

# The Nazarene Circular Letter No 168

September 1997

In this Issue:-

Page 1	Comment	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 2	Editorial	Sister Helen Brady
Page 3	Comments on the Compiled Booklet - Turney/Roberts "Aspects of The Atonement"	Brother Phil Parry
Page 5	Letter to Dr. Stephen Palmer regarding the Christadelphian Campaign in The Forest of Dean	Brother Phil Parry
Page 8	The Future Work of Elijah	Brother Ray Gregory
Page 15	Casting Your Care Upon Him	Brother Richard Virgin
Page 17	The Brazen Serpent	Brother Phil Parry
Page 19	Appendix to above article	Brother Phil Parry

\* \* \*

## Comment

Dear Brethren, Sisters and Friends, How good it feels to be back again working on this Circular Letter! I have been looking forward to this moment with a joy. For the past four months major work has been going on in our 250 year old cottage - earth floors dug out and replaced with concrete, drains dug up and replaced, damp-proof course put in, re-wiring throughout with many extra lights and power points, part of the gable end of house re-built, four chimneys rebuilt, some roof rafters replaced and hundreds of roof tiles replaced, new floor boards in two bedrooms and landing, while several windows have yet to be replaced. This work resulted in over 30 tonnes of rubbish which has now been taken away. We are now in the process of redecorating virtually the whole house, but I have taken time out to produce this Circular Letter in my "new" office and it is a real pleasure to be able to do so.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to all who give me so much encouragement and to all who support the Circular Letter with articles expressing their views and arguments as well as give financial support. With regard to our financial position we are at present several hundreds of pounds in debt but this does not worry me too much for I know from experience the generous spirit of our Fellowship but I wish especially to mention the generosity of our Christadelphian readers who also very kindly send financial contributions, particularly when asking for literature, which are greatly appreciated.

Also we send out a general invitation to all our readers to submit articles, comments or questions for insertion in our Circular Letters. We welcome controversy, not for its own sake but that good should come out of it. Do please join in for the benefit of all.

With Love to all in the Lord, Russell

# Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends,

Loving Greetings in Messiah's Dear Name.

On this side of the globe we are slipping into winter and the close of another year, while those on the other side of the world are coming into summer. But wherever we are, we are all under the same sky and under God's almighty protection.

I have been reading recently about William Tyndale. He was responsible almost single handed for the glory of the King James Bible, the Authorized Version commissioned in 1604, yet the translators did not have the grace to mention his name and the enormous debt owed to him. The Revised Version of the Bible printed in 1881 is almost a straight lift from Tyndale with updated spelling. Indeed all English translations owe a linguistic debt to William Tyndale.

In 1994 the British Library spent more than a million pounds on a small red morocco bound volume described as "the most important printed book in the English language" - - the sole surviving copy of William Tyndale's 1526 translation of the New Testament. I believe it is now on show in the new library.

The fact that we can now pick up a Bible and read and benefit from its invaluable contents is entirely due to William Tyndale. For his work on the Bible he was strangled and burnt as a heretic in 1536.

The most likely year of Tyndale's birth is 1494 probably within a few miles of Dursley, between Bristol and Gloucester, on the western edge of the Cotswold Hills. He came from a wealthy family which included merchants and landowners; and they with the church were the holders of local power. The Tyndales were successful people in one of England's most prosperous counties.

According to a biography I am reading about Tyndale, life in Gloucestershire in the 1550 was prosperous. Agriculture and trade, especially in wool and cloth, were flourishing. The houses and gardens were good and well planned. Gloucester was not remote for the main trade routes were funnelled through that strip of land east of the Severn River. Local education was good too. There was an excellent Grammar School near Stinchcombe founded by a Lady Berkeley in 1304.

We know that William Tyndale went to Oxford University and took his B.A. on July 4 1512. Tyndale grew to be a remarkable linguist, noted in Europe for knowing seven languages as well as English like a native.

The Bible was written in two languages, Hebrew and Greek and Tyndale's work was to start afresh and to translate the New Testament from the original Greek, at least twice, and a good deal of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. He was killed before his work was finished. William Tyndale said his aim was "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than a learned man." It is clear that the Bible, which contains everything to make us wise, is the result of Tyndale's labours. The wonderful phrases that instruct and comfort the reader are often thought to be proverbial or Shakespeare because they are so familiar, but they are Tyndale's work. Phrases like "Be not weary in well doing" (2 Thessalonians 3); "Fight the good fight and lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6); "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4); "Clothed and in his right mind" (Luke 18); "The heat and burden of the day" (Matthew 20); "Eat and be merry" (Luke 12); "Filthy Lucre" (1 Timothy 3); "Looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12). All these and many many more are Tyndale, direct, simple and strong. What a debt we owe him.

Before the end he was in prison for sixteen months and a letter from him written in Latin still survives and it breaks the heart to read it...

“I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell... My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out... and I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study.”

What a tragic irony that the scholar responsible for the translating the book containing the Word that David called a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path should languish in the dark of a prison cell.

But his test is over, his work is done. A work that has and still benefits those who look for truth and a reason for living. The name of William Tyndale may have been passed over by the high and mighty but his work lives and is known to God and because of it I do not think there can be much doubt his name is in the Book of Life.

With Love to all. Helen Brady.

---

## **Comments on The Compiled Booklet “Turney/Roberts Aspects of the Atonement (1873)”**

Dear Brethren, Sisters and interested friends who may have received the valuable compilation containing “32 Questions and Answers” by Edward Turney and Robert Roberts; Edward Turney’s lecture “The Sacrifice of Christ,” Robert Robert’s lecture “The Slain Lamb” and “The Lecture entitled The Slain Lamb Dissected” by Edward Turney.

I give Brother Russell Gregory great credit for this work and labour of love which in our own personal cases as Nazarenes would be unnecessary though helpful in keeping our own minds continually aware of the errors of doctrine propounded by Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts, the pioneers of the Christadelphian Community and also the misrepresentation directed since 1873 against the views of Edward Turney by R.Roberts and those who accepted his views without question.

It should be appreciated that the work of the Nazarenes, past and present has involved the enlightening of the Truth to Christadelphians and others of the true means of salvation and eternal life through the Love of God in providing His own Son as the Ransom price of Redemption in the giving of His life in the blood to take away the Sin of the world first and foremost - Adam’s Sin and all his posterity concluded Federally under it (Galatians 3:22 and Romans 5:6).

Seeing that this compilation deals with the contrasting views of the Nazarenes and those of the pioneers of the Christadelphian community and subsequent leaders and teachers of the latter community, it has been found necessary to deal with these opposing and contrasting views from their source, that source in this case being Dr John Thomas and Robert Roberts in that order. The central object being Jesus Christ and His Atoning work in the purpose of God and His Creation.

