

Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 194

March/April 2002

In this Issue:-

Page 1	Editorial	Sister Helen Brady
Page 2	Opposing Sinful Flesh	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 7	Comments on the extracts from “Exploring Bible Language”	Brother Phil Parry
Page 10	Replies to “Exploring Bible Language”	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 13	“North American Statement of Understanding” copied from	Logos magazine
Page 16	Comments on the North American Statement of Understanding:	
	1)	Brother John Stevenson
Page 17	2)	Brother Eric Cave
Page 18	Letter to P. Parry from the editor of Shofar magazine.	Brother Alan Pursell
Page 22	Reply to A. Pursell	Brother Phil Parry
Page 24	Further comments on A.Pursell’s letter	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 25	Some observations regarding Michael Ashton’s editorial	Brother Eric Cave
Page 28	Analysis of Islip Collyer’s booklet “The Meaning of Sacrifice.”	Brother A.L. Wilson

Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends,

The Apocrypha is the name given to a collection of fifteen Jewish books or portions of books written in the last two centuries BC and the 1st Century AD. They were not included in the Hebrew canon of the Bible. The Greek Bible (Septuagint) included all of them except 2 Esdras. After centuries of uncertainty, it was laid down in the 16th century AD that these works should be accepted as part of the Latin (Vulgate) Bible except for the Prayer of Manasseh and I and 2 Esdras, which were placed in an appendix after the New Testament. In the Protestant Bible, the Apocrypha were not treated as scriptural. They were printed as a separate section between the Old and New Testaments, and in modern editions usually appear in a separate volume.

The Wisdom Books in the Hebrew Bible are Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes. Two more works - the Wisdom of Solomon (also known as the Book of Wisdom) and the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus) – were included in the Greek and Latin Bibles, but classified as Apocrypha in the Protestant Bible. Of these works, Solomon’s name is associated with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Wisdom. The Song of Songs or Song of Solomon has also been attributed to his authorship.

Solomon was Israel’s greatest sage, renowned for his judicial insight, learning and literary skill. It was said ‘he was wiser than all other men’ (1 Kings 4:30,31). In the Apocrypha there is a particularly beautiful section in the Wisdom of Solomon that has great resonance for those who have lost people they love and whose names are in the Book of Life and who will be raised when Jesus Christ returns;

“But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace.

For though they be punished in the sight, of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastened they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the

nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth: and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him: for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect.”

What a wonderful prospect those words set before us. And what a merciful rest the dead in Christ take. When they awake to Jesus’ call to ‘come forth’ they will have been blissfully unaware of the time they have slept, it will only seem to them the twinkling of an eye since they breathed their last. Death is a bitter and final thing to all who are left to grieve; how people survive it who have no hope is a mystery. Those of us who know what the future is are blessed indeed. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him. in those that hope in His mercy and we can be sure that joy cometh in the morning.

Love to all, far and near, Helen

OPPOSING SINFUL FLESH TRUTHS AND UNTRUTHS

The object of this article is to show that there was no change in the physical flesh of mankind due to Adam’s transgression in the garden of Eden. Such expressions as sinful flesh, sin in the flesh, defiled flesh, sin stricken nature, fallen stock, condemned nature, the results of Adamic transgression, etc., etc., cannot be truly applied to our physical flesh.

It is equally true to say that “flesh” is often used in Scripture metonymically, as in “walking in the flesh” when referring to people who walk after the lusts of the flesh in contrast to those who walk In the Spirit and seek the things of God. Another example is found in Romans 7 where Paul says, “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,” when referring to his life before conversion, before he walked in the Spirit.

In the Bible there is one definition of sin - Sin is transgression of law. Sin is also used in another sense when Jesus and the Apostles refer to Sin as a Master - we are either servants of sin or servants of righteousness. The term “sin” is never used of man’s nature, i.e. his physical flesh.

In his lecture “The Slain Lamb,” which was Robert Roberts attack on Edward Turney, he said,

“It is a marvellous piece of New-born wisdom to say that ‘sinful’ applies to the character but not to the substance that produced that character.”

This is a shameful statement to put forward in serious argument. It is foolishness to say that substance can produce character. Character is abstract and could be said to be moral reputation produced by the interaction of thought and experience, or, moral reputation which is developed by the process of reasoning guiding our choice of action in face of events. In this we have free will, which again, is not substance, neither is thought, moral reputation, or reasoning.

In support of his claim that brain substance produces character R.Roberts goes on to further mislead and confuse his readers by saying that -

“character is the manifestation of the qualities of the flesh,”

but it isn’t. Character is manifested as the qualities of the mind and affect behaviour, while the qualities of the flesh are manifested in such things as physical beauty or strong physique, etc.

Robert Roberts intention, of course, was to prove that sin is an indwelling factor of the flesh, passed down by inheritance from Adam and Eve, flesh with which God is supposed to be at enmity because it is no longer the good substance which He created in the beginning.

It is quite extraordinary that such a notion as sin dwelling in the flesh ever caught on but its origin dates back to Persia around the third century A.D. Mani, or Manichaeus who was born in Ecbatana in Persia in 215 A.D., was a religious leader after whom the Manicheans were named. He believed that evil was to be found in matter and that our bodies are trapped in and by this evil matter. By 245 A.D. he was teaching this new religion at the court of the Persian king Sapor where he had a strong following. About an hundred years later Augustine was born in Numidia in North Africa (354 A.D.) and on moving to Carthage where he studied, he became deeply involved in Manicheism which seemed to him to offer a solution to the problem of evil. He converted to the Catholic faith in 386 A.D. and had such influence on the Catholic Church as to persuade it to accept his version of this doctrine which became known as the Doctrine of Original Sin and ever since it has been a required tenet of the Church.

But what was the attraction of the idea in the first place? Was it because people were unwilling to accept that they were responsible for the consequences of their wrong-doing in the world? Were they looking to place the blame elsewhere, just as did Adam and Eve?

Over the centuries the doctrine of Original Sin was taken on board by all the harlot daughters of Rome and expressed in different forms. Robert Roberts, too, believed it, and taught this Catholic doctrine as can be seen in Clause V of the B.A.S.F., which is as good a definition of Original Sin as can be found anywhere,

“That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken - a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.”

We should reject this doctrine on the basis of its origins alone, but more important than this, we reject it for two other reasons, a) because it is not Scripture teaching and b) because the Bible has something far better to offer if we face up to our guilt.

So let's turn to Scripture. “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), that is, God's law which is good. This same law which tells us to love God with all our heart, and all our soul, and with all our mind, and love our neighbours as ourselves. This law gives us the choice to do right or wrong; to obey or to disobey. We cannot obey or disobey without law. This choice was given us in order we should build characters, if we choose, well pleasing to our Creator. And it's all we need really. We can do without sin in the flesh, and we can do without an inherent tendency to sin, and we can do without sin-stricken nature. Law gives us all we need in this department, for we can't build characters without it.

But most people find much pleasure in being selfish and the usual desire is to please oneself rather than seek the ways of God, and it is so much easier anyway. Though not born with wrong desires, infants are necessarily selfish in order to be sure they get the attention they need. It's nature's way. From this early stage they quickly see ways of getting their own way and become greedy for the things they want for themselves. Without good parental guidance, by maturity, it doesn't seem worthwhile putting ones neighbour first and most people find it more pleasurable to turn to wrong ways till their hearts become evil, especially if they are surrounded by people of similar bad habits.

The Sermon on the Mount depicts the sort of life God wishes us to lead but it doesn't attract many people and Jesus Christ was well aware of this when, in Matthew 15:19, He said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man.” It is for these things God condemns people, “and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” (John 3:19).

So for those who choose to disobey God, their end is to perish; they are condemned to death, which is their reward for being sinners. Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death...” the reward paid as wages.

Furthermore this reward is not natural death but death by law, typified by the first death recorded, the slaying of the lamb in Eden for the sin of Adam and Eve, a judicial death in which the animal died in order that Adam and Eve should not perish without hope.

But while people have life, they have hope. Forgiveness is freely available because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:12). However serious ones sins may have been they can be forgiven (with the exception of sin against the Holy Spirit - Matthew 12:31), as Saul of Tarsus found from his own experience. And he wrote, in Romans 3:25, regarding Jesus, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." And again in Romans 4:25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

Delivered from what? Saved from what? Sinful flesh? Sin in the flesh? Condemned nature? Not at all. It is law which gives choice to do right or wrong, and it is in choosing to do wrong which defiles a man, that is, stains his character and it is for this he is condemned. So it is condemnation of the law from which we can be saved.

In case you think Paul meant sinful flesh in Romans 8:3 "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..." it may be as well here to point out that it should have been translated "flesh of sin". But here again we have the problem of those who will insist on telling us that "flesh of sin" means the same thing as "sinful flesh" when it doesn't. Grammatically, it is in the possessive case, in the same sense I could refer to this "coat of mine" meaning of course, this coat is my possession. So in the letter to the Romans Paul explains that our flesh is sin's possession. This "flesh of sin" is flesh sold to Sin as a King at the time of Adam's transgression of the law in Eden, and this "flesh" refers to people who follow after 'King Sin' by desiring the lusts of the flesh. These people are under the federal head of Adam and are said to be in Adam.

