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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings to all.

On BBC Radio 3 they have been broadcasting a series of programs called "Apocalypse Now and Then" in which the theology behind the belief that we are living at the end of time is examined.

Regrettably I missed the first two programmes and came in on the third when the theme of the "Anti-Christ" was looked at. The commentator talked mainly to a Californian preacher, Irving Baxter, who is the editor of "End Times" magazine which keeps its readers abreast of world events from an apocalyptic perspective. He is keen to identify the Anti-Christ of Scripture and his favourite candidate is the former president of Russia Mikail Gorbechov, principally because some reporter had remarked that although Gorbechov smiled he had iron teeth and had a birth mark on his forehead that was obviously the mark of the beast. Also apparently Mr Gorbechov is presently presiding over an annual conference to forward the idea of a "new world order." The conference headquarters is in San Francisco.

An Israeli theologian whose name I did not catch believed that the Anti-Christ was Emperor Nero for if the letters of his name were spelled out in an ancient alphabet and each letter was given a number Nero produced the 666 of the Bible. This was a code that the Jews of Biblical times would have understood.

In Michigan there is a T.V. station devoted to interpreting world events in tune with Bible prophecy and it is broadcast throughout America, Canada and Europe via satellite. The station is funded by selling Bible based products, tapes, videos and books and raises 12 to 15 million dollars annually for the station.

The anchor man said he had committed 14,000 verses of the Bible to memory, by subject, on prophecy and that he read 5 books a week on various related subjects. He believed that the invasion of Israel to come from the North would prove to be Russia, and that when Mr Yeltsin fell from power the next Russian Government would be the invader as those likely to take over from Yeltsin had revealed themselves to be anti-Semitic. Then would follow the great tribulation and the return of Christ to the earth.

It is clear that there are many sincere people throughout the world looking for the return of Jesus to the earth. It sometimes seems that those people who are fortunate enough not to be suffering war, starvation or persecution are entirely bent on pleasures or criminal activities of varying degrees of depravity, so it is heart-warming to know that there are others with their minds attuned to eternal things that are beautiful and uplifting.

With Love to all, Helen Brady.

“The Nature of Christ”

Reprinted from “The Testimony” Magazine, July 1988

A touchstone for most of our doctrines is to be found in the nature of Christ and his work of atonement. If we misunderstand his nature we are almost certain to fail in our understanding of the atonement. Similarly, if we fail to grasp the true nature of mortal man we shall not comprehend the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We speak of the nature of Christ, and not of his natures. This is to avoid entanglement with the orthodox teaching that Christ pre-existed as God the Son. The orthodox doctrine of the two natures of Christ in one person derives from and is a part of Trinitarian teaching. For the same reason it is better for us avoid using such terms as “the humanity of Christ” and “the divinity of Christ,” even though careful and precise usage might be consonant with true teaching. Since Scripture does not employ those phrases it is wiser for us not to do so.

Christendom’s beliefs about the nature(s) of Jesus arise from other erroneous beliefs or from misuse of Scripture. These are:

1. teaching concerning his personal pre-existence
2. teaching that man survives death (which leads to the neglect of belief in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth at Christ’s return).
3. failure to distinguish between those Scriptures which apply to Christ after his glorification and those which applied to him before his death.

We too must avoid the pitfalls created by item 3 above. Our study commences with the nature of Christ before his death.

Stepping stones to understanding

Useful stepping stones to our understanding are to be found in verses which tell us of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at his first coming: “He shall save his people from their sins.” “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” “...made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death...that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” “...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

These verses relate also to our own condition. We are sinners who will die. The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins and from death. This was to be accomplished by the grace of God, a gift which was totally unmerited on our part. In order to bring about this great work Christ was to share our nature, by which means he would be able to destroy the devil and thereby provide a way to release us from death.

The battle ground

The battle was thus to be fought on the territory of sin and death, and not remotely in some other way. Furthermore, it was no mechanical achievement brought about by effortless work. It was to be accomplished by Christ’s being touched with our infirmities and tempted in all points like his brethren; by his humbling himself; by suffering, strong crying and tears; and by his becoming obedient even unto death.

Jesus experienced the things of the childhood of a Jewish boy: he was circumcised, subject to Joseph and Mary, and he increased in wisdom as he grew older. As an adult he knew joy and sorrow, compassion

and anger. He knew what it was to be under stress, to weep, to need friends, to be hungry and tired, to be alone and to be heartbroken.

There can be no doubt that the Lord was a man of fellow feeling. He was “in all things...made like unto his brethren,” he was “from among (his) brethren” and was truly of “the seed of Abraham,” and thus was descended from Adam.

Some problems

From time to time some brethren, whilst giving ready assent to this teaching, have held back from its deeper implications. All of the experiences we have described were possible because Christ was mortal. This being so, would he not also share those things which the Spirit has expounded in such expressions as “I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing,” a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me;” “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind”? All of these things are summed up in such well-known words as, “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh;” and, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”

We have all inherited the downward pull of the flesh towards sin and death. Indeed, this has been the great dilemma of mankind, the impasse from which man had no escape. All men have cried, with Paul: “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

It appears to have been from a mistaken regard for the person of Christ that some brethren have shrunk from applying these words to Jesus; or if they have applied them, they have sought to re-define “sinful flesh” by saying that we do not inherit a bias toward sin. We believe that this is to misunderstand both the nature of Christ and the nature of his atoning work. It is to confuse the character of the Lord Jesus Christ with the background against which it was achieved. In fact, it diminishes the magnitude of the victory of Christ and the glory which now attaches to him.

On the other hand, there have been those who wholly accept the teaching concerning “sinful flesh” and are prepared to say that the Lord fully shared this infirmity; but they want to go further and say that all mankind is subject to some additional condemnation or uncleanness simply because of the flesh we bear; and that this would rest also on Christ. The Truth is set out in our Statement of Faith;

Clause V - That Adam broke this (Edenic) law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground, from whence he was taken - a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.

By birth we suffer from no legal impediment or guilt other than that which we physically inherit. This was true also of Christ.

Error complicates doctrine

All erroneous teaching complicates doctrine and makes even the refutation of it a matter which is far from easy. The truth is simple: as a result of his transgression Adam was condemned to die; his “very good” nature became evil. We physically inherit the results, but not the guilt, of that condemnation. When we sin we come under personal condemnation and deservedly so. The condemnation in our physical natures cannot be removed by baptism, by faith, by law or by anything other than a change to immortality at the hand of Christ should we be found faithful. The condemnation because of sin, however, can be removed by forgiveness through faithful baptism into the death of the Lord Jesus.

Sinful flesh is flesh inherited from the sinner, Adam. It is flesh in which the consequences of his sin are working towards death, and in which “the motions of sins” are at work. The promptings and urgings of the flesh are not themselves sin until they are yielded to, and then they bring forth sin. This is the difference between temptation and actual sin. Every man before and since Christ has sinned; that is, has been overcome of sin and is personally a transgressor.

Why was Christ victorious?

If this is so, and it is, how was it possible for Christ, who was fully of our nature, to be different from all other men by remaining sinless? Did he do what other men could have done had they gone about it the right way? In other words, was the difference in Christ solely a difference in what he achieved but not in anything else?

The answer is that no man other than Christ could attain unto perfection. Christ was provided to do what no one else could do. The hopelessness of man is set out in a variety of places. Take for example, the stated truth: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son..." The law was holy, just and good, but it could not work salvation because of the weakness of the flesh. This must be true of any law. There was not a law which was ordained unto life: "For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law." Man could not keep law, and therefore righteousness could not come by law.

Divine begetting

We have now come to the heart of the matter. Salvation came from God. The Lord of the vineyard sent His only Son. This was the only way. Here are the critical Scriptures:

"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." - Romans 8:3.

"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" - Galatians 4:4

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" - John 1:14.

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" - Luke 1:35.

The uniqueness of Christ

No other child has ever been born in this way; Christ was God's only begotten. The Holy Spirit was the power which overshadowed Mary and caused her to conceive. The Son of God did not exist before he was born of Mary; he was born of her. He was "made under the law" and not outside of or above it.

Nevertheless he was truly God's Son; God was his Father. It was for this reason that he is said to have come down from heaven. There would have been no Son of God had not God moved. His Word, His Divine intent hitherto made known in mighty promises, was now made operative by His Spirit and Christ was conceived, not of the will of man, but of God.

It must be made clear that Jesus was not called Son of God because of things external to his person, the circumstances around him, for example; he was Son of God in his actual being because he was begotten of the Father by the Spirit. There are those who would wish to call him Son of God because of his response to the Word of God and because of God's care for him in his Divine education and the circumstances of daily life. Certainly these things were special, but they were not what was meant by the words "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." There had never been such a child from conception to birth.

How can this be?

Others have wanted to define precisely how Christ was the Son of God and have entered into genetic explanations to make their case. This is to presume that we have knowledge which in fact has not been vouchsafed to us, and any such speculation or supposed understanding has no sure foundation.

Brother Roberts wrote wisely when he said; "When we are asked to sanction some definition of "how" (as a matter of literal, scientific, metaphysical process) this dayspring from on high hath visited us, we are at

once in the region of the incomprehensible and impracticable; for not only can we not know, but even if we could, it would be of no practical value. It is not the comprehension of Divine modes, but the doing of His will that commends us to God. We cannot know the Divine modes. When He works, it is sufficient to believe that He works. It is bootless to trouble ourselves as to the "how."

A better question

We are, however, entitled to ask a different question: not how did God work the miracle of the birth of Jesus, but why did He do it? The answer is that it was the only way in which to provide a man who could and would conquer sin. There had to be help from God in order to provide a deliverer and redeemer.

This, too, has caused some to stumble. In seeking to ensure that the Lord Jesus was truly one of us they have found it difficult to consider how he could have been helped. If he received help by virtue of his being God's Son, they say, how then could he be truly like us? Once again Brother Robert's advice not to seek to find out "how," but to accept the fact of the case is sound and helpful.

We are told that he was "the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself," "a body... prepared." Isaiah adds: "the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

Jesus was helped by his birth, and by the blessing of God during his life, to bear a burden which no other man could bear. He was not a substitute for us in his life, any more than he was in his death. He was not doing what anyone else could have done had they gone about it the right way; he was doing what no one could possibly have done, and in that he needed help. The help he received did not remove in any way the fact that Jesus was like unto his brethren. It provided him with the means whereby, despite being like us, he could overcome the mastery of sin in human flesh, if he submitted himself by the surrender of his own human will.

In ways beyond our experience Jesus knew altogether what was in man, and that included a knowledge of himself as man. His mind was the battle ground between the law that was in his members and those things which were of his Father. These were not two separate persons within him, two separate parts; they were ingredients of his one nature. The stress he bore is beyond our comprehension. Something had to yield, and in the final agony of bloodlike sweat he said; "not my will, but thine be done." He refused to yield him-self unto sin, and instead committed himself totally to his Father.

The Christ who surrendered was the whole man, the "I myself," as Paul describes himself, victorious over sin. John does not write that the Word was made flesh, and we beheld the glory of God; he wrote (of Christ) that "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." God's glory was made manifest in the Son, who was made in our nature.

A final question

There is one further aspect to consider, and it is vital to our own salvation. What is the Lord's nature now? He now bears the "name which is above every name; "All power ...in heaven and in earth" has now been committed to him; "all things" are "in subjection under his feet," for "God...hath highly exalted him." Certainly he is the Lord the Spirit, and he is a partaker of the Divine nature, but he is also man made perfect, man clothed upon with immortality; and he is still, even after his glorification, called "the man Christ Jesus." The victory of Christ is complete: first over sin whilst he lived, and then over death and corruptibility by dying sinless, rising again, and receiving immortality from his Father.

