

Nazarene Circular Letter No. 160

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EDITORIAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends,

Loving greetings in the Name of Messiah.

As always Russell has compiled a selection of writings from various sources to stimulate and provoke thought and to provide spiritual food for us all.

Many of our readers are either physically or intellectually in isolation so a circular letter like this is especially valuable giving as it does a feeling of belonging, something which seems to be a deeply felt need in all human beings. As we grow older our circles of relatives and friends begins to shrink and we have to learn the lesson that Jesus learned very early in His short and sorrowful life that in the end we are all alone and only God's presence and support in unfailing. In difficult times we learn that “effectual fervent prayer... availeth much.” Jesus told us “ask...seek...knock;” it is clear that in Jesus' life prayer was His greatest solace and support, His firm foundation and He tells and assures His followers that it can be the same for them too.

The efficacy of prayer depends not on our weak faith but on God's strength, loving mercy and grace. When we feel damaged by doubt, faith falters, and sometimes fails and God's presence seems far away. Unfortunately this seems to happen when we need His presence most yet because of trials or tragedy our spiritual sensitivity becomes numb. At such painful times it is essential to remember that it is not our frail grasp of God that is important but His mighty grasp of us. We are always in the embrace of a love that will not let us go, for underneath are the everlasting arms, God's mercy never fails; it is new every morning.

Love to all.

Helen Brady.

* * *

In our last C.L. we failed to mention that Brother Phil Parry had been in touch with the Matron in the Home where Brother John Carter is a resident. Brother Phil was informed that Brother John was still in

fairly good health at the age of 95 - though we are not exactly sure of his age, it could be 96. However, Brother Phil and Sister Rene sent a Birthday Card. It is several years since he was able to write to us but let us not forget him in our prayers, nor others in their hours of need. May our Lord come quickly,

Russell.

Judas, The Servant of Jesus Christ and Brother of James

(Luke 6:16 and John 14:22)

Earnestly Contend For The Faith

It appears there has been, and always will be until God is all in all, a time to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints. And what is that faith? It is referred to by the writer of the General Epistle of Jude (Judas) as “the common salvation” (verse 3).

What does the word “common” mean in this context? The Concise English Dictionary renders it thus: - “Belonging equally to more than one; open or free to all.” This certainly explains the one Faith or the Gospel of salvation through the Love, Mercy and Grace of God once delivered to those in ancient times who were termed saints or sanctified ones and held fast the profession of their faith through all trial and opposition.

The faith Jude refers to was only delivered once, and from one source; what has taken place since is not a replacement but a perversion, hence his statement in verse 4, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We have the same theme in Paul’s epistle to Titus, chapter 1. He describes himself as “a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; to Titus mine own son after the common faith: grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour,” (no Trinity perversion here, but two separate personages, not three.)

Further on in verses 9 to 11 of this same chapter Paul is confirming the same views expressed by Jude - to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to certain ones chosen to receive it, not a so-called faith or creed which has evolved through corrupted tampering with the inspired and living word of God. As verse 9 expresses what a steward of God must do to qualify for the office of a bishop in the Ecclesia of God holding the One Faith, and not a perverted mixture of truth and error, but “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers... whose mouths must be stopped.” The latter is also true in these more modern times of religious deception but how can such mouths be stopped if we choose to avoid the exhortation of Jude, to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints?

People in our day look upon saints as those created by the Roman Catholic hierarchy who after some three to four hundred years or so in purgatory (after release from the body by death, as they teach), have been accepted for sainthood through what is termed “The Devil’s Advocate.”

Peter was a saint, Paul was a saint, and also many to whom their Epistles were addressed, beside those of Old Testament times, and this, long before the Apostate Roman Catholic Church evolved by false teaching, persecution and torture of those who would not submit to it.

These victims of conscience may not all have had the one faith, but recognized the false teaching of that time, as of man, not of God, and suffered for it. The modern Apostate Church of Rome might now say that

they do not, condone the actions of persecution and torture carried out by their predecessors, yet they must admit that the edifice of the modern R.C. Church is built, not on Christ the Rock, not on Peter even, but on the result of compulsion, persecution and torture of those who would not submit to the acceptance of her false teaching and corruptive practices. How then can members of that edifice even attempt to contend for a faith that they have never had delivered to them?

But we need not point only to the Roman Catholic Church though some of this persecution may still be in operation under cover within it and unrecognized by many sincere adherents of Roman Catholicism who have known nothing from study of the Scriptures for themselves but have accepted the word of those who are dressed with garments to make them appear as ministers of righteousness. If the latter are content with their position, so be it, but if they contend that they have the true faith when they have not, then this is where we should earnestly contend for the one faith alluded to by Jude.

But of course it is not as simple as it appears, for in most cases we find that such people have nothing to contend with but what has been presented to them as truth by their false teachers, so they stop their ears and creep into their shells lest their false hopes and dreams be shattered.

Paul exhorts true custodians of the faith to be gentle, "showing all meekness to all men. For that we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasure, etc... But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Now, does not this last statement referring to the love and kindness of God give, in a nutshell as it were, the very essence of the faith once delivered to the saints? Were not the promises in Eden, then to Noah, then to Abraham, then to Moses, given by the grace of God through the blood of the everlasting covenant which was the blood of His Son Jesus Christ by whom God justified man from the Federal Sin of Adam? Did not Paul say to the Corinthian believers, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," and does he not show this to be the foremost and the important part of the Gospel which he had preached unto them and wherein they stood?

Should we be surprised by the exhortation of Jude concerning people whom we know to be in the same position of ignorance and deception that we were once in and no longer are? He says, "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh." We may ask, What does Jude mean by this?

Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me." Paul also said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12).

Evidently this was the sound doctrine of God delivered to Jesus and of Jesus to Paul, that he and us might save ourselves and them that hear us. So Paul wrote to Timothy, chapter 4 verse 16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (See Amos 4:11).

Jude speaks of two classes to be dealt with 1 think, in verses 22 and 23. There are those under deception and therefore ignorant of the Faith, and there are those in the world who as in our own case and past experience need plucking out of the burning before they are completely devoured. The latter have had a glimpse of the truth but not that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation - they have been led astray by those who have gone in the way of Cain. What does Jude mean by "The way of Cain"? One commentator explains it as follows:

"Cain - a type of the religious natural man, who believes in God, and in "religion," but after his own will, and who rejects redemption by blood. Compelled as a teacher of religion to explain the atonement, the apostate teacher explains it away."

Now, where have we read of such cases as this? It is quite obvious if you have read certain literature, that you know at least one denomination which in regard to the Atonement answers to this commentators description. This is the denomination many of us left because of its apostate teaching of original sin and incapability of explaining the scriptural doctrine of the Atonement which we found to be fundamental to salvation and of which we found it to be, on closer study of the Scriptures, a denomination grossly in error.

It has been for this reason we have heeded the words of Jude, verse 22, "And of some have compassion or pity, making a difference:" that difference being a case of ourselves having been in the same misguided and false position and sense of security, even as we read in Amos 4:11, "And ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning."

We have tried in our own individual efforts, to have compassion on the disillusioned friends and relatives conscience caused our separation from, rather than compromise with error and dishonesty. I cannot explain it better than our Sister Helen Brady has done in a pamphlet entitled, "Come Now, Let Us Reason Together Saith The Lord:"

"Sadly our efforts during these years have with a few notable exceptions been met with indifference or outright hatred..., our views when not suppressed have been misrepresented and we have been treated like outcasts."

I might even add that even the name Brady has been given the title 'Anathema,' nevertheless I feel sure someone has other plans as in Revelation 22:3,4, "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Not long ago I wrote to a younger member of the above sect which has been responsible for the misrepresentation of our beliefs, thinking he might answer me according to his own understanding and not on the basis of false tittle tattle. I asked if he could inform me as briefly as he could what he understood the beliefs and teaching of the Nazarenes to be. I had never met him or spoken to him on the phone, but I knew his parents who were of the same sect. But his being on the lecturing list I thought he should be qualified to speak for himself and from his own experience of having read our teaching or discussed it with any of our members, this latter being doubtful of course.

The eventual reply I received was not an answer to my request but what appeared to be a result of his going back into my past history when I was a member of his sect long before him and before his parents. Consequently, by asking people who were not completely aware of the facts he accused me of things concerning my beliefs and actions which were not wholly correct, but at the same time he shut the door of further correspondence with him, thus fulfilling what I said in my letter I hoped would not be a description of his attitude; Isaiah's prophecy repeated by Jesus, Matthew 13:14,15.

It was nothing strange, for him to tell me our differences commenced with Genesis, but I had not requested of him to point out the differences between his beliefs and mine but simply to state what he understood to be the beliefs and teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship. He also stated that I had started marching on the wrong foot but he did not say when this was. If it had been when I belonged as a member of his community he would have been correct and I could have informed him that on re-immersion into a valid sacrificial Christ and newness of life and service to him and his Father, I had commenced marching on the correct foot and on the same track which Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts were both on in the year 1869, and which sadly, they had wandered from later on.

Therefore it can be proved beyond doubt that the differences of my critic's community commenced in Genesis in the fact of adding to its account and record what is not there. This being a perverted doctrine of the Apostate Church stating that when Adam sinned God changed his nature in order to eventually bring about his death, and not only this, but created in that nature a greater tendency to sin which could also be transmitted to his posterity, and their natural death be justified by the fact that they were bound to sin. A perversion and monstrosity so perpetrated that even Jesus the free-born Son of God cannot be excluded but must in every way possible to manipulate the word of God, bring Jesus also under the curse of Adamic sin.

This does not appear to me a resemblance in any form to the faith Jude had in mind to be contended for, but a false doctrine to be contended against in order that the faith which was once delivered to the saints might remain as a beacon of fire and light upon the mountain against such a background of the darkness of such doctrines of men misguided by false tradition.

My correspondent and critic in his quoting of the words of Jesus, John 10:27-29, of His immediate disciples who were then following him, took the liberty of qualifying those words with the pre-condition of the judgment, whereas the words of Jesus were authoritative and definite, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." This is confirmation of Isaiah 8:16 and 18, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Also in John 17:6-12. Also Hebrews 2:11-13. This verse 11 of Hebrews, Robert Roberts misapplied as the Lord Jesus and His brethren being all of one (Adam), whereas the One referred to was God. It shows to what depths people of his following will go to try and prove Jesus to be a son of Adam and not realizing that in being of the same nature of flesh and blood would make no difference to His holiness at birth, nor His sinlessness to the time of His death.

It is this example of blindness which applies to Jesus a serpent nature lifted up in condemnation of His own flesh when Numbers 21:6-9 is read in accordance with such false interpretations and false traditions handed down by the precepts of men, I know of only one denomination holding to this interpretation and yet professing to be in the Truth, for even a person of average intelligence and unbiased, could not even compare the Brazen Serpent with "condemned flesh" when in fact it was to be looked up to for a saving from "the death by sin." It was for this saving from "death by sin" which Jesus said He was lifted up on the tree, as Moses lifted up the Brazen Serpent. It was in both cases a provision of God to save people from the judicial sentence of "death by sin," through an exhibition of faith in that which was lifted up for that purpose.

Therefore to say Jesus was lifted up for the condemnation of sin in his "serpent – sin in the flesh nature," is absolute blasphemy.

