

Nazarene fellowship Circular Letter No. 178

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Editorial

Loving greetings in Messiah’s dear name.

Neo-Darwinism is the latest theory that seems to be gripping the scientific world. This is the new or modified version of the proposition put forward by Charles Darwin in his book “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection” which purported to demolish once and for all the Biblical Genesis account of how humanity began. The phrase that best describes Darwin’s principle theme is “survival of the fittest.”

Darwin did not know about DNA. We do and each day brings discoveries about what can be done with genes and what genes can do. So the new or neo-Darwinists say that it is the fittest and most selfish genes which are selected to survive. In England this theory has a champion named Richard Dawkins. Recently the Americans voted him Humanist of the Year. In the opinion of this top man, who is presently Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, human beings are “survival machines-robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes.” In America Dawkins has an admirer who shares his views and his name is E.O.Wilson. He is an insect zoologist. He and his followers believe that our brains are already genetically programmed by the time we are born. At birth the brain is an unexposed negative waiting to be slipped into developer fluid. The photograph has already been taken. Mental life has effectively been pre-arranged before we take our first breath. If such preposterous notions are correct this means that freedom of the will, moral behaviour, in fact, all that we do, think and feel, imagine and dream, all that we hope for, love and wonder at are programmed into our brains by DNA and we are indeed robots or puppets with pre-ordained pulled strings. This of course means that no one can be blamed or punished for anything. Murderers and thieves, adulterers, vandals and rapists are simply doing what they are programmed to do. To be logical we must include in this ghastly scenario of ‘blameless’ robots the fiends who dreamed up the Final Solution and put 6 million people to death. Were all the crazed despots and wicked dictators that have cut swathes through humanity down the ages even to the present day, robots just responding to their genes inevitable demands?

Richard Dawkins says “Faith is one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus, but harder to eradicate. Indeed the whole subject of God is a bore.” To such a person religious faith in a loving God with a plan of forgiveness and redemption for the faithful and the promise of an eternal life, are a complete anathema. To speak of these things to them is to cast pearls before swine. Dawkins explains that the survival of belief in God is because of its ‘great psychological appeal.’ Even so neo-Darwinists cannot explain how life itself originated: they have no answer to the greatest mystery - what was the origin of life from which the species eventually evolved? Apparently the evolution theory relies on gradualism. Random genetic mutation of superior genes is a desperately slow process. Yet I understand that the fossil evidence that does exist suggests that species evolve suddenly in ‘big bangs’ rather than bit by bit. Neo-Darwinists have difficulty explaining this. These men, Wilson and Dawkins, are promoting a Godless world, a

nightmarish place where accountability is dead. Striving to be better would be doomed to failure and education would just improve our inherited intelligence.

In a morally meaningless society it would soon begin to make sick sense to get rid of the old, the infirm and the unintelligent. What occupation would be more desirable and understandable than working to 'improve the species'? It would undoubtedly ensure the survival of society's rulers. It is amazing that grown-up people who are 'educated' and who have lived through times that are infamous for the calculated disposal of untold millions of our fellows can bring themselves to propound such appalling stuff.

We turn with relief and unbounded joy to the Bible and to God Almighty and His merciful loving-kindness toward those who seek Him and find Him.

Russell, Eileen and I send love to all our readers everywhere. Helen Brady.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

Three Letters from a Sister to John Carter - and His Reply

Abertillery. June 1st 1945.

Dear Brother Carter,

Greetings. I have read your article in the June Christadelphian entitled "Blind Leaders" and I wonder why you do not apply the same to our leaders, both living and dead, as you must know as well as I do that your literature and the Statement of Faith contains errors. It is only in the last few months that this has been brought to my notice and it has caused me mental agony to think that what I have loved and defended for 30 years was shattered; my resignation has been sent in and no doubt, you have been acquainted of the fact.

Now, Brother Carter, in all sincerity and humility, I ask you, are you out to teach pure doctrine, or defend the literature that has been put into your trust? I told you long ago that it needed revising, but then I did not know to what extent it was wrong or the seriousness of the errors. It would be a costly matter, no doubt, but if it was done the funds would be forthcoming and the many divisions that are taking place would be avoided. There has been plenty of literature sent round to open the eyes of honest brethren, though many like the Recording brother here, do not want the Truth and boast that they burn it unread. Another Recording brother I know put it out of sight, fearing trouble in the ecclesia; I myself have been warned against it by many, but after reading some of it I was soon convinced that I have been following errors. We who are Bible readers and love Truth have more understanding than our teachers because they will not humble themselves and be taught.

In my final letter of resignation I said that I had much to thank the Christadelphians for "on the material side of the Kingdom," but they are astray on the nature of Christ and His sacrifice and resurrection; I received no reply - only withdrawal.

What a responsibility lies at the door of the leaders of Christadelphians who defend errors and make no effort to correct them; they are the "Blind leaders of the blind," and there can be no hope for them if they persist in false doctrine and teaching of lies.

Please excuse my plainness of speech but I feel very anxious for the "Blind Followers;" I have been one myself for 30 years, but I thank God that my eyes have been opened and I pray that others may be also. How I wish that you would read some of these booklets that deal with the real errors in the Christadelphian works and then you might be able to lead the divided body to unity in the Truth, even in Christ who is The Truth.

Believe me, yours faithfully, Mrs J.A.French.

* * * *

Abertillery. July 2nd 1945

Dear Brother Carter,

Greetings; you did not reply to my letter of June 1st - and yet I think it has influenced the writers of some of the articles in the July "Christadelphian."

First, may I state that the pamphlets you so object to are sent out in love and sympathy to enlighten the sincere followers of Christ and help them to see that in Christadelphian writings they are embracing many errors. But instead of studying what they say - or answering them, you and the other leaders pronounce them heresy and the writers heretics. Even Nicodemus was wiser than you: "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?" (John 7:51). You judge and condemn publicly in your magazine, yet you neither quote what they say nor try to refute it. Even Brother Islip Collyer speaks of the question as strife about words, but he does not name the pamphlet or the writer, nor does he quote the words which he says cause the strife. It would be more honourable to quote the words and explain, or if possible, refute them, before he condemns. Let us hear both sides of the argument. I have now studied it for myself and instead of it being strife about words, it is an earnest contention for pure doctrine; there is faith and faith.

You have preached to others that their doctrines are wrong and expect to be heard, but you will not listen when the errors in Christadelphian works are pointed out. Many will say of Islip Collyer's letter No. 31, "Good, it will silence those who differ." A year ago I should have agreed to all he said, but I am wiser now; the majority of Christadelphians are so biased by their upbringing and associations that they cannot see the simple truth.

At the end of last year a Yorkshire brother sent me "The Resurrection and Judgement of The Saints," by Wm. Richmond and said in his letter, "Truth sees no lion in the path, and many up North believe in the incorruptible resurrection that Wm. Richmond taught, but will not confess it, fearing excommunication;" so I read the booklet and sent for more. I received a selection of pamphlets from Birmingham, and to my surprise they were from those we call "the clean flesh people." I fought for months until I had to give in; they were right; Christadelphians were wrong. I sent some to Sister Houlston, of Ludlow, and she, being more intelligent and with her experience in writing in the Testimony and for the Isolation League, decided in four weeks, while I had been four months, and we were both baptized the same day last May.

Oh that we had known before; but we have always been warned not to read these pamphlets and have trusted too much in our leaders, who we now realize hold "the unclean flesh heresy." If you do away with that it will remove many errors and give you a clean and spotless Christ "who needeth not daily, as other high priests, to offer up sacrifice for himself" (Hebrews 7:27) for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" (verse 26) and "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5); "he did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22).

It is only Christadelphians who say He benefited from His own sacrifice, but in that case it would be no sacrifice. "He was cut off, but not for himself" (Daniel 9:26). He was cut off for "the sin of the world;" "the scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Galatians 3:22).

With all the education, literary talents and many books to help them, it is amazing to me that the eminent writers for the Christadelphian magazines cannot perceive the truth. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matthew 11:25); and the babes, the despised ones, are trying to teach the wise and prudent and are preaching the Truth, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

I notice that F.W.T. has awakened to some truth - even the forgiveness of sins now; that we can be "presented faultless;" then how about the Christadelphian judgment?

On page 78 you print an extract from Robert Roberts on "God will be sanctified," and at the end of the first paragraph he speaks of Christ "who shared their sin-nature." You must know that there is no such term as sin-nature in the whole Bible. It is an invention of R.Roberts. Paul speaks of "first the natural, then the spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:46,47). Perhaps Robert Roberts meant condemned nature; but even so he would have been wrong, for how could one condemned man ransom other condemned men? We are often given a lesson in simple Greek terms in the magazine, and I am wondering why those who profess to understand the

Greek do not deal with some of the disputed texts like the “sinful flesh” of Romans 8:3. Is it because they know that the doctrine of defiled nature based upon it is unjustifiable?

Kindly read the lecture by Edward Turney on “The Sacrifice of Christ” and then Robert Roberts’ reply “The Slain Lamb.” If you are then in any doubt read “A review of The Slain Lamb” by F.J.Pearce and you will have a better understanding of the situation. Your magazine is a powerful organ to lead and sway the people who are being called out and the Truth will come out, so please do not misrepresent those who in the fear and love of God are showing you and yours a better way. Until recently I had complete confidence in the Christadelphian magazine and I can truly say I would have died for my faith; I thought if Christadelphians are wrong, then who can be right? It was with sorrow and pain that I learned differently, but now it is a joy to me to have a fuller and better understanding and having found a good thing, I only wish to share it with others.

Believe me, yours faithfully, Mrs J.A.French.

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Abertillery. July 9th 1945

Dear Brother Carter,

Greetings. The July Christadelphian in the intelligence from Ludlow says that Sister Houlston was “baptized into another fellowship.” This may be a misunderstanding on the part of the Recording brother and we should be glad if you will correct it in the next issue. Sister Houlston was baptized on the same day as myself, into the Name of Jesus and was received into the fellowship of those who believe that He was not under condemnation but that His sacrifice was made voluntarily to redeem us, not Himself.

