

Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 171

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Note regarding a booklet by Brian Jones

I wrote to Brian Jones recently regarding his booklet, entitled "The Belief and Faith of The First Century Church of Christ Jesus the Nazarene" and in his reply he stated that "My book has nothing remotely to do with the Nazarene Fellowship."

However, Brian Jones has taken much from our Nazarene Fellowship literature to which he has added an admixture of doubtful and unsustainable doctrines with which we cannot be associated.

Russell Gregory

Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in Messiah's dear Name to all at home and abroad.

This year Israel celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment as a nation in 1948. After years of unimaginable suffering at the hands of Hitler and his evil henchmen, the Jews must have thought when liberation came from the ghastly camps that they would soon find a place in the world and some peace and safety at last. The war ended in 1945 but the struggle for the Jews continued as they were pushed from pillar to post by the Governments who had been fighting for their freedom, amongst other causes, for six long years. I watched a fascinating television programme about the Jewish battle for a homeland and the British Government has nothing to be proud of. The Foreign Secretary of the time, Ernest Bevan proved to be a foul-mouthed anti-Semite of the worst sort and seemed more than inclined to finish the job Hitler had started in 1940. The programme made salutary viewing with graphic pictures of British soldiers under orders to harass and on some occasions shoot concentration camp survivors, who were attempting to land from ships that had brought them to the land that was to become Israel. These "inhuman creatures" as Bevan called them, were put into camps again on Cyprus and in awful conditions and under American army control with direction from General Patten, another individual infamous for his cruelty.

Eventually, and much to his credit, General Eisenhower dismissed Patten and backed the idea of Israel as a nation. The British disagreed and fought the decision at every turn.

When the establishment of Israel was put before the United Nations Assembly for a vote and for recognition, the Americans were the first to recognize the new State.

What a moment that must have been for those surviving Jews. In many cases lone survivors of whole families wiped out by gas, starvation, disease and torture.

However, the state of Israel was built on twin tragedies. The murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and the “catastrophe” of the Arabs in that it threw 700,000 Palestinians into exile. There was an Arab village called Sumeiriyeh from which the 800 inhabitants were driven out on May 14th, 1948 during the first Arab-Israeli war. In the fifty years since then they have never been allowed to return. Their homes were levelled, and in their place the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters’ kibbutz was established to house survivors of the Holocaust and preserve the memory of the Nazi genocide.

Most of the 800 or so inhabitants of Sumeiriyeh joined the Palestinian exodus to Lebanon. Some villagers joined the Palestinian guerrillas who waged an often pitiless war to recover their homes. One of the villagers named Abu Amer is now an Israeli citizen, and ostensibly enjoys equal rights with Jews. But he cannot go back to the land where his family once grew olives, vegetables and wheat. His son summed up the feelings of countless Palestinians. “The Nazis committed crimes against the Jews, and the Jews committed crimes against us.” Grief builds upon grief it seems.

The first settlers wanted to acknowledge the suffering of the Arabs by including the name of Sumeiriyeh in the name of their kibbutz. But they were overruled by government officials.

Such are the complexities of the Arab-Israeli situation that it is unlikely that any man or men will solve the problem. Like the rest of the world struggling with insoluble problems of all kinds it will have to wait until Jesus sits on the throne of David and dispenses divine justice for all people everywhere. Then the nations will be able to say as Martin Luther King said in his last great speech, “Free at last, Great God Almighty, free at last!”

I hope it will not be thought inappropriate but I should like to end on a personal reminiscence. It came to mind because of the contribution from A.D.Norris in the last Circular Letter, giving his interpretation of the Sacrifice of Christ alongside our view, ably and succinctly written by Russell.

While I was a child I watched my father Ernest as he wrote and contended for what he profoundly believed to be the truth. He spent many hours writing and he had a volume of correspondence to deal with, much of it I regret to say disagreeable. It did not seem to upset him, it just made him more determined to make his views clear and understandable and he worked tirelessly to that end.

My memory may be at fault here but I think it, was probably during the 1950’s that my father received a series of anonymous letters discussing various aspects of the truth to which he responded. The correspondence lasted for some considerable time and then ceased. This correspondence came from a Monomark number and address. My father’s letters were forwarded via this Monomark to the anonymous writer. Months or it may even have been years later A.D.Norris wrote to my father probably after the publication of the pamphlet called The Norris Confession. Father recognized the type face as that of his anonymous Monomark correspondent and responded to the letter from A.D.Norris via the Monomark, And Mr Norris admitted that he had been rumbled!

Russell and I send our love and good wishes to all with grateful thanks for the kind letters and contributions both financial and written received in the past weeks.

Helen Brady

Dear Readers, I wish to apologize for the lateness of this Circular Letter.

It is due entirely to my family springing a surprise 70th birthday present on me in the form of a holiday in the South of France! No, it was not on the coast amongst the wealth and glamour of today's society but an hours drive inland up into the hills of Provence to some of the most spectacular scenery I have seen.

Each day my wife and I marvelled at the variety of tiny flowers about our feet with the scent of Rosemary and Thyme and with a mixture of other herbs drifting up as we walked in the sunshine over the hills, covered by acres of brilliant yellow Broom and drifts of deep blue Salvias with large patch-works of grass-like pale blue Sisyrinchiums, bushes of pink Mallows, and the waving heads of wild flax, and oh, so many wild flowers we could not name but nevertheless were entranced by, especially the four kinds of orchids we found. In this botanists paradise we saw butterflies new to us, while the noise of the cicadas broke the silent peace all around.

Then the unforgettable views of the Verdone Gorge with its magnificent grandeur and the seemingly endless climb as we drove up the twisting hairpin bends with glimpses of the river below, which wound eventually into the vivid turquoise-blue lake. At each turn there were such varied rock formations of massive folds of granite, and contorted volcanic designs interspersed with marble, which left us bewildered by the gigantic forces of nature required to make them.

The flight to Nice was clear and without cloud covering the ground. The sight of the French Alps far below with its snow covered mountains was awe-inspiring of itself, but during the flight home we passed over masses of ephemeral cloud columns with snowy-white heads, many thousands of feet high, brilliant and dazzling in the sunshine at the summits but looking down into each evanescent canyon we saw only increasing darkness. It was better above than below these widespread thunderstorms!

Now it's back to work again and with senses renewed we wonder who could doubt a wise Creator?

With love to all, Russell.

Exhortation from a Circular Letter dated February 1957:

In the Book of Proverbs (4:18), we read:- "But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

God is LIGHT, and all those who seek Him in sincerity, as do the just, see clearer and clearer unto the end of all things which will culminate in Revelation 22:5, when "they shall see His face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Between the stages of time at the beginning, when God said, "Let there be light", and the end of all, the ETERNAL LIGHT of Revelation 22, are many instances of light being given by God, and examples of light in many forms in the life of those who sought God.

Just a few come to mind as we think upon this proverb of Light. In the Garden of Eden, after man's fall, there was placed by God a flaming sword which kept the way to the Tree of Life. Here we see an association of brightness, or light, and LIFE. Yet a little later in the Scripture, mediums of light are used in the dreams which Joseph had; still later, in the form of a pillar of fire by night kept Israel, and ultimately brought them to the Land of Promise.

In the beginning of the New Testament we read of the birth of the Son of God, "The Light of men", Witnessed by the wise men who saw the light of the star which heralded Him.

In John 8:12, Jesus says "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Here was the shining Light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But before that day was seen, the Light of the world was cut off, as seen in Luke 23:44-45, "and it came to pass about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was

darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst,” at which time the Roman centurion had to declare “Truly this was the Son of God.”

But the Perfect Day was very soon revealed to us in the words of the angel to the women at the tomb, “Why seek ye the living among the dead?”

“The Light” now was indeed glorious and had attained to fullness and perfection, which brightness was seen by Saul of Tarsus when in ignorance he sought what he thought was right and truth. Suddenly a light from heaven, brighter than the midday sun. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.”

Brother Skinner.

We now publish three letters in response to the article by Brother A.D.Norris entitled “Christ Died For Our Sins” which appeared in the last Circular Letter:

The first reply is from Brother Phil Parry :-

Let me first emphasize that the Apostle Paul declares, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” Isaiah 53; and not according to any card-carrying member of the Central Christadelphian Fellowship which denotes adherence to a man-made creed as introduced to certain ones in the year 1873 to prevent them accepting the enlightened scriptural teaching of Edward Turney and forcing them to produce his authorized cards similar to a Trade Union closed shop. This man was Robert Roberts, and it is plain to me that we are still being introduced to the same old doctrines by A.D.Norris which pervaded in 1873 when challenged as false by E.Turney, and others in agreement with his Lecture “The Sacrifice of Christ.”