Is this part of the essence of the Gospel some of this denomination tell me they are preaching to a sick and dying world? If so, then there is greater need than ever to earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the saints, but first let us be sure who those saints were, by information from God's Word, not man's.

To all in the One Faith and hope of the Israel of God, Love, Joy, and Peace be multiplied through the Grace of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Brother Phil Parry. 8.4.1996

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to Adrian Miles.

My letter to Brother Adrian Miles which follows explains itself:

Dear Adrian, I understand from Neil that you feel you have received a bewildering amount of material from me since you started receiving the Circular Letters and booklets about six or seven months ago, and you have expressed to Neil that you thought our message must be rather complicated and you are not sure what it is. Because of this I feel I must write to you in order to make matters more clear.

The message we wish to express is not at all complicated. In fact it is the straightforward Gospel message that Jesus Christ died for us, and through Him we can have life more abundantly.

However, this message has been complicated by Christadelphian doctrine that denies the meaning of those few words; they say Christ died a representative death; that He had to die for Himself; that He had

sinful flesh; that He was given extra strength from God not available to us; that because we have sinful flesh it is impossible for us to keep the commandments. Then in other contexts they will unwittingly contradict themselves, until many in the community don't know what is what any more.

This is where the complications lie and many in the Nazarene Fellowship have spent years trying to put the right message across to the Christadelphian community both before leaving them and since.

Having been brought up in a Christadelphian family and having been a Sunday School teacher for about forty years, a Presiding Brother for nearly as long, and one of the Managing Brethren for some twelve years, I feel qualified to express a few thoughts.

It is my experience that only a few Christadelphians know what is in the B.A.S.F., and of those few, most of them don't understand it. Again, of the few who do understand what it means only a minority agree with it. Consequently, and perhaps happily so, almost all Christadelphians are ignorant of its blasphemies and false teachings. Sadly, though, it is the small minority that hold sway using the B.A.S.F. as the bedrock of belief and the weapon for excommunication, though quite unable to uphold their views with sound use of Scripture.

Does this sound rather strong language? I wish it were not true. But as it is, how are we to respond to these false teachings and wrested Scriptures? It would not be right for us to walk away and leave those we love in ignorance, so we do our best to enlighten them as to the seriousness of these matters.

In choosing this course of action we earnestly seek our Heavenly Father's guidance in all we do that it may bring forth fruit to His honour and glory through Jesus Christ. It is not a simple task we have undertaken, but we know we have found the truth and wish to share it with those we love. It may well be that those ignorant of the false doctrines in the B.A.S.F. may be acceptable to God, but we must expose wrong wherever we see it so that no one need be left in ignorance or doubt as to the truth.

We feel our message to the Christadelphian community has to be that of Jesus Christ to the church of the Laodiceans which we read in Revelation 3, verses 14 to the end of the chapter.

I hope this explains why some of what you read in the Circular Letters and booklets is sometimes complicated. It is all in an effort to combat the complex false doctrines which result from misinterpreting, misunderstanding and misapplying Scripture.

Sincerely your brother in the Hope of the Gospel,

Russell Gregory.

Following conversations between Brethren David Nodding and Ray Gregory, David wrote the following exposition of his beliefs:-

As In Adam All Die

The Bible teaches that because of the failure of Adam and Eve to keep the commandment God had put them under they became subject to death. It is suggested by some that when God said to Adam "thou shalt surely die" that Adam should have died on that very day. But should we interpret a verse of Scripture on one verse alone? This is not wise. To understand what was meant by the saying we must look to another verse of Scripture - "And unto Adam he said... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This was the death sentence that was placed upon Adam, and was also to be passed on to all his posterity, not because they were guilty of the same crime that their father had committed, but because they were born into his line of descendants on whom the sentence of death had been passed. This is what the Apostle Paul says to the Roman brethren and sisters when he writes:- "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world (Kosmos)

and death by sin.” That is into the world that God had created, of which the first chapter of Genesis says all things were very good, entered a situation that did not allow God to continue as it was before. Adam’s transgression caused that situation that no longer allowed him to remain in the place where he had been placed. This is seen when it says:-

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man.” So Paul says “so death passed upon all men.” The last part of Paul’s statement which is translated “for that all have sinned” should be better understood, “in whom all have sinned, or held guilty.” Put in other words -”in whom the death sentence continues through his posterity.

This is confirmed by Paul when he says:- “nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (likeness) of Adam’s transgression.” Now the general thinking on these passages is that Adam’s transgression was the means of making all his descendants into weak failing creatures who became corrupted by his sin, and fail continually to keep God’s laws. And due to this thinking the teaching of a Christ who was not a human being came into existence; for how could one condemned by sinful flesh and all the weaknesses in man so live a perfect life before God? But what does the Scripture say? “And Yahweh Elohim said, Behold now man has become as one of us to know good and evil...”

To some, Jesus had to be the product of a new creation and not in Adam’s descendants. Others think that Jesus was part of the Creator that came down from heaven, and after fulfilling what was required of Him, went back to the Creator again. So what do we find in the Scriptures concerning Jesus? Paul calls Jesus, the man Christ Jesus, born of a woman in fulfilment of the prophecy made in Genesis 3:15, by which He is called the seed of the woman. The Greek is more emphatic (The Childbearing) so referring to the promise; also the Greek word is ‘*sperma*’ and nature has taught us that it is the male that produces the sperm, the female makes the egg, so to be called the seed of the woman must speak of some reason why the birth should take place in that way. The birth of Isaac was also a miracle, when Sarah is seen as one that is passed the age of giving birth.

As already said, some think that the birth of Jesus took place in this way because they believe that in some way Adam’s sin is passed on by the male seed, and Jesus, not having a natural father, would be free of all Adamic sin. Those who believe that Christ was a completely new creation, so free of Adam’s condemnation, are not accepting certain facts laid down in Scripture. First, that Jesus was a human being made of flesh and blood. Second, He was one who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, or human weaknesses. Third, He was of the seed of David according to the flesh and so a child of the Adamic race who was subject to death.

The Scriptures show of a person who during His life learnt how to become fully dependent on His God. He, like the Psalmist, had a wonderful love for God’s Law (Psalm 119:97). And because of His love for that Law, loved righteousness and hated iniquity. To Jesus the greatest commandment of the law was to love God with all His being, and the second was His love for His neighbour. To Jesus the whole law and the teaching of the prophets was fulfilled on these two commandments, and on such Jesus established His life.

But to go back to why Jesus could not be seen as the Son of Joseph:- First, though Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, the child promised was to be of the woman and not of the man (Genesis 3:15) as we have already said. (This teaching was to be found in many of the ancient religions, where we find the mother with child was the central thinking of their worship). Second, for Joseph to want to put away Mary before their marriage was consummated shows that the child was not his. Thirdly, Joseph was a carpenter and was not of the school of the Rabbis and Jesus was destined to be a teacher in Israel as the one like unto Moses. As the Son of Joseph He would have been known as Rabbi Ben Joseph and not by His name Joshua (Saviour). Fourthly, the Messiah that was promised was spoken of as one of which God had said “I will be his Father and he shall be my son.”

So Jesus fulfilled the Scripture that required Him to be the seed of the woman, of whom Mary was told, He shall be called the Son of the highest, and Yahweh Elohim shall give him the throne of His father David. (This also shows that Mary was a descendent of David). Being born of a woman, He was a child of flesh and blood, who, according to the law was circumcised on the eighth day. As a male that was a firstborn, He was

called holy to Yahweh, and this presentation required an offering made unto Yahweh. (This shows that Jesus was born of a natural birth). And even after His resurrection He showed Himself to His disciples as one that still possessed flesh and bones and not like a spirit. (God is Spirit - no indefinite article).

Though Jesus did not die a natural death, being in the line of those that have been born after the flesh, if He had lived a normal life then His obedience to the law would have given Him a long life (Ephesians 6:2,3) but He would have eventually died.

Paul teaches us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but as we have seen, Jesus showed Himself to His disciples, having flesh and bone; here then Jesus is energized by Spirit, and so the last Adam became a living Spirit.

The Son of God. “And declared to be the Son of God in strength, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). The day of Jesus’ resurrection was to Paul the day spoken of in the second Psalm:- “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” And being a child of the Resurrection, He was become the head of the body, the Ecclesia: who is the first (Greek - arche) - the firstborn of dead ones.

Did Jesus die to pay the price of Adam’s transgression? The teaching of the Christian Church that makes Jesus the universal Saviour of the human race came into existence when the church sought to separate itself from its Jewish beginnings, and the God of Israel became the God of the human race. The separation of the children of Jacob to be God’s own special people, had excluded the rest of the human race, but now that the special people have been rejected because they had rejected their Saviour; the church used the opportunity to establish Christ’s sacrifice as a universal Saviour of mankind. But is this what the Bible teaches?

The Old Testament Scriptures, commencing at the end of chapter eleven of Genesis, introduces us to the family that God had brought from Ur of Chaldea. It was out of this family that the man Abraham came, and unto Abraham God made promises that would have their fulfilment in one that is called the seed of Abraham, and to the Apostle Paul this seed was the Christ. These promises made with Abraham would one day make of him a great nation and a blessing that would involve all the families of the soil (Hebrew – Adamah). These promises were then confirmed with his son Isaac (Genesis 26:3,4) and then with his grand son Jacob. But the promises were not passed on to the next generation. When Jacob was 130, he and his family moved to Egypt and there they remained for the next 240 years. It was at the time when the children of Israel were bond slaves in that land of Egypt that the God of Heaven chose to take this nation as His people, and at Mount Sinai He made a covenant with them that so separated them from all other nations upon the face of the earth. So Israel became God’s people and they agreed to accept His laws. God promised them that they would live in the land that He had promised to their fathers, but this covenant was established on the basis of obedience and would only continue if Israel fulfilled their side of the bargain. Old Testament history shows that Israel as a nation failed to keep His laws and commandments and God saw it necessary to speak of another covenant (Jeremiah 31:31). But before the Sinai covenant could be taken away it needed that one should fulfil it (Matthew 5:17).

Now before Jesus was born Mary was told that His name was to be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Here then is the one that was to redeem the Jewish nation from the position they now found themselves in. He was born as one of their nation; as a child of the Law; to redeem them that were under the Mosaic Law. To achieve this it was necessary for Him to fulfil what God required of His people who lived under that law. And Jesus did this by living to those two commandments based on Love - loving God and loving his neighbour, and the Scripture says He loved them unto the end.

As the writer to the Hebrews taught, the blood of bulls and goats could never remove their sins, because the hearts of the people were far removed from their God. The blood of bulls and goats were offered on the day of Atonement every year, yet because they were commanded to be offered every year the law showed they would never make the nation perfect. As long as Israel remained under the law, disobedience continued and the nations sins mounted up; a sacrifice was needed to pay for these sins and this sacrifice had to be a human one (Hebrews 10:9,10). So when John saw Jesus he said “Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the (Jewish) world.