Thanking you, yours in the service of Christ, Mrs J.A.French.

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Birmingham, 19th July 1945.

Dear Sister French,

I have received your three letters but have not had time to answer them before. Your last shall be answered first.

You say Sister Houlston was baptized into the name of Jesus and you question the intelligence from Ludlow. But that is the very point where we join issue. I would contend that both you and Sister Houlston have most unwisely been baptized, to use Paul’s phrase, “into another gospel which is not another.” In fact, it is no gospel at all. With this conviction, how could either Ludlow ecclesia or myself publish the statement you suggest?

When I got your first letter and the leaflet you sent and had read them, the words of Paul came to my mind; “Who hath beguiled you that ye should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth?”

It would be difficult to crowd more scriptural errors within the space of four pages than is done in the leaflet you sent. Unfortunately, to combat error and state truth very often takes longer time and more space than the declaration of error. I have noticed errors in nearly every paragraph. I am surprised to find that you are beguiled by statements such as these.

Sincerely your brother, John Carter.

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Abertillery. August 3rd 1945

Dear Brother Carter,

Greetings. Your letter of the 19th July to hand in reply to my three letters; I must say I think it very weak and you are very evasive and assuming. You do not even mention my second letter and you see so many errors in that leaflet - and give proof of none! This seems to be the spirit of the Christadelphian leaders, for you print an amazing letter from our dear Brother Islip Collyer (August, page 86) in which he mentions "undesirable literature," which he does not review but only misrepresents.

He says "It is suggested that a violent death was inflicted on Christ as a substitute for Adam." This is untrue; we contend that in His love God gave Jesus as a sin-offering and that Christ willingly offered Himself to release Adam and his family from Sin's captivity. We are "bought by the precious blood of Christ" and are no longer in Adam but in Christ, after baptism into His death.

It is easy for you to prejudice your readers and prevent them reading these pamphlets for your magazine is a powerful organ, but it is not always used for the good of its readers (and yet it is "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"!). I am amazed that you should have passed the last paragraph but one on page 87, where you allow Brother Islip Collyer to condemn himself three times in print. It just proves that neither you nor he understand Paul's letter to the Romans. Allow a sister to explain it for your benefit.

Paul writes to converted Jews (Romans 2:17). They are called saints (Romans 1:7). Then he describes the state of wickedness natural man falls into when left to himself (chapters 1 and 3). Then righteousness by faith (chapter 4). The federal principle is shown in chapter 5, whether in or belong to Adam or Christ. Chapter 6 tells our position and how we should live after rising from baptism. But in chapter 7 he writes to the brethren that know the law (converted Jews) and in verse 5 he says, "When we were in the flesh" and relates the experience of a Jew under the Law, in the flesh or before conversion and without the Gospel. Paul (Saul) thought he was doing God service when he persecuted the Saints - against conscience, for he was "kicking against the pricks."

See what Dr Adam Clarke says about chapter 7 - I guess you have his books. In chapter 8 Paul says, "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Verse 9, "Ye are not in the flesh." So that saints may (and should) apply chapters 6 and 8 to themselves, but not chapter 7. I often heard from the platform "When I would do good evil is present with me." This is self-condemnation! We can be judged by our own words - see Matthew 12:35-7.

I feel towards you and your followers as Paul did in Romans 9:1-3, and 10:1,2, and as Moses in Exodus 32:32, and it is with this in mind and with this spirit that these matters are being published. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear are leaving you behind. I have heard it said, and I think it is true, that Christadelphians are latter-day Jews and their eyes are holden; but there are a few latter-day Jeremiahs and Ezekiels, with the word of God burning within and they are speaking the word to their brethren, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, so that in the Day of Judgement none shall be able to say "We were never told."

With kind wishes, I remain your sister in Christ's service, Mrs J.A.French.

Defiance and Repentance

When thinking of defiance two people who grossly defied God come to mind: Balaam and Pharaoh. Let us first look at Balaam. His fault was that the prospect of fame and monetary gain made him bent on getting his own way, whether it was God's will or not. He was so determined on that futile mission trying to curse the children of Israel that God had to intervene forcibly. We know what happened, His ass saw the angel of God, but when trying to save Balaam by turning out of the angel's way, Balaam thought the ass was stubborn and smote her. This happened three times until Balaam eventually himself saw the angel. Now, to

be honest with ourselves, when we badly want something, not necessarily money or material possessions, do we always ask ourselves whether our wishes are in accordance with the will of God as recorded for us in the Bible? And do we always pray to God before taking any important decisions in our lives and ask whether it is His will? And if our wishes do not materialize, being unfulfilled, do we gracefully accept it as God's will, realizing that there is a reason for it which we may only discover years later, perhaps only after the resurrection?

Now to the case of Pharaoh. He broke his promise to let the children of Israel go free nine times. But the ninth time proved once too many. God was very patient with him considering how he defied Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh mistook God's patience for slackness, assuming God did after all, not mean what He said. He mistook God for one who just made empty threats. Now none of us openly defies God to this pattern but we all have our weaknesses in one direction or another. We all sin in many ways, then regret it and ask God for forgiveness and we sincerely mean it at the time. But unfortunately we often commit the same sin again.

I often ask myself how we are trying God's patience when we do the same wrong repeatedly but let us never be guilty of Pharaoh's mistake of misinterpreting God's patience for weakness. It could easily be done, not intentionally like Pharaoh but unconsciously, because the punishment does not always immediately follow the misdeed.

Think of a child who does something he shouldn't. Father threatens punishment "Don't do this again or else..." But some are more patient and easygoing than others and allow the wrong to go through a few times though threatening repeatedly. The child then thinks he is getting away with it, mistaking his father's patience for sheer bluff, very much like Pharaoh's attitude towards God, though in a much smaller way and not really intending direct defiance. But if he is a caring father heeding Solomon's proverbs about a loving father chastening his son betimes, the time will come when the child will do it once too often only to discover that father meant what he said after all. He will then discover the hard and painful way the difference between patience and slackness of keeping promises. When we sin and the evil consequences do not appear immediately, do not let us think we got away with it.

Sin is sin, but God in His mercy and through the intercession of our High Priest forgives the repentant sinner. Let us never slacken in our efforts to do better next time. It is easily done when apparently and only apparently we do not experience any evil consequences. But let us be conscious of God's mercies, undeserved on our part and beware of avoiding Pharaoh's mistake of taking unfair advantage of it.

I now want to turn to the very opposite: sincere repentance. Here again there are two examples - David and Paul. The former committed adultery and then tried to cover it up, but in doing so he committed another sin, murder. But how much he tried to hide it God did not let him do so. He eventually confessed to God and his prayer of repentance is recorded for us in Psalm 51. Trying to cover wrongdoing by rulers and people in authority has, is and will be until the return of the Lord, a common feature. We have an example of it in 1 Samuel 15 when Saul failed to carry out God's command to destroy utterly the Amalekites and all their possessions. And he had to admit it but he tried his utmost to persuade Samuel to come with him just this once so that the people should not find out. Of course it became known eventually that God had rejected Saul and appointed David in his place.

How different from the case of Paul. Paul unlike David, did not transgress the law. He was guilty of a misguided zeal in persecuting the Christians, but one outstanding feature of his character is his own admission in public both in front of the Jewish teachers and in front of the Roman authorities, that he was wrong. Just think of it - a teacher of some fame, an authority on the law and Jewish tradition, held in high esteem by Gamaliel, a religious teacher at that time, admitting his error in public, unashamedly. Not what we find of leaders and statesmen of our day is it?

What can we learn from this? Let us for a moment not look on doctrinal matters of his epistle but just at the repentant Paul. Of course Paul's repentance was brought about suddenly through God's intervention. Our own conversion did not come about as dramatically as this. For most of us it came about through reading literature, or a friend showing us the way of truth. But like Paul we all had to admit sometimes in our lives that the faith we were brought up in, or the faith we embraced later in our lives, was wrong. Not necessarily in public but nevertheless to some close friends, and it took some courage. But with all our faults we can at least say that we let God lead us and were not defiant like Pharaoh and Balaam. We

resolved at the time of our conversion to serve God to the utmost of our ability. Let us continue in this path. If we have failed as we all do at times, let us renew our resolve. It is never too late. God is patient and merciful. Only let us not fall into Pharaoh's way and take unfair advantage of it. And we shall find that God will never leave and forsake us.

Brother Leo Dreifuss

In the June issue of The Testimony magazine Chris Maddocks wrote an article entitled -

“Death and Life – the consequences of Adam’s sin and their removal in Christ”

by Chris Maddocks

Response by C.E.Cave:-

I have rarely read such a farrago of unwarranted generalizations than those that appear in “The Testimony” article for June 1999 under the above heading.

Chris Maddocks begins with what he terms “the culmination of 6000 years of man’s rebellion against God” when the truth is that as the majority of mankind throughout history have been ignorant of the God of the Bible, they can hardly be said to have rebelled against Him. And of those men and that nation to whom God revealed Himself there were many, even at times the whole nation who obeyed their God and sought to do His will. Ezekiel in his 18th chapter makes it clear that God does not impute to the children the sins of their fathers. But regrettably Chris Maddocks does not seem able to distinguish the different ways in which the Bible uses the word “Sin” and chooses to believe in a man made so called “Statement of faith” rather than the true teaching in the Word of God. When Adam sinned he placed himself in the position of a servant of Sin, King Sin, the devil, for “his servant ye are to who ye yield yourselves servants to obey.” He forsook his position as a child of God and became a bond slave to ‘Sin;’ an abstract conception and not a real entity, as was his Creator. But being a bond slave he and all his possessions, including his children and their progeny belonged to their new master ‘king sin.’ This was their legal situation for which their only wages were ‘death,’ another word which Chris Maddocks misunderstands, blinkered as he is by his faulty Statement of Faith and its assumption that because Adam in his “very good” nature chose to sin, then God implanted into his ‘flesh’ a principle which would cause Adam and all his progeny to do the same and continue to sin.