Let us go back in the Scriptures to the time of Moses. Under the law animals were sacrificed for sins but this was only until Jesus Christ should Himself be the sacrifice for sins. The law, being our school master to bring us to Christ, taught the need for sacrifice to take away sin and to bring in salvation through faith in that sacrifice. The law of Moses itself could not give salvation, not because of inherent weakness in man's flesh but because man, as sin's possession, was in a weak position, being unable to offer a suitable sacrifice which would satisfy the righteousness of the law. Romans 8:3,4, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and as an offering for sin (R.V.) condemned sin (when) in the flesh;" Why so? "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The weakness then was that the law was unable to save people who belonged to sin. Galatians 3:21, "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law..." Again, this is confirmed in Hebrews chapter 7 where the first 18 verses show the need for another Priesthood because the first Priesthood under Levi could not bring salvation. Verses 18,19, "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did..." The R.S.V. is even more explicit:- "On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect); on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God."

So Paul says, there is something the law could not do, and, that the law could not give life, while the writer to the Hebrews says, the law was weak and useless in its priesthood, so a new High Priest, "after the order of Melchizedec," came and with Him came hope of eternal life. Our conclusion then is that this weakness does not refer to any inherent weakness defiling the physical flesh, but the urgent need for remission of sins through the shedding of blood of our Lord and Saviour. Nowhere does condemnation have anything to do with sin dwelling in the flesh, but with transgressions, with acts of sin, with walking after the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life and these things are not of the Father but of the world; with breaking God's law.

But before Jesus could become an High Priest after the order of Melchizedec He had the task of Redemption to fulfil, to buy us back from the bondage of Sin into which Adam had sold the human race. Jesus Christ laid down His life of His own free will and no one took it from Him. It was His natural life He laid down, His psuche life in which He showed beyond all doubt that the flesh is very good for the purpose for which God made it and that we too, in the same flesh, can keep the commandments as He did. Indeed this is the way He condemned sin - by showing that people could keep the law perfectly if they tried as He did. Moreover, this is what He asks of us - to keep the commandments perfectly. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." And what is His command for us to keep? He said it was a new commandment, "That ye love one another as I have loved you." Is Jesus asking the impossible of His followers? Not impossible. It was hard for Jesus but He overcame. It is hard for us but we too can overcome. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Hebrews 11 is a good exhortation in this regard. Which of these had it easy, so to speak?

So please don't make excuses for yourselves, "Oh, poor me, I've got sin in my flesh, I can't possibly do what is right. The sin principle in my flesh gives me a bias in the direction of evil, so I'm a poor sinner. Woe is me!" This is false humility, it is hypocrisy! Paul said "I can do all things through Jesus Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13). We too can be made strong, if we ask in faith.

Not only did Jesus die to buy us back from the bondage into which Adam sold us by transgression, but having bought us He is now our High Priest in heaven who is able to forgive us if we ask Him in faith. This is the gospel message of which Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, "...I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

This states categorically that Jesus died for our sins and nowhere is there the suggestion of His dying for sinful nature, either His or ours.

Because Jesus gave Himself to die for our sins they are now taken away in Him. This was prophesied in the Old Testament in Isaiah 53:8, 10,11. "...for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people was he stricken... when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin... for he shall bear their iniquities."

Jesus Christ was the great antitype of those sacrificial offerings under the law. He was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. He made His soul an offering for sin, (not for sin in the flesh). He bear our iniquities, (not sinful nature). His offering was His life in the blood. Matthew 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

There is no place for any change in the flesh of man since sin is transgression of law and no change in the flesh took place. Romans 8:3 is therefore misunderstood by all who subscribe to the doctrine of sinful flesh.

Now let's consider another matter - Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."

Of this Robert Roberts said,

"He hung on a tree, and by that fact the law cursed Him" -

"Hanging on the tree brought the curse on Him -

"He did His Father's will In submitting to be placed in a position which the law cursed."

Then R.Roberts goes on to say,

"When He died, the law obtained the utmost triumph it could claim."

One could be forgiven for thinking that Robert Roberts believed in a personal Devil who devised a diabolical law to trap Jesus and succeeded.

Was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ a triumph for the law? The righteous law of the Righteous God obtaining the utmost triumph it could claim by the diabolical murder of a righteous man! Perverse spirit! No, the curse that Christ suffered in the shedding of His life blood had to do with sin, our sin and sin carries guilt, our guilt, and He died so that we should not suffer for our guilt. He bought us so that He could forgive us and make us His possession in stead of Sin's possession.

It was not the hanging on a tree that cursed anyone but the sin committed in breaking the law; this sin brought the curse. The punishment of hanging was for those already cursed of the law.

Turning to 1 Corinthians 12:3 we read "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." So what is the teaching of Galatians 3:13? It is that Jesus willingly took the sinner's curse on Himself and in doing this He bought us from the curse of the law in order that we should not suffer it and perish.

Looking again at R. Roberts statement that "He did His Father's will in submitting to be placed in a position which the law cursed," he is perfectly correct. This is exactly what Jesus did, for He put himself in the position of the sinner. He took the sinners place. This is substitution. But this of course is not what R. Roberts meant.

Our next matter for consideration is the brasen serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness. It is widely taught amongst Christadelphians that the brass of this serpent represented the sin stricken nature of Jesus.

But we ask, does brass in the scriptures stand for physical human nature? And we answer, it does not stand for our physical nature, but it does represent actual sin as transgression or disobedience.

In showing this to be the case we look at Numbers 21:6-9, where the Israelites complained about having been brought out of Egypt: "And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee."

Here we see sin and death but not a sin stricken nature. It is sinners being punished for their sin in complaining of God's goodness in bringing them out of the bondage they suffered in Egypt. To save those who had faith, a brass serpent was made and lifted up on a pole and every one who had been bitten and had faith enough to look up to the serpent upon the pole, was saved from the death of the serpent bite. This faith acknowledged the supremacy and mercy of God in bringing them out of Egypt but the brass serpent signified the transgression which brought about their death, and cannot be considered to stand for the physical flesh. It was their sin which caused their death, yet those of faith could be saved.

The parallel Jesus made between the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness by Moses and the lifting up of Himself on Calvary was twofold, a) between the sin of the people which caused the serpent to be lifted up with the sin of the world which caused our Saviour to be lifted up, and b) the faith required by those who would be saved by looking up to the serpent and the faith required by those who would be saved by looking up to Jesus.

Brass then, does not represent sin-stricken nature but can be said to represent actual sin, i.e. transgression of law.

Another association of brass with actual sin is to be found In Numbers 16:36-40, for after the earth had swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram with their wives and families "there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning... and the censers of these sinners... make broad plates for the covering of the altar; for they offered them before the Lord, therefore shall they be hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. Then Eleazar took the brasen censers...."

So were these brass plates with which Eleazar covered the altar a sign of inherited sinstricken human nature, or were they a sign of people's transgression? A sign of transgression. Also it was a warning that God would not tolerate presumptuous sin, for those 250 were not appointed by God to offer incense, hence the covering of the altar with this brass would remind and caution the people every time an offering was made upon the altar.

Brass, here again is associated with sin and death and not with the doctrine of Original Sin or Clause V of the B.A.S.F. as some would have us believe.

To sum up: we see that the Scriptures do not speak of defiled physical flesh, variously referred to by Christadelphians as sinful flesh, sin in the flesh, sin stricken nature, the results of Adamic disobedience, fallen stock, condemned nature, etc., etc.

Scripture speaks of sin as transgression of God's law and it is this alone which brings condemnation. It is serious error to complicate these things with the trappings of mystery and superstition, for that is what the doctrine of Original Sin really consists of. Sin is abstract and cannot possibly be a physical element pervading the flesh.

In 150 years of Christadelphian reasoning from the Scriptures they have provided no sound proof of a change taking place in the physical nature of our first parents when they transgressed God's commandment.

Certainly many Christadelphians have repeatedly put forward verses by which they claim to support the theory, but the more reasonable amongst them can only say, "well, there must have been a change" and then point out that human nature is pretty awful. We agree that human beings can be and are all too often, pretty awful but this is no proof of defiled flesh but proof of their evil thoughts and deeds.

The usual story is that the doctrine of sin in the flesh has to be deduced from the Scriptures. But why should anyone want to deduce a doctrine which makes Sin a substance dwelling in our bodies - except to excuse themselves for their awful failings? Worse still, these deduced arguments misuse Scriptures to the extent that Christadelphians boast to be unique amongst Christian groups in worshipping an unclean and defiled Christ!

Without exception, the quotations put forward, when prayerfully examined, correctly understood and put into context fail to give the required proof or even the shadow of support for changed nature or a defiled Christ which Christadelphians so long for.

Thanks and Praise be to God!

Brother Russell Gregory.

Footnote: All quotations of Robert Roberts are taken from "The Slain Lamb" and are to be found on pages 63 to 67 in our own publication of his lecture, which was copied from the original publication in "The Christadelphian" Magazine for October 1873.