We are left to wonder at the wisdom and knowledge of God. The Lord God has perfected a son of Adam, even though the first Adam brought ail men to sin and death; and He has perfected it righteously in accordance with His own judgment on the heinousness of sin. He has accomplished it in grace and love. He brought redemption despite our unworthiness and without compromising His utter abhorrence of sin. The one who redeemed us was the one who condemned sin on its own ground, even our sinful nature.

Christ was one of us in nature, but was altogether not of us in his sinlessness. Thus he was the perfect Son of God and the perfect Son of man. Christ the righteous, the Holy One of God, commended the love of God to us as sinners, and by his redeeming work we now have hope of life everlasting.

Harry Tennant.

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Brother Phil Parry Comments on the above article:-

This was sent by a lady of the Christadelphian community in Gloucester to a member of the Nazarene Fellowship and passed on to me as a matter of interest and possible comments. I have not met the lady but have corresponded and know her views.

Subject: "The Nature of Christ"

I agree completely with the paragraph where the writer says that Jesus experienced what all Jewish boys would experience because He was a human being. I use not the phrase "mortal" because of its corrupt usage by Christadelphians to deceive their readers, as appears by what follows, and I quote;

"This being so, would he not also share those things which the Spirit has expounded in Romans 7:18,21,23, 8:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21?"

What is intended here is the teaching of sin-in-the-flesh, and one need go no further than verse 18 to expose the blatant scriptural ignorance of the writer. Did Jesus ever say "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not"? Is this true of Jesus? Why have you left out verses 24 and 25? Simply because what Paul was saying applied to himself unconverted to Christ and not his then present position in Christ. Did not Paul mean by the term "in the flesh" a state of alienation and dominion under sin? If not how could he say in answer to Romans 8:8 "But ye are not in the flesh," if they were yet physical flesh and alive as human beings: (Romans 8:9). Surely "in the Spirit" applies to a state of freedom from the bondage of Sin brought about by dying unto Sin as a Master, into the only means available, the Death, not the resurrection of Christ. That is the reason why Romans 7 could not apply to Jesus and why Paul could exclaim and pen the words of Romans 8 in full, and using the correct term in verse 3, "Sin's flesh," the possessive case. I presume the writer is misinterpreting 2 Corinthians 5:21 as did Dr Thomas and R.Roberts, to mean that human nature or flesh is sin and that Jesus by being born of flesh and blood nature God made Him sin or sinful flesh. But Paul says that God made Him to be sin for us.

If Paul meant "human nature" surely he would have used the term "human nature," but how would it have read or sounded? Listen, "For he had made him to be human nature for us, who knew no human nature, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I ask, What would that have done for us by His being merely human nature? Do you not see that the true rendering of verse 21 showed how God had been in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and had committed to the Apostles the Word of reconciliation, verses 19,20? And does not Paul teach in Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (not because of sinful condemned nature), but crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."? Can you not see therefore that Paul taught Jesus as being the antitypical sacrificial Lamb made Sin, or a Sin-offering, but not merely for those under Moses but for the Adamic Sin of the World, from Eden to Gethsemane? And was not Paul speaking as an ambassador for Christ when he said, verse 20, "As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The death Jesus suffered was therefore a sacrifice, not a penalty, where would be the point of being baptized into a penalty? And if Jesus needed redemption Himself we are definitely excluded.

Why then all this unnecessary fuss about the nature of Christ? Edward Turney had no doubts that the nature of Jesus was the same quality as Adam's at Creation and the same as ours at present seeing that Paul by the Spirit speaks only of two in 1 Corinthians 15. The difference was not in the quality of the physical flesh but in the ownership. Adam, as a human being under law, sinned and thus became the servant of Sin as

a Bondmaster, hence he became “Sin’s flesh” or flesh owned by Sin and was no longer in his own right an heir of God as a son. Reconciliation could be made in the form of adoption, but would not be a restoration to the former position. There was only one way, and that was the debt of life to the violated law in Eden must be paid with an equivalent life unforfeited by sin, which meant a voluntary sacrificial death.

Therefore Jesus in pleasing His Father voluntarily gave His life a ransom for many and was responsible with His Father in not only bringing Adam, but many sons to glory as their Captain of Salvation.

However it appears not to be the purpose of “The Testimony” writer to teach or to prove this, for we know that when a lady member of our Fellowship requested of “The Testimony” Editor to put in that magazine her father’s views on The Atonement, he refused on the grounds that nothing was accepted that did not harmonize with the B.A.S.F. In other words, no matter how much truth was stated if it did not end with acceptance of the agreed general belief, it would be refused. Editor Tony Benson knew her father’s views opposed his.

I do not know if the Christadelphian lady in Gloucester had been aware of this suppression of freedom of thought, would have been so sure in her mind in sending this article to my friend and brother in Christ, but I think being indoctrinated with the theory of the “changed-nature,” “sinful-nature” myth, for so many years and facing little if any opposition due to its suppression, she would regard this article as in harmony with her own and would fail to detect the gross error of doctrine and evasiveness when faced with the problem of not being able to give an answer from Scripture. I detect this same writer following the same pattern of Robert Roberts in failing to be able to answer the simple questions people might ask, when in fact the answers are to be found in the Scriptures, but on one condition and principal, found in Amos 3:7; Isaiah 64:4; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13.

I might also truthfully ask the question after reading this Testimony article the same as that of the Prophet Isaiah in his 53rd chapter, verse 1 - “Who hath believed our report?” for indeed our report is not foreign to the teaching of the Prophets and Apostles who had all the answers and the Testimony of Jesus.

Going back to the second paragraph and following the references to Romans and 2 Corinthians 5:21, I myself have no mistaken regard for the person of Christ but have shown that Romans 7:18 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 is a mistaken view on the part of the “Testimony” writer. Furthermore, how can anyone re-define “sinful-flesh” if there is no such thing in existence? For anyone to say “we do not inherit a bias toward sin,” is not a re-defining of “sinful flesh,” but a straightforward fact of Scripture that God was not the author of changed and sin-defiled flesh as contended by this writer. No one but the contenders for sinful flesh would misunderstand both the nature of Christ and the nature of His atoning work. Having no bias toward sin does not in any way diminish the magnitude of the victory of Christ and the glory which now attaches to Him, which the writer suggests would be the case. In fact he destroys his own reasoning later on by saying “Jesus needed help from God to do what was impossible in other men of the same flesh;” if this is not a diminishing of the magnitude of the victory of Christ and the glory due to him I do not know what is. It is tantamount to saying all credit was due to God - and Jesus a mere puppet controlled by strings in the way it should perform, whereas Jesus had a free will and the desire to please God by His own mind and motivation. (Psalm 40:7,8).

The writer continues:

“On the other hand, there have been those who wholly accept the teaching concerning sinful flesh, and are prepared to say that the Lord fully shared this infirmity; but they want to go further and say that all mankind is subject to some additional condemnation or uncleanness simply because of the flesh we bear; and that this would also rest on Christ.”

As there have been and still are people who accept the false teaching concerning sin-ful flesh, such as “The Testimony” writer and his own advocates of the B.A.S.F., I cannot see how they can go any further, or that they have any necessity to add to the nature what they are told in the B.A.S.F. is already present in the nature they bear, and it is certainly taught in the B.A.S.F., and “The Testimony” magazine that all this condemnation, uncleanness, sin- in-the-flesh, rested on Christ due to His human nature like unto His brethren. And what is infirmity but gradual decay and consequent death common to all? Hebrews 7:23 and 28. The statement which follows is absolutely contrary to the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles, and is split

into three sections which are rather misleading in the way they are put to the reader. The writer says,

“By birth we suffer from no legal impediment or guilt other than that which we physically inherit. This was true also of Christ. We physically inherit the results, but not the guilt, of Adam’s condemnation. When we sin we come under personal condemnation and deservedly so.”

Let me now analyse these views. Actually by birth we do become subject to a legal impediment which God had passed upon all in Adam’s loins when he sinned, but of which we only become guilty when enlightened to it through the Word of Salvation. As to any physical results, these are inherited from Adam because he was created a corruptible man whose life span was limited by a physical law of his nature at his creation and not by condemnation of his flesh through sin, which is a false concept of the Apostasy. Now if the writer means the guilt of Adam’s condemnation to be natural decay and death, and that though we also experience the same, we are not guilty, yet suffer it as a result, what then does he consider is our position at birth in the sight of God? And where does the sin enter into the flesh of a new-born babe or when? It should be obvious from the reading of Genesis that our corruptible dying nature is the result of God’s creation of Adam and his ability to reproduce children of the same nature. But to be able to reproduce children with sin in their physical flesh would be impossible with Adam, and to God foolishness and unjustifiable.

Now if, as the writer has said, “By birth we suffer no other guilt than that we physically inherit, and that we do not inherit the guilt of Adam, and this was true also of Christ,” what on earth is this perverted doctrine your members have been responsible for all these years, that Christ the Lamb of God though sinless in character had to die on account of His nature?

To any intelligent person it should be obvious that we cannot inherit guilt, but God was Just and righteous in imputing Adam’s sin and penalty to those in his loins that they might by faith benefit by his Redemption from Judicial death in the day he sinned, he being already subject to the naturally appointed death which was not by sin. Is it not also a fact that God imputes righteousness to people who are not previously righteous? Does not Paul teach this in Romans chapters 4 and 5 referring in chapter 4 verses 6 to 8 to Psalm 32:1,2? And is not Paul drawing attention to the Adamic sin God concluded all under before they were born, as stated in Romans 3:23-25 and Galatians 3:22?

The writer makes some unnecessary statements as to how Jesus was a Son of God. There is no mystery or difficulty here if we know that the begettal was almost similar to begettal of a child in the case of husband and wife, only in the case of Jesus, God energized the ovum or woman’s seed by His own power to achieve the same result - a male child, begotten for a specific purpose, a purpose not possible for Joseph to fulfil seeing his own life through Adam’s line was in pledge forfeited to Sin. This knowledge has been vouchsafed to those who are led by the Spirit and therefore not incomprehensible nor impracticable, only to those who do not comprehend the whole of the Epistles of Paul, Peter, John and James.

There is not the slightest excuse to evade this subject if the “Testimony” writer professes to know the Truth. But he makes the excuse that it is not necessary to know God’s mode of working but that it is the doing of His will which commends us to God. A strange statement considering what he writes further down and I quote:

“Jesus was helped by his birth, and by the blessing of God during his life, to bear a burden which no other man could bear. He was not a substitute for us in his life any more than he was in his death. He was not doing what anyone else could have done had they gone about it the right way; he was doing what no one could possibly have done, and in that he needed help. The help he received did not remove in any way the fact that Jesus was like unto his brethren. It provided him with the means whereby, despite being like us, he could overcome the mastery of sin in human flesh, if he submitted by the surrender of his own human will.”

