

Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 188

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings.

In about the 12th century B.C. Sisera was the Canaanite commander of the army of the king of Hazor. Hazor had conquered the Israelites and treated them harshly for twenty years. At that time Deborah the prophetess and judge was also living. She is the only woman in the Old Testament whose force of character and sagacity made her a leader in her own right. Deborah determined to lead a revolt against Canaanite domination. The story of her triumph is told in two accounts, one in prose and the other in the form of a ballad or song attributed to Deborah herself. The two are not the same in all details.

When the story opens in Judges Deborah is described as habitually seated under a tree between Bethel and Ramah north of Jerusalem where “the people of Israel came up to her for judgment.”

Commanded by God, Deborah sent for Barak and she instructed him to muster the men of Naphtali and Zebulun on the wooded slopes of Mount Tabor. The prose account tells us that only these two tribes were called to the battle. But Deborah’s song indicates that she sent out a general call for help and she pours out her anger on the tribes that did not respond to her, saying, “Why did you tarry among the sheepfold, to hear the piping for the flocks?”

Barak seems to have been a bit unenthusiastic about the fight in spite of having ten thousand men under his command and says rather flatly to Deborah, and apparently quite unconcerned that she is a woman, “If you will go with me, I will go.” So Deborah agrees to accompany the army.

Sisera had a force that included about nine hundred chariots and he advanced in battle array along the open plain past the Canaanite strongholds of Megiddo and Taanach. Sisera no doubt assumed that at this display of might, the rebellious Israeli tribesmen would melt back into their hills. But he failed to take into account that the Lord and the weather were on the side of his foes.

A violent rainstorm came down suddenly, flooding the Kishon and turning the floor of the valley into mud, which was churned up still further by the prancing horses. With the chariots

bogged down and helpless the Israelites rushed down on them in a wild charge. Caught completely off balance, the Canaanite forces were routed and wiped out. Sisera fled to meet a grisly end in a tent killed by Jael, a Kenite woman. She invited him in for a drink, covered him up and stood guard outside until he fell asleep and then she went in and drove a tent peg into his temple. Barak pursued Sisera and Jael shewed him lying dead in her tent.

Deborah was clearly one of the Bible's most remarkable women. Highly esteemed of God and chosen by Him to be a prophet and a judge of His people. Her story also sheds an interesting light on a man's attitude toward a woman of quality all those years ago, in that Barak thought Deborah sufficiently able to accompany him into battle. If we remain faithful what calibre of persons we shall be privileged to walk the earth with when Jesus Christ at last returns to it.

Love to all, Helen Brady

“I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD”

Galatians 2:20

JESUS THE TRUE SUBSTITUTE FOR ADAM'S PENALTY OF DEATH BY SIN

There are people who falsely believe the penalty for sin Adam incurred was the common death he would have experienced if his created corruptible nature were not changed to a superior one like the Angels. There are also some who deny that Adam's nature was subject to decay and death if left to the physical course appointed by the Creator.

In consequence of this, a nature unknown and unwritten in the Scriptures of truth is produced upon the scene, using legal terms in the place of physical terms by stating Adam at creation to be “neither mortal nor immortal,” but “very good,” restricting the latter to apply only to human nature when it applies to the whole creation, and why not if corruptible nature capable of death be considered “very good” if the Creator terms it to be so?

The terms mortal and immortal should not be used in the loose sense some are in the habit of doing. Correct me if I am wrong but I take mortal to mean related to death, and though Adam was capable of death at his creation he was not related to death by sin, being not under law for obedience at the time. The Apostle Paul declares “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.” He does not say. “And death by natural physical causes,” for at least all animal species would be in this latter category but their deaths could not be by sin, not being under moral Divine Law as was Adam in the garden of Eden.

The terms mortal and immortal must be studied and used in the context of Paul's declaration in Romans 5; speaking of justification and reconciliation through Christ's willing and sacrificial death which he shows to be an impossibility if natural decay and death be the penalty upon Adam and passed upon all men. For it would mean that when Adam died at 930 years of age as the penalty for his sin; that penalty was still in force, he was still mortal, subject to death by law, a legal position not a physical condition. In such a category there can be no resurrection for Adam nor us. A man with whom I was in discussion on this subject was positive there was no further hope for Adam - and to be consistent and on the basis of his belief of natural death being the penalty for Adam's sin, he would be correct. But he was not consistent enough in that he was not including himself under the penalty which God passed upon all men and could not understand that it was for a good purpose, and not-in our case a matter of guilt.

Levi is said to have paid tithes to Melchizedec through being in the loins of Abraham, but Levi never met Melchizedec nor paid any tithes to him in person but did so while in the loins of Abraham, in the same way we did not sin personally but were in the loins of Adam when he sinned and so in effect in imputing all in the loins of Adam as under one man's disobedience, God could by one man's obedience impute

righteousness to all who accept the righteousness and death of His Son by faith. I doubt whether Adam in the garden was a keeper of sheep, yet if he was he had no right as a sinner under sentence of judicial death to slay a lamb as a substitute for his own death by the shedding of its blood. For Adam had incurred a debt to the law involving his own life in the blood, not the life-blood of a lamb. Adam was quite aware of the position - the fact that he could not redeem himself and continue to live, hence his words after he had incurred the sentence of judicial death appointed by disobedience (not natural death common to all), "I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked." What caused this fear? Not literal nakedness surely, for prior to sin they were both naked before God and were not ashamed. Was it not rather their shame of disobedience and fear of instant death by loss of life?

Adam was aware at once of the penalty for his sin; he did not have to wait for an explanation from God of how it would be administered. Any intelligent and unbiased reader of Genesis 2:17 would know that Adam was under sentence of loss of natural existence immediately he sinned, so why do people take it upon themselves to alter it to a life sentence, when in fact the sentence was not carried out due to the love and mercy of God in providing a substitute? The stumbling block is that they believe because Adam did die, this was the death he incurred by sin, which is not true. The death he incurred was shown in the Lamb slain - death by the shedding of the life-blood as a provisional substitute until the real substitute entered upon the scene, the Lamb of God, sinless yet able as a human to bear the penalty by shedding His blood, yet rise from the grave because being sinless as the Apostle declares it was not possible He should be holden of it. Jesus suffered the death that came by sin which was loss of His natural existence, but He was not a sinner. The debt to the law Adam incurred was settled and Adam was permitted to live out his natural existence for 930 years as a second probationary period under Grace as a result of the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ.

Should it not be obvious if as some falsely assert He had to die on account of His supposed condemned nature, He should not have been raised and therefore the grave should hold Him? Are people so blind not to see the facts that His flesh was not suffered to see corruption on account that God saw nothing wrong with it? It was not the Creator who introduced this false concept of human flesh, but false teachers who turned people away from the truth unto fables, a simple thing to do with people who cannot read the Scriptures effectively by discriminating between character and physical flesh and in the context of Divine Law.

This later fact was brought to light in 1873 AD by Edward Turney when he was an active member of Christadelphia but too active for the likes of a certain man of the same interests, though he proved himself to be otherwise by his antagonistic methods of misrepresentation of Turney's views and consequently compelling people to drink of his cup of corruptive teaching, and that cup is still being passed around in the resulting change of Isaiah 53 into a lie, resulting in refusal to accept its teaching of Jesus and His death being substitutional for the judicial death of Adam and by Divine appointment imputed to all in his loins, that they also through the merits of Christ's sacrifice might be released by faith from this legal position - for legal it is, not physical as vainly taught, but made void by Paul (Romans 8: 1 ,2).

I referred earlier to the terms mortal and immortal. Paul seems to imply that this is a present possibility in the legal sense in addressing Roman believers whom he considered to be 'mortal' in the sense of having put to death the old man by dying with Christ in symbol, the physical flesh unaltered and now hoping for the reward of faith and deeds (Romans 2:6-8); Paul is stating that the seeking for glory, honour and immortality comes before God renders eternal life; meaning that the stage of not being subject to death by law (= immortal) must be reached before God renders eternal life in Angelic nature (Romans 8:29,30, Jude verse 21). Is it not clear that the erroneous concept some entertain about Christ's substitutional death being the end of all effort and works of faith is not in Romans 2:6-8? Neither is it found in the teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship but is falsely used as a weapon for want of a true understanding of the Atoning sacrifice of Christ.

One ridiculous statement has been made due to this lack of understanding of 'death by sin' and 'death by creation,' the one is legal, the other is physical. It should be understood that sin did not enter the world by any other person than Adam, therefore the subject of substitution should first be addressed in that context. This is exactly how Paul addresses it in his Epistles and nowhere does he teach that men are personally guilty of Adam's sin. When he says in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," it cannot possibly apply to us for we were not born when Paul penned that statement yet he explains what he means by it in Romans 5, a matter of imputation as I have shown earlier with Levi paying tithes to Melchizedec not being in existence at the time. It is known as the Federal Principle, one man's sin being

imputed to all as members of his (Adam's) body, and one man's righteousness being imputed to all by grace, belief and faith (Jesus); the two Federal Heads.

In an effort to refute Christ's death on Calvary as a substitute it has been stated by one professing to understand the Bible, "If Christ be a substitute we ought not to die and he ought not to have risen." This man has jumped into the present time with no thought for the past. So I counter his irresponsible statement thus: "If Christ be not a substitute He need not have been born and Adam should have been put to death under the sentence 'In the day thou eatest,' not 900 or so years after eating." Is it not a fact that Baptized believers do not die the "death by sin" unless they sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth and then experience "the second death"? If this is not so, why and where is the point of being Baptized into the death of Christ if it has no value or significance? The whole purpose of Paul's teaching is to show Jesus as the Lamb provided of God to take away the Sin (singular) of the world, not bring sin into the world in the vessel of His flesh in order that God could condemn it - the teaching of John Thomas M.D. sad to say.

If this is not convincing enough then perhaps the unconvinced will read the words of the One concerned more than any on this subject. Before directing you to the words of Jesus I will quote Paul from Romans 5:15 in connection with Adam's sin, the sin of the world, which made him and all in his loins legally dead: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Christ Jesus, hath abounded unto many."

Now if the many are not dead in the legal terms Paul stated, then they cannot pass from death to life, but Jesus has more to say on this matter to those who are capable of believing Him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Paul shows this to be the position of those who have and do believe Jesus to be the substitute for Adam and all who believe and accept Him as such. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live (as a result) should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

God is not the God of the dead but of the living who no longer live unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again. I say Amen to that with all my heart. If further proof is needed by the obstinate rejecters of Christ's substitutional sacrifice, Paul gives it in Galatians 2:20 where some people's favourite word "prospective" is not in Paul's mind: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Please note, if the condemnation of Adam's sin has been transmitted as a physical law into his flesh, then only his physical death could remove it, or correctly, I should say destroy it, and due to this false theory of the element of sin being also transmitted in the flesh of Adam's posterity Hebrews 2:14 is quoted out of context and gross ignorance in saying that Jesus, through His own death destroyed sin in His flesh on account that He was of the same condemned flesh as Adam. Agreed, the same quality of flesh as Adam but nowhere in Scripture do we find that Adam's flesh was condemned.

How then can a symbolic death in water and the emergence therefrom in the same physically condemned flesh destroy that sin? Impossible. Paul was baptized into the death of Christ but do not look for his help in Romans 7 to establish the "sin in the flesh" error for this has been explained many times and will not stand with what I have quoted from Galatians 2:20. Make your choice, either you frustrate the grace of God in your rejection of Jesus as a Substitute and that His death was in vain, or you give a valid explanation of the real meaning of baptism which is considered to be so important for salvation, and then explain how sinful flesh could be a substitute for sinful flesh. I implore all, please accept Jesus, the Son of God, for if righteousness come through sin's flesh then Christ is dead in vain.

Phil Parry.

The letter which follows is a reply to a Christadelphian friend who asked that his letter should not be published:-

Dear X, Greetings with love in Jesus Name. Thank you for your letter of the 15th January. It is very comprehensive and far reaching and I will do my best to expand some of my thoughts on the points you raise. I appreciate your frankness and kindness in which you express yourself and I shall try to respond in similar manner.

You will see I have enclosed a photocopy of your letter; this is to identify the paragraphs, which I have numbered for reference.

1. I cannot agree that “some questions should never have been asked in the first place.” There can be no wisdom in such an approach. What is there to fear from a question you don’t want? Can you not give the answer? The whole purpose behind the way Scripture is written is that we should search out the gospel diligently questioning everything. Everything we teach is supported by chapter and verse. If it were not so we wouldn’t teach it.

2a. I do not feel in the least bit aggrieved for being disfellowshipped and in this I feel I can speak for many others also. I have never personally known anyone aggrieved after the initial shock, only joy. Certainly I felt upset at the time because it was so unexpected that life-long friends should turn on me in that way, but it was not long before I found it to be by far the greatest blessing in my life and can only feel thankfulness to God for those events. I believe it was providential and far from being aggrieved with those over zealous and misguided brethren I am sorrowful that they should remain so blind. I would love them to be able to see what I see - the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus - and forsake the foolishness of ‘sin in the flesh’ which impugns God’s goodness, loving-kindness, mercy and grace. I believe the principles for our salvation are very simple indeed and sometimes wonder if this is a problem for Christadelphians as they seem to love complication even to the extent of superstition.