However, we thank A.D.Norris for replying to our request to produce what he believes as a Christadelphian on the basis of Holy Scripture, but sad to say, his quoting of the Scriptures do not necessarily produce a true explanation of their meaning by reason of his being committed to the B.A.S.F., the Robertite doctrine of the Christadelphian Central Fellowship which denotes division, closed-shop and card-carrying. This should explain most of the first page of his treatise but I have still to deal with the title he has chosen for it, “Christ Died For Our Sins.”

Robert Roberts stated, “It was our personal sins that were a barrier to our acceptance with God.” This is not true, though it can be true once we are enlightened and have acknowledged our alienation from God through being born in Adamic Bondage under the Law of Sin and Death which passed legally (not physically) on all men, thus making all men sinners by constitution, and not by personal sin, not being under Divine Law in the case of us Gentiles yet as Paul teaches, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” - “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” A.D.Norris was not a personal sinner when Christ died on Calvary, neither was Robert Roberts, it was Adam’s sin (singular) the Sin of the world which was the barrier to God’s acceptance. Adam’s sin left him without strength and under sentence of judicial death by slaying but typically taken away by the slaying of a lamb for a sin-covering. This legal sentence passed upon all men and described by John the Baptist as the Sin of the world because the whole world was federally involved in Adam’s loins, without strength being by alienation without God, not standing before Him in their own right. John pointing the two men toward Jesus said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world.” John did not say “sins” but “sin” (singular). We put off the old man and put on the new. See Ephesians 2:1 to 22 and 4:20 to 24, - “And you bath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins... But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)-.. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off... the old man, which is corrupt (in mind)... and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” A Spiritual change^ not a physical-

Under HEBREWS (in summary) - bottom of page 18; In quoting (Hebrews 9:13,14) I am puzzled as to what is meant by his interpolation of verse 14 to read “How much more will the dying of the Lord cleanse the Spirit?” I would not have thought Spirit needs cleansing. The writer of Hebrews speaks of a “conscience-cleansing” from dead works to serve the living God. This is what I have been drawing attention to, that without the death of Christ to ratify Adam’s typical covering, and all in his loins, plus the sin-

offerings for transgressions under the dispensation before Christ's death, all works would be considered "dead" but in Christ was a new and living way to serve the living God through faith.

Page 19. There is not much to disagree with in the first six paragraphs, but what does Alfred mean by the breaching of the protection of innocence? It was Divine Law which had been breached, Adam's obedience to it was the protection of his innocence, he need not have been disobedient.

Now, says Alfred, "Trace the precipitous decline of the human race from that point on." Let us do so and what do we find? Two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain chose not to be corrected and put on the right way to acceptance with God, but Abel chose rightly, so where is this precipitous decline and your apparent omission of righteous Abel and his offering? Is it not apparent that the reason is to pursue your Robertite doctrine of Clause V of the B.A.S.F.?

1. "The morbid awareness of nakedness provoked shame in the presence of the Creator"? I do not agree. They were literally naked before their Creator at Creation and were not ashamed. It was guilt, transgression of law which portrayed them before God as having no covering for their sin and therefore naked and without strength. I would say that in partaking of the forbidden fruit they activated a Divine appointed sensor which would have made them aware of a physical nakedness which was in contrast with the appearance of the Lord God and remind them also of their sin. In any case there was a change of relationship to God but nowhere in Scripture does it say a change of physical nature and inclination to sin, with natural decay and death as the penalty incurred.

2. This is a bit strange, "A downright rebellious transfer of the responsibility from the sinner to the Sinless One: The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat."

I was of the opinion from the reading, that Eve was first in the transgression, how then can Alfred say she was the sinner and that Adam was the sinless one, when Adam knew where she had obtained the fruit? Unless Alfred is referring to God as the Sinless One, and if this be the case then he would appear to have the conception that the Creator was once under Law Himself, which I regard as unacceptable.

As he progresses towards the next page Alfred is heading for the old false theories of Clause V - "A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of their nature and was transmitted to all their posterity." A sentence which is falsely declared to have passed upon Adam and Eve by the Creator as a penalty for their sin. If sin was displeasing to the Creator it should surprise any intelligent person why the Creator should make any physical change to a nature already subject to decay and death by creation and then add to it a greater inclination to commit what He was already displeased with. If the Creator had done this it is more incredible how Seth remained a faithful man, also Enoch and Noah, men worthy to be written among the cloud of witnesses mentioned in Hebrews. Yet I find that Alfred needs men like this in his effort to bring greater discredit upon those who by their own responsible misdeeds perished in the flood. He then quotes God repenting He had made man because he saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Can we wonder at this if Clause V were ever true? Alfred and his members want us to believe this is true of all men and only certain passages are quoted out of context about the heart, and the words of Scripture which point to the good hearts of men and women are ignored. If the statement about the heart is a generic picture of what the human heart is like why not accept that this applies only to evil thoughts?

8. (Page 20). This is a continuation of the false theory that from Eden man has become more degenerate over the years as a result of Adam's sin, yet we find that many people have by their faith and conduct proved such a theory to be false. I have already mentioned Hebrews 11, the cloud of witnesses. Yes, they were persecuted by men of corrupt minds whose hearts were evil, yet Jesus was a man. Was His heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? You say, "Even if there were to be another flood it could only cut out a canker from an infested body." If the flood brought death, where the need to cut out anything from an infested body? Is this a reference to your theory that the premature death of Jesus was to end any temptation to sin from that point, and would amount to the "Betterment of his body" as you put, it elsewhere? Also you say "It could no more be cured by drowning by a second Flood, than by the Pharisees surgical washing of hands." Could not be cured? It could be prevented. Jesus proved it by sinless conduct- You infer then that drowning by water-baptism (Symbolic death) cannot cure that which is infested with sin

or a heart of deceit and wickedness, - That the old man of your theory is not crucified with Christ's death, but that the same old man of "sin-infested-flesh" rises to the surface after immersion.

Why then do you preach baptism into death and rising to newness of life and freedom from sin if you believe as a Card-carrying Christadelphian that you still have sin as an element in your flesh?

The Roman believers had believed from the heart that form of doctrine Paul had delivered to them, so then their hearts must have been good, not deceitful and desperately wicked. Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things." You ignore this in order to focus on the works of the flesh which are not in the flesh and blood but the result of works contrary to Divine Law, a list of which you have quoted from Galatians 5:19-21. You say, "Israel illustrates the worst in our human dispositions... Israel witnessed what is a pervasive truth concerning mankind as a whole." What are you implying here? Is it your doctrine of sin-in-the-flesh as a defiling physical law of man's nature as a Divine sentence on Adam and posterity? or should it not be plain, that it is the result of disrespect for God's Law?

Alfred continues after quoting from Jeremiah 17:5-9, where we should be careful not to quote verse 9 out of the context of the previous verses and of verse 10 which his own members past and present have tended to do.

He talks of Jeremiah anticipating the judgment passed by the Lord Jesus Himself as quoted here, and this judgement of the Lord Jesus confirmed in the no less far-reaching picture painted by Paul, - Galatians 5:19-21. Alfred should realize that the works of the flesh are not elements of fixation in the physical flesh but are the results of violation of the Law, for without Law sin is dead. Thus Paul could give a list of the things done in violation of the Law which could, and can be, avoided. (See 1 Timothy 1:7 to 14).

How can one who believes the physical flesh to be sinfully inclined, judge those children of Israel with whom God was displeased for the violation of His commandments? A reading of Romans chapter 2 would be of benefit to anyone here. And if the term "flesh" is used indiscriminately as some do, to describe opposition to God's Will by a compulsive inclination or fixation in the physical flesh, - how will they explain the remnant of Israel turning from their waywardness through God giving them a heart of flesh - a heart of flesh that Christadelphians have continually quoted as "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" out of context from Jeremiah 17:9, without any thought for verses 5 to 8 and verse 10. See Ezekiel 11:19 to 21, regarding the heart of flesh.

But both Jesus and Paul describe a correct balance in their judgment, this being the works of the fleshly mind unregenerate by the Spirit Word, and the mind of the Spirit with works led thereby, being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God.

Alfred now poses the question, "What happened to the human race?" (middle of page 21), in the knowledge that "massive further evidence is available to leave our desperate plight in no doubt. Without God to help there can be no deliverance from sin. let alone from the death to which it gives rise."