Again I must analyse these statements in the light of scriptural logic. “Jesus was helped by His birth,” the writer does not explain how, but I know that at the back of his mind is the theory of a hybrid, a God-man, part man and part God. I am not inventing this. I read it in “The Glad Tidings” magazine. Our view is that

we, the human race, were helped by the birth of Jesus in that the virgin birth gave Him freedom from Adamic Federal condemnation which was a legal sentence not a physical; so that He was free to offer His unforfeited life in the blood as a sacrifice for all. Agreed, no other man could possibly be in a position to do this, but you never mentioned His sacrifice when you used these terms; you were concerned with His conquering of sin, but the proper terms to use is the conquering of temptation to sin, but you speak as though sin was present to be conquered when in fact sin is abstract - transgression of Divine Law. Now leaving out the important purpose and mission of Jesus which was to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28), I draw your attention to the words of Jesus to the two sons of Zebedee when a request was made to Him, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able." The reply of Jesus was in the affirmative, so there can be no doubt they were able, and did fulfil His statement. In fact it is recorded in Acts 12:1,2 that Herod was responsible for killing James the brother of John with the sword but I am not sure how John met his end. But one thing is certain, they were obedient to their Master even to the death, but their deaths did not give us Redemption and forgiveness of sins as did the death of Jesus. I have already shown above the contrast between Martyrdom when I explained the reason for the virgin birth of Jesus. In Romans 5:6 Paul puts it plainly in a nutshell as it were and verse 10 explains a position that I have never read of or heard preached from a Christadelphian platform, and it is reconciliation while alienated and constituted sinners in the loins of Adam, and after enlightenment to the fact that Christ's sacrificial death foreshadowed in Eden gave us our existence as well as Adam's who would have perished - we can now by belief and faith in Jesus and the Gospel of salvation be baptized into His death and be reconciled not as enemies but now as sons of God, and as Paul says, "Much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life," that is, through His everlasting Priesthood at the right-hand of God (1 John 1:7).

The writer speaks of the mind of Christ being the battle ground between the law that was in His members and those things which were of His Father. What law is he talking about? I suspect he has in mind that false declaration in Clause V of the B.A.S.F. - a physical law of condemnation in the literal flesh! Jesus refutes such a conception in John 3:18, "He that believeth on him (Jesus) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." Why? Because he is human nature? No, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." The Christadelphian version is that God sent His Son to be condemned, using the Jews and Romans as His instruments to display on the Tree of Calvary the obnoxious and condemned flesh of Christ as a demonstration of what was due to this human flesh, and make this condemned, blemished exhibition of derision and mockery the basis for the forgiveness of sins and as a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God. The law in the members of Christ was always in His heart - Psalm 37:30,31 - and was possible with others before and after David's time. The law Paul referred to in his own members was retrospective of his unregenerated state before his conversion to Christ and unrelated to his physical flesh - Romans 7 - in fact his main teaching is associated with the legal and moral position and how the mission of Jesus Christ had affected it for good. Consider what he says of others and himself after conversion to Christ and freedom from the law of sin and death by symbolic death with Christ, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh (that is, in the flesh). For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1,2, and 10).

This is confirmation that the Law of the Spirit of Life was in Christ during His earthly mission there dwelt no sin in His physical flesh for it was into that body of flesh that Paul and others had been baptized that they also might become servants of God (Romans 6).

I fail to see how Paul's converted position or that of the Roman believers would not harmonize completely with the words in 1 John 4:15,16, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Was not Jesus identical flesh and blood with that of Paul? What was the difference between them? Paul, or Saul, was born under, or sold under sin by Adam; Jesus was born free of that dominion and in this was manifested the love of God toward us, says John, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Therefore said Jesus, "I and my Father are one." Yes, one in purpose. They were never opposed as suggested by the writer, for Jesus said to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34). If sin dwells in our flesh, explain Romans 6:22, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Much has been explained by the Nazarene Fellowship on Romans chapter 7 and it might appear discreditable to Christadelphians that Dr Adam Clarke D.D. has also explained what Paul was teaching and though I have repeated his views that Paul was speaking retrospectively as when unconverted to Christ, the sinful-flesh believers prefer that it was as a converted Christian, in order that they might bolster up their case for inability to do God's Will. Please note the many named in the Bible who pleased God by their faith and works, and yet God could not justify us by them but by His Son only. (Romans 5:1,2). Praise be to the Father and His Son.

Brother Phil Parry.

A Few Thoughts Regarding "Free Life"

When we talk of Jesus Christ having a Free Life we mean He was free from the condemnation which came into the world by Adam's transgression, which condemnation passed upon all Adam's posterity.

Adam was created and his Brother, Jesus Christ, was begotten by their Father with a life free from condemnation. It is commonly accepted that Adam's life was not under condemnation until he transgressed but with regard to Jesus' life we say the true reason for the Virgin Birth was to give Him a life free of the condemnation which came by Adam's transgression. His was a new life direct from the source. To be on probation for eternal life Adam had to be under law. Law gives choice. Adam lost his birthright when he made the wrong choice and ate of the forbidden tree. This necessitated the birth of Jesus Christ who kept His birthright safely.

Now let us consider Moses as a type of Christ. We will note many parallels but notice specially Moses "free life."

Around the time of Moses birth male infants were under condemnation to be slain by order of the authorities to prevent an uprising against their own interests.

Moses was born into a family in bondage to Egyptian slavery. In his early days he was nourished by his mother who was in bondage, he was brought up free of this bondage in the king's palace and educated and trained for a position in the royal household. Moses never forsook his kinsmen to pursue his interests in the royal household. Indeed he believed that his own people would see him as their champion when he slew the Egyptian. But that was not God's way any more than it would have been for Jesus Christ to have thrown Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple in order to persuaded the people to follow Him because of His great power and authority.

In due time God worked miracles by Moses - even Pharaoh was forced to accept that Moses was the leader of Israel.

Moses led the people out of Egyptian bondage and gave them a Law from God. Obedience to the Law would bring great reward while disobedience would bring dire consequences. He led the people through the wilderness years as far as the land of Promise.

In all these things we see Moses as a type of Christ but the point to notice in our present context is that God chose a free man for the purpose. Why? What was the reason for this when God could have raised up any one to lead His people out of bondage. We say, not so, because everyone else in Israel was in bondage. They were slaves to the Egyptians just as Adam and his descendants were slaves to 'King Sin' (Romans 5:21). "sin hath reigned unto death...). No one in bondage would have fulfilled the type except for Moses who had been made free through Divine providence; God raised up a "free" Moses for His purpose of leading His people Israel out of bondage. Even as He chose a "free" Christ to lead His people out of the bondage to Sin.

We deduce these facts from Scripture and find no Scripture contrary to them.

Robert Roberts view of “Free Life.”

But Robert Roberts says that “Free Life is a myth.” Here are his words quoted from “The Slain Lamb;” - early on in his lecture he says:-

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

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

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

Again, further on, while we are still waiting for him to “establish link by link all my evidence,” he says,

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

And yet again, about half way through his lecture, not yet having shown us, or made anything manifest, he says,

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

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

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

This is the concept of a novice, not having considered fully his subject. We surely expect better from one of the Founding Fathers and a Pioneer of the Christadelphian Denomination. Where in his appeal to Scripture do we find support for his views, let alone unassailable proof of them? His references to both Romans 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:21 are misused.

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

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

Brother Russell Gregory.

"God was the Father of Jesus; He was the only begotten, and Adam was the only created. Here we have the two direct Sons of God, therefore brothers in the sense that they had the same Father, What was the difference between them? None physically, but the difference lay in the fact that the first sold himself to another Master and became Sin's slave, whereas the second retained His position. "She (Wisdom) is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her" (Proverbs 3:18). Jesus retained His hold on the tree of life; Adam lost his hold; therefore Jesus was in a position to redeem Adam his brother, and all in Adam who will accept redemption. No man can by any means redeem his brother... God alone could do that by giving Jesus the life. Hence we have the clear proof of Jesus being the only possible redemption price of a "life for a life." Jesus was born outside the prison and He could therefore give Himself in the stead of those who were in prison. This He could not do if He was in the same condemnation.

F.J.Pearce. "For What The Law Could Not Do." Page 9

Brother Ernest Brady makes an Examination of

"The Christadelphian Experience"

An article which Appeared in 'The Testimony' magazine of January 1984

During the controversy between Christadelphians and the Nazarene Fellowship which has now gone on for over 100 years, one of the great obstacles to establishing the truth is the fact that the community is based upon a library of literature which dates back to about 1850. This literature is preserved with almost the same reverence as the Bible itself and although there have been quite a surprising number of corrections and revisions since the originals were written, we believe it has been conclusively proved to be defective in the one vital issue between us. Nevertheless, every new generation of Christadelphians is schooled in the expositions which Dr.Thomas elaborated in Elpis Israel and they sincerely believe that these are sound and scriptural when in fact they are fallacies.

We and others have many times explained the textual, grammatical and doctrinal mistakes which are involved in the view that sin became literally implanted in human flesh at the Fall and not only have quite a few people abandoned Christadelphianism entirely on this account but many more, while honestly admitting that they can see there are certain errors have felt that they have so much of truth as compared with most other sects that they have never felt the need or found the courage to come out. One recognizes the strength and attraction of a numerous and prosperous community which during its existence has evolved into an entity with a life of its own almost independent of its membership and this can be a peril even when it is founded upon sound doctrine - as can be seen in the warnings in the Epistles to the early churches. If, as we

believe is the case here, the basis of doctrine is unsound in any particular, then the protection and inviolability afforded by a strong community makes the perpetuation of error inevitable.

Christadelphians understand very well - none better - how difficult it is to persuade a Catholic to contemplate the possibility that his worship of the Virgin Mary is wrong or a C of E member to accept that man is not an immortal soul, yet they are themselves quite as impervious to the possibility that Dr. Thomas was mistaken in his teaching that sin is literally in our flesh. The consequence is that as new younger writers and speakers come along they are directed by their leaders or go of their own choice back to Elpis Israel or Robert Roberts and, supposing them to have stood up to the test of time and largely unaware of the controversies there have been, they happily reproduce them and do their best to justify their conviction, even if, as we sometimes suspect the brighter ones are conscious that something is not quite right. This is exactly what is happening again today. The Testimony has produced a special issue for January 1984 and a group of capable writers have produced a full study of The Atonement. Unfortunately it is not a study of the Bible doctrine of The Atonement but of the Christadelphian doctrine of The Atonement and these are by no means the same thing. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, it commences with the exposition given by Dr. Thomas where he wrote, "Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there."

We believe that it has been demonstrated beyond a doubt and on many occasions, not only by ourselves but by independent Bible scholars of good repute that this is a very great error. Sin did not and could not exist in Jesus' body because that is an impossible thing, but that did not mean that sin was not condemned when He died. Sin was condemned but it was condemned in the same way as it was condemned under the Mosaic Law - when the Priest made an offering of a legally clean and perfect lamb; sin was condemned by Jesus suffering in His body the punishment due to sinners. Reg Carr makes no attempt to reason the thing out from the Scripture; he is content to quote what Dr. Thomas wrote and clearly this is what he believes but we suggest it is time they ceased merely quoting what others have written and applied their own reasoning to the facts.

It is a certain fact that what Dr. Thomas asserted in 1850 has since proved to be defective, but it may well be that in the state of knowledge at that time his understanding could have been sufficient to constitute him a saint in Christ - we may hope so. But for another, a century later with better education and the benefit of other peoples' work to pin his faith to a fallible man and reject the scriptural reasoning of his own brethren which would teach him better is surely to qualify for condemnation. He has read our various works quite carefully as his quotations prove but he rejects our conclusions. This he has a perfect right to do but one wonders if he fully realizes that he is making a choice which bears on the future life and if he finds himself rejected by the Lord because he has been content to accept a totally wrong and dishonouring concept of the life and death of Jesus, he will have no one to blame but himself. He has written a reasonably fair account of Edward Turney's teaching and although he speaks of it as illogical he does not show how or where it lacks logic. We feel that even the tendentious treatment he gives will not prevent some of his readers recognizing that Turney explained The Atonement with an elegance which, in the event reduced his adversary to fury.