We do not deny that Dr Thomas was a very intelligent and sincere man who read his Bible; having his roots in Calvinism much of which remained in his mind doctrine-wise and thus it is that we marvel that he could pen the words on page 106 of “Eureka” Volume 1 under the heading “Deity Manifested in Spirit,” I quote the following in his reference to Jesus and His flesh: -

“The character of Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, without spot or blemish, or any such thing; but his flesh was like our flesh, in all its points - weak, emotional and unclean. Had his flesh been like that of Angel Elohim, which is consubstantial with the Eternal Spirit, it would have been unfit for the purpose of the Deity in his manifestation. Sin, whose wages is death, had to be condemned in the nature that had transgressed; a necessity that could only be accomplished by the Word

becoming Adamic Flesh, and not Elohist. For this cause, “Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death... that he, by the grace of the Deity might taste death for every man.” For this cause, and forasmuch also “as the children (of the Deity) are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy that having the power of death, that is, the diabolos,” or elements of corruption in our nature, inciting it to transgression, and therefore called “Sin working death in us” - Romans 7:13. Hebrews 2:9-14.”

Now at this juncture it becomes plain to any logical reader of the Bible, except perhaps those with indoctrinated minds by the precepts and the misconceptions of men, that Dr Thomas was the source of the confused teaching of the Christadelphian community in relation to Adam and Jesus. He speaks of Jesus as being the Word made Adamic Flesh - at what time and in what way he means this took place is hard to figure, like many of Dr Thomas’s statements which are often contradictory and confusing. But his following remarks from where I quoted, suggests that he was referring to the conception of Jesus through the word of the Angel to Mary which I am sure the Apostle John was not referring to, for flesh as a physical substance of a new born babe cannot be full of Grace and Truth. This attribute of His Father was manifested by Jesus in His ministry of the word and only in this way could it be said “And the Word of God was made flesh (or manifested in flesh) and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth.”

In my quoting of Dr Thomas speaking of Jesus destroying the Diabolos, did you see his teaching come to the surface? His belief that Jesus did not have the original and identical flesh Adam possessed at creation and while under obedience to his Creator? He has already spoken of the flesh of the brethren of Jesus as having the elements of corruption in our nature, inciting it to transgression and therefore called “Sin working death in us” – quoting out of context Romans 7:13 and Hebrews 2:9-14, which has no bearing or reference to the physical nature but to Paul’s teaching of the legal position. It is plain that Dr Thomas speaks of the flesh of Jesus being weak, emotional and unclean, - not Angel-flesh or nature; but that common to the seed of Abraham, styled by Paul “flesh of sin,” “in which,” he says, “dwells no good thing.” Romans 7:18 and Romans 8:3. “Eureka,” page 106.

Now on this same page Dr Thomas states:- “Sin whose wages is death, had to be condemned in the nature which had transgressed,” for this cause Jesus was in a nature a little lower than the Angels which as Paul states (not Dr Thomas) was for the purpose of condemning the sin of Adam by living a sinless life in the identical nature Adam failed to do, this was how God was able to condemn Adam’s transgression, through His own Son of like flesh as Adam at Creation and in the garden of Eden, the dwelling place of the very nature which by law of God only, could commit sin; for Sin is the transgression of Divine Law and not elements of corruption in our nature inciting it to transgression. (Dr Thomas and B.A.S.F. Clause V).

Here then we have the unproved and unmentioned in Scripture the doctrine of “changed flesh” attributed by Dr Thomas and R.Roberts to Adam and his posterity as a result of Adam’s sin.

Yet it is recorded in the written works of both Dr Thomas and R.Roberts that in some way, (they could not truthfully understand or explain) sin had to be condemned in the person of Jesus who would, of necessity, have to be in the very nature that had transgressed in the garden of Eden - a nature “very good” but yet undeveloped in character until Divine Law was introduced. Adam sinned under law in his very good nature; if this brought about any change of nature in Adam and his posterity, including the virgin Mary, then Jesus having her nature could not have been in the nature which transgressed in Eden but in the nature that Thomas and Roberts have given to Adam as a result of his sin and on which the Scriptures are silent as the grave. Theirs is the doctrine of the Apostate Church of Rome and her daughters. On page 12 of the “Turney/Roberts Compilation (1873) you will read, middle paragraph, confirmation by Robert Roberts that Jesus had the same very good nature identical with that of Adam at Creation, a living soul “very good” in kind and condition in which nature Adam sinned. Both Dr Thomas and R.Roberts before 1873 stated that when Adam sinned there was a change in his character and relation to his Maker but NOT in the nature of his organization (“Ambassador,” March 1869).

In two works of Dr Thomas we have direct contradiction –

(1) In "Elpis Israel," page 128, speaking of Jesus:-

"Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom He died."

(2) In "Eureka," Volume 1. Page 278:-

"The blood of Jesus was more precious than the life blood of any other man – the blood of Jesus was the only blood of all generations of Adam that had not been generated by the lust of the flesh - - - Jesus was unblemished man without spot or wrinkle or any such thing: for he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

Rather than admit he could not understand or explain the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 8:1-3 Dr Thomas was forced to make Sin an element in the physical flesh of Jesus in order that it might be condemned and destroyed in His crucifixion. This later confirmed by R.Roberts in Clause 12 of the B.A.S.F.

Christadelphianism is based on the statement of Dr. Thomas quoted from "Elpis Israel" page 128 and the B.A.S.F. Clauses V and XII.

All our efforts are put forth to prevent the catastrophe of the blind leading the blind and both falling into the ditch. We have no wish to incite animosity and we ask who but the blind cannot accept nor understand the Scripture teaching we have drawn attention to but would rather say they accept the Christadelphian view of the Atonement which is impossible of understanding.

No one can accept what Dr. Thomas wrote in "Eureka" Volume 1, page 278 and the B.A.S.F. To reject the former may well be suicide in Adamic condemnation.

Brother Phil Parry.

---

**Letter from Brother Phil Parry to Dr. Stephen Palmer regarding the Christadelphian Campaign in The Forest of Dean - August 1997:-**

Dear Stephen, Greetings in the Name of the Lord. You may recall my correspondence with you around 1984/1985 regarding the subject matter in "The Testimony" magazine between Paul Aston and Richard Mellows where Paul Aston stated the importance of understanding scriptural terminology as for example the Apostle Paul's use of it in his Epistle to the Romans in reference to Sin personified as a Bondmaster. I complimented Paul Aston for his correct views but seeing they differed from those of Richard Mellows and would obviously clash with the B.A.S.F., they both agreed to differ, leaving the subject in "Limbo" = "A place to which things of no importance or value may be relegated." It is obvious to me and others of my faith that if it had gone further the Editor, Tony Benson, would have put the lid on it, which can be proved by his answer to a letter sent to him by Helen Brady requesting him to print in "The Testimony" her father's views and understanding of The Atonement based on the effective reading of the Bible which you have recently advocated in your Forest of Dean Campaign. As you were aware at the time, I wrote to Paul Aston and he promised to write to me but he never did and from experience with your denomination I have never had to wonder. Why?

