH* CONTRASTED WITH THE NEW *CREATION*

By E. H. Clayton (Essay No. 56)

Subjects which have been under consideration over a long period of time, acquire their own well-known terms. Often the mere discussion of a question conveys the idea that all is clear and plain, and further enquiry superfluous. Should the subject have been misunderstood, it is difficult to correct matters, for the familiar terms and their surroundings are not readily driven from the mind.

If the misunderstanding of the question arises from an erroneous background, then we have confusion, and correction becomes a real problem. Such a difficulty hangs around the new birth. So fundamental do evangelicals consider the new birth, that any suggestion which calls for enquiry is deemed to be the mark of apostasy. Enquiry is furthermore hampered, because figures which ought to be distinguished may have some features of similarity, and so two subjects remain mixed, leaving us without clear knowledge of either.

NEW BIRTH NOT UNDERSTOOD BEFORE

Nicodemus is not the only teacher who is ignorant on this topic. Unfortunately, the ignorance of the present day arises from a different cause than did that of Nicodemus. Today great emphasis is placed on the necessity for regeneration, whereas Nicodemus did not understand it to be a requirement for entry into the kingdom of God at all.

Nicodemus thought that physical relation with Israel was sufficient for the kingdom; he did not recognise the necessity for a spiritual renewal, and yet the Scriptures, of which he was a teacher, plainly stated such to be the case.

The present position is almost worse, for we do not realise that the teaching presented to Nicodemus and Israel is radically different and distinct from that given to the nations through the apostle Paul. We suppose the new birth to be the truth of the evangel of God, and so we continue to be modulated by this figure and lose the greatness of the revelation through Paul, which greatness is characterised by comparing it with the future new **creation**.

THE LORD JESUS AND PAUL DISTINGUISHED

At the outset of our enquiry, let us then discriminate that which the Lord Jesus proclaimed to Israel: the kingdom of God. What He said of it, we must retain in the context in which He gave it. Paul preached to the nations the evangel of God's grace, gathering the saints who are the ecclesia which is the body of Christ. All that the Lord Jesus said, His words as well as His figures, accords with the object of His mission to Israel and finds its correspondences in the Hebrew prophecies, which relate to Israel's establishment as God's holy nation on earth. But what Paul says has a more extensive horizon and deals first with blessings among the celestails for the saints, yet also develops matters related to the universe outside the earth.

Israel's blessings, then, are upon the earth; they focus Messiah's glory on this terrestrial scene. The blessings of the ecclesia are celestial and focus Christ's greater glories, related to His allotment of the universe. Birth is the figure which conveys to us what makes Israel's sons fit for the earthly, millennial sphere. But creation is the figure necessary to indicate the new and radical features of the ways of God which are not centred in Israel.

With these distinctions made plain, we are ready to consider the difference between the figures and, at the same time, to develop their

respective connections and the revelations which range along with them.

DETAILS OF THE NEW BIRTH

The new birth is crystallised in the familiar words: **you must be born anew** (John. 3:7). Our elaboration of it must be sought either in the words of the Lord Jesus, of those who heard Him, or in the Nebrew revelation. It was a matter which Nicodemus ought to have known and taught in Israel, for the prophets had much to say regarding it. Actually, it is the new covenant stated in a few words. What the new covenant brings to Israel is the measure of the significance of the new birth.

A detail of the words **you must be born anew**, which is usually ignored, is that the word **you** is plural; this is not the only case where the plural pronoun is of importance in guiding understanding. The plural speaks of the nation of Israel and not of individuals. An example is seen in Matthew 5:14--You are the light of the world. So also the words of John 3:7 indicate that it is Israel's sons as a whole, as a nation, which must be born anew. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a nation born at one time (Isa. 66:8).

THE KINGDOM OF MESSIAH A RENASCENCE

The establishing of Israel in the kingdom of God was the basis of the Messiah's ministry to them. He refers to the time when He, the Son of Mankind, will sit on His glorious throne, as the **regeneration**, or more suitably as the **renascence** (Matt. 19:28). The import of such a feature indicates that birth illustrates matters regarding the kingdom on the earth, of which Israel is the chosen centre.