This use of the lamb figure is seen in the Passover Lamb, of which Jesus became, fulfilling His obligation to the lamb that redeemed a people out of Egypt, killed on the 14th of the first month; and yet in His death He paid the ransom in full (Greek - apolutrosis) for the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15). But being a Passover Lamb it was necessary to show faith in Him for their sins to be forgiven. If Jesus had represented the sacrifice on the day of Atonement then there would have been no need to show this faith in Him, for it would have automatically have blotted out there sins. So Jesus did not die to pay the price of Adam's sin and this is shown in that the law of death still remains, but Paul sees himself freed from the Law of sin and death, which was Mosaic (Romans 8:2). So to continue -

The Acts of the Apostles shows us that this message was rejected by many in Israel. To them Jesus had become a stumbling block, for they saw no need to go through another act of redemption; the covenant made at Sinai gave them their privileged position, they were the nation that Yahweh had chosen, they saw no need to change the status quo. But as far as God was concerned the life of Jesus Christ had achieved its purpose and the law and covenant given at Sinai had come to an end. Now in Jesus Christ a New Covenant had been established (Hebrews 8:7,8) and there were many Gentile converts to Judaism who saw in this new covenant a way of obtaining an equal status with the Jewish believers that was denied them in the covenant made at Sinai.

This new covenant in Christ again is limited to those who are called. Yet will have in its number, those of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue. So what do we know about this new covenant?

- 1) To those who accepted Christ and were baptised into Him, were no longer condemned by the Law they did not keep (Romans 8:1).
- 2) This New Covenant was established on the Abrahamic promises and allowed both Jew and Gentile to become members (Galatians 3:14). So creating a new body of people that God could call His people.
- 3) Those who were under the Mosaic Covenant who would not accept this teaching were to be seen as Ishmael; cast out and having no part in the new agreement (Galatians 4:28-31).
- 4) This New Covenant was established on two principles. Faith and Love, and the example to follow was none other than Jesus Christ Himself, recognising in Him the status of a child of God.
- 5) That those who come into this Covenant enter into God's Kingdom in a spiritual sense which allows the participants the privileges under that Covenant:-
 - a) The right to call God our Father, or Abba Father.
 - b) The right to have a Mediator, or Intercessor, to speak on our behalf.
 - c) The right, as long as the covenant lasts, to learn of what is required to remain as an acceptable child of God.
 - d) The right to a resurrection from the dead to face a judgment that will be an assessment on the life that has been lived in Christ, whether the character is of such that it can be immortalized.
 - e) If accepted, the privilege will be given to reign with Jesus Christ over the house of Israel in the land that was promised to the fathers, and there be the means of establishing God's Kingdom upon the face of the earth, so that God can be glorified in His people.
 - f) Like the Mosaic Covenant this one will come to an end at the coming of Christ.

David Nodding.

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The above exposition covers far too much ground to be answered in a few words and it was felt necessary to bring the subject back to the very beginning and to do this, during further conversation and as part of his reply, Ray gave David Nodding the booklet, "The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B'yom."

In response to this booklet David wrote the following letter, starting with a short extract:-

Taken from the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament –

"The word MUTH = Die, Kill, Have one executed.

MUTH may refer to death by natural causes or a violent death. The latter may be as a penalty or otherwise. The root is not limited to the death of humans although it is used predominantly that way.

This is a universally used Semetic root for dying and death. The Canaanites employed it as the name of the god of death and the netherworld. Mot (of ANET, pp. 138-42).

In Hebrew it is occasionally used metaphorically as when Job speaks of the death of wisdom (12:2). - Volume 1, page 1165." (end of quote).

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David continues: –

1. The word Temuth is a simple active verb expressed as a future in the third person singular (feminine) He, She, It shall die. The word Muth is a masculine singular noun expressed as an infinitive or verbal noun. The Hebrew infinitives are expressed as an Absolute or as a Construct. The infinitive Absolute functions in syntax. The expression "he will keep" is expressed, "He will indeed (surely) keep," showing emphasis when it immediately precedes the finite verb, so to die or dying.
2. The writers of a small pamphlet (The Usage and Meaning of "Muth Temuth" and "B'Yom") based on these two Hebrew words, seem to have some problem with the death sentence that was passed against Adam and Eve, and was to continue with those who descended from them;
 - A) Because Adam and Eve did not die the very day that God's commandment was broken, but only became mortal beings.
 - B) The problem these two Hebrew words appear in other passages in the Old Testament, and
 - C) If mortality was the punishment for the crime then how can those who have been made mortal be threatened with mortality again?
3. These writers think that because these two words are used again in the context of those who when threatened so had lost their lives the same day, then because Adam and Eve should have died on the same day they broke the law, and they believe that it was only the mercy of God that allowed our first parents to extend their days.
4. With the exception of Genesis 2:17 all other passages quoted are spoken to people who were subject to death or dying creatures.
5. The first two quoted references have to do with Abimelech and his nation in the days of Abraham and Isaac. Both these patriarchs, because of fear, had referred to their wives as their sisters, which had created a situation that in the case of Sarah, was taken into the house of Abimelech to become his wife; God's threat to him in a dream was not that he would become a mortal being, but his life would be cut short. As Abimelech put the situation right, God did not have to carry out His threat.
6. The second passage is in the same context, but this time to the people Abimelech ruled over.
7. The case concerning Shimei (1 Kings 2:36-46) and Ahimelech of the house of Levi (1 Samuel 22:16-18). Both had their lives shortened. Shimei because he returned to Jerusalem after being warned not to leave the place, and Ahimelech with another 85 Levites were murdered by Doeg the Edomite.

8. So in these first four references we can see that Muth Temuth has been used in different ways, some lost their lives and some that didn't.
9. This is also the case with Jeremiah the Prophet (26:8-19). He was threatened but the death sentence was not carried out.
10. And Ahaziah eventually died because he looked to the pagan god of Ekron to be healed. God refused to heal him; his injuries eventually brought about his death. (Thou shalt not come down from thy bed).
11. As we have seen, none of these Bible passages prove what the writers so believe. Our conclusion on the matter is this, the words Muth Temuth, whoever they are spoken by, so controls the decision on how long that persons life should continue, whether it is a short or long duration.
12. So let us return to the first time we come across this expression in Scripture (Genesis 2:17). Here the threat of death is made against a person that was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and said to be very good (verse 31). Adam at this time WAS NOT A MORTAL OR DYING CREATURE, when God's commandment was broken, then God's punishment came upon Adam; Adam's life was now limited to a period of 930 years (See Genesis 5:5). Those years were to be experienced with hard work (By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread) and would continue till he returned to the ground from which he had been created (for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return Genesis 3:19).
13. Now note, that this punishment was exacted out upon Adam and Eve before there is anything said about the skins of an animal that God clothed them with (verse 21). That is to say that the animal's sacrifice was not so that Adam and Eve could continue to live, but so that they could have a means of approaching their God.
14. Being removed from the Garden (that was their previous home), any desire to make communication with their God required bringing a gift. When Abel approached God his gift was acceptable, but Cain's was not (Hebrews 11:4).
15. It was the promise made in Genesis 3:15 on which the hope of a restoration of what had been lost was the means of separating those who sought to please their God and those who pleased themselves.
16. The human race are all the children of Adam and will die. This will continue as long as the Adamic race exists. Paul's words to the Corinthians - The last enemy is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). This word death speaks of a cessation of life. It comes to young and old alike, regardless whatever religion or beliefs they have.
17. The only hope of life that will not be subject to this death state is to be found in the man Christ Jesus; this is what the Apostle Peter taught the Jews in his day (Acts 4:12). And Paul's teaching on immortality was how this death state could be overcome (1 Corinthians 15:54,55). Now this promise of life in Christ is conditional on character, what has been promised to all in Christ is a raising from the dead, and it is only those who are acceptable (those who are conformed to the image of the Son - Romans 8:29) that will be made immortal (Romans 2:6-10).

David Nodding. April 1996

In Response I wrote:-

Dear David, Thank you for the trouble you have been to in producing the facts you give from the "Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament" and the observations in your first paragraph concerning the grammar used in this matter. I am pleased to say all of which confirm our understanding and has already been taken into account in our booklet "The Meaning and Usage of Muth Temuth and B'Yom" and give full support to our views.

For ease of reference I have numbered the paragraphs of your letter and below used the same numbers in reply to each section.

2. The death sentence passed upon Adam was the result of the Law of Sin and Death of which Adam had been warned. Paul, in Romans 8:2, tells us, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." We learn later in the scriptures that this refers to the second death and in Revelation 20:6 we read of those "in Christ", "on such the second death hath no power." This law of sin and death will not be rescinded until the "second death." With this in mind the writers have no problem with the death sentence passed against Adam and Eve.

A). It is obvious Adam and Eve were not put to death the very day they transgressed God's commandment, but in what way are you using the term 'mortal'? Dr Thomas was of the opinion that Adam became mortal after transgression of God's law which makes it therefore a legal term. This use may be confined to theological arguments only and is not generally understood in this way. In general use it was and is applied to animals as well. It is difficult to prove that it must mean Adam was not mortal when created.

One thing is certain - Adam was created corruptible having been provided with sustenance from the produce of the ground during his life in the same way as all other animals. For this see Genesis 1:29 and 30, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." This is consistent with Ecclesiastes 3:19 and 20 where we read, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." There is no evidence in the Bible that Adam and Eve's physical nature was changed in any way as a result of their transgression.

B). The two Hebrew words "Muth Temuth" in the fourteen other references prove the meaning in Genesis 2:17 beyond all question. They are used consistently and every occurrence gives the same clear message. We have no problem with this.

C). You write, "If mortality was the punishment for the crime then how can those who have been made mortal be threatened with mortality again?" Indeed, if mortality were the punishment then it obviously could not be used again. Your assumption is your problem, not ours. It seems evident that you have not understood what it is we are contending for.

3. I think I understand your meaning here to be that because in reference to the other fourteen cases the threat was carried out in some instances but it was not carried out in the case of Adam and Eve, then we must put this down to the mercy of God." Yes, regarding Adam and Eve it was due to the mercy of God.

4. You say that "with the exception of Genesis 2:17, all other passages quoted are spoken to people who were subject to death." There seems to be some confusion here for Adam and Eve were not going to live for ever without a change to spirit nature. Our natural bodies were not created to last for ever. The faithful will be change at the return of Christ. All creatures are subject to death.

5. The first two quotes being Genesis 20:3-7 and Genesis 26:11. You agree with our understanding when it comes to Abraham and Abimelech that the threat was that Abimelech's life would be cut short unless he returned Sarah to Abraham, which he promptly did, and so the threat was then automatically withdrawn; also you say "God's threat to him in a dream was not that he would become a mortal being, but that his life would be cut short." Precisely so. We wholeheartedly agree with you and if you can see this is the case here then why do you refuse to apply it to Adam and Eve? We do, because it is the reasonable thing to do.

6. Here again we have the same context, so we apply it in the same way, and we see the reason for deviation by others as an endeavour on their part to find support for false doctrine.

7. The case of Shimei is in many ways identical to the situation in which Adam and Eve found themselves as in each case a commandment had been broken, but in the case of Adam and Eve their lives were spared, but Shimei was put to death at the first humanly possible opportunity.

8. You say “in the first four references we see that Muth Temuth has been used in different ways, some lost their lives and some didn’t.” Really, David, what sort of logic is this? The words were applied and used in an identical way - the only differences being whether righteousness and mercy was exercised or not. God was merciful, and David was righteous, but Doeg was neither. The words carried identical meaning for all concerned. By what authority do you say they meant different things to different people? The Theological Word-book does not support you and you violate your own paragraph (1) above and so again set your own problems.

