

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 102

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Warm Greetings in Our Redeemers Name.

We thank all those who have communicated with us during the past two months and now we have joy in reporting the baptisms of three former Christadelphians, they were put in touch with our Bro. Phil Parry by Sis. Helen Brady because he was only a few miles from them in Gloucestershire, and quoting from his letter to us he writes, "In consequence of our personal contact, correspondence and phone talks they began to test our views and teaching on the basis of Scripture in comparison with what they had been taught as Christadelphians, and so in accordance with the Apostles advice they tried the spirits whether they were of God and found that we of the Nazarene Fellowship to be of the Truth which harmonises with the Word of God. The joyous result was their desire to be subjects of the One Lord, One Faith and One baptism and to be thereby associated with the true sacrificial death of Christ by total immersion in water into His death by symbolically dying to the dominion of sin and rising to newness of life under the constitution of righteousness in Christ.

After the baptism's which took place in private at a school swimming pool outside Gloucester on 15-5-88 we gathered at the home of two of our new members for the Breaking of Bread after which I extended to them the right hand of Fellowship their names being Reginald Horace Kenner Taylor and his wife Rosemary Ann Taylor, and Frederick Geoffrey Hampton of. We commend to God our new brothers and sister and to the word of His Grace which is able to build us up and give us an inheritance among them that are Sanctified". I am sure we all rejoice with them and add our welcome to fellowship.

We also have another matter to report which will be no surprise to some of you, but as we are getting on in years we feel the Circular Letter would be better in younger hands and therefore have asked our Bro. Russell Gregory to take over from us which he has kindly consented to do if all are agreeable which we trust will be the case and that brethren and sisters will support him in this needful work as you have done to us over the years and for which we are truly grateful. In this issue we have an exhortation by Bro. Leo. Dreifuss entitled "Trying". An article entitled "God's Elect", and the concluding instalment of "Jesus my Substitute" by our late brother A.L.Wilson. A reply by bro. Parry to "The Remnants" comments in their monthly magazine March 1988.

We pray for the welfare of you all and add our love to that of our sis. May Lockett.

Sincerely your bro. and sis. in the Master's Service. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Trying.

Our daily readings have recently taken us through the epistle to the Hebrews. There we learn about Christ's function as our High Priest. Let us remind ourselves of the two main parts that Christ fulfilled in the divine scheme of our redemption.

1. His miraculous birth as a consequence of which He was the only one who ever lived, free to redeem from bondage to sin all those who accept Him.
2. His sinless life He lived while on earth.

The first part. His miraculous birth, was entirely brought about by God's merciful intervention to rescue mankind from the state of affairs brought about by Adam and Eve's transgression. As it is so aptly put by Isaiah in his 59th. chapter verse 16, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation unto him". But for this intervention on God's part we would all be spiritually dead for ever, with no hope beyond our present existence. And let us remind ourselves that apart from God's scheme of salvation we were utterly unable to bring about anything resembling salvation by ourselves. And how ingenious this scheme was from a legal point of view, as best summarized in the epistle to the Romans (ch. 5 v 19) "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous". But don't let us overlook the second part: Christ's sinless life. Here again, had He sinned, we should all be spiritually dead. But because He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, He qualified to be a compassionate High Priest, being able to temper divine justice with mercy.

Now while we were powerless to bring about our redemption from sin, it is within our limited abilities not to commit sin. True we all do sin, we all fail repeatedly in our efforts to live a perfect life pleasing to God, and if we do we have our High Priest to turn to, provided we sincerely repent. But all of us have our weaknesses in one direction or another, and in spite of our promises and sincere resolve to do better next time, when next time comes we fall again. You know when I read through the books of Exodus and Numbers of how the children of Israel went astray and repented, and sinned yet again and again, I often think of the sort of children we all came across as parents or teachers. Children who keep getting into mischief and have to be rescued. Then they are made to promise not to get into trouble again, and they sincerely make the promise. But it won't last for very long before they are in trouble again and have to be rescued afresh. The thought also occurs to me that we, with our repeated failings, we seem to try God's patience, and Jesus' patience just like those children who repeatedly get themselves into mischief.

Personally I cannot speak as a parent, but I can speak as a former teacher. As such we all get our share of very good Industrious students, but we get the other type as well. And there are certain incidents and experiences which we remember for the rest of our lives. One such incident I want to tell you as it may be helpful for our spiritual lives. It concerns a rather troublesome student. When I asked him what the other lecturers had to say about him, back came the one-word answer "trying". Now this is rather ambiguous. It could mean trying hard to get on to do well in his exams, or it could mean trying the teacher's patience by his bad conduct. In this case it probably meant the latter. But come to think of it, the word 'trying' fits us all in one sense or another, or more likely a mixture, of both. We all must strive hard, trying to always please the Father as our Lord and Master did. But then, alas, we fail, and I often wonder how we must be trying at times in the other sense, trying God's patience and mercy which are truly great towards us.

