

Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 182

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In this Issue:-

Page 1 Editorial	Sister Helen Brady
Page 2 Brother John Stevenson writes:	
Page 3 Letter from	Brother Phil Parry:
Page 6 The True Identity of Satan/Diabolos	Brother Pat Brady
Page 11 Reply to above	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 12 Take Heed What Ye Hear	Brother Harvey Linggood
Page 17 "Review of Slain Lamb" 2nd part	Brother F.J.Pearce
Page 23 Miscellanea	Brother Russell Gregory

Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends,

During the last few days of summer one evening last year, I went with a friend to attend a meditation in a tiny medieval church upon the Clent Hills near where I live. The church stands quite alone high among the trees and in ancient times it was the third most visited place of pilgrimage in England.

When we went into the church the sun was still shining. The air was balmy and the countryside was quiet and peaceful, and must have looked much as it had done a thousand years ago. The grass had been recently cut all along the edges of the winding paths and between the grave stones, so there was a sweet smell of hay in the air.

One of the pieces of music played during the meditation was an aria from Handel's Messiah based on two verses from Psalm 37. Handel must have known the Bible very well indeed to produce such a masterpiece as Messiah. Every word in the oratorio is Biblical and the verses Handel chose to illustrate the life of Christ from His birth to His death are felicitous indeed.

I remember reading in a children's encyclopaedia when I was little that Handel felt he was inspired as he wrote the oratorio. When he had finished composing the Hallelujah Chorus he said he thought he saw the heavens open and that he glimpsed the Almighty Himself amongst the angels. There is no musical work to compare with Messiah in its solemnity and majesty. The words chosen and the music set to them makes it a unique piece of work on a sacred subject.

The aria played at the meditation from Psalm 37 was "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him and he will give you your heart's desire." Two truly beautiful and inspirational verses to dwell on containing as they do, loving comfort, matchless advice and an unfailing and enduring promise.

If we can learn to rest in the Lord then we can bear any test that comes our way. Waiting patiently is a hard thing to do. We learn to do it better as we grow older usually, for patience is seldom a virtue of youth. The words "...and he will give you your heart's desire" are really wonderful to the hearer. It presupposes that God knows what everyone's heart's desire is - which of course He does. He has told us He has called us by our name. We are His children and He is our loving Father. No one knows more about each and everyone of us than the Almighty. He knows us better than we dare to know ourselves. Therefore knowing us so intimately He certainly knows our heart's desire.

Here on this side of the globe we are now in winter. Whilst those on the other side of the world are enjoying summertime. Wherever you are when you read this we send our warmest greetings in the name of Messiah, that great Shepherd of the sheep, with the fervent hope that our constant prayers will shorten the time until His longed for return.

Love to all, Helen Brady

John Stevenson writes:

Dear Friends, We have recently witnessed a multimillion pound extravaganza to celebrate “The New Millennium” on the wrong date. Unless you believe that a decade ends with year 9 and a century ends with year 99 and a millennium ends with year 999, you would have to agree that media reporters and announcers the world over got it completely wrong. There was a universal collusion and conspiracy amongst media reporters and announcers, not only to misrepresent this year as the first year of the new millennium, but also to imply that there was no doubt anywhere about this mistaken timing. Many schoolchildren could explain why the new millennium does not start until 2001 but the vast majority of the public were content to blindly accept the wrong date and the extravagant festivities planned for it. In trying to unravel this confusion, I came to the conclusion that most people would subconsciously think “Leading personalities advised us that New Year’s Day 2000 is the beginning of the new millennium and should be celebrated with great festivities; if someone argues that the date is wrong, we might be deprived of the merrymaking, therefore we will not buy into such an argument. If we are wrong then it is because we want to be wrong.”

What has this to do with our beliefs in the Nazarene Fellowship? I think it is very relevant to understanding why we are so few. We believe that God requires us to use our intelligence to know good and evil, or truth and error, and it is refreshing to know that each of us is willing to listen to any serious argument against our beliefs. But the vast majority of the public are not like that. Here is a quote from Ernest Brady in 1955 from “Too True To Be New”: –

“I do not think there is or ever has been a sect able to put forward a clear explanation of the atonement, for the reason that all alike go wrong at the very first step, in believing that natural death or corruptibility is the penalty of the sin in Eden. As I sat and listened to Brother Jennings in the Midlands Institute and saw a hall full of people being fed stones instead of bread, I can only confess that I felt sick at heart, and sad that I had been able to accomplish so little to enlighten them.”

There have been many such frustrating occasions in the long history of the Nazarene Fellowship, but we should not be too disheartened because we should remember that knowing good and evil, or truth and error is not important to most people and their attitude is, “If I am wrong, it is because I prefer to be wrong.” Here is another quotation - from Isaac Asimov, who was unfortunately an atheist, but was antipathetic to popular stupidity,

“Astrology is more popular today than ever before in history and more people than ever make a good living out of it. I have read that there are five thousand astrologers in the United States, and over ten million true believers... College students are no more a homogenous group than is any other large classification of humanity. Not all of them are interested in science; not all of them are truly bright; many of them are just bright enough to discover that what counts in this phoney world is merely the ability to sound bright – an ability which has carried many men to high political office... Many college students are taking up astrology in a big way because 1) it is the in thing to do, 2) it gives them a delicious, if false, sense of security, and 3) it gives them a passport to phoney intellectualism. And none of that is at all inconsistent with astrology being tripe.”

Astrology is far from being the only sort of tripe believed in. Religious sects are notorious for preferring tripe to truth, with man-made creeds and arrogant authoritarianism. But Jesus loves us all, prayed for us, wept for us and died for us. We must accept failure and disillusionment as inevitable in our witness, but hope and pray that some people will see and respond to the light that Jesus brought into the world.

Brother John Stevenson.

Letter from Phil Parry, written to a Christadelphian who says she no longer wishes to receive our literature:-

Dear Stella, Greetings in the Name of Him who is The Way, The Truth and The Life. Firstly I would assure you that through Brother Geoff mainly and over a number of years I have been made aware of the views you have tenaciously held to, though opposed in many cases to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. It was on account of this that I was able as an ex-Christadelphian, to enlighten Geoff to, not only the Truth contained in your latest Hymn Book but also the errors to which your community, including yourself, lend your voices, thus showing a lack of understanding and unity of the True Faith.

I drew Geoff's attention to Hymn 295, the third verse having been altered from the older Hymn Book which reads, "What though our in-bred sins require our flesh to see the dust," to, "Yea, though thy sentence, Lord, requires all flesh to see the dust."

You say it means the same only put in a different way," but who authorized it to be put in a different way? Not only so, but it does not mean the same, for as your community teaches of Jesus, He was flesh, yet He did not turn to dust. Again, the sentence upon Adam was death by the taking away of his life in the blood when he became disobedient, not 930 years after. It was in the day in which Adam knew to be of the evening and morning duration and nothing to do with a thousand years - the antitypical lamb slain in Eden contributed to Adam and Eve being raised from death in a figure, not natural death but the legal death by sin, for without law there could be no sin, yet Adam was capable of dying naturally when created. Your own community have often used this fact as a tool against the believers in the doctrine of the immortal soul, insisting that Adam was a living soul and also wresting out of context Ezekiel chapter 18, i.e., "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

But Ezekiel 18 speaks of inflicted death to transgressors of the Law of Moses, and of those who were obedient who would not "surely die" but live, yet even these died the common death through the nature in which Adam was created, thus showing that their natural death was not the penalty for sin.

You say, "Unrepentant men and women are under sentence of death because of their sin" but you do not clarify this wild and irresponsible statement. You class all people as being under sentence of death whether they have sinned or not, because of a nature your pioneer R.Roberts invented and produced and explained in Clause V of the B.A.S.F. in violation of Clause IV, for which he was also responsible, and also true and correct in saying that Adam, as a living soul and natural body of life, very good yet subject to death without law as all animal species were at their creation; he could affirm nothing but that on scriptural grounds. Yet he says Adam broke the law under which God had placed him and instead of putting him to death by his sin, God delayed that just penalty by changing Adam's nature to a physical law of decay (which was already in operation) but also added an element of bias to sin to a greater degree. Thus Roberts has impugned the justice and righteousness of God by adding to His Word that which is not there.

If we are not competent enough to read the Bible effectively or for that matter, other people's writings, we are not free to alter them to suit our own theories, yet C.C.Walker did just that in a later Edition of "Elpis Israel" because the correct edition on Page 233 of my copy refers to Dr. Thomas as "Jesus Christ is the substitutional testator." C.C.Walker admits liability for altering this to "mediator." He claims this was a "Correction... on the grounds that it was a more accurate description as the context of the doctor's arguments proved." Nonsense! Dr Thomas in this paragraph is quite clear and precise in his choice of his legal terms and is speaking of a will and testament and any lawyer or sensible student of Bible doctrine reading the context would understand it.

To me it is ludicrous to receive a circular advertising a "Distance Learning Course" on how to read the Bible effectively, from, in this case, Blackpool Christadelphians. There is a section on the last page with the heading, "About the Christadelphians" where it continues "Christadelphians adopted their name in the mid 1880's, and it means Brothers and Sisters in Christ." I do not dispute the meaning of the name but I do dispute what is said under the heading of the Name given to the American authorities by John Thomas to describe the people who followed his doctrine. For example, this leaflet says of Christadelphians, "They are bound together by a common faith in the Gospel preached by Christ and His Apostles in the first century. It was this faith and its appeal to men and women from all walks of life which brought the community into

existence.” This cannot be true in view of the fact that the Christadelphian doctrine is astray from much of what the Old Testament prophets spoke by the Holy Spirit and what Jesus and His Apostles taught by the same. What is more and to be deplored, is the incorrect statement that “Christadelphians are bound together by a common faith in the Gospel preached by Christ and His Apostles in the first century.” If this is so how can they explain the various and differing views found in the writings of Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts in opposition to the teaching and faith of the Apostles of the first century and also the casting out of their present and past communities under the false B.A.S.F. those who believed the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles of the first century?

You know very well they either resigned or were cast out for not accepting the teaching of Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts on certain important matters relating to the Atonement through the blood of Christ, of Redemption now, of Judgment now, of Names now in the Book of Life, and incorruptible raising if not blotted out, of the Kingdom of God consisting of only Jews and Gentiles in Christ and under His teaching and faith. There was a unity of doctrine and faith in the first century Ecclesia of Christ but not in that of Thomas and Roberts.

How then can it be claimed that Dr. Thomas brought the Truth to light when in this leaflet it states, “Christadelphians do not believe that any of their members, past or present, have received any special revelation direct from God”?