Take his exposition of Romans 8:3. We read "God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Edward Turney pointed out that the adjective "sinful" is a wrong translation - it is a possessive noun and should be rendered "sin's flesh." If you are seeking Green's hat you don't necessarily look for a Green hat. It may be a black one - but it belongs to Green. Thus the translators allowed their biased belief to colour their translation and Dr. Thomas appears to have accepted it quite uncritically, probably no doubt influenced by the Christian tradition of his earlier associates that the Fall was supposed to have changed man's nature. In fact he rather worsened what was already bad enough by the gloss he put on in his assertion, "inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh," that is "flesh full of sin." Why did he not ask himself the obvious question "Why does Paul say in the "likeness of sin's flesh"? If Jesus had to be flesh full of sin what is the significance of the word "likeness"? The answer is because Jesus, although identical in flesh and nature with all other humans, in fact Himself belonged to God, because God gave Him His life direct whereas we belong to sin because we descend from Adam who sold himself to sin. The word likeness therefore indicates that there is a distinction between men of the same nature but of different legal relationship. Is it not obvious that if the purpose of God to save mankind required that Jesus should belong to sin in the same sense as we do, that He should have been Joseph's son? Had he been so he would have been no different in nature because He was a man but He would not then have been legally qualified to give His life in a sacrifice for us.

Here we come bang up against the other side of the Christadelphian dilemma. When such a writer has to face the question of why Jesus was the Son of God it explodes in his face and obliges him to contradict the very first basic truth that our Saviour was made and tempted in all points like as we are. Reg Carr quotes Robert Roberts amazing words:

“Being then invested with human nature - being “made sin (nature) for us, who knew no sin” he was a fit representative sufferer. But it was also necessary that He should be holy... If Christ had been a son of Adam merely He could not have sustained this unblemished character.”

This is a bottomless pit of contradiction and falsehood; it reveals a chasm which no honest exposition can conceal. What does it do to the reputation of Jesus who trod the winepress alone, who suffered being tempted? What does it do to our conception of the Justice of God? It does two things, either one of which is fatal to true faith.

First it implies that there is a contradiction amounting to foolishness in the way the Creation is organized, for, having created man good and in the image of God which we take to indicate his independence and free-will, to be fruitful and exercise dominion over the whole creation and clearly with no more than a limited span of natural life. He (God) then caused his nature to be changed to evil thus sentencing him to death. It does not improve things to believe as some do, that the evil was the work of the Devil or the effect of his disobedience, for whatever was the cause, ultimately God alone could have caused it to be. His purpose only makes sense on the hypothesis that in his original very good state man was corruptible and subject to temptation and that we are still in that state. We are certainly as God has made us and if it were true that we are sinful flesh then God has made us sinners and ought to take the blame. This is what we mean when we say that Christadelphianism charges God with foolishness. Nothing we do or can do can change our nature. If it was ever changed then God did it; commonsense and reason tell us He did not. The Testimony fudges the issue but it won't go away!

Secondly, if Jesus could not have sustained an unblemished character had He not been the Son of God as Robert Roberts affirms, then there could have been no genuine virtue in His perfection. He could be no example to us because it implies that it required some Divine element in His nature to enable Him to obey the commandments and any sinner could complain, “If I had been a son of God I could behave myself better.” It is a view which robs Jesus of all the honour due to Him for His suffering and endurance makes him little more than a puppet and reduces His life and probation to a pretence. It is a view which no sincere lover of Christ could entertain.

Worst of all perhaps is the way it makes a mockery of Divine justice, for it implies that Jesus, coming in the sinful nature that God created, being tried in all things and overcoming, is then required to suffer death, and a death in a more cruel and terrible form than even the very worst of (most) sinners, in order to be delivered from His sinful nature - when He had lived a perfect life! What kind of justice is that? If it were true that God required Jesus to be put to death because He was sinful nature The Atonement would be the most terrible demonstration of sadistic cruelty it would be possible to invent. This is what these people attribute to our God. They may scorn us and disregard our contention that God did not work to bring about the crucifixion - it was the crime of evil men carried out of their own will and volition but which God foresaw, standing back and allowing it to happen for the sake of its effect on us and our salvation. But if they will take no notice of what we say, why do they not hear what the Apostle says? “Ye, by wicked hands have crucified and slain Him, a man approved of God.”

It simply is not true to say – as Reg Carr does - that from the earliest days of the brotherhood there has been no lack of clarity or certainty about the community's understanding of the nature of Christ. On the contrary, it has been a subject of controversy almost from the beginning, just as in the wider world of Christendom it goes back to 400 AD and Pelagius. There were in fact barely 25 years between when Dr. Thomas published *Elpis Israel* and the controversy of 1873 and no one knows how much discussion there may have been in this period before David Handly brought it into the open. It reveals a very mistaken impression of the time scale to say there was no lack of clarity or certainty, for it could only have been for a comparatively short period that the view that Jesus was sinful flesh prevailed unchallenged, whereas it has been an issue in debate and division for 4 or 5 times as long. His account would give Testimony readers the

impression that we are questioning interpretations accepted during all the history of the Truth, whereas what Dr.Thomas says on the subject appears to us to have been written rather “off the cuff” than researched and carefully thought out as many of his expositions clearly were.

Reg Carr has clearly studied the literature carefully, both Christadelphian and ours but he has either overlooked or chosen to ignore some of the important admissions of his own brethren. For example, John Carter wrote (quoting from memory) that it was wrong to use the phrase sin-in-the-flesh as if it were a compound noun describing a quality of human flesh. This it is not. He was honest enough to recognize that in its context it does NOT mean that flesh contains sin but that Jesus condemned sin while He was in the flesh, that is, while He was a man of our nature. Yet here is Reg still using it in exactly the same way as Dr.Thomas when he wrote, “Sin in the flesh is hereditary” - just what John Carter said we ought not to do. Admissions of this kind do not in themselves prove anything, because even the best expositors can be mistaken, but they do serve to shew that quite eminent and recent writers have recognized that there are faults even in Dr.Thomas. It would have reflected more credit on The Testimony if facts like this had at least been mentioned, even if it is impossible to explain them away.

The assertion that in his reasoning that as descendants of Adam men are under the dominion of Sin Paul was saying that our flesh is full of sin is really complete nonsense. When Adam was created very good his flesh was not full of sin, but he could be tempted and could commit sin, because that is what he did. He thus became a sinner, or in the scriptural usage, sold himself to or under Sin as a master who henceforth held him and ail his children under bondage. That left us all, legally sinners and alienated from our Creator, but it did not fill our flesh with an evil principle, and given that we know that Jesus was the same flesh as we are, yet without sin, it cannot possibly be right to say that He or any other man is physically full of sin. When the annunciation was made to Mary, the Angel said, “That HOLY thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Reading these words, how does any responsible expositor dare to write “The law required the death of the transgressing nature, viz. human nature;” or, “It was necessary that the sinning nature should suffer in him;” or “There was no injustice in His death; it was not wrong for him to die”?

Reg Carr writes that many of the fallacies in Turney’s arguments were high-lighted by Robert Roberts. As we see it the facts are the other way round; the fallacies are those stemming from the Christadelphian view that because Jesus came in the likeness of flesh of sin, therefore He was of sinful nature and needed to die for His own redemption, and while it makes good propaganda to say that Turney reverted to some of the main elements of orthodox Church teaching on The Atonement, it has to be said that some of the elements of Church teaching are infinitely to be preferred to some of the errors of Christadelphianism. If one had to make the choice, I feel that it would be less reprehensible to worship in Church than with my former brethren. I am not likely to be found doing either, but with all their egregious Trinitarian follies at least they honour Jesus as the Prince of Life and Saviour of the World in a way which no Christadelphian, who sees Him as our brother representative suffering justly because of His defiled nature, can possibly understand.

We would invite The Testimony writers to re-consider a bit; to ask themselves a few simple questions instead of being content to re-affirm these horrible errors of the past. One assumes that they have minds open to reason and that if someone said to them “Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” and offered them some sound proof, that they could accept it; but they would need to think for themselves without fear of the consequences.

Brother Ernest Brady.

“Jesus came as He declared, to “give His life a ransom for many.” It was not demanded of Him, but He and the Father were at one in the reconciliation of the world, therefore He willingly laid down His life for the life of the world, the life of the sheep. “No man” he declared, “taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father...” As we have stated before, in order that Jesus could lay down His life for His friends and still justify a resurrection from the dead, it was necessary that He be free from every taint of sin. Although descended from Adam on the maternal side, we see how by His divine begettal He received life direct from

the Source of all life, God Himself, and all scriptural testimony on the subject shows inheritance was always reckoned through the male line. He was therefore free from every condemnation having by inheritance obtained a name "more excellent than the angels" in fact there is no other name given under heaven whereby we might be saved. Jesus never became a servant of sin because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, so God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Therefore He could truly say "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, and the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:34,36).

Brother H.Taberner. Excerpt from "A Ransom For All." Pages 23 and 24.

Why Jesus Christ Chose To Die

Let us begin our subject by making four observations, or foundation statements upon which to build; four statements which must surely be acceptable to all students of Scripture.

They are:-

1. Adam was offered eternal life as a reward for perfect obedience, but failed.
2. Adam was then offered eternal life as a reward for faith.
3. We too, are offered eternal life as a reward for faith.
4. Jesus Christ had a right to eternal life by birth, which could have been forfeited by disobedience, but He did not fail.

In the second chapter of Genesis we read of Adam being created a natural being, and placed in the Garden of Eden with but one commandment, which to disobey meant death. It is reasonable to say that to obey meant life, that is, eternal life at some time after a period of probation; and as Adam was created a natural being this would necessarily mean a change to incorruptibility and is expressed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:46 in this way, "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual," and again in verses 44 and 53, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body..." when "this corruptible must put on incorruption."

There can be no doubt that Adam could have remained sinless and that his sin was his own fault, for he had no need to disobey the commandment given him by his Creator; neither would God pass a harsh punishment upon Adam for doing something he was unable to avoid; but failure to keep a commandment of God is sin - and Adam failed.

Reward for Faith Replaces Reward for Obedience

Having transgressed the one and only commandment given him by God, there was one of two things that could now follow, either,

1. Adam could be put to death for his sin, as God had said, or,
2. Adam could be released from the judicial sentence by redemption.

It is clear Adam did not receive the judicial punishment required by the law for his transgression of the Divine commandment. This was because God, in His great mercy, provided a sin-offering revealing the way to eternal life by faith.

Adam had no need of redemption until he had sinned, but after his transgression redemption was essential, otherwise he would die and perish for ever, for by his disobedience he not only lost the opportunity of the reward of eternal life for perfect obedience, he also lost hope of his natural life beyond that day; for God had said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Had Adam not been redeemed on the day of his transgression there would have been no offspring of his to people the earth and the human race would have been at an end, but through love and compassion for His creatures, God released Adam from the sentence of death, giving him further opportunity of eternal life, not on the basis of perfect obedience, but as a reward for faith. The first indication we have of this plan is in Genesis 3:15, where God said to the serpent, "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." We see this as a reference to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to suffer a temporary 'bruising' on Calvary's Cross, but, would in turn, destroy the devil, i.e., the power of sin, that by faith, forgiveness and obedience to Jesus Christ, we should not come under the law of sin and death.

The time of Adam was not the time for the Son of God to come into the world, so the death of an animal in the day Adam sinned provided him with a covering for his sin, foreshadowing the day when Jesus Christ would give His life on the Cross. But this covering for Adam did not confer on him incorruptibility; the animal's life was sacrificed in order that he should have further opportunity to live, in faith, and while "the blood of bulls and goats" could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4) it could and did provide the necessary covering for sin until such time as it was right in the sight of God to send His Son into the world to take away sin.