It would be a poor outlook for us all if God's patience with us was exhausted. We remember Hitler's speeches who often said that his patience was exhausted, and we all know all too well the consequences of his anger. How much graver the consequences, of God's anger if we go too far.

Coming back to those children getting into mischief. Some are basically good hearted, they have not got the will power to keep out of trouble. But then there are the others of the defiant type like Pharaoh, Balaam, who just try how far they can go. None of us is of this type.

Let us conclude with the resolve that our 'trying' get more and more of the positive type, trying always to do that which is pleasing to our Father, and less and less that of the negative kind of trying God's patience through wrong doing, as we near the end of our probation.

Bro. G.L.Dreifuss

The Oath-Bound Promise - - - The Gospel.

Endless life is for those who the Gospel accept.

- John 3:16. Mark 20:50. Romans 6:23.

But death is the portion of those who reject.

- Acts 5:23. Hebrews 10:26,27. Romans 6:23.

For there is no other way that's revealed by the Lord.

- Acts 4:12. John 10:1,7, 9. 14:6.

To redeem fallen man but through Christ and His Word.

- Titus 2:13,14. Gal.3:13. I Peter 1:18,19.

Continued from April/May

Jesus My Substitute.

Now as an example, let us take Paul's application of antichrist (II Thess. ii. 4), "Who opposeth, and lifts Himself above all that is called God, so that he 'as God' sitteth in the temple (or place) of God, showing himself- that he is God." The reader may apply the following (Matt. v.39; Luke xxi. 15; Acts vi. 10, vii. 51, xviii. 6; Romans ix. 19, viii. 2; I Tim. ii. 6, vi. 20; II Tim. ii. 25, iii. 8; Heb. xii. 4; James iv. 7, v.6).

Regarding Wm. Grant's article, while we confess there is much in it with which we agree, yet there is much in it we would pronounce as indiscriminate confusion of the twofold aspects of Justification. Let us once more state our premises. We hold that it is the major purpose of God to ultimately glorify His own name in all the earth; towards this purpose He is graciously inviting man to become partakers of the "Divine nature," on condition of probationary faithfulness; that before man, who is already under the law of sin, can enter upon this probation, it is imperative that he should be redeemed and initiated into the family of God. Now we hope this is clear. To confuse, then, our subsequent probation as contributing anything towards this previous redemption God has made, is to betray gross ignorance of the matter in dispute; to detract from Christ as the price, and to reduce God's merciful purchase to a mockery. Thus we see that Justification at baptism is quite distinct from Justification when "crossing the bar." With the above distinction, then, let us, as before God, examine Wm. Grant's article.

First. He compliments R.J.Campbell on his renunciation of substitution. We wonder why he should halt at the half-yard toward R.J.C., because he has distinctly told the writer, before witnesses, that he does not now believe that Christ in the days of His flesh was under condemnation to death on His own account, and positively styled such a doctrine "a theological error."

The writer asked: "Unto what, then, were you baptised?" Mr. Grant: "Not into a condemned, but into a risen, glorified Christ."

The writer pointed out that it was the “death” of Christ into which we are requested to be baptised, and that if Christ were under condemnation, the whole affair was a mystery.

Mr. Grant then attempted a slur about “Free life.” The writer replied: “If Christ had not a free life you are yet doomed.”

Well, then, let us compare notes, seeing he has admitted that Jesus was free from condemnation, and sinned not, yet was slain. What conclusion is deducible from these premises? Any babe in logic could ascertain that, if you deny substitution, then the slaying of Jesus was absolutely unnecessary. Consequently, the cold, relentless logic of his own premises leaves him no other alternative than R.J.C.’s “Missionary murder.” But in spite of his compliment to R.J.C. he does not leave the very paragraph till he accuses R.J.C. of denying that Jesus, by dying unto sin, did “for us what we could not do for ourselves.” Is it possible to have substitution more clearly defined? Should R. J. C. ever, cast his eyes across the paper, what will he think of such confusion?

The next proposition to which we take exception also betrays an indiscriminate confusion of the twofold aspects of Justification. Wm. Grant says: “R. J. C. may pooh-pooh at the doctrine of the putting away of sin, but the death of Jesus had much to do with the putting away of sin.” If he had had a clear conception of the legal Justification and Redemption procured for us at our induction into Christ, and presented to us as the free, unmerited gift of God, his reply to R. J. C. would have been that the death of Jesus had everything to do with the putting away of sin; that when we arrive at this stage all required of us is to keep sin away, or resist the Devil, and he will flee from us. Then his subsequent remark to R. J. C., “Where is boasting then?” would have been truly appropriate. But to confuse our subsequent duty as contributing anything toward the putting away of our own sin at the Commencement is to represent God as providing only part of the initial Redemption, leaving man to clear off the remainder afterwards by instalments.