Well might they admit this of both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, for neither were wholly in harmony with the Holy Scriptures and Epistles of the Apostles of Christ. Paul said to the Corinthians, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins (not on account of our nature, nor on account of His own nature, but) according to the Scriptures,” and what did the Scriptures teach about sins? That Jesus, foreshadowed in the typical lamb slain in Eden, died for Adam’s sin by suffering willingly the penalty of inflicted death due to that sin, thus sparing Adam’s life and obtaining the birth and existence of all in his loins to give them also the opportunity of salvation through His shed blood. Paul received this doctrine first of all from Jesus Himself, Galatians 1:11, “But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man... (verse 12). For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Christadelphians cannot say this of themselves. Their so called gospel never commenced with the Lamb of God slain for Adam that he might have redemption and continue to live out his life in accordance with the physical law of his created substance. Their doctrine came from men in the persons of John Thomas and Robert Roberts, and their adopted name, Christadelphian, did not take place in the 1880’s through Dr. Thomas but during the American Civil War when he was asked to designate a suitable name to distinguish his fellow-believers. He died in 1871, so it appears some Christadelphians do not know as much about him as they should, for even much of his written works were contradictory and also out of harmony with Holy Scripture. But nevertheless, I do accept his sincerity and what was true according to Scripture and much nearer to it than ever Robert Roberts taught and bound Christadelphians to in a thirty Clause creed headed “Truth to be received” yet full of untruth which has been the cause of division and not a binding together at all to the Gospel of Christ as the Blackpool Christadelphians ignorantly profess. Over the years, Dear Stella, you have been made aware of the true position and you are finding it hard to kick against the pricks, so you discontinue having our free magazine which warns of the precarious position and hopelessness of non-acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ as a substitute for the penalty for sin Adam incurred which was death by infliction. It is a fact that Jesus did not die to save Adam from natural death, neither us, but from a legal sentence of death which passed upon all men after Adam sinned; yet death by decay was present in Adam at creation but not on account of transgression of law, for law had not then entered the Garden of Eden. You know our teaching, that contrary to the teaching of your leaders, sin is not human nature but sin is either taught in Scripture as transgression of Divine Law or it is personified as a “Bond-master,” in both cases in Paul’s Epistles.

I ask you and all Christadelphians to realize that the knowledge and understanding of the Atoning work of God in Christ comes by reading the Bible effectively. The Ethiopian could read the Scriptures but they were not effective to him until God showed it to him by a devout man in whom was the Holy Spirit. In the 3rd and 4th chapters of John’s record much was taught by Jesus both to Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, the latter having heard him, said through her lack of understanding of the truth, “I know that

Messiah cometh which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.” Did you not say words similar to this a little time ago? “When Jesus comes all will be made clear”? But Jesus is here now, the Word is nigh thee - no need to bring Christ down from above - “I that speak unto thee am he” - the Spirit Word of God in flesh.

Read Romans chapter 10. If as stated about the Christadelphians in their pamphlet, that they do not believe that any of their members past or present have received any special revelation direct from God, then I can say from my own experience of 17 years as a member of the Christadelphian community, that this statement is untrue in my own case and others before and after me, and is also a denial of the statement of Jesus in John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to me.” Verse 37, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Yourself, as well probably of many Christadelphians, North, South, East and West of the globe, have been made aware of a Christadelphian man of 86 years of age and a member of that community for over 60 years and a regular reader of the Bible and fully aware of the views expressed from the time of John Thomas and Robert Roberts, yet like a bolt from the blue, revelation struck him and revealed the Truth in contrast with what he had believed to be the teaching of Scripture, and he was not afraid to show this contrast in letters to certain responsible people who it appears had no respect for any views that were contrary to their B.A.S.F. Nevertheless, he now has many sympathisers especially the Nazarene Fellowship who endorse his views with their own, and praise God. On the matter of your communities Hymns, and especially the one, “When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died...” you explain that “wondrous” does not apply to the Cross but in your view, to the One who was lifted up on it. Yet you are well aware that most of your literature and leading writers have likened Jesus to the brazen serpent Moses lifted up as a symbol of sinful-flesh and serpent-nature, which in fact He was not.

How then can they have read the Bible effectively when Jesus in John 3:14 to 16 gives a direct and opposite reason? Therefore the people responsible for such error are self-condemned with those who sing the Hymn with serpent-nature in mind and God offering up a condemned sacrifice as a Ransom for all in violation of His Law of Atonement.

Maybe, as you have said, some of the Hymns are compiled by members of your community, one, No. 292, I have learned was compiled by a man who held the teachings and views of the Nazarene Fellowship and its contents opposed to the views of your community including yourself, yet are contained in 1 John 3:2. “But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” David confirms this in Psalm 17:15, “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”

This is not the Christadelphian view, for their teaching is that they will rise in sin-condemned nature and must pass before the judgment-seat of Christ to be worthy of full and complete redemption, you also try to justify that theory and remain in that congregation who must be uttering lies when singing Hymn 263 at an immersion, speaking of the candidate’s redemption and cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ. Also Hymn 174, in the memorial of Christ’s introduction of the New Covenant through His body, and blood symbolized in the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. During the Mosaic Passover no leavened bread was to be found on pain of death, in that it foreshadowed not the true bread of God who was to come to release from the bondage of sin - He was to be by Birth and mission the unpolluted Son of God and as there was only unleavened bread on the Passover table He could say, “This is my body given for you,” and of the wine, “This is my blood of the New Covenant.” Do you drink water instead of wine? How then can you justify violation of the anti-type by eating leavened bread which Jesus did not use to introduce the New Covenant in co-ordination with the wine the symbol of His blood? Have you not read God’s Words to His covenanted people? “Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left unto the morning.” Exodus 34:25.

If forbidden in partaking of the type, how much more with the antitype Jesus, the Lamb of God in whom we have redemption through His blood (not will have), the forgiveness of sins!

Redemption in Christ means release from the Law of Sin and Death under which all have been born and that release requires death unto sin for all, with the exception of Christ who was never in that Adamic bondage but by suffering the death due to Adam and all in his loins, symbolic death with Christ secured a walk in newness of life in Him. "It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance." What things? The fact that Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all - that we have redemption through His blood. If we deny it He will deny us. But He cannot deny Himself. - 2 Timothy 2:11-13 - Hebrews 10:14.

If we have become sons and daughters of God we should not, as Esau, sell our birthright for a mixture of confused pottage, a recipe found in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith which some people are doing through lack of ability to read it and the Bible effectively. For example, Clause IX is a nonsense and exhibition of scriptural ignorance that ever I have come across, especially from one whom you regard as an early Pioneer of the Christadelphian Community. This Clause IX implies clearly that the death Adam would have died in the literal day he sinned was by the taking away of his life by the shedding of his blood. Jesus died in this manner by bloodshedding, as the clause states - "He rose from the dead after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God." This is denied in Clause V and as I have said, such contradictory statements are an exhibition of the ignorance of people who cannot read effectively. I challenge you and the Blackpool Christadelphians to prove me wrong, but I have no axe to grind personally, but an acknowledgement of the Justice, Mercy and Grace of God through His Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Yours in His service, Phil Parry.

In September 1999 Pat Brady sent me a copy of his article entitled "The True Identity of Satan/Diabolos."

I felt it was a disappointing exposition and so Pat asked me to comment upon it.

By way of introduction I have reproduced only the first quarter of Pat Brady's exposition to give the reader some idea of his arguments and thinking, following which is my reply to Pat:-

THE TRUE IDENTITY OF SATAN/DIABOLOS

The devil is not a supernatural personal "fallen angel" spirit. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the devil of the gospels is frequently the High Priest Caiaphas, and the diabolos/Satan of the epistles can be other men who opposed the preaching of God's true gospel message.

There is a devil, but it is bad men who oppose and falsely accuse God's true servants. In other words, it is a natural personal, rather than a supernatural personal devil.

Devil (Greek, diabolos) means False Accuser. Satan (Hebrew) means Adversary. These terms are interchangeable. See Revelation 12:9, Matthew 4:1-11. An "accuser" is a noun of "office" and refers to a person, not to an inanimate thing.

Just who the devil/Satan is varies from time to time. In Job's case, it was an envious brother in his meeting. The term "sons of God" as used in Job 1 is used 10 times in scripture and 9 out of 10 refer to covenanted believers, but the one case where it does not is also in Job, chapter 38:7. Son of God can logically apply both to angels and covenanted believers, and in Job 38 refers to the angles, but that does not mean it must refer to angels in Job 1. The Jews used "to present themselves before the Lord" (Job 1:6) when they went before the priests (Deuteronomy 19:17).

In Zechariah 3:1 Satan refers to the Samaritans who opposed the Jews when they went back to the land from Babylon. Read Ezra 4 and Jude 9. They also falsely accused the Jews to the Persian authorities, so they fit the definition.

These are the only worthwhile references to Satan in the Old Testament. God is referred to as Satan but the indefinite article “a Satan” is used. In Job and Zechariah 3 the definite article “the Satan” is used, and only “the Satan” is sinister. See 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 27:23,24 for God being Satan. The angel of Balaam’s ass was “a Satan” also. In I Samuel 29:4 David was “a Satan” to the Philistines, and in 2 Samuel 19:22, the sons of Zeruah were “a Satan” to David.

Scriptural Definition of Satan/Diabolos

We need scriptural definitions of Satan and Diabolos. They are in the scripture and are classics:

Matthew 16:23. Jesus to Peter: “Get thee behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men.”

This is the definition of Satan, and Peter was a man, not a spirit fallen angel. It says “the things that be of men,” not “the things that be of fallen angels.”

Acts 13:10, Paul to the Jewish false prophet; “O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all unrighteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord.”

If the Jewish false prophet was the child of the devil, who was the devil at that particular time? He was the false prophet Chief Priest in Jerusalem, who was orchestrating the opposition to the infant Christian church, and whose predecessor had opposed, falsely accused, and murdered Jesus Christ. More proof about this later. Real angels can’t have offspring, see Luke 20:35,36; “The angels neither marry nor are given in marriage.” Like begets like. Evil false accusing men bring forth spiritual “offspring” in the form of other evil false accusing men and women.

There is no mention of supernatural fallen angel spirit beings in these definitions, which are 100% scriptural: no human philosophising. The diabolos, whenever its identity is clear, is always evil men who oppose good men, as in Revelation 12:9 and John 6:71. In 2 Timothy 3:3 the word for men described as “false accusers” is diabolos in the Greek, and this is also so of the women described as “false accusers” in Titus 3:3. This establishes a very firm precedent that the diabolos is always evil men opposing God’s true servants, and those evil men are either inside or outside covenant relationship with God. The ones in covenant relationship are the ones Jesus described as “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” We should not impose upon the uncertain diabolos passages an interpretation different from these clear passages.

The context in the New Testament determines the identity of the diabolos in each case, and it is always evil men opposing God’s true servants, and in many cases it is the Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas.

CAIAPHAS AS DIABOLOS

Caiaphas and Annas were evil men, but very successful at their chosen occupation, as the world counts success. They knew how to acquire and keep power, and they were instantly aware of all possible threats to that power, and would have had extensive connections in the power elite of the Jewish world, which would act as an informal “intelligence system,” such as all dictators have established in the 20th century.

We can be sure that very little of substance would occur in the Jewish world that they did not know about. As the 490 years of the “70 weeks prophecy” of Daniel was almost expired, Caiaphas would have been anxious about his status as High Priest if the Messiah appeared on the scene, as all Israel expected. He must have decided that if such a person appeared, he would try to do a deal with him to maintain his position.

Caiaphas had John the Baptist under surveillance because John was in the priestly line and had more of a claim to the High Priest position than Caiaphas. He was a threat to Caiaphas’ position because he had a strong following among the people. Caiaphas would have known that the 70 weeks of Daniel had almost

expired and that a strong son of David might appear on the scene. His strategy was obviously to enlist this messiah as a colleague when he appeared, but without conceding any real power to him. That is why he sent “priests and Levites from Jerusalem” to ask John who he was (John 1:19). Being High Priest, he would have had command of those priests and Levites. John denied being the messiah but said that the Christ was “among you” (John 1:26). Those spies from Caiaphas would have scrutinized the crowd and the following events to see who it was, and when Jesus was baptized, one of them would have been sent straight back to Jerusalem to inform Caiaphas.

It is a reasonable deduction that Caiaphas then made his first move to enlist the support of Jesus, in the “wilderness temptation.”