Coming now to the subject of your seminar at the Five Acres College venue, my wife and I attended on Thursday evening 7th of August and we listened attentively to you and your companion demonstrating the reliability of the Bible record and how to read it effectively, this being the subject for that evening and as to the Divine origin of the Holy Scriptures we had no disagreement with you. Your advice also of looking at the cross references of most Bibles and also of allowing Scripture to explain

Scripture by comparison in other parts of the Bible was quite sound but what disappointed us was the lack of opportunity afforded to ask questions or raise differences of opinion in the hearing of the audience on what may have been said to be contrary to the Scriptures and prove to all present the importance of reading the Bible effectively.

For example you, Stephen, in reference to the Jews in the State of Israel, called them “God’s people” without qualifying that statement and in doing so you refuted the words of Paul in Romans 9:6,7,8, where he declares that because they are the fleshly descendants of Abraham they are not the children of the promise nor the children of God. In other words he says, “for they are not all Israel which are of Israel.”

This was true in the days of John the Baptist. There was the class of Pharisees and Sadducees who boasted in descent from Abraham but were not his seed by faith – therefore not of the promises. Paul showed this later by his Epistle to the Galatians 3:26-29.

But what John the Baptist was demonstrating from the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 40 was the ending of the Cain element of carnal minded traditional Israel and declaring “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand - the axe is laid at the root of the trees - every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

John signalled the end of the Old Covenant in Moses and the New Covenant about to begin in Christ who also preached The Kingdom of God and the fact that it cometh not with outward show (Luke 17:20-23).

I will return to this subject later on but from what Jesus says in the above quote from Luke 17 you may realize that your article some time back “Operation Moses” did not materialize as you expected.

In his booklet “Israel - God’s People, God’s Land” David M. Pearce speaks of the fleshly descendants of Abraham of this New Covenant dispensation as being God’s people, and in other parts of the booklet he appears to correct himself in agreement with Paul. This is not the way or the result of reading the Bible effectively surely.

I now want to give a further example. Seeing there had been so much confusion and misrepresentation of the Nazarene beliefs and of Edward Turney in 1873 by the older generation of Christadelphians, I decided on writing to a younger member of the Ellwood Ecclesia who was on the lecturing list but whom I had never met, yet knew his parents, also being members of the Ellwood Ecclesia. My letter dated 25.10.94, to the young man reads as follows:-

Dear Mr Bevan, Greetings in the exalted Name of Jesus, who loved us and gave himself for us. I would prefer you to inform me of what you believe to be the views and teachings of the Nazarene Fellowship and where, if at all, they violate the teaching of the Prophets and of Jesus and His Apostles. I ask no more than a brief outline; and where there is any misunderstanding or inaccuracies, these can be corrected in a friendly way by personal contact and discussion or in writing, the former being the better of the two so that the words from Isaiah quoted by Jesus in Matthew 13:9-15 may not be found to apply in our case or in yours. We are Yours in Sincerity and in the Hope of Israel.

Phil and Rene Parry,” (25-10-94).

I had a reply on the 3rd November 1994 which told me nothing of what he believed the Nazarene teaching to be. His reply was rather abrupt and void of the spirit of Christ with no attempt to inform me what he thought our beliefs were but that he had heard of me through the Latham family and also that our differences with the Christadelphians commenced in Genesis and I had started marching on the wrong foot and would be wasting my time with him personally, and he was closing the door on any further correspondence.

The answer to this is that the Christadelphian differences are with the Genesis account itself, not with the Nazarenes. We are quite clear on the reading of it and what it teaches. Our opposition is

against those people who have not read it effectively and also have added to it statements and doctrines which it does not contain. How then can it be said of some of the Clauses in your Statement of Faith that they are truth to be received when the effective reading of the Bible by comparison with them proves the opposite in many cases?

With Clause IV and its reference to the creation of Adam we are in full agreement - Adam a living soul or natural body of life created from the dust of the ground, a nature to which Abraham identified his own - "Dust and Ashes" (your reference).

But after Clause IV the Christadelphian differences with Genesis begin to appear and the corruption and tampering of its teaching appears to those whose eyes God sees fit to open.

It is evident from the reading of Genesis 2, verse 17 and the contents of your Clause IV that Adam's continuance of natural life was contingent on his obedience and respect for the word of God and that if he partook of the forbidden fruit he would be subject to death by judicial infliction, that is, the ending of his life in the blood, Adam already being of a nature by creation that could not continue for ever without some further modification to that of the Angels. How then can the already created corruptible nature of Adam suddenly become the penalty for his sin? And unless Clause IV is not true and should read "Adam became an immortal soul." why the necessity to do anything with Adam's created nature as stated in Clause V? Your own pioneers and subsequent leaders have forced you to accept their own failure to read the Bible teaching effectively and the accepting of the doctrine of changed nature as a result of Adam's sin, a doctrine not taught by Jesus neither by the Apostle Paul. Adam incurred inflicted death by sin, but Jesus paid that debt (The Sin of the world) taking it away so that Adam and all in his loins might live naturally and by faith lay hold on eternal life through the means provided. Where can you read in Genesis that Adam's nature was changed to the same nature as the beast with an additional element of "sin-inclination" and decay, which was transmitted to his posterity? (Clause V)! Paul does not teach such a doctrine in Romans or any of his Epistles but he does explain Adam's position and that of his posterity, by revelation from God not from man. Perhaps then Stephen, you can tell me where we differ with you from the Genesis account concerning our nature and that of Jesus apart from relationship to God.

I think this is sufficient for you to sort out at present.

I said earlier that I would come back to the subject of Israel but I will only point out a few important things at this Juncture, No 1. That references to Israel in the Old Testament should be read with the proper context in which they are made and spoken- David M. Pearce failed to do this and said of Israel after the flesh and Spirit, God would make a full end of all the nations where He had scattered them but would not make a full end of them. Take for example Jeremiah 46:27,28. This is concerning Israel's people of the captivity in Babylon whom God caused to return to their own land, and is not a reference to our own dispensation. It is always possible to quote out of context to fit our own views and theories. Again David Pearce misquotes Paul's words to refer to Israel after the flesh when they are referring to the Elect of Israel. He say, "Paul wrote to the Galatians, "...for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28,29). This is not true, how can a Gentile baptized into Christ be Abraham's offspring? The relationship is legal and moral, not physical.