It is plain to the Nazarene Fellowship that in this last paragraph of page 21 Alfred is implying that the death he refers to here is the common death to which all creation is subject from the beginning of the creation which he says we all long to be delivered from. Of course the latter will be true to those alive at the coming of Christ who have legally and morally passed from the death which came by Adam's sin and this is the death we are able to avoid through the sacrifice of Jesus. As Alfred has unwittingly agreed with us, deliverance from the death by sin cannot be had without deliverance from sin, but where we emphasize Paul's teaching and that of Jesus, he is alluding to the death common to all creation whereas only the human race is involved through Law.

It is the dominion of sin, the legal position of slavery personified as under a Bond- master, that we can be freed from now through faith in God and His Son. We acknowledge this help from God in Adam's case or we would not be here to contend or defend that fact.

Help was therefore at hand for Paul and others from the Sin and the Death, without the need of a physical death and change to incorruptibility (which was assured him in any case) at the coming of Christ (Romans 8:1,2 and 2 Timothy 4:7,8).

In Romans 5; 12, Paul is defining a different death to that common to all, otherwise he could not say what is written in Romans 8:1,2. Why not admit it?

At the top of page 22 you quote from Romans chapter 7 where Paul is saying he had been delivered from the body belonging to Sin or under that dominion, and instead of serving under that Law with the mind of the flesh, he was serving God with the mind of the Spirit. For as he says, "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace."

But is it not a fact Alfred, that up to this present time those who have possessed the mind of the Spirit have died naturally and physically, and resurrection does not remove this fact of experience?

Jesus' death was not a substitute for Adam's natural death or for ours, if this were so we would not die, because that appointment would have been nullified by a change to spirit-nature. Robert Roberts was faced with this dilemma when writing "The Visible Hand of God" and under the subject of Enoch, where he had to admit to Christ's death being a substitute for Enoch and also those faithful believers alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord to raise the dead asleep in Him and at the same time change to Spirit-nature those of like faith. He asks, "How did Enoch escape and also those alive at the coming of the Lord?" referring of course to natural death as the penalty for sin which it could not be, he was forced to admit such a penalty could not be in force and that Enoch and those alive and remaining had identified themselves and associated with the death of Christ as a substitute for the death-by-sin, in Enoch's case his association with the typical sacrificial animal and shedding of its blood, and the new covenant believers, by symbolic death with Christ in the waters of Baptism, having passed from under the sentence of judicial death to the sentence of the Spirit of Life in Christ.

This is taught by Dr. Thomas in Eureka yet he failed to see that natural death could not be the penalty for Adam's sin, and that the natural death of Christ (a possibility) would not fulfil the Divine appointment and Atonement required, namely, that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins and no reconciliation. God provided this in the provision and offering up of His sin-free Son whom He knew in His foreknowledge would willingly lay down His life in the blood in the place of Adam and all in him on the Federal principle, the equivalent life of the life forfeited in Eden by sin. Adam was a created Son of God free from sin. Jesus from the same nature was a begotten Son of God free from sin. Adam failed the test of faith, Jesus did not, but He went further still in that God never desired nor demanded the death of a sinless man, but to redeem Adam and all in his loins, Jesus willingly paid the price without losing His right as Heir of God and life Eternal.

It is noteworthy on page 22 how the crucifixion of Christ is mentioned but the main reason and meaning for His death ignored, but before I comment on this evasion I must refer to what Alfred says about the law of Moses.

He says, "What the law failed to do was to provide a basis of righteousness for sinners. It failed in this because the nature of flesh stood in its way. And the obstruction offered by flesh was that it would not willingly conform to the standards the Law had laid down."

This does not harmonize at all with the Scriptures. Alfred is saying the Law was too strong to be kept. Paul says that the Law was weak. He does not say the flesh was unable to keep it, but what the Law could not do, because for some reason it was weak through the flesh. Paul says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good. For we know that the law is spiritual; but (as a man unconverted) I am carnal sold under sin. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh (unconverted to Christ) dwelleth no good thing." This is Paul speaking of his past, not the present.

Did he not say that touching the righteousness which was in the law blameless? Then surely there was in the law the provision for a basis of righteousness? And did not Jesus say to His disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the

kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20)? Paul was a strict Pharisee having a zeal for the works and rituals in which that strictest sect boasted, as fleshly descendants of Abraham, but failed to see that they were still under sin - the Sin of the World which had not been taken away as the obstacle to The Way of Life. This Paul learned later and declared, “For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin” (Romans 3:9 and Galatians 3:21 to 29).

What does it say of the parents of John the Baptist in Luke 1:6, “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.” Would that of itself have given them a right to eternal life? No, says Paul, “For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” It is plain that under the law those who acknowledge their sin by repentance and brought the appointed offering in faith received the atonement and forgiveness by reason of acknowledgement that the Edenic Legal sentence of death was in force as long as the Law of Moses remained (Romans 5:20 and Romans 6:1-8).

The Nazarene Fellowship for many years have explained all this in their literature which has been suppressed, so why should I enlarge upon it now? Some have read it to their own advantage and credit but there is the element in Isaiah 6:1-10 and 13 in reference to Romans 11:5, to whom Paul also makes reference and with whose words I associate our work of preaching. (2 Corinthians 4:1-7).

In Isaiah 6:1 to 5 we have a vision of Jesus in glory which Isaiah saw in the year king Uzziah died. The authority to speak the truth was given to representatives of those who had been purged from iniquity and sin. Isaiah was a type of such, and he “heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me,” Did the Lord God say, “I cannot send you because your body is cankered with sin”? No, this was a legal position which had been taken away and purged without any change of nature.

“And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed.”

“Then said I, Lord, how long? Until... the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth... so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

Confirmation of this is seen in Romans 11:2 to 8, “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.” Even so now at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it (the Holy seed) and the rest were blinded, verse 8, according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber.

Concerning the words of Jesus to Peter listed from 1 to 6, I cannot accept how Alfred has presented much of it, for I perceive the same undercurrent of his beliefs which seem not to have changed for the better in giving the impression of devotion and good conduct toward God yet maintaining that Jesus must die on account of His human nature.

No. 3 is a misquotation of the words of Jesus. It is the gates of Hell that will not prevail against His congregation. The powers of death are already taken away, they are no longer under its power when they die naturally, they have passed from death to life in Christ. Nothing can prevent their resurrection to life Eternal.

No. 4 Of Jesus, Alfred says, “But before that day can come T must be crucified, dead and buried, for only from this can the Resurrection to Life emerge.” It is obvious that there can be no resurrection unless a person is physically dead, but who specifically would Christ’s resurrection to Life be for? Jesus need not have suffered an inflicted death on his own account. Those alive in Him at His coming will not do so by infliction nor natural means because Jesus has done it for them - not for Himself. But at No. 6 Alfred refutes

this fact in his rebuke of Peter's words which were the result of his respect and praise of his Master and not that it was right that Jesus should be crucified by wicked men.

I therefore denounce Alfred's words, as dishonouring to Jesus, and not necessarily applicable to all who follow the example of Jesus. Our Lord did not say, "It is the only way, Peter, for me, and you and all of us. He should have omitted the "me" and said "All of us." Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you... my yoke is easy and my burden light." Alfred says it must end at the place where men are crucified. Admitted we must endure chastening but it does not always end at Calvary's Tree, for it was there that the dominion of Sin ended for those who died with Jesus in symbol.

Alfred seems to imply that our salvation depends on doing what Jesus did, he says in effect (personating Jesus), "You must accept the cross as your own proper way to salvation, so take up a cross every one of you, and come with me to the place where men are crucified!"

We are not expected to do this literally, for not even Peter, James, John and all who followed Jesus and were, some of them, put to death, could even redeem anyone. This was the unique purpose of the birth of Jesus, the Redemptive Price, the Ransom for all, The Lamb of God. (Matthew 20:28 and 1 Timothy 2:6).

Bottom paragraph of page 22 is Alfred's warning to all Christadelphians who believe Adam's nature was changed to sinful flesh with a compulsive tendency to commit sin. He says, "It was not Peter's fault that he was born the way he was, but it would have been his grievous and fatal fault if he had declined to confess and deplore the nature he bore."