Mark 1:12 says Jesus was in the wilderness tempted by Satan, the adversary. The diabolos there was either Caiaphas or his ambassador. This tempter came to see Jesus, spoke to Jesus, made Jesus offers, spoke of himself as “I” and “me,” claimed to have the power to bestow kingdoms on Jesus, and finally departed from Jesus. All this fits comfortably with the concept that the tempter was a man with great power, but he wanted more, and did not want to lose what he had. He could only get more by defeating the Romans with Jesus’ power, and being the “power behind the throne,” after Jesus had given him what he wanted. He assumed that the newly arrived Messiah would grasp all the power in Israel and was very anxious about his own position, but probably assumed that the Messiah, son of David could not hold both the kingship and the high priestly positions concurrently, so probably assumed that a deal could be done about the high priesthood.

Caiaphas had control of the temple and the temple guard, and nobody could get up on the pinnacle of the temple without his permission. He told a lie to Jesus, and Jesus later said he was a liar “from the beginning” (John 8:44). The “beginning” was the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (John 15:27). The lie was that he could give Jesus the kingdoms of the world. This was only half true. If Jesus had decided to use his power to defeat the Romans, undoubtedly Caiaphas would have been able to advise him on the best strategy, as he would have known their weaknesses. A half truth is as good as a lie, and Eve fell for a similar lie, but Jesus had been forewarned by the scriptures, and he did not fall for it.

But Jesus exposed a fatal “weakness” to Caiaphas; Jesus did not use his power to remove Caiaphas from his ill-gotten office of High Priest immediately. Power struggles in those days were deadly affairs, as history reveals - Caiaphas would show no such “weakness” in return.

He had Jesus watched and looked for a mistake, hoping to use the power of the Law to discredit Jesus. He had to be very careful, because a man who could heal the sick would presumably be able to bring down fire from heaven. Jesus appeared to make a mistake by healing on the Sabbath, and casting the money lenders out of the temple, which would alienate the financial elite. Caiaphas would hate him for this because the money-changers could not be in the temple without the permission of the high priest. The decision was made very soon after that to kill Jesus (Mark 3:6). We can only imagine what went on in the meetings that were held to decide a strategy against Jesus, but he was subjected to unrelenting surveillance and harassment. Jesus would have been a mystery to these evil men because he did not grasp power the way they did. Jesus would have appeared weak to them, because they did not understand spiritual strength.

The Jewish High Priest was the ultimate false accusing adversary because he “lifted up his hand against the Lord’s anointed” and formed a murderous conspiracy against Jesus (John 11:49-57). This Satanic spirit of Caiaphas entered Judas (John 13:27) after Judas heard (John 13:2) that the authorities had commanded that Jesus be handed over to the authorities, and Judas decided to join them (Luke 22:2-4), for a price. There is such a thing as an evil spirit, described in Ephesians 2:2 as “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” but it is not a supernatural evil spirit. There was an evil spirit among the rulers of Nazi Germany and Stalin’s USSR, but the spirit ceased with the death of those rulers. Such an evil spirit motivate those who plotted the murder of Jesus, but it was the plotters, rather than their evil spirit who were the diabolos...”

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I feel enough has been written above to enable the reader to ascertain the gist of Pat Brady's thesis, but if anyone should require a copy of the complete article it will be sent to them on request.

Here is my reply:-

Dear Pat, Greetings in Jesus' Name. In your article "The True Identity of Satan/Diabolos" you state that your purpose "is to demonstrate that the devil of the gospels is frequently the High Priest Caiaphas and the diabolos/Satan of the epistles can be other men who opposed the preaching of God's true gospel message," however, your claim that "The context in the New Testament determines the identity of the diabolos in each case, and it is always evil men opposing God's true servants, and in many cases it is the Jewish High Priest, Caiaphas" is, I feel an unsustainable. For example in Revelation 12:9, we read of "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." The devil here is Diabolos and cannot be identified as any particular man or men but I believe is mankind in general when they are opposed to God.

You base your theory on this one claim and the idea that Caiaphas and Annas had knowledge of who Jesus was and of His mission. While much of this may have been true, I am sure there is a better way to understand the temptations which Jesus faced up to.

I see too many unlikely thoughts and ideas in what you say so I will try to apply a few thoughts of my own.

After forty days and nights in the wilderness without food Jesus would naturally be very hungry and I am sure that hunger would have been very intense. Should Matthew 4:3 read, "And when Caiaphas came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread"? But why would Jesus be tempted to turn stones into bread if there was someone with Him who had food with them? It is hardly conceivable that either Caiaphas and any agent sent from him would not have provisions with them. So did Caiaphas suggest Jesus turn stones into bread? I doubt it. And why would Jesus answer Caiaphas "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? It just doesn't add up for me.

Again, you hypothesise that Caiaphas wanted to share power with Jesus Christ in defeating the Romans and say that "undoubtedly Caiaphas would have been able to advise Jesus on the best strategy to get a following." So should verses 5 & 6 read, "Then Caiaphas taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"? Was this the idea of Caiaphas in advising that the quickest way for Jesus to get a large following would be to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple knowing no harm would come to Him? Again, I think not. And would it be appropriate for Jesus to answer Caiaphas, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"?

Then you say, "It is a reasonable deduction that Caiaphas then made his first move to enlist the support of Jesus in the wilderness temptation. Mark 1:12 says Jesus was in the wilderness tempted by Satan, the adversary. The diabolos there was either Caiaphas or his ambassador. This tempter came to see Jesus, spoke to Jesus, made Jesus offers, spoke of himself as "I" and "me," claimed to have the power to bestow kingdoms on Jesus." And Matthew 4:8 & 9 according to your thoughts could read, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But for Caiaphas to claim that he could give all these things to Jesus is really going too far! Jesus would see this as a nonsensical offer. So why again should Jesus answer "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve"?

It seems to me to be all too much speculation and all because there is not in your view a better understanding of what the devil is.

Rather than go through all ten pages of your exposition pointing to what I see as doubts and weaknesses I will instead deal very briefly with temptation but with special regard to the temptation of Jesus Christ in the

wilderness and then, at the end, we shall be able to see where your views are in conflict with what I humbly suggest is a higher viewpoint.

Let us start by considering the temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden - they had but one command or law set down by God to test their obedience. The whole and only purpose of this testing was to build character and so make Adam and Eve fit for eternal life. God did not ask too much of them; it was not a difficult law to keep but, for whatever reason, they did not keep it. Having failed they were then offered another chance and given further commands of which we have no specific details but nevertheless we find sacrifices instituted.

At the time of the giving of the first part of Law of Moses the people had said, "All that the Lord has said we will do." Then Moses went up into the mountain to receive the tables of stone upon which the Law was written and when, on coming down from the mountain, he found the people had already broken the law they had confidently said they would keep, he broke the tables of stone in his anger. But the reason for being in the mountain for forty days and nights was twofold. Firstly it was to show the people they would not keep the law on their own without the help of God, and secondly, it was to make further provision for saving them from the penalty of breaking the law, which was judicial death, for Moses had also received the pattern of the Tabernacle which was symbolic of God's plan of redemption offering salvation to those who were even then transgressing the law they had boasted they would keep. The lesson was that they could only keep the Law by putting God first in their lives.

Likewise, with ourselves, God does not ask too much of us and we are able to keep His commandments. We too, do not keep the commandments unless we put God first. But the essential lesson is that we are not only able to keep the commandments but we can do even more than is required. We too can give more than is required as Jesus shows in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Jesus asks us, when smitten, to turn the other cheek also and if any one demand our coat then give him our cloak also, and if compelled to go one mile then be willing to go two. Give to anyone who asks and turn not from anyone who would borrow.

These are beyond anything in the Law of Moses and are symbolic of the ways in which we can please our Heavenly Father and illustrate in some measure what Jesus did. Having kept the commandments there is still room to do more to please God.

So to the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness. This was quite different from the temptation of Adam and Eve because Jesus' temptations did not stop with the Law or commandments. Being the Son of God He had temptations to use His powers to help mankind by curing illnesses as He showed during His ministry. On the other hand Jesus Christ had power and authority as His right far above anything Caiaphas could have imagined possible and could not offer Jesus Christ such things as He could have taken for Himself. Jesus also knew what was in man and would have been utterly unimpressed with any paltry temptations offered by Caiaphas.

Consider for a moment some of reasons for the temptations which Jesus Christ faced in the wilderness:-

He was now over thirty years of age and ready for the work of God in reconciling the world to Himself. For Jesus Christ it meant He would have to face rejection, suffering and eventually crucifixion. Was there any alternative for Him? Could He help mankind any other way?

Perhaps His greatest temptation was when the time came for Him to raised up into heaven. What did He do? He need not have gone to the Cross. Jesus had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." He could abide alone but what of "the joy set before Him" of "bringing many sons to glory"? Jesus decided there was no other way, so "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" to face the ordeal of crucifixion and bring in the "New Covenant in His blood." There can be no doubt that He did this only for us and not for Himself as some would have us believe.

Regarding the first of the three temptations (Matthew 4), Jesus had been without food for forty days. There was no Law forbidding His turning stones into bread, or of feeding thousands of people who followed Him. So why didn't Jesus do it? The reason was because His first priority was to please His Father and seek

His Father's way. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This shows that Jesus was concerned with the spirit of the law rather than the letter; determined to do whatever pleased His Father.

Regarding the next temptation Jesus Christ knew His mission was to turn the people to God and what quicker way than to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple and come to no harm. This would have been most spectacular and proven the power of His Messiahship. The authorities would have accepted Him and listened to His message. We ask then, why did not Jesus do it? We answer, because it was not what His Father wanted Him to do and His first priority was to always do those things that please His Father. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" and while Jesus was free to work miracles to help of others, this one was not the way to please His Father.

Next, Jesus Christ knew He would ultimately rule over all the earth and He also knew He could have taken power to Himself there and then by setting up righteous governments ensuring only the most suitable people were appointed to high office. No more wars or famine from that time on. But this was not the way God had purposed, for He wanted to give eternal life to as many as would choose of themselves to come to Him. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Doing all He could to please His Father was all that mattered to Jesus. He was tempted to follow His own way and His way would have been helpful to the human race, besides which it would also have saved Him having to face the lonely path of rejection, suffering and crucifixion. Was there one law for Jesus Christ and another law for us? There was not, but by seeing and following the spirit of the law it was said of Him, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Why didn't Jesus Christ go down the route of His temptation? It was for one reason, and as far as I can see, one reason only. It was because He could not have given eternal life to His friends.

He could rightly say "I do always those things that please my Father." In overcoming all temptation Jesus knew He was going to Calvary for His friends. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:23. When Jesus said this to the disciples they were alone, with the world shut out. It was to His disciples that He now spoke the things recorded in the next four chapters for His time had now come, "He that loveth His life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. If any man serve me let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man shall serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again..."

In all this, Pat, I hope I have lifted you above the prosaic and mundane, to see Jesus Christ as He was in the wilderness and that He knew where He was going and what would befall Him, not harassed by any surveillance of the authorities, but in complete control of every moment. There was no place for Caiaphas or any other man in the wilderness for Jesus' temptations were very personal to Him and to Him alone. They were the mullings and deliberations of His own mind, giving us insight into His determination to do those things that pleased His Father, at whatever cost to Himself. This He reiterated in prayer to His Father, "Not my will, but thine be done." It was all for His friends: "Ye are my friends - if ye do whatsoever I command you."

There is, I am certain, a much better definition for the devil whether we call it the devil, diabolos and satan; it is 'a personification of man's will when opposed to God's will.' Over the years I have never found any difficulty with this definition; it fits every circumstance, situation, event, presented to us in the scriptures.

I am sorry that I feel your article is so out of keeping with these thoughts but I did find some points of interest in the things you wrote and for which I thank you.