He makes a further misrepresentation of Paul's words as follows, "The Apostle Paul asks. "Has God rejected His people?" He replies emphatically, "By no means." "They are beloved" he declares, "for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable," (Romans 11:1,28,29). This again is very misleading. How can God reject His own people? Impossible! Paul says, "Hath God cast away His people?" He states, "God hath not cast away the people whom He foreknew for I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham." Paul meant that he was the seed of Abraham through Jesus Christ and not by fleshly descent. He also said it was the Elect Jews in Christ who were beloved for the fathers' sakes not the forefathers. There is a difference, and that difference applies now. The Jews of our day are in no different or better position than other nations apart from the fact that their Scriptures are the guide to all people in regard to the way of salvation and that they must accept the New Covenant which replaced the old when Jesus the Messiah became the One Atoning Sacrifice for the world. Since Jesus introduced by His shed blood the New Covenant, God has been

calling whom He chose, to be a Holy People unto Himself. The Good News of the Gospel went forth into all the earth, Paul speaks of it in Romans 10 and 11 and he asks “Did not Israel know? Have they not heard? Yes verily, there sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world” (Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 61:1,2).

If therefore the castaway Jews abide not still in unbelief, God will graft them in again to the real Olive and the grafting in term applies to all who abide not under the Federal Law of Sin and Death. So as Paul says, “Blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” Here it appears the calling ends and all Israel (In Christ) shall be saved. Paul refers to the start of this saving of Israel when Jesus appeared to take away the sin of the world and quotes Jeremiah 31:31. Let me emphasize in conclusion, the land is not Israel’s which they claim it to be through descent from Abraham, and inheritance in the Kingdom for us is not contingent or dependent on the Jewish unbelievers entering its political set up. The return of Jesus is to those who are looking for Him and who know Him as the One Sacrifice God offered up freely for us all, the anti-typical Lamb slain from the foundation of the world as the supreme sin offering. And as Paul said, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. How?, unless they were laid on Him to be taken away? and unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time (without the sin which was laid upon him), unto salvation, having taken sin away” Hebrews 9:28.

Teach this doctrine of the Atonement to Jews and they could understand it, but not the Christadelphian doctrine of a condemned Messiah. I doubt if they ever regarded the Messiah in this position, but they have turned too much of the western traditional teaching of the established churches of Christendom.

However, the matter of Israel is always debatable, so I would ask you to answer the main of my important points and why Christadelphians are so fearful to answer or discuss the teaching of the Bible.

I am yours in anticipation of a reply. Sincerely in the cause of Truth, P.Parry

---

## **The Future Work of Elijah**

In Amos 3 we read “Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets,” and in the next verse He says, “The Lord God hath spoken who can but prophecy.”

In the Scriptures we are given the plan and purpose of the Lord God, the Creator. They are a treasure house in which we find the history of His dealings with mankind and especially His chosen people, Israel. Here too is a call to all peoples to seek Him so that they may receive of Him all the blessings He has to offer - even unto eternal life.

For those who would accept His love and mercy He has revealed how this is to be brought about in the Gospel message of salvation through the teaching, the life and the sacrifice of His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus, and to encourage the followers of Jesus the Lord God made many promises and explained how they were to be brought about. This is why prophecy is interesting for those who have chosen Jesus as their Lord.

The understanding of some prophecies is sometimes obscured by its language, sometimes by analogies and parables, and so it is open to interpretation and this varies because the details from this treasure-store, like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle when put together help give us a picture of future events. As it is not likely that any one person has all of the pieces, each one of us has his own collection and our pictures are going to vary. This is why so many Bible students are fascinated by the variety of different details put forward.

This variety of understanding has revealed some problems. Here are three examples:-

1) A Sister said “I know I shall have to be changed; I could not do some of the things that would be expected of me. My natural feelings would not let me.”

2) Another example occurred in 1917 in Birmingham Town Hall when a full meeting was addressed by a brother who carried a cane; holding it aloft he said, “I look forward to the day when this cane will become a sword dripping with blood in the service of Christ.”

Both may be mistaken, but they are in good company for in Luke 9:52-55 we read -

3) “And Jesus sent messengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” But he turned, and rebuked them and said, “Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.”

John must have taken this saying very much to heart for he became possibly the most spiritually perceptive of the Apostles.

In Luke chapter 19 we may ask then what Jesus meant after He spoke the parable of the Nobleman and the Pounds, He concluded, verse 27, “But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” Those who were to refuse Him as their ruler were the elders of Israel, those who should have known better, but we will meet them later on.

Many prophecies show different facets of the same period of the future, and like a jewel held up to the light, reveal different colours. In this case the light of other Scriptures. When we turn and consider the revealed beauty we see more of its detail and hopefully its meaning. In this way we build up a fascinating picture and more especially if we discuss one with another what we perceive to be the case. This enrichment can be a very comforting aspect of our community life when we recall Malachi 3:16,17, “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord God hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man, spareth his own son that serveth him.”

The future work of Elijah as a subject title for dealing with a period of Israel’s future is based on the prophecy of Malachi, chapter 4, verses 5 and 6 - “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”

Elijah, whose name means “my God is Yahweh,” was one of God’s prophets who felt most keenly the peoples’ rejection of his assertion that Yahweh was God and towards the end of his ministry he asked God to take away his life for he felt that only he was left to worship Him. The Lord God has a special reward for him because of his zeal and faithfulness when we see him in these prophecies ministering to Israel again.

The Jews also have traditionally expected his coming before the coming of their Messiah. That is why they asked John the Baptist if he was Elijah and John replied, “No.”

Concerning Israel at this time, Paul writes in Romans 11:25, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that a blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.”

This covenant is foretold by Jeremiah, chapter 31, verse 33, “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive

their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.” (Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in).

The salvation of Israel will begin with the destruction of the northern invader of the land which is the beginning of God’s judgments in the earth and these judgments of God will result in some learning righteousness. We read in Isaiah 26:9, “For when thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Israel’s deliverance will be full of drama for God will be showing His hand throughout the world in His dealings with them as He says in Ezekiel 39:27, “When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land and I have left none of them any more there, neither will I hide my face any more from them for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

“Sanctified in them in the sight of many nations” - Israel will have Elijah as their leader during this time even as Moses was their shepherd during their years in the wilderness.

To place in sequence some of the events of the future it will help to bring together some of the well-known prophecies concerning the latter days, particularly the days of judgment and preparation for the Kingdom of God on the earth. There are prophecies relating to the redeemed; prophecies concerning Israel; those concerning the Gentiles and prophecies relating to those who will learn righteousness, fear God and give glory to Him. (These are those who will come through the great tribulation). Of these four subjects we are principally concerned with Israel - but first the redeemed.

