

Nazarene fellowship Circular Letter No. 183

May/June 2000

In this Issue: -

Page 2	Editorial	Sister Helen Brady
Page 3	The Policy of Christadelphians Regarding Allegiance to the State	A Christadelphian
Page 10	My Reactions and Answers to Letters from Members of the Christadelphian Community at Home and Abroad	Brother P. Parry
Page 16	Extract from: "The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness"	Dr Edersheim
Page 19	Continuation of: "A Review of 'The Slain Lamb'"	Brother F.J.Pearce
Page 25	Miscellanea - including Correspondence	

A Pearl of Great Price

In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard each one received a penny, whether he had borne the burden and heat of the day or had laboured but one hour; so those who are Christ's at His coming shall each receive the gift of eternal life - the young disciple who, at the last hour of the day of salvation, put on the Lord Jesus, and the veteran who from youth to old age has fought the good fight of faith; yet the place and position of these in the glorious Kingdom of God shall differ immensely from each other. And so the Judge heralds His advent cry: "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." And all this is in perfect accord with the apostolic deliverance, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible."

In further confirmation of this truth see the words of our Lord in Luke 20:35,36, "They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from amongst the dead, cannot die any more, but are equal to the angels." And Revelation 20:6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." In 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17, the Apostle writes to the same effect; "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This teaching of the Apostle is directly opposed to the doctrine that the dead in Christ rise in mortal bodies; but is in complete harmony with his glowing words in 1 Corinthians 15:51,52, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." As in 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 two companies are spoken of - "the dead in Christ," and "those who are alive and remain" - so here; and both companies share the same glorious being and destiny; the dead raised incorruptible, and the living changed while alive; the thus, together, they meet the Lord in the air. One incorruptible band, to be associated for ever with the ever-living Redeemer. Blessed Hope! Transcendent destiny!

So far from having to be tried for his life at the judgment seat of Christ, the Christian has his name inscribed in the book of life even now. Else what mean these gracious words "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels" - Revelation 3:5?

William Laing - From "How are the Dead Raised?"

Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends, Loving Greetings.

The message that comes to us in the story of Jonah is that God has compassion on all His creatures, whether Jew or Gentile, human or animal.

There is a one sentence reference in the Second Book of Kings to a prophet called Jonah who lived in the time of King Jeroboam II of Israel. Jonah was the son of Amittai and he came from a village called Gath-hepher in Galilee, near Nazareth.

The Book named after Jonah opens with the Lord saying to him: “Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me” (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh on the river Tigris was the capital of the Assyrian empire. For the Hebrews, it must have been a byword for luxury and dissipation. Nahum says of the place “Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and booty... all who hear the news of you clap their hands over you. For upon whom has not come your unceasing evil?” Legends of its depravity would have been fresh in the minds of the Jews when the Book of Jonah was written.

Jonah did not welcome the assignment given to him by God and decided to run away and it is easy to sympathize with his feelings. He thought it a good idea to go to Joppa and get on a ship to Tarshish - which was probably a Phoenician trading post in Spain - he paid the fare and went on board. I suppose he hoped that God was not in the area at the time. But the Lord unleashed a violent storm and the ship threatened to founder. The sailors were frightened and tried to help matters by throwing the cargo overboard to lighten the vessel and then they all prayed to their own deities for deliverance. Jonah was evidently asleep in the hold and was awoken by an angry shipmate and told to pray to his God as well in order to help the dire situation. The crew eventually came to the conclusion that the ship was probably in danger because they had a guilty man on board and they drew lots to find out who it was, and the lot fell on Jonah. He was questioned about his background, and he had to admit he was fleeing from his Lord and that the storm was on his account and he told them that if they threw him into the sea the sea would become calm. The sailors were reluctant to throw him overboard perhaps because they found it hard to believe him entirely, so they rowed hard to try to reach land, but the wind and waves defeated their efforts. And at last after begging Jonah’s forgiveness they threw him into the sea and the storm immediately abated.

Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. It doesn’t say a whale. Rationalists are always quick to point out, that the inside of a whale’s throat has a kind of net built into it so that it can swallow small fish but not large humans. “Great fish” is the literal translation of the Hebrew *dag gadol*.

Whilst in the belly of the fish Jonah offered up a psalm in praise of the Lord who had rescued him from drowning, and after three days Jonah was vomited up on the shore.

When God renewed his call to Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach, Jonah obeyed and he told the citizens that for their wickedness their city would be destroyed in forty days. Such a call in these similarly wicked times would most certainly be sneered and laughed at and ignored. However, in Nineveh the inhabitants from the king downwards repented and put on sackcloth. A royal decree was issued and a fast for man and animals was ordered in the hope that God would spare them all. The Lord God did indeed relent and the doom of the city was averted.

It appears that Jonah was surprised at this outcome and indignantly complained to God that he might as well be dead. In fact Jonah wondered if it could really be true that the city would be spared, so he left it and sat down some distance away to await events. God kindly arranged for what was probably a castor-oil plant to grow up rapidly to give Jonah shade but at dawn God sent a worm to cause the plant to wither. The sun beat down on Jonah and a searing east wind added to his misery. He fainted and again wished for death. God was a bit impatient with Jonah’s self pity and the fact that he felt upset about a plant which had cost him no labour, had sprouted in one night and perished the next day. God said to Jonah “...should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

The story of Jonah leaves us in no doubt that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but it is also equally obvious that when God made man and woman in His own image He did not forget to pass on His sense of humour, something which He must sorely need Himself in order to put up with His creation and go on loving it as tenderly as He undoubtedly does.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

The Policy of Christadelphians Regarding Allegiance to the State

Dear Brothers, I have read with interest the editorial contained within the Christadelphian, "A Challenge to Thought," this plus an excellent article by Brother John Marshall, "The Believer and the State," has encouraged me to write to you about a matter that has increasingly occupied my mind for some considerable time.

I believe this matter to be very relevant to both these articles and I would express it thus: What we as a body have lost is the sound and scriptural appreciation of the sanctification enjoined upon us by the High Calling unto which we have been called in Christ - that this fact is nowhere more apparent than in our stated policy which we as a body have adopted in our attitude towards the State - that most of the problems which beset us today arise from and derive support from this policy. This policy is expounded in the published report of its inception - as it was formulated under the pressure in the World crisis 1914 - World War, in the book "Without the Camp."

In my opinion, this record is an indictment against us - who claim to believe and be guided by the Word of God. In my opinion this book should be withdrawn from the War Office records as a statement of Christadelphian policy and its advice to the brotherhood should be countermanded. It represents a danger to the brotherhood in times of crisis and a continual detriment to a sound conversation (manner of life) in Christ Jesus.

No doubt this appears to you as gross disloyalty to brethren who laboured hard and long for our welfare as they saw it. While this is undoubtedly cause for a close and careful examination of criticism, it is not an argument to stifle criticism.

Please let me state the evidence from which I have arrived at my conclusions. Firstly, I would wish to offer a few examples of my claim - that we as a body have lost a sound appreciation of the sanctification of our calling. I will try to state just a few representative instances.

(A) One time we used to refer both in our conversation and in our magazines, to the unbaptised visitor to our lectures as "Aliens." We had sound scriptural reason for this. As however the appreciation of our sanctification became less, the influence mentioned in the editorial became stronger, it was decreed that this was an uncharitable expression and now I think I would be correct in saying that we never see or hear the term except in God's Word.

(B) We have an instance here in Australia which I believe, could be representative of our present thinking. A migrant to this country who had accepted the truth was advised by brethren considered both respectable and knowledgeable, to become naturalized, i.e. an Australian citizen - he was already a resident - this can only mean a recognition of allegiance. This, of course, seems wrong and contradictory to him. The support for this advice was that if he did not, he could not claim the old age pension. Jesus counselled us to take no thought... He was not of course advising or sanctioning a happy go lucky or irresponsible walk through life, but He was saying, Don't decide the issue of right and wrong by how your life, your food and your raiment will be affected.

(C) The advice given to young brethren conducting their defence against National and Military Service emphasizes THOU SHALT NOT KILL. This is wrong - basically our reason is or should be the same for

combatant and non-combatant. It is precisely the same reason why we do not vote. It is a matter of allegiance. We no longer belong to this present order. This line of defence is simple for the young and the Magistrate to understand and appreciate, but of course, it presents implications and, again, "Take no thought..." comes into the picture.

I would now like to examine our relationship to the State and here I would say, that in my opinion, our obsession with the Army, the Military, has blinded our eyes to the true issue involved. The Military machine is only one manifestation of the State. It was of course, the first manifestation to threaten by compulsion our liberty in Jesus Christ. Our problem developed because our thinking and consequently our stated policy, did not keep pace with the changing situation, as the nation prepared to meet the progression of God's purpose, that not only the earth but also the heavens must be shaken, that only those things which cannot be shaken should remain.

Let me state the position as I see it. These times when nations go to war, they first make a survey of their citizens as the resource at their command; the Civil Manpower Authorities have supreme control. In other words, the State is organized for defence (war) so that in this organization, every cog is just as essential to the State effort as the next one. The man working on the farm, provided he is within the State's controlled and organized resources is just as important and as essential as the soldier at the front; furthermore, is just as responsible in the eyes of the State, just as commendable.

In modern warfare, the big proportion of manpower do not kill in man to man combat, in fact the big proportion may never see the enemy. The soldier is only a unit necessary in the State's waging war, but no more necessary or responsible than the man pledged to service in the factory, hospital or farm, who alike are integral parts of the one machine.

Now, shall we help the State, or shall we refuse? Shall we take the advice and follow the counsel made known in "Without The Camp" page 120, where an offer was made to the powers that be - "We are willing to place our service at the disposal of the State in any direction needed, but, not as part of the Army or in any combatant or non-combatant capacity, etc." In other words, which express the very same intention, shall we say, with King Jehoshaphat as he answered Ahab's request for help - "I am as thou art and my people as thy people and we will be with thee in the war"? Our answer comes from the lips of Jehu as he speaks unto us the counsel of God - "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord."

Regarding the position as I have stated it concerning the State's mobilization for war, my understanding has been arrived at from my own experience of conditions (wartime) in Australia, from Press reports and Christadelphian editorials of conditions in England and from an examination of the position adopted by Christadelphians towards the State as outlined in the book "Without The Camp."

Now the problem that confronts us is - What should our attitude be to this known and expected state of affairs? The first essential in defining that which we must do is to rightly determine our responsibility to our God. If we get that right then we can decide what we shall do with that which we have left.

Our Master puts this position in a nutshell when He was asked to give a decision upon the same problem- What shall we give to the State in response to its demand upon us. "Render to Caesar," He said, "the things that are Caesar's." Our property, our money and our material possessions are but on loan. If Caesar demands them, then we must give. But ourselves "render unto God the things that are God's." As man's bond servant, then it matters not whether we are asked to kill or heal - our answer must be the same - for we cannot give that which we do not own.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your Spirit, which are God's."

Are we fulfilling the letter and the spirit of this advice if we are found engaged in doing work vital to help the country (from which we had come out that we might be separate) bring its wars to a successful issue, found to be doing this work as registered citizens of that country and acknowledged bond servant of

the Powers that be? The purchase which the shed blood of Jesus Christ effected as we rose to newness of life from a death unto that which changed us, our responsibilities, our nationality and our objectives. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are past away; behold all things are become new."

In times past we were Gentiles of all the different nationalities and we shared their various responsibilities, but at that time we were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world. But, now in Jesus Christ you who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ - now the position is reversed and we become strangers to the land of our birth - the country of our residence or our birth is no longer our country.

Thus you will see, I am sure you will agree, that the brethren of Christ have been born again, have risen to a newness of life with new and different responsibilities and new and opposed objectives. We are directed to "stand fast in this liberty, where Christ has made us free." Now we are no longer aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, but aliens unto the land of our birth. Our citizenship is in Heaven,

In this position we stand related to and alongside the faithful of old who were persuaded of the promises of their God and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return. These faithful had done that which we are advised to do - Go forth unto Jesus, without the camp, bearing this reproach. For here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come.

We then, like the fathers of old, like Israel of old, have been called out of Egypt, and as Israel, we can look back and see ail things which once held us in bondage - our nationality, our citizenship, our past aspirations and objectives - all lying dead on the other side of the Red Sea. We can make no distinction between so called Christian nations and non-Christian nations, between good Egyptians and bad Egyptians. They are all Egyptians and we have come out from among them, "that ye should return no more that way."