I ask, was it a fault that Peter was born in the nature in which God created Adam? Peter would not have been born at all if God had not spared Adam from the death sentence he had incurred by sin in Eden. Nowhere in Scripture are we told to deplore Our physical nature but to deplore the unlawful deeds and choose the right. Peter was upholding what he considered was right. "Lord this shall not be unto thee," in that he recognized Jesus was not worthy of being put to death by sinners, which was true, but Peter did not realize at that time that God was allowing it with the full consent of Jesus to fulfil what the Scriptures prophesied of Him. Is not the case of John the Baptist similar? "No, Jesus, I know your character, you have no need to repent, I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me?" John did not know Him then as the Messiah, or that this was about to be revealed unto him. But he knew from God that upon whom he saw the Spirit descending and remaining on him that this would be the one for whom he was appointed to prepare the Way. John did not block the way when Jesus said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." John did not deplore the nature he bore he only contrasted it as temporal with the Word of God which abideth forever. It was not Jesus' fault that He was born with a nature identical with that of Adam's when created as a living soul, it was absolutely necessary in that Jesus should prove complete obedience was possible in that same nature, in order that the Creator should be Justified in condemning Adam's sin, and not the nature in which obedience was possible. It was no fault at all that Jesus found Himself in a nature of capability of either obedience or disobedience, but if that Adamic nature had been changed as a consequence of Adam's sin, who was at fault in changing it? And who was it that changed it? The answer to this question is found in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, Clause V. Where we find the answer to be Adam's Creator, for I cannot conceive that Adam had the ability to, or necessity to alter a nature which was already corruptible, or to cause it to be more inclined to sin when the Creator's conditions for continuance of natural life had already been breached.

Therefore it must be conceded that according to their Clause V and their teaching here endorsed by Alfred Norris that the fault must be attributed to The Creator of all things. God forbid! What nonsense!

It is the universal doctrine of the Roman Apostasy which crept into the early Ecclesia of Christ, it is the theme of this treatise by A.D.Norris where, in my view, nothing has improved the position of Christadelphianism which has always been a dividing factor of their history.

I implore therefore that Alfred, in the light of my humble reply to him, that he and all of similar views and theories of the false doctrine of "Changed flesh" Clause V (not found in the Genesis account), but an invention of man, reconsider the seriousness of their position doctrinally and eternally while light is available

freely. Isaiah 55:1-3, Do not regard this as not applicable to you when you sing it in your meeting places; do it.

I find Alfred's words on page 24 most abhorrent when he says it was not enough in God's view that Jesus should resist the temptations and trials of His life and remain sinless, He had to accept the Divine wish, and at the appointed time, "die for our sins according to the scriptures." – 1 Corinthians 15:3. Alfred insists this "remaining alive" was the obstacle to Christ's exaltation and therefore He had to allow His body to be done to death on the Cross to remove from His mortal body all that could have resisted the will of God. In other words, all that God required as a sacrifice for Adam and all men was a lifeless carcass. This is not the meaning of Sacrifice, it is blasphemy. This blasphemy is continued in Alfred's statement, third paragraph from bottom of page 24, "The Lord had pin-pointed the source from which men's sins sprang, and had removed it. By death He had "brought to nought him that hath the power of death, that is the devil,"" The same old teaching of sin-in-the-flesh refuted in 1965 by the Christadelphian Editor, L.G.Sargent and previously by John Carter, the previous Editor, as "Jargon." (Sec "Outrage on Justice" and "Christadelphian Crisis 1965". Alfred's Devil still hangs there dead in the person of Jesus!

The character of Jesus was indeed made perfect through sufferings and not as Alfred falsely states, "through death." Jesus before death on Calvary had all the qualities for change to incorruptible nature, therefore His death was not compulsory for us nor for Himself as Alfred informs us it was. Jesus offered Himself willingly to God, and God made Him to be a sin-offering for us at 33½ years of age that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, He having known no sin.

Under "HEBREWS (in summary)" bottom of page 18, I referred to Alfred's interpolation "How much more will the dying of Christ cleanse the spirit?" The writer to Hebrews correctly states "The blood of Christ" which means the life of Christ in the blood; but you can see that Alfred's motive is more degrading and subtle of the loving sacrifice of Christ than anything the serpent generation of the Jewish rulers and Priests could bring against Him, and I make no apology for saying so for it is the whole theme of your subtle reasoning, Alfred.

If under this heading of Hebrews Aaron offered first for his own sins before being fit to offer sacrifice for the people (Hebrews 7:27). In contrast, what sins did Jesus offer for when He was not even a Priest and could not be while on earth? (Hebrews 8:1-4). Was not Jesus the Lamb God provided as the anti-type to take away the Sin of the world?

This is the whole kernel of the Gospel of Salvation which we preach. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" – as saith the word of God through Isaiah, chapter 6 verses 8 to 10. He that hath an ear, let him hear my Son, saith the Lord God.

To the Great Name of Yahweh through him who loved us and gave himself for us, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and evermore.

Brother Phil Parry.

Extract from Circular Letter dated November 1971:

"A. Clarke, in discussing 2 Corinthians 5:21 shows that some believed in a sinful Christ; anyone with his commentary can read his remarks, but all I wish to explain here is that Dr. Thomas did not discover it as a long lost truth. He, despite the excellence of A. Clarke's matter, believed something which was contemporary in his time, whether he had read A. Clarke's comments we can never know now. But he advocated however a shameful despicable teaching, and is now broadcast by Christadelphians as the truth far and wide. Wherever there are Christadelphian ecclesias who deliberately advocate this evil doctrine, those ecclesias never prosper, they are unhappy and contentious and never do anything worthwhile for

Christianity. Any ecclesia whose whole time and effort is spent on haggling over Clause 5, sin-in-the-flesh, and with its resultant dis-fellowshipping mania which goes hand in hand with it, has missed the mark.”

Brother Frank Butt

The second reply to “Christ Died For Our Sins” is by Brother John Stevenson:-

Dear Brother Norris, Your very long article poses a problem, because it completely fails to come to the point. You have not answered any of our contentions which are supported from Scripture. You could have better limited yourself to these words:”

“The Law failed to provide a basis of righteousness for sinners because the nature of flesh stood in the way. In Romans 7 Paul spoke of the inmost need of a sin-bound body. It was not his fault that he was born the way he was, Neither Paul nor Peter nor Jesus were responsible for the sinful nature they bore, their hereditary from Adam and Eve provided this. Peter was told and Paul came to recognize, that the right thing to do with one’s fleshly nature was to crucify it. So for the Lord Himself, the nature He bore was inborn in Him. The right thing to do, for one so innocently afflicted with the likeness of flesh of sin, was to see to it that flesh of sin was humbled and brought to nought. So the Lord Jesus accepted the office of becoming an offering for sin, and in His own flesh condemned the sin to which He had never yielded.”

These are your own words, and if you had limited yourself to that, your message would have been perfectly clear in its unscriptural nakedness. But you chose to confuse and swamp it with seven thousand extra words which were intended to show that you know the Bible and were earnestly trying to understand the problem, which you misrepresent in your introductory paragraph as being difficult and confusing by saying you do not want to encumber your thinking with an elaborate sacrificial vocabulary, or to overlay your devotion with a heavy elaboration of types and antitypes, etc. I must retort that your contrivance is typical of a leading card-carrying member of the Central Christadelphian Fellowship, and it might mislead many readers to believe that the subject is too difficult for people who lack a prolonged spiritual education. But we of the Nazarene Fellowship have gone back to Scripture and found the B.A.S.F. dismally wanting. I am sorry to be so passionately critical, but it is difficult to be patient when the issues have been carefully thrashed out in clear detail endlessly over the past century and a quarter.

Paul and Peter and Jesus were NOT born with an evil physical nature or sinful flesh inherited from Adam and Eve. But they were born, like all of us, with the capacity to learn to differentiate between good and evil, and to practice righteousness and refrain from wrongdoing. Jesus showed that it could be done. It seems that Paul, after his conversion, also showed that it could be done. Scripture tells us that God loved the world, and through Jesus, loved us while we were yet sinners. Nowhere does Scripture tell us that God detested sinful flesh, and required it to be humiliated and destroyed on the cross.

You say “But of course those holy men of God spoke with authority and divinely granted discernment, purged of the limitations which afflict all of us who now have no open vision.” That sentence is advocating blind unquestioning loyalty to your pernicious teaching. We agree that they spoke with authority, but they had no monopoly of discernment, which is the prerogative and obligation of all of us in scriptural matters.

You say “The Law failed to provide a basis of righteousness for sinners because the nature of flesh stood in its way,” then you quote Romans 7 as though Paul was speaking of his present status as an enlightened convert; commenting further “he did not make himself that way; it was not his fault that he was so born.” This sick argument has been done to death over the past century, and I think it is fair to say that a misunderstanding of Romans chapter 7 is the basis of Christadelphian’s erroneous belief in sin-in-the-flesh. Such misunderstanding contradicts Paul’s teachings in the adjoining chapters of Romans. The fact is that Paul uses the word “flesh” as a metaphor for unrestrained animal passions. The literal flesh of Adam and Eve was no different after the transgression from what it was before.