Entrance into the kingdom is by the new birth. This is the truth insisted upon to Nicodemus, one of Israel's teachers. It is the truth which applies to Israel only, within the scope of the promises confined to them alone. It is not truth for the present administration.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHING THE NEW BIRTH

The particular significance of the new birth is its intimation that physical relationship with Israel is insufficient: there must be spiritual regeneration, for the children of the flesh are not the children of God. Israel's sons require a new spirit; the stony heart must be taken away and replaced by a new one. So will Israel walk in Jehovah's statutes and keep His judgments. This earthly glory is pledged and promised to Israel, and they enter it by the new birth.

God's eonian covenant brings them all these blessings. It is the new covenant which God makes with His earthly people. The blood of Christ is its basis. This is the particular aspect of Christ's death as it refers to Israel's position, outlined in the prophets and the so-called gospels. We should not import into the teachings of the Lord, or of the Twelve, the significance which the apostle Paul reveals as attached to the **cross**. Such things are not in the evangel of the kingdom; the new birth is not related to justification or conciliation, which subjects are exclusive to the ministry of Paul to the nations.

BAPTISM AND NEW BIRTH

Repentance and Baptism are the leading features of the proclamation of John the Baptist, of the Lord Jesus and of the Twelve, and they are related to the new birth. In fact, the elements of the new birth are water and spirit, and these are the mediums of baptism. John announced that he baptised in water for repentance, but He Who is coming after him will baptise in holy spirit. Here we have the causes of the new birth; the water of baptism finds its counterpart in holy spirit which fits its subjects for entry into the kingdom.

THE FIGURE EXPLAINED

The new birth fits for a life on earth during the millenium. It rejuvenates the faculties during that time when Israel is established in the kingdom. It is a renewal in kind, enabling the flesh to walk in the statutes, ordinances and judgments of God. Thus it is a provisional matter in His ways and produces children of God whom He will edify

and lead to the maturity of sons, in readiness for the new creation and God's ultimate uniting of the universe.

Humanity has much to learn and discover and Israel's regeneration is one of the factors which will contribute to the peoples of the earth coming to know and understand God.

THE IMPORT OF THE NEW CREATION

The new creation is quite a distinct matter from the regeneration. The latter proceeds by the avenue of youth, whereas creation produces the adult. It gives sons of God, sons of whom the norm is Christ. The significance of **creation** is that which is **new** and, from the context in which we find this figure used, viz. the ministry of the apostle Paul, we perceive that it fits for a different sphere to that of the new birth. It brings about the radical change necessary for earth-born humans who will have a celestial destiny, the subjects of which will require powers and capacities far superior to those possessed at present, and they will receive them because they are new creations in Christ.

NOT EXPLAINED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The new creation will eventually embrace heaven and earth. On rare occasions new heavens and a new earth were mentioned by Israel's prophets, but into any details they did not go. Even in the Unveiling we have only the barest outline, though it is made plain that the present heavens and earth pass away. Peter also tells of this and shows such things to refer to the day of God, whereas Israel's blessings through the new birth are confined to the day of the Lord of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Unveiling.

AN INSTALMENT OF THE NEW CREATION

The present economy and the evangel related thereto, produce the ecclesia which is Christ's body. It is the first instalment of the new humanity which comes by the new creation. This portion of the new humanity is now being created in righteousness and benignity of the truth. It requires that we put off the old humanity, for the truth of

the evangel shows that the saint, who is a new creation in Christ, really no longer belongs to the race of which Adam is the head.

IN CHRIST

It will be perceived that the new creation is "in Christ." It is the present spiritual counterpart of the period which comes **after** the regeneration of Israel in the day of the Lord. By the blessing of being a new creation we skip the deviousness of the childhood of the new birth and receive the maturity of adulthood. These facts of the future new creation fit the figures of our faith as found in the Ephesian epistle, and do indeed confirm the necessity that we correctly partition the word of truth.