The question arises, have we any obligations unto the land of our sojourn? The answer from the Word of God is none whatever by reason of birth, for we have died unto that which we were. None whatever by reason of our sojourn in the land, for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The only obligation we have is that which has been enjoined upon us from God. The powers that be are ordained of God as preservers of law and order for our good. We are to submit to their laws. Now we all qualify this obligation with the proviso that where conflict arises, we must obey God. We can see that conflict does arise when they, like the Pharaoh of old, would seek to repossess us (Exodus 15:9 margin) that we might be brought into National Service (Isaiah 10:24).

Now the Apostle Peter does not allow us elasticity in determining just where the point of conflict begins. He tells us, "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man, as free, so then it is when our freedom and liberty in Christ as God's bond servant becomes involved, that we apply our qualifications. If we are God's servants we cannot and we are commanded that we must not, become bondservants of men. If we are citizens of Zion we cannot return to and become citizens of the country in which we sojourn as strangers-Indeed the very terms conflict and forbid. If we have given our allegiance unto Christ, then we cannot acknowledge another king. We cannot, said Jesus, serve two masters, for their interests and demands conflict. If you continue in my word, said Jesus, ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

Now consider the result if this policy was adopted. Instead of the body being attacked in age groups, the young ones - those least able to bare it, being the first to be called upon, we would all be standing together, shoulder to shoulder, all charged with the one offence, and what is more, we would be standing in good company where our Master stood and where the Apostles stood (Luke 23:2 & Acts 17:7). Our objection then primarily and basically is not so much as to what we should do, but under what conditions we should do it. Our Master said of His brethren, "My sheep know my voice and follow me and the voice of a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him for they know not the voice of a stranger.

It is recognized that in such times of State mobilization for National Security, whatever one may do, they are indirectly helping the State. So long as one is in the world, this is the natural outcome of such

circumstances. Our Master recognized such and His warning and teaching was that whilst we must of necessity be in the world, we must not, and irrespective of the world's need or coercion, we cannot allow ourselves to be of it. Towards this end He prayed for us (John 17:6-17). He tells us that if we were of the world, it would love us because we would be its own, but because we are not of it, then the world will hate us. But, He says, "Remember when they do, that they hated me before they hated you." Let us pose the question, If we are numbered by the State in their National Security survey as one of their citizens, pledged to obey their directions, in work of National importance for the successful prosecution of their war, how then can we feel ourselves worthy of, or even included in this prayer of our Master? We are of the world and have gone back into the country from whence we had come out. The powers that be do not hate us because we are of their own; indeed they have commended us for taking this action. See "Without the Camp" page 181, also Luke 16:15.

It would appear that one time our Ecclesial Advisors seemed to recognize and acknowledge these facts and responsibilities and their legislation or advice applied them to the problem which the body faced in times of National stress. Not only was this so, but powers that be recognized that this would be so and they made provisions for such situations in their legislation.

I refer particularly to advice given to the brethren by the L.S.C. in the 1914-1918 war, as made known in the book "Without The Camp" pages 63,64. The applicant for exemption was advised to put ABSOLUTE, which of course was exemption free of conditions and based solely upon a recognition and acknowledgement of one's religious convictions. "Absolute" exemption is provided for in the Act and nothing less should be accepted. If "Absolute Exemption" is refused we must be prepared to take the consequences, even imprisonment in defence of our faith (Pages 87,88). You know and I know, for the records in print show sadly the L.S.C. fell from this excellent and scripturally sound and secure position - until we find one brother entering into a Bond on behalf of all Christadelphians to accept Conditional Exemption, the condition being that the holders of an exemption certificate enter into work of National Importance useful for the prosecution of the war (pages 165, 210, 200). This was their covenant with the powers that be (page 229). Compare with Exodus 32:23, 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 18, 1 Corinthians 7:23.

In Australia, advice was circularized to the brethren, June 1938, and it concluded with the advice that the Local Government Act 1916 expressly states, "In exceptional cases in which the genuine convictions and circumstances of the man are such that neither exemption from combatant service, nor a conditional exemption will adequately meet the cases, "Absolute" Exemption may be granted.

Our tragedy is that 'when the chips were down,' when as a body we had the occasion to take thought, we did not ask for "Absolute" exemption, let alone resolve to accept nothing less.

It could be that you feel I have overstated the case re the Christadelphian attitude towards the State - perhaps you feel that they were not Bond servants of men. You may feel that they were not helping the war against their brethren sojourning in the opposing country.

Let me draw your attention to some quotes from "Without The Camp." It has been claimed in a pamphlet distributed in Australia dealing with this matter, "The Christian's relations with the State" by K. Malcolm Pook, and in answer to a suggested question, "What shall our attitude be," that if we agree to do work of National Importance, useful for the prosecution of the war, we would not, in fact, be doing it with this intention at all. Now passing over the doubtful honesty of purpose in evidence here, as such a claim is relevant to our body as a whole, this is not a statement of fact, nor does it represent the statement of policy as presented to the powers that be (England) as the Christadelphian position on their requirements for exemption from military service - see "Without The Camp," pages 200-201. The author argues against those who were reluctant to change their employment, claiming that they were already doing work of National Importance. He says that this was "only half the condition" and that they must transfer to "work useful for the prosecution of the war."

Let no-one deceive himself regarding the Pledge given on behalf of Christadelphians, a record of which lies in the War Office as witness to and evidence of the conditions acceptable to Christadelphians for their exemption from military service. The author further suggests that brethren ask themselves some questions about the work they were doing. Is the work that I am engaged in really useful for the prosecution of the

war? Moreover, the L.S.C. agreed (page 202) that if any brother demurred about changing employment to one useful for the prosecution of the war, his Army Council Certificate should be withdrawn and returned to the War Office.

Thus Christadelphians surrendered their freedom - or more correctly, willingly offered their freedom and became Bond Servants of man - and that to help prosecute man's war into a successful issue. A birthright exchanged for a mess of pottage. Is it any wonder that the authorities termed it an "Admirable Offer?"

Now once this attitude became known to the authorities, opposition towards granting exemption ceased (page 114), over 2000 prospective conscientious objectors were transferred to an equal number of men in civil work of "pledged Bond servants," (pages 275, 210, 229) national importance and useful for the prosecution of the war.

Now, how did the authorities interpret this pledge or bond given and made with them? A Mr Wilson in the British Parliament said in support of "some sterling remarks from our friend, Mr Arnold Rowntree concerning Christadelphians and other conscientious objectors" - Mr. Wilson said, "many of them are burning with an earnest desire, a desire as earnest as any recruited soldier, to do something for their country, if only they could do it without violating their conscience." (Page 119).

The book "Without The Camp" of course deals with the crisis of 1914-1918 but at the outbreak of war in 1939 the then editor in an editorial said, (I quote from The Christadelphian, December 1939), "In a few appeals (not Christadelphians) the tribunals have allowed the appellant's name to remain on the register without conditions." We do not question the genuineness of conscience in these cases, but it has led some brethren to ask why such exemption could not be obtained for us. The answers - that work of National Importance was undertaken 25 years ago; our willingness to do it has now been communicated to the Government; and most of all, if it can be conscientiously undertaken, conscientious objection cannot be raised against it, etc'.

In 1940 the Pelham Committee issued a statement that no Christadelphian should claim "Absolute Exemption" in view of the statement already given to the Prime Minister. (See page 7, Clauses 6,7 statement of the Christadelphian, re: Military Training). Where does this issue leave those with views like mine? Editorial June 1939, I quote - "The position of Christadelphians was made known to the Prime Minister in a letter addressed to him twelve months ago by the Military Service Committee. The Christadelphian position during the Great War was referred to and he was informed that our position today is unchanged. It may be that the communication was not without God's blessing in the framing of the present Act."

Let us hear then, after this communication, what the Prime Minister's option was of the Christadelphian position ("The Christadelphian," June 1939): "There is one class of exemption which is of particular importance, and which is subject to special treatment. I mean that of conscientious objectors who are provided for in Clause 3. I hope that it will be generally agreed that we have dealt with this particular clause in a broad-minded manner.

They constitute a class which must necessarily always present great difficulties. We all recognize that there are people who have perfectly genuine and deep seated scruples on the subject of military service, and even if we cannot agree with those scruples, at any rate we can respect them if they are honestly held. But there is a great variation in the way people are affected by scruples of this kind. There is the most extreme case where a man feels it his duty to do nothing even to aid or comfort those engaged in military operations, although it may well be that those military operations have been forced upon us by the aggression of some country. Probably this is the smallest class of conscientious objectors of all.

But it often happens that those who hold the most extreme opinions, hold them with the greatest tenacity. We learned something about this in the great war; and I think we found that it was both useless and an exasperating waste of time and effort to attempt to force such people to act in a manner which was contrary to their principles." Unquote.

This description of course, did not relate, unfortunately, to Christadelphians and for these people, Class A exemption was provided:-

A) That the applicant shall, without conditions, be finally registered in the register of conscientious objectors...

...then there is another category that take a less extreme view. They take the stronger exception to being connected directly or indirectly to the military forces, or to have anything to do with military services, but at the same time, they are anxious to make it clear that they are no less patriotic than their fellow citizens and no less anxious to bear burdens and sacrifices for the National cause, although they cannot accept them in one particular form. They would therefore be glad provided that their scruples are not infringed, to undertake work which could be represented as work of National Importance, although not connected directly or indirectly with military service.” unquote.

Here then, is Prime Minister Churchill’s option of Christadelphians in 1939 – our position is unchanged, said the Editor, from 1914-1918. This class received Exemption (B), “That he shall be conditionally registered, etc.”

I would like to ask you, brother, from the descriptions given, which group would you prefer to take your place in?

It has been claimed in the pamphlet by Malcolm K. Pook that there is little or no direct Scripture dealing with this problem. I believe that there is a considerable array of direct Scripture. It deals with the positive side of the question, so that it is obvious. If we have been purchased by God and are no longer our own, then we cannot pledge that which we do not own in Bond Service to the State. It is obvious that if we have given our allegiance to Christ (Acts 17:7) we cannot give it or any portion of it, to another King – one Caesar (Matthew 6:24). All talk of dual citizenship or partial allegiance is to postulate a contradiction of terms. It is obvious that if our Citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20), then we cannot have Citizenship in two places (or patriotism, Timothy 2:4). It is obvious that if we have come out from the land of our birth (Exodus 6:17), that we might seek a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 13:13,14), even though the pressure of national necessity demand our return, we cannot obey (Galatians 2:18. Romans 6:16).

It is obvious that if we are strangers and pilgrims (Psalm 39:12, Hebrews 11:1, Peter 2:11), then we cannot be citizens of the land of our sojourn. It is obvious that if we have died (2 Corinthians 5:14-17), then we have been freed from all bondage (Galatians 1:4, Colossians 2:20, 3:1-4). It is obvious that if Christ has made us free (1 Corinthians 7:22), we have not the option to become Bond Servants of man (1 Corinthians 7:23, Galatians 5:1).

I realize, of course, that, you are well acquainted with ail this direct Scripture concerning our relationship to the State, but I am seeking to stress my view that the Christadelphian’s position of recognizing Gentile citizenship and accepting conditional exemption from Military Service, the condition being that they will covenant, bond, or agree to do work as servants of the State, fulfilling the obligations demanded by an acknowledged citizenship, is incompatible with their professed redemption as Brethren of Christ.

I would like to quote one example of the application of these truths. Some time ago there was published in “The Christadelphian” February 1965, an account of some trouble in America. Brethren considered that they should or could vote as there was no direct Scripture forbidding this. In an Editorial, the editor made some excellent comments. I quote: “The man who takes political action or identifies himself with the State has pledged himself to support its policies. To look for a “Thou shall not” for every possible action, is to misunderstand Scripture and the nature of our calling, What we do today must be Judged by our position as “Strangers and sojourners” looking for a city, etc.” The reasons rest on broad principles of our relation to the world around us while we are pilgrims to the Kingdom of God, and our fear of being found to “fight against God” if we take our share in forwarding the policies of the “kingdoms of man.”

I would like you to see that such scriptural advice has an equal application to our whole attitude toward the State and its demands upon us - please apply to matter under discussion.