Imputed Righteousness

The continuation of Adam's life meant life also for his descendants, for he had no children while in the Garden of Eden; so on what basis could the offer of eternal life be extended to them? It could have been in one of two ways, either,

1. Adam's offspring could each in turn be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for perfect obedience, or,
2. They could be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for faith. If Adam's descendants were to be rewarded with eternal life for perfect obedience and failed in that obedience, as did Adam, then it would be necessary for a redeemer to die for each sinner, in order that the sinner be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for faith, as was Adam. Quite clearly such an arrangement would be unsatisfactory; therefore Adam's descendants were offered eternal life on the same basis as was Adam after his transgression, i.e., as a reward for faith. Here we see that, although these descendants of Adam were not born sinners, they were counted as such, and dealt with as though sinners; i.e. they had sin imputed to them; and this was done in the mercy of God for the purpose of salvation. Paul expresses this thought in Romans 5:19 where he writes, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." All born of the will of the flesh come under this imputed sin of Adam so that they might be saved.

The Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, in chapter 3, verses 21 and 22, says, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

The law, then, could not give life because it could not give righteousness, but faith in Christ Jesus is counted for righteousness, and so, for the faithful, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to them that they "might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:5).

Sold to Sin

In his letter to the Romans, Paul uses the illustration of sin being a slave owner to whom the human race has been sold. "Sold under sin," we read in Romans 7:14; while in chapter 6, verse 16, he writes, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey;

whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness;” so when Adam sinned in Eden he sold himself to sin and became the bondservant of sin; and we, his offspring, are born into that same bondage.

Our position is vividly illustrated in the Law of Moses where provision was made for bondservants, for if anyone in Israel fell on hard times, the law allowed that man to sell himself to a wealthy neighbour and become his bondservant, or slave, his wife and children also being taken into bondage. This was done in order that the poor man and his family might have some means of livelihood though lacking the freedom previously enjoyed. The law also made provision for the bondservant to redeem himself if his circumstances should, by some means, improve sufficiently for him to buy his freedom. If this should prove impossible then all was not lost if a near kinsman should come forward who was both willing and able to pay the redemptive price. Such a relative was not bound by the law to pay the price of redemption, but he had the legal right to redeem, and it was up to him to exercise that right if he so wished. Most certainly, if the near kinsman had love and compassion for his less fortunate relatives it would give him great joy to see that family freed from their bondage.

The Purchased Possession

Jesus Christ was the only one both willing and able to redeem Adam and his family (the human race) from their bondage to sin; for being born of a woman He was the near kinsman required by the law, and, as Son of God He was born free of the imputed sin of Adam. It was for this very reason that Jesus Christ was the Son of God by begetting. He had His life direct from His Father and was in a similar position to Adam in the Garden of Eden, and with a right to eternal life provided He remained sinless. He did not forfeit His right by transgression at any time and never came into the bondage to sin. Jesus Christ was “made under the law” (Galatians 4:4) and never broke the law, for we read in Galatians 3:10, “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” and as Jesus Christ did continue in all things that are written in the book of the law, then the curse was not on Him. He was the only man who had the power to retain His life or give it as the ransom price for the sin of the world, as He said, “I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:18). Our Lord and Saviour, unlike the rest of the human race, was born of the will of the Father and lived a life of perfect obedience to the whole law; and even more than this, for He went ‘the extra mile’ by fulfilling His Father’s wishes, for He received eternal life as His birthright and for His perfect obedience to the law, but that law did not demand of Him that He lay down His life for the sin of the world. This He did to please His Father and for the joy set before Him. “Therefore doth my Father love me,” - for voluntarily offering Himself as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish, who “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2), not in obedience to any commandment, for His was a free-will offering of His life.

Baptism

The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross does not confer eternal life on us, for our present life is our redeemed life, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the essential step in the plan of salvation which He took for us because we could not take it for ourselves, that we might remain on probation, having the opportunity of eternal life through faith in Him. It is for us to respond to His unsurpassed love, showing our good conscience towards God by baptism into Jesus Christ wherein we die in symbol and rise again to newness of life in covenant relationship with Him, becoming sons of God by adoption.

Propitiation

As the slaying of the animal in Eden provided a covering for Adam’s sin, protecting him from the law of sin and death, so the covering provided by Jesus Christ protects us from judgment. For the explanation of this let us go back to Moses and the giving of the Law at Sinai. Moses went up into the mountain to receive the law, but at the same time he was given the pattern of the Tabernacle (Hebrews 8:5). Prior to this the people had said, “All the words which the Lord hath said we will do” (Exodus 24:3), but here, too, God had anticipated their failure, and so, with the law which condemned the sinner, He provided also the means of salvation in the pattern of the Tabernacle which pointed to Jesus Christ.

Moses, on coming down from the mountain, saw the people dancing, and in his righteous anger he cast the tables of stone to the ground and broke them in pieces, showing what Israel had already done by their worship of the Golden Calf. Before Moses could present them with the tables of the law, the people had already broken the law, but in His mercy, God had provided, again, a temporary covering, pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the transgressor might not perish; for the pattern and instructions for the Tabernacle was God's answer to the judgment of the law.

Every part of this Tabernacle pointed to the Lamb of God and was focused on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The two tables of stone which Moses broke at the foot of the mountain were replaced and these were hidden in the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:20). The Ark was the central object, the very heart of the Tabernacle teaching. It was a box overlaid with gold and covered by a lid of gold with two cherubim overshadowing it. In this box, or Ark, were placed these second tables of the law, which cried out for Justice, so God placed over it a lid called the "Mercy-seat." Within the Ark, the law pronounced the sentence of death upon the sinner, but God provided a covering, the Mercy-seat, which was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 3:25 Jesus Christ is called our "Mercy-seat" where we read, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." The word translated "propitiation" is hilasterion and means literally, "Mercy-seat," and is so translated in Hebrews 9:5. Upon this Mercy-seat covering the law which called for the death of the sinful nation, the High Priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, took blood from the altar in the court of the Tabernacle and sprinkled it upon the Mercy-seat over the (broken) law, and when God descended in the clouds of shekinah glory into the Holy of Holies, He did not look upon the broken law but upon the blood, for God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13).

Christ Has Made Us Free

What the law could not do Jesus did, for during His lifetime in the flesh He condemned sin in precept and example. At the same time He provided atonement, by His suffering and death for the sinner who will go to Him in faith. The Throne of God, which by the law was a throne of judgment and death, had now become a throne of grace, mercy, and life. The law stands as the pronouncer of death on all who fail to accept, by faith, God's plan of salvation. While the law is powerful in condemning the sinner, it is powerless to save the sinner. It is also powerless to condemn the faithful in Christ Jesus, for the child of God is free from the judgment of the law; for there is no judgment to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. (Romans 8:1). There may well be a chastening of the Lord, but this is not judgment, for God has made provision for our sins to be forgiven after we have been baptised into Christ, for He is our High Priest interceding for us, so when "we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). We have "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14).

In the Gospel of John, chapter 12, verse 24 we read "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Jesus Christ, this "Corn of Wheat," had the choice to either abide alone, or die and bring forth much fruit. He chose to die.

In the first instance, the fruit which Jesus Christ brought forth through His death is the Elect of God, who, being made incorruptible at His coming, will reign with Him in the Millennium Age; then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 72, which is a picture of the age to come, and verse 16 tells of the "handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains" - the Elect ruling over the peoples of the earth, upholding the law of God for the King of Righteousness; "and the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon," - which is the final outcome of the travail of Jesus Christ upon Calvary.

Why did Jesus choose to die? It was to free the faithful from their bondage to sin, that they may share His glory when "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11).

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends- Ye are my friends," says Jesus, "if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:13, 14).

All praise and thanksgiving and honour and glory to God, who “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;” and to His Son, who need not have given His life for us but chose to do so that we may share in His glory.

Russell Gregory. (1986)

When He provided the covering in Eden, God made what we may term a token payment; but sometime, somewhere, by someone, the bond had to be met and the full price paid, in order the law and justice might be upheld. And when John invites us to “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” what do we want more? How simply and perfectly the facts fit the requirements:-

1. It was a violent death that was incurred; it was a violent death which Jesus suffered.
2. Jesus received His life from God, not from Adam, and thus was free from the bondage which includes all other men.
3. He had to be related to the race which He was to redeem; which is why He was the Son of Mary.
4. He had to be identical in nature with all humanity in order to prove that obedience is possible.
5. By perfect obedience He retained His right to the life He received and was thus in a position to give that which belonged to Him - His Life - as the ransom price for His brother Adam, who in parallel circumstances, lost his right to life by sin.

Ernest Brady. “The Question Christadelphians Cannot Answer.” Pages 10 and 11.

With our November/December issue of the Circular Letter (No. 163) we enclosed a copy of “The Ecclesias of God Down The Ages and Today” by brethren E.A.Stallworthy and Edgar Wille, in which we invited comments and viewpoints from our readers to be published in our Circular Letter. In January Brian Morgan sent me a six page review of this article which I asked, if possible he should shorten. Here is his shortened review:-

A MUCH-ABRIDGED REVIEW of the treatise - “THE ECCLESIAS OF GOD DOWN THE AGES & TODAY”

by Brethren Stallworthy & Wille - reviewed by Brian Morgan

FOREWORD

The treatise under review is no history. It is a proposal for the fundamental re-construction – to be strictly accurate, for the destruction - of the Christadelphian fellowship as we know it. For this reason, the review is more of a reply to the call for new practices (and to abandon the decent and orderly practices now in use) which its authors seek to impose on the worldwide fellowship which those of us who love it call....

The Truth.

REVIEW

The document’s first page is a veritable forest of inverted commas, which should normally be used to indicate either a direct oral or written quotation (which the words are not) or that which is counterfeit, falsely described or wrongly referred to (which the words are not). Among the words so treated are:

sections... denomination... democratic... tradition. ..precedent... committees...
recognition... form of words-system... names & denominations... our pioneers –

so it becomes disturbingly obvious that the real objective of the writers is to cheapen the concept which features the words. The objective itself is no less cheap.

Page 1 also contains three highly questionable statements, since:

1. We do not KNOW that God used John Thomas, only that He knew what John Thomas (JT) would do and didn't prevent him from doing it. That does not make what JT did correct.
2. Elpis Israel is only one of several very similar works written around the same time; by no means was it a unique exposition.
3. We do not KNOW whether God used JT "to establish a well-organised communal body" or not. Curiously, when JT was asked by his early converts where they should worship, he told them to continue attendance at their former churches and discuss their new beliefs with people therein who, knowing them well, might be more amenable to conversion. However, if the authors are correct that JT was God's instrument to revive the Hope of Israel, then logically Robert Roberts was His instrument to establish the well-organised communal body - one cannot have it both ways to suit ones objectives'

Why is ones study of scripture always so much more valuable by taking JT as the sole guide to its interpretation? Why, JT himself fought tooth and nail against such pedestals and the concomitant slavish following of his sometimes incorrect expositions!

We are told, on Page 2, that by sticking closely to JT's ideas a faithful few have been led to wonder about things that might be and to question this and that and to doubt the other... Are wonderings, might-be's, questionings and doubts proper foundations for advocating a revolution in ecclesial order, to produce what appears a remarkably accurate picture of autocratic isolationism and anarchy?

Much is made in following paragraphs of revelations that Robert Roberts (RR) was not over-keen on the democratic system in 1864 and introduced it because "nothing else seemed practicable in an age lacking Divine direction", by which I take him to mean direct Holy Spirit gift guidance. This all acts as a build-up to the claim by the authors that "The Word of God is able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3) means it is ALL-SUFFICIENT (their capitals, not mine!) for our needs. However, that quotation doesn't imply, let alone demand as they say it does, that we accept a Word able to give us the kind, not the amount, of wisdom which - with the redemption available in Christ - can lead to salvation. If the amount of wisdom our intelligence gleans is the criterion, woe betide many!