Sincerely your brother in the One Hope, Russell.

Take Heed What Ye Hear

In this second half of the 1900's in which we now live; with its developments in transistor radios and the like, we hear many things of no interest to us, so many of the present generation seem unable to walk the roads and the countryside without a radio playing.

We call to mind the words of Luke 8:18, "Take heed therefore how ye hear..." and I might be permitted to add, "what ye hear." Much goes in one ear and out of the other, as the saying is, however by careful hearing we can be helped in our daily and spiritual walk by careful meditation on that which we hear, e.g., recently, during 1983, there has been a short series of articles on the radio entitled "Elkins in Israel," which were afterwards printed in "The Listener" the following week. When reading them at leisure, thoughts came to mind which may not have occurred as Michael was speaking, as many of us know who have listened to his voice for many years as a B.B.C- correspondent in Jerusalem, which he was for 17 years until his retirement early this year.

His first talk was entitled "Eyewitness to the Birth of a Nation." We must remember Elkins was a Jew, not a Zionist as were so many settlers who went to Palestine early this century. To most Jews, the land of Israel means something. Early in 1947 Elkins sat in his office in San Francisco when he had a visitor, to him a stranger, but with a letter of introduction from a former comrade-at-arms, who had written in that letter "I want you to listen to this man," which Elkins did, with the result we see in the first, of his six talks.

Elkins listened intently, so much so that after the office closed he looked out of the window for what must have been a long time for he neither noticed it was getting dusk or the lights coming on but what he did see was the State of Israel, the home of his visitor, established as an Independent Nation.

A few days later he met with a few emissaries of the Hagana who were seeking help from Jews in Britain, France, South Africa and America, who needed his help in the organization and purchase of arms for their survival as a nation as seen by the Jews. "We must win the war, there might not be another chance for us, ever," so was the reasoning of these men.

November 30th 1947 saw the start of the war. In less than six months (14th May 1948) the Jews proclaimed an Independent State of Israel. The next day, Britain, as I see it, let the Jews down, we walked out of Palestine leaving the State of Israel at its birth to fight for its life against the major Arab States with their massive build-up of arms.

With Britain gone, who up to now had maintained the blockade of both arms and Jews from getting into the land, they could come in freely and they did, some 2000 experienced veterans of war with their knowledge of radar, equipment, communications and flying, etc., became the principal strategists of the Israeli forces, most of whom were from abroad. Elkins himself was now on the move: he says: "And then finally, there I was approaching Haifa harbour aboard a "bucket of rust" called the "Kommemiut" (which translates roughly as "Arising" or "Awakening"). There were about 2,400 of us crammed aboard this ship like sardines in a tin."

What do we see in these things? 1 Corinthians 15:46, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual." Other references also come to mind from the words of the apostle Paul, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," and again, "I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid... God hath not cast away His people."

The natural Jews and Michael Elkins listened to the call as it was pointed out to them. They heeded the message and took action.

So I come to the conclusion of my comments on the first article as far as natural Israel is concerned who still look for a Kingdom (not Just a State) in the land of Palestine, for as we know they still look for their Messiah to come as their King. We, brethren and sisters, along with the many worthies as recorded in Hebrews 11, "look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," who also declares in

the Psalms, "I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," and again, in the New Testament we are told "This is my beloved Son; hear him." In God's mercy we have heard Him.

Now let us look at, the 2nd chapter of Acts of the Apostles where we read "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Let us remember that which James says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone."

We now come to the second of the articles which is entitled, "The in-gathering of the exiles." Here again we must remember the order as referred to earlier in my remarks, natural first followed by that which is spiritual. Leviticus 26:14, "But and if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments," and later in the chapter we are told why the people are scattered throughout the world as seen by Elkins, for they failed to do and keep God's law and statutes which resulted in the words of verse 33 being fulfilled, "I will scatter you among the heathen and will draw out a sword after you," and also in Jeremiah 46:28, "Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished."

Were it not for the overriding hand of God, what nation could stand against and be victorious over such odds. First, says Elkins, there was the war; 650,000 Jews in Israel when the war started, who were opposed by the Arabs the day following the declaration of the State of Israel having in their train some 26 million people, yet Israel won the war.

We think of the words of Jonathan as recorded in 1 Samuel 14:6, "for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." And a very definite case we have from old times recorded in 2 Kings 19:35, "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

Part of the wording of the Declaration of Independence reads, "The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all the countries of their dispersion." To quote from Elkins "Israel began to implement that immediately. On 16th May, two days after that first Independence Day, an immigrant ship docked at Haifa harbour with 7,000 of the 25,000 Holocaust survivors who had been interned by the British in the detention camps on Cyprus for trying to run the British blockade when Britain held the Palestine Mandate."

During the first year, with the guns of war still thundering, the Israelis brought in 203,000 immigrants, within the following two years the numbers would rise by 700,000, doubling the original population of the State.

The land of Israel at the time of Independence was, shall I say, a very hard land but one with great possibilities; indeed it is a land which God's eyes are ever upon as we see from Deuteronomy 11. Back to the land came Jews from 42 major countries and from many little known places where Jews were dispersed. They included many professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, also peasants, goat-herders, some who hunted with blow-pipes, and some with bows and arrows. It was the beginning of the "ingathering of the exiles" to which the Jewish State was pledged, for which men had created it. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan each signed an armistice with Israel. Egypt alone, after many years, has signed a peace treaty with Israel. Iraq however, would not sign an armistice with Israel and in recent P.L.O. (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) activities has lent many of her forces to fight against Israel.

Again our thoughts go back only a matter of recent years when we saw this deadlock still exists, for did not the Israeli Air Force make a sortie against and destroyed the nuclear power plant which had been supplied by France to Iraq? Thus the Israeli government had hoped to forestall any attempt by Iraq to produce nuclear weapons which she felt might be used against her.

In this second of his series, Elkins speaks often of the Yemeni Jews who although they had very little contact with the mass of Jews throughout the world, they took very literally the wording of many parts of the Old Testament. In Egypt, in the times of the Israelitish bondage and persecution they still increased mightily, indeed at all times under persecution they have prospered, so it appears with the Yemeni Jews who remained faithful to their fathers, the record says, "they had remained faithful and deeply devout through the centuries, the men fluent in Hebrew and in the biblical Aramaic, the boys trained from infancy to read the treasured sacred texts, manuscripts handed down from fathers to sons through all generations. Year by year over the centuries, a few brave ones, strong ones, lucky ones, found their way across the great Arabian deserts... travelled the length of the Red Sea and across Egypt... around the entire continent of Africa and settled in the promised land." By 1948 there were 18,000 Yemeni Jews in the land of Palestine, the State of Israel. The rest waited in Yemen relying on the biblical promise: Isaiah 40:31 which they took very literally, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint." When the planes came to collect them from their remote areas they needed no second call to get to the assembly point, for they felt the Lord had sent this form of eagle to fly them to their ancestral home. To quote the final words of this second of the series - "And they landed at Lydda airport, and came down from the plane and fell on their knees to touch their foreheads to the sacred soil of the land that God had promised to their father Abraham; and they were home."

In this second of this series of articles we have seen the gathering of Israel after the flesh. But let us remember that which the writer to the Romans reminds us in chapter 9 verses 6 and 7. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." We brethren and sisters as spiritual Israel await yet another great ingathering - that of peace and mercy upon the Israel of God. The first stages of this ingathering is seen in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. In the gospel records of Matthew and Mark we have recorded, "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." In the purpose of God the culmination of this gathering together is seen in Revelation 21:2,3.

We now come to the third article by Michael Elkins, entitled "The dead do not praise God." The main subject matter this time concerns a person who is one of the three giants of modern Israel, David Ben-Gurion, who fell asleep during the lifetime of most of us. Looking from the view of Elkins as shown in this article, Ben-Gurion was the master mind behind this creation of the State of modern Israel. He was born at Plonsk in Poland and no doubt was brought up in a Jewish ghetto area being well instructed by his parents and the rabbi of Jewish history and their hopes concerning Jerusalem and Palestine for the future. In 1906 at the age of 20 he emigrated to Palestine taking the name of Ben-Gurion instead of that of his Polish name, Gruen.

Elkins says his "vision was both Messianic and practical, he was a man with a far reaching plan for the future having a sense of historic opportunity, knowing when to take immense calculated risks, at the time of the War of Independence saw that to humiliate and defeat absolutely the armies of Jordan would do more harm than good to the Jewish cause, for Ben-Gurion wanted peace with the Arabs rather than endless friction. But as we know, most of the Arab nations are descendants at some stage from Esau or Ishmael. Genesis 17 reminds us that of such it is declared "his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

Ben-Gurion arranged an agreement with King Abdullah of Jordan which caused the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem to have the king, for what he had done, to be assassinated, for what the Arabs considered the betrayal of their cause. No wonder their present King Hussein of Jordan, who as a very young lad witnessed the murder, seems to sit on the fence so much when vital decisions have to be made concerning Jew and Arab. Whatever the cost, Ben-Gurion at that time had in his mind a long view. Israel's population must be maintained along with the financial and political resources throughout world Jewry must be maintained, of the first, by 1972, the population of Israel had quadrupled. Again I will quote from Elkins article, "the speed and scope of this made Israel not just a melting-pot but a pressure cooker," "one issue of failure was the matter of Israel's Arab citizens, I will attempt to deal with this in a later issue," said Michael Elkins.

The next major event in the history of modern Israel was in 1956, in what is known as the Sinai Campaign. Israel's reason for launching this campaign was a reaction to President Nasser's nationalization

of the Suez Canal; for since 1952 Egypt had refused to permit Israeli ships to use the canal, moreover Egypt blockaded the Straights of Tiran thus closing Israeli's only sea outlet route to Africa and the Far East in that small portion Israel still held and could use,

Ben-Gurion watched very carefully events in Egypt and the military developments in the area of Sinai still held by Egypt. Other nations were also very concerned with the nationalization of the Suez Canal. Ben-Gurion saw in these events preparation for all out war against Israel who still as a nation was but a child but with a very strong Father of the family at its head. God's eyes are upon the land at all times as we know, and all national dealings and events which concern the land are allowed of God; at this stage world opinion ignored Israel's basic need for security but not the leaders, hence the concluding words of the 3rd article which form the title words of the article.

Ben-Gurion in the Knesset said, "If you put in one hand all the ideas of the world and in the other, the survival of Israel, I will choose the second. For the dead do not praise God." Almost prophetic words by Ben-Gurion? However, how true. As In Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Also Ecclesiastes 9:5, Psalm 115:17, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18.

We by natural birth are in Adam and as such are dead and cannot praise God. But being in Christ are spiritual Israel and in this life and that to be revealed at the resurrection can praise God.

The fourth article is entitled "The seeds of a bitter harvest" deals mainly with the events during and around what is termed the Six Days War. No doubt most of us remember how keenly we listened to the news and read the daily papers. During May 1967 the average Israeli was very worried and fearful for the Cabinet was divided on a number of issues; the Prime Minister seems so... uncertain and the Chief of Staff, Rabin had recently had a nervous breakdown. Outside the country along the borders were a quarter of a million enemy soldiers - Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Iraqis with their 1,600 tanks, 600 aircraft, 2,600 cannon and many in the rear just waiting for orders. The small but very efficient Israeli army is also mobilized although outnumbered. Again comes to mind the assurance that God is always looking upon the land promised to Abraham and his seed and with many or few and the supreme weapons of all the power of God against which man is hopeless, the elements and the like.