In conclusion I would like to make two further quotations from "The Christadelphian" 1886:

(1) September, page 431, Article 3, Statement from Lanesville Ecclesia:

"We believe and accept the teaching of Jesus - that we are not of this world but being taken out from among the Gentiles, we are cut out of Daniel's mountain, Jeremiah's destroying mountain and Zechariah's great mountain to form the stone Kingdom and having put off our Gentile nationality when we put off the old man and put on the new man, which is Christ, we change our nationality and citizenship - each one becoming "Hebrew of the Hebrews," no longer an alien from the Commonwealth of Israel and a stranger from the covenants of promise; no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the Saints and of the household of God. Therefore Christadelphians, having changed their nationality and citizenship, do not register as citizens of Gentile commonwealths, nor voice their will in Gentile politics. They are come to the Ecclesia of the first enrolled (or registered) in Heaven and their Citizenship or commonwealth is in heaven, out of which they also wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

(2) May, page 206: extract from an article "Electioneering and its Abstainers," Editor R.Roberts:

"But brethren of Christ refuse to vote in a political election under any circumstances, on the grounds that their adoption into the Commonwealth of Israel extinguishes their citizenship in this present world and transforms them into strangers and pilgrims, etc."

I would apologize for the length of this paper and too perhaps for its unskilful presentation-

Your brother in our Master's service.

Post Script:

I would like to try and sum up that which I have attempted to draw your attention to:

The evidence suggests that when faced with a new and changing situation, we stampeded and instead of resolving the issue from an application of our boldly announced principles, we trusted to our own thinking which, for the best of us, is unreliable (Proverbs 14:12). We wanted something and we undertook to parley and bargain with the powers that be. We wanted something and, it is my impression that we finished up with more than we bargained for (Proverbs 23:1-3, 2 Chronicles 20:17),

Where was the Shepherd to save the flock "in the dark and cloudy day"?

One would have expected a reasoned scriptural case, with our action to meet the situation clearly outlined as essentially flowing on from the necessity of our basic and fundamental beliefs. But what do we find? Our spokesman gives two reasons for his advice and Bond, which covenanted every holder of an Exemption Certificate:

Reason 1. "After having carefully considered all the facts of the case, I am of the opinion that of the two evils, imprisonment or at liberty under the Agreement already quoted, the latter is preferable for a Christadelphian."

Well might we ask, what liberty? The liberty to answer the voice of a stranger's call unto his own, that they might fulfil the conditions of service required by the covenant made with the State - and this in contrast and preference to the Apostles' example as they, in prison, rejoiced and sang of the freedom and the liberty which was their birthright, as they fulfilled the conditions of service required by the covenant made with their Master whose voice alone they knew and followed.

Reason 2. "It does not seem that any commandment of the Lord would be violated by signing the Agreement." (Page 235).

I would remind you that it did not seem to our brethren in America, 1965, that any commandment would be violated by voting.

Now at a later date we find our then spokesman, answering the same necessity for a reason, does he produce progressive and expanding scriptural justification or requirement? We did it 25 years ago, he says, and our position today is unchanged.

Now with regards to the 1914-1918 position, I find this understandable. We had to meet a new and changing situation and we had to do it quickly to counter danger both within and without, and, it had to be done under considerable pressure. But the persistent refusal of brethren with the prestige and position to be able to influence our thinking (there is progressive evidence of this) to listen and answer criticism of the hastily arrived at decision is, to me, not understandable.

I would hope and expect you will not disregard this prayerful effort, but that you will feel it your duty, if not your privilege to show me that my charges are wrong; my understanding of scriptural teaching wrong, and that it is right for brethren to recognize Gentile citizenship and accept the responsibility of the resultant allegiance which they owe to the State.

There still remains time for us today while we are not under pressure, to think our stand on this matter (Ephesians 5:5-17). I feel that if a strong and scripturally sound and demonstrable position was adopted, it could and would provide a tremendous stimulus for upbuilding. Our young people, in particular, want and need the security of mind and conscience which they would experience from this. I believe that it would provide a sound basis for instruction of the body and would provide an effective counter to the manifold examples which manifest a present lack (brethren just don't know any better) of appreciation of the sanctification of our calling.

Once again, I remain your brother in Jesus Christ, (A Christadelphian).

My Reactions and Answers to Letters from Members of the Christadelphian Community at Home and Abroad

In considering your views concerning the sin of Adam, though making the point you are not concerned with what other people say or teach even if it be Dr. Thomas, Robert Roberts, or other esteemed members of your community professing the same basis of faith and fellowship, yet you are no nearer the Truth nor further advanced from the errors they have also embraced. Those embraced errors being accepted - that Adam, a man of flesh and blood nature, incapable of everlasting life, disobeyed God's edict to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which would provoke the sentence of death in the time of eating.

This man was God's wonderful creation, as the Scripture declares of such "Fearfully and wonderfully made" - Very Good. This nature under Law, capable of good or evil through that law therefore by knowledge of the same, responsible, not for the nature but to the Giver of the Law through which good character or bad could be developed without any change of that created nature, or defilement physically, neither, I would confidently add, any charge or condemnation of that nature, seeing that God was responsible as its Creator.

Most people, including the above named and yourself, read God's words of the resulting position of exclusion from the Garden of Eden, thinking this is the real penalty for committed sin, thus there is the failure to be truly cognisant of God's statement to Adam when He placed him in the Garden - Genesis 2:17, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." I doubt if some people ever consider death could have been experienced or witnessed in any form in the Garden of Eden; why should it under such conditions, unless it be creatures other than

Adam? Surely a just Creator would explain to Adam the mode and meaning of the death He described as the penalty for disobedience and Adam would have explained it to Eve, so what made them so afraid after transgressing?

Was it not fear of the infliction of death for his disobedience in the day of eating of the forbidden fruit? There was nothing wrong or poisonous in the fruit itself - all God created was very good, so the sin was in their violation of the Divine Law and not because of their physical nakedness. If they were physically naked before God in the first place and not ashamed, why should there be any difference in their appearance in God's sight after eating of the fruit?

Even Job gives us a clue that Adam's fear was not his physical nakedness in the sight of God but the exposure of his transgression and its due penalty of cessation of life. Job 31:33, "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom..."

Was not Adam's transgression in his bosom (his heart) from which good and evil emerges in accordance with Divine Law? Can a physical display of nakedness at Creation be accounted by the Creator an act of transgression when Scripture declares there was no shame? Can we not see that their nakedness was seen to be in a guilty conscience expressing their sin and their need of the Love of God and His mercy to save them from its penalty of which they were well aware from God's statement and conditional life for them in the Garden? Being wise after the event does not alter God's statement in Genesis 2:17 or that dying did not commence until after Adam and Eve had sinned. If God had not seen in His foreknowledge a sinless man who was willing to lay down His life-in-the-blood in the place of Adam and all in his loins, upon whom the legal death by sin had been passed, then Genesis 3:14-24 needed not to have been written. Also I find nothing which says their nakedness in the physical sense was a part of the penalty, but rather the violation of God's Law which, if carried into effect, would result in death-by-infliction; Adam's statement of nakedness before God can be viewed in his repentance for having sinned.

If we cannot accept this mystery of God which until Christ's first appearance had been hid in God through the ages, how are we to understand the book of Genesis and the need for man's redemption and salvation from the death by sin which Jesus taught and also revealed by the Holy Spirit to His chosen Apostles? the Scripture teaching is plain enough to the unbiased reader both in Genesis 2:7 and in Paul's letter to the Romans and to the Corinthians, that a "living soul" is descriptive of a natural human body of life in the blood, capable of decay and of death on which an identical nature could not be passed as a sentence for committed sin. Therefore in Romans 5:12 Paul rightly describes the penalty for Adam in the day of transgression as "death by sin," not continuance of his already corruptible nature by creation.

When one reads Paul's words to the Romans effectively, where the priority of his teaching is that Christ died for Adam and for us, it becomes obvious that Christ's inflicted death was not to prevent Adam or his posterity from dying through natural causes relative to our nature from creation, for all have continued to die even since Jesus was offered up as the free gift from God by grace and has abounded to many. Therefore Paul is not talking about natural death reigning but Grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

To be under the Law of sin and death is a legal position which denotes being in Adam when he sinned - a position which can be reversed through the Atoning sacrifice of Christ. Why then is it that some people prefer others past and present to do their studying and thinking, consequently finding themselves so confused when faced with the true facts which have been written for our admonition and learning by those Prophets and Apostles ordained of God for that purpose? Many have been put off from the realisation that natural death is not the penalty which passed upon Adam, through the fact that Adam did not die in the literal day in which he sinned. Thus ignoring that God had the right to redeem and exercise Love and Mercy, they embrace Genesis 3:14-24 (a confirmation of continuance of life) as the penalty due to sin which in effect is a result of their losing the relationship of Son and Daughter of God they had in the Garden. We are not expected to explain why the Creator exercised Love, Mercy and Redemption through the shedding of blood but to accept that Adam and Eve were spared the infliction of death by that means, and through His own Son who would in due time appear and be the true substance of the types and shadows from Adam to Moses. This is indeed a great part of the revealed mystery spoken of by Paul with such joy in that he could appreciate

what the Law of Moses could not do for as long as it showed him to be under the Law of sin and death and estranged from the Grace of God and the righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus (Romans 5:17-21).

How many can say they have been made free from a physical law of condemnation of their flesh, and a death which is common or natural to all creation? Not even Paul could have had such a theory when after taking so much effort in showing to the Roman believers the unique contrast between the common death by creation and the death by sin, that through Christ suffering the latter, (not sharing it) he could pen those words applied in the present tense, with only a legal application, in Romans 8:2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is impossible for Paul to be referring to the common or natural death to which Adam was subject by creation and not by sin; he is explaining a legal position, not a physical, Those who believe it is physical, ignorantly or otherwise, are in a precarious position in regard to salvation and the understanding of the Atonement and should seek to know more of what Paul and his fellow Apostles and brethren were teaching by the Holy Spirit in their Epistles.

It is not as some have been misled to believe, that God caused Jesus to be born with the same nature as ourselves in order that He might justly condemn it as Sin's Flesh. This is irresponsible ignorance and blasphemy against the justice of God and the Atonement. Why cannot people see that what Paul is stating in Romans 8:2 is in recognition of what is stated in Hebrews 2:14-15 - a 'being made free' from the law of sin and death through the sacrifice of Christ destroying that which had the power of death and bondage and therefore delivering them who through fear of death under its power were unable to free themselves?

This is the teaching of the Grace of God toward man through His Son, both in Romans and Hebrews, not a biased and ill-conceived elaboration of the teaching of condemned physical flesh.

The Law of sin and death was the obstacle which Jesus removed by suffering willingly the death which came by sin, for this was the death which God had passed legally upon (not in) all men and had legal dominion over them as long as they remained under its dominion, for as Paul said of those who were truly in Christ by baptism into His death (by bloodshedding and not by the common death) "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law (Mosaic) but under grace," the law of the Spirit of life in Christ which makes free from the penalty of sin - JUDICIAL DEATH THROUGH RESPONSIBILITY AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN REVEALED IN THE WORD OF GOD.

How can this be true if human nature is synonymous of sin or indwelling as a physical element in the flesh? If sin is a physical element of condemnation in the flesh working out decay and death, how can baptism remove its effects when the same physical flesh emerges from the water with the same contents, in the belief and view of the immersed, still present and confidently quoting out of context and lack of knowledge and understanding, Romans 7:18 - "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing"?

Paul knew better than to ask of people in a condemned and blemished body of sin, "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" - Romans 12:1. The Roman believers were no longer under condemnation although still flesh and blood physically, but they were no longer in the flesh or unregenerated state, but in the Spirit, Sin's claim no longer having power over them.

Even the sacrificial death of Christ was not an offering to God; it was God who offered Him up freely for us all, that the power of death, that is, the Law of sin and its penalty to the sinner, might be destroyed. See Romans 7:6 concerning Paul and the believers after baptism - "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Also Romans 6.22, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life."

Does not this confirm Paul's teaching of alienation from God by Adam's sin, and reconciliation through Christ settling the debt owed to the law by the sinner, which only the sinless could do?

What Jesus really did as a free-born Son of God was to retain His status and heirship by obedience and by so doing He took upon Himself the form or position of a servant. Thus, up to the time of His impending death He offered Himself to God as a living and unblemished sinless man, acceptable to God, so that God was able to present to Master Sin what was required as the Redemption Price, an unforfeited life, which Adam was unable to do. Jesus gave His natural life in the blood and never received life in the blood again, but life energised by Spirit - which Adam did not possess or forfeit to the Law (Genesis 2:17). It was natural life Adam would have lost by sin.

How important then to accept the teaching of the Spirit and put aside the accepted lies of the Apostasy depicting God offering up a blemished man of sinful flesh as the property of the one to whom it is surrendered as the Ransom! Can God be Justified in such a manner?