This would directly rob Christ, and represent the purchase God has made as incomplete. The paper shows that Wm. Grant is not a pioneer, but that he is yet in the stage of depending too much on the propositions of his former teachers, who were no more inspired than he, and as capable of blundering. As an instance of this he says: “It was once said, and that truly, that a just law can never be satisfied with the death of an innocent man when the guilty goes free.” As the rules of syllogism forbid the use of four terms, we must discriminate between the two aspects which underlie this proposition, and render it absolutely free from ambiguity. We thoroughly agree with him that a just law can never be satisfied with the death of the innocent, when the guilty goes free, if accomplished for a wicked purpose; but seeing the case in hand is wholly a question of “Redemption,” we must not confuse the two ideas, but test the truth of the proposition by facts regarding Redemption. Now Jesus was either guilty, or not guilty. If not guilty, then the boasted truth of the proposition is rendered absolutely false. If guilty, will Mr. Grant point out to us where the satisfaction of this just law, for the liberation of the enslaved, obtains? Seeing he rejects the death of the “innocent one,” is he prepared to say this just law would be satisfied with the death of the “guilty,” when the guilty goes free? This would be confusion worse confounded, and reverting to his “theological error of a condemned Christ,” and representing God’s purchase as a fraudulent transaction, by swindling the redemption of man from the Condemnation of this just law, by delivering up one already under its condemnation.

Will Wm. Grant say his own death renders the necessary satisfaction? This robs Christ, and makes a mockery of God’s purchase. How, then, according to him, is this just law to be magnified, and made honourable, seeing he rejects the death of the innocent one? Will he say that God has revoked this just law? Jesus prayed: “If it be possible let this cup pass from me.” Did this cup pass? Will he have the audacity to say Jesus was not innocent? What then becomes of the boasted truth of his writer’s proposition? Will he improve the Scripture: “The just for the unjust?” “The unsearchable ‘riches’ of Christ,” etc. Mr. Grant’s confusion of man doing his part cannot be admitted here. It is wholly a question of this just law being magnified before man can be permitted to do his part. Man’s subsequent faithful probation will secure for him approval at the tribunal of Christ, and is, therefore, quite a distinct thing from his Justification at the commencement of the race. How then, is he to be justified at the commencement of the race, till this just law has been magnified by the death of the innocent one, whom

he repudiates? It seems quite an innocent thing to quote “former teachers,” but it is altogether a different thing to be held responsible for the consequences. As another instance of clinging too much to former teachers, he says: “A writer put it in this way, ‘It is not a mere substitutionary case,’ etc.” Now we would point out that his former teachers were thoroughly logical in their denial of substitution, because they conscientiously believed the strong delusion that Jesus was under condemnation to death on His own account; but seeing Mr. Grant has renounced that delusion as “a theological error,” he has abandoned all reason to uphold their conclusion from premises as contrary as light is from darkness? If he would, for truth’s sake, launch out alone regardless of man, and take another cruise over traversed waters, we assure him he would discover that “physical sin” and the “condemned Christ” are concealed rocks against which the Christadelphian ship has foundered.

“Next, Mr. Grant goes on reiterating with, R. J. C., that Jesus “did not do it all.” Here again we must discriminate. If this refer to our duty after Redemption, we say “True;” but if it refer to the purchase God made for us, by Christ, as contributing anything thereto, then we say it is false; because it is by “grace” through faith, and that, not of ourselves, it is the free, unmerited gift of God. Where is boasting then? Where Mr. Grant’s “Part?” Finally, he says: “Every follower of Christ has his part to do; but he must first be put into a right relation before God.” This is the best statement he has made, and yet he is no nearer a solution of the problem as to whether our being put into this right relation is on the principal of substitution. We thoroughly agree that every follower of Christ, has his part to do; we agree that he must first be put into this right relation before God; but we deny that the believer’s subsequent part contributes anything towards the provision which entitles us to this right relation.”

Herein lies the pith of the whole dispute, and thus his confusion still remains. He has spent, all his energy in telling us that a certain writer put it in this way, that it is “not a mere substitutionary case.” But alas, he has not proved the truth of his writer’s proposition. Can it be that he has actually lost sight of the question he has raised, viz. the principle upon which God has procured for us this right relation, and that the proposition he seeks to maintain is his certain writer’s denial of substitution? Wm. Grant’s paper, like Balaam’s parable, while setting out to curse, has, when cleared from confusion, altogether blessed substitution. Let us prove this. He says: “God offers the reconciliation, and provides the means.” If then, Mr. Grant could not provide the means, what is the principle involved? But what of all this when he denies the innocence? We picture him confronting Christ at His return, and accusing Him to the teeth that He was “not innocent.”