2b. We have no statement of belief outside the Bible and what we print on the back cover of all our booklets allows us to change and this I am most certainly prepared to do whenever a more perfect way is shown to me. Intransigence may have its place in the world, but not before God.

3. You say you “do not believe anyone understands how and why the death of Jesus Christ saves us,” but this is the very subject, indeed, it is the one and only subject on which God asks us to reason with Him:- Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Surely we can come to an understanding by His grace in answer to prayer. We leave “pseudo intellectual discourses” to theologians to confound each other with. But the death of Jesus in place of the death of Adam gave life to the human race with opportunity of eternal life through forgiveness.

4a. There is no evidence that man was other than corruptible before Adam sinned. Yes, the BASF is in agreement with Scripture teaching where in Clause 4 it states that “life was contingent on obedience.” The sentence of death of which Adam was warned was judicial. A putting to death for breaking the law. I heard a story in my youth of a man when sentenced to death, said to the judge, “You cannot sentence me to death. All you can do is fix the time.” He was right, of course. There is a big difference between falling asleep in old age and being hung for some felony while still in the prime of life. But God is the Judge with whom we are dealing and in the sight of God, falling asleep is resting from one’s labours but being put to death by God is oblivion.

4b. Natural life for Adam was contingent on his obedience to the law and had he remained of perfect character when probation was served he would have received eternal life, whether or not the sleep of death intervened is of no import.

4c. Judicial death was contingent upon disobedience while loss of the prospect of eternal life was also a consequence.

4d. You write: “We are not told that Adam’s life was dependent on partaking of the strategically located tree of life, although it was available for his consumption along with the fruit of all the trees bar one.

There was no imperative for him to eat of the tree of life while ever he was obedient. That which post dates the transgression, Genesis 3:22, does not prove that a sinless being's life depends on the same sustenance as that of a being with the knowledge of good and evil." Quite frankly, I have no idea what your point is in all this. Is it in response to something I said?

4e. In my booklet, "Understanding The Atonement," I wrote "Adam forfeited a perfect life" and you say I "have added to the divine narrative." Not so. Adam was part of the "very good" creation and that was not only his physical body but also his character. We may think of his character as being a "blank slate" to begin with but it was not imperfect for being "blank." "Writing" soon appeared on it and during the period of unknown length during which Adam lived in the Garden and communed with the angels, his character remained without blemish or spot - until the time of his transgression. Oh! How Christadelphians confuse body with character, and character with body, putting one for the other, complicating their arguments and mystifying themselves and each other until they don't know which way is up! Let's be clear on this matter. It is character with which God is concerned. He gave us bodies in which to house our characters. It is the development of our good character which will please Him and so He will lead us into light. It is Adam's character that was perfect before he transgressed and the sense in which I used it when I wrote "Adam forfeited a perfect life." It was his character that was blemished by sinning. Not his flesh. You may wish to claim his body was "very good" but not perfect because it was not spirit nature, be that as it may, it is of no matter here. I cannot say Adam's character was other than perfect how ever long he dwelt in the garden prior to his transgression.

5a. You say: "Your teaching actually depends on God making the biggest U-turn in history..." We thank God He did. No doubt Abraham was very thankful when the angel stayed his hand from slaying Isaac. Hezekiah wept when God told him he would die, and God added 15 years to his life. He thanked God for it. Why was Jonah so upset when God made a U-turn and did not destroy Nineveh? Jonah 4:11 - "And should I not 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?" In Exodus 27:21 we read, "...Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel," but we read in 1 Samuel 2:30, "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me..." The principle on which God does U-turns is set out for us in such places as Jeremiah 18:7,8, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." God does a U-turn for every one of us who puts on Christ. In Adam all are destined to die. When we come out of Adam and into Christ, God does a U-turn and we live in Christ. However, in our case God tells us so beforehand.

5b. Of course God has unlimited foreknowledge and neither did He change His original plan right at the outset, but there was no good reason for telling Adam beforehand that he would be forgiven if he sinned. In His wisdom God chose not to tell him until it became necessary - after the event.

5c. The expression "dying thou shalt die" does not convey the idea of a long drawn out period from the time decay set in. Such an interpretation is straining Scripture. Repeating the expression "die" and "dying" is an Hebrew idiom which emphasizes the certainty of dying.

This idiom is used elsewhere in such expressions as "smiting thou shalt smite," "eating thou shalt eat." and it is not confined to the Old Testament, for Jesus used the idiom when He said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you." In no case does it mean an extension of time but it emphasizes the certainty of the act - of dying, of smiting, of eating, of desiring. The evidence opposes the Christadelphian view.

5d. Regarding whether or not animals and man were vegetarian prior to the flood is occasionally discussed amongst us. Genesis 9:3 suggests your view but I have no axe to grind. Answering the question as to why the death of Christ was necessary is rather more urgent than discussing what people may have eaten five or six thousand years ago.

6a. You write: "Jesus, as we know, was the sin offering for us. He does not extend our mortal lives, but gives us the prospect of immortality."

I wish to challenge that statement. Jesus' death gives us prospect of immortality, not by extending our lives but by giving us our natural life in the first place. Had Adam died we would not have lived. Jesus died because Adam did not. So then, our present natural life is our redeemed life. Jesus "is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." - 1 Timothy 4:10.

In Ephesians 1:4 we read of "The redemption of the purchased possession" which would suggest that redemption is still future. However, the Greek word here for redemption is *apolutrosis* which is elsewhere translated "deliverance" as in Hebrews 11:35 - "not accepting deliverance." The "purchased possession" of Ephesians 1:4 were redeemed already by purchase. To redeem them again is not what Paul is saying, but he was talking about the deliverance at the second coming of Jesus. Ephesians 1:4 makes sense if we read it as the "deliverance of the redeemed." This deliverance is "specially for those that believe."

7a. When Jesus said "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." He was surely talking of Himself and the reason for His approaching crucifixion. If He died He would bring forth much fruit, even many sons to glory, but if He didn't die He would abide alone without those "many sons" with Him.

7b. I dispute that Jesus was mortal. But first let me explain my understanding of the word as it may be different to yours. I understand Adam became mortal when he transgressed the law. That is, his life became condemned. That mortal life has been passed from father to child ever since. According to the Scriptures we are all concluded under the one sin of Adam. This I believe is saying the same thing - we all receive his mortal life. Please note that life is passed from father to child, not from mother to child. Adam being the one Federal Head. Jesus had His life direct from His Father, not His mother, hence He too, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), was not mortal. As He never sinned He never became mortal. He is the other Federal Head.

7c. You say: "the fact that Jesus could have called on more than twelve legions of angels to avoid being taken on the Mount of Olives, does not prove that the offer of immortality was available." The logic in reasoning otherwise is seen when we consider that it would not have been sin or transgression of law for Jesus to have called upon those angels to save Him from that hour. His character would still be without blemish or spot. There would have been no reason why He should not abide alone, i.e., without the "many sons" He would otherwise have brought to glory.

7d. You say, "It was death that could not hold this righteous man." I say that death had no claim on this righteous man in the first place, therefore, having given His life freely for us, then the position was that death could not hold Him.

8. You here refer to my article "Who Killed Jesus Christ" in which I do indeed castigate the Christadelphians - for upholding a rotten system which condemns the Son of God along with the sons of Adam and then worse, accuses God of murdering His own Son! Yes, perhaps I ought to have quoted Clause 12, but I have done so on several previous occasions and this time left it out. It was my oversight. And yes, the crucifixion was in the foreknowledge and purpose of God from the foundation of the world.

9a. You say we are "More interested in condemning Christadelphians than in promoting Truth." What a tragedy we can't promote both together. It is in promoting Truth that we find our former brethren at fault, and in love we desire to enlighten them. We cry aloud and spare not. We send thousands of our booklets and Circular Letters to Christadelphians at our own expense - "freely we have received, freely we give" - not for the thanks we get from most of them but for the one here and one there who praise God for having been freed from error. Paul may sow and Apollos water, but God gives the increase.

9b. It may, as you say, be feeble reasoning of man but it is true that God didn't kill his own Son and this condemns Clause 12 as a lie. Where we see false doctrine we say so. Being indifferent to our neighbours false doctrines is a sin. To oppose those false doctrines is to show love to our neighbours. We promote truth and ask others to challenge and correct any mistakes they see us make. If we are in error in any matter then correction is accepted as a kindness.

9c. You suggest we “have no starting point because we have no articles of beliefs.” What nonsense! We, like you, have the Bible. We, like you, have prayer. Our Circular Letter’s are far from negative. We challenge like no one else we are aware of. We strenuously put forward right doctrine which is worth far more than the froth of niceness! We leave that to social clubs.

9d. The article “Who Killed Jesus Christ” does not “come to the wrong conclusion.” “The seed of the serpent killed the Lord Jesus” and the seed of the serpent is sin. Adam’s sin, my sin, your sin. Did I not say in my article, “We sinners are responsible for killing Jesus”? Is this a wrong conclusion? I trow not.

9e. Again you say, “Repentant sinners are not responsible” for killing Jesus, but they are.. They were responsible before repentance, but when forgiven, their own responsibility for their sin is annulled through grace and mercy. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” by God in love to provide a way of escape for us sinners.

9f. Contrary to what you say, the article does distinguish between the purpose of the crucifixion, which is to save sinners, and the cause of the crucifixion, which is sin.

10a. It is good to see you do not ascribe sin in the flesh to the Lord Jesus and I hope you do not ascribe sin in the flesh to anyone else either. However, sin in the flesh is taught in the BASF.

10b. You say: “It is not wise to impart our human reasoning to what we may consider fair in such matters.” This really is a Christadelphianism of the first order! I simply cannot agree. Whatever are we given brains for except to exercise them in such matters? I would suggest we use our minds to “seek” in order that we may find, to “knock” so that it is opened to our understanding and to “ask” for wisdom from above in order to serve our Creator as we ought. Do you use human reasoning when considering Bible teaching? What else is available to you that is not available to me also?

10c. Psalm 80:17. In what way did God make Jesus strong for Himself, and why? It was by giving Him a life free from condemnation. I.e., a life like Adam’s at creation. This gave Jesus Christ a similar starting point and He succeeded where Adam failed. Thereby Jesus could if He so wished, give His life in place of Adam’s. He did and we are most grateful. *(see Footnote).

11a. We “failing, finite creatures” have access to God through prayer and supplication. It is for us to exhort one another to good works.

11b. The BASF does much harm and no good at all by the very fact that it is divisive. It is designed to keep people out. It is made to be more important than the Bible in the fact that one can have many views regarding a whole range of Scriptures but once the BASF is doubted on any point, one has to recant or excommunication is called for. It is also used as a means of fellowship and is supposed to be accepted in its entirety before baptism. The Bible is not. In practice, however, the BASF is seldom mentioned before baptism and it is not until some later date that brethren and sisters find out what they have let themselves in for. Then the usual practice seems to be to ignore the BASF and pretend it doesn’t apply and if one doesn’t question it then all drift on more or less hopefully. It seems to me that Revelation 3:15,16 is relevant.

I wonder how God looks upon it?

Dear X, I feel a lot of passion for the truth and this doesn’t get less with age. I’m sorry if you think my letter is too strongly worded, but please accept it in a good spirit for I would assure you it is written in that way.

With sincere best wishes in the Lord, Russell.

Footnote:- With reference to Psalm 80:17 (10c above), while it is true that Jesus was in the strong position of being free from condemnation under which all the sons of Adam are concluded, this Psalm may be referring to the answer to prayer. No doubt Jesus would have asked His Father to make Him strong in order to fulfil His purpose of Salvation in facing the crucifixion with courage and determination. We must also remember that this Psalm had dual application in that in some measure it applied to David whom God took from the sheepfolds to make King. Solomon too asked God for wisdom to rule His people. It is fitting that

we ask to be made strong for the purpose of preaching, exhortation and exposition. “Make me strong for Thee” should be in all our hearts.

* * *

Our correspondent is obviously by no means satisfied with the Christadelphian Statement of Faith and because he is known to Brother Eric Cave I sent copies of our correspondence to Eric to which he replied as follows (with some personal matters omitted):

Dear X, May grace and peace be with you in the love of Christ... I was somewhat surprised when you said that Adam was created neither mortal nor immortal, echoing John Thomas. John Thomas was a great man but Elihu said “Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment” (Yes, I am 88’). I found the enclosed booklets by A.L.Wilson very instructive and confirmatory of Russell’s comments on paragraph 7b.