He quotes Paul in Romans 8:22 “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” apparently ignorant of the way in which the words “creation” or “creature” are used elsewhere by the apostle, when in 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Colossians 15:23, the Greek ‘*ktisis*’ can only mean ‘mankind’ as it also does in Mark 16:15. To conclude that in Romans it is used to denote all living creatures when the word is not so used elsewhere is an unwarranted generalization and certainly the saints in Rome, whether true or false, were far from groaning and travailing, the record shows that the false brethren were enthusiastically feasting with the licentious Romans and the true saints rejoicing in their new found salvation, even those who suffered for Christ’s sake “counted it all joy,” so where was the groaning and travailing except in the minds of the few righteous who like Lot vexed their righteous souls at the deeds of their neighbours?

Chris Maddocks claims in this first section that

“the consequences of Adam’s offence affected the whole of creation, not just man, for we read cursed is the ground for thy sake... thorns and thistles shall it bring forth...”

If that generalization were true, how is it that the spies needed two men and a pole to carry one bunch of grapes from the land? Or why does Joel speak of the land being as the Garden of Eden before the invader? Or why does God speak of the land as a land of milk and honey wherein the people would be blessed with the fruits of the womb and with corn and oil and wine? Or Jesus of the land of a certain rich man bringing forth plentifully? Common sense requires that just as those thorns and thistles would cause Adam to perspire and just as the land would fail to yield her increase to Cain, then those punishments for sin were personal to the ones who sinned and not universal as Chris Maddocks assumes. Any farmer can eliminate thorns and thistles with a herbicide, or improve the yields with fertilizer. Even sillier is Chris Maddocks assumption that all the animals were cursed. If that generalization were true then God rewarded Job with a heap of curses when he gave him 14000 sheep, 6000 camels, 1000 yoke of oxen and 1000 she asses. When the angels declared that “the man is become as one of us to know good and evil” Chris Maddocks must read it as “the man is become as one of us to know evil.”

Sadly such conclusions are only what we might expect to receive from a writer who has enthusiastically embraced the old Platonic lies concerning mankind, those notions of “original sin” so assiduously taught by Augustine when in the 3rd century he “married Christianity with Paganism” and fully accepted by the Roman church and all her harlot daughters - a lie firmly rejected by John Thomas and even by Robert Roberts himself until after the death of the former he performed his doctrinal somersault and cunningly introduced it as Clause 5 of his unnecessary Statement of Faith.

To continue with Chris Maddocks’ second section headed “Adam Before The Fall” extending his assertions that Adam’s transgression had a profound effect on all creation and that a process of decay hitherto unknown began to bring ‘death’ as its end product. Elsewhere Chris Maddocks quotes from an article written by John Thomas in 1869 on the subject, which he must have read without understanding the opening premise of its author which reads:-

“Moses tells us that when the terrestrial system was completed on the sixth day, that God reviewed all that he had made and pronounced it ‘very good.’ But in what sense was it ‘very good’? In an animal and physical sense; for it was a natural and animal system, not a spiritual one. Such a system is essentially one of waste and reproduction and was organized with reference to what God knew would come to pass.”

This system operated from the very beginning; it was a very good system inasmuch as what John Thomas terms “waste and reproduction” provided the essential food for all those living creatures classified as omnivores and carnivores and without which the balances of creation could not have been maintained and without which many species of life could not have obeyed that first commandment to “be fruitful and multiply.” And there is no hint in the Bible that it was not “up and running before Adam sinned.” Only the tunnel vision of those who have been deceived by Clause 5 requires a rejection of that simple truth.

It is in this section that Chris Maddocks quotes from Elpis Israel and the strange conclusion of John Thomas that God created Adam with a “very good” nature which was capable of death and capable of endless life which could “merge into mortality or by a physical change be clothed with immortality - apparently because he thought that Adam was in an “intermediary state” (Chris Maddocks words) which scarcely agrees with what he wrote in 1869 that Adam was created as part of a “natural and animal system” unless at that earlier time the doctor believed that the animals were also in that state of limbo. How much simpler to believe what the editor of the Christadelphian wrote in March 1969 in his editorial when he quotes from the more mature writings of John Thomas in Eureka where he says (Volume 1 - 1862):-

“Seeing that man had become a transgressor of the divine law, there was no need for a miracle for the infliction of death. All that was necessary was to prevent him eating of the Tree of Lives, and to leave his flesh and blood nature to the operation of the laws peculiar to it.” (L.G.Sargent).

As the editor points out the important facts to be gleaned are that:-

“there was no need of a miraculous change to bring death; the man had merely to be left to the working of his animal nature.”

It was of that physical animal nature that John Thomas had said in Elpis Israel that “Death and corruption then, with reproduction... is the fundamental law of the physical system of the Six Days.”

If then Adam’s natural physical body was subject to death and corruption then stripped of the rhetoric all that John Thomas is telling us is that Adam’s nature is just the same as ours. There was no miraculous change from an imaginary intermediate limbo to that mortal state common to every creature. But of course if one is obsessed with the idea that “very good” means “not subject to death” and that after his transgression God miraculously implanted corruptibility and a bias to sin within Adam and ensured that was genetically transmissible forever, then there are problems which only the Word of God rightly divided can solve. Sadly Chris Maddocks suffers from the delusion that as he reveals in this section it is the B.A.S.F. which must be upheld rather than the Scripture, hence the “What if” suppositions in the remainder of this section.

Under “Mental Change” Chris Maddocks says we need

“to reflect upon the changed circumstances brought about by sin”

and claims that this consisted of

“looking upon each others nakedness in a carnal way”

having previously

“only fulfilled their desires in legitimate ways”!

and

“consequent to eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they had the capacity to satisfy their lusts unlawfully and this is they duly did.”

When? And where is it recorded? This is purely the imagination of Chris Maddocks’ mind. And again

“Having embraced the mind of the serpent they naturally sought out that which was evil”!

Absolute rubbish unknown to the Word of God. When did Adam sin again? The Bible is silent. Did he teach Abel to sin? Was not the serpent also created “very good”? When has nakedness between husband and wife been evil? Were they not created to be fruitful and multiply? I suggest that Chris Maddocks should read Genesis again and retract such nonsense.

This writer claims no infallibility such as Chris Maddocks claims for the B.A.S.F., but would suggest that the idea of a mental change is foreign to Scripture and that Adam who was not deceived, would recognize that when he realized that Eve had eaten of the forbidden tree he would understand that because God had said “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” then Eve was due to die THAT DAY. (Genesis 3:3 proves that Adam had instructed her) and Adam loved his bride, as does Jesus; He therefore could not bear the thought of being parted from “flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone” and consequently partook of the fruit also if by any chance his death might substitute for Eve’s. Had God carried out His law they would both have perished and there would have been no human race to inhabit the earth, but “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13) and God accepted the lamb(s) blood as a substitute for that of the guilty pair.

The next section is headed “Physical Change” and continues the same mentally inept generalizations as before. Constrained by Robert Roberts’s doctrine he inverts the peculiar theory that because Adam’s nature was not changed (which is what Clause 5 implies by the supposed implantation of the sin principle) then it was the “condition” of that nature which must have changed; a theory which he seeks to justify in this next section headed A Physical Change.

Chris Maddocks begins this section with the statement that

“Adam’s nature was not changed, the nature was the same, it was the condition of that nature that altered”

and then seeks to justify his fantasy by quotations from John Thomas and R.Roberts which to any normal intelligent reader actually do no such thing and confirm that the only change which occurred was a change in Adam’s relationship with his Creator and even specifically deny any physical change and I quote: -

“What was the difference between his (Adam’s) position before disobedience and his position after? Simply this, that in one case he was a living soul or natural body on probation for immortality; and in the other, he was a living soul or natural body under sentence of death. He was a living soul or natural body in both cases.”

And then comes the most amazing Alice in wonderland contention of all, and how it got past the magazine editor’s scrutiny is inexplicable - I quote: -

“But although there was no new entity infused into the nature of man to make him become mortal (so what price Clause 5?) there was a distinct physical difference between Adam before the fall and Adam afterwards. The nature was the same, as Brother Roberts shows, but the condition of that nature was dramatically changed. If we were to analyse Adam before and after the fall under a microscope the difference we would see is a principle of decay at work. We would see cells dying. That is we would see the inworking of death, a process commenced because of disobedience.”

How on earth does the mind of Chris Maddocks work? So Adam had no dying cells before he sinned! So God created him without hair, or finger nails or toe nails or even any outer skin. What a peculiar creature he must have been; unable to sneeze or moisten his lips, incapable of shedding a tear, incapable of even movement in case he activated his body fluids. Surely Chris Maddocks should know that there can be no life without death. To what amazing contradictions can idolatry of a false thesis take the human brain?

Chris Maddocks final section is headed “Essential Principles” and his first paragraph rightly declares that “Unless we can understand what it is that we are saved from, we will not understand how, or why we need salvation.” What a pity he puts his faith in a man made concoction by Robert Roberts who did so much good and yet so much harm. A man who looked upon himself as the conscience of the brotherhood; he atone decided what it should believe and anyone who disagreed was branded as a heretic. Far better to listen to what the apostle Peter had to say, a man divinely inspired who had the keys of the Kingdom on behalf of his and our Saviour and who clearly states what we are saved from and how that salvation was accomplished, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (manner of life) received by tradition (i.e. handed down) from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

I can only conclude this critique with the prayer that Chris Maddocks should cease to try and defend the indefensible and read his Bible without the blinkers of those preconceived ideas which render his writings so puerile.

Brother C.E.Cave.

“For The Hope of Israel I am Bound with This Chain”

This was the important statement of St. Paul after his conversion to the one whom he found to be the Messiah of Israel, whose servants he had persecuted and caused to be put to death for their faith.

It may appear strange to some, yet it is true that the very responsible rulers and Priests of Israel had been the cause of his being bound with a chain, but as he said later in his Epistle, “The Word of God is not bound,” - a lesson all must learn if Truth is to prevail.