9. It is clear how this threat was understood by Jeremiah - in just the same way as it was by others to whom it was made in all fifteen cases, but just because the threat was made it does not have to be carried out. This will depend on circumstances.

10. The case of Ahaziah is no exception. Had he turned to God in faith instead of appealing to a false god he may well have received mercy and lived longer but we don’t know for sure.

11. You say “As we have seen, none of these Bible passages prove what the writers so believe.” Do they not? All the cases consistently prove our point beyond all possible dispute. Your conclusion on the matter is just not true. And it is simply not true to say as you do that whoever speaks the threat “so controls the decision on how long that person’s life should continue, whether it is a short or long duration.” Take the case of Jeremiah for example. The threat against him was not carried out because the ones making it in the first place were overruled. See Jeremiah 26:24. The same in the case of Jonathan; here Saul was overruled and Jonathan “died not.” Conclusions like yours are bad because they can and do lead to all sorts of false ideas and unnecessary complications, but matters must be reasoned out more carefully if one is to find the truth taught in Scripture.

12. You say, “the threat of death was made against a person who was made in the image of God and said to be very good.” It is here I believe that you start to go wrong, for if I am right in supposing you to believe that because Adam was made in the image of God then he was not mortal because God is not mortal, then such an argument is flawed. But as you do not state clearly that this is what you believe then I may be guilty of making a false assumption. However, if I understand you correctly regarding your belief then, in line with such argument it would be logical and reasonable to say that because Adam was made in the image of God and as God is Spirit and immortal, then Adam must also be Spirit and immortal. This you will not agree with and neither do we.

Then you continue with, “Adam at this time WAS NOT A MORTAL OR DYING CREATURE, when God’s commandment was broken, then God’s punishment came upon Adam; Adam’s life was now limited to a period of 930 years (See Genesis 5:5).” Your great assumption here is your claim that Adam was not made a dying creature! We have seen from the quote above (Genesis 1:29,30) how Adam was dependent on food from the ground for sustaining his natural life in exactly the same way as all other creatures. You are making claims that can only be upheld by wresting the scriptures.

That Adam was made very good does not mean he was made different to the other animals for they were also made very good. All God’s creatures were created corruptible. Indeed, all the natural creation which has life, plant and animal, were created so as to grow and die from illness, disease, violence or old age, and we do well not to assume Adam was any different in this respect. “First the natural...”

So how was man made in the image of God? It was in his intelligence, with his ability to reason, and with reason he was given choice. He could, of his own free will respond to God’s love. In short, it is all the things which make man mentally higher than the other animals. He was given law so that he could exercise choice. But in physical make up and bodily functions he was created the same as the other animals which, as we have said, were also made very good.

13. You seem to lay some store by the fact that the “punishment was exacted...before there was anything said about the skins of an animal that God clothes them with.” You are making the order of events an important issue in order to lend support to your beliefs. But it became clear to Adam and Eve that they were not going to be put to death that day, for which they must have been very relieved and thankful. The – ‘greatly multiplying of Eve’s sorrow and conception; the curse of the ground and in sorrow shalt Adam eat of it all the days of his life; the thorns and thistles it was to bring forth; and eating of the herb of the field; and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,’ - were all new conditions, none of which God had forewarned them of, nor even mentioned before their transgression and ought not to be confused with the Law of Sin and Death of which they were both aware of.

Certainly the animal’s sacrifice was made “so that they could approach their God.” They could not approach God if they were dead.

14. We agree that when in the Garden Adam and Eve had continual communion with the Elohim which they lost once they sinned, but I’m not sure what you have in mind when you say that “any desire to make communication with their God required bringing a gift.” What gift? It was God who slew the animal to provide the covering. That was God’s gift to them, not their gift to God, and it fits the great Anti-type Jesus who was God’s gift to the world.

Approach to God has always required humility and simple trust, and is expressed by Jesus in the words “Suffer little children to come unto me... for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving has ever been the only pleasing gift whenever one approaches God, and for Adam and Eve it was the same. The ritual offerings and sacrifices, as under the Law of Moses for example, were for specific occasions and we are not told that Adam and Eve had to offer an animal as a gift every time they wished to “make communion” with God. This again is presumption. Cain’s offering was not of faith.

15. Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This certainly refers to the Gift of God in Jesus Christ for the sins of the world and as such is the means of separating those who will serve God and those who will not, but it was not done to restore what was lost by Adam and Eve; but was a means of calling out a people for His Name to grant them eternal life as a free gift.

16. This is not so. We mention two who have not died - Enoch and Elijah, and apart from those there will be many more, as the Apostle Paul tells us “We shall not all die...” The fact that the faithful die now is because their Lord has not returned, but when He is here there will be no reason at all for those who choose to be His servants to die but will continue to the end of the thousand years reign of Christ and then be changed to immortality as the saints will have been at the coming of Christ; the last enemy is death, as Paul says, and this will eventually be ended at the end of the thousand years, but till then death will come to those who reject Christ or are ignorant of Him. But death is not all one. The Bible speaks of five deaths.

17. “Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This promise is conditional on faith and obedience; “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you” said Jesus. All “in Christ” have been promised eternal life, and will be raised immortal. They will not suffer the second death. Those who suffer the second death are those who have rejected Christ and not those who are “in Christ.”

The threat to Adam was that he should die “in the day” (“B’Yom”) of 24 hours and this matter you have not dealt with. “Muth temuth” conveys the idea of certain death and “B’Yom” tells us that death was to have been in the very day of transgression. Yet you create insurmountable problems for yourself by denying the meaning of “Muth temuth.”

Russell Gregory.

“Cry Aloud, Spare Not, Show My People Their Transgressions”

Dear Brother (Logos),

I got your enquiry the other day re payment for Logos and for which I must explain I did not personally authorize any subscription.

It began arriving quite some time ago for some peculiar reason after your Church had excommunicated me and forbade me from associating with the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ under due Christadelphian tradition of process and standing orders and regulation for the operation of your organization.

I would like to, because of these unscriptural regulations, claim that I have been as your brother most unfairly treated in this system of expulsionism, and along with many other brothers and sisters who have suffered similar, been done a very grievous wrong.

Not only that, but I feel that any religion that expulsionates and expels its members for the sole reason that they will not accept and bow obeisance to the words of men because they cannot find such in the Scriptures of Truth, should jerk itself into gear and have a good look at what is happening.

My right of conscientious objection I exercise because I cannot subscribe to the notions and theories of men as a prerequisite for fellowship so called by your religion, as detailed in your creed the B.A.S.F. and its addendum.

The enforced unscriptural phrases, terminology and straightout jargon as used, and seemingly to be forever perpetuated, by your organization is deplorable. Furthermore, for a group of people who do read their Bibles and are of usually better than average intelligence, to go on accepting this bunk, just like possums dazzled in a spotlight, illustrates simply how much they have not looked into these disputed matters for themselves. Indeed, they do not think for themselves, but instead follow standing orders and tradition of your organization, Just like members of other Churches, without question. As soon as the conscientious objector turns up to argue the toss, they are promptly given the ho if they will not recant, and not through recourse to the Scriptures but according to what some brother or writer said or claimed was the correct theory.

No doubt, dear brother, you have been told all this before, but I feel it is my duty to “Cry Aloud” and provide you with some information about this situation.

In 1985 I was baptised in Riverton, New Zealand, into the Christadelphian Church and certainly not into any B.A.S.F. or creed. I can remember having heard about it but had never sighted it until I came across it in the bottom drawer of a retired Recorder.

Sometime later when I began to wonder about your organization’s terminology and that I could not find it in my Bible, I began to feel some deception had been whacked over everybody by those with the influence and the power to decide who should be allowed to meet with the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I looked seriously at what we are supposed to believe in the B.A.S.F. and other material, there was much that could not be easily and simply as a little child be demonstrated from the Scriptures. Indeed, some of the passages quoted supposedly to support some clauses of the B.A.S.F. for meaning and intent, never even touched upon the subject let alone explain them. Have you noticed this aspect dear brother?? Can a little child explain such?? NO WAY! Confusion confounded!

Doesn’t our Lord say the yoke is easy and the burden light? Why this complicated legalistic journalistic terminology dear brother? I have been disappointed and deceived by your organization in that it used such as a weapon to give the conscientious objector the ho.

This situation perpetuated by your religion is very wrong, dear brother, and because of mistakes made early in your history, uncorrected is one of the reasons why there is continual trouble,

Let me tell you another more important reason... When God said “it is not in man to direct his steps,” He means just that. What is more, He also instructed the Prophet to write, “Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for where of is he to be accounted of...” To the Psalmist He commended “Put not your trust in princes or in the son of man in whom there is no help,” and, “there is a way that seemeth right to a man...” etc.

Now this is only some of why God sent His Son to show to man, the true and living way and what is more there is not one instance in the Scriptures where He asked counsel of man. You know that! And yet how did Israel of old and Christadelphians today try and solve their problems? A question asked at a Bible class or of the editors... not by recourse to the Scripture for an answer, but instead, to the appropriate Pioneer works- And accepted without question for decades and generations of brothers and sisters as a faithful and reliable solution.

The very last magazine of Logos has an example of this in the letters section where we are referred to Robert Roberts, “Law of Moses.” Conspicuously that issue of Logos had seventeen pages that contained either directly or indirectly alluding to other writers of pre-eminence. What is wrong with addressing your problems to the Father of light?? The Provider of the Light that gives knowledge of God and all His ways?? Knowledge of man that he may know himself and the purpose for his creation, and wonderfully so.

God asked men in all ages, Israel, Christadelphians, brothers and sisters, TO ASK HIM FIRST!!! And yet in our very hands is record of man’s refusal to do so, and what is more, the dreadful consequences.

Sadly, the Christadelphians in all factions have utterly failed in this regard, even myself on many occasions failed to heed the rigid but simple instruction of God concerning the very source where wisdom dwells and where the ultimate in knowledge and blessing is to be found, the Bible, not the mistakes of the Pioneers.

“Ye shall seek me and ye shall find me when ye search for me with all your heart” Where? “Light is shown for them that seek peace... In Thy light we shall see light.”

Surely dear brother, time is long overdue, and wisdom directs that we seek in the place where divine light shines with all its POWER.

A blind leader of the blind and heretic, is the label you place upon me as a conscientious objector to your creed, which is polluted with the Catholic doctrine Original Sin, as accepted sadly and misguidedly by the organization of your Church and with never a thought for your own position that there may be something wrong, and the very reason for the problems Brethren Thomas and Roberts made some tragic mistakes and which cannot be sustained from Scripture, but I doubt if your traditional instruction originating from them can be altered by a burnt out bushie telling you so.

Christadelphians make my heart ache and I cry aloud that some one within the organization can find the guts to attempt to correct things before it is too late.

And yes, I would like to continue to receive Logos. It is the only contact I have with any Christadelphians and I know you will send it to me even though I would not like to pay for it as it supports the out of kilter foundation established and built upon since the beginnings of your organization over a century ago.

I remain your brother, B.G.Pearce.

Extracts From Your Letters

Brother Phil Parry writes:

We both thank you for the C.L. which again has involved much labour and contained much of interest. It appears that being for the most part ex-Christadelphians, some have not taken kindly to the fresh and alternative views expressed on certain subjects by myself and other members of our Fellowship. Nevertheless, we should not be content with the attitude adopted by Robert Roberts when he said of his own position, "We are past the investigation stage." Your comments at the end of the last C.L. have certainly proved him wrong and we were quite impressed.