So - “Very good” or “neither mortal nor immortal” and I cannot do better than repeat what John Thomas wrote in the “Herald” for July 1855:

“But in what sense was it ‘very good’? In an animal and physical sense, for it was a natural and animal system, not a spiritual one. Such a system is essentially one of waste and reproduction, and was organised with reference to what God knew would come to pass. This is implied in the placing of the earth in such a position with respect to the sun, moon and stars, that there should be a diversity of seasons, etc. Thus fall and winter would be seasons of decay and death, and were institutions existing before the Fall and presented to Adam and Eve phenomena illustrative of a principle of corruption the extent of which however, they might not have been fully apprized of.”

Adam and Eve then being created fully mature would have imprinted on their brains all the knowledge necessary for practical living, as well as the power of speech and communication. They would know how to grow and preserve their grain and harvest it, even how to fashion thread and needle to sew those fig leaves together (bone needles?). Ask yourself whether God would have warned Adam that in the day he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that he would surely die if Adam had not understood what death was? He saw it every day as the flowers faded, as he swatted the fly that landed on his nose, as he watched the cattle munch grass without washing the aphids and caterpillars from their fodder, as God provided food for lions, ravens and eagles from the very day that the elohim shouted for joy as per Job 38:39-41 and 39:27-30 later asserted. Did he watch the mayfly emerge, perform its nuptial flight and perish within a few hours of producing seed? How sad it was that John Thomas contradicted what he had written in the “Herald,” in “Elpis Israel” and left Robert Roberts with the legacy of a belief that corruption and death were phenomena that only occurred after Adam sinned. Carnivores, omnivores, and herbivores were all created within the six 24 hour evening morning days together with the intricate food chains to perpetuate life on earth. Alan and Mary Fowler, in their book “Exploring Bible Language,” have much to say on the sheer stupidity of postulating a second creation after Adam sinned to change the eating patterns of all living creatures which would have necessitated. Someone has listed all the Hebrew meanings of the animals in scripture which Adam would have named from the beginning, the meanings express the characteristics of the birds or beasts in question which I remember included carnivores as tearing and rending etc. As I asked in “The Divine Plan,” “Why should the spider produce webs if not to catch insects for eating? Significant silence from Christadelphia!”

When God said that He had given every green herb for meat to every thing wherein there is life I cannot accept that this excludes the product of green herbs, i.e. ‘flesh.’ Without predators the fecundity of the insect world would have destroyed creation itself within days. Just imagine what would have happened if locusts alone never died and continued to devastate those green herbs. The six day creation was a self perpetuating system kept in balance by death and predators. Christadelphian assumptions that “very good” means “never dying” are simply contradictory of scripture. “What pre-eminence hath man over a beast? They have all one breath,” etc., etc. Where is your Bible evidence that “death” was absent from the creation? God’s warning to Adam is sufficient proof that the man, before he sinned, knew perfectly well what constituted death. Even the phrase “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world” refutes a deathless world, and why docs Paul speak of “brute beasts created (*gennaō*) to be taken and destroyed? First that

which is natural and then that which is spiritual. There is not the slightest evidence in scripture to demonstrate that we must rewrite 1 Corinthians 15:45, 46 to accommodate Roberts' heresy.

I note Russell's comments on your paragraph 3 and would suggest that beginning with "surely YHWH will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," then Romans 5 outlines both the law of sin and death and the opposing law of the spirit of life which govern the atonement and confirm that we can understand how and why the death of Jesus Christ saves us.

We totally agree that BASF Clause 4 is correct when it states that "life was contingent on obedience" but which life? *Nephesh* life or *chay* life? R.R. was ignorant and Christadelphians have followed like sheep. Nor, as I commented in the addendum to "The Divine Plan," has one of my critics had the wit to ask which death Paul was referring to when he wrote "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," 'Common death' or 'Judicial death'? Numbers 16 provides the answer.

But let me return to your paragraph 4 and not only Genesis 2:17 but also Genesis 2:16. The Hebrew infinite absolute is a common idiom to express certainty and is formed by doubling the word as both a noun and a verb. No one can dispute that when in verse 17 the text reads "dying thou shalt die" then the expression is correctly rendered in the English versions as "Surely." "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." So why the inconsistency when the identical doubling of the Hebrew in the previous verse 16 where the text reads "of every tree of the garden eating thou shalt eat" when by all the rules of syntax and grammar it should have been rendered "of every tree of the garden surely thou shalt eat?" John Thomas was no mean Hebraist, but he simply followed King James translators without realising the consequences, namely his conclusion that the tree of "life" or "living" produced immortality. A costly error for Christadelphians. Why did Adam and his partner surely eat of the tree of life? The only intelligent answer can be, and the reason why that particular tree in the midst of the garden is singled out for special mention is that Adam had a job to do, to dress and till the garden; and the fruits of that tree suspended the natural corruptibility, that ageing process (of which I am now so conscious) and which ties in with the divine comment "and now; lest he put forth his hand, and take also (Hebrew *gar* sometimes rendered as 'again') of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever (Hebrew to the '*olam*, equivalent to Greek *aion*). Not only is this I submit confirmed by Adam being thrust out of the garden but additionally confirms that Adam was created a corruptible animal physically. What other explanation which fits all the facts have Christadelphians ever produced? (And no adding to scripture).

Finally Nazarenes are in total agreement with you that Brethren Thomas, Roberts, Turney, Ashton, Mansfield, Gregory and Cave are all failing, finite creatures and we do not quote them as authorities, but when they have published what we judge to be true and scriptural then it is perfectly legitimate to quote them in support of our preaching of the Word. And may well help others to attain that first resurrection.

I would however dispute your belief that the BASF is a reasonable guide to the main features of the Bible message. I used to think so; I now consider it a dangerous and wicked travesty of Bible Truth. Any document which encourages otherwise reasonable and intelligent men to commit the unforgivable sin should be rejected. Mark 3 says:

"All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation because they said "He hath an unclean spirit."

This is surely what C. Maddocks has charged the Lord with - having a *diabolos*, parroting what Christadelphian editors and writers have asserted from Roberts down to Michael Ashton, Alfred Norris, Peter Watkins, etc., etc.

The whole purpose of the Bible message is that it is able to make us wise unto salvation. What salvation is possible when men are encouraged by the BASF to testify that Jesus had a devil. I hold the BASF responsible for deceiving thousands of honest well meaning men and women into the belief that Jesus had an unclean spirit.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it.” There are seven clauses in the BASF which teach ‘sinful flesh’ and ‘the condemned line of Abraham and David which prevent believers entering that strait gate and, like Paul, my hearts desire and prayer to God for my Christadelphian friends is that they might be saved, for I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

With love in Jesus Christ to you and yours, Eric Cave.

* * *

Having read my reply (pages 2 to 5), Brother Phil Parry writes his own:-

“Comments on, and in addition to Brother R.Gregory’s reply to a letter from, I believe, a well-meaning seeker for Truth.”

If the matter of Bible Truth on the work of the Lord Jesus lies somewhere in between that traditionally taught by Christadelphians and that proposed by the Nazarene Fellowship’s teaching based on the inspired Scriptures, then such a position would be identical with that of the lukewarm state of the Laodicean Ecclesia (Revelation 3:14-22). It was found years ago that verses 17 & 18 was traditionally the state of Christadelphianism bound by the confused clauses of the BASF and, in answer to the words of the Lord Jesus, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the Creation of God, those who anointed themselves with the eye salve of the Spirit Word and realized their untenable position opened the door to Him whose voice they heard and were able to sup with Him who is the “Bread” or “Word of Life.”

Nazarenes have no desire or intention to be in an ‘in-between’ insecure position to be spued out by Him whom they regard as God’s Gift of Salvation, but the option to avoid this, Jesus leaves to the individuals concerned.

Ex-Christadelphian Nazarenes did have and do have statements of beliefs, this is the reason they were either excommunicated or resigned by reason that their beliefs were based on the inspired teaching of the Apostles and Prophets and not the insecure interpretations and false teaching in many instances of men purported to have found and brought to light The Truth of the first century Ecclesia of Christ, which had been corrupted by false teachers. It has been acknowledged by Christadelphians that the Baptists of 1660 AD had the same views as themselves so, where did the Baptists’ views emerge from? And their views were not all above question. We are not asked of God and His Son to make a decision between Christadelphianism and other similar “Creed-bound” denominations but between Truth and Error and this can only be done through prayer and a desire for Truth no matter the cost. Paul made the decision after enlightenment on the road to Damascus and he was prepared to suffer and go forth with Jesus without the camp bearing His reproach. Jesus asks men and women to do the same but He also expects them to know and understand for what they are contending, otherwise their labour would be minus His blessing and in vain.

I once asked two Mormon canvassers “Where did religion begin?” They looked stunned and bewildered because the “Book of Mormon” was the motive of their visit. What is the meaning of the word Genesis? Is it not “Beginning”? Yes, and what do we read from it? Is it not about God’s creation including Adam, then Eve? Were they capable of dying by natural decay or by inflicted shedding of blood as the case might be? If we are not clear by our reading of Genesis where should we look for a true answer and explanation? Should it not be to a writer inspired by the Holy Spirit?

I was really amazed by the following statement made in the letter to Brother Gregory:-

“I do not believe that anyone understands how and why the death of Jesus Christ saves us. There is no human logic whereby the death of one man can save innumerable persons.”

Neither can I see it logical or reasonable “that through the sin of one man a multitude should have a Divinely appointed physical sin principle to operate in an unnecessarily changed nature and by such a means pass death upon a multitude who were not personally sinners when Adam sinned;” but this is what Clause V of the BASF claims, and is the very reason why the spiritual and logical reasoning of the Apostle Paul in

Romans 5 is not understood by the great majority of Christadelphians. Paul's logic and reasoning is not based on human theories and self-invented ideas but by revelation from the Lord Jesus Himself. Galatians 1:11,12, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel that was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The result therefore is found in the teaching of Jesus and His mission as recorded in Matthew 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Paul explains this so simply and clearly in his epistle to the Romans on the basis of God's plan which we call the Federal Principle involving two Federal Heads, Adam and Jesus whereby when Adam sinned all in his loins God imputed as sinners but not in a personal sense, for they were not personally in existence to commit sin. This was the position of being in Adam by Divine imputation and not by physical descent or of personal guilt. Paul shows that the way out of Adam is through the merits of the other Federal Head, Jesus Christ but both positions are by enlightenment and introduction. Thus Brother Gregory's correspondent has identified himself with others of having come out of Adam by some means he does not explain other than to say "We are either children of God or children of the devil, in Christ we are not *diabolos*." Amen, but how are people classed as "in Christ"? Is it not by reason of knowing and understanding why His death was necessary to remove the penalty of the "death by sin," which passed by imputation upon all men so that by faith and symbolic death (baptism) into that of Christ, righteousness without works might be imputed in contrast?

Paul shows plainly in Romans that there is only one way to be qualified as being "in Christ" and it is not a physical, but a moral and legal position, his words in Romans 8:1,2, are convincing and beyond dispute showing that the Law of sin and death is not physical but legal and moral in its application to those under it, in that no physical death is required to be made free of a legal sentence which hangs over all who become aware of it and the means of freedom from it, which is Jesus. We should appreciate therefore the words of Paul when he speaks not of natural death as applicable to animal and human species, but to the "death by sin" which automatically passed upon Adam in the moment he transgressed as stated Genesis 2:17. What follows in Genesis chapter 3 are consequential divine statements and not the passing of the sentence of death for sin upon Adam or of Eve but more so a matter of natural existence as far as their limited corruptible created nature of flesh and blood would allow, and we must note that the serpent was included in this report.

Thus we can appreciate that God foresaw in the provision of His Son typified in the lamb slain in Eden, that Adam and all in his loins owed their existence to his death in the place of Adam or we would have all been non-existent. Seeing that we are all on the same level through the Mercy of God we cannot question His righteousness or Justice and long-suffering. He has the right to predestinate whom He chooses as Paul declares in Romans chapter 9 and also chapter 8. It has been stated "Many are called but few chosen," so there must be reasons for the latter. Paul speaks of those called, to make their calling and election sure, he also says, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are His,"

In conclusion and not wishing to add to Brother Gregory's excellent reply to his friends letter, I say in all confidence that if the death by sin which passed upon Adam and on all men was the natural death Adam experienced at the age of 930 years (Genesis 5:5), then the words of Jesus in John 5:24 could not be true, neither the words of 1 John 3:14, for both speak of a possible position of being dead while physically alive and yet presented with or having taken the opportunity to pass from death unto life. If therefore condemnation and sin be in the physical flesh, all remain dead.

Brother Phil Parry.

SIN UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

The word 'sin' has been used carelessly for centuries. I have quite a collection of old dictionaries, not one of which defines sin in a negative way. They all agree the gist of sin is being naughty, or doing wicked things. I present a contrary argument that the meaning of sin in popular usage has changed since the Authorised Version was translated nearly 400 years ago, and that change was brought about by careless usage based on careless thinking.