CONCILIATION AND THE NEW CREATION

Further examination of the subject of the new creation shows us that it is the accompaniment of the conciliation, just as the new birth was associated with repentance and baptism. And if we follow the conciliation closely, we shall learn much of the deep things of God. Israel's religious ascendancy passes with the coming of the day of God. And we understand that conciliation will then be possible on earth as it has been earlier in the heavens. It could not become a fact of earth whilst Israel intruded between God and the remainder of humanity, as in the day of the Lord. And there is a valid reason for this, for the greater and more radical truths around the death of Christ are not in point in the day of the Lord. At that time the blood of Christ dispenses its virtue in making possible the new covenant to Israel. This is the limit of blessings to the present earth. But the new creation is possible because, in the death of His Son, God achieved greater things than a covenant with His people Israel.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

Justification is possible because of Christ's death, but justification, though a glorious and fundamental matter, and contributing to the new creation, is not exclusive, being quite a necessary matter in every connection. But the conciliation is especially for the new creation. To us in this economy it has precious

blessings for our delectation, but these treasures are not for Israel, for that nation does not enter the blessings of the conciliation, resulting from the death of God's Son. Nor does it attain to the deeper meaning of the word of the cross; that divides between the old creation and the new creation; also between the old and the new humanities. The cross obliterates all the features of the old humanity. Through the cross the old humanity was crucified with Christ. The cross sets aside circumcision and removes the barrier with the uncircumcision. Sin's flesh and all its connections are gone, having been crucified at the cross. A new humanity which accords with God is thus a possibility, and it finds its basis, not in the death of Christ, nor in the blood of Christ, nor the death of God's Son, but in the word of the cross which applies the crucifixion to humanity. The old humanity and all its features are no more--they were crucified and rendered inert.

SUMMARY

The new birth is for Israel and the millennial blessings of the day of the Lord. The new creation is for the present economy and finds its counterpart in the day of God, when conciliation receives its fuller fruits in heaven and earth. The full fruition is at the consummation, when the just award to Christ by God reaches out to its fullest limits.

Chosen by God

By John Essex

One of the most important principles of God's Word is to be found in Romans 9:11, "*that God's purpose may remain as a choice*", and the context clearly shows that the choice is of God, not out of the acts of the one who is being called, but of Him Who is calling.

If we examine the scriptures carefully, we shall find that from first to last, from beginning to consummation, God's purpose has remained as a choice — the choice of Him Who is Supreme. He "is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will", says Paul. (Eph. 1:11). The Psalmist sang (Psalm 138:5), "I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas and all deep places." And again, in Ecclesiastics 8:4, we find these words, "Where the word of a king is, there is power, and who may say unto Him, What doest thou?"

In the ninth chapter of Romans, the right of God to choose whomsoever He wills for whatever position He wills, is fully developed and emphatically maintained. It matters not whether the position is one of honour or one of dishonour, or whether (as in the case of Esau and Jacob) the choice is made before those most concerned have been a conscious existence. The choice is entirely of God, "not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling."

The members of that ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, are no exception to this rule. The method of their calling is outlined by Paul in 1 Cor. 1:26-29, "For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble, but the stupid of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weak of the world *God* chooses, that he may be disgracing the strong, and the ignoble of the world and the contemptible *God* chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is, so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight." Notice how many times it is emphasised that the choice is entirely of God.

Yes, for the supreme honour of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, God has chosen *whomsoever He wills*. And having thus chosen, He has again exercised His sovereign prerogative by placing them in the body just *wheresoever He wills*. In 1 Corinthians 12, we have the picture of the human body to illustrate our relationship to Christ and to one another. We are all members of one body. Some are hands, some are eyes, some ears, and so on. That is why we are so diverse. Although actuated by the same spirit, we are not all alike.

We are not all called upon to fill the same functions. We cannot all be translators, we cannot all be speakers, we cannot all be deep thinkers. Some serve in one way and some in another.

“ Some are placed in the body merely to help the more vital parts to function. ”

Some are extremely tender-hearted in affliction, warmly sympathetic in times of trouble or sorrow; others give encouragement to the rest by the very simplicity and devotion of their lives. Whatever they do, all are necessary. No member can say to another, I have no need of you. Above all things let us be content with our position in the body, remembering that God has placed each of the members in it *according as He wills*.

We may often wonder why God has chosen us, weak and unworthy as we are. But let us always remember that, though God calls us as we are, He chooses us for what He intends us to be. And in the turning of us from the one to the other, we become His achievement. (Eph. 2:10).