So what was this Hope of Israel” he proclaimed, that it should cause such opposition from leading members of that very nation? If it was a true Hope, they should not have opposed anyone supporting it, yet all through the history of man and especially that of Israel this has been the case - wrong against right - error against truth. We turn to Acts 28:17-20 and allow Paul to answer the above question, also at verses 28 to 31, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” - and Paul continued “preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

Paul had already stated to King Agrippa, “My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.”

Paul was not accusing the whole nation but the leaders who caused them to err and was now preaching what should have been the very hope of these leaders demonstrated by belief and faith, which he himself was now doing in response to his calling. Acts 26:15 - “And I said, Who art thou Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, to open their eyes (Jews and Gentiles) and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

“For these causes,” said Paul, “the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing to both small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

This was certainly a strange yet new message to the Jews who considered that circumcision was a strict adherence to the Law in which they could boast as descendants of Abraham after the flesh, not realizing its origin, which was before the Mosaic Law and was a seal of the righteousness of faith which Abraham demonstrated before being circumcised that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who walk also in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.... Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) – Romans 3:27 - “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. ...Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.”

The Gospel then that Paul was preaching involved the promised seed of the woman recorded in Genesis 3:15 and was also spoken of to Abraham as the “Seed” to whom the promises of the land and the world would first apply and not to “seeds as of many” which Paul makes plain in his Epistle to Galatians, chapter 3 vs. 16-22.

Paul was trying to show that the inheritance of the promises made of God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not by keeping of the traditions and rituals of the law in the letter, but through faith, in the Spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God. This was why the True Hope of Israel had become buried by false tradition, boasting in the dead works of the law and circumcision misinterpreted.

Regarding the inheritance of the Land to the seed of Abraham, God did not break His promise, for under Joshua the twelve tribes of Israel did receive their inheritance as recorded in Joshua 21:43, “And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt

therein... (v.45) There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”

Who or what constitutes these twelve tribes of which Paul is speaking and are hoping to come to the promises God made to the fathers and are for this cause serving Him day and night? Surely Paul must now be speaking of a remnant, not of fleshly descent but of the Spirit, that is, those Jews who had accepted Jesus the Messiah through the preaching of Jesus and His Apostles and servants, for there were many whom Paul said had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life and he was now turning to the Gentiles since God had now accepted them under the New Covenant in Christ Jesus whose words to Paul I quoted earlier - “That they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

The Apostle James addresses his Epistle thus: “James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting...” His Epistle continues in praise of Abraham and his faith being wrought with his works and by works, faith was made perfect. Also he cites the harlot Rahab as a true example of faith justified by works. Now James is not addressing the twelve tribes who received their inheritance under Joshua for there still remains a Rest to the people of God as recorded in Hebrews 4:8-11, “For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he (God) not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

These twelve tribes of which James, Peter and Paul speak of having been scattered by reason of persecution by the ruling leaders of the Jews of the circumcision, may be of those 144 thousand sealed of God in their foreheads by reason of their belief and faith in their Messiah. John in vision saw them with the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion but irrespective of this, they must have conformed to faith in the blood of the everlasting covenant which was that of Jesus prefigured in the lamb slain from the foundation of the world as a covering for Adam’s sin and recognized continually by his posterity in faith and hope. But this recognition was very limited in that many of the sacrifices and offerings lacked faith in what they pointed to. This state of affairs lasted under Moses where the Psalmist speaks of Israel as a Vine which God brought out of Egypt. This also was by the blood of lambs which typified the Lamb of God. In Psalm 80:8 we read of Israel as the vine brought out of Egypt and being caused to take root, God Himself preparing room for it, but the Psalmist was mourning and relating the fact that God had forsook them and caused them to be reproached by their enemies but they understood not that these nations were preserved in order to test Israel’s faith after seeing His miraculous signs in Egypt and in the wilderness. And After entry into the Promised Land under Joshua they continually did evil till the time they rejected God as their King though faithful judges showed them great examples of faith in God and then under Samuel they asked for a king like those of the surrounding nations.

The plea of the Psalmist in verse 14 was “Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madest strong for thyself. (v17). Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.” See Isaiah 49:5-10. Also Romans 5:6, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” He being strong by reason of His begetting of a virgin - a Son of God mighty to save - being justified by His blood.

As Paul realized later in his life, this was the purpose of the Mosaic Law – a schoolmaster to bring people of Israel to Christ in the realization that it was impossible for the blood of goats and calves to take away sin seeing they were only types of the one whom God had begotten and appointed to do so if willing, so that by one offering on the Federal Principle, all from Eden’s transgression, the Law of Moses, Calvary and beyond, might avail themselves of God’s offer of salvation through the blood of Christ and by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, immortality and eternal life in the Kingdom of God of a much higher order than Israel’s in the time of Samuel when they rejected God as their King.

It is well known that God continually sent prophets to obtain fruit from His Vineyard Israel but found very little although there was always a remnant producing some.

The time came after Israel’s persecution and stoning of them God had sent, that last of all (as the parable of Jesus states) God said, “I will send my Son, it may be they will reverence him.” But they caught Him and cast Him out of the Vineyard and slew him (Matthew 21:39). Jesus continues the parable from

verse 40, "When the Lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husband men, which shall render him the fruits in their season. Jesus said unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The parable that followed in Matthew 22:1-14 confirmed God's rejection of the Satanic element of Abraham's descendants under the Mosaic covenant including the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70 and through the blood of Jesus Christ introduced a New Covenant under which they who were bidden to the Kingdom of Heaven could make themselves ready by putting on the garments which qualified them to enter and take part. Previous to their invitation they were a mixture of bad and good but in the garments they were provided with and had put on, they stood in a justified state. The man who had not on a wedding garment and thought he could enter without it, represented that element of the Jewish nation who ignored the Prophets, John the Baptist and the Messiah Himself; thus considering and judging themselves unworthy of the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Israel as a nation failed to achieve the standard God required in a Holy people, as He said through His servant Moses, Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." At this time God appeared in Mount Sinai and proclaimed the covenant and law.

The evidence of Scripture is that as a nation they failed but in the individual case there was always a faithful remnant spoken of in various places of Scripture as the elect. The contrast between those from whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been taken away and the elect to whom it pertaineth, is shown by Peter and Paul, the former having been given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 16:19); so in effect he would know who could qualify to enter (incidentally the false idea of Peter at the Pearly Gates with a literal key is not to be accepted here; we are speaking of a Kingdom of God on the earth under His supreme authority and rule and consisting of those who sang a new song saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9,10).

There is hardly a better introduction to those who comprise this glorious throng than those referred to in Peter's first Epistle, chapter 1 which is well worthwhile reading and will save space and writing on my behalf as I wish to also call attention to Peter's words in the following chapter 2, verses 2 to 10 showing the position of believers under the New Covenant in Christ - Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:12-25, 8:7-13, 1 John 2:22-29, all references relating to this subject of the Israel of God under the New Covenant and the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit and classified as the Sons of God and associates of the Kingdom and bringing forth the fruits thereof. Here then are Peter's words from 1 Peter 2:5, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore that believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you from darkness to light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

I believe that Paul addresses this same people in contrast with the people under Moses at the foot of Sinai - Hebrews 12:18-24, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and tempest, nor unto blackness and darkness. But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Incidentally, Abel's offering which typified that of Christ, testified by faith his own individual righteousness in and through the anti-typical Lamb of God, but, unlike the blood of the Lamb of God, it could not redeem a multitude).

In the period of my Christadelphian association the question used to be put, "What is the Kingdom of God?" and the answer was, "The Kingdom of Israel restored at the second coming of Christ." It was also stated in lectures the importance of the Jews to return to the Promised Land to be ready as subjects of this Kingdom, seeing that a king needs subjects to reign over. The fact is that there are thousands of Jews returned to the land but they do not all acknowledge that their Messiah the Son of God, has already come and that their fathers slew Him, or that the deliverer has come out of Sion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and that all Israel might be saved. "For, saith God, this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Jeremiah 31:31) (Hebrews 8:8). This commenced when Jesus laid down His life on Calvary's Tree and as John the Baptist said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Thus the Federal Sin under Adam and the personal transgressions under the Mosaic Law were taken away (Hebrews 9:15).

We read in 1 Samuel 8 of Israel's rejection of God as their King and God's description of the kingdom they would experience under a king other than Himself. This kingdom commenced with Saul though God continued to over-rule for the sake of some who would still demonstrate faith in Him and the promises made to the fathers. It was a similar kingdom to that of the Gentile nations where the needs and aspirations of the rulers had priority through taxation of a similar kind we have today causing dissatisfaction, trouble and strife.

This kingdom of Israel ceased after a period of time and was non-existent under the Roman power when Jesus appeared on the scene, so it could not have been a non-existent kingdom under their former kings that Jesus said would be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof and which they had failed to do. Can anyone imagine such a corrupt kingdom being restored and being styled the Kingdom of God? I very much doubt it seeing that the Kingdom of God is established under the New Covenant in Christ's shed blood and cannot involve Jews who are not in Christ. Also taking into account the theory of some that the Jews will build a Temple after the pattern shown to Ezekiel and, under the authority of God will offer up sacrifices which would be retrospective of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary to instruct Jews of the flesh of the way of salvation through Him by the shedding of blood. Are not we who profess to be in Christ, now at this present time celebrating in retrospect His death by the partaking of the unleavened bread and the wine? If we can do it in this appointed way, why should people need to resort to another way which is not in my opinion a fact of the Scripture teaching? Another statement of fact is that of Paul, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Before Christ's death He did so in types and shadows and by the Mercy Seat of the Ark of His testament overshadowed by the cherubim, but this all ended when He spoke through His Son as recorded in Hebrews 1:1,2. It is also stated of Christ that He was not a servant but a Son over His own house, whose house are we a temple in which God dwells by His Spirit. (Hebrews 3:5,6).

We have boldness now to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh; and have a high priest over the house of God, whose house are we if we hold fast our faith and confidence to the end.

Under the old covenant and Levitical priesthood the Apostle writes, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. For in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. (Hebrews 10:3,4).