Moses prescribed separate sacrifices for sins and for trespasses. Pie also ordains that these two different sacrifices should be carried out in the same manner. Leviticus 4 & 5 deal with the sin offering, and it is made clear that the word sin is applied to inadvertent law-breaking; that is, at the time of breaking the law, the lawbreaker was not aware of the law, nor that he was breaking it- Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the trespass offering which is also referred to as a guilt offering (although the word guilt is sometimes applied in a restricted way to the sin offering), and it is clear in these chapters that the offender knows the law and knows he is doing wrong. I maintain that in most of the important references to sin in the Bible, the word is used in a negative sense, whereas usually the word guilt or trespass is used to mean deliberate flouting of the law. I use the example of a car driver pulled up for exceeding the speed limit, who then says "I'm sorry, constable, I forgot to watch the speedometer," implying he is not a trespasser but merely a sinner. Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer says "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

If I wanted to make it perfectly clear to the modern mind I would word it, "Forgive us our offences as we forgive those who offend against us." The World Council of Churches, as you would expect, got it completely wrong by substituting the word sin: "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." That could be justified by pointing out that the meaning of sin has changed over the centuries, as testified by the dictionaries, which all define sin as evildoing. But that is not acceptable to a serious Bible student who would insist on the definition of sin used by the translators of the Hebrew and Greek texts 400 years ago.

I have a small book of 320 pages by Stewart McDowell, 1932, entitled "Is Sin Our Fault?" I would opine that it is full of vague and confused waffle because he never clearly defines the word sin, although he endeavours to do so at great length repeatedly. The nearest he comes to a definition is that sin means a drifting away from God. Nevertheless the title of the book poses an interesting question. One could easily presume that sin is not our fault, because surely if we break a law without knowing the law, we are not really guilty. That is an impotent excuse if it is our responsibility to know the law; as Christians we should meditate on God's law day and night. The speedometer is situated in the dashboard squarely and conspicuously in front of the driver, who must surely learn for his licence that he should glance at it frequently and regulate his speed accordingly.

I would define the biblical meaning of sin as negligence, incompetence, shortcomings, failure, ignorance and lawlessness. Is an infant sinful? Certainly not if you think of sin as possession of an evil nature. But an infant is sinful in the biblical sense because it is ignorant, incompetent and negligent. However an infant is not guilty, in fact it is perfectly innocent because it is incapable of knowledge, competence and diligence. Its failure is not due to negligence but to inability. It cannot act righteously until it is old enough to learn the law, practise the law and obey the law. An infant is not equipped with cognition and reason, but only with selfish instincts designed to help self-preservation. Therefore a baby is an innocent sinner. However, if the baby grows up to be emotionally, mentally and morally lazy, he will still have his selfish instincts and could adopt the attitude "I don't know the law and I don't want to know the law, so don't tell me. I don't care what you think, I can't be bothered; I look after number one. I get what I want, regardless of whom it belongs to. I don't go any second mile for anyone." Such attitudes are common throughout society and if a sinner never gets beyond that, he is a hardened sinner who soon becomes a criminal, though most of them learn to be nice to their friends and to be careful while a policeman is watching. In contrast, an emotionally and morally mature person on hearing the gospel will realize that he is a selfish sinner and he will repent in his mind and regenerate a new outlook in his heart and spend the rest of his life learning righteousness.

"Transformed by grace divine, the glory shall be Thine,
To Thy most holy will, O Lord, we now our all resign."

The Book of Common Prayer, which is almost as old as the A.V., tends to support my contention that the meaning of sin is essentially negative in the Bible. In the general confession of the communion service we say "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most grievously have committed..." The fact that we bewail both our sins and our wickedness implies that they are not identical; the first is negative and the second is positive. This seems to be supported by a parallel passage in the general confession for matins and evensong: "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended

against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done (SINS), and we have done those things which we ought not to have done “(TRESPASSES), and there is no health in us.”

We notice that in Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer the word sins does occur. It is reasonably certain that Jesus would have more than once taught the prayer we know as the Lord’s Prayer and it is quite probable that on some occasions He used different words. Possibly the version that Luke records from Jesus’ sermon on the plains reflects His teaching in an ironical style. “Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who are indebted to us.” To paraphrase that in an exaggerated way - “Forgive us our accidental mistakes, as we forgive those who deliberately despoil us.” Obviously that is only my own opinion, but I have thought carefully about why the word sin is used once in Luke’s version and not at all in Matthew’s version.

The Relationship Between Believing Sinners and Unregenerate Sinners.

Jesus gives us in Matthew 25, His only picture of Judgment day when He sorts the nations into sheep and goats. The first thing to notice is that theological dogma does not enter the picture at all. He does not say to them, “Who believes the truth? Those who do may enter the Kingdom at once. Those who believe false doctrines - off into outer darkness!” That is nothing like His teaching. Now look carefully at the goats. Did they do anything wrong? Did they break any laws? No. They were not obliged to feed the hungry or clothe the naked. There was no law compelling them to visit the sick and the imprisoned. So what was wrong? Simply that they failed to help neighbours in need. They wouldn’t go the second mile. They were not necessarily law-breakers, but they were sinners. This is the moral law of love that God wants us all to learn. I once heard a good Jewish precept: “Thou shalt not stand idle whilst thy neighbour bleeds.” The gospel of love is as simple as that.

I learn from the Bible that Jesus died for my salvation. When I look at a neighbour whom I may not particularly like, I must remember that Jesus died for his salvation also. I must also remember that I should not pre-occupy myself with criticism of his faults but understand that he cannot help the way he is today, but that my interaction with him might help him to become a better person tomorrow. In other words we must behave like the sheep on the right hand in Matthew 25. The logical extension of this is that we should not form an exclusive self-righteous sect, pitying the ignorant apostasy, but we should take up Dr. John Thomas’ advice to his followers in the early days, that they remain in their church congregations and protest against false doctrines and advocate Bible study. There would be a serious difficulty in this because worldly people want a leader to tell them what to do and what to believe. Consequently the majority of any congregation would side with the minister on doctrinal matters and you would be regarded as a troublemaker trying to rock the boat. However, in any congregation there might be one or two, or perhaps a handful who would want to discuss scriptural matters further. And conversely, we would be able to learn some other quite important issues regarding the Christian Gospel from the minority of sincere and humble believers and ministers throughout the popular churches.

We all agree that the correct understanding of biblical doctrine is vitally important but that is only half our obligation. The other half is true repentance. I agree with Dr. W.R.Matthews, dean of St Paul’s in 1960 when he wrote in reply to Ernest Brady, “The one doctrine of the atonement which I feel is fundamental is that which was elaborated by the unfortunate Abelard, that is, that the contemplation of Christ on the Cross moves us to repentance, though I admit that we need to go further than that if we seek full understanding.” The word repentance means turning about and going the other way. We really should put more time and effort and discussion into this subject. It involves a lot more than believing in Jesus and accepting Him as our Saviour. I think it involves also our accepting responsibility for His unmerited execution. Some of you might know this lovely old Methodist hymn:

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour’s blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love, how can it be
That Jesus my Saviour shouldst die for me’

You will notice I have altered the last line because this hymn was written by a Trinitarian.

Whilst on this subject, there are two hymns that I have always detested. One is “When I think how they crucified my Lord.” Why should I detest it? Because it implies “When I think how they - the baddies - crucified my Lord (we are the goodies).” I would like to re-write it: “When I think how we crucified our Lord.”

The other hymn is, “The Old Rugged Cross.” Jesus was executed on a stake, not a cross. However that contention is of trivial import. But we must get our theological values straight. The execution stake on which we humans murdered the divine Son of God cannot ever be an emblem for fond adoration, this borders on blasphemy. Back in the seventies I took the liberty of amending the wording of this hymn. I will quote it here. The alterations are underlined:

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
An emblem of suffering and shame;
And I hate that hard cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.
2. But the old rugged cross, so esteemed by the world
Has a grim malediction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary
3. In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A villainous horror I see;
For on that curled cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me.
4. So the old rugged cross stung my conscience to life.
Its shame and reproach turned me round;
Jesus calls me away from this world and its play
To His gift of redemption and life.

Chorus: So I'll mourn by that torturing cross.
Till my troubles at last I lay down;
I will stand by that cruel, bitter cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

Jesus died for us while we were yet sinners. Hence it is necessary to recognize that it is we sinners who by wicked hands put to death the Prince of Life. The sinners who stood by and did nothing were just as responsible as the authorities who murdered the Son of God.

I (who am very much a sinner), pray that God will bless us with understanding, and open our eyes to a full appreciation of the whole gospel.

With Love to all, John Stevenson. Australia.

We are pleased to say we have now received a further letter from Graeham Mansfield, Editor of “Logos” magazine.

In the last Circular Letter on page 19 we reported my letter to him dated 14th December 2000 in which Graeham was asked two questions. 1) From what scriptures do you deduce that there is in “the physical condition of our nature the bias towards evil”? and 2) The fact that Adam ate of the tree and did not die that day, shows the mercy of God. Do you have any difficulty with this view? In his letter dated 14th February Graeham replied as follows: -

Dear Russell, I was hoping to answer your letter of December 14th through “Logos, but unfortunately it has been crowded out by other matters. I will include it as soon as convenient.

The original text of Genesis 2:17 is more explicit than represented in the AV, as indicated in the margin. The literal Hebrew is “in the day thou shalt eat thereof, dying thou shalt die.” A process was immediately set in motion because of his disobedience that eventuated in the inevitable result: Adam died. It was not a matter of mercy, although that aspect was revealed in the gracious promise of redemption through the “seed of the woman” (ch. 3:15). God had warned what would happen if Adam was disobedient; and Adam’s transgression confirmed that result. Mortality became a condition of mankind, which was not the case before transgression. Paul teaches that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Romans 5:12), thus showing that death was not working in the nature of mankind before sin, but now that sin had been revealed in Adam’s changed condition. Upon that basis Paul further explains that “so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” A condition now existed in mankind that was not there formerly: all Adam’s descendants were destined to death, because they bear “the body of death” (Romans 7:24).

Further, the apostle explains that “the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” (Romans 7:5). It is clear from this that the law of God identified sin, which was “working in the members.” Six thousand years of human history demonstrates the failure and misery that has resulted from sin (Job 9:20, etc). For this reason, under the Law of Moses, a mother was required to make an offering at the birth of a child (Lev. 12:2); not that there was transgression in the birth, but to recognize the teaching that by birth, the sin condition of nature is continued in mankind. She was ceremonially “unclean,” upholding the truth that the flesh is unclean; inexorably associated with sin.

It is true that we do wrong when breaking the divine law. Bearing sin’s flesh (Romans 8:3) is not a crime, but a misfortune; a disease that affects our condition. In that condition we bear a sin-bias, an inclination to fulfil the “law of our members” (Romans 7:23), that Paul found to be “in his flesh” (v.18). It is against this “flesh with its affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24) that we must struggle, endeavouring to “crucify” it, to develop a godliness in our character.

There is nothing we can do to change the nature we bear; this must await the day of approval, when “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). Our work is to challenge that nature and overcome its domination: and this is only possible through the power of the Word applied in life.

Kind regards, Graeham Mansfield.

By way of reply I wrote to Graeham on the 15th March as follows:

Dear Graeham, Thank you for your letter of the 14th February. I find your explanations very inadequate and do not take into consideration all Bible teaching relating to the “Fall” and its consequences. I agree with you when you say:

“The original text of Genesis 2:17 is more explicit than represented in the AV, as indicated in the margin. The literal Hebrew is “in the day thou shalt eat thereof, dying thou shalt die.”

But then you add

“A process was immediately set in motion because of his disobedience that eventuated in the inevitable result: Adam died.”

I could understand this argument coming from a novice in exposition, but, Graeham, you are not in the position of a novice and I feel it should be unnecessary for me to point out that “dying thou shalt die” is an idiom frequently used in Scripture to emphasize a matter and has nothing to do with eventuality. “Dying thou shalt die;” “Eating thou shalt eat;” “Smiting thou shalt smite;” “With desire I have desired;” etc., all have repetition which has to do with emphasizing the certainty of dying, eating, smiting, desiring, etc. The

death here in question was a putting to death for transgression; a Judicial death for breaking the law of sin and death. God had told Adam that in the day he broke the law he would die.

When the occasion arose and Adam did break the law there was a death - the death of the animal which provided him with a covering for his sin. The coats of skins were an outward sign that by the shedding of blood he had been forgiven and would not die for his sin. There are no grounds for claiming that dying as used in Genesis 2:17 is a drawn out process.

Next you quote from Romans 5:12, "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." Again this is judicial death. There was no death for breaking God's law until Adam and Eve transgressed and then, after the transgression, the animal slain in Eden was the first antitype of Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman who was "slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8). If Paul meant natural death in Romans 5:12 then why did Jesus Christ suffer a judicial death when He took away the sin of the world?

You further quote "so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." You were happy to refer to the margin in your earlier quote and now may I refer to the margin here, for it reads "so death passed upon all men in whom all sinned." This is surely a reference by Paul to his argument that in Adam we are all concluded under sin. Not a physical matter but a legal. Religion is based on a legal system.