We have been pondering another matter which had not struck home until recently. It concerns the occasion of the woman and the ointment; I could hardly conceive of Mary the sister of Lazarus being a very serious sinner, so was there another woman other than Mary the sister of Lazarus? John 11:2 and John 12:3

See other records:- Matthew 26:6,7. Mark 14:3. Luke 7:37,38. All in Bethany?

King regards to all, Phil and Rene Parry.

Sister Evelyn Linggood writes:

Many thanks for the booklets... we shall soon have quite a stack of them but one we haven't had yet is "The Great Mystery of the Christian Religion" by E.Brady. I find it useful to give to those religious people outside our faith.

With regard to your question "So who is gathered to Armageddon?" the answer is simple and should be looked for in the wider context. Verse 14 - it is the "kings of the earth" who are gathered there as it says plainly; verse 15 refers to saints and should be read in parenthesis.

May I again comment on yours on pages 26 and 27 of the last C.L. concerning Zechariah 13:1. I believe the fountain to be the sacrificial regime set up in Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. I see you refrained from explaining the latter when you gave your explanation of the fountain. Yes, the remnant of the nation of Israel will be a righteous nation as is verified in many Scriptures but they will be on probation for eternal life and it will be a process of learning even as it is for us now, they will still be human beings and may err from time to time as we do but they, as we have, will have a means of forgiveness and to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. We do well to ponder 1 John 1:7-10 and 2:1-2 in this respect and this is "walking in the light" as John says, and if perfectly sinless why would they need priests to intercede for them? Jesus Christ remained sinless because at an early age He completely dedicated Himself to His Father's will knowing full well His role in the scheme of things and of the Glory that would follow if He overcame and of His love toward mankind.

I am afraid that Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 33:18 cannot be argued against; we just have to accept them. Also the sacrifices as listed in Ezekiel's vision - "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

The saints are in a different category to natural Israel and are the firstfruits of the nation (Revelation 14:4 and Romans 11:16) - the first to be immortalized; the only ones who have Christ as their High Priest presently and are the only ones in the New Covenant.

It is a pity we don't see eye to eye on some things but as you say, provided we put forth our views in a brotherly way we shall no doubt survive and it will have to be a case of wait and see when Christ comes to make all things clear.

With Love to all in patient waiting, Harvey and Evelyn.

My Reply:

Thank you for requesting "The Great Mystery of the Christian Religion," No sooner asked for than printed! Copies are enclosed for all our readers and more are available request.

Thank you for your reply to the question, Who is gathered to Armageddon? Of course the usual answer is that we should put verse 15 in parenthesis, but why? For those who are interested, reference to Young's Concordance shows that the name Armageddon means the "hill of Megiddo," and "Megiddo" is the "Place of God." I cannot make anything of it at present but perhaps some thoughts may come together in the process of time.

You refer to 1 John 1:7 - "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," and to Chapter 2 verse 2 - "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." If these verses are to apply in the future Kingdom, then why are animal sacrifices required as the "means of forgiveness" and for cleansing "from all unrighteousness"? We haven't needed such sacrifices for two thousand years and with immortal priests instructing the people in the next thousand when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth, why the need then? It just doesn't seem congruous to me.

I suppose I am taking a lot of convincing and even Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 33:18 have not persuaded me, as I don't see a literal material building referred to in Isaiah chapter 56, but reference to the "house" of Israel, natural and spiritual; while Jeremiah 33:18 on its own is no problem; only when one gets to verses 21 & 22 is there a problem and I think this can be understood as types. But I hesitate to make much comment here as I do not wish to be at all dogmatic and I am prepared to wait and see.

Russell.

Brother Harold Dawson writes:

"The proliferation of nuclear weapons in the hands of unstable nations, especially Arab nations, will be, I feel, relevant to the "time of trouble such as never was." The return of Jesus will not be just one of these fine days, but to save planet earth - and God's elect from destruction. "Of that day knoweth no man," said Jesus, and that day could be a terrible time. We are well blessed in many ways and have been all along compared to the dreadful situations of thousands during the two world wars and many others since."

Kind Regards, Harold Dawson.

In July 1995 I attended a talk given by Brother Cyril Marsters at the Christadelphian Summer School in Birmingham, and I was generally impressed and pleased to find the Nazarene case put forward with such fairness though bias showed through time and again which I felt was to be expected, but it was at the end of the talk I was astounded at Cyril's remark concerning Robert Roberts' answer to Edward Turney, "Well, friend Turney, What have you to answer to that? I can't see any answer." How was it that Cyril Masters could not see the truths he put forward from Turney's speech and the foolishness of Robert Roberts' counters. Prejudice is blind and it is sad to see it in those we love for Jesus' sake. It was because of this I eventually sent away for a taped copy of the talk which I reproduce below verbatim:

Russell.

The Clean Flesh Heresy and The Statement of Faith

1066 they tell me had its moments, but it just couldn't compare with 1873 for excitement. I say that advisedly - my wife advised me. She said "what a dull subject! You'd better liven it up a bit. Well, I'm trying. But seriously, I ask you, what could be more exciting than an actual heresy bursting upon the Christadelphian scene one evening, being eclipsed by a masterful exposition of received wisdom on the next?"

So, first of all, I'll tell you how I came into contact with the subject, I think it was in 1961, I sent away for this booklet, "The Sacrifice of Christ," by Edward Turney.

The booklet is a record of a lecture given by Turney in 1873 in the Temperance Hall, but in addition to the one I sent for, I think this one came at the same time, - "A Review of The Slain Lamb" by F.J.Pearce. "The Slain Lamb" of course being Robert Robert's lecture the following evening.

Now the opening sentence of "The Review" informed me that Robert Robert's "Slain Lamb" lecture was given in reply to a lecture delivered the previous evening by Edward Turney, the one I had just obtained - the heresy.

Now I must shamefully admit that I avidly read these two heretical booklets, but knowing that my education had been sadly neglected I had never read Robert Robert's "Slain Lamb;" my conscience told me it was high time to read the words of our brother himself. Now whether "The Slain Lamb" was out of print at the Office in the '60's, I can't recall; but evidently I had difficulty in finding a copy. But coming to the rescue, as he had done in so many ways previously - I don't think he's here, my honourable friend John Weaving sent me a spare copy he had, and I dug this out recently from the archive and it still had John's note intact inside it; "8th August 63, Dear Cyril and Ruth, In haste, love John." So thanks to John I was now able to look at the actual words of our esteemed Robert Robert's himself.

Now I have another friend, strange as it may seem, you have another friend sitting not many yards from here rejoicing under the initials W.V.R. Our friend who also is esteemed, in some quarters; our friend, Bill, as you may know, is interested in dates, and this interest led him to devise his own formula for telling you the day of the week of any past date you care to tax him with. Now the title page of "The Slain Lamb" states that the lecture was delivered on Friday 29th July 1873 in reply to the one given in the Renunciationist interest given the previous evening. Bill's eagle eyes spotted this, and he told me on the phone recently, "Somebody got their dates wrong. July 29th 1873 was not a Friday." I, of course, was nonplussed. Lo and behold, when I looked at Turney's booklet, it said, August 28th 1873, not July. Well, I've had these two booklets over thirty years and I've never noticed the discrepancy. So, on asking my learned friend whether in the said year the 28th August happened to be a Thursday he was able immediately to confirm that it was. I'm happy therefore, - sorry, Bill, we're happy - my learned friend and I, are both happy to get at the correct dates, Thursday 28th, Friday 29th August 1873. Not July

Now, as to the birth of the heresy we can't pin-point with any accuracy the exact hour of birth, but I think we can say that the birth took place on the former, and the naming ceremony took place on the latter of the aforementioned dates. As with all births there were preparations beforehand, but we'll leave mention of these until later.

Now as I've said, "The Slain Lamb" booklet tells us that the lecture was delivered in reply to the one given in the Renunciationist interest on the previous evening, and a footnote on page 3 explains that the Renunciationists, as Roberts dubbed them, taught that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh and that they renounced the doctrine that He was a Son of man. Now, in the interests of truth it must be said that the first part of this charge is completely untrue; the second part, being rather a play on the word 'man,' and confusing the way in which Turney used the word in his context, is not strictly correct either. I hope you will see that this comment is justified when we look at Turney's actual beliefs.

After Renunciationists, the second label given to Turney and his followers was "The Clean Flesh Heretics," and the term "Clean Flesh" arose because of Turney's rejection of Roberts's belief in Sinful Flesh.

Because of this rejection, in “The Slain Lamb,” Roberts taunted Turney, on page 20, with believing in good flesh, which phrase presumably later became modified to clean flesh - the label which has stuck ever since.

Next I’d like to give you, mainly in my own words, but with some quotations, my understanding of Turney’s views from my reading of his lecture, “The Sacrifice of Christ.”

So, the first heading on the nature of man - Turney believed that man as created was a natural body of living flesh and blood. He was created as part of the system we all experience with its cycle of birth, growth, maturity, then decline and eventual death; the creation described in Genesis as very good. But his nature, as created, included all the feelings and emotions, impulses and desires which are natural to man, and he was placed on probation for eternal life.

Now on the nature of sin, Turney said sin is the transgression of God’s law. And he said, and I quote;

“Now I maintain that there is nothing in man with which the Almighty has endowed him that is sinful of itself; but by the too great exercise of certain endowments or faculties, he oversteps the divine boundary line, and then we have what is called sin, but not till then. If desires were sin then God would be the author of sin, for man can only be what his Creator made him.”

The next heading is Turney’s views on Adam’s sin and its effect, and it’s perhaps worth pointing out here that there was no disagreement between Turney and Roberts over their literal interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis, when they spoke about Adam they both were referring to one single individual person. Turney says that God gave Adam a law, the breaking of which would result in death. Adam broke God’s law and lost his right to life, his life was forfeited. Terrible words at which Robert Roberts jumped up and down about because it wasn’t scriptural.

That sentence, Turney argued, was a judicial one; it meant the taking away of Adam’s natural life, it was an inflicted death, in other words, capital punishment. This didn’t happen because, in God’s mercy, the penalty was only inflicted in type. But in the slaying of the animals in Eden Adam was meant to see in their violent death what was, in fact, due to him, and also at this time, Adam had no progeny, he and his wife were the sum total of the human race, therefore, says Turney, having lost his right to life he had not only forfeited his own but also the lives of all who were in him at that time. And this, I think, for Turney, was the sense in which, by one man sin entered the world. Romans 5:12.

Now on the nature of Christ, having already, drawn attention to the untrue claim in “The Slain Lamb” about Turney’s views on the subject, I will quote directly from Turney, page 35 of the booklet, having mentioned various theories concerning Christ, he said;

“I have uniformly taught that the nature of Jesus was precisely like our own,”

and of speaking about various other children by Joseph he said,

“The flesh of their brother Jesus was just like theirs.”

And I can vouch for the fact that these statements are completely consistent with his lecture as a whole. Turney believed that Jesus was a part of the human race and was of the same nature as us. The nub of his ideas of Jesus lay in the significance he saw of His origin. The import of the virgin birth for Turney was that Jesus’ life did not spring from a human father, but was initiated directly from God. Jesus, he said, was a last Adam (1 Corinthians 15) and His life, like the life of the first Adam at creation was free, that is, it was not forfeited to sin.