As Dr. Thomas says: God has bought us with “a price” from that other Lord. If then, you say this very price was “due,” you prostitute the law of purchase and charge God with fraud. The law of Redemption will accept nothing short of an exact equivalent. If He gave what was already “due,” there could be no release for others, the law would justly claim and retain its own. The Redeeming price must, therefore, absolutely belong to another, the confiscated article then being “life,” God so loved the world, that He gave His “own “ Son, who again gave the life of His flesh for that is the exact equivalent of the confiscated article (Matthew xx. 28; I Tim. ii. 6). That price has eternally gone (Psalm xlix. 8; Job xxxiii. 24). Christ had it to spare (John xii. 24). And God rewarded Him with a superior or more glorious existence. “He asked life of Thee, Thou gavest it Him, length of days that for ever more He should live” (Psalm xxi. 4; Hebrews i. 9, vii. 16-24).

We have compared the proposition of Wm. Grant’s “certain writer” condemning substitution, and have found that God did not revoke the just law, contrary to His attributes (Hebrews vi. 18). We have also found that the believer could neither undergo the execution in order to redeem himself, nor yet that he dies under condemnation, otherwise contradicting Paul (Romans vii. 1); robbing Christ (John xiv. 6) and reducing God’s purchase to a mockery. What then is the solution? We could not define it in more appropriate terms than from his own pen to R.J.C. “That Jesus by dying unto sin, did for us what we could not do for ourselves.” Jesus says, “Out of thine own mouth shall thou be judged.” We claim then, to have shown that God has graciously provided for us this right relation before Him, on His own glorious principle of substitution. Jesus, the innocent, endured the literal execution due to Adam’s sin, and for our recognition of this fact God has prohibited any from entering the law of the spirit of life in Christ, until they undergo “the execution due to the law of sin and death;” but thank God, only in symbol (Romans chapter 6).

It is then as Dr. Thomas says, "A gracious, merciful and loving Father who first purchased us from the law of sin and death, at the expense of His beloved Son, and put us on probation for immortality (Romans ii. 6 and 7). This is the exact antithesis of the theory popularly represented as, "Jesus purchasing man from a wrathful, malignant and offended God, and a flaming endless Hell!"

When therefore, a believer has been duly baptised into the "Sacrificial Death of Christ," he is freely presented by God with the only available covering for sin. Those who spurn this free, unmerited gift, have no place at the wedding (Matthew xxii. 11). All therefore, requested of us now is to keep this garment clean till the wedding day.

So shall we walk with Him in white.

Andrew L. Wilson.

The Oath-Bound Promise - - - The Gospel.

All who will may be saved by obedient faith.

- John 20:31. Hebrews 5:9.

And may gain life unending through Christ by His death.

- Mark 10:30. Romans 5:10.

For the Gospel Salvation to all is made free.

- Titus 2: 11.

As they heed its instruction their judgment will be.

- Romans 2:16. John 3:18.

Among the many articles which have come to hand from among the papers of our late Bro. F. Pearce is one entitled God's Elect. It deals with inheritance by birth and by election. The author I do not know. Pages 1-40 deals with Adam to Christ, it seems however that the theme continued beyond page 40 as the last line ends with a comma and is not complete. The following is a summary of that portion we have:-

E.H.Linggood.

GOD'S ELECT.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33)

One Blood-All Nations. God has made of "one blood" all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth (Acts 17:26), and has also "determined the times appointed, and the bounds of their habitation", but at the same time. He has chosen a race out of all the nations of his creation to commit unto them His Oracles (Rom. 3:1) and the revelation of His Eternal Purpose with mankind and the earth upon which he dwells. The "Chosen People" we call the Jewish People, the name however is a tribal one and does not really convey the full import of "The Elect Race", which God has separated "a people for Himself". (Deut 7: 6-9,11). Jew, merely indicates a lineage, a descendant of Judah, from which the designation has been coined. It is the pronunciation of the first syllable of the word - JU - and spelt Jew.

We shall soon begin to see the theme of the author more clearly. The tribe Judah, is one of the twelve tribes of Israel. ISRAEL was the name given by God to Jacob, the younger twin son of Isaac (Genesis ch. 25 verses 24-26; and ch. 32 vs 27 and 28); and hence the sons of Jacob became to be called the tribes of Israel rather than of Jacob. Both names are however used of the nation in the scriptures.