You say, "Bearing sin's flesh (Romans 8:3) is not a crime, but a misfortune, a disease that affects our condition." This is preposterous! I say being Sin's flesh is not a misfortune, neither is it a disease affecting our condition. Once we realize we are Sin's flesh we also realize there is a great blessing in that we can be freed from it. Being Sin's flesh we are owned by Sin (personified by Paul as a Master). We are Sin's possession. Jesus came in the likeness of people in Sin's possession but He was not Sin's possession; He was God's Son and belonged to God. Adam was created God's son and belonged to God once but sold himself to Sin. Paul explains that we have been concluded under the sin of Adam in order that we can be saved from this position by the righteousness of Christ - by coming out of Adam and into Jesus Christ by true baptism. Thus we can be concluded under the righteousness of Christ and become sons of God by adoption. Neither sin nor baptism change the quality of our flesh but change our relationship to God. There is no reason for baptism other than to bring us into covenant relationship with God through Jesus' death which reverses the position of being concluded under the sin of Adam. I say again - being concluded under sin is not a misfortune, neither is it a disease which affects our condition. It is for the purpose of granting us the greatest blessing possible - our salvation through Jesus' sacrifice!

Do you agree that we have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Lord Jesus? To admit that we have been purchased is to acknowledge true substitution whereby the life of Jesus Christ was freely given in place of the life of Adam.

Regarding Romans 7, I agree with the view expressed by Dr. Thomas and others when they explained that Paul was speaking of himself before conversion.

In Romans 7:1-4 Paul compares marriage to being in bondage either to sin or to Christ. Then verse 5 commences, "For when we were in the flesh..." which correlates to when Paul was in bondage to sin, when "the motions of sins which were by the law did work in my members to bring forth fruit unto death." Verse 6 commences, "But now we are delivered from the law... that we should serve in newness of spirit." Being in the spirit correlates to being in bondage to Christ. Paul then, for much of the chapter, laments the time he was in the flesh and in bondage to sin and finally exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" only to give the answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord... There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Do you agree that there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ? I feel sure you must however reluctantly. At the time of writing Paul had been delivered from bondage to sin and was no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit for he was in Christ.

In Leviticus 12 the Israelite recognizes that the new infant, being of Adam, needed to be redeemed in order to be a child of God, one of the chosen race of Israel. Again this is legal not physical. A matter of relationship with God and nothing to do with the physical condition of the flesh.

The editorial in our Circular Letter 187 for January/February 2001 is based on a radio programme in which a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim took part. It shows where Augustine obtained his teaching of sin in the flesh and the extraordinary influence he has had on the Catholic Church since the third century. While the whole of this editorial is worthy of special note I will here quote a small part of it:

“Before he converted to Catholicism Augustine was enamoured of a sect with Persian origins called the Manicheans. Mani, who was its prime mover, tussling with the problem of evil in a world created by a good God, decided that evil was to be found in matter. Our souls are good, he reasoned, for we are splinters of the divine, but we are trapped in evil matter by a body and in particular by its sexual lusts. Augustine was greatly influenced by this explanation. He had been promiscuous much of his youth and into his midlife and was ashamed of it. He was the person who introduced celibacy into the picture as a necessity for followers of Christ.

Some of the early fathers of the Church speak of women as intrinsically dangerous. This is not a particularly Christian view, it is one found in ancient Greek sources. At the time of the early church the whole culture was Greek, the language, social style, history, stories and education. This accounts for the dubious attitude to women that lingers still in many churches to the present day. The early fathers of the church reasoned that if they were attracted by women, it was the women’s fault and not theirs. Certainly it could not be the fault of men, who are rational beings. This is the story that is read into Adam and Eve’s activities and its logic does not entirely recommend it!

So Original Sin was launched into Western Christendom as a genetic condition, inherited at birth, which makes us incapable of doing the right thing no matter how hard we try...”

There is much more in this editorial but this short extract is sufficient for our present purpose and it cannot be comfortable being so closely associated with such history!

Looking forward to hearing from you with another clear reply,

With Kind Regards, Russell.

In our last Circular Letter we published an article by Brother A. Jannaway entitled “How Sin Affected Human Nature.” It was as comprehensive as any Christadelphian article intending to show how and why we have “sinful flesh.” There now follows an

“Answer to misrepresentation and slander of St. Paul through ignorance and misrepresentation of his teaching.”

Many interesting points have emerged from our Circular Letter of January/February 2001, Number 187 for it seems that despite the extraordinary amount of Nazarene Fellowship literature which has gone out over the past years dealing with many subjects important to salvation and the errors of teaching that have been shown to be obstacles to an understanding of the word of Truth, so many who have dared to read have either been disinterested or have suffered loss of memory.

I say this because so many statements from the Scriptures have been quoted out of context and lack of understanding in an effort to substantiate false theories and doctrines to which they have been introduced. Such is to be found for example under the name of A. Jannaway whose challenge is directed at non-existent people invented by the late Robert Roberts who might well have been associated with the Age of Fables; for to have applied to Edward Turney as having a theory of “clean flesh” or “unclean flesh” in a physical sense, was and is a fable, a myth with no correct basis of the Spirit’s teaching.

A. Jannaway assumes that those who believe Jesus to have been born with the nature Adam possessed at creation is to believe His flesh was not only “very good” but “clean,” whereas R. Roberts believed Jesus’ flesh was “physically unclean” and therefore it must be right that any opposition to “unclean” must be “clean.” Well, the latter is true in the legal and moral teaching of the Scriptures but if we apply the term “unclean” to human flesh then those who believe this of human nature can be made to look and feel very foolish and void of understanding. For example “Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing” (= human sinful flesh?). No doubt A. Jannaway and many of his kind have shaken hands and embraced each other as being unclean condemned flesh, and through such a false theory violated that Divine advice and defiled their own guilty conscience in believing a lie. So much for the Roberts’ myth.

How can men of The Logos theories of unclean sinful flesh make sense or understanding of Paul’s teaching when it is logically compared with many of his statements? We find they have no intention of making sense of such statements but to use them to suit their own false theory of belief in “sin in the flesh” as a compulsory physical element and law, which they are told, not in the Scriptures, but in Clause V of the BASF., that this was implanted by the Creator into Adam’s body and became a physical law of his being transmittable through sexual intercourse to his posterity.

I am sure from a scriptural basis that natural decay and death could have been transmitted by Adam and Eve to their posterity while they remained obedient in the Garden of Eden or if they had sinned, but this possibility did not reach that stage as a result of their exit, but to transmit sin in the way stated is inconceivable and unscriptural rubbish, a mockery against the wisdom of God and even the Apostle Paul’s teaching by that wisdom,

For a man like A. Jannaway to abuse Paul’s teaching by such misunderstanding of it and to consider himself so depraved and deceitful, so desperately wicked and corrupt of mind in his present state as he makes Paul to have been in his converted state, I would wonder why he would have the gall to ask the question “Who shall deliver me from this depraved nature of sinful flesh, I have already been baptized and risen to newness of life, a new creature in Christ, but sin is still in my flesh, O wretched man that I am?” Unfortunately this seems to be representative of the Logos membership, and Nazarenes are condemned for opposing it!

A. Jannaway declares, and I suppose he speaks for the Logos element, “Let clean flesh theorists advance one Scripture that claims that man is now physically in a very good state.”

I can tell him he has to find these mythical theorists in order to get an answer, for as far as I am concerned they do not exist and never did, only in the warped mind of Robert Roberts in 1873 to suit his own mischievous motives.

Nevertheless we do have scriptural evidence from the words of a reliable man who treats the subject in the correct way when he describes the possibility of evil and good emerging from the heart of the man of flesh nature depending on the state of mind, the one is described as an evil man and the other a good man, and our reliable source is Jesus Himself who destroys A. Jannaway’s motive in his quoting from Jeremiah 17:9 about the heart of man being (for the benefit of his own case and incorrect reasoning) “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?” He deliberately ignores the fact that Jeremiah like Jesus, was speaking of the heart of an evil minded man, he ignores from verse 10 onwards that the heart of Jeremiah was not deceitful nor desperately wicked and that God judges the hearts of men not by their flesh nature which is as God made them from the beginning, but by conduct.

Like others of his creed, A. Jannaway quotes Jesus from Matthew 12:35 but only the latter half of the verse which suits him, and points to the evil treasure that only an evil man possesses to bring forth, unlike the good man of whom Jesus gives priority in this verse. Again he quotes Paul as saying “In the flesh dwelleth no good thing,” but Paul did not say that; he said “For I know that in me, that is in my flesh (not in anyone else’s flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” Was Paul an evil man with evil treasure in his heart when he wrote those words? Of course not, he was now a new man in Christ, who, like those Romans he addressed, had “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, God be thanked.” (Romans 6:17,18). It is obvious that Paul was among those who had delivered that form of doctrine to the Roman believers and it contained nothing about sin being in the physical flesh, but as being in a state of slavery to a

Master personified in his discourse as “Sin” and in bondage to his law from which there was release through Christ, but not to those who imagined sin to be physically in their flesh as I previously demonstrated (in my impersonating of the position of A. Jannaway and his sympathisers at the time of his writing).

In the Scriptures and wisdom of God, good and evil relates to character where human beings are concerned and the context of what is stated is important. The words of the young man to Jesus “Good Master,” have been used to uphold the doctrine that flesh is evil not good by reason of the reply Jesus made to him, “Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one that is, God.” But surely this is not a reference to physical flesh but to character measured by the One who is above all and who created all things even human nature and this is what Jesus meant as being inferior to His Father in the voluntary form of a servant though His Son.

Jesus said also “I am the Good Shepherd.” What was good about that? His flesh? Yes, this is true, in that He laid down the life in His flesh for the sheep which fact is denied in Logos teaching.

Common sense should reveal that Paul is showing how he and the Roman believers had been redeemed or purchased from the slavery of Sin as a Master under whom they had been born. This he reckons as being “in the flesh” with passions of sins which could not exist without law - Romans 7:5. Paul continues in verse 6, “But now we are delivered from the law, that position of being dead and held in slavery that could only bring forth fruit unto death, for the wages of sin is death, and now we are serving in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (in the flesh) yet alive in a body of flesh and blood.”

So as Paul teaches of those in Christ delivered from the bondage of Master Sin, with the mind we serve the law of God but when we were in the flesh, the law of sin, because our members were those of Sin but now we are the members of Christ and serving righteousness (Romans 6). Why be so obstinate and blind not to see and realize that Paul is comparing himself as formerly an unregenerated Jew under the law which could not by works give life, and his present position of grace and in Christ? Of this present state of freedom in Christ and the marvellous work of conversions of people to Christ, how can you say that Paul was speaking of himself in the present tense, in view also of what little I have already explained and what I quote now from Romans 7:18, “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” If this were true of Paul in the present tense of his statement, I wonder at him saying of himself, 1 Corinthians 9:3,2, “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” Again, 1 Corinthians 11:1,2, “Be ye followers of me, even as also I am of Christ. Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.”

All this good credited to a man in Christ who found not how to perform that which is good? Shame on those who profess to have the Truth and blind themselves to its staring them in the face!

Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters,” Yet it is claimed Paul was doing so, when in fact he was discouraging such conduct in people who had become servants to one Master who had made them free. (Romans chapter 6).

This subject was explained years ago in Nazarene literature under the heading of “The Wretched Man of Romans Chapter 7 and in any case if the context is respected and considered rightly dividing the Word of Truth, there would be no confusing of Paul’s teaching. It is unfortunate for their members that not only is Mr. Jannaway guilty of indiscriminate reading of the Scriptures but also their so-called intellectual and responsible writers and advisers throughout Christadelphia.

Where Mr. Jannaway says of Adam that he after his transgression in view of his own and Paul’s evil and condemned nature, might also have said, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”, this is false speculation, for Adam’s body and nature was not condemned, it was his sin which was condemned and came under sins penalty; “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Adam was never delivered from his physical body and I am sure he never asked to be, whether it was corruptible by creation (as it certainly was) or under sentence of death by sin. It was from his legal position he needed deliverance, and in the love and mercy of God he was, otherwise he would have perished the day he sinned. The state of being in Adam is a legal one under the law of sin and death and called the body of

Sin of belonging to Sin, so that Paul considered his members as being the members of “Sin” under his law, so that whatever good he may have done in his unregenerated state it was credited to his slave owner “Sin” who would ultimately pay his wages, Death.

It was the “Old Man” under “Sin” from whom Paul craved deliverance, not from a body of physical flesh and in fact he had already been delivered from the “Old man” when he asked the question “Who shall deliver me...?” In fact he states who had done so and thanked God through Jesus Christ. He then contrasts his unregenerated state under the law of sin and death with his present conversion in service to Christ by saying “So then with the mind (Spiritual) I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh (not Spirit) the law of sin.” He then states the true position, not of physical flesh but legal and moral relationship, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus” - Romans 8:1,2. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh (the old man) with its affections and lusts” - Galatians 5:24. Paul in the present tense, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me.” - Galatians 2:20. Was Christ a no good thing dwelling in Paul’s flesh and blood?