Early on 5th June Israeli planes attacked and wiped out the Egyptian Air Force and within a few days Syria's and Jordan's Air Forces were reduced to a state of ineffectiveness. Jordan, although promised if they remained outside the war, would be given immunity from action, failed to do so. No doubt from pressure of the other Arab nations and in his mind the events of boyhood relating to King Abdullah who was murdered may have been in the mind of the present King Hussein, again comes to mind the words of Mark 8:37, "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" King Hussein had saved as it were his soul. So the armoured fist fell also on Jordan. In six days Israel had won its third war since its first Independence Day.

The Israeli flag now flew unchallenged over many new areas including a United Jerusalem; over all the Sinai Peninsula from its borders with Israel to the Suez Canal and to Sharm-e-Sheikh at the shore of the Red Sea. In 1963 Ben-Gurion retired from the post of Prime Minister and designated Levi Eshkol as his successor for the remainder of his term of office until new elections were held. Eshkol, like so many leading Jews, came from a Russian dominated background. He was only 19 when he came to Palestine in 1914 and very soon rose steadily to the top echelon of Zionist leadership. For over half a century he was a close friend of Ben-Gurion and a strong member of the Labour Party along with Ben-Gurion.

The two men had many clashes during their time together but when the elections took place in 1965 Eschol was elected to lead the country. In 1967 when the war clouds were gathering, Eschol did what was necessary; Israel's war plans were ready and the reserves mobilized. This time if war came and when Israel were victorious, for she was confident of winning, she would not be prepared to give up any gains without compensation as in the case of the Sinai Campaign.

Eschol was a quiet man and such men are fine for quiet times but with the threat of war sounds it needed someone with flair and charisma as Minister of Defence to inspire and keep up the morale of the people and that man was at hand - Prince of Charisma as he was termed, the one-eyed hero of Sinai, Moshe Dyan. In the public eye it was not the Prime Minister who received the praise and headlines but Dyan.

Eschol still had in mind to try and make peace with the Arabs and says Elkins in his article, Eschol offered to return to Jordan all the West Bank except Jerusalem. It was refused; the land was taken by war and by war it must be returned, seems to be the attitude of the Arabs. To this day they are implacable and this view is borne out by a book recently read entitled "The One Remains" by Stewart Perowne. Thus the hopes of peace had been dashed to the ground and the seeds were planted for a bitter harvest.

Eschol died of a heart attack on 26th February 1969, no doubt a disappointed man. But who was to follow him?

In the early days of the nation of Israel as seen in the Old Testament from time to time women played an important roll as needed. We have Miriam among these whom God chose to lead Israel, Michah 6:4. Also Deborah, Judges 4; Esther: 4:13, and Ruth: 2:11.

Now to modern Israel who is the great woman leader? Surely Golda Meir and it is in the 5th of Elkins series he deals with this grand old lady, the title being "The Granite Grandmother." She came to Israel in the 1890's and died on 8th December 1978 having seen Modern Israel through some very critical years.

I shall not make many comments upon the 5th article by Michael Elkins which he gave on the Radio, as in the earlier part he speaks of incidents involving Golda Meir and himself when he lived as a subtenant in a small flat of a mansion while Golda had a flat above him. About one in the morning Michael was trying to feed his month old son with the bottle but without success for he kept screaming, the old lady in a flat above heard and came to the rescue. After giving a lot of minute detail, Elkins says in his article, "I recount this anecdote because it seems to me to reflect in miniature some of Golda Meir's basic characteristics. Consider: at the moment of the incident, she was Minister of Labour in a government that had just decided to launch a war - the Sinai Campaign of October 1956, yet she had concern and compassion for a baby crying in the night. She was certain she knew what was wrong and had no hesitation in acting on that certainty. So what do we have? Compassion, personal involvement, the conviction of being right, decisiveness, and a readiness to act on her decision and to take responsibility for it. Add to this a tough and penetrating mind and you have, in microcosm, Israel's fourth Prime Minister."

From the time of leaving Egypt under Moses, Israel lived at risk from the many peoples around her - Ammonites, Canaanites, Edomites, Philistines and later the Babylonians and other hoards. They needed an authoritarian leader as we see many times in the Old Testament. With a good king and priesthood, things went well but they wanted a king whom they could see like other nations, to lead them in battle as we see in 1 Samuel 8:4-7, so today, Israel lives in considerable risk and still needs an authoritarian leader as a "father figure" or a "granite grandmother," as Elkins says, which they have today in Menachem Begin, whom we know is considering retiring from politics.

With the death of Eshkol a new Prime Minister had to be appointed to carry out the remainder of the term. Golda Meir was asked to fill the vacant office, at the age of 70 she reluctantly agreed, pointing out her age, she was ill, exhausted and she said, burnt out, but it must only be as a stop-gap until the next elections in 1969. Whenever a leader is needed in any nation, God provides a suitable person to take the helm, provided it is in accordance with His ultimate Divine Will. On balance, Israel needed a Golda Meir and never more so then nearly four years later when on 6th October 1973, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year, Egypt and Syria struck suddenly, achieving tactical and strategic surprise. For three days the fate of modern Israel hung in the balance (as seen by men) even Moshe Dyan was disturbed and spoke to the Prime Minister of the impending "destruction of the Third Jewish Commonwealth," but Prime Minister Meir stood like a rock, rallying the nation in her great final service to the Jewish people whom she had served all her life.

One thing must have given her joy, indeed it could have been her supreme satisfaction, for although she died on 8th December 1978 she had lived to see an Egyptian President come to Jerusalem seeking peace with Israel.

While not directly connected with events at the time of which we are speaking, often verses of Scripture come to mind. One such is that of Zechariah 8:23. We look forward to the fulfilment in detail in the Kingdom of God.

We now come to the final part of “Elkins in Israel” series, dealing with Menachem Begin, which is entitled “The Infirm Giant.” To quote from the article, “Well then, here the Prime Minister stands, enfeebled by three heart attacks and a minor cerebral stroke; afflicted with a permanent kidney malfunction; his appearance skeletal; his energy and his attention-span diminished, visibly depressed, sorrowing and lonely, bereft by death of his wife a year ago. However, on some matters despite human debility, those on which his heart is set, Begin is informed, tough, smart and in command,” says the article.

When we read the article we can see that which Mr Begin aims for is not to be the work of man. Further in the article we read, “I once asked him how he would like to be noted in the history books?” “As the man who set the borders of the land of Israel for all eternity,” he said. But Begin is aware that all men must die and that some men die sooner than others leaving their work unfinished. And so, says Elkins, he hastens, sometimes stumbling, sometimes compelled to retrace his steps and go another way, often heedless of the pain he causes others, however he hastens to give reality to his only goal. We must remember however there are a million Palestinians who live in part of that “Land of Israel” within the borders that Mr Begin would set for the State of Israel. There may be solutions, ways between, territorial adjustments, cantons, federations, shared sovereignty, but these require time to evolve, a general readiness for compromise, such solutions require open options and Mr Begin is closing these. The final words of the series show this to be the case - “I damn those Palestinians and Arab leaders and more particularly the leaders of the P.L.O. who have never been willing and are not now willing to come to terms with the Jewish State and who have in all these years, led the Palestinian people from disaster to disaster.”

Although no direct connection with the aims and hopes of Menachem Begin as he feels towards the Arabs, when God’s King reigns in Zion, as stated in Psalm 2:6, all will be obliged to recognize great David’s greater Son - “Yet have I set my King upon my Holy Hill of Zion.”

Brother Harvey Linggood.
(c. 1980)

In our last circular letter we published the first part of the

“REVIEW OF THE SLAIN LAMB”

Which showed how Robert Roberts not only misrepresented what Edward Turney said in his talk on “The Sacrifice of Christ” but also that he deliberately did so.

Although the hall was full of brethren and sisters when Edward Turney gave his talk it was only a very small number who heard him speak relative to those who have since read R.Roberts response in “The Christadelphian” magazine and later in his book, “The Slain Lamb.” Since 1873 “The Slain Lamb” has been standard Christadelphian reading thus continuing the false accusations made by R.Roberts against those whom they like to label “the Clean Flesh heretics.”

Christadelphians are actively discouraged from reading Edward Turney’s lecture, “The Sacrifice of Christ,” and thus it is believed that R.Roberts won his case - but it was a deception and Edward Turney’s views have never been disproved. It is a tragedy that many sincere brethren and sisters over the past one hundred and twenty-eight years have been taken in by reading and discussion of “The Slain Lamb” without reference to what it was supposed to be in answer to and unaware of what was being contended for.

It is not too strong language to say that R.Roberts used perfidious methods to persuade his followers but the critical reader can see some nonsense remarks such as on one page saying that Turney believed that Jesus Christ hadn’t come in the flesh and on another page that Turney made Jesus Christ a mere man! Then regarding the understanding of the sacrifice of Christ, R.Roberts claimed in this book that it was a difficult matter, though in “Christendom Astray” he said that nothing could be simpler!

We saw how R.Roberts contradicted himself regarding the change in Adam - was it his nature, or was it his relationship with his Creator that changed? R.Roberts would use either as it suited his present argument. If he had tried to work out each belief in a logical way he would have seen that a change of relationship was right, because Adam, after transgression needed adoption to become a son of God again, by contrast to Jesus Christ who needed no adoption. For Adam and all in him, adoption by God meant a fresh covenant relationship; achieved for Adam by the slaying of the lamb; achieved for the Jewish nation by the covenant of circumcision; achieved for us by baptism into Jesus Christ, all finally ratified on Calvary. In contrast, a change of nature is not affected by any of these. Defiled nature is a myth and therefore baptism into a defiled Christ is useless. A year or two before Edward Turney's lecture, R.Roberts refused to baptize a certain David Handley on the grounds that David Handley was in error in believing that Adam's nature was changed yet this very error is what R.Roberts taught in "The Slain Lamb"!

We also saw how R.Roberts accused Turney of inventing unscriptural phrases, though he himself had used plenty. And then we have R-Roberts assuming that Adam had no weakness and could suffer no pain before his transgression we wonder what a strange creature Adam must have been in his eyes.

How can anyone take R.Roberts so seriously as to believe he is capable of rightly dividing the Word of God on all matters when he is unreliable even of rightly dividing the words of Edward Turney?

We now continue with the next portion of:-

A REVIEW OF "THE SLAIN LAMB PART TWO

Page 7, paragraph 1 - "Free life is a myth."

We have already shown how Adam and Jesus received their life direct from God. This does not in any way suggest a different kind of flesh. All life is the same in the abstract, and the life of the flesh of Jesus which was in the blood was the same kind of life that Adam had, only fresh from the same fountain head - God. Adam, through sin, forfeited a life that was previously unforfeited. Jesus gave His life which was not forfeited to sin for the redemption of Adam and all in him. Could He have done this if He was not free to do it? Jesus came that we may have life (John 10). If He was in Adam He would have needed redemption Himself and therefore could not have been the price of release for those in bondage, being in the same condemnation.

Why do so many delude themselves with the idea that the term FREE LIFE teaches a different kind of life or flesh? We have never contended otherwise than that the term is restricted to the legal vocabulary. The literal words FREE LIFE are not in the Scriptures but is there anything more clearly taught? Could Jesus have bought us out of the common market place if the price He paid was not His own and free to pay it? Peter said: We are bought with a price and that price was the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18,19) in which blood was the life that He received from His Father. Could Jesus have bought the "field" if He was not free? Who is the purchased possession - we or Christ? Why, we are. No one in Adam could redeem his brother (Psalm 49:7,8). (Emphatic Diaglott, Matthew 16:26). Therefore it was necessary for someone who was free to accomplish it. The supremacy of Jesus lay in the fact that He was the special begetting of the Father for this very purpose. The apostle said that he was Christ's free man (Galatians 5:1) only upon the principle that he was set free by Jesus, which could not have been the case if Jesus was in bondage with him. Jesus said the children were free (Matthew 17:26).