Comments of Brother Phil Parry on the extract from: "EXPLORING BIBLE LANGUAGE" by Alan and Margaret Fowler, which appeared in our last Circular Letter:-

This article in the Nazarene Circular Letter for Jan/Feb 2002 and comments by our Brother Russell Gregory as a result, made very interesting reading in both cases.

On the basis of the statement of the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15, "First that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual," I can accept Alan and Margaret's view that the natural creation was corruptible or capable of death as ordained of the Creator but I would only postulate that there were designs for eternal life for humans in the Divine plan and therefore I cannot speak for such as are not under moral law by enlightenment to that plan.

Incidentally, what I read and learn from Genesis 1:30 relates to the species which lives on the earth and wherein is the breath of life and would not survive if continually in the water, hence the Creator's provision of every green plant for food, but of course this does not rule out deathlessness in the oceans. Therefore I agree with your statement that the essential lesson of Genesis 1:29,30 is surely that God has made the natural world self-sustaining.

The question you raise, "Are we not justified in asking whether God would have inflicted disease and death on the whole animal kingdom because of Adam's sin in the absence of any compelling Biblical or scientific evidence?" Well, thanks be to God we have the Biblical evidence of His Word which says nothing of Adam or his posterity let alone the animal kingdom being inflicted with disease and death because of Adam's sin.

You go on to the matter of Augustinian Original Sin, that Augustine went further, much further and taught that the sin of Adam and Eve alone brought death and disease and physical and moral depravity to all mankind- Where have I read this very doctrine but in Clause V of the Christadelphian B.A.S.F? Certainly in your next paragraph you refute this doctrine as unjust on the basis of Ezekiel 18. irrespective that this rule of law applied many years after Adam, nevertheless to a people in covenant relationship to God through certain conditions, and as Russell has emphasized in his comments, the dying for personal sins did not mean or refer to the common or natural death experienced by Adam and all mankind but a Judicially inflicted death on account of violation of law.

It should be noted that Russell has drawn your attention to this very fact, yet you fail to accept it in your following statement, "We each repeat the history of Eden, and we each receive 'the wages of sin' which is death (Romans 6:23). We are paid for what we do, we all sin, so we all die." This reads and means a finality, and if your statement "We all die" means or refers to natural death, it certainly is final for in effect it would be the result of a lifetime service to Sin as a Master.

But you appear to have misused this point in the previous verses of the chapter you quote, Romans 6:23, for Paul is telling these converts that they had already died unto Sin personified as a Bondservant and were now servants of Christ and righteous, and the end, not wages, everlasting life, the gift of God.

Following your reference to Ezekiel 18, 2 Chronicles 25:4 and Deuteronomy 24:16, you ask the question which is not founded upon Paul's teaching and reasoning in Romans chapter 5, in that you falsely assume that God condemned all mankind because of one man's sin. Paul does not teach this and when he says "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), the context of this chapter reads that God constituted all in the loins of Adam as having sinned so that He could constitute all "in Christ" as being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

There is a difference in being constituted sinners and personal sinners by violation of law. This lesson is learned in Hebrews 7:4 to 9 showing that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedec before he was even born. It is therefore from this position of conclusion under Adam's sin that God, through His Son has shown the way of release, this being by enlightenment and faith. Hence Romans 8:1,2 freedom, not from a corruptible body of flesh and blood but from a legal status under sin.

Coming to your question, "If God does not punish children because of the sins of their parents then would He have condemned all mankind because of one man's sin?" You follow this with a self-admission of having mortality and depravity, which in fact is not Scripture teaching but the teaching handed down by Robert Roberts and wholly supported by "Logos" writers in their magazine. You use therefore the term "our" in connection with yourselves.

Then you say the answer is in the second half of Romans 5 and present a misleading summary from verse 15 to 21 omitting verse 20 for some reason, a verse which is most important in that, as has been pointed out by Paul, "the law of Moses entered that the offence (of Adam) might abound" to focus on the fact that God concluded all under Adam's sin so that one man's righteousness might abound to all who recognize his grace and offer of eternal life in Christ.

None in Adam's loins were personal violators of God's law but as members of his body were constituted as such, or 'in Adam,' so that when enlightened to this position they could pass from this related position into Christ by belief and faith; no change of nature being necessary. If, as many believe, men are 'in Adam' by physical descent, for example Augustinians, Roman Catholics, Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Anglicans and many more, but excluding the Nazarene Fellowship, then their end is physical and final by reason of their corruptible nature (which is not the death which passed upon all men by Adam's sin).

We can only pass from Adam into Christ by a legal and a moral procedure appointed of God which involves being made free from under "the law of sin and death," which Paul explains in his Epistle in regard to putting on Christ - that it is not putting on Christ's physical nature but the garment of His righteousness by baptism into His death, thus dying unto Adamic federal sin- Galatians 3:26,27, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

In other words you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, but your flesh and blood nature is unaltered. Why not stick to the legal situation as a result of Adam's sin, and realize with Paul that redemption is release for a ransom, or purchase, by the shed blood of Christ, the Lamb of God? Romans 8:1-2 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." How then can people be so dull in believing that the law of sin and death was or is a physical law or element of sin in the flesh styled mortality, depravity, sin-stricken flesh, obnoxious to God? And how could Paul be said to have been preaching this in the present tense as some contend in Romans 7, when he has already been made free but still in that so-called sinful flesh as taught in ignorance by those I have already mentioned?

The lesson of Scripture is not to confuse the physical with the legal. So I return to your presentation of the six verses in Romans 5:15,16,17,18,19,21, "By one man's offence many died." When did they die? Do you mean they died after they had been born as a result of Adam's life being spared and consequently the many died the common death?

Can you not accept verse 12 that Adam first brought the sentence of inflicted death by law upon himself and being therefore legally dead, the many in his loins were also legally dead (v. 15)? Through Adam's redemption he lived out his natural span of life and was able to produce sons and daughters who were imputed to be legally dead under the law of sin and death from which there was release through the redeeming blood of Christ and on account of which, as foreshadowed in the lamb slain in Eden, we all owe our existence and need of redemption and reconciliation before we can become servants of God. Hence Paul's words in Romans 6:1 "11 in his showing of sin having reigned as far as death by baptism into that of Christ. Paul can only be teaching the legal and moral position here, not physical in that our physical bodies are not crucified with Him, but the old man, which is sold under sin.

You seem to ignore the fact that Jesus, the antitype of the lamb slain in Eden, assured physical life only to Adam's posterity, in order that they might by enlightenment and faith obtain everlasting life through His sacrificial death.

As I said at the beginning, your comments on Romans 5 are misleading and you are not clear in your own minds what Paul is teaching as proved by your following words, "Looking again at verse 12 which introduces this section of Romans 5, it is clear that Paul accepted that all men die because all men are sinners." Did Paul accept that men die natural deaths because they are sinners, or rather that they die because of their corruptible nature, of which Adam was created?

Would Paul include the great cloud of witnesses of Hebrews chapter II as sinners when they have been made righteous through the sacrifice of Christ? If so he would destroy all that he has taught in Romans and other Epistles. And if we believe natural death to be the penalty passed upon us as a result of Adam's sin and that we receive the wages of sin when we die naturally, then Christ has become of no effect to us; we are yet in sin and abiding in sin, not in Christ!

As our Russell has shown and I also submit that your last five paragraphs have confirmed that not only is the Augustinian doctrine a result of false teachers entering the early church of Christ, but you, like many

more denominations I can name, seem to lean toward it. It saddens me, though my efforts might appear to be the contrary, that so many Bible readers commence their studies on the basis and foundation laid by men who have inherited the works of false teachers and present it as unquestionable truth to be received, when unbiased, rightly dividing of the Word of God proves the opposite.

I sincerely hope and pray that our Father will reveal to you the true position you are in, for we seek no glory ourselves but it is as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:16, "for though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."

By the Grace of God in His Son, the gospel Paul preached has been made very clear to me and woe be to those who preach some of the most contemptible theories regarding the meaning of why Jesus died on Calvary!

Phil Parry 25.2-2002

P.S. To be wise after reading of the events in Genesis and say that the penalty for eating the forbidden fruit was to be barred from the Tree of Life, and other additional consequences, is to ignore God's statement "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," not, "Your nature will be infected with a physical law causing decay and finally natural death and spreading (as the writers put it) to all men." - P.P.

I have received a letter in response to the comments in the last Circular Letter regarding the extract from the book, "Exploring Bible Language" but at the end of the letter the writer says, "I must ask you to refrain from publishing this letter... but have no objection to you dealing with the points raised..."

Here is my reply:-

Dear Brother X, That there is a difference between natural death and judicial death is of course obvious but the importance of this distinction may not be so clear.

Adam was told that "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" if this meant that the process of dying was to be put into operation on the day he transgressed then it cannot be used again as a threat, yet when Solomon said to Shimei (1 Kings 2:37) that in the day he left Jerusalem he would surely die, then according to your idea, the process of death would be put into motion when it was already in motion. While it is obvious that Solomon had no such powers to put "dying" into operation, it is equally obvious that he had the power to fulfil his threat of putting Shimei to a judicial death, which indeed he did.