Tracing the lineage of Jacob back we come to his accredited ancestor Abraham which name was given him by God as a new name rather than his birth name of Abram (Gen. 17:5). Earlier in Genesis chapter 14 v 13 he is spoken of as “Abram the Hebrew”. The name, Hebrew, is derived from the fourth descendant of Noah, Eber, born sixty-seven years after the Flood. Gen.12. The Noahic descendants were:- Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber. Eber is the direct “father” of the Hebrew race. Shem is the progenitor of the Semitic races. It is interesting to note that the great Apostle Paul, speaks of himself as “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5), and that one Epistle in the New Testament bears the title, “To The Hebrews”. The language of the Jews is called The Hebrew tongue. That august personage to whom Abram paid tithes, namely Melchizedec, was a Hebrew, probably Eber himself, who outlived Abram by four years, Eber was four hundred and sixty-four years when he died. (See Genesis ch. 14; Psalm 110; Hebrews 7: 1-10).

Hence the historical names of the Jewish nation were the ‘Tribe of Judah, and the Hebrews; so when we speak of the Jews their ancestry comes into the picture rather than the tribe. It is important to note the changes that occurred in the human race since the creation of the first man Adam. All the natural descendants of Adam (except eight persons, Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives) perished in The Flood. GOD made a new start in an effort to turn mankind to Him in Noah. Enoch having been taken by God before the flood, for God took him. (Gen. 5:23). The Divine commentary about Noah is surely a great testimony to his Godly character, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD... Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God”, of whom God also spoke, “For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation” (Genesis 6: 8-9, 7:1). The lineage of the present world and its inhabitants can therefore be simply stated - Adam, Noah. With Noah we really had a ‘good’ start again. Who then is to blame for the world’s wickedness? Surely mankind. Adam’s sin ‘alienated’ from God, but is not responsible for the worlds wickedness. Noah is an example of “God’s Elect”, and in men of like faith we see how “the purpose of GOD through ELECTION might stand” in all ages and generations.

That is the theme of our article. Lineage by Birth and by Election. On the next page we give a diagram to Illustrate the details of the treatise. The author says “We trust that it may help readers to follow our points more clearly than can be conveyed in words.

BY BIRTH.

(According to the flesh)

BY ELECTION.

(According to God’s Choice)

THE INHERITANCE - PSALM 8.

<p>(Genesis 2:7)</p> <p><u>Cain</u> (the first born) (I John 3:12. Jude 11)</p> <p>The world of wicked people Destroyed by the Flood (genesis 6:1)</p> <p><u>Japheth</u> (the elder) Gen. 10:21, 9:27)</p>	<p>ADAM.</p>	<p>(Luke 1:26-35)</p> <p><u>Abel</u> (Elect by faith.) (Hebrews 11:4)</p> <p><u>Seth</u>. (Genesis 5:3. 4:25)</p> <p><u>Enoch</u>. (Genesis 5:21-24. Heb. 11:5)</p> <p><u>Noah</u>. (Genesis 5:29, 6:8,9 7:1, Heb.11:7) (cf 1 Peter 3:20-22)</p> <p><u>Shem</u>. (Genesis 9:27)</p> <p><u>Eber</u>. (Melchisedec) (Genesis 10:21)</p> <p><u>Abraham</u>. (Abram) (Genesis 12:1-5, Rom. 4, Gal. 3:16. Heb. 11:8-19)</p>
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Ishmael. (Genesis 15:3 and 16:3 and 11

Isaac. (Genesis 15:4, 17:19, Rom. 9:7, 8,
Gal. 4:28-31, Heb. 11:20

Esau. (Romans 9:13)

Jacob. (Israel) (Heb. 11:21)

Reuben. (I Chron. 5:1-3)

Joseph. 1 Chron. 5:1-3, cf Psalm 78:67-72)

Saul. (I Sam. 15:22 and 28)
30)

David. (I Sam.16:1,11-13) (cf.Acts 2:29 and

Ephraim (Hosea7:1, 8-12)

Jehoiachin (Coniah) Jer. 22:28-30, Ezek21:25-27

Joseph. (Matthew 1:11,16)

Mary. (Matt. 1:20, 21, Luke 2:6, 7)

JESUS. THE CHRIST, GOD’S elect.

Note the two lines;

Left “According to the flesh” rejected or disinherited.

Right. “According to God’s Choice” elected, none of which had the Rights of Primogeniture i.e. - of “first-borns”.

I will now pass on to give a summary of the article dealing with the matters and rights involved in the Birth-rights relating to the first-born of a family insofar as they concern the many individuals included in the chart. In doing so I am accepting the accuracy of the Hebrew words and the meaning given by the author and their relation to the subject being dealt with at the time of the articles composition.