That has always been His way in the past. He called Abraham as an idolater in Ur of the Chaldees, and turned him into a “father of all who believe.” (Josh. 24:2; Rom. 4:11). He called Jacob as a supplanter and changed him into Israel, a prince, or upright, with God. (Gen. 32:28). The nation of Israel was a stiff-necked and gainsaying people when God entered into covenant relationship with them at Sinai, but they are to become the people of God, through whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed. Simon was called as a fisherman, who was to deny his master three times, but he was changed into Peter, a fisher of men, and a rock upon which Christ could build an ecclesia. Saul of Tarsus was called as a persecutor of Jesus, and was changed into Paul, the apostle of the risen Lord, and a pattern for all who would afterwards believe in Jesus. (1 Tim. 1:16). Yes, God calls us as we are, and makes us to be holy and flawless in His sight. This is so that He can fulfil in us the purpose which He had in mind from the beginning, namely, to display in us the riches of His grace in the eons to come, to all in heaven as well as all on earth. All our deficiencies are made up for us by Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance. (1 Cor. 1:30). We are the complement of Christ, through which He is completing the all in all. (Eph. 1:23).

Even in resurrection, the sovereignty of God is again proclaimed. In 1 Cor. 15:38, we learn that God will again exercise His prerogative by giving us, in resurrection, “a body according as He wills, and to each of the seeds its own body.” And the body which He has chosen for us, as we read in another place, will be

conformed to the body of Christ's glory, so that we shall indeed, and in every way, be like our glorious Head.

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*” Give thanks to the Father,
Who makes you competent
for a part of the allotment
of the saints in light. ”*

IN THE BEGINNING

By John H. Essex

No. 23. THE SIXTH DAY (CONCLUDED)

Another thought which occurs for the first time in the events of the sixth day, is that of "giving." The first recorded gift of God is that of 'meat' (= food). Of course, as we saw in earlier studies, this was not the first gift in actual timing. The gift of grace was "given to us in Christ Jesus **before eonian times**" (2 Tim.1:9), but the gift of food, in Gen. 1:29, is the first recorded gift in Scripture, and the first gift appreciated by mankind.

This brings to our notice three great facts, namely,

1. The creature has a need in order to survive.
2. This need can only be satisfied by the constant assimilation of something outside of itself.
3. The Creator, and only the Creator, is able to initiate and maintain the supply of whatever is required to meet the need. The fact that God blesses His creatures (verses 22 and 28) is evidence that God intends to maintain that supply, though He has the power to cut it off if He so wills. (Ps.104: 27-29). We notice, in verse 30, that the gift of God is extended to the animals as well as to man.

The word "meat" in the King James (Authorised) Version should not be given the restricted meaning that it carries today, namely, animal flesh. Not until after the Deluge of Noah's time was man permitted to eat animal flesh (see Gen. 9:3). At this point of creation, it is quite clear, from the context of verses 29 and 30, that the food was to be entirely vegetarian, and this will again be the case in future eons. (see Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25).

Notice the difference between the food offered to man and the food provided for animals. For man, every herb bearing seed, and the fruit of every tree yielding seed; for animals, every green herb. In neither case are there any poisons!

God has created humanity with a need for food in order that he may be made to recognize his dependence on his Creator. Man

can never be all-sufficient, as is God. This is true in the spiritual sense as well as in the physical. "Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration going out through the mouth of God." (Matt.4:4, quoted from Deut. 8:3).

Let it also be noted that the food we eat must contain life, and must give up that life, for it to be of value to us. This, again, is true of the spiritual as well as of the physical. Jesus, the living Word of God, described Himself as the "Bread of God" and the "Bread of Life" (John 6:32, 35, 48), of which anyone may be eating and may not be dying. In succeeding verses, He spoke of His own impending sacrifice. In verse 63, He added that the declarations which He uttered were both spirit and life.

But food is useless unless there is an appetite for it. God not only provides the food, but also creates the desire for it. The Psalmist wrote, "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season; Thou openest Thine hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." Jesus said that none could come to Him unless the Father drew him (John 6:44; see also verse 65). And we know from experience that God created in us the desire for spiritual food which He alone can satisfy through His written word.

Eating in the physical sense is one of the great pleasures of life. How much thought and effort goes into the preparation of an attractive meal ! God has varied our food in every possible way; certain items are essential for our well-being, but above and beyond that, there is much to please the palate. Meals are intended to be enjoyed, not just consumed. And so it is, too, with spiritual food. God has gone to infinite pains in the compiling of His Word. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). And let it be noted that, as with the physical, so with the spiritual, God alone can supply the food. The most that man can do is to present it (2 Tim. 4:2). Let us then take pains to present it in such a way as to make it palatable to our readers or hearers. J.H.E.