I repeat, we of the Nazarene faith believe that Jesus' death was a substitute for the death Adam incurred by sin; it did not free Adam or us from the experience of natural death but gave Adam the opportunity of a second probation for acceptance with God as an adopted son by Grace, which applies also to Adam's posterity - sons of God by adoption and grace through the Lord Jesus in whom we have redemption, says Paul, through His blood. Now there are some who contend either in ignorance or obstinacy, that Redemption in Christ is not a present reality and will not be so until after the resurrection and judgment-seat of Christ has decided it.

The question arises, when are individuals regarded as in Christ? Is it by belief in the Gospel of Salvation and Baptism into Christ's death, or as stated above after His second coming? Paul is very certain on the subject of Redemption when he says "In whom we have redemption," present tense, therefore if we are not now in Christ through His blood we will not qualify for Redemption until we are - for at His coming the door of qualification will be shut. It is the dead in Christ who rise first and the living in Christ glorified with them.

In some cases the term 'redemption' has been mistakenly used for 'deliverance' and vice-versa, so that logic and discrimination is necessary in rightly dividing the Word of Truth. In reading the Holy Scriptures the context is very important in understanding its message and teaching.

What then do those in-Christ understand from Paul's words in Ephesians 1:11-14 concerning God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (pledge) of our inheritance until the redemption (deliverance) of the purchased possession (the redeemed), unto the praise of his glory."

We find two important matters of interest in Paul's teaching here and it points us to the atoning work of God in His Son by purchasing Adam and all in his loins back to Himself through the life in the blood of His Son who gave it willingly as the price of purchase which means in this case 'redemption.' As quoted earlier, "In whom we have redemption through his blood,.." also confirmed in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Now this speaks of Redemption in Christ or the purchase from under the Law of sin and death - release from the bondage of sin and his wages that the person redeemed through faith in the Redeemer might serve a new Master and be confirmed as many members yet one Ecclesia or body as we have noted from Acts 20:28. This explains one of the two matters of importance I mentioned, since Paul has spoken also of inheritance, in which Abraham was also involved. I was reminded of this when reading in Ephesians 1:13,14 of being sealed with that holy Spirit of promise "after ye believed." "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness," Romans 4:3. "and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though

they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also,... though not circumcised in flesh, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”

Paul has shown that circumcision of the physical flesh of a descendant of Abraham availeth nothing unless it be accompanied by belief and faith in God and His promises depending on His Grace. The same also applying to those immersed in water if their action does not accompany a belief and true understanding of its meaning.

We find then that all through the history of Israel there was a boasting in that fact of circumcision but yet an absence of faith, a faith only exhibited by certain people who, ignoring the rigour and letter only of the Law* (see footnote) reverted to that faith before its institution through Moses - the faith of Abraham of whom Jesus declared “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad.” What did Abraham see? Was it not the seed of the woman mentioned to Eve in Genesis who would abolish death-by-sin, that is, by destroying the power of sin which had passed upon all men through the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God in that through Jesus, the promised Seed, He would be able to free the many from that power, and justify them through their faith in Him who died the death that came by sin through the shedding of blood.

There can be no doubt that Abraham saw this and demonstrated it by faith and works. He even declared to Isaac on their way to the offering up of Isaac, “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” he accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead because of the promise God made to him “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” that is, the seed of promise Jesus the Seed of the woman, the Son of God.

Paul’s comments on this is noted in his epistle to Romans 8:1,2, the result of his teaching in chapters 6 and 7, all pertaining to the legal position through Adam’s sin, and of being under the Law of Moses which entered to focus the mind on the offence of Adam’s sin, and the Grace of God offered to man through Jesus Christ. Through that grace Paul could say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” What other condemnation could there be of which he has been speaking, and from which he has been made free yet still a body of flesh and blood?

Are people so stiff-necked and obstinate that they cannot see that if the Law of sin and Death was a physical element of condemnation or even in fact that temptation is sin, that Paul could not have made such a statement? See Romans 5:20,21, confirming the above - “The Law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I realize I have digressed from the subject of inheritance but it was important to show the need of being out of Adam and in Christ by passing from Death to Life while still remaining flesh and blood, that it is a legal and moral position and not a physical state.

Now Peter realized this when he penned chapter 1 of his first letter and I feel sure that he had in his mind what Jesus said of Himself to the Jews as recorded in John 10:27-29, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

Incidentally, I was rather disgusted by the interpretation a Christadelphian Lecturer made of this verse 28 in a letter to me some time ago. He said it meant resurrection and judgment, which to any reasoning logical reader is a complete reversal of what Jesus was stating, but I suppose a support of the Christadelphian views were the most important to him at the time. I hope sincerely he has changed his views for the better.

What is it that Peter regarded so important in addition to those he addressed as “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”? Was it not that they had been “begotten unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God (John 10:28,29 confirmed) through faith unto salvation

ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ... receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls”?

If the fact of being capable of temptations requires redemption, as stated by one of my correspondents, the words of Peter we have just quoted would be in direct opposition, for Peter speaks of temptations as a trial of faith under God and His Son, and much more precious than of gold that perishes under fire, so that it might be found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ and not, as falsely taught, after passing a judgment seat to decide. Incorruptible resurrection has already decided this - 1 Corinthians 15, and please note, Paul is addressing believers in Christ and the resurrection of life, not those who doubted that there would be a resurrection or even those who have since appeared on the scene doubting his words “raised incorruptible” and substituting it as “process by stages.” These latter are also contesting the truth of Paul’s words and those of Jesus in respect of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; God speaking of those things that are not as though they were, “Now that the dead are raised Moses was shown at the bush, I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob,” God is not the God of the dead but of the living.” Jesus referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as living unto Him.

The great message of the Gospel is Good News, a lifting up of the spiritual mind to the things God has promised through His Son, not a declaration of God’s condemnation of human flesh which He created for His own pleasure. Human flesh is a static physical compound, but human disposition reflects obedience or disobedience to God’s Law which is altogether different. In this respect the Love and Mercy of God should be appreciated and lift our hearts to the hope set before us of which Peter in his first Epistle, chapters 1 and 2 has made clear by the Holy Ghost, which was not the case before Pentecost. So he continues concerning salvation in Christ - 1 Peter 1:10,11 - “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them signifying, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

These are the hidden things of God revealed by the Spirit, not handed down on a plate by the teaching and tradition of men who deny the power and working of the Holy Spirit and of being born again, not by a change of nature but by the Word of God which liveth and abideth ever... and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Why is it then that so many professing Bible students cannot explain the Atonement correctly? It is because of their objection to substitution on the one hand as it clashes with their erroneous belief of natural death being the penalty for Adam’s disobedience and on the other hand, that it was unjust for a sinless man to experience that penalty. So, in order that they can justify God in allowing Jesus to die they say it was because He had condemned nature like Adam and through His death He demonstrated the condemnation of God on sin in the flesh, and the penalty due to Himself as well as to Adam and all in his loins.

While we find another section accept “Substitution,” believing everything has been accomplished for them through Christ and they have nothing more to do but offer lip service through the medium of the false and vain traditions of men who have followed those who have turned away from the Truth unto fables.

The obstacle then in both cases is an incorrect understanding of Death; the one operating legally until removed by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, and the other, by the physical action of gradual decay which with the legal sentence removed, becomes a mere sleep awaiting the resurrection of Life. Symbolic death and physical death are involved here but a choice must be made by a correct and scriptural understanding of the Atonement which demands that the death of Jesus was a voluntary substitute for Adam and all in his loins, but only operative by an understanding and obedience of faith in the atoning work of God in His Son to bring us to Him.

One correspondent said in his letter to me some time ago, that a former Editor of The Christadelphian Magazine did not arrive at an understanding of the Atonement and that he himself was only just beginning to understand its meaning.

What a statement from a man brought up for at least 65 years as a Christadelphian - that when immersed he did not understand this to be a result of the atoning blood of Christ's sacrificial death, and goes on to say Edward Turney was wrong in his teaching and he could not agree with me either, yet he could not explain his own understanding of the Atonement to me or where Edward Turney was wrong, or myself.

My membership as a Christadelphian for 17 years was not a waste of time as a basis on which to build up some knowledge of the Bible but if I had left it there when further enlightenment through the Spirit Word fired me to greater appreciation and understanding of the Love of God and the reason why He sent forth His Son, my life would have been of none effect for salvation.

So I declare to those who accept Jesus as our Lord by His birth, mission and death, "Be of good courage, trust in the Lord." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen.

Whoso readeth, let him understand. Phil Parry.
[27.04.2000]

Footnote: In fact, Jesus, by His own voluntary death, abrogated the Law of condemnation for all. The statement, "for all" gives all the option of becoming in-Christ, the once for all Ransom having been paid and accepted by belief and faith.

Extract from Dr. Edersheim's book entitled -

"The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness"

The Birth and Training of Moses

To the attentive reader of Scripture it will not seem strange - only remarkable - that the very measure which Pharaoh had taken for the destruction of Israel eventually led to their deliverance. Had it not been for the command to cast the Hebrew children into the river, Moses would not have been rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, nor trained in all the wisdom of Egypt to fit him for his calling. Yet all throughout, this marvellous story pursues a natural course; that is, natural in its progress, but supernatural in its purposes and results.

A member of the tribe of Levi, and descendant of Kohath, Amram by name, had married Jochebed, who belonged to the same tribe. Their union had already been blessed with two children, Miriam and Aaron, when the murderous edict of Pharaoh was issued. The birth of their next child brought them the more sorrow and care that the "exceeding fairness" of the child not only won their hearts, but seemed to point him out as destined of God for some special purpose. In the struggle of affection and hope against the fear of man, they obtained the victory, as victory is always obtained, "by faith." There was no special revelation made to them, nor was there need for it. It was a simple question of faith, weighing the command of Pharaoh against the command of God and their own hopes. They resolved to trust the living God of their fathers and to brave all seeming danger. It was in this sense that "by faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Longer concealment at home being impossible, the same confidence of faith now led the mother to lay the child in an ark made of, as at that time the light Nile-boats used to be, of "bulrushes" or papyrus - strong three cornered rush that grew to a height of about ten or fifteen feet. The "ark" - a term used in Scripture only here and in connection with the deliverance of Noah by an "ark" - was made tight within by "slime" - either Nile mud or asphalt - and impenetrable to water by a coating of "pitch." Thus protected, the "ark" with its precious burden, was deposited among "the flags" in the brink, or lip of the river, just where

Pharaoh's daughter was wont to bathe, though the sacred text does not expressly inform us whether or not this spot was purposely chosen.

The allusion in Psalm 78:12 [o the "marvellous things" done "in the field of Zoan," may perhaps guide us to the very scene of this deliverance. Zoan, as we know, was the ancient Avaris, the capital of the Shepherd kings, which the new dynasty had taken from them. The probability that it would continue the residence of the Pharaohs, the more so as it lay on the eastern boundary of Goshen, is confirmed by the circumstance that in those days, of all the ancient Egyptian residences, Avaris or Zoan alone lay on an arm of the Nile which was not infested by crocodiles, and where the princesses therefore could bathe. There is a curious illustration on one of the Egyptian monuments of the scene described in the rescue of Moses. A noble lady is represented bathing in the river with four of her maidens attending upon her, just like the daughter of Pharaoh in the story of Moses. But to return – the discovery of the ark and the weeping of the babe, as the stranger lifted him are all true to nature. The princess is touched by the appeal of the child to her woman's feelings. She compassionates him none the less that he is one of the doomed race. To have thrown the weeping child into the river would have been inhuman. Pharaoh's daughter acted as every woman would have done in the circumstances. To save one Hebrew child could be no very great crime in the king's daughter. Moreover, curiously enough, we learn from the monuments, that just at that very time the royal princesses exercised special influence- in fact, that two of them were co-regents. So when, Just at the opportune moment, Miriam, who all along had watched at a little distance, came forward and proposed to call some Hebrew woman to nurse the weeping child - this strange gift, bestowed as it were by the Nile-god himself (the Egyptians worshipped the Nile as a god) on the princess, - she readily consented. The nurse called was, of course the child's own mother, who received her baby now as a precious charge, entrusted to her care by the daughter of him who would have compassed his destruction. So marvellous are the ways of God.