Time and again in Scripture we come across this Hebrew idiom "dying thou shalt die," and nowhere but in relation to Adam and Eve would anyone consider it meant natural death. We know it can only mean judicial death in every other case so why strain Scripture to make Genesis 2:17 to mean something different, unless of course it is to fit in with preconceived ideas? Similar idioms are used elsewhere in such expressions as "smiting thou shalt smite" and "eating thou shalt eat" and neither is it confined to the Old Testament, for Jesus used the idiom when He said "With desire I have desired..." and in each case it emphasizes the certainty or intensity of the act - of dying, of smiting, of eating, of desiring.

Such evidence opposes the Christadelphian view of "dying" being a long process, and what you call my dogmatism I would have thought was common sense. However, rather than repeat further arguments here I am enclosing a booklet entitled "The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B'Yom." I would welcome your observations regarding it.

I cannot agree to the point you make of Jesus being born of Mary and would therefore "inherit the tendency to sin." This is reversion to sin in the flesh. One cannot inherit a tendency to sin. There is only one definition of sin and it is this – sin is transgression of law, and law gives choice. God gave us law in order to

give us the opportunity to build our characters and so become well pleasing to Him by obedience. We can either obey or disobey, the choice is ours. Any supposed “tendency to sin” would need to be implanted by God thereby making Him responsible for sin. Of course you will say, no, it doesn’t, but I challenge you to show it doesn’t. Also it would make choice, or free will, a nonsense and we would be back to original sin which you say you have rejected and under which we cannot be expected to be obedient.

However, Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, thereby showing that obedience is possible, Jesus having had the same experience as others. Having shown there was no fault in human nature God can justly condemn us for our sins and this is what was meant when Paul said Jesus condemned sin (while) in the flesh.

A view you say you reject is the commonly held Christadelphian understanding of “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” and explained that this symbolized Jesus as being a “criminal” by reason of bearing our sins in His body on the tree. The commonly held view makes Jesus “serpent nature” which had to be destroyed as being the source of all temptation and which we mere mortals cannot overcome, but I wonder how many would realize that being made a “criminal” by reason of bearing our sins in His body to the cross was any different? It is all too easy to carry any analogy to extremes and this is the snare into which some have fallen. This is what has happened in Christadelphia when they assumed a parallel between Jesus’ flesh and serpent flesh, and now you have made a parallel between Jesus and a criminal.

You could have said plainly that the true reason for Jesus using this analogy was to show that just as the Israelites in the wilderness should look to the serpent which Moses had erected and thereby live by faith and obedience, even so should people now look to Jesus and live by faith and obedience, and had you stated the truth this clearly so that it shone brightly, do you think it would have been received so readily? I think not.

Towards the end of your letter you boldly claim that “the whole clean flesh controversy is utterly futile.” I suppose it is unnecessary to say the term “clean flesh” was invented by Robert Roberts and is not of our choosing; nevertheless we think we understand what Christadelphians generally mean by it.

We know there is no such thing as clean or unclean flesh in the literal sense for it is as God created it, but there is clean and unclean flesh in the legal sense and this is how we see it, as Paul explains in his epistle to the Romans. ‘Unclean flesh,’ or ‘Sin’s flesh,’ refers to people in bondage to Sin and ‘clean flesh’ refers to those not in bondage to Sin - the literal flesh remaining unchanged. Jesus being begotten of God was not born into Adamic bondage to Sin but was born free of this bondage. He came in the flesh like Sin’s flesh (Romans 8:3), but He was not Sin’s flesh, i.e. He did not belong to Sin, He belonged to His Father.

Adam was alienated from His Creator when he sinned and, as we are all born into the same alienation, are thereby said to be “concluded under sin” (Galatians 3:22). Jesus was not alienated from His Father, i.e. He was not concluded under sin. Furthermore, neither do we need to stay in this alienated position which we found ourselves to be in when we first understood the gospel, for at baptism we become sons of God by adoption and Jesus gives us free-born status - Romans 6:22 confirming this - “Being now made free from sin, and become servants of God...” after which we are no longer “in the flesh but in the Spirit...” We are no longer Sin’s flesh but made free - “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

“Being now made free from sin, and become servants of God...” also tells us that we need to be made free from sin in order to be servants of God, but you greatly complicate the issue when you say that “it all depends what we mean by being made free from sin” for “surely it means being made free from the consequences of sin which does not occur immediately but is brought about by the fact that our sins are daily laid on Jesus who bore our sins in His body on the tree.”

Indeed Jesus did bear the consequence of our sins in His body on the tree, however, the consequence of our sins are not laid on Him daily, but we receive forgiveness as often as we request it in faith. God makes people free when He puts away their sins, as when David was forgiven for his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. The law required David be put to death for these offences but being forgiven his life was spared. He was freed from the requirements of God’s law. The consequent painful results were a constant reminder that God is not mocked; the severity of God may be looked upon as a charge to fear to do

evil, which helped prevent repetition of such bad behaviour. But there is no doubt his sin was put away, and the fact remains that God does not require sentence to be served for those who are His.

To balance the severity of this chastising there was the blessing for David and Bathsheba in that their next child, Solomon, became successor to David and to whom God gave great wisdom.

(I see a similarity between this chastising of David and the warning of Jesus to the impotent man “which had an infirmity thirty and eight years” when Jesus said to him, “sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee” - John 5:5 & 14).

We receive correction as God sees fit, we also suffer for His name’s sake, but these are altogether different from serving sentence for transgression of law.

While we should show gentleness, meekness and temperance amongst brethren we are forced to speak out against those teachings which impugn God’s character. It is regarding such teachings that we are confrontational, that we cry aloud and spare not. I can only describe the B.A.S.F. as iniquitous because of necessity it must hold a more important place than the Bible, requiring allegiance from all Christadelphians to a man-devised set of beliefs.

Sincerely your brother in seeking truth, Russell.

* * *

In response to my letter above, I received a reply in which the person concerned said that he agreed that “human nature was not corrupted because of Adam’s sin, and Jesus did not have to die because of his nature but because he bore our sins and He was therefore the holy, harmless and undefiled Lamb of God who died for us.”

There were, though, other matters in his letter with which I felt I could not agree, such as that “Adam’s sentence of death was commuted by the Edenic sacrifice,” and “that one of the consequences of Adam’s sin which was not withdrawn was exclusion from the tree of life.” These matters I consider in my next reply:-

Dear X, Thank you for your letter. Yes, we do have some important views in common such as Jesus not dying for His nature, yet there are some things in your letter which I feel sure are not right.

I do not see that Adam’s sentence of death was commuted. I would say that the sentence was taken away completely. In Eden Adam was given a law requiring perfect obedience. The failure to observe perfect obedience was to bring cessation of life. This may seem to be a harsh judgment but as God is perfect He asked perfection of Adam in order that they may share the close relationship of Father and Son.

God knew this position would not continue and had the next stage planned and ready for when Adam and Eve transgressed. We know that Jesus was, in the mind of God “slain from the foundation of the world,” and we can see this was so in this next stage. The purpose of God was that man should develop character and become well pleasing to Him and eventually share in the Glory of His Son in the Kingdom. In order for this to be, it was necessary for man to be given a chance to develop and this could only come about by trial under law, i.e. probation.

Having failed in perfect obedience, we see Adam and Eve’s fear in the garden as a plea for clemency, which was forthcoming in the sacrifice of the animal by which they were forgiven; this sacrifice foreshadowing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Adam and Eve were then placed under a completely different law of which forgiveness was a very important part.

The circumstances needful for forgiveness were set out by God and were briefly that there should be a change of heart, or repentance, thus showing the sincere desire for a restored relationship to Him.

If Adam’s sentence was commuted as you say, then where the need for Jesus’ sacrifice?

I believe Jesus took Adam's place in death, or putting it another way, Jesus died because Adam did not. This is the sacrifice Jesus made for us. This is how Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, laid down His life for the sheep. This is why forgiveness is available only through Jesus Christ. This is why there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved. Jesus in effect bought the whole human race – the purchase of His precious blood. His life in the blood was the ransom He paid.

Regarding access to the tree of life you say we must agree that exclusion from it was not withdrawn, but I see that the “cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,” was not there to keep the way shut but to keep it open - under the circumstances and conditions of repentance by which the penalty of flaming sword (Judgment) was to be avoided.

My personal view is that the tree of life symbolized obedience. Also I see Jesus as our Tree of Life, as He said “I am the way the truth and the life.” If He was the life and we partake of Him, then we are partaking of that tree symbolized in Eden. In effect we are partaking of His perfect obedience and, in the resurrection, sharing in His reward.

I am not sure I understand your definition that human nature = “animal Instincts.” However, my first ‘instinct’ on reading your letter is to say, no, I don’t agree. There is nothing wrong with animal instincts in us as it is part of our God-given make up as you say, but as human nature also includes a higher intelligence than that given to animals, I would say therefore that animal instincts cannot equal human nature.

With Love in the Lord, Russell.

We are grateful to Brother John Stevenson for sending us the following extract from the Logos magazine. For many of us it will recall awful memories of the strained reunion of the Central and Suffolk Street fellowships of some 50 years ago. But there can never be a proper and lasting union between the multiple fragments of Christadelphia. When will they learn to put Scripture before their Statement of Faith?