Is it therefore credible that what Paul says in his Epistle to Ephesians chapter 3, verses 12 to 22, can be set aside for a Temple made with hands which would again be of the pattern shown to Moses, to David, to Nehemiah and Ezra, and also Ezekiel? Is it credible that Jesus in making Jew and Gentile one, by reconciling both unto God in one body by the Cross - blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to the cross and triumphing over them, that such will be restored?

Are we to accept that the Old and the New Covenants are to operate at one and the same time? In view of Hebrews 8:6-13 I think not; "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (v.7) and not only so, as it is written in Hebrews 7:28, "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

Paul also stated, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us (Jews) unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” Galatians 3:24-28. On this basis of being in Christ Paul puts the question and gives the answer, Romans 11:1, “I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew, (v.5), Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace, (v.7), What then, Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. See John 10:28, 2 Timothy 2; 19). For the present day Jews to come to a belief in Jesus the Son of God whereby men can be saved, is not to be expected through the law alone as a schoolmaster. It did not bring Paul to Christ, though touching the righteousness which was of the law Paul was blameless. He needed the glorified appearance of a former crucified man whom he had rejected together with the Jewish rulers, to convince him and bring him to a proper understanding that the types and shadows of the law referred to the Messiah of Israel, His sacrificial death and resurrection. Jesus after His ascension to Heaven left behind pastors and teachers to be His witnesses in preaching the Gospel of Salvation in Him, but as Paul has pointed out, only the elect Jews and Gentiles will accept it.

I have never read in their Epistles of a literal temple being built in the vicinity of Jerusalem on the same lines and pattern shown to Ezekiel, and even in Ezekiel it is not stated to him that this temple is to be any other than a replacement of the one that had been destroyed when Israel were taken to Babylon. Every description given to Ezekiel is on the lines of the previous Temple and its ministrations, so to me it seems contradictory that glorified priests of the Kingdom Age should remove their garments and put on other garments when garments of white signifying righteousness and incorruptibility have already been given them to put on (Ezekiel 42:13,14) (Leviticus 2:3, Numbers 18:9). The purpose of this vision to Ezekiel was to show it to Israel who were in the Babylonian captivity on account of the former Temple being destroyed through their rejection of the pattern it portrayed of the greater Temple God would dwell in even His Son Jesus. They were to view the pattern shown to them by Ezekiel that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and if they were ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, the fashion thereof and all the ordinances thereof and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof and do them. (Ezekiel 43:9-11). How could Israel of the captivity be told by Ezekiel to do these things if it referred to Christ’s Kingdom Age and the second advent as some would have us believe? Even the sons of Zadok are appointed to minister in the sanctuary to offer unto God the fat and the blood... and they shall keep my charge... They shall be clothed with linen garments, and no wool shall come upon them... they shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat and when they go out into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; (v.20), neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long, (v.22) neither shall they take for their wives a widow nor her that is put away, but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel.”

This is proof enough that the sons of Zadok are not glorified resurrected priests, for as Jesus stated, “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God, neither can they die anymore.” Furthermore, I would not suppose there would be these restrictions with their hair as would be with the sons of Zadok referred to in Ezekiel. The only way I can look upon Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple is that it is instructions to those who will build it, and a pattern of the more perfect Tabernacle not made with hands. It was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin - they were but types of the Lord Jesus who did so by His own blood, thus ratifying the types under the law. Sacrifices in a future Temple would be a return to the Old Covenant rituals and would necessitate the death of Christ to ratify them which I cannot conceive possible. Again in Ezekiel 45:21,22, it records the Passover on the appropriate month and day - it speaks of the prince preparing for himself and for all the people of the land. a bullock for a sin offering.

It appears to me that Ezekiel was permitted to see the culmination of the natural in the types when until he was brought again from his sight-seeing tour, to the door of the house where something he had not witnessed on his first tour was now to be seen, for in fact John, like Ezekiel, was carried away in the Spirit (Revelation 21:10) and he witnessed things similar as stated in Revelation 21 and 22. Please study the Epistle to the Hebrews in relation to Ezekiel and form your own conclusions.

Brother Phil Parry.

On the 26th July we received permission to publish the following article by Brother Pat Brady together with the subsequent correspondence between Brother Pat and Brother John Stevenson. We, in the U.K., have not had sufficient time to respond to Pat Brady's views but hope to do so in the next Circular Letter.

Reconciliation - Atonement

The scriptural doctrine of reconciliation is described in 1 John 2:2 as propitiation. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins. We propitiate a person when we do something that renders him favourably disposed towards us and our requests, as Esther propitiated the Persian king. The practical outworking of Jesus Christ's propitiation of God is that His Father forgives us for Christ's sake (Ephesians 4:32).

We must remember that it was the goodness, graciousness, love and mercy of God which ordained such a state of affairs in the first place, in that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God was wanting to forgive, but will only do so under certain conditions, which have been established in Jesus Christ, but all the work of Jesus reveals the love of God (1 John 4:10).

What are the conditions? God sent Jesus in the identical physical nature that we share, to endure all our sufferings and temptations (Hebrews 2:14-17). He was perfectly faithful and obedient until the end point of His life, which was a most cruel and painful death on the cross. Jesus displayed that there is no excuse for sin and we should acknowledge this fact when we repent. We don't repent if we blame our inherited physical nature, or a supernatural devil, for our sins. It is our moral failures, our faithlessness, our failure to trust fully in God and not the physical nature we inherit, which is the cause of our sins. Our nature simply assists in supplying the temptations. Jesus had the same nature and overcame, by putting His trust in God and His Spirit and using His fleshly members always as servants to righteousness (Romans 6:19).

Jesus Christ was a man like us, though Son of God and had to complete a life of probation before He could be judged as perfectly righteous and granted eternal life. It was God's wish that Israel would "reverence my son" (Matthew 21:37), but they rejected Him and murdered Him, as a result of which God "destroyed those wicked murderers and burnt their city." Part of Jesus' probation was "enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself" and "resisting unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:3). God allowed these terrible things to happen, "in accordance with His determinate counsel and foreknowledge" (Acts 4:28), but quickly justified Jesus from their false accusations by resurrecting and glorifying Him with eternal life (1 Timothy 3:16) and making Him High Priest in the New Covenant dispensation, replacing the Jewish High Priest who had falsely accused and murdered Him (Hebrews 2:14-17).

Jesus submitted to death because He knew that God in His wisdom would not have required it if we could have been saved without it. If He had not died such a death, some men would say that He had not been "tempted in all points" and was therefore not fit to be their judge, if they had denied their faith under torture. They would have accused Him of serving God for profit, as Job was accused. The end point of our probation is death (Hebrews 9:27) and so it had to be for Jesus if He was to be made in all points like His brethren, leading them out of death itself (Hebrews 2:9,10). "We needed a sympathetic High Priest to plead our case before God and a merciful and understanding Judge, one who had been tempted in all points like us, including suffering and death (Hebrews 2:17, & 4:15). Jesus' sufferings and death were necessary to qualify Him for those positions and to qualify Him to be King of the world.

Jesus Christ died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3), because His death ratified into force a New Covenant which contained a promise of the forgiveness of sins to those who accept the covenant (Hebrews 9:15-17 & 8:18). The terms of the New Covenant were defined by the words and example of Jesus' life. Jesus is our Redeemer, because we have forgiveness of sins in His name (Ephesians 1:7). Jesus gave His life as a ransom to deliver us from the penalty of our sins (Matthew 20:28), not to pay the penalty- The ransom price was in no way equivalent to the debt forgiven by God. If it was, it would have secured the release of only one sinner, and Jesus would have needed to stay dead forever to secure that one sinner's release. The ransom price was exactly equivalent to what Jesus needed to do on His own behalf to display perfect righteousness before God. The punishment due to us for sin is freely forgiven by God, in His great

grace and mercy. So the life and death of Jesus was exemplary; it was an example for us to follow, until death if necessary (1 Peter 2:20-24). Jesus demonstrated that it is never expedient to tell lies or indulge in violence to deliver ourselves, even from the most unjust fate. We must trust in God to deliver us, by resurrection if necessary. We should not use lies or violence to vindicate ourselves. Jesus could have denied being Son of God and King of Israel and Pilate would have let Him go, or He could have called in 12 legions of angels, if such had been the will of God and encouraged His apostles to use their swords to deliver Him, but He did not, as an example to us. Jesus said "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give you a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). If necessary, He expects His followers to suffer and die as He did, trusting in God for deliverance. His sacrifice and our sacrifice (Romans 12:1) is doing the will of God at all times, even if being crucified and slain by wicked hands is the result (Acts 2:23). It is a life of spiritual sacrifice that God wants, though death may terminate it (Psalm 51:17, Micah 6:6-8, Hebrews 10:7).

The Problem With Substitution

There is another theory of reconciliation called the substitutionary death of Jesus, or the expiatory death. Expiation means to endure the full penalty of a wrong or crime on behalf of somebody else, though you are innocent yourself, and is the same as satisfaction, which renders a full legal equivalent for the wrong done. Expiation is the active means of expiating, or of making reparation or satisfaction, as for offence or sin. These definitions come from Websters Dictionary. If the full penalty of our sins was paid by Jesus, and if a full legal equivalent for our punishment has been rendered, there can be little scope for God to forgive us, which the Scriptures teach He most assuredly does. This is the problem in the substitutionary, expiatory death theory of reconciliation, otherwise known as the satisfaction theory of the atonement. It would be unjust for an innocent man to be punished for the guilty and we would owe our salvation almost to Jesus alone who endured the punishment and considerably less to God who allegedly demanded such punishment.