One of the old church-writers has noted that "the daughter of Pharaoh is the community of the Gentiles," thereby meaning to illustrate this great truth, which we trace throughout history, that somehow the salvation of Israel was always connected with the instrumentality of the Gentiles. It was so in the history of Joseph, and even before that; and it will continue so till at the last, through their mercy Israel shall obtain mercy. But meanwhile a precious opportunity was afforded to those believing Hebrew parents to mould the mind of the adopted son of the princess of Egypt. The three first years of life, the common Eastern time for nursing, are often, even in our northern climes, where development is so much slower, a period decisive in after life. It requires no stretch of imagination to conceive what the child Moses would learn at his mother's knee, and hear among his persecuted people. When a child so preserved and so trained found himself destined to step from his Hebrew home to the court of Pharaoh - his mind full of the promises made to the fathers, and his heart heavy with the sorrows of his brethren, - it seems almost natural that thoughts of future deliverance of his people through him should gradually rise in his soul. Many of our deepest purposes have their root in earliest childhood, and the lessons then learnt, and the thoughts then conceived, have been steadily carried out to the end of our lives.

Yet, as in all deepest life-purpose, there was no rashness about carrying it into execution. When Jochebed brought the child back to the princess, the latter gave her adopted son the Egyptian name "Moses" which, curiously enough, appears also in several of the old Egyptian papyri, among others, as that of one of the royal princes. The word means "brought forth," or "drawn out," "because," as she said in giving the name, "I drew him out of the water." (Some have derived the name Moses from two Egyptian words which literally mean "water" "saved"). But for the present Moses would probably not reside in the royal palace at Avaris. St. Stephen (Acts 7:22) tells us that he "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." In no country was such value attached to education, nor was it begun so early as in Egypt. No sooner was a child weaned than it was sent to school, and instructed by regularly appointed scribes. As writing was not by letters, but by hieroglyphics, which might be either pictorial representations, or symbols (a sceptre for a king, etc.) or a kind of phonetic signs, and as there seem to have been hieroglyphics for single letters, for syllables, and for words, that art alone must, from its complication, have taken almost a lifetime to master it perfectly. But beyond this,-education was carried to a very great length, and, in the case of those destined for the higher professions, embraced not only the various sciences, as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, etc., but theology, philosophy, and a knowledge of the laws. There can be no doubt that, as the adopted son of the princess, Moses would receive the highest training. Scripture tells us that, in consequence, he was "mighty

in his words and deeds, and we may take the statement in its simplicity, without entering upon the many Jewish and Egyptian legends which extol his wisdom, and his military and other achievements.

Thus the first forty years of Moses' life passed. Undoubtedly, had he been so minded, a career higher even than that of Joseph might have been open to him. But, before entering it, he had to decide that one great preliminary question, with whom he would cast in his lot - with Egypt or with Israel, with the world or with the promises? As so often happens, the providence of God here helped him to a clear, as the grace of God to a right, decision. In the actual circumstances of Hebrew persecution it was impossible at the same time "to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" and to have part, as one of them, "with the people of God," The one meant "the pleasures of sin" and "the treasures of Egypt" - enjoyment and honours, the other implied "affliction" and "the reproach of Christ" - or suffering and that obloquy which has always attached to Christ and to His people, and at that time especially, to those who clung to the covenant of which Christ was the substance.

But faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, enabled Moses not only to refuse what Egypt held out, but to choose rather the affliction and more than that, to "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," because "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." In this spirit "he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." But his faith was, though deeply genuine, as yet far from pure and spiritual. The ancient Egyptians were noted for the severity of their discipline, and their monuments represent the taskmasters armed with heavy scourges, made of tough bending wood which they unmercifully used. The sight of such sufferings, inflicted by menials upon his brethren, would naturally rouse the utmost resentment of the 'son' of the Princess Royal. This, together with the long-cherished resolve to espouse the cause of his brethren, and the nascent thought of becoming their deliverer, led him to slay an Egyptian, whom he saw thus maltreating "an Hebrew, one of his brethren." Still it was not an access of sudden frenzy, for "he looked this way and that way," to see "that there was no man" to observe his deed; rather was it an attempt to carry out spiritual, ends by carnal means, such as in the history of Moses' ancestors had so often led to sin and suffering. He would become a deliverer before he was called to it of God; and he would accomplish it by other means than those which God would appoint. One of the fathers has rightly compared this deed to that of Peter in cutting off the ear of the high-priest's servant; at the same time also calling attention to the fact, that the heart both of Moses and Peter resembled a field richly covered with weeds, but which by their very luxuriance gave promise of much good fruit, when the field should have been broken up and sown with good seed.

In the gracious dispensation of God, that time had now come. Before being transplanted, so to speak, Moses had to be cut down. He had to strike root downwards, before he could spring upwards. As St. Stephen puts it, "his brethren understood not how that God, by his hand, would give them deliverance" - what his appearance and conduct among them really meant; and when next he attempted to interfere in a quarrel between two Hebrews, the wrong-doer in harsh terms disowned his authority, and reproached him with his crime. It was now evident that the matter was generally known. Presently it reached the ears of Pharaoh. From what we know of Egyptian society, such an offence could not have remained unpunished, even in the son of a princess, and on the supposition that she who had originally saved Moses was still alive, after the lapse of forty years and the then reigning Pharaoh was her father. But, besides, Moses had not only killed an official in the discharge of his duty, he had virtually taken the part of the Hebrews, and encouraged them to rebellion. That Moses commanded such position of influence that Pharaoh could not at once order his execution, but "sought to slay him," only aggravated the matter, and made Moses the more dangerous. Open resistance to Pharaoh was of course impossible. The sole hope of safety now seemed to lie in renouncing all further connection with his people. That or flight were the only alternatives. On the other hand, flight might further provoke the wrath of the king, and it was more than doubtful whether any of the neighbouring countries could, under such circumstances, afford him safe shelter. It was therefore, indeed, once more an act of faith when Moses "forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured (remained steadfast, viz, to his choice and people), as seeing the Invisible One," that is, as one who, instead of considering the king of Egypt, looked by faith to the King invisible. (1 Timothy 1:17).

Like Jacob of old, and Joseph under similar circumstances, Moses must now go into a strange land. All that Egypt could teach him, he had acquired. What he still needed could only be learned in lowliness, humiliation, and suffering. Two things would become manifest in the course of his history. That which, in his own view, was to have freed his people from their misery, had only brought misery to himself. On the

other hand, that which seemed to remove him from his special calling, would prepare the way for its final attainment. And so it often happens to us in the most important events in our lives, that thus we may learn the lessons of faith and implicit self-surrender, and that God alone may have the glory.

Disowned by his people and pursued by the king, the gracious Providence of God prepared a shelter and home for the fugitive. Along the eastern shore of the Red Sea the Midianites, descended from Abraham through Keturah (Genesis 25:2-4) had their settlements, whence, as nomads, they wandered, on one side to the southern point of the peninsula of Sinai, and on the other, northward, as far as the territory of Moab. Among the Midianites it happened to Moses, as of old to Jacob on his flight. At the “well” he was able to protect the daughters of Reuel, “the priest of Midian,” against the violence of the shepherds, who drove away their flocks. Invited in consequence to the house of Reuel, he continued there, and eventually married Zipporah, the daughter of the priest. This and the birth of his two sons is absolutely all that Moses himself records of his forty years stay in Midian. But we are in circumstances to infer some other and important details. The father-in-law of Moses seems to have worshipped the God of Abraham, as even his name implies: Reuel, the “friend of El,” being the designation which the patriarchs gave to God, as *El Shaddai* – God Almighty. This is further borne out by his after-conduct. Reuel is also called Jethro and Jether, which means “excellency” and was probably his official title as chief priest of the tribe, the same as the Imam of the modern Arabs, the term having a kindred meaning.

We continue with the third portion of Brother F.J.Pearce’s

“A Review of The Slain Lamb”

Page 11, paragraph 2. “Death reigned from Adam to Moses.” We have considered this in the previous paragraph but we further point out the sentence was on the federal principle (legal) as the following verses show, that God concluded all under sin that He might have mercy on all (Romans 3:9,19; 11:32; Galatians 3:32). The sentence of condemnation is removed by the love of God, even more willingly than it was put on. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). No son of Adam, nor himself, need have perished. God’s everlasting arms are ever open to eagerly receive all into His family by adoption that believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him by faith (Hebrews 11:6). “God so loved the world that He gave...” (John 3:16). He does not afflict willingly (Lamentations 3:33). The multitude of His mercies are ever present, as proven by the wonderful provision He has made, not only in the necessities of life, but in the provision of the redemption price for the sin of the world which all are concluded under by Scripture. If we make a covenant by the sacrifice (Psalm 50:5) of Jesus, the sentence of condemnation is removed (Romans 8:1). Instead of being sons of Adam on the federal principle, we are sons of God upon the same principle. We like the last sentence on this paragraph of R.Roberts, “though not without the light of hope through faith.”

Page 11, paragraph 3. “Not of works lest any man should boast.” How great a statement this is. “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Romans 3:20). This ought to make those think who believe that Jesus was justified by the law. It is faith in the spirit of the law that makes a man honourable in God’s sight. Now, what was the first requisite to be recognized in the spirit of the law of Moses? Why, redemption, as was typically shown in the shadows or ordinances of the law. This redemption law has ever been the basis of reconciliation. “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). All need the redemption that is of God in Christ Jesus before they can embark upon the road for eternal life as adopted sons and daughters.

Page 11, paragraph 4. “This law condemned to death all who disobeyed it in the meanest particular.” The deduction from this is that they all ought to have been stoned or burned. We ask, On what authority did R.Roberts say this? This is a grateful refuge for those who wish to excuse themselves upon the original sin basis. We have no hesitation in saying that this excuse gives a liberty in crime and is blasphemy against the God of Heaven. Fancy a just God asking them to keep that which, they could not possibly keep because of their sinful flesh nature inherited from Adam and then punish them for not keeping it! God has not put any trial or temptation upon us that we are unable to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). We thank God for

this truth. R.Roberts should draw a distinction between keeping the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Men of faith went beyond the literal letter of the law. If he confines his meanest particular to the righteousness which was of the law, then we remind the reader that Paul in this respect was blameless. Paul went about persecuting those of the sect of the Nazarenes, thinking he was doing God a service. Had he understood the spirit of the law he would not have done so.

Page 11, paragraph 4. “This do and thou shalt live,” etc. We have previously commented upon this. This is the fallacy of justification by works of law. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees who kept the letter of the law? What was His complaint against them? His complaint against them was that they left out the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, faith (Matthew 23:3,23; Romans 9:32). “Wherefore they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” We see here the two phases of justification; first by redemption, by faith through grace, Ephesians 2:8; secondly, by works of faith (faithful walk). Faith without works (of faith, not of the mere letter) is dead (Romans 4; James 2:20 to end).

R.Roberts’ reference to the certain rich ruler does not go far enough. Most certainly Jesus did say, “Do this and thou shalt live,” but what was the rich young ruler’s response to Jesus’ advice to sell all that he had to show in a practical manner his love to his neighbour by keeping the spirit of the law? He was sorrowful, yes, and the keeping of the mere letter of the law can only end in sorrow. The statement that the law given was unto life is quite true, as R.Roberts says, “If they kept it” but it must be the spirit of the law as well as the letter, as Jesus said, “This do, and not leave the other undone.” “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:10).

We ask here about the other portion of Romans 7:10 that was left out, viz., “The commandment that was ordained to life, and found to be unto death.” Why did Paul find a commandment that was ordained to life to be unto death? Was it because no flesh could keep it? If no flesh could keep it, how did Jesus, who was flesh, keep it? Think on these things- The law, as Paul says, “I would not have known sin if the law had not said Thou shall not” etc. It made all guilty before God because federally operative and stopped every mouth which would speak against it, it being a JUST law and prevented everyone from establishing one’s own righteousness. Did not the law itself (in the ordinances) portray redemption? Did not the law, in the spirit of it and the letter, command all to be dead to sin? Paul says, “I, through the law, am dead to the law” (Galatians 2:19). Paul found the law to be unto death on the federal principle, viz., that the very ordinances of the law portrayed the sacrifice that was to be made by Christ as the price of redemption from the sin that all were concluded under. Hence even those under the law were in need of that redemption, which redemption, when accepted, required the individual to be dead unto sin. If wilfully disobedient after accepting redemption the spirit of the law was still unto death (second death) though ordained to life.

That the Jews under the law were in need of redemption is proven by the Scripture which says that Jesus was born under the law to redeem under the law (Galatians 4:5). The foregoing is the law that was ordained to life being found by Paul to be unto death in its spiritual application, which application R.Roberts is silent upon, being content to confine his argument to physical death which we will now consider under the heading of “The Law in its Literal Application.”

