

A Few Thoughts Regarding “Free Life”

When we talk of Jesus Christ having a Free Life we mean He was free from the condemnation which came into the world by Adam's transgression. We see from the account in Genesis chapter 2 verse 17 that Adam was cautioned by God that if he broke the commandment forbidding him to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would die that day* (see foot-note). However, when Adam disobeyed, God was merciful to him and allowed him to go on living for many years, but Adam's life was now under forfeit to the law he had broken and the penalty was hanging over him. It was while in this state that Adam begat children and inevitably it was his forfeited life which was passed down to all subsequent generations.

But Jesus Christ was born free of this condemnation due to having His life direct from His Father and not from the line of Adam. It is this matter that is disputed by some and we wish here to bring forward some Bible teachings which support our view, whilst at the same time showing why it is important.

To be on probation for eternal life Adam had to be under law, and law gives choice - to obey or not. Adam lost his birthright when he made the wrong choice and ate of the forbidden tree. This necessitated the birth of Jesus Christ, called the 'last Adam' 1 Corinthians 15:45, and who kept His birthright safely by never transgressing His Father's will.

Now let us for a few moments consider Moses as a type of Christ. We will note many parallels but we ask you to notice especially Moses "free life."

Moses was born into a family in bondage to Egyptian slavery at a time when all male infants were slain by order of Pharaoh to prevent an uprising of the Israelites against Egyptian national interests. But God had a purpose in mind to alter the natural course of events and show His power and rulership over the nations.

In his infancy Moses was nourished by his mother, but by God's intervention he was brought up free of his mother's bondage, being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and living in the Royal palace he was educated and trained for a position in the Egyptian royal household. So Moses now had a free life – free of the bondage of slavery and could have chosen a life among the Royal family, but he never forsook his kinsmen in order to pursue any interests he may have had in the royal household; indeed, he believed that his own people would see him as their champion when he slew the Egyptian. (See Exodus 2:11). But that was not God's way any more than it would have been for Jesus Christ to have thrown Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple in order to persuade the people to follow Him. But, for now, it was necessary for Moses to flee for his life and so left Egypt until, one day, many years later, God called him to return to Egypt and face a new Pharaoh

(Footnote: *Many believe that the common death of all men is the punishment which Adam introduced into the world but this cannot be so. Man was made as the animals – with a limited life-span to die of old age, accident or illness and God meant just what He said even though Adam did not die that day. Later, Jesus Christ took Adam's place when laying down His life for the sin of the world and brought in forgiveness for the faithful.]*

It was now in the purpose of God, the time for the Israelites to come out of Egypt as a free people and to do this God worked many miracles through Moses in the presence of Pharaoh until he was forced to let all the slaves go free in spite of the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart.

So, as a result of the ten plagues God brought on Egypt, Moses led the Israelites out of bondage and while in the wilderness gave them a law from God – the Mosaic Law. Obedience to the law would bring great reward while disobedience would bring dire consequences as we read in Deuteronomy 28:1, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: 2. and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God..."

He led the people for forty years throughout their wilderness journey until reaching the land of Promise.

Just as we see Moses was a free man and not someone in bondage as a slave to the Egyptians, so we also see Jesus Christ to be free of Adamic condemnation – free from bondage to Sin.

But why did Jesus Christ need to be free of Adamic condemnation? Could not God have raised up anyone to lead His people out of bondage to Sin. We say, not so, because every one of Adam's descendants was under condemnation by receiving a forfeited life from Adam. They had no right to the life in them; they had no right to lay it down for another; it was not theirs to give.

The Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians just as Adam and his descendants were slaves, or in bondage, to the power of Sin. No one in bondage would have fulfilled the type except for Moses who had been made free through Divine providence; God raised up a "free" Moses for His purpose of leading His people Israel out of bondage. Even as He chose a "free" Christ to lead His people out of the bondage to Sin.

These facts we deduce from Scripture and find no Scripture contrary to them.

Robert Roberts view of "Free Life."