Page 2 ends with reference to the amazing claim by JT that

"God-manifestation, not human salvation, was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit."

However, since the Eternal Spirit's very purpose is enshrined in His Name, His manifestation in mighty ones makes those mighty ones - human beings glorified with His nature in His Kingdom - somewhat essential to that purpose-name. Why, even the authors deny their Page 2 dictat on Page 3, with

"...we are now, and all the saints have been, shaped and prepared for future elevation to world dominion,"

That is correct - as far as the first 1,000 years of eternity are concerned, but is it nothing to do with God's purpose..? Or with His eventual manifestation?

The main burden of Page 3 is to show that association of the faithful with each other is merely incidental, not part of what they are required to do - not even a by-product. I wonder why 1 John 3/14 is quoted -

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

This makes contact with, care for and consequent association with the brethren (not merely a local few of them) essential in order to pass from death unto life. “Merely incidental”...?

Then we are told of God’s first arrangements for individual worship. For some reason best known to the writers, this is family or tribal priesthood, not individual worship at all. Noah is one example quoted. Except for the number of others on whose behalf the priest acts, this is identical to Aaronic priesthood - hardly individual worship!

It would be interesting to know the grounds for Page 4’s claim that Moses was Israel’s prophet, priest & king. Prophet he certainly was, but surely Aaron & the Levite tribe had Just a little more to do with the priesthood, and as God pointedly informed Samuel years later, He, not Moses or anyone else, was Israel’s King. How can our authors possibly say there was no central authority during the time of the judges? Moses, Joshua - neither could compel obedience nor would God have wanted them to; they could punish disobedience, and so could the judges. Even the document admits that “rebuke from their brethren and discipline from God brought a quick response”. Knowing the Lord’s own assessment of the human heart, it is surely not beyond the wit of man to estimate which of the above two sanctions had the greater effect on that response! Again, more evidence of a Divine, directly Spirit-led organisation of the community when the Meditations say there was none.

Gideon, we are told, “refused to be Israel’s king - God was their King.” What a pity the writers failed to acknowledge that fact when attributing both kingship and priesthood to Moses! But why do they “conclude from the fruitfulness in an era when there was no visible leadership (What – no Gideon? No Deborah? No Samuel?) That a well-organised system in the hands of man will hasten apostasy”? Was not the Law which the judges administered a well-organised system? After all, GOD organised it!

Page 5 voices a quite astonishing claim. After showing that good and bad leadership (David & Jeroboam/Manasseh etc) brought national faithfulness and evil respectively, Paragraph 1 ends by telling us that this proves God does not work with or through organised communities as such. So David’s and the early part of Solomon’s reigns were never divinely helped or guided, and neither prospered by obeying God, or obtained His guidance?

Much is made of the fact that Jesus did not seek synagogue office, or leave behind a well-developed religious system. Ah, brethren! Had you known the meaning of the word “religion” you might have realised how well Jesus had set up the structure for spreading, and organising the believers in, the re-binding of the ties between God and man which man had been guilty of severing! “Whereof we are witnesses”, they said.

And what point is there in stressing that Christ’s work was altogether with individuals, when immediately one individual fell from grace and committed suicide, his fellows had to appoint a successor to make up the appointed number, and were helped by the Spirit to do so? Were not “the twelve” an organised team with special religious systems to inaugurate worldwide?

Perhaps in this context we can see the danger of claiming, or accepting, that we need a kind of “clergy” to do our studying of the Word of God for us and explain it to us. I always thought that was the function of RC and C of E priests.

Page 7 begins the introduction of the real motive behind all this preamble. A 16-line paragraph carefully traces a transition between “then”, when God had a visible body-corporate (that means a bodily body, by the way) on earth, and “now”, when - according to the writers - He doesn’t. Thus the whole of Christadelphia, and of the Nazarene Fellowship for that matter, is consigned to the valley of Hinnom as useless and irrelevant to say the least, if God indeed has no representative body of people for His Name on earth. Both organisations are, it seems, examples of JT’s eternally damned, eternally dead, never to rise “names and denominations of Christendom” I whose deluded members, in ignorance of the revelations vouchsafed to two of their number, will not be raised to face the “Great Assize” at the judgment seat of Christ.

The writers actually heap severe blame on the Christadelphian pioneers for having the temerity to form a body to communicate with local ecclesias, to create some semblance of order (only a few sentences previously having elevated "order" to being the whole objective of Spirit gifts!) in the listing of those ecclesias and their speakers etc., and to create and circulate any kind of publication, such as The Christadelphian - and the Nazarene Circular Newsletter presumably - and the very document they circulated of which this is a review? Why are these people so keen and delighted to use the very organisation they condemn so roundly in order to spread their condemnation of it?

Why, also, is there nowhere in the whole document a single reference to preaching the Word, in or out of season?

However, the following is the exalted state of those few who become part of a ruling Elder class, or of the rank and file apprentice class, of the new-style ecclesia our authors advocate:

"These believers (in the previous paragraph styled these scattered few strangers & pilgrims wherever they are found) ARE the ecclesia in their locality. Their association requires no official incorporation nor any of the arrangements with which we are familiar in the religious organisations."

No such group should therefore ever know of the existence of any other such group and should never have any speakers but its own members, never help any other ecclesia nor be helped by them. There must be no communication whatever between groups and no attempt to "go into all the world and preach the gospel",

What a ghastly, unloving and unscriptural situation!

Once more, as if constant repetition can convert theory into fact, we are reminded that

"God's Word is ALL (their emphasis) that is necessary to us and is able to make us wise unto salvation, and will accomplish that whereunto God has sent it. Any procedure not sanctioned therein either (!) by pattern, type, precept or example, must have proceeded not from God but from the heart of man and is on that account both unnecessary and undesirable."

Thus saith the Meditation - what saith The Word?

* A bishop must be the husband of one wife.

* Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. (Only at home?)

* All ecclesias to organise collections for other known, poorer ecclesias. (Of whose existence they are unaware?)

* Ecclesias are to receive, welcome and sustain visiting brethren & sisters. (With no knowledge of where they are?)

* A central source of reference to, and communication from, those who are in touch with the scattered ecclesias, as was the case in Jerusalem, on matters of principle and practice. One such committee pronounced on how much, if any, of the Mosaic Law was incumbent on Gentile converts. (But now we can leave them to their own devices and be left to ours?)

* A separate central committee should administer the distribution of relief supplies being organised by other ecclesias contributing to a central fund (This was necessary even though the Holy Spirit gifts were in abundance.)

I assume the above will suffice for the time being as an example of the way our writers' isolated, isolationist cells of monastic meditation and solitary study should copy the pattern, precept, example, etc. There is of course ten times more that could be added thereto.

The real essence of Page 8 is the description of "those who are in the eyes of the Spirit 'fathers' being fathers by virtue of the Word dwelling richly in them by faith".

By whose judgment are we to know which of many people (old in years and all with definite, fixed views on scripture which they defend with great tenacity) the Spirit has indeed decided are "fathers"? Should we hear them all and decide for ourselves, or would that not be democracy all over again..?

Or maybe we should let them all argue the toss about who shall be greatest, as they've been doing ever since AD 30 and before, and quietly go about our own worship..? You see the trouble is, as you know and I do, that what will decide who has the say-so in each of these monastic cells is not whom the Spirit recognises but who has the greatest force of personality, volume of speech, verbosity and money to publish. That's what decides too much of ecclesial life now – and will these fatherly leopards so rapidly change their spots?

Yet that - a new "legality" and unlimited power to appoint oneself to the Christadelphian Clergy or the Nazarene Nobility - is the inevitable destiny of such a power struggle. No wonder the document calls these self-appointed elders -

“...a group of saints, each of them individually in the Truth - and NOTHING MORE IS NECESSARY...”

What is here being proposed is the complete destruction of everything now done “decently and in order” in the running of ecclesias in communication and communion with each other in order to rear up a humanly-inspired hierarchy and “spiritual career-structure” for the elevation of the finest debaters and the most learned counsel for its defence and self-continuation. “Instruction” of the unlearned is urged. By whom? How appointed? And who sets and marks the test papers to decide who are the unlearned and what degree of instruction is required per capita?

“In some cases” our authors continue, “problems as to what scripture teaches, or the way we should walk”, may bring us (bring whom – the Clergy or the rank and file?) To decide to turn away from the presence of a foolish person or a perverse teacher.” Again, who decides? On whose evidence and proof of in whatever evil behaviour or wrong doctrine Bro. Farnesbarnes has been indulging? Is there to be a mini “Great Assize”, so beloved by JT, on each occasion? With a jury? Or even a majority verdict? (Of course not; that would be democratic!)

If, in an ecclesia numbering 50, thirty take Elder ‘A’s side and twenty follow Elder ‘B’ in opposition, suddenly there will HAVE to be two ecclesias, of 30 and 20 members respectively, each denouncing the other as apostate - when we know they shouldn’t even be aware of each other’s existence. In its utter stupidity the whole concept reminds one of the Rome/Constantinople split, with two popes each excommunicating the other to the flames of hell.

At least Page 9 ends with a kind of honesty:

“Once we accept these “meditations” (they even put commas round their own terminology now!) as a true summary of the guidance of Scripture...”

Suddenly one can see a crunch coming. And it arrives with a rush on Page 10, which is a long homily to the rank and file, to obey them that have the rule over you by now and while you weren’t looking, even though they may well be guided and motivated not by the Spirit, but by the lusts of the eyes and flesh, and above all by the pride of life, and the lust for power so typical of homo sapiens.

Page 11, following all the previous condemnation of voting as leading to perdition rather than to Christ, nevertheless has this to say:

“...regard will be had in love to the needs of the greater number, the others submitting in harmony with the beautiful principle ‘in honour preferring one another’“

Seldom has a 180° U-turn been couched in such attractive but irrelevant terms, but even this is surpassed in Paragraph 2:

“...do not let us, even if the “majority” (again those silly commas!) are with us, add the power of the vote to our beseeching that we may work our will.”

One wonders which is the sillier, using quote marks to pretend the majority doesn't exist or pretending that one can know that one has a majority by means other than a vote!

On Page 12 - the last page, fortunately! – there appears a most scurrilous likening of Christadelphia - and no doubt Nazarenty – with the Germany of both Communist and Capitalist domination of Europe. As with the one, so with the others; the writers know for certain that Reunion will bring further apostasy and make the system even more tyrannical than ever. Do you enjoy reading that the true ecclesia of Christ will rejoice at the disbanding of your fellowship, knowing that our illustrious duo have classed it with the “evil republic” into which I was lovingly received 55 years ago?

Do you regard the formation or maintenance of a visible Nazarene Fellowship on earth as a futility? Is the sole reason you and I are here that we should:

“...use our initiative only in our efforts to make His Word powerful in us, that it may accomplish that whereunto He has sent it IN US”? (MY emphasis, for once!)

You know as well as I do what this says in 1997 English - “To the devil (literally) with you, Jack; I intend to be all right!” In fact, to the devil with “Preach the Word”; merely study it like the good old Scribes and Pharisees, so that we can establish and maintain our exalted rank and station, and all our lives thank God that we are not as other men!

Don't we all know human nature well enough by now? Can we not be sure that those who use the Word to sow seeds of a two-tier fellowship of the Leaders and the led (“It is not in man.....”) will not be those seeking the role of the led but that of the leaders, the hierarchy, the instructors, the examiners, the judges and the power-wielders?