Care must be exercised with the use of the term "sacrificial death," a term not found in the Scriptures. Jesus' death alone was not the whole sacrifice which He offered to God, though it was part of it. His whole life of faithfulness until death was His sacrifice, symbolized as "His blood." We are told in the Old Testament that "the life is in the blood." The blood offered to God in heaven by High Priest Jesus was His whole sacrificial life till death, which included being subject to His parents, forsaking a career, lands and houses, wife, children and family and knowing all His life that He would be unjustly rejected and murdered at the end of it. To take all that in the right spirit and still trust in God and not hate His tormentors, was a sacrifice indeed- The concept of violent sacrificial death expiation is a pagan one and God told the prophets that such an idea never came into His mind (Jeremiah 19:5), as He does not punish one man for the sins of another (Ezekiel 18:20).

The truth of the matter was simply and clearly defined by Jesus in His parable in Matthew 18:23-35. God forgives and He expects us to forgive too and not demand reparation for offences.

The Problem With Representation

This theory has been defined by one of its advocates like this: "All these aims required that the sacrificial victim should be a perfectly righteous man, as well as the possessor of the nature to be sacrificially condemned - who should do no sin himself, while 'made sin' and treated as sin for us." "The crucifixion of Christ as a 'declaration of the righteousness of God' and a 'condemnation of sin in the flesh' exhibited to the world the righteous treatment of sin. It was as though it was proclaimed to the world, when the body was nailed to the cross: 'this is how condemned human nature should be treated according to the righteousness of God; it is fit only for destruction.' The foundation of this theory is the assertion that sin is equivalent to the nature we inherit. If this is the case, we could hardly be expected to do anything other than sin. We would indeed have an excuse for our sins, but the life of Jesus demonstrated that we have no excuse or our sins. The theory also asserts that the death of Jesus was a "sacrificial condemnation" of the nature we inherit, not of the wrong things we do with it. In other words, it is asserted that God expected Jesus to condemn the very physical nature that God Himself had endowed us with. He allegedly condemns the creation, in the form of a righteous man and not the creatures who misused it. This is totally irrational, but has a strong attraction if we want to excuse ourselves for our sins.

The theory is elaborately constructed by misuse of the figure of speech known as metonymy, which is the literary device of describing a thing by one of its attributes, e.g. "The crown commands" instead of "The

king commands.” The theory takes Jesus being “made sin” in 2 Corinthians 5:21 to mean Jesus was “made human nature,” because sin is allegedly one of human nature’s attributes. Because Jesus did not sin, He is the exception who disproves the rule, so sin is not inevitably one of “human nature’s” attributes. Unfortunately for this theory, the Scriptures say JESUS was “made sin,” NOT “Jesus’ body was made sin.” Because sin was not one of Jesus’ attributes, “sin” cannot be used by metonymy to stand for Jesus, though some have twisted the figure of speech to say just that.

The next step in this elaborately constructed theory of metonymical sin is to link it to Hebrews 2:14 and claim that because sin rightly pays wages of death (Romans 6:23) and human nature allegedly = sin, the devil of Hebrews 2:14, which also “had the power of death,” must be “human nature.” In effect, they are claiming that, when Jesus was “made sin,” He was also “made the devil,” because He was born with a nature allegedly called “sin” by metonymy. The problem here is that the Scriptures say “the one (or him) who had the power of death,” NOT “it (or that) which has the power of death.” “Had” is also past tense, but should still be present tense as “human nature” presumably still has the power of death. The Scriptures always speak about the devil as if he were a person. “Diabolos” in Hebrews 2:14 is masculine and the Greek could have accommodated a neuter rendition of this word if the Spirit had desired. The claim that diabolos in Hebrews 2:14 is personification of “human nature” is a feeble one. Personification in Scripture is usually very obvious, such as the olive and fig trees speaking (Judges 9:9-11) and there is no need to resort to personification if a literal reading makes perfect sense.

The only explanation of 2 Corinthians 5:21 which has a scriptural precedent supporting it is the assertion that “made sin” means that Jesus was “made a sin offering.” This on numerous occasions. Look up “sin offering” in your concordance. There is no word for “offering.” The word “made” has the sense of “appoint,” such as in “appoint a Prime Minister.” The secondary sense that Jesus was treated as a sinner, though He was sinless, also has some validity and displays the exemplary aspect of His sacrifice.

The false accusing devil of Hebrews 2:14 was Caiaphas, whom Jesus replaced as High Priest. The Representation theory also asserts that Jesus needed to offer a sacrificial death to redeem Himself from human nature. The advocates of this doctrine have expressed it like this: “Christ required redemption from Adamic nature equally with His brethren and the mode of redemption which God had ordained was a perfect obedience culminating in a sacrificial death.” “...He was able to render the perfect sacrifice required and thus to secure redemption for Himself from sin-stricken human nature and both forgiveness and redemption for those who come to God through Him in the way appointed.”

The truth is expressed in Titus 2:14: “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Redemption is defined in Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 as “forgiveness of sins.” Jesus had no sins or iniquity to need redemption from, unless one postulates a “sin” of possessing a physical human body. Though it is true that Jesus needed to work out His own salvation by obedience until death (Hebrews 5:7), it is not true that this constitutes Jesus redeeming Himself from His inherited nature. There is a fine but very important distinction. God is not necessarily pleased if we vilify the nature we have inherited, but rather He wants us to overcome it, using Jesus’ example of faith in God and His Spirit and prayer.

Care must be exercised with the use of the term “sacrificial death,” a term not found in the Scriptures. Jesus’ death alone was not the whole sacrifice which He offered to God. His whole life of faithfulness until death was His sacrifice, symbolized as “His blood.” We are told in the Old Testament that “the life is in the blood.” The blood offered to God in heaven by High Priest Jesus was His whole sacrificial life till death, which included being subject to His parents, forsaking a career, lands and houses, wife, children and family and knowing all His life that He would be unjustly rejected and murdered at the end of it. To take all that in the right spirit and still trust in God and not hate His tormentors, was a sacrifice indeed. The concept of violent sacrificial death expiation is a pagan one, and God told the prophets that such an idea never came into His mind (Jeremiah 19:5), as He does not punish one man for the sins of another (Ezekiel 18:20).

Brother Pat Brady.

* * *

Brother John Stevenson's response to the above article:

I was given a copy of Pat Brady's dissertation entitled "Reconciliation – Atonement" and was asked to comment on it. I found it very interesting and accepted the challenge, although some of my comments might be classed as hair-splitting, but I feel that a contrasting opinion may be worth splitting hairs for, and might perhaps induce others to offer their comments.

I am a little worried about Brother Pat's treatment of the word propitiation in his first paragraph. I have recently discussed Philip Yancey's book "What's So Amazing About Grace?" and I agree with his thesis that God's Grace is freely given to any who will accept it, so certainly God would not need any propitiation. I am not sure how accurately the word propitiate represents the Greek original, but the sense is clarified by the text of 1 John 4:9 & 10: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." This makes it very obvious that if God sent Jesus to be a propitiation, then it was not God who needed to be appeased, but diabolos. The sacrificial death of Jesus was to expiate the debt of mankind to diabolos in order to free us to come to God.

Looking now at the fourth paragraph, I have never felt quite comfortable with the idea that the life of Jesus before His ministry should be described as a probation. I suppose it is technically correct, because if Jesus had indulged in any sort of evil-doing, He would have disqualified Himself from being our Saviour and the sacrifice for our sins. However, both His mother Mary and His nominal father Joseph knew He had been miraculously conceived for a divine purpose, each having been verbally instructed by the angel Gabriel, therefore I see the youth of Jesus rather as preparation for His mission than as a probation. Both Jesus and His parents were aware of His divine status and in studying and preparing for His mission He would have been strongly motivated to keep far from evil-doing.

I must be perfectly clear about what I mean by status. Prince Charles has royal status because he is the son of the reigning monarch, but his nature is ordinary human nature like the rest of us. In exactly the same way, Jesus has divine status, being the Son of God and I regard Him as Divine Royalty. But as we all know, His nature was ordinary human nature, exactly like the rest of us.

In the next paragraph I am a little uneasy about the statements "The endpoint of our probation is death and so it had to be for Jesus," and "Jesus' sufferings and death were necessary to qualify Him..." Jesus was superbly qualified in any case and His suffering and death was entirely for our salvation. Could I make a little analogy? A man arrived at a railway station and placed his luggage on the footpath while he dashed into a shop to get something to eat. If he had not been so hasty he might have seen a sign which read "Any unattended luggage will be impounded." When he returned from the shop his luggage had disappeared and the porter informed him that it would be in the lost property department.

There he found that he had to pay a considerable sum to redeem his property and he did not have that much money. He tried to explain that the return of his property was urgent, as he had to catch a train to a far city, but the lost property attendant insisted that the penalty had to be paid first. While the argument was going on, a stranger appeared and handed over the money to redeem the luggage. The grateful traveller turned to his new friend and asked him why he had done it and the man replied "My father saw your predicament from the window across the street and sent me to redeem your luggage for you, but with the instruction that you must be careful to read, observe and obey signs in future."

Of course that analogy has many inadequacies, but I hope you can see the point that the man's father did not need to be propitiated and that his son forfeited the penalty incurred by the traveller in order to get him out of trouble and convey an important message, but not to qualify himself for anything. Also note that the man's son did in fact pay the penalty, not to his father, but to the heartless bureaucracy of the lost property department.

In the next paragraph, (commencing "Jesus Christ died for our sins...") I find this statement unacceptable: - "The ransom price was exactly equivalent to what Jesus needed to do on His own behalf to display perfect righteousness before God." No; the ransom price was exactly equivalent to the debt incurred

by Adam (and under the federal principle, including all his descendants), and forgiven by God. Jesus had already displayed perfect righteousness before God. He went to His death deliberately and voluntarily, specifically to save us. The exemplary or morality doctrine of the atonement is certainly correct and cogent, but it is validated, elucidated and illuminated by the scriptural transactional doctrine, that Jesus sacrificed His life to redeem us from the Sin of The World.