Similarly, the literal flesh of a criminal is no different to the literal flesh of a saint. These are facts that Christadelphians cannot and will not acknowledge. Sinful describes attitudes and actions, not literal flesh,

I cannot agree with your suggestion that Peter denied Jesus three times because he had a false conception of the Messiah's agenda. I think the denial was due to a confused, terror-stricken, panicky state of mind. And on what basis do you decide that the penitent thief "came to a true understanding of sin"?

You say "Though afflicted with the disposition towards sin which He shared with us all, He resisted temptation whenever it assailed Him, but each victory won a battle only, and the war continued for so long as the fleshly nature remained alive." It seems to me that the war ended in the wilderness just before Jesus commenced His ministry. "We accept the message of surrender given by the Lord in His embracing of the Cross, seeing in this His own complete victory over sin." Yes, over sin, not over sinful flesh. And Jesus did not "embrace" the Cross; how could anyone infer that? He was nailed there by the servants of sin. I could go on and on, but I fear, brother Norris, that you, and all Christadelphia, really are lacking discernment and open vision.

May the Lord open your eyes while there is yet time. Brother John Stevenson.

Extracts from Circular Letter dated November 1971:

"Personally I delight in reading anything and everything in the house of Bible study. It doesn't thereby follow that I accept all I read. But let us remember in a multitude of counsellors there is safety. Good stimulative reading is a joy and a blessing. We haven't got all the answers like we think we once had, and for the "Logos" group to print "Logos" notes as "The answers" for "Logos" Bible students, is just superb ego. This is Mormonism; Watch-towerism; Scofield Bibleism; Papacy, etc. and is intolerable. It is a real grief and disappointment to find oneself forced to disagree with some of his best friends over one of our long held views; division is good, it calls for personal study and this is God's way to make sterling worth. We want thinking thoughtful Bible students."

Brother Frank Butt

Our third reply to Brother Alfred Norris is by Russell Gregory:-

Dear Brother Alfred, Let me thank you for the presentation of your views on the doctrine of the Atonement. The sincerity expressed in your presentation is very much appreciated and so it grieves me all the more that your treatise contains what I consider some awful, life-threatening errors. On account of these it cannot be right to let them pass without an attempt being made to set out a more scriptural understanding.

You know the Scriptures extremely well and you write freely and fluently, but you overlook the reason for the temptation of Adam and Eve and the lessons of its outcome. In so doing no one is able to understand why Christ died, and where is understanding shown in repeatedly stating that Christ died for our sins and quoting many passages to support that declaration without showing how His death took away the sin of the world? Neither do you tell us why our sins can be forgiven only through Him. By your repetition of how bad is human nature and how well Jesus did in overcoming every temptation you seem to think you have proved your case, you also make it touch and go with Jesus right to the end of His life whether He would or would not remain perfect and it appears a relief to you that His crucifixion was not left to chance any longer in case He failed and God's whole plan of Salvation would be in ruins.

In this reply you will find constructive criticism of a selection of phrases drawn from your treatise. These are far from all the extracts to which we take exception but the discerning Bible student will see which view is in keeping with Scripture. Following the selection of phrases drawn from your treatise there are short sections on Substitution, Ownership, Alienation and Reconciliation.

"Elaborate sacrificial vocabulary" and "heavy elaboration of types and antitypes"

You seem so fearful of allowing your "thinking to be encumbered by elaborate sacrificial vocabulary" and your "devotion to be overlaid with heavy elaboration of types and antitypes" that you do not recognize the more important matters and fail to see how the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ achieved our Salvation, and you

choose to ignore the purpose of those types and antitypes (with few exceptions) which were written for our learning, till you are lost for want of reason and logic. From the start you implant the notion that the Bible student must expect “encumbrances” and “heavy elaborations” but these are found in Christadelphian writings, not in Scripture. Bible teaching is surprisingly simple, that a child can grasp its concepts.

“Holy men of God spoke with... divinely granted discernment, purged of the limitations which afflict all of us who now have no open vision.”

Cannot the faithful of all ages have divinely granted discernment for the asking? Who has scales before their eyes preventing them from seeing what God is trying to teach them?

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7), Surely one can seek to know the truth of Bible teaching and expect, by the grace of God, to find it; then knock on the door of understanding that it may be opened, to understand God’s will and purpose with us; and ask for wisdom from above that we may use our knowledge and understanding with wisdom, to honour and glorify our loving Creator. Knowledge, understanding and wisdom is available to all through fervent, effectual prayer.

“The closing words of Genesis 2 are an omen of bad things to come:- “They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”“

In the closing words of Genesis 2 there is a wonderful parallel looking forward to the other Son of God and His Bride -

This second Adam counselled those who were to constitute His Bride to “buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see” (Revelation 3:18). You may say, and quite rightly, that the Bride is clothed with white raiment, but the white raiment is the righteousness provided by the Groom through the forgiveness He made available, that His elect should be able to come before His Father in His Name and stand before Him no longer ashamed of their sins for they have been forgiven. Forgiveness, or the taking away of sin, is all the clothing the Bride needs. There is no shame before God except in sin.

“So fundamental was that ultimate picture of a lustless society that Genesis uses it as a springboard to mark the change which took place once the forbidden fruit had been tasted.”

There is in this statement the insinuation that the change from sinless flesh to sinful flesh took place at the time of eating the forbidden fruit. We have come across many and varied notions of when the supposed change took place and all are as empty as this one. You endeavour to show that the flesh of Adam and Eve changed from sinless flesh to flesh full of sin when the “society” changed from a lustless society to a lustful society. Your argument doesn’t exist, as it was not a lustless society in the Garden of Eden. Have you forgotten that Eve was tempted? The moment law was introduced to man then lust also came, which is the desire to rebel against the law. Where then is your lustless society if lust came with the law? Where there is law there is choice, and where there is choice there is the opportunity to lust.

Law was introduced to build character. It gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to either rebel against it (lust), or they could “Resist the devil” and he would flee from them.

Thus your so-called argument as to when the change in their flesh took place, being invalid, only goes to show that no change took place.

“Nakedness was the response of a bad conscience towards God.”

Was it not their guilt in transgressing which made them ashamed and fearful? There is no indication that Adam and Eve were ever ashamed or fearful of each other after their transgression, but of being seen by God and the angels. Have there ever been a loving bride and groom ashamed of their nakedness? Indeed in such a loving relationship nakedness is a matter of shared joy and should that joy fade it is because of lack of

forgiveness between them through the hardness of their hearts, and forgiveness from the heart restores their relationship to its initial joy. But a devoted couple would not be seen naked in public - their good conscience toward God would not allow it, yet you say, "After the fall nakedness was the response of a bad conscience towards God," and I cannot think what you mean by this for you do not say, but if you mean that the shame of their nakedness was the response of a guilty conscience toward God then I would agree, but I would suggest that any one with a bad conscience is unlikely to feel shame.

"Morbidity awareness of nakedness"

Your claim that "morbidity awareness of nakedness provoked shame in the presence of the Creator," sets the disordered scene for what you have to say about sinful flesh, by applying the term morbid both to the mind (morbid = unwholesome ideas) and to the flesh (morbid = unwholesome flesh) as though they were the same - making "the deep-rooted corruption of their hearts" to be "the obstruction offered by the flesh." What havoc you cause by mixing things that differ - that is, the literal flesh with unlawful desires encompassed in "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

"A spread of actual evil... burgeoned in the period between that Fall and the Flood"

It was not evil which burgeoned for that was bad from the beginning. When we have the first four people named, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel, one of them was a murderer. How much did evil burgeon after that? Not at all. What burgeoned was the number of people on the earth and if one in every four had been a murderer one could still not say that evil had burgeoned but had maintained a steady level. The desire for over dramatization seems compelling.

"No matter what steps are taken to correct them, (our human dispositions) continue to assert themselves regardless."

It is not possible to feel anything but sorrow for such a person as finds this to be the case. The Christian who seeks earnestly to serve His Master finds it easier as he goes through life, though he meet with ever greater trials. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). It is perhaps true to say that once one yields to temptation one's resolve is weakened by it, but if this is so then the opposite must be true, that if one's resolve and integrity remain intact then one has taken good positive steps to make overcoming temptation easier for the future. Practice makes perfect, and our bad dispositions do not assert themselves regardless anymore. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7,8).

Our trials and tribulations are our opportunities to please and serve our Creator and Jesus Christ. Paul confirmed this in the following two passages:- Romans 5:3 - "We have access by faith into his grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God and not only so, but we glory in tribulations." and 2 Corinthians 7:4, "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorifying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." Paul rejoiced in tribulations because it was a means to an end.