We draw your attention to an incident recorded in John 8. Jesus said to certain Jews: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jesus was the way, the truth and the life). What was their answer to this? Verse 33, "They answered Him, We are Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man," etc. Why were they in bondage though Abraham's seed? Why was it necessary for them to know the truth to be free? Why, because they judged after the flesh. That was the enigma to the Jew. They could not understand the Gentile having part in the promise which was by faith and not by fleshly descent. (See Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:1 regarding freedom from condemnation).

On page 6, paragraph 3 R.Roberts says, "I will only use those Psalms which are quoted by the Spirit in the apostles as applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ and belonging to him." Then on page 9, paragraph 2 he uses the testimony of Jesus of the Psalms concerning Him as though every Psalm he (R.Roberts) has selected are the ones concerning Jesus without question. Consider Psalm 40:12, ask yourself the question as to whether this Psalm is applicable to Christ. Why it is deplorable. Note how R.Roberts applies "mine iniquities." Jesus had none and the only way He could have any was in the manner R.Roberts describes in his brackets ("the iniquities of His brethren laid upon Him in their effects"). See Dr. Thomas; same, "Echoes of Past Controversies," page 41. Read Isaiah 53 and note the "WE," "OUR," etc, but not "for Himself." Jesus needed deliverance from the natural order as Adam did prior to transgression, but Jesus did not need redemption. Adam needed both redemption and deliverance after sinning.

Page 8, paragraph 1 - "Because of thine indignation and thy wrath..." What? Did God have indignation and wrath against Jesus? Pitiably delusion"! God has this against sin or transgression of law (1 John 3:4), not against the nature (flesh and blood) which He created. God was well pleased with Jesus, not wrathful. If Jesus did not have a life free from sin's claim and a free will to lay it down there would be no virtue in His loving obedience. God's wrath and indignation are against sin and sinners and nothing else; and Jesus having no sin had no wrath or indignation of God against Him. If you prefer to call God's love a giving Him "wrath" you are free to do so - God will not stop you. Hear H.Fry in "Echoes of Past Controversies," pages 59,60, "Make His death a penalty due to Him personally and you destroy both aspects of His loving obedience, for there can be no virtue whatever in submitting to a penalty legally due to oneself." This is perfectly true and Oh that it was preached, and not a condemned Saviour! He bore our sins, not His own. In Him is no sin (1 John 3:5). To contend that the sacrifice of Jesus was necessary to cleanse or purify His nature is to contend for something that is foreign to Scripture. Where is it found in the Scriptures? We do not, read of clean nor unclean flesh in the Scriptures. Search and see. It is always to be understood in the legal or moral sense and not the physical. Every sacrifice in God's book is positively enjoined for a conscience cleansing. There is nothing unclean of itself (Romans 14:14). "To the pure all things are pure" (Titus 1:15). "Call no man common or unclean" (Acts 10:15,28) Jesus said, "Ye are clean (John 15:3) "but not all" (John 13). Does this Scripture refer to their flesh or their moral relationship? Listen to Dr.Thomas, "Passing through the grave cleanses no one. They who emerge thence come forth with the same nature they carried into it and therefore their coming forth is a resurrection" (Eureka, Volume 3, page 587). On the Doctor's own reasoning then, if Jesus was condemned nature going into the grave, then He was condemned nature coming from it, if condemnation is physical. R.Roberts contradicts the Doctor, we know, and further says:

"If any other Jew was obedient, it would have been in his power by dying to cleanse himself from Adamic condemnation" ("Echoes of Past Controversies," Page 52).

This flatly contradicts the Doctor and more so, the Scriptures.

The most important fact has been ignored, viz., that the miraculous birth of Jesus was essential to produce one who could pay sin's claim before resurrection was possible. No Jew born of the will of the flesh could possibly do this, being born in Adamic relationship, which relationship, if continued in till natural death takes place, will mean the individual's perishing and not sleep. This is the condemnation passed upon all men, which condemnation is removed in God's just manner without any physical change at baptism (Romans 8:1). God was the only one who could bring about the production of such an one. His own arm brought salvation (Isaiah 59:16). He gave Jesus through love and unless Jesus had been free legally from condemnation He would not have been a fit person for the sacrifice. Besides, if Jesus needed to purify Himself, then sacrifice would be a term of little understanding. He gave up all that He then possessed, the life of His flesh which was in the blood, for us. If He received the same life back it would have been merely a loan, thereby violating the term SACRIFICE. He was put to death in flesh, and quickened in spirit (1 Peter 3:18). If Jesus was constituted a sinner in Adam, He could not be the head into which we can be inducted. In that case He would need induction Himself! We believe, as the Doctor did, that Jesus had the same flesh after resurrection as before crucifixion, but we add, no blood. If flesh can only be purified by passing through the grave, we ask, Why will the living not die who are alive at Christ's coming? R.Roberts says, "Free life is a thing you do not read of in the Scriptures." We agree with him; neither is Adamic condemnation, nor, "Jesus had to die to cleanse His nature;" nor "Jesus was in the loins of Adam;" nor, "He was constitutes a sinner in Adam," etc.

R.Roberts says, "Free life is a mere invention, a plausible thing, an unproved assumption which is made the starting point of the train of reasoning by which it is attempted to establish this heresy. If the initial fallacy is taken for granted, the false conclusion come with all the appearance of irresistible logic. But let the initial fallacy be perceived and the whole argument falls to pieces like a rope of sand."

We ourselves say the same thing. If the initial fallacy of changed flesh be perceived the whole argument of Christadelphian physical condemnation falls to pieces like a rope of sand. We thank God that we have seen the initial Christadelphian fallacy of physical condemnation which involves the Lord Jesus Christ as a polluted sacrifice and are now built upon a rock, not sand, and can withstand (not pigeonhole) all the fallacies that can be hurled against it.

Page 8, paragraph 2 - "First, it is a fallacy to speak of life as distinct from nature." Further down R.Roberts says, "It was a body that was prepared for sacrifice, not a life." "It was death and not life that was required for the putting away of sin."

Well, why all this vivisection? What is the use of one without the other? Was it the "body" of Jesus that was the equivalent ransom price? If so, then the price was not paid. Or the life of His flesh which was in the blood which He did give? We agree with R.Roberts that life is an abstract principle and we also realize the necessity of discrimination, which discrimination can only be perceived through unbiased thoughts and reasoning. It would be wrong to say that Jesus derived His life from Adam. That would involve His being born of the will of the flesh. Roberts says on page 6 that "Adam was produced a mechanism of natural life." But he cannot deny that that natural body received its life direct from God. (I don't suggest that he did deny this). "God formed man... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). It was from God that Adam received that life. Now compare the Spirit's testimony in Luke 1: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Was not the receiving of life direct from God in both cases, Adam and Jesus? (And Dr. Thomas says so in "Phanerosis" pages 34 and 38). Could Jesus be the only begotten of the Father if He received His life via Adam? If He could, why this special miracle? Adam and Jesus received life in such a special sense as no others did. Life is the same in general with all creation. The only difference is in the mode of manifestation. Natural life is manifested in a natural body; eternal life in an incorruptible body. "Life is more than meat and the body more than raiment" (Matthew 6:25). One is of no use without the other.

We believe that life covers the whole idea of existence; yet the importance is in the life. The life that Jesus received from God was not a different kind of life, but a supply fresh from the same fountain of life. That life was the life of His flesh, which was manifested in an organism capable of corrupting like our own, but God did not suffer Him to corrupt (Psalm 16:10), That life He laid down (John 10:11,15). The life He now has was from the same fountain, but manifested in an incorruptible body.

When we consider the sacrifice of Christ we consider the life of His flesh, or otherwise sacrifice is a farce. Such a life was requisite as an equivalent ransom of a life for a life. A life for a life was the principle that God laid down. That without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22) which principle is quite clear when the necessity of Christ's death by slaying is perceived. This life had to be free from condemnation. Life covers the whole existence. For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what will a man give in ransom for his life? (Matthew 16:26 - Emphatic Diaglott). "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what could a man give to redeem his life?" (Mark 12:27 - Emphatic Diaglott).

No mere man could redeem his brother; if he could, why the miraculous conception? God produced the life in Jesus to release Adam, and all in him, upon the principle that without the shedding of blood there was no remission (Hebrews 9:22). "The life of all flesh is in the blood, and it was the blood which made atonement or reconciliation" (Leviticus 17:11,14). Jesus gave His life (which was in the blood) a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6). Adam forfeited his life to sin, and if Jesus committed sin He would have done the same. But He did not; therefore He gave a life unforfeited to sin as the just, exact equivalent life for a life to effect the ransom and redeem His brother. Dr.Thomas had the right conception of this

redemption and it is our basis of reasoning which removes all contradictory statements and proves God to be just. "Redemption means to buy back.

Redemption is release for a ransom. All who become God's servants are released from a former lord by purchase. The purchaser is Jehovah. The price, or ransom price, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." ("Eureka," volume 1, page 20, also "Phanerosis," footnote, page 59). "Now the life blood of Jesus was more precious than the life blood of any other man" (Ibid- 278). The death of Jesus would have been of no avail if the life blood was not free from Adam's race which sinned (federal principle, not individual transgression, being as yet unborn) in Adam. The blood, body and life of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice cannot be separated, as salvation could not be obtained apart from the principle of "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). If we are wrong in using life in this manner, then you must charge Dr. Thomas as equally heretic with us.

Page 9, paragraph 3. We find R.Roberts again finding fault with phrases which he calls unscriptural jargon, because we say life was forfeited, and will end in eternal death. Here we remind you that the Doctor used these words, and R.Roberts uses the latter in the very same connection as we use it, and what is more, it is Scriptural (See Emphatic Diaglott) quoted and R.V. for the word "forfeit"). Though the words eternal death are not found in the Scriptures, who uses them more than Christadelphians from the following Scriptures - John 3:16; Romans 6:25; Revelation 20 (second death; Peter, eternal fire consumed, never see light, etc. Now Dr.Thomas: Eureka, volume 1, page 278, line 16; Elpis Israel, page 73, last line; "life forfeited for sin" "Their tenure of paradise was predicated upon their abstinence from sin, so that it could be forfeited only by transgression of law" "Clerical Theology, page 10). Also "Revealed Mystery" page 26, "God has set eternal life and eternal death before man," etc. The foregoing is merely to show how Christadelphians are unwilling to grant to others the latitude they desire for themselves.

Page 9, paragraph 4. R.Roberts says, "Adam's innocence ended with a fall, and here a little dazzle is thrown into the eyes." (He forgets the "dazzle" he throws himself. His dazzle after the fall is a change from a very good condition to a dying nature which, as we have already endeavoured to show, is not in accordance with Scripture). He says, "Instead of taking the simple testimony of Scripture that death came, you have it that your life was forfeited." (We correct R.Roberts here - E.Turney said "Adam's" life was forfeited"). We ask, what is the difference between death came and life forfeited? There is no difference. The life that Adam forfeited was his own through sinning, the wages of which was death. Did not Adam incur this by disobedience of God's law? He did. But he did not pay it. He was typically forgiven, but his typical forgiveness does not alter the fact that death as the wages of sin entered. This just principle of God was in operation before transgression, as witness His warning to Adam as to disobeying Him: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." That debt was paid by Jesus on Calvary. "God typically redeemed Adam with a paper note in Eden (shadow) but He laid down the golden sovereign on Calvary."