NORTH AMERICAN STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

This statement is the result of many years’ discussion and examination of the doctrines formerly dividing the Amended and Unamended communities in North America. It has now been published on the internet (www.nasu.ca), and Logos is pleased to reproduce the relevant sections to the Brotherhood, as being a very helpful document of the doctrinal explanation. It conforms to our understanding of the subject, and we are pleased to recommend it to brethren and sisters everywhere-

CLARIFICATION STATEMENTS (PREAMBLE).

This section of the booklet consists of three clarification statements entitled:

- 1) Adamic Condemnation,
- 2) The Lord’s Involvement in His own Sacrifice,
- 3) In Adam/in Christ.

These statements represent various aspects of the general doctrinal heading of “The Atonement” which all Christadelphians agree is key to a proper understanding of the One Faith, and one which distinguishes them from other professing Christians. Christadelphians have also historically felt that a common understanding and expression of the key principles pertaining to the Atonement is important in understanding each other. With regard to the Atonement, the respective Statements of Faith (in Section 4) express the related issues in virtually identical ways. However in view of the divided body, brethren consider it important that clarification is made about certain specific areas of this subject in order to feel mutually

assured that the One Faith is not being compromised on the doctrine of the Atonement, or by extension any other doctrines. To this end, Clarification Statements have been set out as a foundation on which a united house might be built.

These Clarification Statements are the product of the collaborative work of representatives of approximately 40 North American ecclesias, Amended and Unamended, in a process that has spanned a period of more than 6 years. Many brethren involved in the discussion, drafting and editing of these statements have noted that these statements are “not exactly the way I would have expressed them,” but they have at the same time acknowledged that the statements represent a good common expression of the issues.

In the drafting of these statements, the many brethren involved in this initiative have attempted to heed the scriptural instructions to “let each esteem other better than themselves” {Phil. 2:3} in “all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.” {Eph. 4:2}. [Then follows two quotations - Phil. 2:1-5. Eph. 4:1-6.]

ADAMIC CONDEMNATION. “by one man sin entered into the world...”

Adam’s Sentence. Man was created in a very good state. The serpent introduced a manner of thinking which was at enmity with God. Adam and Eve fell from their very good state when they embraced this carnal thinking and disobeyed God’s law. Carnal thinking became an inherent tendency of their being, and they were sentenced to die in accordance with the law they transgressed- The inclination to carnal thinking and the sentence from God became a physical law of their being, which was transmitted to all their posterity. Therefore, Adam’s descendants are born into an unclean condition - fallen, perishing and inclined to sin. The human race is under condemnation to perish (without hope), unclean in God’s sight and in need of salvation. In scripture, “sin” is used to mean both the unclean (defiled) nature with its carnal inclination and actual transgression. These are related as cause and effect - our unclean nature with its carnal inclination is the result of Adam’s transgression, and our subsequent transgressions occur when we give way to our inclination. We need to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. {Gen.1:3}, 2:15-17, 3:1-24, 5:3, Jer.17.-9, Rom. 3:9-23, 5:10-14,18, 7:20-23. 8:6-8, Eph.2.12,13}.

Guilt for Personal Transgression. Men are in no way responsible for Adam’s sin nor do they have any personal guilt on account of the nature which they bear as members of Adam’s race. By our own sinful actions we become guilty and in need of God’s forgiveness. {lsa.59.-2, Eze.18:4-20}.

The Way to Life. Once in Christ Jesus through baptism, we are justified by faith, sanctified and reconciled to God. Our relationship to God changes so that we are no longer certain to perish, but are in the hope of life eternal as His adopted children and heirs to the Abrahamic covenant. Nevertheless, the inherited dying nature with its proneness to sin remains our daily burden during our probation which only ends when we rest in the grave or the crown of life is received. Christ will bestow eternal life upon those saints judged under grace to have followed him in faithfulness during this probation. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God - this corruptible and mortal body needs changing to incorruptibility and saving out of death. {1 Cor. 1:2,30, 6:11, 2 Thes.2-.13, 2 Cor.5-.2-4,18, 19, Rom.5:10,21, 6:23, 8:1-7,20-24, Eph.2:12-19, Jn3:14-18, 5:24, 1 Jn.1-.5-8, 1 Cor. 15:50,53, 1 Pet.1-.23.24, Heb.5:7}.

THE LORD’S INVOLVEMENT IN HIS OWN SACRIFICE. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself”

Life. God had prepared a loving and gracious response to man’s desperate need, and sent His Son, “made of a woman, made under the law.” Jesus was miraculously begotten of God, yet born of a human mother “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (i.e. the same nature that was the result of Adam’s original transgression). In the days of his flesh, he suffered from all the effects that come to us from Adam’s transgression, including the temptation to sin. In order to accomplish his saving role as a representative of mankind, it was necessary for Jesus to partake of man’s condemned nature and to reject and conquer all its impulses. By his loving submission at all times to his Father’s will Jesus overcame the flesh daily and never transgressed. {Luke 1:26-35, Gal. 3:13, 4:4, Mark 10:17,18, Rom. 8:3 RV mg, 2 Cor. 5: 18-21, Heb. 2:14-18, 4:15, 1 Pet. 2:24}. Rom. 8:3 RV mg - flesh of sin [sinful flesh - KJV].

Death. It was not until his submission to death by crucifixion that Jesus completed his repudiation of the flesh and his conquest of sin. Because he did not deserve to perish on the basis of personal transgression, Christ's voluntary submission to sacrificial death declared the righteousness of God by acknowledging that all flesh is rightly subject to death. In order to enjoy eternal fellowship with his Father, Jesus' nature required cleansing. This was accomplished through his conquering and destruction of the flesh (in all its aspects) by his faithful life, sacrificial death and, by the power of the Father, his consequent resurrection and immortalization. He needed saving out of death before ascending to the Father's right hand. {John 19:28-30, Luke 22 39-42, Rom.3:25,26, 8:3-7, John 10:17,18, Heb.2-.14, 5:7, 9:21-28).

Resurrection. As a representative member of the human race he came to save, Christ became the first beneficiary of his own sacrifice and obtained eternal redemption through the shedding of his own blood. Therefore, God exalted him as Lord of all. The everlasting covenant was ratified by Christ's poured out blood as a result of his life of perfect obedience. He became the first man to receive its promise of eternal life through his resurrection, being freed from the dominion of death. [1 Cor. 15:20-23, 42-45, 50, 53-54, Phil. 2:8,9, Heb. 9:12-18, 1 Pet. 3:18,21,22, Heb. 12:2, Lev. 17:11-14, Gal. 3:16,17, Rom.6:9].

IN ADAM/IN CHRIST. "If any man be in Christ..."

Baptism. Submitting ourselves in faith, love and obedience to God through baptism by complete immersion, we symbolically participate in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Once faith leads us to repent and be baptized, we are justified by that faith, sanctified and reconciled to God in Christ Jesus. We are raised a new creature in Christ, our previous personal transgressions are forgiven, and our relationship to God changes so that we are no longer certain to perish, but are in the hope of life eternal. By grace, we become brethren of Christ through association with his sacrifice, being adopted children Of God. Whereas before our adoption we were strangers from the covenants of promise, we now become heirs to these promises first alluded to in the garden, and later established with Abraham and David. {Rom. 6:3-8, 1 Cor. 6:11, Gal. 3:16,26-29, Eph. 2:8,12,13, 2 Pet. 1:4, Rev. 5:9,10, Gen. 3:15, 13:14-17, 15:4-18, 17:1-21, 22:15-18, 2 Sam. 7:12-16).

Newness of Life. Symbolically, in baptism, the old man (related to the one man, Adam) is put to death and we are reborn in newness of life (related to the one man, Jesus Christ). We commit to put behind us the sinful thoughts and deeds of the old man, and to replace them with godliness after the example of Jesus. Although the spirit of Christ is being developed in us, we are still dying and struggling with the fleshly inclination to sin. If we strive to direct our lives in God's righteousness, giving glory to His Name, He looks mercifully upon our imperfect service because we are in Christ. We cannot attain righteousness by our own efforts, but through Christ's righteousness and our faith in his name and kingdom, we have righteousness accounted to us by our gracious God. {Rom. 5:15-19, 6:4-6, 1 Pet. 1:23, / Cor. 15:22,45, 2 Cor. 5:17-21, Rom. 3:21-26, 4:22- 25, 7:14-25, Phil. 2:12,13, 3:9, Gal.2-.16-21, 2 Tim.1:9, Col.1-9-23, 2:11-13, 1 Pet.2:9-10).

Mercy of God. Baptized persons who turn away from God fall under the condemnation that is rightly associated with their sins. By the mercy of God, spiritual access to our Heavenly Father remains available to these wayward children because of our High Priest Jesus Christ; if they turn from sin, seek forgiveness and obey God they can be cleansed from their sins. {Eze. 18:10-13,21-23, Heb.3:12't4, 1 John 1:5-9, 2:3-6,} - {Rom5,6,7}

RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, "the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead..."

Introduction. This section is built on the doctrinal foundation established and clarified in the foregoing clarification statements. The official historical difference between the two communities has concerned Resurrectional Responsibility. This section expresses the common understanding developed by representatives of the two communities on Resurrectional Responsibility.