Paul says that the law was a ministration of death (2 Corinthians 3:7). This is true in its spiritual application and also true in its practical application of the literal law. The literal law condemned to death the transgressor of it. But what was the manner in which the Jews kept the letter of the law? Did they keep it because it was their heartfelt desire to do so, or to save their necks? They could have kept the law in a feeling of boredom so long as they could avoid the penalty of not doing so falling upon them. (Read Galatians 3:12) “And the law is not of faith, but, the man that doeth them (the works) shall live in them.” The law itself was not of faith, but faith had to be exhibited in the law, therefore, those who kept the letter (doeth them) would save their necks by so doing. Well could the apostle say, “They sought it not by faith” (Romans 9:32). The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Corinthians 3:6) and this irrespective of this so-called physical condemnation.

Page 12, paragraph 2. We have already touched upon the righteousness of one and how the one act was the price of our release or redemption, also of the obedient life of Jesus apart from this one act (though also an act of obedience). John 15:10 shows that Jesus kept God’s commandments and therefore remained or abided in God’s love. We have also considered free life, which R.Roberts has completely

misrepresented as E.Turney never contended for free life in the manner that R.Roberts accuses him of doing, as we will have occasion to point out later. We have also considered the incapability of flesh to keep the law, an assertion that is not found in Scripture. We wish to state here that Jesus was in flesh and He kept the law in both the spirit and the letter. He said on one occasion, "Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother," etc. (Matthew 5:21,22). This is the spirit of the law. Love is the fulfilling of the law and Jesus kept it. (This statement is proleptic - Love was the inciting factor upon which the law runs. Love was the incentive to introduce the law - without which the law had never been introduced). How, then, was flesh unable to keep it? **Let me refer you back to page 11 of R.Roberts' book - "The commandment (speaking of the law) was ordained to life. Does that mean eternal life? Yes." Then he refers to a certain lawyer and concludes the paragraph by saying "The law was ordained to life if they kept it."** How does this apply to Jesus on R.Roberts' own reasoning? Did not Jesus earn eternal life by keeping the law, letter and spirit, apart from the one act necessary for our redemption? If He did not, then the law, which was holy, just and good, appears to be a worthless thing! It is by faith, operating through love, which is the complete fulfilment of the law and we repeat that if Jesus had not been produced by God but was born of the will of the flesh which is the same as being described as "in Adam's loins," His obedience would have only benefited Himself, because in that case He could not have been the saviour of the world. Had He not been begotten of God He would not have been without spot and would not have been a pure offering to buy back. Redemption, justification by the grace of God must be the first requisite, or the Scriptures will be nullified which say "Not by works, but by grace through faith," and this applied to Jesus. Cornelius is a striking example of this.

R.Roberts continues, "God will keep no man in the grave because of Adam's sin if he himself is individually righteous." We reply, man does not go to the grave because of Adam's sin. Man goes to the grave because he is of corruptible organization (natural) as God made him. Every man shall suffer for his own sin, be it violation of natural law (sinneth against his own body) or spiritual law. What will keep him in the grave will be his dying in Adamic relationship. Perish without law (to God) showing God's just principle of free will without physical shackling. We most certainly agree that God will keep no man in the grave if he himself be individually righteous but his righteousness must be God's righteousness that is by faith.

R.Roberts proceeds, "How came it then that life could not come by the law as Paul says in the 3rd chapter of Galatians at the 21st verse: 'Is the law then against the promise of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law'". He then gives Romans 8:3 as the spirit's answer to show why the law could not give life and further down repeats **his oft used phrase of the incapability of the flesh to keep it and at the same time holds that Jesus came in flesh (sinful flesh at that) to keep it! He merely says that the law could not give life because no one was able to keep it,** which is equivalent to saying that there was no eternal life in the law, **after himself agreeing that the law was ordained to eternal life.** If no one kept the law then no one under the law will have eternal life. In that case, what about the worthies of Hebrews 11? What R.Roberts has omitted to explain (probably because it is in opposition to his argument) is the true Scriptural reason why the actual law itself would not give life. It is faith in what the law prefigured that gave life, not the law itself. The law itself was not of faith. If it was, how could the Scriptures say that faith cometh by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17)? The law was given, but faith had to be exhibited in that law given. Did it ever occur to R.Roberts, or has it ever occurred to Christadelphians that if the law itself gave life the Jews were born into the kingdom of God? You may probably stare at this statement but it is the teaching of Scripture, which was Paul's argument against the Jews who boasted in Moses' law, as he says, "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." It was an enigma to the Jew that the Gentile should have a part in the promise. Paul says, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid." The law was holy, just and good, and what is holy, just and good cannot be in opposition to the promises of God. But the promise was of faith. Therefore the literal law prefigured that wherein faith was to be exhibited, viz., the sacrifice of Jesus as the price of man's redemption. Jesus did not take the law away, nailing it to His cross in its entirety. The spirit of the law (which was faith in the law) is as much in operation to-day as ever it was. What was blotted out was the handwriting of ordinances (Colossians 2:14).

These ordinances or shadows were not required when Jesus who was the substance of them, paid the price that they foreshadowed, on Calvary. Eternal life was acquired in the law before Jesus was born, being provisional, which sets aside R.Roberts' dazzle regarding the incapability of the flesh to keep it.

R.Roberts' application of Romans 8:3 "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" is not the spirit's answer nor the supporting of his theory of physical condemnation. What support does he find for his theory in this passage when he believes that Jesus came under the same physical condemnation? On this reasoning the law could have produced such an one.

It amounts to this; R. Roberts wants two Christs, viz., a morally sinless one and a physically condemned one. In other words, a black and white shield to hide behind to produce a black or white Christ when it suits him to do so.

What the law could not do was to produce one free from Adamic relationship, that is, legally free, by not being born of the will of the flesh, though of the same nature, thereby being not among the all concluded under sin. (More on this when we consider page 19).

R.Roberts uses the occasion of the disciples falling asleep in the garden of Gethsemane to support his argument. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). He does not seem to desire to discriminate between natural physical exhaustion and condemned nature. There is the teaching of first natural then spiritual in this incident, viz., keep spiritually awake as a natural man. **Concluding the paragraph R.Roberts says, "This is the teaching of the word, and the teaching of God's word is decisive in such matters."** We are quite agreed and rejoice in the fact that the teaching of God's word is decisive in such matters, but reject R.Roberts' interpretation of God's teaching. Where does God teach that nature is an unclean thing and physically condemned? Can he produce a passage of Scripture of the spirit's teaching in opposition to this - "There is nothing unclean of itself"? Read honestly; search and see

Page 12, paragraph 3. This paragraph contains some very important Scripture, but R.Roberts lacks the necessary discrimination none the less. He asks, "Could not God have made human nature after such a pattern or constitution that it would have been able to keep the law? Doubtless He could. Why did He not?" Then he gives the reason of God not so making human nature as follows: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise of faith by Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Galatians 3:22). Here he is charging God with making human nature upon such a pattern or constitution that it could not possibly keep the law and at the same time asking man to obey Him. He says, **"Our wisdom lies in simply seeing and accepting it."** Have we to simply see and accept what is not to be found in the Scriptures? R.Roberts is asking us to accept that God made human nature of such a pattern or constitution that it could not possibly keep His law. Did R.Roberts ever reject free will? No, he always preached it, because it would be unscriptural to do otherwise. Here he is repudiating his own teaching to uphold physical condemnation. Did not Adam have a free will to obey or disobey in the nature God created? Certainly he did. Assuming that there was a physical change after transgression, has that change deprived man of free will? Why, the very Scriptures deny it. What does R.Roberts' reasoning amount to in accordance with his quotation of Galatians 3:22? This - that God raised up His only begotten Son to pay the penalty for what Adam, nor any other person could not have avoided - human nature. And he asks us to accept that all are concluded under a sin which could not possibly be avoided owing to God's wisdom in creating man of a nature that could not keep His law, that the promise of faith by Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Believe what? That God gave Jesus to suffer for what man could not avoid, or that He gave Jesus as the just for the unjust? We have shown that the law could be and was kept both in letter and spirit. God has not asked anyone to do what was impossible. Proof: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able," etc. (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In Galatians 5 we read a list of the works of the flesh, and this is the spirit's list or teaching. We ask, can you place your finger upon one of the works mentioned there that cannot be avoided? Flee this delusion of "sinful flesh as a physical fixation" because it is built upon sand and needs the advocates of it to go to the very extreme of confusion to uphold, yes, to the very extreme of using the only begotten of the Father as a prop to support it and then knock the prop away when considering His moral freedom from sin. Be fully persuaded in your minds as to what is the scriptural definition of sin and you have the truth in its simplicity as to the record "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Galatians 3:22; Romans 3:19; and 11:32, prove conclusively that we are concluded under sin on the federal principle. The one sin of Adam brought upon him and all in him, a legal condemnation so that faith must be exhibited in God's loving and merciful provision of the

ransom, not that we physically suffer for that one sin. It is imputed to all in Adam upon the same principle (which is just) that we are made righteous in Christ by faith in the one obedient act of shedding His blood, namely, legal (Romans 5 & 8:1). If we are all concluded physically under sin, then why are we not made physically righteous at baptism? Oh, says Christadelphianism, that occurs at resurrection. Well, in that case, the condemnation is not removed until resurrection, thereby making the spirit word of Romans 8:1 a lie. Perceive the double dealing (and contradiction - "Echoes of Past Controversies" - Dr. Thomas, page 48 and R.R., page 52) that has to be resorted to here. They are not prepared to accept the spirit's teaching that there is now no condemnation which proves conclusively that the condemnation is legal, but must contend that man must pass through the grave to be physically cleansed or purified from sin, thereby involving Jesus in such an absurdity as this - "In Him is no sin, but in Him was sin." Two condemnations in the face of the Spirit's declaration that there is only one, and that one God is more than pleased to remove now, while we are yet corruptible beings. Well may R.Roberts quote the Spirit's words "That He might have mercy on all," but what a God-dishonouring foundation he gives for quoting it. He quotes, "That no flesh should glory in His sight" (1 Corinthians 1:29). "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). Why doesn't he quote it upon a true foundation? The law prevented anyone being righteous in his own eyes. It made all conscious of sin as Paul says. Why did it stop every mouth and make all guilty before God? Simply because there was one thing requisite before works of righteousness could commence - and that was redemption, which redemption was as efficacious before the antitypical ransom price was paid as after, being prefigured in the ordinances which was to be recognized before the spirit of the law could be kept. The mere works of the law (merely keeping the letter of the ordinances) justified no one. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20).

Christadelphians agree that morality is of no avail apart from belief and baptism, and so it was with the mere keeping of the letter of the law. The righteousness which was of the law justified no one, but the righteousness which is of faith does, though it had to be exhibited in the same law. We go one further than Christadelphians and say that if redemption be not recognized as the first requisite, baptism and works will be of no avail, because no one can commence works of righteousness who has not recognized God's redemption by Christ has made him legally free to do so.

R.Roberts continues: "The spirit and essence of the plan of God's redemption in Christ is that praise and glory may be to Him, and that no flesh should glory in His presence" etc. This is what we are contending for. R.Roberts is here supporting our contention, viz., that the redemption is God's, that God provided it, that flesh could not glory in His presence by providing it. We have pleasure here in quoting one of the leading Christadelphian advocates of to-day, Islip Collyer, in his book, "The Meaning of Sacrifice," where he says "Christ was begotten, not of the will of the flesh, but by the power of the Highest, the Holy Spirit of God. Human flesh was thus rejected as unable to effect any redemption." This proves the fact that had Jesus been in the loins of Adam He could not have been able to effect redemption; hence Jesus being produced by God, and in flesh, is evidence of proof of the statement that no flesh should glory in His presence has to do with His mode of production. It also proves the legal aspect of the condemnation. Jesus was Son of God from His conception (see Luke 1) "That holy thing that shall be born of thee."

Jesus was in flesh when He accomplished the ransom, as it could not be accomplished otherwise owing to the laying down of His life (the life of His flesh which was in the blood) being the equivalent of a life for a life. To say that Jesus was given extra power to accomplish this makes God unjust. What is the force of His being made in all points like unto His brethren if He were given extra power to overcome? It makes overcoming a farce. Jesus' power to do this lay in the fact that He was free from the sin of Adam that all were concluded under. His miraculous conception and His desire at all times to do His Father's will. Therefore, none but He could redeem His brother (Dr.Thomas, "Eureka" vol. 1, page 278).