Another misconception found in Christadelphian statements is used by A. Jannaway to bolster his view of depraved nature through lust of the flesh and consequent change of Adam’s nature to decay, death and corruption. He quotes Peter as saying in effect that the corruptible nature of man is due to Adam’s lust, but if it is read as I read it myself as a Christadelphian, it would show that man need not be a partaker of the corruption that is in the world through lust, or unlawful covetousness, but can through God’s provision escape now from the immoral and unlawful covetous practices of this present evil world. Peter is speaking to the believers who have already escaped the immoral corruption that is in the world but they were still alive in flesh and blood nature which was corruptible through creation, not by Adam’s sin.

I counsel anyone to read 2 Peter 1, especially verse 9 for it appears many have not believed these words and are still in the flesh as Paul meant it, and taught it with Peter.

In conclusion I refer to two men, one a Christadelphian – Dr. Thomas M.D. and Dr. Adam Clarke D.D. whose views were in agreement that in Romans 7:18 Paul as a converted Christian could only be referring to his past as an unregenerated Jew under the Mosaic Law. Please consider this seriously, Mr. Jannaway and Co.

Brother Phil Parry.

OPEN LETTER TO CHRISTADELPHIANS

Our purpose in writing to you is to remark on the strange situation in which Christadelphians find themselves as the time of the end approaches. For over a century we know they have been foremost in the study of Scriptural prophecy and more than any other sect they understand and realize the way the world is going. They know that it cannot now be long before the last judgments begin to pour out upon an evil world and ungodly generation and one would expect them to be especially and urgently concerned about any aspect of their faith which might be in question.

It is widely known that almost from the very commencement of Christadelphianism there have been divergent views regarding their doctrine that God “changed” Adam’s flesh from very good to “sinful flesh” involving the Saviour and making him “defiled,” a theory nowhere found in Scripture and is completely without foundation.

In recent years it has become increasingly clear to thoughtful brethren and sisters among them that the early Christadelphians did not completely clear away the confusion which had marred the simplicity of the Gospel after it became the accepted religion of the Roman Empire. Yet nothing has been done to clear up and resolve these differences and establish whether or not their faith is indeed founded on the Rock which is Christ, or on a false foundation; there are capable and thoughtful brethren who are aware of the existence of the problem but who deliberately ignore it and strive to give their readers the impression that it does not exist, or who use their skill to cover up and counteract the efforts of those who, like ourselves, are trying to bring them into the light.

We would be the last to deny the admirable work which is being done; preaching and special efforts are now almost worldwide; social and charitable work and the care of the sick and aged is past praise. But the sad thing is that all these good works are being done upon a basis which is recognized to be false in vital particulars - we refer to the nature of man and the sacrifice of Christ. John Carter made it plain in "The Christadelphian" as far back as August 1958 that he did not accept that Jesus was in any sense under condemnation, he also rejected the concept of Sin-in-the-flesh as used by the BASF. Since then L.G.Sargent has made similar statements. How is it possible then for the organization to continue which is founded upon such falsehood? The simple explanation is that the Christadelphian community has acquired a life of its own, independent of its individual members. Its literature, its institutions, its finances now constitute an organization which can exist independently of those who belong to it. It has become impossible for any individual to alter its structure. Brethren may think, and up to a point, speak and write their own thoughts but they are powerless to change its direction. It is true to say that there are now many among them who recognize that "sinful flesh" is nonsense. What is the purpose in God changing man's flesh from "very good" (Genesis 1:31) to "Sinful flesh"? Adam, by his sin, had made things bad enough and to charge God with making things worse by changing his flesh for the worse comes near to blasphemy. No! there is no sin in the flesh! Nowhere in Holy Writ is it recorded that God at any time changed man's flesh. This is a fabrication conceived by the mind of man, as Sin is abstract and cannot be a physical property of the flesh. John in his 1st epistle plainly tells us that "sin is transgression of law" (1 John 3:4) and is a legal matter, nothing to do with man's flesh. The notion arose from the mistaken exposition of Romans 8; 3 and the idea that Jesus condemned sin-in-the-flesh; whereas the meaning is: - Jesus condemned sin while He was Himself in flesh, e.g. by showing that it ought not to be. Romans 8:3 correctly (as it is now recognized to be an error) should not read "sinful flesh" but "sin's flesh", e.g. denoting ownership and is a totally different thing.

Regarding this doctrine of changed flesh, may we give you a simple illustration to bring to your notice the unreasonable and serious implications of the Christadelphian charge against Almighty God that He changed man's flesh by "The implantation in his flesh of a sin principle, rendering him and all his posterity inevitable sinners, incapable of keeping the commandments." (BASF).

Let us suppose that following the birth of your son or daughter, it became very cross, which proved to be very disturbing and upsetting to the normal routine (as did Adam's sin). As a loving parent you would immediately seek a remedy to restore a normal state of things for the child and for everyone else in the household (which was what God actually did for Adam). Having done all you could for your child's comfort, imagine your dismay to learn that, because your child had been so cross, someone had begun and circulated a false statement charging you with having (if it were possible) implanted a 'crying principle' in your child's flesh, causing him and all his posterity to become "inevitable criers" for life, in effect, become "a physical law of his being."

Would you not conclude that the person responsible for the rumour was mad? Would you not be alarmed that if the rumour reached the ears of the Child Welfare authorities, it would cause you to be charged with an inhuman action against a defenceless babe, causing it untold misery for life? You would be guilty of cruelty, or considered to be of unsound mind and either punished or put away in a safe place. Need we say that you would lose no time in inserting in the columns of the local newspaper a notice denying the charge and threatening to prosecute anyone further slandering your name. But how sad you would be, and angry, to find that in spite of your protestations to the contrary, all your relatives, neighbours and friends continue to believe this wicked charge against you and persist on passing on the falsehood to all that wish to listen, thus causing you to appear a monster in the public eye. It seems beyond reason does it not that anyone with intelligence could swallow such a ridiculous and monstrous tale and accept it as true! Yet though you claim to be of more than average intelligence, you have no qualms or conscience whatsoever, in believing and communicating to others a similar monstrous tale against the Creator (who in actual fact did for Adam all that was possible at that time to save Adam (man) from the consequences of his sin in Eden), when you persist in believing and teaching others, that because Adam sinned "God implanted in his flesh a sin principle making him and all his posterity inevitable sinners;" in plain English, incapable of keeping the commandments, or unable to help ourselves when we do wrong as it is the "fault of our Adamic nature obtruding itself" (Peter Watkins). Such wicked teaching in endangering the salvation of many sincere and well meaning people who follow Christadelphian teaching.

For you to perform (if you had the power) such a thing in your son's flesh would be neither good to you or to him. Neither would it be any good to God or man, but rather aggravate an already serious situation and, as you would have a very bad opinion of the offending person who started the false rumour about your "implanting a crying principle in your son's flesh" making him an "inevitable crier," so too will God have equally bad an opinion of you and all those with you who persist in believing such a wicked falsehood about Him. Please make no mistake that you cannot Justify yourself be pleading "You did not know" because the Creator, like yourself, has also made a public declaration for all that have eyes to see in Genesis 3:21, that by the typical sacrifices of the lambs (Genesis 4:1-4) Jesus was symbolically slain in Eden in the sacrifices which provided the skins to clothe or cover Adam and Eve's sin as a type of their personal redemption and forgiveness. (This was the first "Sin of the world" which brought in the law of sin and death, which also began the rite of sacrifice). Why should not repentant Adam be spared and given a second chance? If you had the power to stay the course of the law, would you not use it, if only temporarily, as did God, if your son was legally sentenced to death? You certainly would spare your son. if you could, even though he deserved to die.

It is only as a rebel in his "naked" or unpardoned state that Adam is the Federal Head of the human race, alienated from God. Most people, including Christadelphians, think that Adam became mortal or destined to die because of his disobedience and has perished. Actually he was, by the love and mercy of his heavenly Father (and ours) the first man to be saved by the sacrifice of Christ, though it was only then foreshadowed in the animal types of sacrifice and clothing, or covering; as we are left in no doubt about it, God Himself made the covering! And here in type is the "slaying of the Lamb from the foundation, or beginning of the world." We know that the blood of these innocent animals was shed to provide the covering for their sin, but in type until the sinless One should come and give His life to pay the debt incurred by man. Christadelphians together with the Mother of Harlots and all her Daughter Churches fail to see in Genesis 3:21 this most of all important saving truth (hence their doctrine of sinful flesh), and unless you do recognize the import of it, you too are in danger of perishing without hope. May we, at this juncture, respectfully draw your attention to the fact that the sinful flesh heresy is the basic doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and all her daughter churches and is the root cause of all the confusion in so-called Christendom to-day. Is it then possible that this hateful "sinful flesh" doctrine could be the basic doctrine of the True Church? We unhesitatingly say "Not likely!"

We see in Adam's two sons the manifestation of the two sorts of people with whom God is concerned - Cain, "Your father the Devil, a murderer from the beginning," and Abel, who served God and acknowledged His purpose in offering the proper sacrifice in which blood was shed, thus witnessing to his faith that in the fullness of time God would provide a sin offering; for in the rite of sacrifice under the law it was understood that in making his offering, the repentant sinner was confessing the fact that in strict justice his own life was forfeit, but that because God is merciful and not willing that any should perish God would accept the life of an animal instead of the sinner's. Not that God had any delight in the slaughter of dumb and innocent creatures, "obedience is better than sacrifice," but the life of a man as a reasoning and intelligent being was infinitely more valuable, and if it could be saved and be brought nearer to God and a fuller conception and appreciation of His attributes, then the suffering involved was justified.

We do the same when we are (correctly) baptized, dying in symbol the death which Christ literally died for us. Unfortunately Christadelphians do not teach or uphold these truths. Would to God that they did.

By the slaying of the lambs for an offering in Eden (Genesis 3:21) Adam's natural life span was secured, otherwise he would have been slain there and then. Herein we see the mercy of God in that temporarily, He stayed the law of 'a man's life for a man's life' from taking its course. Actually the Creator did the only thing possible at that time, as there was no other man as yet born (even if one had been willing, as was Christ). So He substituted the animal's life instead of Adam's as if Adam's life had been taken, and there being no other man to continue the race, we should have had no existence. This did not mean that the debt incurred by Adam had been cancelled but that "in due time" the full price would have to be paid. In due time, this was what our dear Saviour Jesus voluntarily did for his brother Adam (and we in him); Adam's natural life was spared and consequently if he remained faithful, his eternal life would also be granted to him at the first resurrection. You see, both being Sons of God, they were brothers, and under the Mosaic law it was the right of the nearest of kin to redeem, and Jesus was Adam's nearest of kin and in the right position to redeem Adam from the power of Sin and bondage (death).

Had this sacrificing of the animals (Genesis 3:21) not taken place the sentence of death, not natural death, of Genesis 2:17 would have taken its course and Adam would have paid the legal penalty of an inflicted death by slaying; even as a man who has committed murder pays for his crime with his life. Adam, by disobeying God's command virtually murdered the human race and but for God's intervention the race would have ended there and then.

Death in 930 years can by no stretch of imagination be considered to be sentence of death, and the sentence pronounced on Adam was "In the day... thou shalt surely die." To verify this look up 1 Kings 2:37 and similar references and you will find "thou shalt surely die" in Scripture means sentenced to death by law, which here involves blood shedding. We implore you, brother, to study this matter and get to the right meaning. It is not a difficult thing to reason out, if it is remembered that sentence of death and natural death are two different deaths in Scripture, as the present time. What a tragedy it will be to have spent one's life preaching things which are contrary to Scripture and dishonouring to God and deserving only of - "Bring them before me and I will slay them."

Contrary to Christadelphian teaching the truth of Scripture is that Adam was created a living soul or a natural being with a natural span of life, which was destined to end in natural death as a result of physical exhaustion or senile decay. He was put on probation requiring obedience to God's command - "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." If he had been faithful, he would have, like all other faithful ones, have been rewarded with eternal life at the end of the age at the return of Christ at the resurrection of the just.

However, he disobeyed, forfeited his life (as a murderer does) and deserved to be put to death. By the love and mercy of God, that the human race might continue, Adam was spared and allowed to live his natural span of 930 years and put on a second probation requiring faith. All his children are off-spring of a forfeited life to which he no longer had any legal right and are consequently alienated from God, or legally dead. But when they come to enlightenment by learning about these truths, they become responsible and come under the sentence incurred by Adam.

By voluntarily laying down His own life, which was not forfeited or under condemnation as a result of being the Son of God, and He having kept it that way by living an obedient life, Jesus paid Adam's debt of - "A man's life for a man's life" and retrospectively and prospectively ransomed the whole race from having perished without hope. He thereby made it possible for those of them who believed in Him and suffer, in symbol, the death which Jesus suffered literally on the cross for them, to receive as the gift of God, life everlasting.

This is the true Gospel which answers to reason and to Scripture. Please compare these few lines with Christadelphian teaching, then ask yourself which accounts best for the Master's own teaching -

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."