With regard to God's future judgment through Christ Jesus, Clause XXIV of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) reads: "That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely those who know the revealed will of God and have been called upon to submit to it) dead and living - obedient and disobedient - will be summoned before his judgment seat 'to be judged according to their works' and 'receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad.'"

We understand that the amendment (set out in parenthesis in the quoted clause above) was inserted to guard against the teaching that God is restricted to raising only those in covenant relationship, and that in this regard his hands are effectively tied by His own laws. With this in mind, we affirm our belief of the following:

"God's hands are not tied in any way from raising for condemnation any rebels and unbelievers He deems to be so deserving, regardless of whether they are baptized or un-baptized.

Those who have responded to the call of God through baptism (in this dispensation) will therefore appear at the judgment seat of Christ. His faithful servants will receive the gift of everlasting life, but the unfaithful will be condemned.

Based on the intrinsically interwoven factors of knowledge and calling, God will raise to condemnation those rebels and unbelievers whom His justice demands. As humans, none can determine who has been called according to knowledge to submit to His will. (Dan. 12:2, Rom. 2:5-8,16, 1 Pet. 4:4-7,17-18, James 4:17, Eph. 5:8-10, John 3:19, 5:24-29, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 2:3, 10:26-29, 32, 2 Pet. 2:20,21, Luke 12:47,48, Rom. 6:3-6, Gal.3:26-29, 2 Cor. 5-10, Psalm 50:4,5, Mat. 24:30,31, Rom. 14:10-12, Gal. 6:7,8).

* * * * *

Comments on the foregoing "Statement of Understanding"

1st letter:- J. Stevenson writes:

"Years ago a friend said "The only good thing about banging your head against a brick wall is the wonderful relief when you stop."

In the first century A.D. the Apostolic teaching was clear and still fresh and generally accepted- In the second and third centuries, as anticipated by the apostles, smooth-tongued wolves in sheep's clothing infiltrated the churches with doctrines that were pagan and superstitious, confusing the brethren. Many believers were persuaded and led astray by plausible argument, purportedly (but rather tenuously) supported by Scripture. There was great contention and disputation, but such is human nature that the false prophets gradually gained ground. The "conversion" of Constantine in the fourth century was to their great advantage, and subsequent Councils endorsed the false doctrine and made it mandatory for membership of the church. However, disputation continued until a few centuries later when false doctrine became orthodox and permeated the whole church.

Can you see the analogy for the history of Christadelphianism? In the mid nineteenth century, John Thomas and others including Edward Turney were searching for and discovering gospel truth. But towards the end of the nineteenth century an arrogant, autocrat arose and decreed what was good for the brotherhood to believe, formulating the B.A.S.F. to establish his stronghold. There was great contention for many decades after that; but human nature being what it is, conformity to the false doctrine gradually won over, and by the middle of the twentieth century, the unity movement in England and Australia persuaded the disparate ecclesiae to come to an agreement on the basis of the B.A.S.F. and toe the line and disfellowship dissenters.

The same is now happening in North America. Human nature being what it is, members care more about what the ecclesial leaders think of them than what Jesus taught. They find more security in an exclusive self-righteous ecclesia than in the teachings of Moses, the Prophets, the Messiah, and the Apostles.

We Nazarenes, though few, are privileged to have a clear understanding of correct doctrine. The majority of Christadelphians attach more importance to their membership of the community than they do to the truth. Just as false doctrine became established by the Council of Nicea, and subsequently permeated the whole church, similarly the false understanding of the atonement became established in the B.A.S.F. and subsequently permeated the whole of Christadelphia, and that is not going to change.

I wish there was some way we could proselytise Christendom, because it is my feeling that we would be significantly more successful amongst sincere Christians. However I am confident that God will help seekers of the truth to find it.”

J. Stevenson. February 2002.

* * * * *

2nd letter: Eric Cave writes:-

“The preamble to this document says that it represents various aspects of the general doctrinal heading of the Atonement which all Christadelphians agree is the ‘key’ to a proper understanding of the One Faith (how right this is!), and one which distinguishes them from other professing Christians. So why does it begin with the great universal LIE of Christendom, the doctrine of “Original Sin,” or perhaps we should be charitable and call it the SUPPOSITION of Christendom, which they then proceed to extrapolate into the gobbledegook known as the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith devised by Robert Roberts?”

The first paragraph reads “ADAMIC CONDEMNATION” by one man sin entered into the world...” and reads:-

Adam’s sentence. Man was created in a very good state. The serpent introduced a manner of thinking which was at enmity with God. Adam and Eve fell from their very good state when they embraced this carnal thinking and disobeyed God’s law. Carnal thinking became an inherent tendency of their being, and they were sentenced to die in accordance with the law they had transgressed. The inclination to carnal thinking and the sentence from God became a physical law of their being, which was transmitted to all their posterity. Therefore, Adam’s descendants are born into an unclean condition - fallen, perishing and inclined to sin. The human race is under condemnation to perish (without hope), unclean in God’s sight and in need of salvation. In scripture, “sin” is used to mean both the unclean (defiled) nature with its carnal inclination and actual transgression. These are related as cause and effect - our unclean nature with its carnal inclination is the result of Adam’s transgression, and our subsequent transgressions occur when we give way to our inclination. We need to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus- {Gen. 1:31, 2:15-17, 3:1-24. 5:3, Jer. 17:9, Rom.3-9-23, 5:10-14.18. 7:20-23. 8:6-8, Eph.2.12,13).

Not one of the above Scripture references mentions the inclination of the carnal thinking or the sentence from God becoming a physical law of Adam or Eve’s being! Try turning to them and confirm. Or take for example Romans 8;6-8 which reads, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in (the) flesh cannot please God.” But the representatives of the 40 North American ecclesias who devised this statement omit the next verse 9 which reads, “But ye are not in (the) flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his (the def. Article I have bracketed is not in the Greek). So why didn’t the authors include verse 9? Perhaps that would have given the game away.

We ask every intelligent thinking Christadelphian (and there are many such) whether Adam sinned again after being thrust out of Eden? Or when did Abel sin? Or Shem, or Enoch who “walked with God”? Or any of the antediluvian patriarchs, the sons of God (Genesis 6:2) until the sons of God observed the daughters of men to be fair and took to themselves wives of all that they chose? Did Noah sin, or Daniel, or Job, or any of the prophets? Or in the New Testament, Luke chapter 1, did Zachariah or Elizabeth, who are testified to have been “righteous before God”? Or in chapter 2, Simeon and Anna in the Temple, or John Baptist, or the virgin Mary herself? and that holy thing born of her who derived human nature from her, the

sinless Lamb of God Himself who provides living proof that human nature is capable of perfect obedience and surrendered His 'psuche' life to rise in the glory of His 'zoe' Life, that He might bring "many sons unto glory."

I am sorry to conclude that those 40 American ecclesias whose representatives have spent 6 years drafting the "North American Statement of Understanding" have merely confirmed their own gullibility.

We will not bore our readers with the remainder of this document which seeks to prove that Jesus Christ needed to die because He shared our nature, or in the infamous and unscriptural words of Robert Roberts "God required the ritual destruction of sinful human nature in a morally sinless bearer thereof," though how there could be a "morally sinless bearer of the nature which he affirmed makes sinlessness in us an impossibility he failed to explain, nor do the brethren who devised the document make us any wiser. The Scriptures are clear: -

Jesus died for our sins
He died for our transgressions, our transgressions
He gave His life for the sheep
He was delivered for our offences
He was sacrificed for us
He tasted death for every man
He suffered for us, the just for the unjust

Not one single verse of Scripture can prove that Jesus died for Himself or that He was included amongst those for whom He died, or that He needed redemption, or that He was a constitutional sinner and the prophet Daniel testifies, in chapter 9, verse 26, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself."

Love to all, Eric Cave.

* * *

In case any should think there is now unity amongst North American ecclesias we understand that there are many still choosing to meet under the Unamended Statement of Faith and the Shofar magazine is evidence of this. This magazine was started just 12 months ago and proclaims amongst its aims to "Arouse zeal... Proclaim the Hebrew roots of Holy Writ... Rekindle the pioneering spirit... Revisit historical issues... Alert the brotherhood to impending dangers... Examine unexplored, obscure or suppressed topics... Promote Biblical principles above politics... offer possible solutions to emotional and sometimes divisive subjects, etc."

All of which we wholeheartedly encourage and support.

Our first contact with Shofar magazine was reported in our C.L.No. 192 for Nov/Dec 2001 on page 14, in which P. Parry comments on some of the contents of their first issue dated March/April 2001. One of the editors, Brother Alan Pursell, wishing to clarify his position, replied to these comments in February 2002 as follows (because of the length of the letter I have left out some introductory background and matters of a personal nature) :-

"Dear P. Parry, Thank you for your comments regarding the Shofar magazine... After reading your letter dated 24th September 2001 concerning my article about Yeshua's temptation, it is obvious that there is some confusion over semantics of which I will address later in this letter... Our family tries to examine scripture and rightly divide the word, which sometimes means we have to disagree with certain men held in 'very high esteem.' As you will notice in the third issue of Shofar I came to a different conclusion than John Thomas, Robert Roberts and H.P.Mansfield... Please, save your assumptions and hold your pen until you know what we believe.