The judgments of God will have a beginning and an end. In the first letter of Peter, chapter 4 verse 17, we read “for the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

The taking away of the redeemed will be the first of a long series of events which will end with the great multitude which no man can number. We read in Revelation 7:9 and 10, “After this I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.” These are the subjects of Christ and His bride of the Millennial reign. These are those who have learned righteousness during the judgments of God.

The closing of the door of the Ark by God, the removal of Lot and his family from Sodom and the coming of Christ for His redeemed all have one thing in common; it did not rain until Noah and his family were safely in the Ark, and the angel who came to destroy Sodom said to Lot “Haste thee; escape thither for I cannot do anything till thou become thither; and Jesus said, “Then shall two be in the field. The one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left.” In Luke 17:37 Jesus is asked “Where Lord? and he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or precede) them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

The taking away of the redeemed may take place at the same time or just before the invasion of the land of Israel and the world would know nothing of their removal; only the plight of the Jews and the threat to world peace would concern it.

The invasion of the land is “the day of Jacob’s calamity” at the time of their final punishment. Only about a third of the nation will live to see God’s wonderful intervention. In Zechariah 13:8,9 we read:- “And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine

them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say. The Lord is my God.”

There are many prophecies concerning this time. In Jeremiah 30:7 we read, “Alas, for that day is great so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it; for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck and will burst thy bonds and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God and David their King whom I will raise up unto them,” in Isaiah 26:16, “Lord, in trouble have they visited thee (looked for thee); they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.”

In this calamity they see the end of their own endeavours to bring into being a nation established in peace and security. In the next two verses we read (17,18), “Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery is in pain and crieth out in her pangs, so have we been in thy sight, of Lord, we have been with child, we have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance (safety) in the earth.”

In their despair they turn to God. Joel 2:12, “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning and rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repenteth him of the evil.” Verse 15 tells the people what they must do, “Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children and those that suck the breast; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet; let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach that the heathen should rule over them; wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity his people.”

These prophecies all concern the same event - the salvation of the remnant of Israel “whose names were written unto life.” We read in Isaiah 4:3 “he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem (or written unto life in Jerusalem).

The land will be laid waste and unclean and Jerusalem in ruins for every wall will have fallen to the ground during God’s destruction of the invader. Israel will now have seen God’s deliverance of the land and this is possibly the time for Elijah to make himself known to them. The assembling of the people is for several reasons. Firstly to comfort them, then to choose elders to meet the coming Christ on Mount Zion and to prepare to leave the desolate city in an orderly manner.

In Isaiah 40:1 we have a description of one of the most moving events. The Revised Version reads, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye (Elijah) speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins; the voice (Elijah again) of him that crieth in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God!” In verse 9 “Oh, thou (Elijah) that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; Oh, thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up; be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold! your God.” Isaiah 52:7 may describe the same occasion “ “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him (Elijah) that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion Thy God reigneth.”

The meeting of Christ and the elders is recounted by Zechariah in chapter 12 verse 10, “And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem.

If the redeemed are with Christ on Mount Zion when Elijah introduces their Messiah to the Jewish elders Revelation 14:1-3 (Compare this quote with A.V.) may apply, “And I saw and behold, the Lamb standing on mount Zion and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name

of his Father on their foreheads... They sang, as it were, a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no man could learn that song save the hundred and forty-four thousand even they that had been purchased out of the earth.” Are these elders the representatives of those who would not that He should rule over them?

Note the elders do not sing, that is, they are not the redeemed. Are they the elders of Israel who have been brought by Elijah to meet their Messiah? Moses brought seventy elders of Israel to see God, as we read in Exodus 24:9. “Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel and they saw the God of Israel.”

Why only the elders besides the redeemed? The risen Christ has been seen only by chosen witnesses - Acts 10:40, 41, “Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God.” Turning back to Isaiah 52:8,9 (Compare with A.V.) we read, “The voice of thy watchmen, they lift up the voice, together do they sing for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord returneth to Zion; break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem for the Lord hath comforted his people; he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The next verse (11) brings us to the departure from the land into the wilderness, “Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out in haste nor by flight for the Lord will go before you and the God of Israel will be your rearward.”

With Elijah to lead them in the wilderness they shall pass under the rod a second time - Ezekiel 20:35 to 38, “And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God, and I will cause you to pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant and I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against me, I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn and they shall not enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.”

Israel in the wilderness is described in Joel 2:28, - “And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

And again in Ezekiel the same time is foretold - Ezekiel 36:25, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.”

This new Israel, as a result of their salvation, conversion and change of heart will have a unique incentive to preach the everlasting gospel. In Revelation 14:6 we see an angel preaching the everlasting gospel and foretelling the judgments yet to come. This messenger sent to preach to the whole world may be Israel on whom God has poured out His spirit. Revelation 14:6, “And I saw another angel (or messenger) fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment is come and worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters.”

One response to their preaching is referred to by Zechariah in chapter 8 verse 23, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts. In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying. We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you.”

This latter day preaching of the gospel of the coming Kingdom was promised by Jesus speaking in Matthew 24:14 (of the gospel of the coming Kingdom not the gospel of redemption), “and this gospel

of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

After the cleansing of the land and the preaching of the everlasting gospel, a period of possibly three and a half years, Israel will return to the land. In Isaiah 26:2 we read, “Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in,” and again in Isaiah 62:10, “Go through, go through the gates, prepare ye the way of the people, cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold! the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world: Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him and his work before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord and thou shalt be called Sought Out. A city not forsaken,”

But there will be those who oppose Israel returning to the land. This opposition could be another confederacy of nations and ideologies supported by Christendom who will join together to prevent the Jews becoming a nation in her own land again. Joel 3:9-16, “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war; wake up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near; let them come up; beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong; assemble yourselves and come all ye heathen and gather yourselves together round about; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, Oh Lord; let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about; put ye in the sickle for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake. But the Lord will be the hope of his people and the strength of the children of Israel.”

This judgment of God on the nations that come against Jerusalem for the last time is foretold by many of the prophets. Habakkuk has a vision of God’s judgments on the nations that come against Israel and in verse 2 of chapter 3 he asks God to remember mercy, so final and complete is the devastation of their enemies. Verse 11 reads, “The sun and moon stood still in their habitation” reminds us that God likened this day to when He fought in the day of battle in Zechariah 14:3, - “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when he fought in the day of battle.” When was the day of battle? Joshua 10:13, “And the sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher - So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down about a whole day and there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.”

This final and complete destruction of the nations that come against God’s people accompanied by the sun and moon standing still give the people of the whole world notice of the fact that it is God who judges. This vindication of the Jews and their gospel of the coming Kingdom with their Messiah as its King will cause “all the tribes of earth to mourn.”