"Massive further evidence is available to leave our desperate plight in no doubt"

You seem to be saying that the desperate plight we need delivering from is the wickedness of evil people. You don't make it at all clear that the desperate plight you are talking about is "sinful flesh," and not till later do you tell us that we are not supposed to be able to control our desires to conform to God's will.

The large majority of the human race never hear the gospel message and are not offered hope of eternal life. We see their misery, pain and sorrow, their hopes and disillusionments, but if they are not called they cannot be chosen. There is massive further evidence of their plight but the crucifixion of Jesus Christ will not help them, and neither is it the "desperate plight" from which we look for deliverance.

Your final sentence in this section. "Without God to help there can be no deliverance from sin..." is true enough but here, at the end of a catalogue of man's evil ways, it has no relevance. When Paul says "His

servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness” he is personifying “sin” as a Master; he then continues “we were the servants of sin... but have been made free from sin” (Romans 6:16). Surely it is obvious that sin has nothing to do with literal flesh. Sin is wrong action - it is transgression of law - it is abstract.

The fact is that the desperate plight we cannot escape from without following God’s plan of salvation is the condemnation brought upon us through the sin of Adam. His plan is for us to come out of Adam and into Christ.

“The Scriptures are much more deeply involved in deliverance from sin than they are in the quite secondary deliverance from death”

Not true! Being delivered from the bondage to sin through the Love of Jesus Christ in giving Himself as the Sacrifice for sin we are at the same time delivered from death and the two cannot be separated. So it is not possible for the Scriptures to be as you claim.

The fact is that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for one reason and one reason only, so that we can have deliverance from death. He died to take away the sin of the world. “The Lord is not willing that any should perish (“the quite secondary deliverance”, you say) but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). And there you have it - The Lord makes them to be absolutely inseparable in His will and purpose. This is again confirmed by the Holy Spirit upon Zacharias, where we are told that John the Baptist came “To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins” (Luke 2:77).

“God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh”

It is common knowledge that we have a bad translation in Romans 8:3 but it is not such common knowledge that the B.A.S.F. depends upon the bad translation and sections of it would fall apart once the translation is corrected. The term “sinful flesh” should read “sin’s flesh,” and we know there are those who say they cannot see the difference but it should be obvious that there is a difference between “flesh full of sin” and “flesh belonging to sin” as a Master, and it is this latter sense in which Paul uses it.

“Condemned sin(,) in the flesh”

You have been meticulous in your punctuation which makes your insertion of a comma in Romans 8:3, which you enclose in brackets, the more noticeable. It is the Nazarene Fellowship rather than the Christadelphians who agree with the point you are making, that the expression sin-in-the-flesh does not carry the sense Paul meant. Surely Paul uses the expression “in the flesh” in the same way as Peter when he wrote, “For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh” (1 Peter 4:1), that is, Jesus Christ suffered for us while He was in the flesh and, likewise, He condemned sin while He was in the flesh.

Jesus Christ did not condemn sin by giving Himself as the sin-offering. He condemned sin by showing that there is no need for us to sin and that we can, if we choose, be as perfect in obedience to God’s will as He.

We know that “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16), and we are told “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” (1 Corinthians 1:27), so “that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:29). Common sense should tell us that the apostle is not speaking of literal flesh in these passages but of worldly wise people who seek worldly pleasures. In any case Paul explains this in the context of this first chapter of his letter to the Corinthians. We are not estranged from God because of sinful flesh but because of sin.

The fact is that we have become estranged from God through yielding to lust, and lust is in the mind, as Paul says, “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,” but this doesn’t have to be the case, to the faithful he says, “yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight” (Colossians 1:21,22). There was nothing wrong with the flesh of Jesus when He offered Himself as the Lamb of God to take away

the sin of the world, and reconciled us to God. We were not reconciled to God through a body of sin. Jesus said, "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33), and again he said, "the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51). No Presiding Brother at the Memorial Table would dare to refer to the body and blood of Jesus Christ as sinful for fear of blasphemy, yet away from the Table of the Lord it is a different story. There is a double standard.

"What the law failed to do was to provide a basis of righteousness for sinners."

Another statement that is not true! God has always desired that men and women should worship Him in Spirit and in truth and all who did so and kept the law were considered righteous for they showed the faith of Abraham. One false claim leads to another for you go on to say, "It failed because the nature of 'flesh' stood in its way. And the obstruction offered by flesh was that it would not willingly conform to the standards the Law laid down." The flesh does not have a will - only the mind has a will.

What the law could not do was take away sin- All the sacrifices for sin before Christ gave provisional covering for sin, they did not take sin away. Jesus Christ gave Himself to be the Sacrifice for sin, to take it away. He came "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:11,12,26). And God forgives us, not for our sakes, but for Christ's sake, as we read in Ephesians 4:32 - "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

"I know that in me. that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not..."

It is extraordinary to find a Bible expositor who believes he can apply these verses to himself as a follower of Christ, especially after Paul's declaration that those in Christ are freed from sin. (Romans 6:22). Dr. Thomas recognized Paul's use of "in the flesh" as opposed to "in the Spirit" when he wrote regarding these verses;- "The apostle affirms this of himself considered as an unenlightened son of the flesh."

It is worth quoting Dr. Adam Clarke's comment on this section of Romans chapter 7, for he says: "It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that the Apostle speaks here of his regenerate state, and that what was, in such a state, true to himself, must be true of all others in the same state. This opinion, most pitifully and most shamefully not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character." To which we say, Amen.

The illustration Paul gives at the beginning of Romans 7 is of a wife bound to her husband while he lives, but if he dies she is free from that bondage and can be bound to another Paul compares this to our being bound to the law of sin and death but through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, who destroyed the power of sin which condemned us, we are freed from that bondage and can be bound to Him instead. In other words we are "dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead" (verse 4).

Paul's first state, that of being bound to, and condemned by, the law of sin and death, he refers to as being "in the flesh," and whatever he did in that state could only "bring forth fruit unto death" (verse 5). But now being in Christ, having died with Him in baptism, he served "in newness of spirit" - verse 6, for he was no longer in the flesh but in the spirit. It was in this first state of being bound to the law of sin and death of which Paul was speaking when he said "in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Then when he was "in Christ," he said "I can do all things through Jesus Christ which strengtheneth me."

Likewise, we too, were in bondage to the law of sin and death, when we were "in the flesh," and before "our old man" was destroyed. We served sin, and sin reigned in our mortal bodies. But through baptism into Christ's death, we became dead to the law of sin and death that we should be married to another - to Him who was raised from the dead.

When Paul asks at verse 24, "Who shall deliver me...?" what was he delivered from? and the answer is that he was delivered from the law of sin and death which condemned him. Then he thanks God for his deliverance and continues "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are In Christ Jesus."

Contradictions

Contradictions appear when we try to apply verses 7 to 23 of chapter 7 to the disciples of Jesus Christ. Contradictions such as:-

between having been delivered and not having been delivered;

and verse 15, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" is not in keeping with Romans 6:16, "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?," and 1 Thessalonians 1:6. "ye became followers of us and of the Lord."

Verse 17, "It is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me" confounds 1 Corinthians 11:2, "Remember me in all things and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you"

Verse 19, "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" is incompatible with 1 Corinthians 4:16, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me"

Verse 20, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," contradicts Philippians 3:17, "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Jesus Christ"

The view of Romans 7 where you apply verse 18 to yourself - "For 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," opposes the exhortation of Paul to "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5) - the mind of a servant to manifest God to others.

"It was not Peter's fault that he was born the way he was but it would have been his grievous and fatal fault if he had declined to confess and deplore the nature he bore"

While you do not seem to approve of the expression sin-in-the-flesh you keep all its trappings. Why should God make us with a nature we should "confess and deplore" when Adam and Eve were just as capable of sinning in their good flesh as we are in what you call sinful flesh? No Christadelphian has given a sensible answer to this matter!

The fact is that the nature Peter bore was the nature God gave him. It was the same nature which God gave to Adam at creation and to Jesus Christ and to all of us, and it is perfectly good for the purpose of our present lives. To suppose for one moment that a God-given gift, so "fearfully and wonderfully made", in which is housed the "mind of the Spirit" and with which we serve our Creator, should be an object to "confess and deplore" is grotesque.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

"When he ceased to be Satan and fell in line behind his Lord. then salvation was his for the faithful continuance of asking"

This is the opposite of the truth. Continuance of asking for something already granted does not show any faith at all but the lack of it. Certainly salvation can be lost again by foolish conduct but it is the present possession of the faithful. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

"There is not the uncomplicated one-to-one relationship between baptism and conversion which one might like to think."