We now meet with other Christadelphians in North America who are commonly called "Unamended" due to differences on understanding implications of the BASF, namely the nature of man, nature of Messiah, and the resurrection. Unfortunately it is my opinion that there are those in all fellowships who still hold

precepts and traditions of certain deceased men as almost infallible, and do not search the Scriptures to find out whether those things are so... There are certain 'buzzwords' that are used by both fellowships but have very different meanings depending on who uses them. Words such as nature, flesh, physical, legal, moral, constitution, condemnation, sin, atonement, and reconcile to name a few, mean one thing to one person and something else to another. Unfortunately, it is impossible not to use some of these words to describe atonement issues... Inevitably there are misunderstandings, which after reading your letter, is what seems to have taken place.

Since your letter of September 24th we have received some "Nazarene" literature from Russell Gregory. I found that we are in many ways fighting the same battle with the Central Fellowship (Amended). In fact, the article concerning Jesus' temptation was spurred by those in Central Fellowship (particularly Logos Publications) advocating that Jesus had to have been tempted externally and could not have been tempted by his own internal thoughts since he had not committed a personal sin. One of my points was that this false theory is a product of the "clean flesh" heresy, not "clean flesh" itself. You quoted from a section of my work and based many of your assumptions on this one paragraph. I'll share with you how this article was originally written but changed for publication:

"If Yeshua was truly a man, then our Lord must have had occasional thoughts contrary to what he knew was right. However, we know he never allowed sinful thoughts to "conceive." Teaching that our Saviour required an external tempter opens the door to either one of two unsound ideas; (1) He was not really "like unto his brethren," and was not tempted in the same way as we are, or (2) an external tempter causes all men to commit their first sin. The latter premise is to say we do not inherit a fallen state from our father Adam, a premise many will recognize as the seeds of the "clean flesh" theory, requiring each man to be tempted as if he were a "new Adam."

"Inherit a fallen state" (legal term) was changed to "proneness to sin," not because they are the same thing (obviously not) but because those who say Jesus had to have an external tempter must come to grips with the idea that we inherit a mental condition from Adam. I believe that one part of this inherited mental condition is an inclination to commit sin (which is not sin itself, it is only when one acts upon those tendencies is it actually sin, more on this later)...

Your groups work on "dying thou shalt die" (muth temuth) is quite excellent... Once one sees that the death sentence was a cutting off, and that it was only through Adam's repentance and God's mercy that he lived 900+ years, can he begin to see the "legal" aspect of the atonement which you continually reference. You will enjoy the next issue of Shofar which will comment extensively on this subject in a step by step manner.

I notice also in correspondence to G. Mansfield by Russell, a comment on Romans 5:12 concerning "in whom" being a legal matter not a physical one. I would like to add a comment on verse 19, "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." Upon analysing the word "made" I found it interesting that my Greek Lexicon identifies this usage in a "possible legal sense." This goes directly against those of the Central Fellowship who deny the legal, federal or constitutional principle.

I also have similar questions on Ezekiel's temple. I always wondered how animal sacrifices and the Law of Moses would be reinstated if those things were already "nailed to the cross." I was once asked my opinion of Revelation 20:19 - "And I saw no temple therein..." I had to admit that although I had read the Bible cover to cover, I never actually saw that verse. I investigated the subject and came up with many more questions. It is my belief that Ezekiel was giving instructions for rebuilding after the Babylonian Diaspora as well as retelling the Law similarly to Moses (Deuteronomy), Joshua, David and Hezekiah. Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Zechariah and Haggai probably had a copy of Ezekiel's writings. I think many fail to realize how they would have interpreted these instructions.

Ezra 6:14: "And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia."

To what commandment is Ezra referencing if not the book of Ezekiel? Furthermore, if John was referring to the same physical temple in Revelation 20 then are we to picture a giant cube?

Revelation 20:16: “And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”

Many only see length and breadth, but fail to see a twelve thousand furlong high wall.

I digress, now back to your letter. Your objection appears to be the term “sinful flesh.” I believe we may have a semantics problem. Is “sinful flesh” a moral, physical or legal term? First let me define the terms as I generally use them.

1. Moral - personal transgressions, that which man commits, trespass of the law.

2. Physical - that which makes a up person: flesh, bone, muscle, ligament, blood etc. Also, natural mental tendencies of the creature. This term further includes the natural decay and ageing of a creature.

3. Legal - the condition, constitution, position in which a person exists. That federal head (Adam or Christ) under which God looks upon us. Condemned to die or made free to life. Esteemed as sinners or as righteous. One’s sentence according to law.

‘Sinful flesh’ is a misleading term for some for it can be understood in multiple ways:

1. Physical composition naturally comes to mind, which in my opinion includes ones natural tendency to commit sin (again, this is not sin in itself, i.e. transgression of law, but simply a mental bias. This is closely associated with the moral aspect but only when one acts upon the physical tendencies does it become a moral condition).

2. Legal sentence to die. In contrast to the term “clean flesh” “sinful flesh” is used to describe that sinful state into which man is born. This is what one typically encounters in Unamended circles.

When speaking of a newborn babe, is there any “sin”? Not morally and the term “sin” does not apply in the physical sense of composition (bone, ligaments, muscle, hair, etc.). There is however, condemnation in a newborn babe in a legal sense. He is legally constituted a sinner by no fault of his own but simply by a misfortune. He is not “clean” or “righteous” in any way, but cursed from birth to die. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19). Every man is constituted (legal) as “unclean” or as “sinners” from birth, “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” (Job 14:4). However, man can be justified (legally) in God’s eyes - cleansed in the Lamb’s blood.

I therefore agree with your words “according to the Scripture God had concluded by law, and not by a physical condition of the flesh, all under the sin of Adam, and styled “The law of sin and death.” In the future I will try to be more sensitive to the term “sinful flesh” for it can obviously be misunderstood, thank you for pointing that out. However, I think most of our Unamended readership knew the intended meaning. As far as our Central readership, any word I could have used would have been misunderstood or twisted to mean something I didn’t intend-

In my experience there is much confusion and misunderstanding in the Central Fellowship over the term “legal.” Robert Roberts and many today have tried to cram the intended meaning of the word “legal” into the moral aspect and refuse to see the term in light of these statements above. It is for this reason that I did not use these terms in the article for fear of being misunderstood by this group. Since the term “legal” has been interpreted by the Central Fellowship as a moral term only, they accuse those believing in “legal defilement” as advocating “original sin.” I have great difficulty finding words to express myself on this particular topic for fear of being misunderstood by those in both fellowships. You however, come from a different background that is quite unique from what I typically encounter when dealing with this subject.

You seem to understand what is meant by the term “legal.” Our differences may be predicated on what is understood by the term “physical.” Allow me to explain.

The scriptures say that Adam was created “very good.” “Very good” seems to be both a legal and physical term. God composed Adam of physical flesh and blood, having a free will to obey or disobey, capable of dying, but not with a legal sentence to die. So then, was Adam mortal? The answer depends on what is meant by “mortal.” In my opinion the term “mortal” encompasses the physical makeup of flesh and blood that is exposed to the natural process of ageing and decay, that is also subject (not just capable) to death. Obviously Adam was capable of dying otherwise we would think he was created immortal, but he was not created with a curse to die nor was he a decaying, ageing creature; hence I feel it is inappropriate to say he was created mortal. Adam became mortal only after his transgression and his curse to death.

“In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Adam partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The name of the tree seems to imply that prior to eating the fruit, he did not discern between good and evil. Although he could reason and name the animals, this does not mean he could discern between good and evil. He did however, have free-will to choose whether he should obey or disobey the law set forth by God. After partaking of the fruit, something changed not only legally with the curse to die that day, but mentally (which is included in my definition of “physical”). Adam and Eve were still composed of the same flesh, blood, bone, muscle, etc., but now their eyes were opened knowing both good and evil.

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil... And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...” Genesis 3:5,7.

Something changed mentally. It also seems logical from Genesis 3:19 that they began the process of decay or ageing and were subject to diseases. Although physically ageing is not a sin but merely a condition of the creature, it does have to be changed.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:53,54.

Adam was changed morally (committed sin), legally (cursed to die), and physically in that he was ageing and knew both good and evil, now an element of the brain (tendency to sin, not sin in itself). To say that Adam had a freewill before and after transgression is indeed a true statement, but didn't Adam have natural bias toward sin now that he knew evil? I believe something more is transmitted to Adam's posterity than just the legal curse to die. Physically we are decaying and have a mental condition knowing both good and evil. We are no different than Adam after the sin with the exception of the moral sin itself. Are not children inclined to resist the laws of parents just as we are inclined to resist the laws of God? Our battle is to overcome the physical creature by resisting our mental tendencies or bias to commit sin.