The dreadful lie of "Changed Flesh" we repeat is nowhere recorded in Scripture and there is deep sorrow and concern at the preaching of this error, as it not only clouds the whole conception of the Plan of God but because the indiscriminating acceptance of the idea that on account of the supposed inherent sinfulness of human flesh it is impossible for men and women to keep the commandments, and such teaching is endangering the salvation of many sincere and well meaning people who blindly follow your teaching. If you are comforting yourself that your failure to live up to the example set by Christ is due to sin impulses in your flesh beyond your control and think you have any justification in so thinking, you are badly mistaken, because we can give you about a dozen, at least, with whom God was pleased:-

1	Abel	"obtained witness that he was righteous"	Hebrews 11:4.
2	Abraham	His heart was faithful	Genesis 18:19
3	Levi	"Iniquity was not found in his lips"	Malachi 2:6
4	Asa	"His heart was perfect with the Lord all his days."	1 Kings 15:14.
5	Job	"Perfect and upright"	Job 1:1
6	Daniel	"he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."	Daniel 6:4
7	Jospeh	"A just man"	Matthew 1:19

8 Zacharias)	“and they were both righteous before God”	Luke 1:6
9 Elizabeth)		
10 John the Baptist	“there hath not risen a greater”	John 1:47
11 Nathaniel	“In whom was no guile”	John 1:47
12 Paul	“Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”	Philippians 3:6.

These are a sample of whom Christadelphians describe as “degraded beings” “Whose heart is deceitful and desperately wicked” (Islip Colyer).

The recorded facts re: these men that they are faithful, righteous, perfect, without iniquity, upright, blameless and so forth. And if these lived thus and pleased God, then so can and must we. And we would do well to hesitate to contradict Scripture and say that those of whom God approves were personally sinners.

The whole object of the apostle Paul in Romans chapters 6,7 and 8 is to show the contrast between the sinner “in Adam” living for himself and controlled by the natural mind, and the saint “in Christ” led by the Spirit of God and living for others. In Paul’s words, “The former state is “in the flesh” and the latter state “in the Spirit” but both are in the same literal flesh; hence he says “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” “If so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.”

In both states equally the same literal flesh and blood, but differently related to God and His purpose.

Please also consider the following passages of Scripture and ask yourself if there is anything which God asks us to do but which we are unable to perform because of sin-in-the-flesh, or because we are born with tendencies in the direction of sin which we cannot control.

- 1 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous” – 1 John 3:7
- 2 “Be ye therefore perfect (upright), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” – Matthew 5:48
- 3 “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? - James 4:4
- 4 “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father” - Matthew 7:21

In conclusion, as you are a Christadelphian, we challenge you to give proof that God ever did such a foolish and senseless thing as to change man’s flesh from very good to sinful flesh. To do so would have only increased the harm already done by Adam and to affirm and teach that Christ had to die for the purpose of destroying his “sinful flesh” is charging God with cruelty and foolishness, the like of which would be difficult to find in the most ignorant of men.

Have you never realized that human flesh is as God made it, and that there does not seem to be much sense in making it sinful and then destroying it because it is sinful?

And Christ’s flesh was not destroyed in any case - “He saw no corruption,” not even a bone of Him was broken! (Scripture).

These letters come to you uninvited and maybe unwelcome but for love of the brethren and their eternal welfare these things need to be agitated and brought to their notice, so that they can start thinking for themselves and get these errors put right, for is it not according to the Lord’s will to search the hidden things of God?

Are we not all to strive after a more perfect understanding of God’s will and purpose? To contend earnestly for the true faith delivered unto the saints? Or maybe you prefer to think that it is the Lord’s will to close our minds to reason and scriptural investigation and sink into the prevailing lethargy and compromise with error for the sake of comfort.

We affirm that on account of their erroneous doctrine of Sin-in-the-flesh, Christadelphians are unable to give an explanation of the sacrifice of Christ or of the nature of man which appeals to reason and justice and which is in harmony with all the Scriptures, this being the reason why these subjects are scarcely ever dealt with in their preaching. Christadelphians are conscious of the unreasonableness of the Creator making the whole of the human race sinners and punishing them with death on account of one man’s sin; they can

see the injustice of God inflicting the same punishment on Jesus who was sinless, as a condition of forgiving others; and they are aware that there are many Scriptures that directly contradict their teaching. So long as there was nothing else we all had to swallow it and make the best of it, blaming our own lack of “spiritual perception” for any mental discomfort we might occasionally experience.

Christadelphians are faced to-day with a similar choice to the Jews of Christ’s day- Will they, as did the Jews, reject the Messiah in order to keep their traditions, man made constitutions and Statements of Faith? Or will they open their minds and accept the Holy, sinless and undefiled One and the Just, as their Saviour and Sacrifice, and abandon their “defiled” and “sinful flesh” Representative?

We trust that for their own sakes they will, but it is hard for them to “kick against the pricks” as it was for Paul.

Earnestly contending for the true faith and ever ready to assist your quest for Truth, we are, your former Brother and Sister,

David and Ann Phillips (written circa 1970).

Second instalment of

“The Atonement” X-Rayed

by Brother A.L.Wilson

BACK TO EDEN

Out of the mouths of babes, even sucklings hast thou ordained praise and taken the wise in their own craftiness. Jesus thanked His Father He did so. I pronounce the Amen.

In regard to the legal aspect in Eden, the case of Adam was similar to that of a murderer in our day. Adam stood under sentence of death; his execution was imminent, but God loved Adam! Could that love of itself cancel the oath of the Law of sin and death? If so, then as Paul declares, “Christ died in vain.” Such would nullify the necessity of His being brought into the world at all, whereas Jesus declares, “To this end was I born, even for this cause came I into the world. The Master well knew that the Law of sin and death was as irrevocable as the Law of the Spirit of Life- When He intimated this truth to His disciples they understood it not. The law of sin and death declared, The soul that sinneth shall die. Without shedding of blood, no remission. Now ponder the Master’s two questions here; what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and forfeit (*zemiothe*) his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange (*en antallagma*) in ransom (*anti lutron*) in place of his life?” The soul that fails to perceive the necessity here for the God-provided ransom is to be pitied indeed!

Thus, if God is to honour and magnify His word above His Name - Isaiah 42:21 - ransom is imperative to God’s attribute of verity. Paul clinches this point for all time;

“Being justified freely by His Grace (*charite*) through the deliverance (*apolutrosos*) that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a Mercy Seat through faith in (*en*) the blood of Him, for an exhibition of His (God’s) righteousness... in order that He might be just (with the Law of sin and death, which demanded the life blood of the sinner) before Justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus.” John confirms Paul. God so loved the world that He stooped to this (obligation) on man’s account - John 3:16, Romans 3:26. Has not God been gracious?

Adam landed himself in an irrevocable fix (Matthew 16:26), to counteract which God alone could undertake; but if this one whom God provided was under your double curse, you reverse the glorious

honesty of Paul's just God to a fraudulent transaction. All this pretended aversion to substitution is forced (innocently. I verily believe) to uphold your pagan assumption of hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh.

You yell, "No! It is not substitution, but representative association."

I ask, if in Christadelphian terms the nature of Jesus was obnoxious to the curse, why do you mince and omit the one help of your principle? Why not be honest and say, "the association of a condemned representative" or, "the condemned representative association"?

God's servants of all ages declared that God, distressed over Adam's calamity, instantly ordered His *elohim* to deliver him from going down into the pit, "I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24). This is the most accurate and concise distinction between the terms *redeem* and *deliver* we have in print. This settled all. King Sin justly demanded the life blood of Adam (Genesis 2:17). Did God slay Adam? This had annihilated the race on the spot. What procured and secured our continued existence? God slew His own Lamb, a Ransom instead of (*anti lutron*) Adam. Thank God! (Genesis 3:23, 22:8, Revelation 13:8, Ephesians 1:4, John 3:16).

Now God paid this ransom by a paper note (type) in Eden but ever true to His Word, He honestly (Romans 3:26) tabled down His sovereign on Calvary. Then types, shadows, representatives gave place to our Antitype. Substitute, Surety of the better covenant (Hebrews 7:22). Thus Adam stood arbitrarily delivered by ransom and by faith in the Antitype promised, in a position to enter a second probation. Now is your chance.

Whether Adam instantly availed himself of this golden opportunity is not stated, but the conditions were like those of subsequent Abraham and every other human soul since, viz., that God has provided a Lamb for a burnt offering (Genesis 22:8).

Jesus clinches. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Other foundation can no man lay." All who would therefore enter the New Covenant must comply with God's pleasant conditions, viz., "the quiet waters by."

"Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,
Where the flowers are blooming and the sweet waters flow,"

An individual passing through the symbol of His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection to new life in Christ is an indispensable preliminary to our acceptance with God.

By this ransom (*anti lutron*) God has enabled us to hand in our ticket (receipt) to the jailor (Psalm 142:7) and to walk out of prison, to adoption and freedom. "If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed." Cannot you now perceive that if Christ was under any obligation whatever to be slain before His own supposed debt could be wiped out, His abode today would be the grave?

Lest there be any further difficulty in your mind re the distinction between the terms *redeem* and *deliver*, permit a homely illustration: John, having fallen into the water, was instantly hauled out by his mother and saved from a watery grave. Would you say he had been redeemed? Why, then abuse language to involve the Beloved of God under your double curse? You charge Him of hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh and the Mosaic curse, though passively having been hung there; blasphemous theology! I reiterate: the context alone must ever decide whether deliverance is dependent on, or is the result of ransom, since of itself it contains no thought of a price having been paid.

When this important distinction is grasped a glorious concord is heard in the "Song of the Redeemed." "Thou wast slain, and didst buy us back (*egorasas*) to God by Thy blood." Strictly Dr. Thomas's definition. Why be stubborn? Now just permit a test how your assumption would chord that song. Did they sing, "Thou wast slain for Thyself..." etc., cannot you hear the "Conductor" instantly calling "Halt"? Let us now hear how your assumption would appeal from the lips of Jesus. This is the severest scrutiny to which any theory can be subjected; even deductive logic is forced to take a back seat. Hear Jesus first:

“When He had given thanks, He broke the bread, and said, This is my (sinful) body which must be slain for myself. You know that sin could not be condemned in my body if it was not there. This is the body of your Condemned Representative which must be slain to cleanse Myself, and you must go through all that I go through.” (Your booklet, page 32; “Christendom Astray,” page 114),

“After the same manner also He took the cup saying, This is the New Testament in my sinful blood which I received through the veins of Mary” (Robert Roberts).

You know that

“As regards physical constitution, I am as much under the curse as you are” (J.J.Hadley).

“My very nature is obnoxious to the curse” (Robert Roberts).

You all know that I have “a black and a white side” (Dr. Thomas) - and so on ad infinitum.

HEAR PAUL

“No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Again, “There is nothing unclean of itself” (Romans 14:14). Again, “Every sin man committeth is outside the body” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Thus your sinful flesh hobby is stabled not in Romans 8:3, nor in any other part of God’s realm.

Not until you discover this truth can you ever behold the Lamb of God. You would then discover that instead of His being under your curse, He owes His very existence to that calamity. “To this end was I born. For this cause came I into the world.” (John 18:37).

On page 18 you present us with a powerful refutation of your own assumption. This is the chief characteristic of every Christadelphian who uses ink on this theme, viz.,

“Sin, the prince, the Devil had nothing in Jesus, no death claim, no real fault in Him. No, nor even Herod; and Pilate washed his hands of the case.”

We endorse that glorious pronouncement with our whole soul. It ought to be framed in gold, but we wonder when you will wash your hands of this case. Had you confronted Pilate and those other gentlemen you name, all of them had changed their mind, and Pilate, instead of washing his hands, had pronounced the Master’s crucifixion on the spot.

How should Pilate, the Devil and Herod have hearkened the collective Christadelphian charge against Jesus? viz., your charge of His double curse, Edenic and Mosaic,” and hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh? The Christadelphian evidence against Jesus excels in rank blasphemy that of the Jews.

CHRISTADELPHIAN EVIDENCE AGAINST JESUS

“There is no “if” in it, you know: He was made sin by being made of a woman” (C. Smith).

“His body was as unclean as those for whom He died, requiring cleansing from sin nature by His sacrificial death.”

Think of Sacrificing His own debt!

“He was as much under the curse as those He came to save” (J.J.Hadley).

“The sin-nature of His mother, the combination of condemned human nature.” (“Christendom Astray,” pages 113,114).

How should the Devil, Herod and Pilate have taken the above evidence?

MORTAL BODY

On page 17 you say: “the body of sin is our mortal body” (Romans 6:6, 8:11), “mortal because of sin.”

I prefer to say the phrase “the body of sin” in Greek means “the body belonging to sin” not a “sinful body.” This Divine truth nullifies your assumption throughout and reduces your hobby to a will-o’-the-wisp. Does the adjective mortal predicate that the flesh has been changed? This is your death trap. Has not the sinner changed his relation to Law, which has pronounced his execution? You are ever on the prowl for flesh! Would you say a pigeon or a horse is mortal? Please say yes or no.