Now, on the sacrifice of Christ, being of the same nature as His brethren but not having lost His life in Adam as they have, the consequence was, argued Turney that Jesus was able to give that life for them; also the life that His Father had given Him He had not yielded up to sin, it remained His own. Therefore He was in a position to lay it down of His own free will as a ransom for us, “while we were without strength” - Romans 5:6, or, (R.E.B.) “while we were still helpless Christ died to redeem us.”

Turney saw all men's personal sins as being treated by God, I think, as included in that one sin of Adam their Federal Head, which I think is the description that his present day followers - this is how they explain it. And this was in order that God might have mercy on all in Christ by imputing the righteousness of Christ to them. So I suppose you have two Federal Heads. Turney saw in Jesus the Lamb of God - the great anti-type of all the sacrifices previously made under the law, the Lamb without blemish. He saw Jesus as the unsinning victim upon whom the sins of the world were laid, and after resurrection, when He entered heaven itself, Hebrews 9:24, then He presented His offering to God and became our High Priest and remains there as our Advocate with the Father.

That then is my understanding of Turney's views on these matters, as I read it from the record of his lecture.

Now the background happenings leading up to the lecture - these two lectures were of course, not delivered out of the blue but were the culmination of writings, discussions, and disagreements which had gone on previously. Some of them for years. Some of Turney's views of 1873, now developed and presented in his lecture as a unified whole, originated not with himself, but with a David Handley. Turney acknowledged in his lecture his indebtedness to Handley for his discussions with him. Of interest therefore, is a letter from David Handley to Robert Roberts written nearly two years previous to the lectures on the subject of redemption through Jesus, and this letter sets out one of the basic ideas developed by Turney. Here is a short quote. Handley said,

“All who derive life from Adam lost it, for in him all sinned, but Christ could suffer the penalty and then redeem His brethren, for He had never forfeited His life by personal transgression. And His life being independent of the race He could give it for a ransom. While no man could give to God a ransom for his brother, the Son of God, who was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, could, having the price of redemption in His own power.”

Handley concluded that letter to Robert Roberts by saying, if you think the matter worthy of insertion in “The Christadelphian,” use it. If not refuse it. Robert Roberts did publish the letter without comment in “The Christadelphian” for November 1871.

Now it's plain from reading Turney that various pamphlets had been written on these matters both by himself and by Robert Roberts. During the lecture, he held up in his hand a pamphlet by Robert Roberts entitled “A Review of Brother Turney's Answers to the Sacrifice of Christ” from which he wished to quote. Later in the lecture he remarked on Robert Roberts' reaction to the publication of his 32 questions, so putting two and two together I assume the Answers pamphlet was a sequel to the Questions one. Perhaps Neil will put me right on that after. So with the various pamphlets and reviews being published a number of brethren became curious to hear more of Turney's views.

Turney, who apparently resided in Nottingham, I gather, received letters from brethren in Birmingham requesting him to go there (or, come here), to explain his new idea, as it was being called. The result was a meeting arranged for the 22nd August 1873 and Turney describes this meeting in his introduction to the booklet. Quote,

“About seven in the evening more than twenty brethren and sisters had assembled at 71, Belgrave Road. I then proceeded to sketch out my subject. This occupied about an hour and a half... After I got through my sketch many questions were asked, and at the end of nearly four hours of hard work in a small closely packed room, one of the brethren rose to express the thanks of the meeting at the free and fair manner in which at their request I had come forward.”

He then describes how the following lecture, the lecture, the heretical lecture, delivered on the 28th August came about. I want to quote him on this because it does illustrate how Turney saw the attitude of Robert Roberts towards him. Following the meeting we just mentioned of the 22nd after which Turney said he received letters from those present stating that the meeting as a whole was convinced that what he said was true and scriptural, he received an urgent request to deliver a lecture to as many of the Birmingham

brethren as could be got together on the subject of the sacrifice of Christ. So it's from here I will quote direct from him, from the introduction to the booklet.

"The reader will very likely ask why this lecture was not delivered in the Athenaeum Rooms, seeing that brethren alone were allowed to be present." (I don't think that was sexist, I think he meant members.) This is the answer, "Mr Roberts holds the Athenaeum Rooms in his own name, though he does not of course pay all the rent himself. A number of brethren wished him to grant the use of the room and were so anxious that, as before stated they preferred to pay for the use of it. What was the reply of this good and valiant man, this mighty warrior who was ever ready to let in a foe in order to display his prowess in putting him to flight? "No! Never! Not while I hold the place shall that wolf enter here..." The reader will now know why I found myself in the Temperance Hall."

He continues,

"Up to the moment of going on the platform I was told in writing that the meeting was mine: and that the man who courageously bolted the Athenaeum doors against me was doing his utmost to "neutralize" the effect of the lecture. He had for nights been declaiming against me, and against my doctrine. And although he knew perfectly well that he and his friends had not taken the Temperance Hall and would not have to pay for it, he had the singular audacity to request that the brethren would grant him the privilege of putting all the questions to me on Thursday night."

He then goes on to describe how the Editor, as he called him, disgraced himself about a dozen times by attempted interruptions during the lecture, and how at the end, when the Chairman rose to make his closing remarks he was prevented by Robert Roberts, "who, shouting at the top of his voice threw the meeting into confusion."

Now, if this was correct it would appear that our brother had worked himself up into rather a frenzy. Surely not, I hear you say. Well, I'm obliged to lay before you a piece of, perhaps we'll call, internal evidence, which unfortunately tends to corroborate Turney's complaints. And I perform this duty by reading to you the first paragraph of our brothers lecture. He, Robert Roberts, said,

"This meeting is necessitated by that which took place last night; as to some things which took place at the close having an untoward appearance I would say judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Paul turned upon Elymas the sorcerer with an emphasis apparently inconsistent with that meek and quiet spirit recommended under ordinary circumstances. We read also of Jesus being frequently stirred to anger by the perversity, subtle, hypocritical foes. Little wonder, then if in our own weak days under the goading presence of many evil circumstances there should be a departure from that perfect equanimity which it is desirable at all times to observe (1st paragraph of "The Slain Lamb")

Now he continues these explanations for a further two paragraphs, one of them is quite a long one so I'm not going to bother you with all that, but I would like to read just a fraction because it contains a delightfully expressive reference to lung power.

"To add to the aggravation of this, the Chairman refused me permission to make a communication to the meeting. What could I do but call mere lung power to the aid of duty. As one with whom the interests of the truth are supreme I felt called upon not to allow the conventionalities of public assembly to override those interests, therefore overleaping the opposition of the Chair I asked the lecturer in loud voice to meet me in public debate, for without loudness of voice my object would not have been attained."

Sad, isn't it? Anyway, he recovered, and having composed himself back to his normal authoritative self he was then able to describe his qualifications for dealing with Turney's heresy. He said, on page 3,

“The question as a whole is a difficult question for one reason. It has to do with God’s view of the case. It’s difficult for the mind of the flesh to enter into the divine methods of working; it is only after a prolonged spiritual education that we come at this.”

On page 4: - “One thing that distinguishes this disturbing heresy more than another is that it cannot express itself in words which the Holy Spirit teaches but is obliged continually to employ invented phrases. 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 show 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.”

So with his credentials established our brother seeks to leave us in doubt as to his estimation of Turney and his heretical views, and for the benefit of our own spiritual education, I think we ought to listen to him. Again I quote, page 7,

“I will undertake to destroy link by link the whole chain of sophistry by which the minds of the brethren are being bewitched.”

Again, page 10: - “I will endeavour to make manifest the most unscriptural, the most carnal, the most untrue, and the most mischievous character of the new philosophy with which it is now attempted to inoculate the brethren on the subject of the flesh.”

Those last two words “the flesh” indicate the main area of disagreement, I think, between Roberts and Turney. The superstructures of their respective arguments about the sacrifice of Christ hinge on their individual perceptions of the nature of man. So before we can come to our final section we must take a quick look at this difference of views. So a very brief look at some of the arguments between Turney and Robert Roberts - selective, of course. We have already looked at Turney’s views - man, he argued, was a natural creation, very good within the limits of mortality. He was capable of sinning but having a choice in the matter and man’s natural endowments were what God had given him. And he argued that sinful was quite the wrong adjective to qualify the noun flesh. A sinful man, Turney said, was a man of bad character, but not of bad flesh.

Now Roberts appeared to completely disagree, and on page 17, of “The Slain Lamb” he poured scorn on Turney’s comments about sin relating to character rather than to flesh, and he said,

“Now what is character, brothers? Is it not the manifestation of the qualities of the flesh?”

He made many other comments which he made it quite clear he was speaking about man’s literal flesh, for example, on page 17,

“It is a marvellous piece of new-born wisdom to say that sinful applies to the character but not to the substance that produces the character.”

Page 18: - “The mind of the flesh is an evil and a sinful thing. Natural impulses resident in the brain flesh are in all directions opposed to God.”

Page 20: - “The flesh is weak, unclean and sinful.”

Page 21: - “All New Testament allusions to the subject teach that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing.”

Now this leaves my simple mind with an unanswered question, as to how this evil fixation in literal flesh came about, and Dr Thomas, as we probably all know, provides the answer. The definition of this physical principle. The quotation (second hand to me I haven’t looked it up, it is from Turney’s), is from “Elpis Israel,” page 113, paragraph 3, as follows,

“The word sin,” he says,” is used in two principle acceptations, it signifies in the first place the transgression of law, and in the next it represents that physical principle in the animal nature which is the cause of all its disease, death and resolution into dust. It is called that in the flesh which has the power of death, - it is that in the flesh which has the power of death and it is called sin because the development or fixation of this evil in the flesh was the result of transgression.”

So here we have the Doctor’s definition of sinful flesh and the explanation of how it came about - it came about because of transgression.

Now the whole tenor of Robert Roberts’ “Slain Lamb” agrees with that definition but on the previous evening Turney had pointed out that Roberts had not always been consistent in that opinion and he referred to an article by Robert Roberts in “The Ambassador” for March 1869, in which he had actually agreed with what Turney himself was now saying. This is what he quoted Roberts as saying and he gives chapter and verse: it was page 58, left column of “The Ambassador” for March, 1869. He says,

“The phrase “sin in the flesh” is metonymical. It is not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading physical organization.” Further down, “There is no such thing as this essential evil or sin.”

And again, obviously answering a communication from somebody,

“Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he transgressed. There is no evidence of this whatsoever and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way.”

Obviously then, Roberts had changed his mind on the subject by August, 1873.

As we’ve said Roberts’ and Turney’s differing views on the sacrifice of Christ are completely dependent upon their views upon the nature of man. Turney saw Jesus as a second Adam with natural life received direct from God. A life in which He chose to do God’s will and which therefore he did not forfeit through sin. In that sense it was a free life, His own life, which He laid down of his own free will for us, said Turney. Roberts on the other hand, who saw the nature of man sinful and actually evil in the literal flesh, a nature which was condemned, the nature was condemned, saw the Lord Jesus in a completely different way. He argued that as Jesus came in our flesh then He had sinful flesh. He like us was cursed. Therefore before He could redeem us He had to die to purify Himself.