CONCLUSION

The treatise, originally produced to persuade Christadelphians to oppose reunion many years ago and now resurrected for some reason, is one of the saddest tales it has ever been my misfortune to read; a tale at best of the proposed abandonment of the household of faith to total anarchy – at worst of a lust for power, with the privileged, self-promoted clergy and subservient laity which would rapidly develop there from. I refrain from any verdict as to which would actually ensue, as I just don't know and I am content to admit as much.

If the authors had postulated this state of affairs as being one which – with our present dimmed vision and only partial knowledge – we might imagine to be suitable for our hoped-for rôle as “these my brethren” and leaders in the Kingdom, with those of the nations whom the Lord will class as “sheep” when he sits on the throne of his glory being the led, one might have seen something to commend in the treatise, but to advocate such a two-tier, two-rank, two-honour system of dictatorship-ruled “cells”, in total isolation from, each other, their members pursuing a 100% self-centred, introspective form of worship, through one who criticised his own beloved twelve for seeking rank and title before the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, simply beggars belief.

Why do you give this 12-page advocacy of (at best) ecclesial anarchy or (at worst) an unholy power-struggle in the name of Christ so much space in your publications and so much expense from your funds?

Sincerely yours in the pursuit of both personal holiness and the preaching of the Good News to every creature.

Brian Morgan.

* * *

Comment on Brian Morgan's Review: -

It was with great disappointment that I read Brian Morgan's Review. I gives us no pleasure to see one Christadelphian write so scathingly and unjustifiably about two other Christadelphians. Brian's Foreword is no appraisal for the treatise is a history and it is a practical suggestion for the great improvement of the Christadelphian fellowship.

I wrote several pages pointing out faults in Brian's Review but finally consigned them to the rubbish bin because they made miserable reading, however, I have picked out three examples of which I give the essence:-

1) Just because inverted commas are used instead of some other form of emphasis Brian Morgan makes the claim that "it becomes disturbingly obvious that the real objective of the writers is to cheapen the concept which features the words" and therefore "the objective is no less cheap." This is rubbish and unjustifiable.

2) Brian Morgan disagrees with the claim of the two authors when they say that "the Word of God is able to make thee wise unto salvation, means it is all-sufficient for our needs." Well, isn't it? I always thought that the whole purpose of the Word of God was to make us wise unto salvation; what more do we need for this purpose? But Brian Morgan says it does not provide the quantity of wisdom required for salvation! Surely you cannot believe that Christadelphia gives us this extra wisdom in some way, perhaps in the B.A.S.F.? But seriously, once we know something of the Word of God it is up to us to use it intelligently and to good advantage to ensure salvation. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thus says the Word of God, in James 1:5.

3) Brian really goes overboard with his non sequitur arguments. Because God had a representative body in the past but does not have one today seems to present an enormous problem to him. He claims the representative body must be Christadelphia, and if not then the whole of that fellowship must be consigned to the valley of Hinnom along with all the other "names and denominations" of Christendom. If anyone thinks the Christadelphians are God's representative body then why are they so fragmented and at odds one with another? Which fragment is God's representative body? It is quite unthinkable that they all can be when there is so much confusion between them. God is not the author of confusion and He would not have such a confused body to represent Him; He leaves men to delude themselves.

I am sorry Brian has not seen the good in this treatise. Perhaps in the portion of the article "My Ekklesia" reproduced from page 26 onwards he will find something with which to agree.

Russell Gregory.

"Where shall we turn to find that the Prince of Life was under condemnation to death? "Greater love hath no man this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Shall we outrage language by attempting to reconcile "lay down his life" with "condemnation to death"? Is a condemned foundation the sign by which we shall identify the House of God? Never while words retain their meaning and reason her seat."

Andrew Wilson. "Jesus At The Bar." Page 11.

One pleasing result of sending out the Treatise by Edgar Willie and E.A.Stallworthy on "The Ecclesias of God" is that we have been sent another article written and distributed amongst the Christadelphian community in 1923 which deals with the problems of Ecclesial life; it is a much longer treatise than the one

by, Willie and Stallworthy and one we may eventually reproduce, God willing. The title is “My Ekklesia” and the author uses the penname “Kohleth.” We are grateful to Brother Grant Pearce for sending this.

I reproduce here parts one and two, but first an explanatory note from the Foreword:-

“In this (article) it will be noted that the original Greek term, “Ekklesia” has been preserved to denote the scriptural ideas attached thereto, while the Romanized form, “Ecclesia” has been left to denote all those who have appropriated that word to express their own institutions...

And, that the judgment pronounced upon all Names, Denominations and Sects, because of their “Evil Speakings,” and with which the Ecclesiastical world is full (Revelation 17:3), may not befall any reader of this pamphlet, is the sincere desire of one solicitous for his own eternal welfare, as well as that of others.”

KOHELETH
January 1923

“My Ekklesia”

Part One

Before entering upon the subject proper of this pamphlet, “The Nature of My Ekklesia” (Matthew 16:18), it has to be remarked that in the personal teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, as recorded in the Gospels, the expression “Ekklesia” appears but twice, and both in Matthew (16:18 and 18:17). If this term is to be understood as equivalent to the expression “Church” as meaning a society possessing Organization, Officiate, Expressly stated Creed and Regular Constitution, it is not a little remarkable that Jesus said so little about it, and where He did speak, that He gave no definition, but used the words, as it were, not needing any. Jesus dealt with definitions not at all, or but very rarely. In the passages, the term “Ekklesia” is understood by Kohleth to refer, in the second to the Israelitish Institution, and in the first to one much greater. In the Apostolic writings, however, the subject matter of “Ekklesia” abounds, and, as we shall see, in the Gospels as well,

And yet upon these two texts, and in particular upon the first, have been reared, during the long passage of time which has elapsed from the earthly life of Jesus in Palestine, till now, innumerable Human Religious Institutions. All that have appeared have emerged from preceding systems, and, though mutually antagonistic, yet presenting a strong family likeness. All have claimed as reason for their existence the lack of identity with the Ekklesia of Christ in some way or other, on the part of that Institution from which they have come out, while the new arrival is held to be in complete identity with “My Ekklesia.” On this assumption, all claim some Divine Authority for their Institutional being, for the right to admit persons, for the right to define what is of faith, of morals, and of order, for the right of control over their individual constituents in all matters of doctrine and practice, for the right to inflict “spiritual” punishment upon the heretic and the disorderly, and for the right to exclude from their midst those whom they may adjudge impenitent. All, too, in the last resort, profess to hold Scripture as justifying these claims or rights. They differ, however, in the method of exercising this authority. Some do so through Popes, Councils, Bishops, Presbyters, Clergies; some through hosts of lesser officials of distinctive names or titles, every one of which in and of itself, is a name of evil speaking, in the sense of affirming that they are creations of God. Nay, there are Ecclesias whose method of exercising this authority is through Constitutions, Statements or Confessions of Faith, and prescribed Bases of Fellowship, of which formulas certain men, chosen by majorities, are esteemed to be the authorized representatives, because duly officialised for the purpose by the rest. Such Ecclesiastics are constituted the Guardians, the Defenders and Authoritative Interpreters of their doctrines, all other being held to be merely Irresponsibles, without any representative character. To such persons these documents are their Guides to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias; Repositories of their faith and the Codes of their discipline.

The old discrimination between clergy and laity becomes again apparent, and what with the most pious intent was set up to defend and propagate the Original Apostolic Truth soon becomes a barrier to the progress set before each individual in the work of his life in Christ, the co-operation with God in the formation of Divine Likeness, a matter entirely lost sight of by the Institutionalists whose eye and mind are filled with his god, his arm, his hand, and his strength, his Ecclesia or Church. To criticize the official acts of these persons, to uncover their nakedness of Divinity, and to repudiate their officialism as the very instrument of apostasy from the teaching of Christ, is held to be schism, heresy, Bolshevism, departure from the faith, and deadly sin. Like the clergy, those "holding office amongst us" are beyond criticism, they disdain even to acknowledge or reply to justifiable enquiry. This irrationality of supposedly reasonable beings, after all, has but one explanation; like the clergy, they too are of the dumb-dogs-that-cannot-bark class of Isaiah 56:10,11. All this evil springs from the one root, the false assumption of every Institution called a Church, Chapel or Ecclesia, that it is identical with "My Ekklesia."

In face of all this, it becomes a duty upon occasion to point out to deluded adherents, whether they will hear or not, the deplorable fact that, so far as they are concerned, between the great historic institutions of today, claiming to be the Churches of Christ, and the modern "Ecclesias" (both of them alike full of sects and parties, although plainly written "There is one body" - Ephesians 4:4), there is no real difference in principle. All, without exception, are memorials of Apostasy from Christ; all prefer Caesar, and, as such, are doomed to utter destruction at the Lord's impending re-appearing. It will happen to them according to the true proverb, "*Semel rejecta iterum accepta*," - what once they rejected with disgust in another form they take up again (2 Peter 2:22) Continuously unwilling to test their foundations (2 Corinthians 13:5), they go forward to meet a storm arising to prove them based on shifting sands instead of solid rock (Matthew 7:24-27). Happy indeed for the man whose eyes God hath opened to the wondrous truth that lies in the words, "MY EKKLESIA," for as an element in the Word of God, that man will stand in the storm appointed to wreck the present order of things amongst men, including all its organizations - religious, political and social (1 Peter 1:25).

A striking coincidence, too, in point of time appears, for, just as in the closing days of Israel's polity, "My Ekklesia" was submitted as subject for consideration to the Jewish people, by the last of the Messengers of God, in comparison with that with which they had been familiar for generations, in order to manifest the exceeding greatness of "My Ekklesia" over the former - so again in the closing days of Gentile opportunity, the same question; what is "My Ekklesia?" has become one for serious consideration on the part of many who account of themselves as though they were the people of God. "The people of God are we," they say, "and the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ," without qualification and as if beyond all question. What then did Jesus mean by His use of the words "My Ekklesia"? At an earlier age He had differentiated Himself from His natural family by speaking of "My Father's business." Now what differentiation was in His mind when He spoke of "My Ekklesia," as against that former Ekklesia of God comprised in His Nation?

It must be noted that it is on the background of the Jewish people that Jesus presents all His pictures of the Coming Day, and extends the gracious offer to individuals, whether Jew or Gentile, of help to reach and share in the same.

Part Two

First, then, observe that the words are spoken to the people of Israel (Matthew 18:24), and that, while the word "Ekklesia" is a Greek one, the thought contained in it on the part of the Lord has nothing in common with Greek notions, further than the philological, viz., that it connotes "a number of persons called out" for some reason or other. It is the Greek idea, however, with its usage for municipal and political conventions, that ancient Churches and modern Ecclesias alike have seized upon as justifying its application to their Institutions. Jesus the Hebrew, speaking to Hebrews - unless indeed, He spoke to them in Greek, which certainly was one of the tongues current in Palestine since the overlordship of Greece began - would use it in the Hebrew sense one as far removed from the Greek idea as Heaven is from earth. To the Hebrew who spoke Greek, the word itself was quite familiar. He found it in the LXX being frequently used for various assemblies and gatherings of persons. In the Law he would find it in Deuteronomy 18:16, etc., in the Psalms, in Psalm 2:25, 26:5, and elsewhere. The LXX used it to express the Hebrew idea but not consistently, as inspiration would have done. Found, however, in the LXX, Jesus used it as He did so many of its other words, but filling them with quite a different spirit or meaning. He transformed this, making it

express Divine as against the former Greek ideas connected with it. Our English word "call" exactly expresses the idea of the Hebrew. "Koheleth" too, or more correctly "Qoheleth," is derived from this word, and means essentially a caller. To what? To the chief duty incumbent on man, to the Formation of Divine Likeness; to the imitation of God; to the imitation of Christ, to the imitation of the Apostles. As God had, in the ages before Moses, called mankind in Adam whom He had created in His image, to ascend to a condition higher and greater, even after His Likeness (Genesis 1:26,27) so all who heard that call were the "called," "His Ekklesia." "His Quhal," "His call."