Matthew 24:29, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken and then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.” In the final overthrow of her enemies not one of the people of Israel will perish. Psalm 91:7, “A thousand shall fail at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee, only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.” For these are a righteous nation having passed under the rod.

This period of Israel’s future is the last part of the judgments of God; during the remainder of the judgment among the Gentiles the Jew will still preach the everlasting gospel and will be secure in their own land rebuilding their cities and building the temple for their Messiah, who with His bride, may be at His Father’s side awaiting the end of God’s judgments. For in Psalm 110:1 we read, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”

After the tribulation of those days we have John’s vision in Revelation 7:9-17, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and

peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four beasts and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen; and one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they? And I said unto him. Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

These are those who have learned righteousness, feared God and given glory to Him when His judgments were in the earth. The elect (the bride of Christ) are with Him in His throne for He promised in Revelation 3:21, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father in his throne.” The coming with His bride to the Temple is foretold in Malachi 3:1,2, “Behold I will send my messenger (Elijah) and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”

The comings of Christ are possibly best illustrated by referring to prophecies which describe the situation or effect at the time. For the redeemed; Revelation 16:15, “Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” In 1 Thessalonians 5:2 we read - “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” And the coming to Israel, Zechariah 18:10 tell us, “They shall look on me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.” And later His return to a waiting world when He will come in glory. Malachi 3:1, “And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.” Matthew 24:27, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

To sum up: We have seen Elijah’s leadership during this time described variously as a messenger, a deliverer, and one who would turn away sin from Jacob, a comforter, etc.

We have not mentioned a defender since the Archangel Michael claims this role as the mighty prince who stands for God’s people. We may have first met him when he identified himself to Joshua as “the captain of the host of the Lord” which goeth before the armies of Israel. His defence of Israel with other “mighty ones” can be seen on two occasions that Israel will be defended by God; at Jacob’s time of trouble, the destruction of the invader, and again when the nations will seek to destroy them having rejected the Jews preaching of the everlasting gospel. The outcome, Malachi 3:12, “And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Christ is coming. The many references to the Advent cannot be all accommodated in one day or even a short period of time because He is to remain in heaven until the Lord God has made His enemies His footstool.

The Spirit of Life is in our Lord Jesus. His concern is for the healing of the people. It is His Father the Lord God, the Creator, who will purge out the rebels and it is our Lord’s good pleasure to feed and nurture those who have learned righteousness and it is ours too, who hope to be His helpers in that day.

We have seen the goodness and severity of God in His dealings with the nation of Israel. For Spiritual Israel Christ left two messages for our day and our day alone - “When ye see these things begin to come to pass, look up for your deliverance draweth nigh.” This is the deliverance of the body, for the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible and the living shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

The other message is in the form of an exhortation, “Pray ye always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that are coming on the earth.”

Being accounted worthy is made possible by Jesus being “made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:30). For righteousness is the gift of God (Romans 5:17).

Brother Ray Gregory.

---

## CASTING YOUR CARE ON HIM

The quotation from 1 Peter 5:7 concludes by assuring us that “He careth for you” some words of very great comfort for us all. They are perhaps most welcome to the lonely, the isolated and the downcast. However Scripture indicates that being alone is not all bad, there are many advantages.

It was, after all, in crowds that the “world that then was, perished...” and in hoards that Israel in the wilderness were plagued en-masse to the total destruction of many. Nehemiah stood out as one alone who loved the Lord so much that he would put not just his job, but his life in jeopardy before the King, and in re-building Jerusalem’s fallen walls was opposed by the lovers of darkness.

Jesus was forsaken by all His close friends in His hour of greatest need, when in isolation He must have stood as the true Majesty, when the crowd blasphemously screamed “Crucify him, crucify him!” It was not until after His ascension that the crowds (or clouds) of witnesses gained comfort and strength from the sheer numbers who came to be baptised believers, as each one of us now is.

Still later, in their crowds, these same believers were thrown to the lions by Nero and his cohorts until the crowds thinned to groups and the groups to individuals once again. In the Middle Ages, as too graphically illustrated by the book “the Protesters” individuals were once more prepared to die for their faith. How foolish says the unbeliever, perhaps even jealous of their faith. We find that today, whilst the following of the number of the faithful seems to dwindle, those around are still jealous of the faith we have found, but nonetheless unwilling to accept its loving bonds and the careful cherishing of the Lord for themselves. When the Lord comes shall He find faith on the earth? is the Bible question. It will clearly not be among the masses (or Mass’s) but in isolated pockets, here a few, there a few, still devoted to the Lord. It is, after all, to those who “love His appearing” that He will appear with healing in His wings.

The days draw on and get ever longer and more evil. Do not let us be deluded that this is not so. We must never be prepared to compromise, to say, in effect, the world isn’t really so bad. It is, and it is getting steadily worse. Today’s T.V. programmes are debasing and debased, with but few exceptions. Even the News broadcasts indicate the downhill spiral of humanity accelerating its pace at an almost unbelievable rate over just the last 10 years. Stand back and look at it for yourself, objectively. But don’t look for too long, and remember Jesus’ great prayer that His true followers would be allowed to live in the world but to be kept from its evil. That prayer could have been made today, and for each of us individually, Jesus does care for you, and for me. He knows us, and all (unfortunately) our strengths and weaknesses, and in too many instances the latter to be more than the former.

Take comfort and strength, for He careth for you. But how, we may ask, do we do so. How do we keep ourselves separate from the world, how do we show that we are a peculiar people, zealous of good works? They are reasonable questions, and demand an answer to help us in this struggle.

We have to look to our Great Example, the Lord of Glory Himself. May we never forget that He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. How did He overcome, and were His temptations real anyway? Yes! Most assuredly they were; the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering. If we are truly His brothers and Sisters, by adoption, why should we not

think that we need our trials too? What a fantastic prospect that even though we fail when tested, we shall still come out like pure gold, for this is His will and He alone can, and will do it for everyone who casts their care on Him.

But we have still not seen how to overcome, in a practical way. We are living in the world and whether we like it or not its subtle ways will influence us each one to a greater or lesser extent, no one is immune.

What did Jesus do? Well, for a start, by the age of 12 (!) He knew that He had to be about His Father's business, and there He was found in the Temple putting points to the religious leaders, and asking them questions. Can you imagine many 12 years olds today in front of the A.B's asking them questions? And so we perceive dimly the meaning of "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus." How could He have known the things to do with Israel and God's salvation? Only through an intense interest in the Word of God. Read every Sabbath we can imagine Him clinging to its every syllable. This was the food He had to eat which His own disciples could not understand. It is still meat and drink to the disciple, who is aspiring to be as his Lord.