PRIMOGENITURE is a term which defines the rights of the first-born of parents with respect to rights of inheritance and succession to a father’s estate at death. Man as a father commences his kindred in his first-born son. First-born rights conform to a law governing them, and are based upon the principles which are seen in Jacob’s blessings upon his twelve sons: “Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power” (Genesis 49:5).

Let us look at these attributes of first-borns more closely.

(i) “**My might**”. The Hebrew word KO-CHI (my strength, power, might). The word is “specially used of virile strength, Genesis 49:3. ‘aT-TAH (Thou) KO-CHI (my might), “thou art my strength” i.e. the son of my strength, begotten in my youthful vigour!” (Gesenius).

(ii) “**The beginning of my strength**”. (Hebrew WeRE-’OSHITH and the beginning, same word as in Gen. 1:1) ‘O-NI (my strength).

The phrase is translated in :-

- a. Gesenius :- “first-fruits of strength”.
- b. Berry :- “and the first-fruits of my vigour”.

The idea of “first-fruits” is significant. The Hebrew word ‘ON’ means faculty; ability, hence -(i) strength, power, Job 18:7 and 12; specially of virile and genital power. Gen. 49:3; Deut. 21:17; Psalm 105:36; plural ‘O-NIM Isaiah 40:26,29; Psalm 78:51. (ii) substance, wealth... Hosea 12:9; Job. 20:10. (Gesenius). “The first-fruits of my substance” would perhaps convey the primal import of the Hebrew of this attribute of the first-born.

(iii) **“The excellency of dignity”** (Hebrew Ye-THeR excellency of Se—’ETH dignity), a. Ye-THeR signifies “excellence” in the sense of being pre-eminent, “to excel, to be superior to the rest”. b. Se’ETH, the dignified aspect of the countenance, exaltation, majesty.

The picture before us in these words seem to be a man of dignified and majestic deportment, of regal preeminence.

(iv) **“And the excellency of power”**. (Hebrew WeYe-THER and the excellency of AAZ power). AAZ means (1) strength, might, “The excellency of power” implies potential omnipotence, the power to Conquer. The word is applied to GOD in the Psalms, “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power (Hebrew AOZ, strength) belongeth unto God” Psalm 62:11. “Praise him in the firmament of his power” Psalm150:1.

To summarise. The attributes of the first-born son imply in the abstract the transcendent notion of:

1. Paternal vitality in its youthful prime.
2. The first-fruits of genital power and virility.
3. The excellency of the dignity of manhood, of regal pre-eminence and majesty.
4. Potential omnipotence, the strength of the conqueror.

There is no doubt that these noble qualities of manhood were the attributes of the first man, Adam, as the first created “Son of God” and the progenitor of the human race. The underlying importance God and excellences cannot be over-estimated in relation to GOD as the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as His only begotten Son, His First-born.

The above summary may appear rather academic, but it is of service in giving radical significance to the theme not possible through words which have so many senses in our language, and about which so little and generally known.

Throughout the scriptures we see that God recognises the potential rights and privileges in all first-borns

irrespective of parental preferences and powers, and He has incorporated them in His Laws as we see in Deut. 21:15-17 where the matter of inheritance with regard to first-borns of a beloved wife or of a hated

= or less favoured wife = are set before us. God has also made provision in the Mosaic Laws to safeguard and prevent the alienation of the inheritance of the allotment of the land when He originally distributed the Holy Land among the tribes of Israel by Joshua; this we have set before us in Deut. 25:5 and 6, cf. Numbers 27:5-11, also Ch.36.

In these laws relating to primogeniture we have the reasons for the selective genealogies in the Holy Scriptures, and how when human insubordination to Divine Law tries to circumvent the eternal lineage of “Jesus who is called Christ” the hand of God overruled human passion and controlled the lineage. The genealogies of the Inspired Record, cumbersome and disinteresting to most people, are chief among many evidences of the inerrancy of Bible inspiration. Who but GOD, behind the scenes of human marriages, as it were, over the thousands of years could control and order them that Christ should be of the lineage He willed ?

God had pre-determined that the Lord Jesus Christ should come of the line of Judah, and had Judah had his way it might have been otherwise. But the intransigence of Judah was outwitted by Tamar in the matter of her harlotry as seen in the thirty eighth chapter of Genesis. “By the man whose these are am I with child”.

On the other hand, we have the manly deference of Boaz in the story of Ruth to divine law regulating inheritance. Through the extremity of misfortune and want Naomi returns with her daughter-in-law Ruth out of the country of Moab but finds it necessary to ‘sell’ her deceased husband’s

inheritance; but it could be redeemed by a near kinsman only by a marriage with Ruth. Ruth 3:2, 4:1-6. So the son born to Ruth made her the ancestress of "Jesus who is called Christ".