R.Roberts says, "You are asked to look at the third upright line in the renunciationist diagram as the debt which had to be paid." Can anyone prove that the debt to sin (which was death as wages) was paid prior to Calvary? No; they cannot. If Adam paid it you would not be reading this and we would never have written it because it would have been final and we would have had no existence.

R.Roberts continues: "And by much more of such artificial unscriptural jargon you are argued into a conviction that very opposite of truth. Has it never occurred to the Renunciationists that if eternal death, so called, was the debt to be paid, as they say (we do not say so), and Jesus paid the debt, that the resurrection of Jesus was impossible?" We reply, Has it not occurred to Christadelphians that the life that Jesus laid down in payment of that debt was the life of His flesh which was in the blood and that the life of His flesh that He laid down in sacrifice He received not again? Has it occurred to them that the life Jesus laid down as the redemption price of our souls (life) was precious, in that it could only be redeemed once and, as the Psalmist says, it ceaseth for ever? The life He laid down as the payment of that debt has ceased for ever, being put to death in flesh, quickened in spirit (1 Peter 3:18).

Regarding "death came" we ask, what death came as a sentence? Natural death? No. It was death as the wages of sin, which death is predicated upon a moral and not a physical constitution of things. The laws of nature operate irrespective of this; thus death as wages is something that must be earned (Romans 2:7). Therefore judicial. God's law of death as the wages of sin is Just. We read in Romans 5:12, "Therefore, as

by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” (Margin - “in whom” - Adam). Here we have clearly stated that death came by sin. It most certainly did, because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), but Adam, by God’s mercy, was spared from suffering the penalty as wages. How then, is this sentence affecting all in Adam who were not responsible for the committing of that sin? Are they counted as individually guilty of that sin of Adam’s because they were in his loins? No, they are not. They are all concluded under that sin; they were sold under sin (in Adam) (Romans 7:14) on the Federal Principle, which is legal and not, physical.

When we realize that sin is never spoken of in Scripture other than of being transgression, which is disobedience of God’s law, which disobedience cannot take place before one is born, we can see the fallacy of applying Romans 5:12 to teach that man’s natural death is the wages of Adam’s sin. The sentence is that if we die in Adamic relationship our natural death will be eternal, because we will not rise. If we die unto Adamic relationship by reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, and continue in that state (walking after the spirit) our natural death will be merely sleep. There we have the distinction between sleep and perish, though in both cases it is natural death via natural channels, as God set in motion in accordance with the natural law of a natural creation. First natural, then spiritual. The only death that has been passed upon all men in harmony with the attributes of a just God is death as the wages of sin. With sin God is displeased; with nature itself He is not. There is nothing unclean of itself - “Call no man common or unclean.” The wages that Adam incurred was paid by Christ. The just for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18). As the One act of Adam sold himself and all in him, so the One act of Jesus bought us back from sin’s claim. Read the seven fold divinely balanced antithesis of the two federal heads - Adam and Jesus - in Romans 5 (Emphatic Diaglott). Was it the obedient acts of Jesus that redeemed us? The obedient life of Jesus enabled Him to retain His right to life. The obedient act was the giving of His life blood as the price for the redemption of the sin of the world. Though His obedient life was necessary to retain His title to life this extra obedient act was necessary for our redemption. The obedient life of Jesus would not have saved us apart from His obedience to “even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8) because no one is free to enter upon the race of eternal life apart from being first redeemed. When a person accepts redemption he leaves Adam and becomes in Christ. There is now no condemnation (Romans 8:1). Is there any difference in the condemnation passed upon all men and the condemnation that is removed at baptism? It is the mixing up of the physical with the legal that sends so many earnest minds adrift. The believer dies unto sin symbolically in baptism, which removes the condemnation as Paul plainly says. If Romans 5:12 teaches that the natural death that all men die is the death passed upon all men, or the condemnation, please harmonise with Romans 8:1.

Page 10, paragraph 2. R.Roberts asks, “Now what is that condemnation?” We have just answered it and we emphatically say that if the condemnation is understood it is the key to the right understanding of the sacrifice of Christ. The right understanding of the condemnation removes the fallacy of having to contend that Christ was a physically polluted altar. R.Roberts says, “Is it against the nature or the life?” This paragraph is another example of vivisection in an endeavour to prove condemnation of nature. We repeat that we believe life to cover the whole idea of existence. Can the body be condemned without the life, mind, strength or blood? Man is exactly what God made him and no theorizing can alter the fact. God has not condemned that nature, but sin which is a moral act. Every sin a man doeth is without the body (1 Corinthians 6:18). The sentence that Adam incurred was for sin and that sentence was not against the nature He created from the dust. It is only sin that will cause anyone to return to dust eternally, that is, the unworthy walker.

There is no need of R.Roberts’ vivisection because a condemned man loses his all when he loses his life. For R.Roberts to say that it is not the life that is condemned is like saying that God has condemned something that is inanimate, because flesh is inanimate without life. He says further: “It is the person, the individual, the nature that is condemned because it was the person Adam that was the sinner.” Exclude life from the person and explain how Adam sinned. For God to condemn our nature apart from transgression is to charge God with lashing man for his inevitable movements and then asking man to obey Him”! (R.Roberts subtlety is in this statement that nature is equivalent to the person). R.Roberts continues, “Condemnation in Adam means, therefore, that we are mortal in Adam; mortal in the physical constitution - the organization.” We ask the question here, if the term mortal predicates another kind of flesh, please define the term corruptible and explain the physical difference? Mortal is a legal term (unfortunately it has become universally applied to the physical) and it is only connected with the physical because the physical

man is necessary to carry that legality. It means a physical body legally dead to sin, as Paul explains; "Let not sin reign in your mortal (reckoned dead to sin) bodies" (Romans 6). For a believer to reckon himself dead to sin means quite the reverse to his natural body being under condemnation. It is restricted to the legal sphere entirely. Mortal being a scriptural term has an entirely legal application, it follows that none can be scripturally mortal who have not died to sin. Can any keep a body dead unto sin who have not died unto sin? Certainly not.

Again, on R.Roberts understanding of MORTAL being that the nature is condemned, he is bound to admit upon his own teaching of Jesus being raised mortal that He arose under condemnation!! Think on these things and examine R.Roberts' and Christadelphian leaders' writings in general, for they are striking upon superficial reading, but will not stand against the truth of the stone being cut out of the mountain without hands. The animal world proves Dr.Thomas right when he said on more than one occasion that "the order of creation would have gone to the dust if there had been no sin" ("Elpis Israel," page 42; "Eureka," volume 1, page 248). This is equivalent to saying that the natural man would have returned to the dust in accordance with the laws peculiar to his organization before transgression.

R.Roberts continues: "Oh but we sinned in Adam (compare "Echoes of Past Controversies," page 32). says this theory. Did we sin in the individual sense in him? How could we sin individually when we did not exist? Paul says, No. He says death reigned over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

He is here supporting what E.Turney contended for, viz., that we did not sin individually, because we did not exist. Have you examined the meaning of Paul's words quoted above? To sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression would be to sin wilfully by disobeying law. Not to sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression means to sin without law. Read Romans 5 where the passage appears verse 13, "For until the law, sin was in the world (Adamic sin); but sin is not imputed where there is no law (light is ground of condemnation)." Where death reigns it means that the individual perishes, because sin is not imputed to him as to his responsibility to resurrection. Here is conclusive proof of this - Romans 2:12, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law" (read the whole chapter). The sin imputed and the sin not imputed must be discriminated between, as light and darkness. When death reigns it means that they are dead, it means that every individual who dies in Adamic relationship will remain in the grave; all who leave Adam (and they cannot leave Adam if the term IN ADAM were physically applied) and become in Christ, cease to be under the reign of death and have as the apostle John says, "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24), (while yet being natural beings).

R.Roberts concludes this paragraph, "It is in the physical substance that the principle of death is at work." We reply, Of course it is, but in accordance with natural law and not because of original sin. (Compare "Echoes of Past Controversies," page 99).

Page 10, paragraph 3. "Sin in the flesh." We have somewhat to say upon this when we come to the place where R.Roberts says, "I will endeavour to make manifest the most unscriptural, the most carnal, and mischievous character of the new philosophy." This sentence is not in the Greek Scriptures and R.Roberts will prove us right when we consider page 19.

to be continued...

MISCELLANAE

In God's purpose He formed Adam and Eve with a free will. They could do their own thing and please themselves, or they could do the will of God who made them. But free will must mean there is choice and choice is not possible without law, for without God's law there was no way of knowing what was His will. The law He gave them meant they could obey or disobey.

In our last Circular Letter, on page 5, Brother Phil Parry quoted from the works of Dr. Thomas - "Redemption is release for a ransom; all who become God's servants are released from a former lord by

purchase, the Purchaser is God and the ransom price paid, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.”

It should be obvious to all students of Scripture that the need for redemption is the legal position of Adam and all his descendants brought about by his transgression in Eden when he sold himself to Sin as a master. It was a legal change because it involved law. Adam’s sin changed his relationship to his Creator from being a Son of God to being a servant of Sin, bringing about the alienation of himself and all his posterity. That God has thus concluded all under the sin of Adam did not transfer blame, nor make us guilty, or responsible and neither is it our misfortune; it was for our blessing.

There is no hint of changed flesh or nature in this legal and moral (it was a moral law) position, nor is there need of any.

It is a simple plan and perhaps too simple for the many who seem to prefer complication and mystery and so bring in the supposed change in flesh.

It is sin that God condemns, not our flesh. And Jesus Christ condemned sin by being obedient to His Father’s will, proving that obedience is quite possible, for He was tempted in all points as we are. If we sin then we alone are to blame; we have committed no sin through having to. Can anyone point to a sin they have committed and say that they had to do it? Never. To suppose oneself to be so weak that one could not help but sin is false humility - and false humility is hypocrisy. To blame the weakness of the flesh which God has given us is wrong and insulting to Him. No one is tempted above that which he is able to bear. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.

While browsing through an old “Christadelphian” magazine (December 1993) I came across an Editorial in which Michael Ashton said that Jesus Christ “did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth.” Yes, he actually did write it and I was pleased to see that he had got something right. Jesus Christ did not have to make an offering for the nature He received at birth. Nazarenes have been saying it for years. We have been disfellowshipped for saying it.

Not surprisingly, his claim was questioned and an attempted explanation given in the April 1994 magazine. After more than half a page of verbosity the answer was given thus:-

“Perhaps the difficulty with the phrase “He did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth,” arises because, for the purpose of the exposition about baptism, the Lord’s moral and physical needs were being separated. In its context, the phrase was referring to Jesus not having any moral imperfections for which an offering had to be made. Atonement always implies the covering of moral impurity, just as alienation is moral and not physical; we are “alienated from God... by wicked works.” (Colossians 1:21). As we have considered, Jesus had no sins which needed covering.

He bore no moral guilt and was not morally unclean as we are when we sin. He was not alienated from the Father, though his nature meant that he was physically separated from Him. In order to enjoy full fellowship with the Father Jesus’ mortal nature needed changing; he needed saving “out of death” (Hebrews 5:7 margin). As he was specifically sent by God to be our Saviour, the only way this could be accomplished was by his obedient sacrifice. The Father’s response was to raise him from the dead and glorify him, and he became the firstfruits of them that slept. By these means, the Lord benefited from his own sacrifice.”