A friend of mine in his 40's died recently, and at his funeral I was moved to hear words he frequently said, but which I had never heard: "If we have time to eat and drink, we have time to read the Word of God." Does it need to be said he was one of the busiest people I have ever met? The words are fitting for each of us to ponder. This is a starting point to our own ability, with His help, to overcome the world.

What else did the Master do? He liked to be alone. Not many of us feel like that, and those who say they do sometimes have their motives questioned. But Jesus liked it, and sought it. Indeed reading Scripture makes us wonder if He did not go off alone every single night. Perhaps this is hidden in "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Why did He want this solitude? To commune with His Father, and our Father. Communication that is still open to us, the power of prayer. Look at the lonely, or lone ones, of the Word and witness the Power it can give. Moses, isolated from Egypt through choice and Israel through hardness of their hearts prayed to God and caused their release from bondage. Elijah prayed and there was famine, and again and it ceased. Nehemiah prayed a few words only, and was given strength to speak before rulers and kings, and so we could catalogue the faithful, who through prayer stopped the mouths of lions, were sawn asunder, etc, etc. (Hebrew 11 – the "Faith" chapter) and of course our Greatest Example, whose prayer was so intense that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. There's our model, who gave us the model prayer as well. He was heard, and angels strengthened Him to fulfil God's will in bringing eternal redemption FOR US.

Read, pray, and do, are the 3 things which will keep us steadfast unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

What can you do? Work for the Lord. There is so much of it, far too much to go round. Sisters, a letter to the isolated, to the bedridden, to the lonely, to those in search of the Truth in far off lands, to Brethren and Sisters who need to hear from someone of like precious faith. There are many practical needs as well, more than you will find time to do - if only you look.

Brethren, a helping hand to someone in need, because you Love the Lord. Not necessarily to those in the household of Faith, to any one, who may respond and then, perhaps let you teach them the Truth you love. Above all attend to reading, to prayer, and to exhortation, even if it is just to yourself.

To those crowded out by the crowds of this madcap world and breakneck existence, find time for isolation, splendid isolation, alone with yourself and your Saviour and His Father. On the hills, in the garden, by the brook, and suddenly you will recognize that the world passes away and the fashion thereof but the still small voice, which calms us all in our anxieties endures for ever. He calls you now. He will call you again, into His glorious Kingdom.

Brother Richard Virgin.

# THE BRAZEN SERPENT

## Lifted up on a Pole by Moses at God's command.

Numbers 21:6-9 and 2 Kings 18:4

There was one reason only for the lifting up on a pole of this brass image of the serpents which God sent among the sinning Israelites in the wilderness, and one lesson to learn from what it portrayed then, and for the future. One thing is certain, it was meant to be an object to look up to for healing by belief and faith in words of God through Moses, and not an object and image of worship by reason of any miraculous power it was thought by some, it possessed. The looking up to it for healing and saving from "the death by sin" was through faith in the words of God to Moses, but the power to save was not in the image of the Brazen Serpent but from God who was responsible for its provision even as He was for the provision of His Own Son, who proved it possible to live a sinless life in the identical flesh and blood nature of the first man Adam, and of those Israelites who were bitten by serpents.

It is written of those people under the Mosaic Covenant, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The serpents God sent among them was a condemnation of their personal sin under law. Did they say what the late Peter Watkins expressed of Christadelphians in 1946-47,

"It is not we that have sinned, but the irrepressible Adamic nature has obtruded itself - and we heartily deplore the fact. As long as we deplore our transgressions - as long as they are committed despite ourselves and because of ourselves... we remain in Christ and righteous."

I suggest he and his community should have read Hebrews 10:26-30 where the writer speaks of God's fiery indignation as per the fiery serpents. Then find, in opposition to their own views of "serpent-nature" with which in their teaching they label Christ, the true facts of the case spoken by Jesus Himself and recorded in John 3:14-17, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Jesus also speaks in John chapter 10 - 'I am come that the sheep which believe in me and follow me might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' - 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep' - 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.'

What a vast difference Jesus gives for His being lifted up to that of the Editor of "The Slain Lamb" who in his doctrine has put Jesus on a tree in "serpent-nature," as declaration from God of what was due to "sinful, condemned" flesh; Jesus, as per Dr. Thomas, cleansing His own altar body by His own sprinkled blood thereon, and as per Robert Roberts, Jesus shedding His blood contaminated by the sin which ran in the veins of His mother Mary.

This is the Messiah of God as described by their pioneers and leaders, for Christadelphians to look up to as an image which they have beaten or moulded into the pattern of their own teaching and inventions derived from the Apostate Church of Rome concerned with condemned and defiled changed flesh of Adam resulting falsely from the misunderstood teaching of the Apostle Paul.

In this respect therefore, they can be said to be worshipping the Thomas and Roberts image of an unclean Christ of "Sin-stricken nature," as they boldly term it, and instead of burning incense to Him, commemorating His body and blood, leavened bread and sinful blood for them, emblemized on the memorial table. Portraying a Christ fit only for destruction by reason of being the habitation of the Devil or as they term it "sin-in-the-flesh."

It appears from 2 Kings 18:4 that the idolaters of Israel had been looking upon the Brazen Serpent as an object of miraculous power from the time Moses had lifted it up on the pole. King Hezekiah had come to this conclusion by their excluding of the God of Abraham that it was but a piece of brass or by derision, a trifle of brass, the meaning of Nehushtan, for this is what he called it.

I wonder are there any Christadelphians in our day who, like king Hezekiah, are come to the light and are prepared to face up to the serious situation they are in and break up this false image of Christ presented to them on a pole by Dr Thomas and R. Roberts?

The tools for the job are between the covers of the Bible. The Nazarenes were given them by the Lord God and Father of Jesus. We have tried our best to hand them to Christadelphians but in most cases it has met with refusal so that thus is fulfilled in them Matthew chapter 13:11-15.

The meaning and reference Jesus made to the lifting up of the Brazen Serpent in application to His own sacrificial death on the tree is quite clear in Numbers 21:6-9; John 3:14 and John 12:31-32. In other words says Jesus - 'Now shall the prince or bondmaster of the children of disobedience, and who has the power of death in that the debt of life to him has not been paid, be cast out through me, and I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me.' John adds, "This he said signifying what death He should die." Is there a difference? Nazarenes believe and know there is a difference between the death Jesus suffered and the deaths of all other men. Also the fact that He was made a little lower than the angels in nature specifically for the purpose of suffering death by bloodshedding in the place of Adam, and consequently for all men. And it was not because He had condemned nature as falsely taught but that He, "by the grace of God," not the wrath of God, "should taste death for every man." Jesus was crowned with glory and honour to do this - Hebrews 2:9, He was made perfect through sufferings, not through His death - Romans 5:18.