A Reply by P. Parry to the 'Remnants' Comments in the March 1988 Monthly Magazine

Dear Editors, W.G.Butterfield and J.A.Defries,

I will endeavour to reply honestly and Scripturally to your comments, but if as stated in your final comment you are leaving the final decision to your readers of who was right Turney or Roberts, you should at least refrain from the policy of Roberts against Turney by the misrepresentation of his teaching.

You have in fact mis-represented what I wrote in my reply to G.T. in the Magazine "Bible Searcher and Witness," Editor P. Reekie in regard to Dr. Thomas's bewilderment and his question as a result, "How could sin be condemned in the nature of Jesus if it did not exist there?" You say on page 54, "The Nazarenes ask this question" when in fact I was quoting Dr. Thomas. It may appear a small error in your reading but consider how much harm R.Roberts did in his misrepresentation of Turney by discouraging people from reading his Lecture on "The Sacrifice of Christ" and thus forcing them to the extreme view that Jesus was a polluted offering and under sentence of death because He was flesh and blood and also in need of Redemption, having to cleanse Himself by death etc.

You object to the Nazarene Fellowship statement that Jesus was born with a life unforfeited to sin, but neither your objection or reasons are substantiated by the scriptures, neither by Dr. Thomas. You say, "When Jesus was born he was already on a course (unlike Adam) that would inevitably lead to death. As Jesus grew up he was aging, therefore he was dying." We do not deny this, seeing he was human. But you add (unlike Adam) which is to contradict scripture and also your own pioneer Dr. Thomas where, in Elpis Israel under the heading "Man in his noviate" speaking of Adam's nature at creation, "It was not constituted so as to continue in life for ever, independent of any further modification," and after some further explanation and reasons he concludes with the precise statement "He was capable of death." Dr. Thomas therefore has answered the simple question you present i.e. "If the body of Jesus was not sin-stricken, condemned, why was he dying"? The obvious answer is simple, "Because he had a nature like Adam's was at creation - a nature capable of death but not on account of Adamic sin. This is where R.Roberts, his followers and in fact the whole of Christendom went astray in believing that Adam's former nature at creation had been changed to something inferior in order to bring about the return ultimately to the dust.' In fact this was not involved in the Divine statement, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die", which means Judicial inflicted death - the very death Jesus suffered willingly, "The Just for the Unjust" to bring us to God. How then can you make such a foolish statement as the following, "The only escape for Jesus was by his death upon the cross"? I ask you, "How can anyone escape physical death by the experience of that very thing? Was Jesus in any way better by dying on the cross than by dying a natural death? In either case God would have raised a sinless man, but the natural death of Christ would not have paid Adam's debt to the Law in Eden, neither has his death on the cross prevented us from dying a natural death, but you appear to wilfully blind yourselves to what it has done, because a man has come in his own name, and him you intend to believe, error and truth combined.

Now to your heading of "WHAT ROBERT ROBERTS SAID".

The first two lines contains the most unqualified statement that could come from a man who professed to know the God who revealed His various attributes to Moses, in which was Love, Mercy, Justice and Truth. R. Roberts is here quoted, "in what way the righteousness of God was declared in the crucifixion of a guileless and sinless and perfect man. We must first of all ask who he was." It matters not one bit who he was if the description guileless, sinless, perfect, was correct, the Righteousness of

God would not be declared in this way but the very opposite. It was not the Righteousness of God that put Jesus to death but sinners under the serpent power of darkness, the Prince of this world, after Jesus had in 33½ years by daily conduct, declared the righteousness of God in condemning sin. He then offered himself to God as a living and willing sacrifice so that His Father might give him up freely for us all God would not have allowed him to be crucified for any other reasons. (1) His willingness, and (2) That He (Jesus) would see the travail of His soul and be satisfied - for the joy set before Him.

You say, "Jesus had the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit struggling within himself." There is not a word in scripture to support that Jesus had two minds. Would Paul have said to the believers, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus", if two distinct minds of opposition were to be commended? Does not his own Father say of him, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; Heb. 1:9. Also. "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." Heb. 10:9. Was iniquity bound to be in Him in order for Him to hate it? Was not this iniquity being manifested daily by and through the fleshly minds of the serpent generation by whom he was surrounded and hated? Was Jesus "carnally minded" as you suggest? or was he not indeed "Spiritually Minded"?

The Apostle declares the carnal mind (mind of the flesh) to be enmity against God, and to be carnally minded is death, but to be "Spiritually minded is life and peace." "I do always those things that please my Father", said Jesus. The Spiritual mind of Jesus was continually warring against the fleshly (unregenerated) minds of the powers of darkness Personified as the Serpent (The Prince of this world) and in consequence of this he said to his disciples, "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the World." (not Himself as you suggest).