INFLEXIONS OF MORTAL

MORTAL: Is the Adjective form (2 Chronicles 14:11, Job 4:11, Romans 6:12, 8:11).

MORTALITY: Is the Noun form (2 Corinthians 5:4).

MORTALLY: Is the Adverb form (Deuteronomy 19:11), “If a man smite his neighbour mortally that he die” etc. Here the adverb modifies the verb “to smite,” it cannot qualify the man’s flesh, a noun!

MORTIFY: This is the Verbal form (Romans 8:13). “Mortify” - “put to death the deeds of the body, and ye shall live.”

Cannot you now perceive that if you mortify - put to death - your body instead of the deeds, then you commit suicide and thwart the purpose of God?

Does not this general analysis demonstrate that the term “mortal” is wholly restricted to the legal and criminal vocabulary and department, while the “physical” remains unchanged? A condemned representative under execution on his own account could benefit no soul, not even himself. The late Robert Roberts wrote in strict conformity with the foregoing:

“There is no evidence of this change whatever, the presumption and evidence are entirely the opposite direction. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his physical organization.”

That declaration alone most powerfully clears Jesus at the Bar and is in strict conformity with Paul: “There is nothing unclean of itself” (Romans 14:14, Acts 10:28).

The Late Dr. Thomas, in “The Herald of the Kingdom,” volume 5, page 159, declared:

“Death and corruption, with reproduction, is the fundamental law of the physical system of the six days. Adam and Eve and all the other animals born of the earth with themselves would have died and gone to corruption, if there had been no transgression, provided there had been no further interference with the physical system than Moses records in the history of the six days. The lives and the deaths of Adam and Eve were predicated not upon any peculiarity of their animal constitution, but upon the relation they may come to sustain to the two trees in paradise. From this we learn that they placed themselves under the Law which sentenced them to death.

From these premises it will be seen that we dissent from our correspondent’s notion that ‘All creation became corrupt,’ by which we understand him to mean constitutionally impregnated with corruptibility at the fall, we believe that the change was moral, not physical.”

Let us now hear the late Brother Edward Turney:

“The animals, we learn from Genesis, sprang from the ground by Almighty Power. They have all the same breath. All are flesh, that is, they are corruptible. You may call them mortal if you like, in a loose or general sense, but it is more strictly correct to style them corruptible, because mortal means sentenced to death through breach of law.”

Is it possible that more strict unanimity could be exhibited on any theme in theology? That glorious sample presented will permit of no “yes” today and “no” tomorrow. Why then, violate the very fundamental laws of thought to involve the Beloved of God under the curse on account of His flesh? Which would render Him so blasphemously unfit for the purpose for which the Gracious God brought Him into existence. The purpose for and the development of the Redemption was the same yesterday, is today and will be until the Beloved One delivers up the Kingdom to His Father, when God shall be all and in all. “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with my Glory.”

All this aversion to substitution, or Just ransom (*anti lutron*) in place of man, is forced to uphold the pagan delusion of sinful flesh, which if true, would irrevocably have involved Christ. Divine truth alone can remove every barrier preventing our perception of the true Anointed of God, and saves from all subtle, double-dealing to present a black and a white Christ to uphold the pagan delusion. “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” “Other foundation can no man lay.” Ask yourself, did God lay a condemned foundation? (Isaiah 28:16-19). Ask yourself whether the just God redeemed - bought back - man by the shed blood of a condemned representative? (1 Peter 1:18). Ask whether such could possibly be a sacrifice?

SATAN AGAINST SATAN

All the glorious admissions in the foregoing by our Christadelphian friends are reversed by the late J.J.Andrew. In his “Blood of the Everlasting Covenant,” pages 6 and 7 he declares:

“A change must therefore have taken place in Adam’s physical constitution as the result of this decree... How the change was effected is not revealed, neither is it necessary to know.”

I ask, must we therefore, take this unrevealed assumption wholesale without ever a pinch of salt? This supposed contraction of hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh is the delusion of the dark ages. Not until it is analysed and compared with the Word of God alone are the fatal results disclosed. It forces the advocate to block out the glorious sacrificial ransom the Beloved of God laid down for man. It involves Christ under your curse where no soul, not even angel from heaven, could sacrifice his own debt. I pronounce your “perfectly good rendering of Romans 8:3,” therefore, a fatal error. Your fatal adjective is not there in the Greek. That assumption is the parent of “no mere man is able to keep the commands of God,” a premium on crime. It restricts the purpose for the Divine begettal of Jesus, for the arming of Jesus with super-human power in order to conquer this supposed demon in His flesh, which renders every other human soul utterly powerless to keep the commandments of God.” (Shorter Catechism).

This state of apostasy enslaved even Dr. Thomas, who declared: “A circumcised person was bound to keep that which he could not possibly keep, which if he did keep, could not benefit him.” (“Echoes of Past Controversies,” page 13).

Cannot you perceive the havoc your assumption of sinful flesh has wrought in the earth? The late J.J.Hadley declared; “We are not born with desires to disobey for disobedience’s sake, but with desires which possess a strength out of proportion to our power of self control.”

The Master sent His disciples to cast out devils, but I cannot find where either He or they ever encountered hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh, but I do find where God tries no man above what he is able to bear, even makes a way of escape that he may be able to bear it. I implore every sinful flesh advocate to pick up a concordance and scan the references to the pleadings of the gracious God to obey, keep, do, and hearken, then ask himself how God would receive his reply, “No mere man is able”! The Master must have been ignorant of sinful flesh because instead of this alien excuse of inability, He takes the opposite way out. “When ye have done all that was commanded you,” then say, “We are unprofitable servants, we have done only what was commanded us.”

Well then, if Jesus was granted super-human power, a machine gun say, before He could conquer this hyphenated demon in His flesh while every other soul must face that monster with bare fists alone, will you please point out to me where the credit and glory come in? Bluntly, your assumption is a premium on crime. Kindle the fire with your “Shorter Catechism Theologic.” God graciously invites all to join His covenant and worship Him, not in blasphemy, but in the Name of Him whom God provided, whose blood alone could ratify that covenant (Hebrews 10).

Sinful flesh blames God all through and damns man. The assumption is a libel on a just God, an abuse of reason, which sinks the advocate far below the line of God’s spirit level. “It cripples all energy, paralyses all effort, blasphemes the goodness of God, impugns His wisdom and turns His mercy into gall. It changes the creature of His hand into a prone puppet, who is lashed for his inevitable movements. The impression magnetizes man into the very obliquity he deplores and invokes the tears and lamentations of a hypocrite,” but by analytical examination it is discovered to be “the strongest of all delusions,” and the most “contrary literature under heaven.”

MADE SIN

To clinch your assumption that the very nature of Jesus was obnoxious to the curse, you cite 2 Corinthians 5:21, viz., “For He hath made him, who knew no sin, sin for us.”

Permit a logical analysis. First, the apostle does not say that God made Him sinful flesh, not even Judas Iscariot, but *amartian* - sin-offering. The more speedily this truth is demonstrated the better for all concerned. Now this Scripture contains a Divine, balanced antithesis with a tight dilemma for the ‘flesh hunter.’

Whatever Jesus is made here, we are made the exact opposite. All abstract nouns have their opposites (see Galatians 5:19). Now the opposite of sin is righteousness – exactly what the Scriptures declare. If, therefore, Jesus was made physical sin at birth, then we were made physical righteousness. How would righteous flesh suit your palate? But we must not confound the legal with the physical and stupidly conclude that the flesh itself has been changed. Cannot you perceive you have left the rails of pure deduction?

Now in this very text you quote to curse Jesus, there is an adjectival clause to Jesus which contains a past tense, which must ever dominate in priority that of a present tense. If therefore, you persist that Jesus was made sin at birth, then you are irrevocably forced back to pre-existence; e.g. “For He hath made (complete present tense) Him who knew (past tense) no sin.” This demonstrates that Jesus was 33 years old when God made Him *hamartian* - a sin offering - for us. If you persist it refers to His birth of a woman, then get out of pre-existence as best you can. Contend accurately, commit the Shorter Catechism to the flames and try your hand with Romans 8:3 once more, and I assure you that your sinful flesh is not there, in the Greek, nor in any other part of God’s Book.

FLESH OF SIN

This phrase is universally understood to mean sinful flesh and we are reminded that both the A.V. and the R.V. agree, which you pronounce “a perfectly good rendering” of the Greek “flesh of sin.”

I unreservedly pronounce this pitiable. The reverse is the case. It is the most fatal death-trap that ever was introduced into Theology, because such would involve Christ under your flesh curse. The Revisers of the A.V. and the R.V. dwell snugly with “Lady Rule All”, 17 Apocalyptic Avenue, Pandemonium, whom Dr. Thomas denounced as “spiritual policemen” to guard that Old Lady

What on earth tempted you to flee to that hotel? The accommodate rendering of Romans 8:3 can be found in the writings of Dr. Thomas, though he reluctantly gave it to a correspondent in “The Rock,” when pressed. Pity when you were up among the Revisers you neglected their favour to define for you the term soul, when their prompt reply had been “the immortal part of man.”

You commenced your pamphlet with a good display of rhetoric parsing, but instantly your assumption was in danger you cobbled up Romans 8:3 and gave up, or annihilated the possessive case and, to refute just

ransom, refused to dethrone that pagan intruder “sinful flesh.” Is sinful flesh a perfectly good rendering of the Greek *sarkos amartias* - flesh of sin? For the benefit of those that have ears to hear, I assure them that the adjective sinful is not there in the Greek: it is a noun in the Greek genitive case, indicating possession, not an adjective indicating the quality of flesh. It is therefore, irrevocably a question of the possession of God, or the possession of sin, the devil - the two possessors mentioned in Romans 8:3.

The Greek does not use our English form of the possessive case, but ever the genitive. We also use the genitive form, but only when the possessor is neuter, e.g., “the roof of the house.” We do not say “the house’s roof.” The following is a puzzle to many: “If Moses was the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, then he was the daughter of Pharaoh’s son.” We do not say Pharaoh’s daughter’s son.”

What then, prevented your consulting the writings of Dr. Thomas for the Greek phrase *sarkos amartias* - the flesh of sin - sin’s flesh? But lo and behold, you reverse the Doctors accurate rendering, yet you deem it blasphemy if any other soul, except yourself, gainsay Dr. Thomas. Thus the accurate rendering of Romans 8:3 demonstrates that Jesus belonged to God, all others were the devil’s flesh, and therefore Jesus stood clear at the Bar.

METONYM

Metonym is an abridged, shortened form of speech by changing the name; *meta* - change, *onoma* - name, Paul was a past-master in the use of this figure. This fact forced Peter’s caution for our carefulness not to misconstrue Paul’s words to our own destruction. This is exactly what you have done with Romans 8:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. You strangle Paul’s words to curse Jesus. I now ask you to note the late Robert Roberts who exhibited your gross error more powerfully than the foregoing. He declared:

“The phrase sin in the flesh is metonymical. It is not the expression of a literal element, or principle pervading physical organization. Literally, sin is disobedience, or an act of rebellion. The impulses which lead to this reside in the flesh, and metonymically came to be called by the name of the act to which they gave birth. In defining first principles, we must be accurate.”

I ask, where does that glorious pronouncement of Divine truth from the pen of your predecessor land “your perfectly good rendering of Romans 8:3”? You make neither a kirk nor a mill of it. Yet the above Divine truth ought to be framed in gold because it clears Jesus at the Bar.

There is a world-wide metonym, viz., the kettle boils; but when I beheld you pouring out the water and attempting to drink the kettle I pitied your flock. “The leaders of the people cause them to err.”

Satisfied that your “perfectly good rendering of Romans 8:3” lands Jesus down below, all you imagine requisite now is just to quote that Jesus was a Man. Smart, is it not? All this absurdity is aside from the point at issue. We dispute not that Jesus was a Man; but we deny that He was a Man under condemnation. You quote: “Christ Himself likewise took part of the same flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him having the power of death.”

Was there ever a Law Court under heaven which could convict a human soul, even Jesus, that had contracted hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh, and rendered his very nature obnoxious to your curse? Contemptible logic! You must have an acute nose for sinful flesh, but it is not even there. Had you gone back to where the apostle says, “but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angles...” but we dare not read into it a curse on Jesus. What is the apostle’s adverbial of purpose for Jesus being a little lower than the angels? Does the apostle hint that Jesus stood condemned on account of His flesh? Infernal inference! The purpose was that He “by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Was it not therefore, imperative He should be made lower than the angels, for this specific purpose? To have made Him equal to the angels who cannot die, you had thwarted the purpose of God; but no unsophisticated soul could read into this a curse on Jesus. “No man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.” 1 Corinthians 12:3. The apostle is as silent as a corpse re the kind of flesh for which you are for ever on the prowl; the apostle’s reason herein because “you speak not by the Spirit of God.”

to be continued...