I’ll just give two short examples from “The Slain Lamb,” Page 8, Roberts said,

“I will show you that He, Jesus, 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.”

And page 16,

“But Christ, instead of being what is called a free life was in the condemned nature of the children of Adam, hence when He died nothing wrong happened so far as God’s doings were concerned.”

Turney accused Roberts then of contradictions. The previous evening he quoted, again from “The Ambassador,” March, 1869, to show that Roberts had stated that Jesus ability to overcome sin was owing to superior power He had been given. Roberts didn’t deny this in his lecture. Instead, on page 21, third paragraph, of “The Slain Lamb,” he repeated something similar, confirming in effect that his view was still the same.

Discussing these views of Roberts, Turney in his lecture had described an imaginary picture. On page 42, and I quote,

“Here is a heavy weight. You call this man to lift it but find it too heavy for him, he is willing enough but not strong enough and because he cannot raise the weight you condemn him. You then call that man to raise the weight which he does forthwith and because he has more strength than the other you reward and exalt him.” Turney asked, “Is that justice?” And he comments, “If you make Christ stronger than His brethren you destroy the Scriptures which say that He was tempted in all points as we are. Hebrews 4:15.”

The next evening as we would expect, Robert Roberts in his inimitable way was able to destroy that argument without any difficulty whatsoever. On page 22 and I quote, Roberts said,

“as for the question asked that if God gave Jesus greater power than we, has He not dealt unjustly with us. It is not the question of a child of God. Such a question is enough to secure for the questioner the grave of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.”

Well, friend Turney, What have you to answer to that? I can’t see any answer.

Well, I think I shall have to leave it there. The look at the subject has been brief and restricted in the time available and the quotations, I admit, have been very selective, but the aims were,

(a) to give a brief description of the heresy for those not knowing what it was all about, and in my experience I don’t think there are many of us that did know, and

(b) to highlight the thinking of the two main protagonists in the dispute and

(c) hopefully, to provoke a few resulting questions we could profitably ask ourselves today in particular with regard to the Statement of Faith and the legacy which Robert Roberts has left us in that.

And my personal view is that had not Turney come on the scene at that point some of the clauses could have been quite different. Bearing in mind Roberts had, on more occasions than the one I quoted, actually agreed apparently with some of the things Turney was advocating. So I’ll leave it to you and see what comes of it.

Cyril Marsters

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FIRST COMMENTARY ON

“THE CLEAN FLESH HERESY AND THE STATEMENT OF FAITH”

Dear Russell,

Thanks for the account of the talk given by Cyril Marsters as a result of his reading of the lecture by Edward Turney “The Sacrifice of Christ,” 28th August 1873 and the lecture by Robert Roberts “The Slain Lamb” the following evening 29th August 1873.

Yes, Cyril has presented Edward Turney’s case quite fairly in quoting from Turney’s Lecture, but he has certainly read “The Slain Lamb” with, I am convinced, the bias of Roberts’ indoctrination of his followers.

When I read “The Slain Lamb” I could detect plainly the evil motives of Roberts against the great pretence and show of glorifying God, and when in a dilemma of failure to answer a simple question based on God’s justice, he either says, the question should not be asked, or in the case of Christ’s unselfishness in

laying down His life freely for all and not under compulsion, attributes no glory to Him but says, "It is all of God my dear Brethren.

God did it." But Roberts did not destroy any of Turney's arguments and examples, but made himself look quite foolish and had Turney so desired he could have enlarged on it but he was there to bring the Truth into focus, not ridicule Roberts.

How different Cyril's case to mine in 1952!

I was being criticized and hounded for expounding in the Christadelphian ecclesia the views of Edward Turney which I had never read or heard from others, and was loaned from the Recording Brother that very lecture "The sacrifice of Christ" which after reading, confirmed the very views for which I was contending; this of course led to my resignation and that of my wife, followed by re-immersion into the True Lamb of God which He provided as the real Sacrifice for the Sin of the world.

Now in his first paragraph Cyril is putting upon Turney the label of heresy, but not only this, - a judgment in favour of the man Roberts who wrested Scripture right, left and centre to bring God's unblemished and uncondemned Son into that very position of condemnation and blemish, forbidden to an Israelite under the law to offer.

I ask him, "What is exciting about "heresy" to one who loves Truth?" Here follows Cyril's words:- "But seriously, I ask you, what could be more exciting than an actual heresy bursting upon the Christadelphian scene one evening, being eclipsed by a masterful exposition of received wisdom on the next?" Perhaps Cyril would do well to read Proverbs 18:13 "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

Despite all that Cyril Marsters relates from his reading of the booklets, he has pre-judged that any doctrine based on and proved by Holy Scripture, though it be found true and yet is in opposition to Christadelphian teaching handed down by Thomas and Roberts, must be styled "Heresy," yet Edward Turney in his lecture was contending in one aspect of it, for the very teaching contended for by Dr. Thomas and R. Roberts, - that Adam was created from the dust of the ground a natural body of life and that when he sinned no change of nature occurred but a change of character and relationship to his Maker. Furthermore they both said there was no evidence in Scripture to support the view of changed nature, this was in 1869 but Dr Thomas nevertheless violated Scripture in the latter half of his statement quoted from "Elpis Israel" by E. Turney, and the result of Dr. Thomas' unscriptural reasoning is that God was the Author of the sin which entered the world, for it is obvious that God was the Creator of Adam's corruptible nature which was capable of death before any law was given, a fact confirmed by Dr. Thomas in his written works.

Why did he change his mind after 1869? Simply because he wrote so much that he became entangled with the web of his own weaving which I can prove to anyone who may be interested in seeking for Truth.

I think it has been expressed somewhere that R. Roberts had only defended the "changed-nature" theory out of loyalty for Dr. Thomas who in fact may well have been unaware of the many contradictions expressed in his writings.

Where would Robert Roberts' wisdom have answered the question I now put in view of his sarcastic statement quoted from pages 17 and 18 of "The Slain Lamb" in regard to E. Turney's view that sinful applied to character and not to physical quality of man's flesh? If sinful applies to both the character and "the substance that produces the character" (as Roberts strangely expresses it), then it should follow that Jesus, a substance of flesh and blood who was sinless in character would have righteousness dwelling as a physical element in His flesh; how then could Robert Roberts with his marvellous found wisdom describe the nature of Jesus as condemned and unclean? Roberts dug a pit and fell into it.

I find it most difficult to accept that Roberts could use the case and examples of Jesus against the hypocritical Jews, to Justify his own outburst against a man who was expounding what he and Thomas believed in 1869 and in addition the true meaning of the sacrificial animal types under the Law as

foreshadowing the superior substance who was to come in the person of Jesus, whom Roberts was describing to be inferior to those types.

I now ask Cyril Marsters, “Do you not see this foolish outburst of R.Roberts eclipsed by the teaching and logical reasoning of the Spirit Word? And have you been so biased in your reading of the three booklets that it has brought you down to the level of the Apostate doctrine of “Original Sin” introduced from Rome and contained in Clause V of the B.A.S.F.?”

Neither had Roberts any excuses for his behaviour toward Turney. In fact Turney was not perverse, subtle nor hypocritical, but a very humble and sincere man. Yet in his talk he has been described as “Our esteemed brother”! That description should be transferred to Edward Turney. Roberts shows himself to be a master of the craft of changing the abstract into the physical and quoting the Scripture references out of context. Example in “The Visible Hand of God” page 34-2 Corinthians 1:9; and showing that Paul had not been freed from the death that Roberts believed to be the penalty but still had the sentence in His flesh, which is another of Roberts’ wresting of Scripture.

To Robert Roberts and most Christadelphians Christ’s death as a substitute for that of Adam is unacceptable because they are void of the true knowledge and understanding of the death that Adam incurred. In “The Visible Hand of God” Robert Roberts gave an incorrect teaching on this matter apart from teaching that Adam could not die left to himself. (Page 23).

Then on the matter of Enoch and those faithful alive at the return of Jesus, he was faced with a dilemma opposed to his own views and was forced to accept the substitutionary death of Christ in the Scriptural manner believed and taught by the Nazarenes. See Pages 42 and 43 of “The Visible Hand of God.”

It surprises me why there has been or should be, any divergent views on the nature of man between people who profess themselves to be intelligent readers of the account of Creation in Genesis. When faced with the topic of belief in the immortality of the soul every Christadelphian flies to Genesis, Ezekiel 18, Ecclesiastes, the Psalms, Job, etc., to prove the flesh or nature of man to be as God made it - capable of death; dust thou art.

If Cyril Marsters agrees with all these references to the nature of Adam at Creation together with Christadelphians in general, how would it be possible to believe that natural death came by man and at the same time believe Clause V that it came by the Creator through His sentence for Adam’s sin which defiled and became a physical law of his being, which was already there from Creation?

People do not like to accuse Dr. Thomas of this theory of changed and defiled flesh full of the element of compulsive tendency to sin, but he wrote this nonsense in “Elpis Israel” quoted by E.Turney from page 113 paragraph 3. I say “nonsense” because one would tend to think the statement should be the reverse way, and in any case affecting character not the physical flesh, which Turney rightly contended.

This doctrine of Thomas and Roberts therefore was the doctrine of “original sin” a legacy they refused and then re-adopted, thus causing all the trouble, strife and contention which has existed since Turney taught the Truth as preached by Jesus and His Apostles.

How strange that out of all the Christadelphian divisions and sections they all seem to be indoctrinated with the error that natural death came by Adam’s sin.

It is the main root of all the controversy and failure to understand the mission and the sacrificial death of Christ, yet so simple when all the misrepresentation and bias is removed by logical reasoning and common sense based on the Scriptures and not the self-interpretations of men who prefer power and authority over others. Through Christadelphian history whenever a doctrinal problem arises, it has always been the question, “What do our pioneers say?” when it should be said, “Search the Scriptures as interpreted by Jesus and His Apostles.”

I have only this sad conclusion to come to in view of the statement by Robert Roberts that “Sinful” and therefore “Sinless” applies to the substance which produces these two characteristics; then Jesus needed not

to die to cleanse His own substance which Roberts and his followers were forced to believe or accept on his terms. Roberts therefore hung himself from the gallows of his own making and consequently all who continued to resist the rescue offered to them through the teaching and reasoning of sincere men who sought no financial gain in the writing of books, but through simple down to earth teaching and writing sought only to enlighten those in darkness to the mission of Jesus, The Light of the World.

P. Parry.

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SECOND COMMENTARY ON

“THE CLEAN FLESH HERESY AND THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

In my introductory remarks to the above talk I said I had noted bias showing through time and again. On reading and further study of his talk it is evident that Brother Cyril Marsters is turning a blind eye to Robert Robert’s many blunders and obvious errors.

He does well to point out two of Robert Robert’s untruths - that “Renunciationists taught that Christ did not come in the flesh” and that “they renounced the doctrine that He was the Son of man.” This, says Cyril, is “in the interests of truth,” if only he had considered the many more errors in Robert Robert’s teachings “in the interests of truth” he would have seen and appreciated the Scripture truths in Turney’s lecture, but it seems he refused to consider for a moment that perhaps Edward Turney might be right, but being a Christadelphian, he has accepted the general teachings of that community based on the B.A.S.F. seemingly without question.