None of these have as yet reached the goal for which the formation and acquisition of Divine Likeness was to qualify them. All are still within the gates of Sheol, but One. Of these, the first members of the called, the Quhal, taken in total and during their lifetime, there is not the slightest trace of any such organization or incorporation such as the term "Church" or even "Ecclesia" as currently used, implies and yet they are formed "His Ekklesia," a hidden party amongst the people. Evidence to the contrary is waited for from defenders of Ecclesiasticism. It was a call directed to all men of the human race and its words are to be found in Genesis 1:26, which from their utterance, before the appearance of man to the days of Moses, must have been the bedrock of Revelation - i.e. simply the Divine announcement of His purpose with earth and man

Within this great, wide-reaching circle of an "all" who heard with the ear, there were but few who heard indeed; hence, while all were called, only true hearers became the True Ekklesia. Of these we do not find any organized institution from Adam to Moses, while the earth became filled with institutions of human device, every one of which can be shown to be an apostasy from the truth of God as expressed in Genesis 1:26.

In the midst of these, after the Racial Period was over, an individual was called - Abraham - and his family multiplied till they became a great people, with a history such as no other people possesses. They had the promises of God to their fathers; they had a direct lineage preserved from the father of the human race; they had evidences of the finger of God interfering at well-marked stages; and best of all, they had the reason why of all this in their hands, in Genesis 1:26. Again, at the right moment God called Israel to Himself to meet Him at Sinai, by the voice of Moses, His servant, to form them into a nation; hence Israel became a national Quhal or Ekklesia of God. At certain times He called these people to meet Him before the Tabernacle for instruction or reprimand. This great company of persons, so gathered in response to His call was the Quhal or Ekklesia, as sometimes rendered by the LXX, and later, as seen in Acts 7:38. But not all Israel were Israel, any more than all Abraham's Seed are counted for the Seed (Romans 9:6,7). Not all were like Noah who walked with God (Genesis 6:9). Not all were perfect and upright as Job had been (Job 1:1). All these were individual members of His hidden or invisible Quhal.

Now if we confine ourselves to the mere meaning of the word, as a word in itself, without relation to anything else, Quhal is correctly "the called." But at this point the parallel ceases; for by usage amongst the Greeks the word Ekklesia meant "the assembly of the free and sovereign people of a Greek City-State in answer to summons, for the consideration of some question affecting their interests." The Hebrew idea recognizes no sovereign or free people exercising their supposed rights by vote or otherwise. In the Greek case the movement of the Ecclesia is one from itself, of internal origin. It is a democratic institution. The people, by the people, for the people. It assembles, discusses, considers and finally votes; and the result of a majority vote is that some action follows. This is the usual method of Institutionalism. Men know no other way, when as it is said, they enjoy political freedom. In the Hebrew case the movement of the Ekklesia was from God, one from without, not self-originated. It met when summoned; it listened and heard, and had nothing to do but obey. It may disobey, not being constrained, but then penalty follows as prescribed. What a world of difference between the Hebrew and the Greek ideas'. It is possible that with the cessation of the Spirit in the Prophets, say, in Malachi, that the synagogical system of the Hebrews came into being as one influenced by the Greek spirit long current, and so became, as it did later, the kernel of Judaism, with all the disastrous results of failure to recognize Messiah when He came; for blinded by their public and private institutionalism, and as will happen again, they could not see. Modern Jewish theology frankly admits that "the greatest and indeed the unique creation of Judaism is the Synagogue, which started on its world mission and made the Torah the common property of the whole people. Devised in the captivity as a substitute for the Temple it soon eclipsed it as a religious force and rallying point for the whole people, appealing through the prayers and the Scripture lessons to the people as a whole." This exactly expresses the appearance of the

Churches and Ecclesias to-day, unwittingly devised to take the place of Christ or “My Ekklesia,” which they have eclipsed as “a religious force and rallying point for believers.” the end will be the same – an utter failure to recognize the Messiah at His re-appearing. All their members will look to the Ecclesias or Churches for guidance in that crisis with the dreadful consequences that there can be no escaping from the Gates of Hades for them, because not of “My Ekklesia.”

Again there are many who affirm that without some such order and decency as prevails in the modern Churches or Ecclesias, nothing can be done, no order be kept. This is mere blasphemy, for if God proffers to the individual opportunity to ascend from the mere image state in which all men are by nature, to the state of likeness to Himself after the pattern of His Son, His provisions for reaching that goal cannot be described as “nothing,” and, “it does not matter,” while the provision for the way He has appointed concerns individuals alone, and is not concerned with institutions. Hence while there was a national form of “My Ekklesia” in Israel within it as a husk lay a kernel, the true Ekklesia, without any organic shape and so minute in his range of vision that one of its most prominent members was fully convinced that he was its only representative, until God Himself informed him that there was a total number of seven thousand besides. (Romans 11:3,4).

We have then on the one side a democracy, self-determining, and on the other a Theocracy or Divine Rule, determining all things pertinent to each. The history of all democracies sooner or later evidences an invariable tendency by stages to reach rulership by officials (bureaucracy) which begets oligarchy, autocracy, tyranny; these breeding in their turn despotism, Caesarism, papalism and anti-christism. Scores of institutions, all starting with the best of intentions, are before us as wrecks strewing the pages of history, whether political, religious or social. The Theocratic rule is distinct. God commands, man hears, man obeys. Well and good! Suppose he disobeys, he perishes at the hands of some appointed executioner of the Divine will. This is exactly the difference between the modern Ecclesia and My Ekklesia. The first, an admitted democracy with all the inherent vices of democratic institutions; the other, a Theocracy in which each one is responsible to God alone for obedience, failing which there is but one end at an appointed time and place. The theocratic rule of the Most High has been demonstrated in times past beyond question. He destroyed mankind by a flood because they refused to hearken to Him. He showed His power on men later at Babel and Sodom. In Israel, too, was His power known over and over again, and also in the times of primitive Christianity. The ruin of Israel and the disappearance of His gifts to the first believers is proof sufficient of the manner of Theocratic Rule. He called, He spake by appointed men themselves the subjects of His call. He promised, He warned, He threatened, He chastised, and finally brake up and scattered them whom He had called. The nation of Israel perished, the primitive Ekklesia has vanished. All modern systems whether organized after the models of Israel, politically or ecclesiastically after the pattern of primitive Christianity, are mere shells, husks in which no vitality can be found. None posses the marks of His presence; none manifest His Spirit, for He has called none of them.

But all this has not occurred without prevision on and provision as the Law, Prophets and Psalms were left to the people in a portable form when the Temple, Prophecy and Psalmist were withdrawn, so the Scriptures of the New Testament, in like form have been left to the remnants of the woman’s seed, after Jesus had departed and Apostles had gone down into sheol. These Scriptures reveal Theocracy. This and this alone, is His instrument of rule to ail who come within its reach. By its very nature it is to-day one addressed to individuals and not to organized communities as such, as distinct from individuals, be they called by any name. And what if some or many cannot accept such doctrine but demand some self-appointed men, whether as alleged of God, or as admitted of men. What of it? The end in view is not for them. The Scriptures as the sole rule of Faith and Practice are only designed for those who are able to receive them. In fact. My Ekklesia of to-day is without any shape or form whatever. It is Spirit, nor does it require any human incorporation or embodiment through which to express itself. God must be manifested through each of the individuals who comprise it in the simplest method imaginable; yet in the most manifold manner. And no form or rite is required of any beyond baptism and the proclamation of the Lord’s death, with a spirit or disposition capable by growth in Divine Likeness of meeting any circumstance as it may arise. Nothing is to be found in the New Testament addressed to an Ecclesia of the modern stamp, for no such thing has ever been present to Divine Mind. If the individual to whom the call comes accepts it, that call itself prescribes everything necessary during the waiting period marked by the Lord’s personal absence. And as the nation of Israel was not an end in itself, as its members imagined, but only a means to an end so the Ekklesia, even in its primitive form with its apparatus of gifts, was no end in itself either but a means to the Perfect Thing which is yet to come. Let the individual embrace then, freely and willingly, his day of opportunity and

gladly obey the Scriptures - let it not be with him as with primitive Christianity or with Israel which all too rapidly passed from spiritual ideas to carnal shapes and so fell from their high estate in their idolatry. Israel rejected God that He should be King over them. She preferred the fashions of her neighbours. They obtained the king and they paid for him with their ultimate loss of their national existence. Primitive Christianity rejected Apostolic rule and it has become what we know as Christendom or Christian Civilization - a mass of intermingled waste and confusion with evil in predominance. Yet so great is the pity of God for His creatures, so strong His desire for their salvation that, despite the removal of Israel and the early Ekklesia the way is still open for men to avail themselves of, in order to reach the goal which follows upon release from the Gates of Hades. Protected in time past by Divine provision from utter destruction, some few have witness borne to them that they were children of Faith. Likewise protected in Israel by a wall and a defence, some few also became children of faith. What more than conformity to Christ's teaching and precepts as defined by the Most High in the New Testament Scripture does a man require to find grace in the sight of God in these times? Sent like sheep among wolves, the primitive Christian had protection enough till the Laodicean times arrived when the mass was spued out of the mouth of the Lord. Protected now by Divine Providence, men in Christ are still able to develop that Divine Likeness which is the one passport of immortality and possession of the earth for ever. In each age My Ekklesia maintained its existence unseen to the natural man, but known alone to its Creator and Father and those to whom He has revealed it. This sum total of persons in all ages have always had the Word of God in their hands and in their hearts. In its pages they meet with Him, there He speaks to them; there are His commands, warnings and encouragements, threatenings and approval. Where else indeed? They listen, hear and obey, each for himself, and when the day of their manifestation has come at last, My Ekklesia, formed in the darkness of the long weary night of Gentile times, formed in secret, becomes visible to an astonished world of religious professors and make-believers. What if there be some who cannot accept this - of them it can be said: "A man cannot receive anything except it be given him from Heaven" (John 3:27).

The question then for old-time Ecclesiastics and modern Ecclesiasts is simple: Should I preserve the Greek idea in my understanding of the term used by Jesus and continue to forward the democratic principles of ecclesial business, or shall I, like the Master Himself, follow the Hebrew or Scriptural idea - that of accepting the Theocratic principle and so fulfil "My Father's Business?" Ecclesial business or my Father's Business? Which? Shall I serve God or Belial?

It will be seen then that it is no matter of indifference but one of the highest importance, that the doctrine of My Ekklesia be comprehended aright by anyone who would fain be delivered from the power of the Gates of Hades, for the promise that against certain "these gates shall not prevail" is confined to members of My Ekklesia, viz., that number of persons called of God by angelic being in pre-Mosaic times, by Moses, the servant of God in Mosaic times and by Jesus the Son of God, in His days as the messenger of His people, personally or by His Apostles; and last of all, by the Scriptures of Truth to the men of after ages. There are but two sides to this great question, on either of which a man called must stand. Happy he who, adjuring all human institutions, becomes one of My Ekklesia against which death itself shall have no power, a fact not to be demonstrated in any Ecclesia but in the person of each accepted individual at an appointed day.

Koheleth.

* * *

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine..."
John 7:17

"If any man speak, let him speak the oracles of God."
1 Peter 4:11