Page 13, paragraph 1. R.Roberts says, "The highest delight of created beings is the recognition and adoration of the eternal prerogative of God." No one can more approve of this statement than we. The eternal prerogative of God we have endeavoured to show in the just method of the all-important understanding of the sacrifice of Christ. God's eternal prerogative we lovingly admit and, **as R.Roberts says on page 12, paragraph 3, "Our wisdom lies in seeing and accepting it,"** but to accept God's prerogative and at the same time contend for what is not in harmony with His justice is a charge that we will ever endeavour to avoid. **R.Roberts continues, "I give you the Father's own declaration of the Father's mind instead of condescending like the lecturer last night to quote heathen poets and the doctors of the**

apostasy-” In reply we agree that E.Turney quoted heathen poets and the doctors of the apostasy and we say that E.Turney could very well have omitted them from his remarks, because heathen poets were not what he relied upon. Christadelphians, including R.Roberts and Dr. Thomas, have resorted to the very same thing. We are not saying this to excuse E.Turney but to suggest that they both (E.Turney and Christadelphians) found some truth in the heathen poets. It is a weak argument of R.Roberts to refer to it. Be it remembered that our beloved apostle Paul used the heathen poets wherein they were true (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12). This appears that R.Roberts’ complaint extended against Paul. Really, it was an attempt to belittle E.Turney (one of those things that R.Roberts always excused himself for afterwards because of the weakness of the flesh) yet he refused to debate the matter out with E.Turney for three or four nights or as long as he desired.

Page 13, paragraph 2- “But now is the righteousness of God manifested without the law.” We would remind the reader that life in the blood is the ransom price, not the obedient acts under law. This is where the price of redemption is changed by Christadelphians. Works of law alone saved no one. The righteousness of God was manifested without the law in that the ordinances were not required, Jesus being the substance of them. Though He was the fulfilment of what the ordinances portrayed, He also fulfilled the spirit of the law, thereby manifesting the righteousness of God. We agree that He was subject to the law owing to His mother being a Jewess of the line of David, but the fallacy of R.Roberts’ reasoning lies in his assumed physical condemnation. All under the law were legally condemned in Adam until they saw the redemption prefigured in the law and upon seeing it and recognizing it, obeying the spirit of the ordinances. None under the law or outside the law were physically condemned. Therefore for Jesus to be the seed of Abraham and of David (in the female line) does not make Him physically condemned but more clearly demonstrates that the condemnation is legal. We will endeavour to demonstrate this from the Scriptures under three headings, viz., THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, as Paul scripturally demonstrates in harmony with the arguments of Jesus to the Jews; THE GENEALOGIES OF MATTHEW & LUKE; and THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.

Page 13, paragraph 3. “The object of Jesus being made under the law was that He might be under its curse.” We reply, if Jesus died under the curse of the law He was a sinner. And the Scriptures and R.Roberts say that He was spotless. He was made a curse for us, not that He was under the curse (Galatians 3:10). He was made a curse at the same time that He was made a sin offering for us, viz-, at 33 years of age, not at birth- Imagine the shadow cursing the substance. What does the apostle mean when he says “For as many as are under the law are under the curse? Does he merely restrict it to the transgressing of the law in its practical application? No. He goes beyond that. The spirit of the law as portrayed in the letter of it concluded all under the sin of Adam. Therefore the spirit of the law cursed all as in Adamic relationship on the federal principle and this curse had to be removed by the individual under the law before Christ appeared by recognizing the redemption that was prefigured. He was then in the position of being provisionally freed. The fallacy of applying the curse of the law to the literal application of it regarding the individual transgressor lies in the fact that it is only applied to the operation of the letter. But Paul clears away this fallacy in his exposition relating to himself. We quote as follows from the Emphatic Diaglott on Galatians 2:19, “Besides, I through the law, died by law, so that I might live by God.” In what sense did Paul die by law? Physically? Absurd. The curse of the law concluded all under sin. Hence it was the ministration of death on the federal principle as well as in its literal application to the actual transgressor of its letter. Paul in writing on these things did not dwell on the letter (he had done that previously, thinking he was doing God service). Hence he could say that the law that was ordained to life he found to be unto death. Death unto sin. When we, like Paul, have died unto sin, the curse is removed, having been baptized into the death that removed the curse. Hence the glorious harmony between Paul’s words concerning himself in Galatians 2:19 and Romans 8:1.

For the benefit of readers who do not know what the “joke” was that R.Roberts says was attempted last night we will explain. But first of all why is this supposed joke not explained by R.Roberts here? Perhaps he realized that it was no joke at all? But we leave that to the reader to judge when we quote it. It is indeed a pity that so few have made themselves acquainted with E.Turney’s lecture so as to be enabled to see whether R.Roberts is combating what E.Turney did contend for. The following is the joke: J.J.Andrew wrote in “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified” that Jesus broke the law (page 77, line 1, first edition) as follows; “He that is hanged is accursed of God. This was the one item of the law which was infringed by Jesus, and therefore He became obnoxious to its curse.” The attempted joke in the opinion of R.Roberts was in the following reply of E.Turney to J.J.Andrew’s statement: “It was necessary then for Jesus to do this, namely,

to be guilty of the whole law to obey it.” Well, if this is a Joke, what is the statement that it was made in reply to? What was the impression that J.J.Andrew’s statement made in the eyes of others which caused the statement to be omitted in the reprint? Study Deuteronomy 21:22 and Galatians 3:10-13 and see if you can make a transgressor of the law a type of the Lord Jesus who was without sin. If you can, you may succeed in making His hanging on the tree His breaking of the law.

Listen to another eminent Christadelphian leader, “It does not necessarily follow that hanging on a tree was a breach of law, It does not say that. If it were so, the law would be broken and in that case it would place Christ in the same position as those who were guilty of all (James 2:10, H.Fry in “Echoes of Past Controversies,” Page 102). The law cursed the transgressor and he was hung upon a tree afterwards. Jesus voluntarily laid down His life and took the curse of the law away, nailing it to His cross. What did He nail to His cross - the spirit of the law? No. The handwriting of ordinances (Colossians 2:14). Why? Because they prefigured Him as the substance that would remove the curse. He was put to death by wicked hands as a transgressor in their opinions. Therefore they meted out to Him the literal physical penalty as of a transgressor of the law. Because wicked men did it, is that proof that the law, which was holy, just and good, did it? It was as the apostle Peter says, and no theorising can alter it - “the just for the unjust.” He removed the curse for all. If all do not accept the removal of the condemnation it does not alter the fact that the redemption price has been paid.

Jesus opened up a new and living way for all under the federal sin of Adam. “Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin (singular) of the world” (John 1:29). So that whosoever believeth in Him (as the ransom, through faith) should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16), as one sin came by man, and death (as wages) by sin, so life came by the one act of the man Christ Jesus (Romans 5:18,19). It was in love that Jesus laid down His life for us (Ephesians 5:25) and not because the law cursed Him to do it. The wages of sin is death by execution. This penalty Adam did not pay. Jesus paid it to redeem all who are under that penalty; Adam first and we, as in him on the federal principle. To say that the law cursed Jesus and also say that He voluntarily gave, is to contend for the absurdity of voluntary compulsion. (Is this another joke?). Jesus was obedient even to the death of the cross. He was cursed by sinners but never by God or His law.

to be continued-

MISCELLENAE

In response to her editorial in the Last Circular Letter, Sister Helen received the following letter-

Dear Sister Helen, I received this morning issue 182 of The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter, of which the opening page contained your letter to us all dated 28 March 2000. I hope you will allow me to raise one question as to the accuracy of this page, and accept my assurance that I do not intend to make any controversial use of the correction if I prove to be right. I am sure you will want to rectify the error, but you need not mention my name in doing so, and I should, indeed, prefer that you did not do so.

My copies of Psalm 37 AKJ version do not contain the precise words you have quoted, but rather: *“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. Psalm 37:7-8, verse 8 resembling verse 1, Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.”*

This quotation does not entirely warrant your statement, “*Every word in the oratorio is biblical,*” and, more to the point, does not seem to appear in the oratorio at all. My own copy of Messiah, at least, seems to contain no quotation from Psalm 37.

My strong recollection is that the words are actually quoted in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. I have just rescued my copy of this from the oblivion of our loft, and confirmed the memory. It is the second aria in Part II, and is something of a paraphrase of AKJ.

I think, in concluding, that you are a bit too flattering of Handel's scriptwriter in the sentence "Every word... is biblical" for the words "*Thy rebuke hath broken his heart*" of the tenor Recitative from Psalm 69:20 are neither true to the Psalm nor to the facts of the case. Reproach or insults certainly, as in some modern versions, but the idea of God rebuking Jesus is not welcome to me, or to you either I should imagine.

All the same, I admire Messiah greatly, even if I should stop short of Handel's view, if that is what he really thought, that he was inspired when he wrote the oratorio.

With my best wishes, A

In reply Sister Helen wrote as follows:-

Dear Brother A, Thank you for your kind letter pointing out my careless mistakes concerning Handel's Messiahs the March Circular Letter.

I wrote from memory and only checked with a friend who sings in oratorios. Obviously I should have been more thorough. I didn't realize I knew anything from Elijah. Nor did I recall Handel's Recitative "Thy rebuke..." I take your point completely and regret my wholehearted flattery. My only plea in mitigation is that the words "...and He will give you your heart's desire," are a slight modification of verse 4 of Psalm 37. I am glad neither Handel nor Mendelssohn are in a position to be irritated at my ignorance in mixing their works.

Russell will print a full correction using your letter but omitting your name as you prefer.

My grateful thanks for writing and with best wishes, Helen.

* * *

From time to time we all experience something which makes us stop and think, perhaps something is said which is the cause for taking more notice than usual. This happened to me again when I received a letter a few weeks ago; here it is:-

"Dear Mr Gregory, For a few months I have been sent copies of your magazine, together with pamphlets issued by your organization. I do not know where you got my address from, or how I was selected to receive them, but I wish you to cease sending them to me.

As a Christadelphian, I am... unable to accept some of the less lovely aspects of the brotherhood, such as disfellowshipping and the lack of appreciation about salvation etc., but I deplore your practice of attacking the body at every opportunity. It must be the easiest thing in the world to criticize, and your fellowship must read every word published by Christadelphians so that you can issue some defamatory article about it. If you did the same for all other religious groups and churches I could understand it, but to select just one, upon which to pronounce, displays to me a misguided sense of dedication which is unfair, unhelpful and mischievous.

I am aware that I and we have many faults, and I count that knowledge as a blessing. Perhaps you are not so aware that your own organization may be at least as faulty, because no one considers themselves responsible for pointing them out to you on such a regular basis and in such an un-Christ like way.

I have read most of the articles in your booklets etc., and find them very tedious, trawling up as they do, arguments and condemnations for statements made by men and women sometimes a generation or more ago, and which may find little support among the current membership. I also find many of your statements and articles can be traced back to semantics and 'strife about words,' which as you will know is condemned by N.T. writers. I do wish that you would use your obvious talents for study and writing to a more profitable use in building up rather than trying to demolish the beliefs and faith of other people.

I would urge you to do the unthinkable, and join us in worship and praise. It is a fact that no two people have the same understandings and beliefs. Who is to say which one is the right one? Me? You? Or are you so convinced by your own rhetoric that no one but you has any standing before God?

Originally I was brought up by good parents as a Methodist, but Bro. A.D.Norris's appearance on T.V. was the first intimation that there might be something more to religion than that Church's beliefs. I do despise the way in which you vilify him for words which may not be meant as you choose to take them.

For over 10 years I have been trying to tell Brethren that there is more to belief than to strive after (an unattainable) perfection, and that judgment may not be the bogeyman many consider it to be, but I have had absolutely no success. You will have little success either, in trying to persuade Christadelphians to change their beliefs. We are a conservative, Victorian society, where received wisdom is 'the truth,' and any amount of propaganda is useless if it cuts across this teaching. It may be a pity in many ways, but it may also be strength in others.

What you do achieve is to upset some who are not well founded and cause them to worry, but few are able to talk about their worries to others for fear of being considered 'unsound.' Is that your objective? From my limited knowledge you have had little success in enticing many to join your tiny group.

If you wish to reply in a positive way to my suggestions for a more harmonious relationship I shall be pleased to hear from you as a fellow believer. If you wish to reply in any other way I have to say that I shall ignore it.

I hope that there is some way in which we can be united in a common belief based on reason rather than unfounded opinion (that Adam was created a dying creature, the two deaths etc), and more in keeping with your original roots in Christadelphianism.

Yours sincerely, X.

In reply I wrote: -

Dear X, Thank you for your letter of 28th March and I apologize for being so long in responding but I wanted to consider thoughtfully and prayerfully the matters you raise.