It does not surprise me that Cyril had difficulty in obtaining a copy of “The Slain Lamb,” even Roberts himself very quickly revised his own speech though not sufficiently to meet the approval of the publishers, for there is evidence of disagreement in Christadelphian circles as to its content and after his death parts of his lecture were deleted in an attempt to make it appear more suitable for general reading.

We do well to remember that Robert Roberts was a journalist where truth gives way to sensationalism and one cannot but be amazed at his use of language; and to accept his word readily is dangerous, for he does not do what he says he is going to in “The Slain Lamb.” Is it really a “masterful exposition of received wisdom.” We ask from where did the “received wisdom” emanate? Careful consideration will show it is not divine wisdom, any more than we would expect to find in his writings for The Birmingham Post.

In the first paragraph of “The Slain Lamb” Robert Roberts tries to justify his shameful ill-temper of the previous evening. No apology here; and though not quoted by Cyril Marsters, Roberts says he was not dissatisfied with his behaviour. I cannot do better than quote the view of Turney regarding this outburst:-

“The first paragraph of “The Slain Lamb” introduces “Elymas the Sorcerer” and “the subtle hypocritical foes” of Jesus as a sufficient excuse for the shouting and temper by the editor at the close of our lecture on “The Sacrifice of Christ.” If it be possible that we are not a “subtle hypocrite,” a “child of the devil, and enemy of all unrighteousness,” for so Elymas is described, then it would seem that there was no adequate cause for so violent a perturbation of “that perfect equanimity (as Brother Roberts’ says) which it is desirable at ail times to observe.” Without fear we venture to leave our identification by this hue and cry to the brethren in all the earth...

Paragraph 3. This admits that he (Brother Roberts) “was goaded into a breach of public etiquette;” and then tells us he “was not dissatisfied with his offence in the matter.” That is to say, he was satisfied with his own disgraceful behaviour! Setting aside this peculiar logic, this utterance pictures a self-satisfied self-sufficient individual.”

Robert Roberts says he “asked the lecturer in loud voice to meet me in public debate.” But only minutes before Turney had asked him. Cyril Marsters knew this when preparing his talk so why did he not say so? I quote from the closing remarks of Turney’s lecture:-

“And now brethren, I have finished my lecture, but I will beg your attention for five minutes while I relate a few personal matters. Mr Roberts has noised abroad that I have not the courage to meet him in discussion. If that be true, all I can say is that he is the first man of whom I have felt afraid. But brethren, I am not naturally afraid of the faces of men especially of men who, I firmly believe cannot maintain the cause they have undertaken to defend.

To tell you the truth, I rather like a sharp encounter, it does me good; but I do not put much faith in such things as a means of settling questions of importance. This can only come after quiet and patient private investigation.

Now I will tell you in a few words the story of these challenges. First of all Mr Roberts attacked my 32 questions (* see footnote) the “Christadelphian” for June 1873, suppressing the name of the author. Upon this Brother Farmer here present asked me if I would see Mr Roberts privately, provided he was willing. I said yes. I should like to see him privately. Then Brother Farmer arranged with Brother Sully to go at once to Birmingham with the object of bringing about this interview.

What message did Brother Sully bring back? Listen. Brother Sully:- “Will you see Brother Turney privately about this affair?”

Mr Roberts: “Oh, if Brother Turney had wished to see me, he would not have launched those 32 questions.”

Brother Sully: “But I know Brother Turney does wish to see you.”

Mr Roberts: “Then I don’t know that I want to see him,” and as confirmation of this he said in a letter:-

“I would rather not be hampered by personal influences,”

After this I said I was willing to meet him before one or two brethren on each side, with Dr.Hayes for chairman and Brother A. Andrew for reporter, the report to be used by either party as he thought well. This offer he absolutely refused. He said:

“It would be submitting himself to an irritating situation.” I dare say it would, and he spoke as he felt. But why should he be irritated, seeing, as he pretends, he has all truth on his side and I have all error on mine?...

Well, then, the truth is brethren that I have been the party ready to meet Mr Roberts on anything like fair terms, time and again. But he would not, for reasons best known to himself.

Now I put down a public challenge to discuss three or four nights before you all when I return... I hope Mr Roberts will be better informed on the scheme on redemption before I return, for instead of publicly debating the question it would be far more profitable to go round the country helping him to set it forth. But so long as he is hostile, it will be war to the last. I never give in when I feel sure I am in the right.”

So why did Roberts shout at the top of his voice instead of just accepting Turney’s invitation? As Turney said, “Envy and rage are twin demons,” and it seems Robert Roberts was possessed of both. Let us remember the words of James:- “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19 & 20).

The reason, it seems to me, why Robert Roberts would not meet Edward Turney in debate was that he was unable to support his views with logical reasoning from Scripture, and he knew it. This is seen to be Robert Roberts’ weakness and Edward Turney’s strength. Roberts had a wonderful way with words at the expense of reason and when challenged in logic he had not the willingness to stop and quietly work matters

out; but would rather throw in a phrase to divert attention from the heart of the matter and then pretend and say he had countered the argument put to him.

Robert Roberts' inability to reason is seen, for example, in his statement, "The question as a whole is a difficult question for one reason. It has to do with God's view of the case. It's difficult for the mind of the flesh to enter into the divine methods of working."

On his own definition of the "mind of the flesh" he ought to say it is impossible for it to enter into the divine methods of working seeing that in his view "the mind of the flesh is an evil and a sinful thing. Natural impulses in the brain flesh are in all directions opposed to God."

The fact is that no amount of prolonged "spiritual" education will enable the mind of the flesh to see God's view of the case or to enter into the divine methods of working. However, the mind of the spirit of a babe in Christ quickly sees God's views and methods.

Roberts made a foolish claim in saying "One thing that distinguishes this disturbing heresy more than another is that it cannot express itself in words which the Holy Spirit teaches but is obliged to employ invented phrases." Someone had the patience to count the 423 Scripture quotations and allusions in Turney's lecture, but setting aside the copious appeal to the Scriptures by Turney, it is due largely to Roberts' literary art that Christadelphia is so full of invented phrases.

We are told Robert Roberts jumped up and down because of the terrible words "forfeited life." Do they not express Scripture teaching? They are as scriptural as the term "condemned life." In those parts of the world where capital punishment is lawful and someone breaks the law, his life is forfeit; i.e. he is condemned. Roberts agrees with the term "condemned," yet balks at "forfeit." However, this principle of forfeited life is seen in many places throughout Scripture. Is not a condemned life forfeited; and is not a forfeited life condemned? The problem is for Robert Roberts followers to find the solution. Our booklet, "The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B'Yom" give the scriptural answer, and cites fifteen such instances

Let us take some of the quotations which Cyril Marsters used from Roberts' lecture;-

Roberts boasted, "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."

Search his lecture as you may, you will not find his placing of the theory of the truth anywhere, in any language.

Again he said, "I will undertake to destroy link by link the whole chain of sophistry by which the minds of the brethren are being bewitched"

We suppose by this he meant to destroy the links in Turney's arguments - he failed miserably.

And again, "I will endeavour to make manifest the most unscriptural, the most carnal, the most untrue, and the most mischievous character of the new philosophy..."

Brave words but we look in vain for any manifestation.

In all these boasts Roberts failed to achieve any success and proved himself a broken reed.

And when Roberts stated: "The flesh is weak, unclean and sinful," he was right only in the smallest part. The flesh indeed is weak but when Jesus said this He was not referring to literal flesh but the weakness of man's will. When literal flesh is unclean it can be washed with soap and water, but this is not the way Roberts meant us to understand him, and to suppose the literal flesh can be sinful is foolish nonsense passed down from the Roman Catholic church which adopted this doctrine about the year 400 A.D. Roberts mixes up the literal sense with the metaphorical sense making his arguments incomprehensible.

And Roberts statement that “All New Testament allusions to the subject teach that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing,” is nothing short of a lie. Such extravagant language is not conducive to finding the truth of anything. There is not in the whole of the Scriptures anywhere taught that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing. I put the challenge to our many Christadelphian readers to find just one.

Cyril Marsters says, “for the benefit of our own spiritual education, I think we ought to listen to him.” Ought we not rather listen to God first as our brother Grant Pearce says in his letter reported elsewhere in this C.L. Brother Grant’s letter is full of wisdom from above and an appeal to sound reason in contrast to Roberts’ lecture “The Slain Lamb.”

Notice again the craftiness of Roberts’ answer when opposing Turney’s argument regarding the weak man and the strong man - one unable to lift the heavy weight and the other able. He twists it round to accuse Turney of doubting God’s fairness. Of course Turney never doubted God in any way. Robert Roberts was being dishonest, and he knew it. Turney was pointing to the unfairness of Christadelphian doctrine which destroys the Scripture which says that Jesus Christ was tempted in all points as we are.

It is too late to quote Isaiah 42 to Roberts :- “Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob” but I ask Cyril Marsters, “Are you still going to answer with Robert Roberts and say ‘It is not the question of a child of God.’ And judge Turney as Roberts does in saying, ‘Such a question is enough to secure for the questioner the grave of Koran, Dathan and Abiram’“? Roberts’ words are sensationalism at its worst and utter rubbish.

In expressing Turney’s views Cyril Marsters said:-

“Turney saw all men’s personal sins as being treated by God, I think, as included in the one sin of Adam.”

Turney writes pages showing they were not. I will endeavour to clarify one aspect of the subject briefly in this fashion: -

My earliest instruction regarding the Atonement was in Sunday School when as a teenager my teacher, Brother Frank Hadley, explained that Jesus Christ gave His life as the purchase price for the whole human race, and it is from this starting point I have come to my present understanding,

In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said of Himself “The Son of man came... to give his life a ransom for many, and the meaning of ransom is “corresponding price.” So to what does the price of His life correspond? I say it corresponds to the life of Adam which was not taken.

Now Jesus Christ was the second Adam and, I maintain that the first Adam and the second Adam, both being Sons of God, were made one as good as the other and the penalty due to the first Adam of dying in the day he sinned was, in God’s mercy and love for us, held over until “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” the second Adam, should take his place. The life of Jesus Christ being the Ransom or corresponding price.

Hebrews 9:12 tells us that “by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” We ask, redemption from what? Paul uses the illustration of Sin as being a slave-owner, so that when Adam sinned he sold himself to Sin and became the bond-servant of sin. (The system of slavery as explained in the Law of Moses gives the complete picture). We are born into that bondage and need redemption from it. Which the Lamb of God did when He entered into heaven itself.

1 Corinthians 6:20: “Know ye not that...ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.” We know the price paid was the precious blood of Jesus Christ. But why the purchase?

Jesus said, “Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends” and in laying down His life willingly and freely, He purchased the human race to do with it as He wishes, and when He added, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,” He was making selection as to whom He will forgive and whom He will not.

With every purchase, ransom or redemption there is a price paid; the price in exchange for the purchased, ransomed, or redeemed. We call this exchange substitution, and so do many Christadelphians who accept Scripture and choose to ignore the B.A.S.F.

This is a short summary with but few Bible references, but it illustrates how the Atonement works. It also shows why there is no need for a change to sinful flesh of Adam or a bias to sin being inherent in human flesh. Indeed these Roman Catholic based doctrines obscure the truth and we earnestly exhort all who will to diligently “search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life...” (John 5:39).

Russell.

“The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth even from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is Judge himself.”

Psalm 50:1-6