You suggest that because a man can be tempted, his flesh is condemned even for thinking or debating about things that are opposed to good conduct. Surely if such thinking and debating does lead to unlawful action, then having been resisted it is not sin, but in fact it is to be Divinely commended. Why cannot you accept this? "Resist the Devil (Diabolos) and he will flee from you". You are therefore suggesting and implying that the Diabolos was in Eve and Adam at their creation, for if as you say 'temptation' is the Diabolos in human nature then the temptation and the partaking of 'The tree of the knowledge of good and Evil was not optional in Adam and Eve's case, as the Divine Law had implied. But you are bound to accept that the desire would have been in their minds to partake but they need not have done so, therefore the act of eating is the Sin - not the temptation or desire. Neither temptation nor desire can be termed 'sin-in-the-flesh'. If the Diabolos was in Adam at his creation as your comments lead us to believe, then he was also in Jesus, who was of the same nature Adam was created in (Dr. Thomas's teaching) - evidence available, - but when the Jews accused him of having this Diabolos Jesus denied it. So you are no better than His accusers. You accuse Jesus of 'serpent thinking' simply because He was a man of flesh and blood, and you imply that He bruised Himself in overcoming evil thoughts present in Himself and that the only way they could be eradicated was through a change to the Divine Nature. This is a very strange statement in view of the fact that Jesus from the age of enlightenment and responsibility and up to the age of 33 yrs. had managed in flesh and blood nature to eradicate all that could have prevented him from being the sinless person He was. Thus you take away all the honour due to Him by His obedience and His sinlessness, in establishing the Righteousness of God in condemning Sin - not the flesh.

Small wonder then that Robert Roberts declension from what he first believed, has affected those who are loyal to that very Apostate and Roman declension; the wine of this fornication has certainly dulled the brains of those who have and are still drinking of it, they have reached a stage whereby some of the things he said and evidenced by scriptural support have become indiscernible to them. As Paul said of those who trusted in Moses and read the law and the Prophets, "There remaineth the same vail untaken away from their eyes etc." In absolute contradiction of what he wrote in the Ambassador 1869 that there was no change in Adam's nature when he sinned or any scriptural evidence of support for such a theory - you quote him as saying, "That the word of God to Adam took effect and made him a death-stricken man; he was not subject to death before, for sin was the door by which death came in etc.," here he quotes Romans chapter 5 out of its context to support corruptibility and ultimate natural death as the penalty for sin. He then says, "That the penalty for a sinner was the taking away of life by bloodshedding - that the crucifixion of Christ exhibited to the world God's righteous treatment of sin."

But Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts have stated that Adam was created a natural corruptible dying creature and would have died (as he in fact did), if left to him-self without any further modification to his nature to prevent it. Not to accept this teaching by these so called Christadelphian pioneers of the Truth, was to be refused Baptism. Now, the opposite is the case as with the doctrine of the resurrection which Dr. Thomas taught and believed and placed on record in Elpis Israel, his later treatise 'Anastasis' being a direct contradiction of what he wrote and what the Apostle Paul taught in I Cor. ch. 15 and I Thess chapter 4 - that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God and being dependent on the breath of life could not be caught away to meet the Lord in the air other than in incorruptible nature - so that the first resurrection is confined to the faithful and a change of nature to those who are alive and remain faithful at the coming of Christ. In one of his written works (it may have been 'Anastasis') Dr. Thomas said, "I believed in the resurrection of the just at the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the unjust a thousand years later, I taught this Truth in Elpis Israel." If it was a Truth where did he obtain this Truth? There is only one source known to us - "Thy Word is Truth." Why do all Christadelphians profess the Bible as this very source of Truth and yet direct people to Dr. Thomas and R. Roberts whose writings are full of contradiction on fundamental matters essential to Unity of the Faith which Jesus will be looking for at his coming?

It will be little comfort to you to say to him "This is the sound doctrine of the pioneers upon which our 'Statement of Faith' has been based when he will know of the contradiction of his teaching; his glorification at resurrection will have changed his nature but it will not have affected his memory. Sad though it may sound he will declare to some boastful professors, 'I never knew you.'" Certainly there has always been a 'Remnant' according to the election of Grace - not on accepting doctrines of men without question and test, by the Word. Certainly 'A Remnant shall be saved.' But are you really sure after reading my humble comments, that you are among that 'Remnant'? Jesus will receive the Bride adorned for Him and taken from His side. Bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and He will cherish that Bride as He does now in her preparation.

So contrary to what you affirm and teach, the Apostle states, "No man yet hated his own flesh".

P. Parry. The Nazarene Fellowship.

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