But Robert Roberts, in opposing Edward Turney's lecture "The Sacrifice of Christ" says that "Free Life is a myth." Here are his words quoted from "The Slain Lamb;" - early on in his lecture he says:-

"I will tonight, place the theory of the truth side by side with the theory of this error, and I will explain the theory of the truth in the language of the Spirit; and I will shew wherein the language of the Spirit is destructive of the language - the artificial and carnal language - which this Renunciationist heresy is incessantly compelled to employ in defining its principles."

Later, not yet having "placed the theory of the truth side by side with the theory of this error," he says,

"in order that you may see that Jesus, in the days of His flesh, inherited and experienced all the results and feelings that have come by Adam's transgression: from which I will argue and prove otherwise my argument, that this inheritance extended to mortality itself, and that "free life," so called, is a myth... I wish to establish, link by link, all my evidence, as I will undertake to destroy, link by link, the whole chain of sophistry by the which the minds of the brethren are being bewitched and turned aside from the truth."

Again, further on, while we are still waiting for him to "establish link by link all my evidence," Robert Roberts says,

“I will shew you before I am done, that He had not a free life, but bore our condemnation in his own person, as much as any of us, necessitating His death before He could be purified from the curse. This free life is a thing you do not read of in the Scriptures; it is a mere invention; a plausible thing, but a gratuitous thing; an unproved assumption which is made the starting point of the train of reasoning by which it is attempted to establish this heresy.”

And yet again, now nearly half way through his lecture, and still not having made anything manifest, he claims,

“I will endeavour to make manifest the most unscriptural, the most carnal, and the most untrue and mischievous character of the new philosophy, with which it is now attempted to inoculate the brethren on the subject of “the flesh”.

And so eventually and at last after an arduous period of preparation we come to the time when Robert Roberts is about to place before us “the theory of the truth in the language of the Spirit” and “prove that free life, so called, is a myth” and “to establish link by link” all his evidence to “shew Jesus had not a free life,” and we anticipate the deliverance of some awesome argument with great expectation and now ‘the time of birth’ has arrived - and what do we find? - we witness a still-born argument, useless and lifeless as could be, for his conclusion is this: ~

“Well, if there had been a Jew who had kept the law in all things, having done the will of the Father from the very beginning of life to the end of his life, he would have been in the very position of the Lord Jesus Himself; it would then have been in his power, by dying, to cleanse himself from the Adamic condemnation, and his righteousness would have caused his resurrection from the dead. It is by the righteousness of one that resurrection has come (Romans 5:18, 1 Corinthians 15:21); it is not by the “free life” of one. “Free Life” is a myth; and invention of the new heresy...”

We say all this is the concept of a novice, who has not properly considered his subject. We should surely expect better from one of the Founding Fathers and a Pioneer of the Christadelphian Denomination. Where is his appeal to Scripture to support his views, let alone unassailable proof of them? His references to both Romans 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:21 are misused for assuming that our natural death is the consequence of Adam’s transgression. Not once has he attempted to “establish” anything “link by link.” All his talk has been useless and pointless. In short, it was no answer in any way whatsoever to Edward Turney’s lecture entitled “The Sacrifice of Christ.”

On the previous evening Edward Turney, in his lecture, had said “Now brethren, there are two things required of the last Adam; one was that He should run His probation after a perfect manner; the other that He should lay down His life for us. I am utterly unable to see how He could lay down a life He did not possess. If His is lost or forfeit as ours is at birth He did not possess it free, and as His natural life was the price to be paid He had in that case nothing to pay with.”

We consider this subject is of the greatest importance to every disciple because, as Ernest Brady explained in his booklet “The Great Mystery of the Christian Religion,” “Those who have sought to explain His (Christ’s) death as a vicarious punishment or as the destruction of a sinful nature have done both Him and His Father a grievous wrong. Him because if His death was in any sense necessary for His own deliverance it could not have been a sacrifice on behalf of others, and God because it would be totally unjust to punish the innocent in order that the guilty might go free.”

Russell Gregory.