The complication is one of your own making; by trying to attach one meaning only to the Greek word “*epistrepho*” which is here translated “converted.” (Luke 22:32). The Emphatic Diaglott translates it as “turned.” There was no doubt that Peter understood the fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and he didn’t need converting to this belief.

But Peter was about to show weakness under extreme circumstances and in fear he turned away from the dreadful prospect of being crucified with Christ, for which he was hardly prepared, and his faith failed him for the moment, but later having experienced this trial, he was better able to strengthen his brethren who may face unexpected and severe trials.

The Greek word “*epistrepho*” is used in several ways and while it is often applied to a change of mind it can also be used in the literal sense as in turning one’s self as in Acts 9:40, “Peter turning (*epistrepho*) to the body, said, Tabitha, arise.” Again in Acts 16:18, “But Paul, being grieved, turned (*epistrepho*) and said to the spirit...” Also it is used in the raising of Jairus’ daughter when “her spirit came again (*epistrepho*).”

You have no justification therefore in concluding from this statement of Jesus Christ that Peter’s understanding had a long way to go before his conversion was complete. The fact is that there remains the uncomplicated one-to-one relationship between baptism and conversion because baptism is “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21).

“He did not come to be afforded honours, nor to encourage His disciples to do so.”

How can you make such a bald statement? Certainly Jesus Christ did not seek high position among men in this present age. He taught that to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God, He was nevertheless the greatest Prophet, Priest and King this world has known, and the world was His. He was determined He should gain the whole world and be afforded these honours - by first coming as a servant to minister and give His life a ransom for the sin of the world. He knew the honour which would come to Him in due course, and no one worked harder for it. He gave all He had - Matthew 13:44, “The Kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Jesus Christ gave His life to buy the world. And Jesus Christ knew that “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow” (Philippians 2:10), and that “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23).

As for not encouraging His disciple to seek honours the opposite is true. Jesus Christ encouraged them to seek the highest honours possible that they should be rewarded with honour. “Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12). Again, Paul exhorts the disciples - “By patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Romans 2:7). And again, “he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). And the outcome of their diligence in seeking is told by Jesus Christ - “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.”

“In the passage concerning the Good Shepherd the Lord showed that He was not compelled to yield to the evil designs of men, but did so voluntarily.”

We agree wholeheartedly with this statement, but a little later regarding His crucifixion, you say, “This was the only way.” Crediting that you do not intend to contradict yourself then your view must be that Jesus Christ had to die by crucifixion or die as a sinner for not yielding to crucifixion! What sort of choice is that?

But the facts are given us by Jesus Christ Himself - “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Surely there can be no doubt that here Jesus was referring to Himself, and that if He chose He could enter heaven alone and avoid the crucifixion. He confirmed this when He said, “Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). A request for Divine intervention to avoid His murder was not wrong or sinful and God would have granted Him the angels for the asking, which surely proves the case. So it is not true to say there was no other way for Jesus Christ- He had a genuine choice, and what He did was for us, out of His love for us and not for Himself,

“The culmination of the work of Atonement”

You carry yourself away on the tide of encumbrance and elaborate sacrificial vocabulary! You make the claim that Jesus’ work as High Priest at the right hand of God “is set out as the culmination of the work of Atonement in not a few passages of Scripture,” but the culmination of Jesus work of Atonement was His Sacrifice.

The Old Testament teaching regarding sacrifices is that there is no atonement without the shedding of blood. The life blood of the animal was shed in place of the life blood of the sinner and so atonement was made. Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for your soul.”

The New Testament confirms this: Romans 5:11, “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Once Jesus Christ had shed His blood for us, His work of Atonement was completed. The passages you quote show Him as “a merciful and faithful high priest” through whom we “find grace to help in time of need” and “who maketh intercession for us.” This is not the culmination of His work of Atonement but the new position as our Great High Priest.

A Few Thoughts on the Subject of Substitution

By going the extra mile, turning the other cheek and giving our cloak also (Matthew 5:38-42), we do God’s will by going beyond the requirements of the Law, and Jesus set us the example in all these things for He would not expect more of us than of Himself. The supreme example of doing His Father’s will, of course, is when He accepted the role of the Lamb of God and “gave himself for our sins... according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4). There was no Law requiring this self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ but He demonstrated that “greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13), and thereby showing the greatest love it is possible for any man to comprehend.

We have already quoted Paul, “Be ye followers of me even as I am of Jesus Christ,” so let us turn to an example in the life of the Apostle Paul with a view to looking at the idea of substitution, in which he followed the pattern set us. T refer to Philemon, verses 16 to 19.

Here is a slave who has run away from his master and it seems both slave and master have been converted, quite separately, to Christ, and Paul seeks their reconciliation:- “Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If thou therefore count me a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.”

What a wonderful illustration of following the example of Jesus Christ! And it shows substitution, Paul says he will repay any debt owed by the repentant slave. He wants to pay instead of the debt being charged to the slave. There is not a better illustration of what Jesus Christ has done for us in paying the debt no one else was able to meet.

While the law of redemption (Leviticus 25:47-55) gave a person the right to redeem his next of kin from bondage, it was not his legal obligation to do so, but by “going the extra mile,” as it were. that person would by doing God’s will, which would be well pleasing to Him. Jesus Christ was in such a position to redeem His next of kin. He alone could buy them back from their bondage to sin’s condemnation. His own eternal life was assured for obedience to the law and this did not include yielding Himself to crucifixion, which makes your claim that “what was accomplished by (His crucifixion) removed all obstacles to the heavenly exaltation of the Lord” to be null and void- What He accomplished by His crucifixion removed all obstacles to our heavenly exaltation.

Next let us consider Romans 5:7,8:- “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Again, this is straightforward substitution, for if in the process of saving another person one should give his own life then it would be said that the latter died for the former. The argument you, brother Alfred, put to me some forty or so years ago that “if Christ died instead of us then He should have stayed dead and we should never die,” is useless because Jesus Christ did not lose His eternal life, He lost His natural life. His natural life in place of our natural life. Jesus Christ did not receive his natural life again after crucifixion, for that had gone for ever. And neither did Jesus Christ die in order that we should keep our natural life and not die. He died so that we should have natural life with the opportunity of life eternal through forgiveness and faith.

Observe also 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” It is generally accepted that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is given us to replace our unrighteousness and though it is never said, this too is substitution, but we maintain that Jesus Christ took our unrighteousness upon Himself in place of His own righteousness. That is, His righteousness was imputed to us and our unrighteousness was imputed to Him, with the result that we have a natural life and He died in our place, and for our sins, and as our substitute, out of His love for us.

Perceive the teaching of 2 Corinthians 8:9: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” This is the same story. He had a natural life of His own (which made Him rich) and which He gave (which made Him poor) in place of our life which had been forfeited to sin, so that we should have a natural life of our very own (which makes us rich), a life not forfeited to sin.

It is worth quoting Edward Turney here for he expresses himself so well:-

“The life of the race, forfeited by Adam, placing the whole of mankind in debt for the sum of - One Life. The bill paid by the only man who had the price - One Life – His own; received at His birth, new and free, from the source of all life, and preserved by Him by His perfect obedience until the time came when He voluntarily gave it up as the price of our deliverance. This is a true sacrifice; this gives the honour where it is due; this alone adequately meets the Apostle’s reminder: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty, might be rich.” “

Ownership and Relationship to God. Alienation and Reconciliation.

Adam was the created son of God and owned by God. When he sinned he was alienated from God for he sold himself to sin and was owned by sin as a Master and came under condemnation. As a consequence of this all in Adam are owned by sin and are under condemnation .

Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He never sinned and so was never owned by sin. He was owned by God. He was flesh which God made in the likeness of the flesh owned by sin. Jesus never needed adoption and He never needed His relationship to His Father to be restored.

Furthermore, whilst Jesus was the Son of God by birth, we through belief and faith can become sons of God by adoption. Thus it is that forgiveness, which is available only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, restores our relationship to God so that we are no longer under condemnation. We conclude therefore that even as our restored relationship is a legal, and not a physical matter then our physical flesh is not changed. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12,13).

Those who are baptized into Christ’s death have become reconciled to God; they are no longer alienated. If alienation had changed the flesh of Adam and Eve then it is only reasonable to suppose that reconciliation should change it back again, but I know of no one who imagines this to be the case. However, “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). Again this is not the literal flesh but the affections of the mind towards the things of the flesh. To crucify the flesh is to bring our minds into subjection to the will of God. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,

that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). It is our minds which we bring into subjection that our wrong desires (our old man) should be destroyed, not our literal bodies, and henceforth we should not serve sin as we did when we were alienated from God.