The most important section of this dissertation is entitled “The Problem With Substitution.” Christadelphians, including Brother Pat Brady, have an enormous dilemma with the word “substitution,” because they confine its meaning to the idea that God required someone to be punished for our sins before He could forgive us. Of course that idea is repugnant and it is not what the Scriptures teach. There is really no difficulty with the concept of substitution if we are careful to be guided by the Bible. Jesus died that we might live; in other words His death was instead of our death; He was our substitute, that is straightforward and simple. And although it is true that God sent His Son to die for us, it is not true on the other hand that God wished or intended that Jesus had to die, except that in His foreknowledge He knew that Jesus would be put to death when He sent Him to call us to repentance. The fact remains that it was the servants of Diabolos who plotted and performed the murder of God’s Son, inflicting sin’s penalty. It is important that to some extent we should identify with the servants of Diabolos, because we were in the same boat before we accepted the gospel and were baptized.

Therefore I insist that Jesus died a sacrificial death, even though that term is not found in the Scriptures. His death alone was quite emphatically the whole substitutionary sacrifice, offered not to God but to King Sin (or Diabolos) when His life’s blood was poured out. The concept of a violent expiatory death to propitiate God is indeed a pagan one, but the concept that we sinners murdered the divine Son of God, who was sent to call us to repentance and that God proclaimed that as an expiatory sacrifice to King Sin, in order to redeem us from bondage to Diabolos so that we could be welcomed back into the sheepfold, is definitely not a pagan concept but a scriptural one. When we were in bondage to Diabolos, we could justify thoughtlessness, expediency, nonchalance, callousness, spite, hate, deceit and greed; all those selfish animal instincts which Paul describes as the ways of the flesh, childish contrivances that we must put away if we are to respond to the teaching of the gospel. Some people have a lot of difficulty with the concept of the atonement as a transaction with the Devil, who has no real existence. We of the Nazarene Fellowship feel strongly that there is no alternative. There is no doubt that the atonement is a transaction and that it was not done to appease God’s wrath. Although the devil is a hypothetical entity, his servants are certainly not hypothetical.

I will not waste words with the next section, “The Problem With Representation,” because I cannot imagine how any reasonable person could logically justify that philosophy. In summary, Jesus, the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace, the greatly beloved only-begotten Son of God, was sent to mankind to call us to repentance; but we, with wicked lawless hands executed the Prince of Life. But it was all according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, so that the whole world would learn of the wages of sin and of God’s plan for redemption.

Brother John Stevenson.

* * *

Reply by Brother Pat Brady:

Dear John, Thanks for the comments on my article. In your 2nd paragraph, you say because God is gracious, He would not need propitiation. I agree He is gracious, but feel that the way I have explained propitiation does not infringe on, or negate, that graciousness. Nevertheless, 1 John 2:1,2 says that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, as does 1 John 4:9,10. Just because God sent Jesus, it does not necessarily follow that He would not require propitiation, but it does magnify His graciousness, in that “when there was no arm to save, his arm brought salvation.” The propitiation He required does not by any means expiate the penalty of our sins, or even of Adam’s sin. It was a propitiation which renders Him inclined to be favourably disposed towards us, and in His graciousness He supplied the One who made the propitiation and on whose account we are forgiven. God actually forgives.

I feel He did it that way more for our sakes than for His own. It is reasonable that He demonstrate to the world that we ARE responsible for our sins, because Jesus was sinless in our mortal, temptable frame. He expects us to acknowledge that responsibility as part of a genuine repentance. If we do this, He freely and graciously forgives our sins. He could not forgive those who felt that He should forgive us, even though they had inadequately repented and reformed, because they think He lumbered us with a nature that made obedience impossible. The doctrine of Original Sin effectively does just this and the Christadelphians believe a disguised form of Original Sin. I am sure you don't and nor do the Nazarenes.

You say "The sacrificial death of Jesus was to expiate the debt of mankind to diabolos in order to free us to come to God." Where does it say the debt was paid to diabolos? Was the debt to diabolos? David said "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51).

The sin offering blood on the day of atonement was not given to diabolos, whoever or whatever you think that might be, but into the most holy place representing heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24,25). It was given to God. Your theory does not fit the facts. Paragraph 3;

You quibble about the life of Jesus being a "probation." Call it preparation if you like, the fact is Jesus would not have merited life Himself if He had sinned, in which case He would have been of no use to us. His probation was until death, as ours is, though ours will almost certainly not be as terrible as His. His death was a murder by wicked men against the command of God that they "reverence His son," and that they hear the prophet like unto Moses, (Deuteronomy 18:18). He was obedient until death, though He knew from the Scriptures that His obedience would result in such a death. This is exemplary for us, showing us the degree of faith and dedication that is required of us also, because He faithfully performed it.

Your analogy about the railway station does not fit because the sin offering on the Day of Atonement went to God, not the railway bureaucrat. It was God who inflicted death on Adam, not the devil.

You next say the ransom price was exactly the equivalent to the debt incurred by Adam. Jesus should have stayed dead forever if that was the case. It is true that the life and death of Jesus was instead of our death. I am not hung up on the word "substitution," but it is a commonly used word to describe the concept of expiation, which is full payment of a debt and leaves no room for forgiveness or graciousness. But God was as gracious towards Adam as He is towards us, and Adam was forgiven too.

There was no expiatory sacrifice paid to King Sin. Once again, the Mosaic types do not fit your theory. This theory is like the old Mousetrap theory of the atonement, which stated that Jesus paid the debt to the devil and God then resurrected Him out of the devil's clutches, thus effectively swindling the devil. The God of heaven is not like a worldly scheming conniving con man. What sort of example would a shady, shonky, dishonest scheme like that set for those who are supposed to be influenced and impressed by it? It is a bit like the "Eleventh" commandment that we all heard about in the school yard "Do what you like, but don't get caught." This would make the God of heaven only marginally more moral than the arch fiend devil, which is unthinkable.

It is also similar to the Jehovah's Witness atonement scam theory which says that the natural body of Jesus was not resurrected, but He was resurrected in a spiritual body, thus trying to avoid the appearance of a swindle. They never say where His natural body went to. This is also wrong in my opinion. I have just heard another theory this week. It says Jesus gave His natural life, but was raised with spiritual life, and different Greek words for life are used to support this assertion. This is just another swindle theory, to accommodate the wrong concept of expiation. We receive life because we are forgiven by a gracious God, not because a mythical devil has been paid off. That would give the impression that the devil is more powerful than God, which does not fit the scriptural facts.

I recently wrote an assessment of a Grace book similar to Yancey's book and I will enclose a copy of that assessment. *(see footnote). I dare say Yancey's book is similar. I will read it if I come across it.

Finally, I have a precise concept of who the diabolos was in Jesus' day. I will enclose a copy of my exposition. You can send your article and my reply to the Nazarene magazine if you wish. My only condition is that they print my entire article and not just excerpts and that they also print my exposition on the diabolos entirely. (see footnote). If they could send me a copy I would be grateful.

Yours sincerely in Christ, Pat Brady. (8th July 1999).

* **Footnote:** Neither the “assessment” nor the “exposition on the diabolos” were enclosed but should we receive them we are happy to publish them with our next Circular Letter due to be distributed at the end of September.

MISCELLANAE

In past Circular Letters we have had discussion on the meaning of “mortal.” Its common usage has changed over the years and is today understood in a variety of ways. Dictionaries apply the word to the human race except where it is used in a very loose sense and is then applied to the animal kingdom in general. However, we are not too much concerned with today’s general understanding and use in secular life but we are concerned with how it is used and should be understood in the Word of God.

One view commonly held is that “mortal” and “corruptible” are interchangeable terms and in support of this Paul is quoted where he wrote “This mortal must put on immortality and this corruptible must put on incorruption.” It is said that this shows them to mean the same thing; however, this does not necessarily follow and it seems clear to me that the Scripture’s use of “corruptible” relates to either the physical body or to morality (character), while “mortal” relates to the legal position of mankind. If this understanding is correct then we can say that Adam was not mortal until he transgressed God’s commandment at which time he became a condemned man for breaking the Law. He was already a natural creature who would die a natural death in due course (unless God changed his nature) but this natural death is not the consequence of breaking the Law of God.

Jesus Christ had His life direct from His Father. He also was not mortal in just the same way as Adam was not mortal before his transgression and Jesus Christ, having never sinned, remained in that legal position until His resurrection when He rose immortal and incorruptible.

All Adam’s offspring are born into the legal mortal position but when a person is baptized into Jesus Christ he puts off his mortal position because by the grace of God his alienation from his Creator is reversed, i.e. his condemnation is annulled. Therefore he is no longer mortal but returns to the position or relationship with God which Adam rejoiced in before he transgressed. This agrees with the view expressed by Dr. Thomas when he wrote that Adam was neither mortal nor immortal.

I was taken to task by several correspondents for inventing the word “mortable” when writing in C.L.175 - a matter which in no way surprised me but I do not agree that we should avoid terms not used in Scripture. Such self-imposed limitation is unnecessary and far too restricting. The English language allows us to express ideas better or more clearly than many other languages and we should use it wisely for that purpose.

More recently I have come across the word “Mortalise” in Collins New English Dictionary, published in 1956, which means “to make mortal.” This would have saved me inventing “mortable.” Adam and Eve were mortalised when estranged from God through their sin. This same dictionary also gives a meaning of “mortal” as “meriting damnation, as sin.” Adam and Eve certainly did not merit damnation before their transgression, so again it is clear to me that they were not created mortal because they were not created under condemnation.

With this Circular Letter we are re-distributing “Mortal and Immortal” written by Andrew & Lena Wilson in response to an enquirer. It will be seen that they show “mortal” to be a legal term and on pages 3 and 4 make the putting on of Christ the same as putting on of immortality. This view is held by some in the Nazarene Fellowship but personally I see a difficulty here for as I see it, once immortality has been granted by the grace of God it cannot be reversed. How then could those who have been baptized into Christ and

then lose their faith become subject to the second death? These are considered to have crucified Christ afresh and in my view have become mortal again until they are destroyed in the second death.

This booklet by the Wilsons is not one of the easiest articles to digest but it is well worth putting in the effort as it contains much excellent teaching and many good observations illustrating the grace of God to the human race He so loved.