There was a time when I seemed to receive either letters of appreciation or letters of - dare I say it - hate. Thankfully the distasteful letters have all but ceased. It is your letter that has brought me up short and for which I thank you. I have no wish to try to justify myself if I am doing anything wrong, but if your letter helps me get things into a better perspective then that must be good for our readers.

I found your name and address in the A.L.S. diary and at your request have now taken you off our mailing list.

You say you "...are unable to accept some of the unlovely aspects of the brotherhood such as disfellowshipping and the lack of appreciation about salvation," etc. These are indeed matters to be deplored. The practise of disfellowshipping would not be possible if there was no B.A.S.F. or such like creed and that is why we print our position on the back cover of every booklet we publish. I feel this is a very important position for us to maintain.

Almost all in the Nazarene Fellowship have come out of the Christadelphian community and we know of many others who, while sharing our beliefs, still continue to stay within that community feeling they can do more good there than by leaving. Personally, while I do not agree with their stance, I nevertheless understand it and looking back on my own past, I sat on the fence for many years before resignation was demanded of me. At the time I was upset but now I thank God for bringing me into more light and truth than ever I considered possible as a Christadelphian.

The lack of appreciation about salvation amongst Christadelphians is due to their failure to understand the Atonement and that is where we put so much emphasis in our teaching. I fail to see this as "a misguided

sense of dedication which is unfair, unhelpful and mischievous.” We are never content merely to criticize Christadelphian teaching but we feel we invariably put something better in its place.

As for the Nazarene Fellowship reading every word published by the Christadelphians this is simply not the case. I very rarely see a Christadelphian magazine and do not know of anyone in the Nazarene Fellowship who receives any of them on a regular basis. During the past twelve months I have been given perhaps one pamphlet and two small books, one of which I have not yet read. Apart from this I receive contributions by others who come into contact with Christadelphians, or from Christadelphians themselves. The information which comes to me seems to be a matter, speaking in a worldly sense, of pure chance: I know this is not the case of course.

The thing that hurts most in your letter is that you see us as “pointing out faults in Christadelphian doctrines in an un-Christlike way.” This is never intended. Certainly we attack and I can understand this attack may be seen to stem from self-righteousness, but God forbid - “There but for the grace of God, go I.” All we do is out of love for others that they may study for themselves and be found approved of God. More than anything in the world I feel I want to echo the sentiments of Paul - “I would to God, that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these (B.A.S.F.) bonds.”

You say that you also find many of our statements and articles can be traced back to semantics and strife about words, which is condemned. I do not accept this as true and fail to see where you get this idea from. On the contrary we are told to “prove all things and hold fast that which is good.” The purpose in doing this is so that we can worship God in spirit and in truth “for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” To this end we do our best to demolish wrong teachings.

Then you ask, “Who is to say which one is right?” But God said through Isaiah (1:18), “Come now, and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool...” How can we reason with God but by prayer and study of His Word? How else can we have a right standing before God? I would rejoice to join in worship and praise of God together with all of like precious faith.

All of us feel that our time spent within the Christadelphian community was an important stepping stone to a better understanding of the Atonement. It has never been our expectation that many of them would be convinced of what we have learned. All are called of God and come to Him when ready, usually late in life. Our objective is that we should put forward sound scriptural proof of all we believe.

Again you say “I despise the way in which you vilify him (A.D.Norris) for words which may not be meant as you choose to take them.” We do not vilify him and we are aware of his sincerity but all we know of his beliefs is what he has written and we have shown where they are contrary to Scripture. He is a very capable writer and I have no reason to suppose he might mean other than he says, but I will give anyone the benefit of any doubt. A few years ago he wrote an article specially for us to publish in our Circular Letter. Should you wish I will send you a copy.

How we wish we had a more harmonious relationship with Christadelphians but we cannot compromise with Bible truth in order to achieve harmony.

I too hope there is some way in which we can be united in a common belief based on reason rather than unfounded opinion (that Adam was not created a dying creature, not two deaths etc) and more in keeping with our original roots in Christadelphianism. John Thomas had a right spirit within him during his prayer when ship-wreck threatened. Paul had a right spirit within him when on the road to Damascus. It has been my great desire and my prayer for many years that my knowledge of God, of His will and of His purpose should be increased; that the door of my understanding should be opened to understand these things; and that I might have wisdom from above and so honour and glorify our Heavenly Father. I feel my prayer has, by the grace of God, been answered in some small measure, for which I am thankful beyond words.

Belief and obedience are also both important for we must worship God in spirit and in truth, and as Jesus said, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” If we apply ourselves to prayer we need not fail in either.

What your letter tells me is that we need to put more emphasis on the grace and love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ, also, while in our prayers I am sure we all express praise, thankfulness and humility, these are not sufficiently apparent in our writings.

By the grace and love of God and His beloved Son who shed His lifeblood for us we have passed from death into life. In this precious knowledge and in humility I ask you to accept this letter.

Yours sincerely, Russell.

* * *

I quote from a letter received from Brother Harold Dawson:- “The matter of the nature of Jesus Christ and the fact that He was born of the will of the Spirit and not of the will of the flesh is very, very important that we should attribute to our Saviour the majesty that was really His - and yet He took upon Himself the status of a servant to wash our feet and He paid the price of our sins in order to save us all. I stand in awe of His love towards us who at best are so unworthy of His great sacrifice, and I stand in awe also of course, of what the power of God must be. It is because Christadelphians fail to recognize the significance of the fact that Jesus was heralded by the angel who appeared to Joseph and Mary about this vital fact, that they have a Christ who was as condemned as those He came to save. A tragedy indeed and so very sad. May God open all our eyes and receive us at last.”

* * *

I have again been in touch with Graeham Mansfield, Editor of The Logos Magazine, and he says he will yet correspond with us. The delay, he assures us, has been due to pressure of work and writes - “I have had no opportunity to give the matter due consideration, having to deal with many other details in the production of our magazines. However, I am aware of our agreement, and I will certainly take up the matter with you... I am approaching some of our associated brethren to see whether they will take on the communication with you. Otherwise I will try and do something while travelling.”

[This being a reference to his forthcoming visit to North America and the U.K.]

We look forward to this exchange on our varied beliefs which we shall report in full in due course.

* * *

Recent correspondence between Brethren Eric Cave and Geoff Hampton has centred on Revelation 16:12 discussing the meaning of the word Armageddon. Many years ago brother Eric was asked “Where does it say that Armageddon is a battle?” Ever since that time he says he has never referred to Armageddon as a battle and he writes:-

“It is clear that the text speaks of two gatherings. The gathering of the nations of the whole world by the three unclean spirits... to fight with God Almighty; and the gathering of those who watch and keep their garments by the One who comes as a thief.

These latter are assembled at a place which John says is called Armageddon. I see little merit in the assumption of John Thomas that the word signifies “A heap of sheaves in the valley of threshing.” The Hebrew HR is never rendered “heap” (which is an entirely different word in Hebrew) but always “mount” or “mountain.” John Thomas simply followed Christendom’s suppositions that the returned Christ would destroy all the world’s armies as a first step to the establishment of His Kingdom. Joseph’s sheaves in Genesis 37 and the precious sheaves of the sower in Psalm 126:6 render the Hebrew ALUMMAH or ALUM. The sheaf of the first fruits to be waved before YHWH in Leviticus 23:10 is OMR (an ‘omer’ or a ‘handful’). The valley of Jehoshaphat, or valley of decision in Joel 3 where the final battle is to be fought is rendered by the Hebrew AMK ‘emeq’ or ‘aymek.’

Alternatively Brother Gibson, well known for his articles in The Testimony throughout the 70's and 80's and the author of "Biblical Semantic Logic" though no longer a Christadelphian, has the following to say - 'Deuteronomy 33:15 is the only place in Scripture where the precise Hebrew words which comprise Armageddon occur together.' He argues that the Hebrew HR (har) 'mountain' and MGD (mege) 'precious things' or 'pleasant things,' with 'on' being simply a grammatical case ending.

The word 'mege' is rendered 'precious things,' or 'precious fruits' in Genesis 24:53, Deuteronomy 33:13,14 (twice) and 15 where it is preceded by HR (har) and again in verse 16. It is also rendered precious things in 2 Chronicles 21:3 and Ezra 1:6. It is rendered 'pleasant fruits' in the Song of Solomon 4:13,16 and 7:13. It is these precious fruits, with Jesus Himself being the firstfruits of them that sleep that are laid up at their gates for the bride and her beloved in the Song of Zion's King.

If you read the contexts of the foregoing references I think you will agree that when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, then the dead in Christ shall rise first then we which are alive and remain can expect to be caught up together with them that now sleep to meet our Lord in the air and be transported to the mount of precious things called in the Hebrew tongue 'Armageddon' and ever be with Him, our Hope and our Salvation. How we long and pray for that day."

* * *

We received a letter in April from a correspondent who has asked to remain anonymous, and in his letter he writes: "I am a recent convert to the Nazarene understanding of the Holy Word of God... I am at last able to fairly well grasp a lot more truth than I ever heard of since I became a Christadelphian... Thanks be to our Father at this time in my life I feel retrieved from error."

Again we rejoice greatly to receive such letters. We understand this elderly brother has had a hard life. Our prayers are with him that he may rejoice the more in his increased knowledge and understanding, looking forward to Lord's coming.

* * *

A few months ago a relative died, his possessions being shared amongst those nearest and dearest to him. Later, I had the opportunity of visiting the house a day or two before the sale was completed, to see if there was anything I would like before the remnants were disposed of. Amongst some old books I found (by chance?) a copy of Dr Edersheim's, "The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness" from which I have published a short piece on pages 16 to 18.

Reading this book by Dr. Edersheim brought to mind that some time ago I showed, in the pages of the C.L., one of the likenesses between Moses and Jesus Christ was they were both free of the bondage in which their next of kin were involved; Moses, miraculously, was brought up in the King's household free of the bondage in which his family and nation were held; and Jesus Christ, miraculously born of a virgin, also brought up in His Father's house, was free of the bondage to sin which all His kinsmen were concluded under.

Stephen, in his defence in answering the high priest and just before he was cast out of the city and stoned to death, said, "This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This same Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me" (Acts 7:36,37). In all this we see comparison and similarity between Moses and Jesus Christ but I would emphasize the distinctive likeness between Moses and Jesus Christ was their freedom from bondage and this is unique in Scripture.

This freedom from bondage is the key to the Atonement for without this understanding, the Atonement remains ever a mystery despite the many claims to the contrary.

* * *

Almost all of Christendom agrees Jesus Christ “condemned sin in the flesh” by which they understand that we all have “sin in the flesh,” that is to say, “sinful flesh.” The Roman Catholic Church felt it wrong for the Son of God to have sin in His flesh so they devised the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which makes Him free of it; for Christadelphians, having sin in His flesh is no difficulty because they claim that Jesus, having sinful flesh, had to die for Himself to get rid of it, as well as for us.

However these doctrines are built upon one verse of Scripture; their dependency is solely upon Romans 8:3 meaning what they want it to mean, and while other references are put forward in support of this interpretation, none of them teach it. Take away Romans 8:3 and you take away the notions of sin in the flesh, sinful flesh, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and support for the idea that we cannot be obedient, etc.

However, the phrase “sin in the flesh” demands a better understanding than this when we consider such Scriptures as the following:-

John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 14:9-11, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father... the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me.”

1 John 3:5, “...and in him is no sin.”

Hebrews 10:20, “Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...”

1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sin... that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

1 Peter 4:1, “Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh...”

Acts 2:31, “He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

The above selection of Scripture references are all consistent with the fact that Jesus Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (Hebrews 8:26) while he was in the flesh, when, in condemning sin, “He suffered for us in the days of his flesh” (1 Peter 4:1, also Hebrews 5:5-7). Indeed, it was not His flesh Jesus Christ found to be at fault but the wickedness of the people around Him. Paul confirms this in writing to the Ephesians (6:12) - “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

By His obedience unto death, Jesus Christ condemned sin “in the days of His flesh” - this is what Paul is telling the Romans in 8:3. Read in this light it indeed seems strange that such a tangled web of doctrine has been developed round this one misunderstood verse – the only verse in Scripture where it is purported to tell us we have sin in the flesh. It is dangerous building any doctrine on a single verse. How much mischief has been caused for over seventeen hundred years by a Pope who wanted to justify his wanton misconduct by excusing himself on the grounds that he was not responsible for his fleshly lusts, blaming his flesh instead of himself for his immorality!

“To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever, Amen” Russell.