Take the veil from the eyes when reading the above through Christadelphian literature, or you will be no better than those idol worshippers who burnt incense to the Brazen Serpent which Hezekiah break in pieces.

The late Peter Watkins was astray on the Adamic sentence being by natural death. God through Christ never had cause to waive natural death but He did waive the sentence of "death by sin" which passed upon Adam legally, and upon all men. We can through Christ be freed from the death by sin as Paul informs us in Romans 8:1,2. After His resurrection did Jesus say in His conversation with the disciples on their way to Emmaus "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things on account of having serpent-nature or sinful-flesh"? No! "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25,26).

Can it be found in Moses and the prophets that Jesus, or even any human beings, die because of serpent nature? Of course not! Man dies because he has the same nature of the first man Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). None can dispute this truth from Paul and profess to know the truth. But as he teaches in Romans, death by sin is what must be considered in the legal sense in which it entered the world through Adam's transgression of law (Romans 6:23A).

And in conclusion read the proof that it must be a legal matter when one act of a Righteous man can cause the changeover of many without any physical change or physical death by that many. See Ephesians chapter 2.

May the Lord in His mercy open the eyes of those who still cannot see why Jesus was lifted up from the earth to draw all men unto Him-

Brother Phil Parry

\* \* \*

## Appendix to above comments on “The Brazen Serpent”

There is a parallel to this teaching and belief of the Robertsites section of Christadelphia found in a sect who now call themselves “The Household of Faith?” but who in doctrine and belief are identical; their difference and separation from the former being on grounds of moral conduct. This is proved by a reading of their booklet entitled “A Declaration of the Faith” which I found on reading to be an unscriptural and also presumptuous title with added blasphemy and degradation of the flesh of Jesus being taught and claimed without Scripture proof.

The clauses contained in the Statements of Faith of both these sects are identical even to their interpretation of the reason and meaning of why Jesus Christ chose to die except for the fact that “The Household of Faith” people go beyond what the Scripture states by saying of Jesus:-

“He was a man just like us, so according to the purpose of God, his body, which was subject to the same temptations as all men, was crucified and destroyed. This manifested the righteous judgment of God upon Sin in the flesh, that is, Human nature (Romans 8:3). Upon this basis God extends His mercy to people who acknowledge their sin. They recognize the righteous judgment of God - they repent and are able to gain the true hope of salvation.”

I must object most strongly to these false theories. Adam when created was subject to certain desires relative to natural life. None of those desires were wrong until he was subjected to God’s moral law, for where there is no law there is no transgression. How then can anyone be so stupid and say that Adam’s natural desires amounted to sin-in-his-flesh, the flesh that God had created and termed “very good”? Jesus was born with the same nature Adam had before and after his disobedience, but Adam defiled his own character by disobedience under law; Jesus did not, and retained His integrity and Sonship thereby.

To say that Christ’s body was destroyed is a lie and refutation of the Scriptures, neither is it a manifestation of the righteous judgement of God upon “sin-in-the-flesh” which is abstract and means transgression of God’s law relating to sinful character, not the inclinations which lead to good or evil as a result of knowledge.

Sin is not an element in the physical nature. Sin can be avoided by personal respect for the commandments of God and is not synonymous of human nature. The reference by this sect to Romans 8:3 is misunderstood and out of context with Paul’s teaching,

The words also of Peter (2:22-27) expose the lie “that the body of Jesus was destroyed and that it was the righteous judgment of God upon human nature.” Did not Peter condemn the action of the men who by wicked hands crucified the sinless man of whose begetting and existence God was directly responsible?

Would Peter therefore be so bold as to condemn God for the nature and crucifixion of His sinless beloved Son in whom He was well pleased? Was not this the “body prepared” of God to make His soul (life in the blood) an offering for Sin and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in His hand in that His righteous servant would justify many by bearing up to the Tree their iniquities? (Isaiah chapter 53). All this because Jesus had serpent nature - sinful flesh under condemnation? Definitely not. Read verse 12 of Isaiah 53. The reward and the answer is plain; “A portion with the great, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and bare the sin of many.”

Not content with the 53rd Isaiah, this sect continues to violate the Word of God by comparing and likening the nature of Jesus to the deceitful reasoning of the Serpent as an emblem of human nature having a compulsive disposition and proneness to Sin.

So in his statement of John 3:14 “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up,” Jesus is likening Himself to the serpent. So, verse 15, whosoever believes in this crucifixion of human nature (and practices it in their life) shall not perish but have eternal life.”

We are being told here that we can believe that Jesus was crucified to destroy His human nature, and if we believe this was why He died and we do the same by moral conduct, we shall not perish but have eternal life. Can they not understand that Jesus' moral conduct was perfect and yet for some reason (other than their invented sinful flesh rubbish) He was if willing, appointed unto this sacrificial death to take away the Sin (singular) of the world?

Jesus did in His moral conduct what this sect is telling us to do in our lifetime that we may not perish but have eternal life. If Jesus did it morally (and He did) where the need for Him to be crucified? Would not this declare the unrighteous judgment of God?

When for the time ye ought to be teachers (seeing ye are dull of hearing), ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; the Gospel Paul preached. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

You of both sects are not preaching what Paul received and taught about the Gospel of salvation through Jesus giving His life as the ransom price of purchase from under the Law of Sin and Death Adam brought into the world. But that He offered up a life in a corrupt and condemned body of flesh which He Himself considered was obnoxious to Himself and His Father.

In the light of such false theories and misinterpretations one finds it strange to read Paul's words to the Ephesian believers, chapter 5 verse 29, concerning Christ and His body the Church, "For no man ever hated his own flesh...for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." In the resurrected flesh and bone body of Jesus was a continuation of the same character He had before His crucifixion, a character necessary to qualify him for the higher office than that of Aaron, even at the right hand of God in Heaven. His flesh saw no corruption but was rejuvenated by the Spirit Power of God instead of the blood which He shed for the life of the world - a world bought with a price - His natural body and blood which you of both sects and identical creeds liken unto an emblematic serpent denoting Sin, in direct opposition to the meaning Jesus Himself explained it and why it was lifted up on a pole by Moses.

Both sects expose their ignorance of the Atoning work of God in Christ and have the audacity to say of Christ's sacrifice by crucifixion, "So whosoever believes in this crucifixion of human nature as the righteous judgment of God, and repent and practice the same in their life shall not perish but have eternal life" - you mean commit suicide?

In disgust I conclude "If I am to frustrate the Grace of God in this way to obtain salvation and eternal life then Christ is dead in vain" - Saint Paul

When Paul said "I am crucified with Christ" this was in the past tense and nothing to do with his conduct as a new man living by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20- 21).

Please get the necessary priorities correct from the Scriptures of Truth explained by the Apostles of Jesus whom He authorised.

Brother Phil Parry.