* * *

In C.L. 174 I wrote that “Not once in the history of the Christadelphians has there been a useful exchange of reasoning,” i.e., upon the subject of the Atonement. This could soon change because Graeham Mansfield, the Editor of “Logos” magazine has agreed to such an exchange and writes in response to a letter to him as follows : -

“I am quite happy to join in written discussion, on the understanding that we can mutually choose to place these matters in our magazines, including Logos, if we feel it of value to our readers. Certainly the object of any discussion as far as we are concerned is to uphold apostolic doctrine and practice, and this has been our determination ever since my father commenced Logos in 1934.”

It is indeed the desire of the Nazarene Fellowship to uphold Scripture and we therefore look forward to a useful exchange of reasoning and understanding for the benefit of all who desire to “worship God in Spirit and in Truth for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

* * *

In our last Circular Letter (No. 177) we printed excerpts from correspondence with Brother Richard Lister and our replies in response. We have again had letters from Richard and in one he writes “Your idea to debate issues of the Atonement probably has some merit but really there is no point in discussing everything and settling nothing in the manner of the Greeks.”

After quoting Romans 5:19; 7:5,18,23; 8:3; and Hebrews 2:14, he goes on to say : -

“The teaching of these Scriptures is clear and unambiguous to all whose minds are not spoilt by vain philosophy. - - flesh, human nature is full of sin and sinful tendencies, it is defiled, the Diabolos. Christ had the same identical nature as Adam after his transgression and as all Adam’s posterity. This is what the Scriptures teach. This corruption or sin’s flesh constitution commenced with Adam’s sin, this is Paul’s teaching. If you can’t see it you are blind.”

Yet Richard cannot see that he misunderstands or misapplies the quotations he gives in support of his view. We will consider each reference:-

Romans 5:19 - “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

This refers to imputed sin and imputed righteousness. Just as the sin of Adam is imputed to us so much the more “they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” This is the Federal principle where we see the two Federal heads - Adam, whose sin is imputed to his offspring and Jesus Christ whose righteousness is imputed to the faithful. This is a matter of faith, not works.

Romans 7:5 - “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

The time “when we were in the flesh” was before baptism into the death of Jesus Christ; before we knew of and responded to the saving grace of God; when we lived for the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and for the pride of life. Being “in the flesh” we were outside any hope of life eternal. Since we are no longer in the flesh “the motions of sins, which were by the law,” no longer “work in our members to

bring forth fruit unto death.” Once we have “put on Christ” in baptism we are considered to be no longer “in the flesh” having His righteousness imputed to us. Again this is the Federal principle in order that the righteousness of one may cover all. The free gift or grace of God.

Romans 7:18 - “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,…”

Again Paul is referring to the time before he understood who Jesus Christ was – the time of being “in the flesh” as being the opposite of being “in the Spirit.” This does not affect the literal physical flesh in any way.

Romans 7:23 - “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

This whole section in chapter 7 refers to the time before Paul’s conversion to Jesus Christ (Dr. Thomas wrote “In the animal man there dwelleth no good thing. The apostle affirms this of himself, considered as an unenlightened son of the flesh.” - *Elpis Israel*, ninth edition, page 92) and when read in its proper context is seen to have no connection with the present life of the convert. Romans 8:1 confirms this where Paul writes, “Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The section ends by Paul asking “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” This death being “mortality” (or condemnation) and the deliverer is God through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:3 - “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Why so much determined blindness surrounds this one verse is beyond comprehension. It is nothing short of an obstinate refusal to face facts and an unreasonable desire to believe the superstition of sin-in-the-flesh. This one verse is the mainstay of all Christadelphian argument and there are many leaders determined to keep it that way knowing full well it cannot be upheld. Briefly, what the law could not do was save people who kept it because of itself it was insufficient to give immortality even to people who kept the Law perfectly. It needed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to fulfil its purpose. It was the “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” That is, the Law showed the way to Christ who alone made possible the way of salvation through His sacrifice. The weakness of the flesh lay in the fact that no other man could by any means save himself or others the reason being is because his life is already forfeit and is of no value as a sacrifice - it belonged to Sin and so it was necessary for God to send His own Son in flesh like sin’s flesh. Not in ‘sinful flesh’ nor yet in the ‘likeness of sinful flesh.’ What Paul wrote was “in the likeness of sin’s flesh” and he knew what he meant - flesh owned by Sin which includes every human being whose life is derived from Adam - i.e. “Scripture hath concluded all under sin” (Galatians 3:22). Jesus Christ had His life anew from His Father and being born of a woman He had flesh like the rest of us but it was not “concluded under sin.” His was not Sin’s flesh, for such a concept is not taught in the Bible - Jesus Christ was in flesh like anyone else’s flesh – i.e. like sin’s flesh, but not belonging to King Sin - and by His perfect life He condemned sin by showing that people are able to overcome temptation if they are determined to and seek God’s help in doing so (Moses taught this lesson to the Israelites in Exodus 20:20 “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not; for God is come to prove you and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not”), so that Jesus condemned sin while He was in the flesh. When else could He have done it? Having condemned sin while in flesh like our flesh He then offered His life as the perfect sacrifice to redeem Adam.

Hebrews 2:14 - “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”

The meaning of this verse now becomes self evident that once Jesus Christ, in flesh similar to ours but of different ownership (i.e. flesh owned by God and not by Sin), He gave Himself to be the sacrifice for the life of the world by redeeming Adam and giving all who will do the will of God the opportunity of life for evermore through forgiveness and faith. Death has no more dominion over Jesus Christ (Romans 6:9) nor over those in Him.

To see this more clearly we understand the devil to be the personification of man's will when opposed to God's will. It was Adam's will to disobey God's will and this is what brought him under the condemnation of death. This condemnation was voluntarily accepted by Jesus Christ who took Adam's place in death. The lamb slain in Eden prefigured this as explained to Adam.

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Much could be said regarding Chris Maddocks article in the Testimony and I feel Brother Eric Cave has given an excellent response to it and now I am 'inspired' to make a few observations also.

It is a very poor production for a thoughtful person being so full of unfounded nonsense. Natural decay and renewal were in operation in the earth for millions of years before Adam was created, and Romans 8:22 has no connection with such natural processes which continue for their purpose in the very good state of their creation. The word "creature" in Scripture can have a wide application but in the context of Romans 8:19-22 it relates to mankind only.

Under the heading of "The entry of Death," Chris Maddocks claims that "man's transgression..." resulted in "a process of decay, hitherto unknown... bringing the death of all living things." This reasoning is based on Romans 5:12 "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men." Therefore, says Chris Maddocks, "a law of corruption came into operation." However, the death here spoken of by Paul is not natural death but the condemnation to death whereby "all are concluded under sin" (Galatians 3:22) on the Federal Principle for the sake of the blessing of Salvation - "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21,22).

Chris Maddocks is in error when he equates "the process of death" and "the principle or law of decay" with "mortality." Mortal means, meriting condemnation and it is not a process, but is a condemnation that is reversed by baptism into Christ's death, because He died in place of Adam and consequently for us.

In the section in which Chris Maddocks quotes Dr. Thomas as saying

"Adam and Eve, and all the other animals born of the earth with themselves, would have died and gone to corruption, if there had been no transgression, provided that there had been no further interference with the physical system than Moses records in his history of the Six Days,"

he observes that the animal man

"was not designed for eternity, and would eventually wear out. Yet it ought to be pointed out that this is more of an academic consideration than anything else; in actual fact it could never have happened. In Eden Adam and Eve had only two options placed before them, neither of which would have permitted the natural dissolution of their animal nature into corruption. Either they would remain faithful and, after a period of probation, be granted immortality or they would disobey and be placed under the sentence of death."

However, what Chris Maddocks says could never have happened actually did happen; Adam lived over 900 years and died a natural death, the "natural dissolution of their animal nature into corruption" - not the condemned death which was his due and which Jesus Christ died in his place.

Chris Maddocks suggestion that because

"Adam and Eve being sustained by the breath of life and having no principle of corruption within them could have maintained an undying existence indefinitely,"

is really a non-starter, because of its assumption of there being no principle of corruption. (How could there be no corruption yet "animal man would eventually wear out"?). This again is the result of another assumption - that when everything which God had made and He saw it was very good it is assumed this says everything was in a static condition of growth or a state of no change. The problem for such misbelievers is that they have to prove their case and as an example let us take plant life; did plants have a different nature

before the fall than after. Plants as we know them today can only survive because of decaying matter in the soil - the reason why the seed which fell on stony ground could not grow is because the germinating plants had no decaying matter from which to draw the necessary nutrients. Even if the 'stones' were finer than sand it could not support living plants - not until mixed with decaying matter could anything grow in it. With added moisture seeds may spring up but would soon wither away.

After the fall, Chris Maddocks sees "in operation a principle of corruption affecting every aspect of life both animal and vegetable" - presumably then before this principle operated there was no principle of corruption operating on animal or vegetable life. What work did Adam do when tilling the ground and tending the garden? Nothing grew because if it did it would also die. What did Adam and Eve eat if vegetation did not corrupt when ingested? How ever did any animals survive?

There could have been no eco-cycle to sustain pre-historic animals or is Chris Maddocks going to say that God put their fossils into the rocks at creation in order to confound scientists?

Is Chris Maddocks prepared to defy all the scientific evidence for the sake of clinging to a misunderstanding of the Genesis account? After all, scientists only discover what God has created.

Under the heading of "Mental Change" Chris Maddocks makes the wondrous claim:-

"there was something in the fruit itself which, when ingested into their systems, would operate upon their minds, and inflame the faculties controlling their propensities, changing their legitimate use into habits of an animal kind, called lusts."

This, he goes on to say is shown by Eve

"having adopted the mind of the serpent, she then taught her husband to do as she did, and he partook of the forbidden fruit also. The fruit, it is testified, gave them a mental awareness that they did not previously have; 'the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.'

Has Chris Maddocks never experienced a guilty conscience and felt ashamed of himself for the wrong he has done?

Russell Gregory.

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"For the wages of sin is death" - Romans 6:23

The death Jesus died was a ransom paid:
it was not wages earned.

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