So these are the facts presented:-

Jesus Christ “did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth”

“Jesus had no sins which needed covering”

“not having any moral imperfection for which an offering had to be made”

“He bore no moral guilt and was not morally unclean”

“He was not alienated from the Father”

“Atonement always implies the covering of moral impurity”

“We are alienated from God by wicked works”

Congratulations to Michael Ashton! But then he goes on to say, “His nature meant that He was physically separated from Him.” Just when we thought Michael was beginning to see the light, he comes out with this monstrous nonsense. Was the light too much for him that he had to quickly draw the curtains in order to shut it out again? Jesus Christ, physically begotten by God and physically conceived by Mary, then physically born nine months later, with physical nature provided by the Creator of all, then grew up to full stature of manhood in that same physical nature, did not have to make an offering for that nature, yet Michael assures us, Jesus Christ was physically separated from His Father! How does he know this amazing thing? Yes, we are alienated from God by our sins and Jesus Christ was not alienated from Him by any sin, so how does Michael Ashton know He was separated physically? Not only would it need divine inspiration to make such a claim, but Michael then makes it the grounds for Christ’s crucifixion! - “the only way,” he says, that Jesus could be saved out of death “was by His obedient sacrifice.” This is too preposterous for words.

Whoever can follow such reasoning? Jesus Christ had need to offer for His physical nature because there was nothing wrong with it and He had no need to offer for any sin, because He was sinless, so now we are told He had to offer Himself as being the only way He could benefit from His death and be given eternal life!

For people like me and you who are sinners, we can be changed when Jesus returns and be given eternal life without dying, but for Jesus Christ the sinless One, He must needs die a cruel death by wicked hands in order He should receive the same. Dear Michael Ashton, where are you leading your readers? You no longer believe that Jesus Christ had sinful flesh, so please come clean and state clearly what you do believe. “Thinkest thou not” said Jesus, “that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). Would that mean then, that by accepting the help of the angels to save Himself from the injustice of the authorities, He wouldn’t have been given eternal life; that He would have died anyway? Would it have been a sin for Him not to die by crucifixion? If you answer, yes, then consider, God and the angels would have shared in enabled that sin!

While we are pleased to see that Michael Ashton does not believe Jesus Christ had to die for sinful flesh, we wish he and all Christadelphians would keep to Scripture only and not teach false doctrine. But it seems ever needful to invent complication and mystery and add it to Bible teaching. The simple facts to keep ever in mind are that law gives choice and sin is transgression of law. Keep these facts in mind and there is no need to bring in silly doctrines which in the end dishonour our Creator and loving Father.

“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” - Luke 18:16,17.

In our last magazine we reproduced a page from an early edition of “Elpis Israel” showing where Dr. Thomas wrote of Jesus Christ being the “substitutional testator,” but which, in 1910, C.C. Walker claimed was a mistake which he felt should be corrected and so replaced the phrase with “mediator.” We were pleased to hear that the Logos committee have now:-

“reproduced the volume according to the original penmanship of Bro. Thomas. In the preface to his fourth edition, which we have used for the text, he wrote: “in reviewing the original, the author was agreeably surprised on finding he had so few corrections to make... the emendations made will place this revise in accord with the author’s latest work; so that he considers this revised edition is the best.” Greaham Mansfield continues, “With pleasure we comply with the principle of maintaining the manuscript as originally produced, according to the form and style of the author... It is not that we consider Bro. Thomas inspired or infallible, as some unkindly and mistakenly claim. However we do uphold him as a providentially selected, remarkable teacher, whose voice sounds clearer through his pen than do his detractors through their antagonism.”

We here reproduce the Publisher's Notes of January 1910 Edition of "Elpis Israel" in which C.C.Walker says he "is indebted to an esteemed fellow-labourer for valued help in the revisions here noted." All the following illegitimate revisions will have been removed in the Logos publication:-

PUBLISHERS NOTES.

THE Publisher has not hesitated to make such emendations as he believes the Author will approve on his reappearance in the land of the living.

These emendations and changes are, however, very slight, and are here mentioned only for the information of the community that so justly value Elpis Israel and its Author; and also "to cut off occasion" from some who would not be slow to accuse the publisher of "tampering" with the work of the deceased.

The changes made, in the main range themselves round two or three heads as follows:- Improved translations; improved expositions due to increased knowledge; expunged errors; notes on the Author's wonderful political prevision.

With regard to TRANSLATIONS, it must be admitted that Dr. Thomas sometimes altered "the Authorised Version," as it is called, without improving matters, illustrating somewhat the remark of Mr. Fowler, the phrenologist; who said that he would sometimes "use rather extravagant language" in his expositions. The present edition of Elpis Israel restores the A.V. rendering of 2 Tim. iii. 16 (pages 5 and elsewhere), "All Scripture is given by inspiration." The R.V. rendering will not be defended by those who know the truth of the matter. On page 9, "word" has been substituted for "will and testament," as defining the Lord's purpose, the reason for which appears in another note. On page 65, the A.V. translation of Rom. xiii, 1-5 has been restored. On page 69, the Hebrew idiom should not be lifted into the English. The foot-note illustrates the matter. Some mistaken expositions have arisen out of this; hence it is here mentioned. On pages 132-33 "justification" has been restored, and "pardon" deleted; also "in" has been restored, and "by" deleted in the expressions "in the name of Jesus," etc. On page 181, the usage of Elohim in the singular is referred to in the foot-note, and the suggestion that it should be rendered "gods" throughout Genesis is deleted. Other changes in translation are very few and are too unimportant to mention. The publisher is indebted to an esteemed fellow-labourer for valued help in the revisions here noted.

With regard to IMPROVED EXPOSITIONS due to increased knowledge the following notes may suffice. In the section on "The Sabbath" the author speaks of "the first day of the week" as "the Lord's day." But it is never so styled in the Scriptures, and the author in Eureka, Vol. 11, p. 159 (a later writing), himself more forcibly draws the true distinction between "Sunday" and "the Lord's day." The latter phrase has therefore been deleted from this edition of Elpis Israel,

On page 50, the reference to the nature of the resurrection-body on its emergence from the grave is corrected, in harmony with the author's preface to the fourth edition, and Anastasis, a later work on Resurrection and Judgment.

On page 167, the publisher has ventured to suggest in a footnote that the scriptures do here and there suggest reasons for the expression of God's will in His appointed "principles of religion. He believes that his impressions on this matter are derived from Dr. Thomas' other expositions.

On page 234, the author speaks of the Lord's "covenant with Abraham; "and a footnote gives the publisher's reasons for retaining this scriptural term and rejecting "will" and "testament" in the argument following. For the expression "substitutional testator" (page 239), the publisher has substituted the term "Mediator," which is the true equivalent of the inspired original. Those who choose to closely compare the old and new editions of Elpis

Israel in these pages, will see that the author's argument gains in lucidity and force by the change.

On pages 357, 358, paragraphs indicated, which were either lacking in clearness, or rendered erroneous by lapse of time, have been re-written on the basis of later expositions by the author.

'There are very few EXPUNGED ERRORS. Among these the erroneous paraphrase of Christ's reply to the thief on the cross (omitted in this edition from the exposition on page 60), and mentioned here only because it has, unfortunately, gained considerable currency.

On page 294, the erroneous supposition that Ex. xvii and Num. xx, refer to one and the same incident (the smiting of the rock by Moses), is corrected by a slight change in the wording. The first incident was before the giving of the law in Horeb, and the smiting was in obedience to a command of God. The second incident was nearly forty years later, at Kadesh, about 150 miles north of Horeb, and smiting was not commanded—only speaking to the rock.

From page 307, the table of Chronology to the Captivity has been omitted. The period is dealt with in Chronikon Hebraiko, which is appended to this edition of Elpis Israel; but further light on some points is still to be desired.

From pages 361 and 414, some erroneous anticipations that the efflux of time has manifested concerning the end of the age, have been omitted as a matter of course.

A more agreeable class of notes is that referring to the author's wonderful POLITICAL PREVISION on the basis of the prophecies. A mere reference to some of the footnotes in this edition will suffice for illustration. See pages 115, 333, 374, 376, 382, 383, etc. Also the paragraph at the end of the preceding "Biographical Notes."

A few more "Notes" on the progress of the world, as anticipated by Elpis Israel fifty years ago, will be found in the Appendix at the end of the book.

Birmingham, January. 1010.

It is pleasing to see that Dr. Thomas is recognized by the Logos committee as being fallible and we have always seen him as a remarkable man, sincere and prayerful and used by God to bring a certain amount of truth to light, but that light was not complete with Dr. Thomas. He certainly had a better grasp of Scripture teaching than most of his contemporaries and he has our admiration for that, but why stop there when further light has been shown. It was Edward Turney who continued where Dr. Thomas left off, sorting out his contradictions and developing his views in a sensible and prayerful manner. R.Roberts, on the other hand was known at times, to be intemperate in speech and conduct, like a spoilt child afraid he may not get his own way. He changed course with regard to some important doctrines, causing untold confusion and division which fostered much ill-feeling in the Christadelphian brotherhood and his divisive Statement of Faith is perhaps the biggest mistake he ever made for it has frozen Christadelphian teachings for all time and they are now not allowed to be discussed in any of their magazines.

In a recent Logos magazine we are told that many misunderstand Clause V of the B.A.S.F. where sin in the flesh is spoken of. Quoting from an earlier "Logos" they write,

"We never appreciated the full force of these words until recently when our attention was drawn to what some had in mind when they (some Christadelphian ecclesias) opposed the theory of "sin-in-the-flesh." It appears they thought Clause 5 taught that when Adam sinned, God injected into him a literal, physical element styled "sin-in-the-flesh" which defiled the flesh and caused him to sin. They were outspoken in repudiation of such an idea.

They were quite right to repudiate this idea. It does not express the meaning of the term used by Paul in Romans 8:3. They were quite wrong, however, in thinking that the Statement of Faith was designed to express this idea, or that it is the teaching of any ecclesia in Australia.

“...A correspondent states: “it is a tremendously different thing to say the sentence defiled him (which simply means that God inflamed him). It is abhorrent to teach that God implanted, or inflamed Adam with - or so that he must - sin. This is the objectionable part of Clause 5 and ought to be completely eradicated, and speedily, too.” Our comment at this stage was: “If the B.A.S.F. taught what our correspondent apparently imagines it does, we would agree with him. We fail to see, however, how it is possible that such reasoning - that God forced Adam to sin - can be read into Clause 5.”

The same article quotes from another Christadelphian source:

“This phrase is being erroneously treated as though it should be hyphenated and read, sin-in-the-flesh, a literal entity. Concerning this error it has been well said that “The phrase sin in the flesh is metonymical; it is not expressive of a literal principle or element pervading the physical organisation” (R.Roberts). It is not something that was planted there and that works like an imaginary evil spirit. That which was imposed on our first parents was the law of death, the “dying thou shalt die” sentence which defiled and became a physical law of their being...”

While we are pleased to see that defilement is meant to be understood and used in the ceremonial sense, as in John 18:28, “They themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled,” we find all this confusion and controversy so unnecessary, for if the truth were really understood it would be seen that there was no such defilement as Clause 5 states.

A proper understanding of Romans 7 ending with verse 1 of chapter 8, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” should settle the matter. The condemnation, or what Clause 5 states as “defilement” is removed when one is in Jesus Christ and so makes it impossible for such “defilement” to “become a physical law of his being” as Clause 5 claims.

This same article claims that:

“What we inherit from Adam is the mortality that came by sin. This is our misfortune, not our crime. And God holds nothing against us because of it.”

In reply we would say it is not our misfortune but our blessing, as Paul explains in Romans 5:18. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Being made righteous is not a misfortune!

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid... But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” - Galatians 3:21,22. Great blessing indeed!

With love in Jesus Christ to all,

Russell Gregory.