Again Paul explains, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). But Paul was not literally crucified. It is obvious we are still in the literal flesh and it is equally obvious that there has been no necessity for any change in that flesh.. The Apostle Paul confirms this when he wrote, “That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed” (Romans 9:8). And why are they considered the children of promise? Because they show the faith of Abraham. Are they in literal flesh? Of course they are. The literal flesh is of no consequence in this respect for it is the mind of the flesh which alienates, not the flesh itself.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live” (Romans 8:12,13).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them (i.e. no adverse judgment against them) which are in Jesus Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. 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).

Furthermore, Paul states, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Romans 8:9,10).

So let us repeat and conclude that sin does not reside in the literal flesh and that the flesh is as good as God made it in the beginning and it has never changed in its nature- Sinful flesh or Sin-in-the-flesh is a nonsense as sin cannot be rightly considered a quality of the flesh. Paul, when using these expressions is referring to those who serve fleshly desires. “So then they that are in the flesh (serving fleshly desires) cannot please God” (Romans 8:8).

In Conclusion

A surface reading of your treatise may seem plausible to some, but as we have seen, it is sadly lacking. In fact, yet there are ample facts given to us by the inspired writers of the Scriptures for us to be able to prove all things. Misleading statements and false claims may appear of small consequence by themselves but collectively you have used them to lead your readers further and further from the Gospel and leave them, and yourself, without any reason for hope.

Christadelphians have long had the choice between the offending sections of the B.A.S.F. and Scripture. Far too long have they held on to the false teaching of the Sinful Flesh theory.

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve” - Joshua 24:15.

We say with all boldness that this reply is not an alternative view of the Atonement; but the only view compatible with Scripture.

Your brother in earnest sincerity, Russell.

Extract from Circular Letter dated November 1971:

“It is time now for Christadelphians to abandon the B.A.S.F.; never was a time more ripe for this to be done. All that is required is to advertise meetings as Non-B.A.S.F. Any creed limits thinking and stifles holy spirit interpretation; it is a grievous chain which we wish the angel of the Lord would strike off like he did

for Peter in prison. I ask how can anyone be a Berean Bible student who is imprisoned in a creed's prison house? He is afraid to bring up any new thoughts for fear of offending the party line."

Brother Frank Butt.

While reading through some old Circular Letters I came across reference to a Pastor Antipas of The Nazarene College, in London S.E.!

This Pastor Antipas published a Proclamation in April 1895 consisting of eighty-seven Scriptural Propositions, with abundant Scripture, which, says our late Brother Hembling, in the main, are consistent with our own teaching, stating that "Adam was created capable of dying," that Adam was "threatened with death for transgression," quoting "for by man came death" and "the wages of sin is death." He also stated that Adam's sentence was judicial death, but seems confused by appearing to make his natural death the judicial death.

Pastor Antipas wrote, at the end of the Proclamation book, and in reference to services held at his College, "Wherein the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, is proclaimed every Sunday. Those who have been alienated or perplexed by what is called orthodox teaching, or such as are adrift on the vast ocean of scepticism, are heartily welcome."

It seems that Pastor Antipas was known to Brother Turney, continues Brother Hembling, for they quoted from each others writings. In fact, following the "Proclamation," Pastor Antipas adds, amongst other articles, the "Thirty-two Questions Concerning Jesus Christ" which Edward Turney used and Robert Roberts published in The Christadelphian magazine.

Here we give an excerpt from the gentle words of one, James Martin of the Nazarene College which I rather liked. Under the Heading of "Alabaster Boxes of Human Sympathy" he wrote:

"Do not keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up until your friends are dead. Fill their lives with sweetness.

Speak approving, cheering words, while their ears can hear them; the kind things you mean to say when they are gone, say before they go.

The flowers you mean to send for their coffins, send to brighten and sweeten their homes before they leave them.

If my friends have alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them.

I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without an eulogy, than life without the sweetness of love and sympathy.

Let us learn to anoint our friends beforehand to the burial; post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit.

Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over the weary way, and the odours of which have no sweetness for the dead."

Russell.

In concluding this Circular Letter there are one or two things I would like to say. Firstly, while we have only three written replies to Brother Alfred Norris's article on "Jesus Christ Died For Our Sins", there have been many who have commented to me upon it with such observations as, "For all his fancy talk, there is nothing I can get hold of" and "A.D.Norris has a morbid obsession with sin." It is sad I have not come across anyone with anything like a favourable view of his article and I would like some Christadelphian readers to respond with their thoughts for publication in the next Circular Letter.

On reading the article by Alfred Norris I felt there was a lack of facts. How can we hope to prove all things if we use too much speculation? It is not our wish to attack others for their beliefs but it is our hearts desire to find where the truth lies and prove the matter to others so that we may all "worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." (John 4:23). With this Circular Letter we are sending out our booklet entitled "Eight Bible Essays" which support our aim to honour our heavenly Father and the foreword is of particular interest as it is written by Brother Leo Dreifuss who by the grace of God escaped the Holocaust and came to live with a Christadelphian family in this country.

One matter of great importance is that there is a contradiction between free will which God has given us with the Law, and the idea that we cannot be perfect in our conduct. The purpose of being given free will is so that we can choose to do right or wrong, while the belief that we cannot do right all the time denies the object of Law, and does not seem in keeping with a loving Creator who desires our willingness to serve Him.

It has often occurred to me that we lose out on understanding by not talking the language in which the Scriptures were written, and for many years I have realized there are two Greek words each translated "life" in the New Testament. The one Greek word is "*psuche*" and the other "*zoe*."

There is much to be gained from the way these words are used and perhaps one day we may write at greater length upon this matter, but for now I wish to draw attention to the difference in the meaning of the two words.

The first word *psuche* is used to denote natural life which we all have and which ends in our death (or for some it will end at the return of Jesus Christ). The other word, *zoe*, refers to eternal life, or the life which begins at our baptism, or our promised life. Let me give a few examples:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life" (Matthew 6:25), and the word here for life is *psuche*, meaning, of course, our natural life. Again in Matthew 16:25, Jesus said, "Whosoever will save his life will lose it." Again this is *psuche* life. And again, when Jesus said He came "to give his life a ransom for many" He used the same word *psuche*. (Matthew 20:28), It was His *psuche* life which He gave.

However, when Jesus Christ refers to eternal life He uses the word *zoe* as in Matthew 7:14, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (*zoe*), and few there be that find it," and in Matthew 19:17. "If thou wilt enter into life (*zoe*), keep the commandments."

And then, in John 1:4 we read of Jesus, "In him was life (*zoe*); and the life (*zoe*) was the light of men." And in John 5:26 we read "For as the Father hath life (*zoe*) in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life (*zoe*) in himself."

We see then that Jesus Christ had two lives; His *psuche* life and His *zoe* life, and when He died on the cross it was His *psuche* which He gave for the sin of the world.

While this seems very clear it must be said that there are one or two exceptions in the way these two words are used and so I think it wise to give this subject more thought before insisting on there use in the way shown here. If any would like to contribute to this subject I shall be most pleased to publish your comments in the next C.L.

I believe I am right in saying that at one time or another Dr. Thomas had all the truth regarding the Atonement. A matter he had prayed for in extremis during his shipwreck. But we also see contradictions in his writings and I feel sure had he lived, by the grace of God, a few more years he would have ironed out these contradictions - perhaps with the help of his friend Edward Turney, for they were close friends up to

the time Dr. Thomas died, and I think this is the reason there was so much antagonism shown by Robert Roberts towards him. However, Dr. Thomas thought Robert Roberts was in a position to make a good successor and hoped he would take on his (Dr. Thomas's) mantle as a spiritual influence for good so on the death of Dr. Thomas the majority of Christadelphians followed Robert Roberts rather than Edward Turney. Robert Roberts failed in his following of Dr. Thomas, for pride and jealousy were too strong in him and he showed this in his mistrust and ill-temper towards Edward Turney who was always so desirous of showing where the truth lay and instead of working with him, Robert Roberts promulgated views which he knew to be doubtful and unsustainable. It was his clever oratory and delightful language which swayed the majority of Christadelphians, not his sound reasoning.

Millions of people in Churches throughout the world say the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, and millions more here it in television and radio services, but how few understand what they are praying for? "Thy Kingdom come" means little or nothing to the majority of people and they see no connection with present world events. We see the world continually going to the brink of disaster and pulling back for a short time, but how long can this continue?

Our hope is in the promises of God, for "the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (1 John 3:9 to 14).

Russell.