After baptism do we change morally? YES, forgiveness of sin. Do we change legally? YES, constituted righteous without a curse to die (as opposed to sinners cursed to die)? and therefore subject to resurrection. Do we change physically? NO! We are not only composed of the same flesh, blood and bone as before, but are still inclined to sin- We thank our Heavenly Father for His mercy not only to esteem us as righteous ones (legal), but also for the forgiveness of sins that we continue to commit. There is no change physically until after the resurrection when the faithful will be made immortal, incapable of dying, and without the inclination to sin.

After reading commentary in your fellowship's “Circular Letter” it seems there may be differences in applying these principles to Jesus. I believe He was not only born with the sentence of death (legal defilement), but also physically ageing and knowing both good and evil just like all men.

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

“For he hath made him to be sin for us (legal), who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

He had lusts and desires just like all men. “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:18.

I agree with your words, “Like all other men, Jesus had free will to obey or disobey.” He was in every way like unto His brethren, but fortunately He overcame all such fleshly lusts (mental tendency/physical) and was morally sinless. Through His death, He then destroyed that which has the power of death, that is the devil or “sin in the flesh.” I believe Jesus was a representative, not a substitute. He was under a legal curse to die, had to overcome temptation, and was under the Law of Moses (that is how He redeemed those from the curse of the Law - Galatians 3:13). He therefore had to participate in our same nature and overcome it. He was both the Offering as well as the High Priest (after the order of Melchizedec) making that sacrifice first for Himself, and then for the people, providing a way into the New Covenant for those before and after him...

I hope our correspondence can be mutually educational and not attempt to go on an attack. In the Hope of Messiah’s return,

Alan Pursell.

* * *

In reply. Brother Phil Parry writes:

Dear A. Pursell, My thanks and kind regards in the Name of Yashua with my compliments that you have, contrary to many leaders and writers of the Christadelphian community, replied to my comments which were made in our magazine.

When I first received your magazine stating its purpose of finding “The Truth” Jesus taught, I thought here is something to be commended, then when I discovered it was produced under the title and name “Christadelphian,” which contrary to its meaning “Brother of Christ.” has come to mean “Confusion,” Satan divided against himself; so who can rectify the situation when there is no clear understanding of the Atoning Work of God in His Son? It is the most important subject in man’s history, the preaching of God’s Kingdom means nothing without it, salvation through Christ’s sacrificial death must be understood first to assure any inheritance in it.

You no doubt have read the words of Jesus to the opposing (satanic) Jews, “Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself.” In the last two pages of your letter to me you give the impression that you support the attitude of those Jews, and after reading your earlier comments, which incidentally were somewhat confusing in parts, I was astounded to find you supporting the very theory which renounces Jesus as a perfect and unblemished willing sacrifice in obtaining redemption and salvation for Adam and all who were alienated from God by his sin.

If Jesus’ death by bloodshedding, foreshadowing the lamb slain instead of Adam is not a substitute, in what way was the sentence of inflicted death-by-sin remitted? Please note this sentence passed upon all men by imputation seeing they were not born, therefore it could only be legal. Jesus was never “in Adam” though of similar flesh and blood capable of dying naturally, but never under a legal curse to die, which you falsely state and also follow with another statement that Jesus was under the Law of Moses and by overcoming temptation was able to redeem those under it from its curse. How could Jesus under a personal curse of any kind redeem anyone when His sacrifice was for the purpose of ratifying the typical sacrifices offered for the

transgressions that were under the first covenant? Again, if the sacrifice Jesus made was first for Himself, when did He die for the people, for only one death was involved?

That it was necessary that Jesus should be a partaker of the same nature in which Adam was created and in which (very good) nature Adam sinned, I am in full agreement, but to say as you do, that Jesus was both the offering and the High Priest after the order of Melchizedec is only a half truth - the offering for the people, yes, but as High Priest. No. He could not be a Priest on earth though He had the qualities for being made a Priest after the order of Melchizedec which would commence at the right hand of God for His household. See Hebrews 8:1 to 4 and 7:27,28 (Jesus had no sins to offer for).

I hope you will clarify more clearly the statements and terms you use such as “constituted righteous without a curse to die,” as opposed to sinners cursed to die, this being after baptism into the death of Christ whom you say was already cursed to die, thus making him a sinner bringing us back to the false teaching of Roberts and his adherents which has been the cause of contention for the time between 1873 and the present. That glue of Roberts’ teaching still seems to have stuck to you as with many more. I do not say this to be offensive, I am sad to have to say it.

I can appreciate what you say about your father’s experiences in the past but you do not say what the teachings contained which opened new doors for him on the nature of man and the nature of the Messiah. Actually on that subject there were no new doors to open on the physical aspect but the relationship, which was misunderstood and confused.

The nature of man and the nature of Jesus: there should never have been any dispute or difference between the two, Jesus was a man like Adam in physical flesh and blood, later events made a difference in relationship to God. Adam failed to retain his title as Son of God, Jesus in the same nature retained His title “Son of God” from birth to the right hand of His Father; Adam needed adoption after his sin, his posterity were born needing adoption also, both through Jesus, who was never in the loins of Adam, His male pedigree declaring one source - “The power of the Highest” upon the seed of the woman, Mary, whose flesh and blood was the same physical quality as Eve’s when taken out of Adam’s side.

Jesus said, “It is the Spirit that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing.” See Genesis 2:7-8, and 1 Corinthians 15:45 to 49.

The doubtful disputations came by reason of Apostate and Augustinian doctrines of original sin = “changed, defiled flesh” as accepted by R.Roberts and his followers. Clause V of the B.A.S.F.

The natural corruptible nature of Adam of 930 years duration, was of sufficient length of time for his participation in God’s plan of the reproduction of his species to replenish the earth even if he had not sinned, but as Adam’s sin brought instant sentence of death by infliction not decay, a ransom or purchase was necessary to his salvation and to also preserve him for that reason - hence the Lamb of God on Calvary and foreshadowed in Eden to take away the Sin of the world (Adam’s), on the Federal principle (Romans 5).

You requested of me, “Please save your assumptions and hold your pen until you know what we believe.” Fair enough, but you have stated enough so far for me to question some of your beliefs as being unscriptural. You speak of Jesus being born under the legal sentence of death, etc. (half truth). Why do you quote Hebrews 2:14 and follow with 2 Corinthians 5:21 falsely used by R.Roberts? Is this the A.D.Norris’s line of thought that when Jesus hung on the tree, the devil hung there dead? Can you wonder at my assumptions if your teaching is not scripturally based and clear?

In conclusion I appreciate your kind thoughts hoping I have recovered from the illness mentioned in our Circular Letter Nov/Dec. I thank our heavenly Father that my wife Rene and myself are feeling much improved especially as she is almost 85 years of age and I am 84 but still handicapped with eye trouble and diabetes.

We look forward to a reply clarifying of your position on the basis of Holy Scripture as there is so much pillar to post theories zigzagging about among many, differentiating themselves under assumed titles

and magazines in circulation, and found to be no nearer to the Apostolic teaching of the first century yet assuming the covering of the umbrella “Christadelphian” which is so hazy and misleading.

If I have distorted your position, I apologize. My intention was to arouse your interest and realize the false doctrine as well as the true set out by John Thomas and R.Roberts and bold fast to that taught by Jesus, the Holy Apostles and Prophets rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Our Kind Regards and Thoughts for your Spiritual Welfare and Eternal Life with all who Love our Lord Jesus in sincerity,

P. Parry, (11th March 2002)

P.S. The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith in my possession is dated 1908, I do not know what was amended in the previous one. You say yours is the Unamended Statement of Faith, which one are you referring to? Ours needs no amendment = The Holy Word. - P.P.

* * *

Further comments from Russell:-

I haven't written a separate letter to Brother Alan Pursell due to pressure on my time in getting out this Circular Letter, but I would just like to say that when compiling the article on page 2, “Opposing Sinful Flesh,” I had Brother Alan's letter in mind along with several others, so perhaps that article will in some way answer a few matters raised by Brother Alan. However, I would like to add a few last minute thoughts before completing this Circular Letter:-

First, I wish to thank you, Brother Alan, for responding to our comments in C.L.192 and understand you do not wish to enter into a public debate.

We in the Nazarene Fellowship have always stood firm and united in our approach to the Bible subjects of the Atonement, baptism, resurrection, and judgment and this we realize makes us appear absolute in what we preach. While this is so, we are always open to change as stated on the back cover of all our booklets - “for if we are wrong our chief aim is to get it right” - and we do not have the restriction of a Statement of Faith which would prevent change.

Like Brother Phil Parry, I too, felt confusion in your letter and believe this is due to your need to be constrained by the BUSF. Once anyone breaks free from the constrictions of a Statement of Faith the Scriptures can open up in a most remarkable manner. One of the things from which we are released is the confusion of understanding of what you call “buzzwords” - nature, flesh, physical, legal, moral, constitution, condemnation, sin, atonement, reconcile, etc. My personal experience is that, looking back to when I was a Christadelphian, I was paddling about in muddy water but after I was withdrawn from it was not long before I saw a clear ocean of truth. Christadelphia now looks to me like Babel where there is so much confusion and misunderstanding of one another.

You write, “Your groups works on ‘dying thou shalt die’ (muth temuth) is quite excellent,” but then you say that you believe Jesus did not die as our Substitute, when the reasoning throughout this booklet shows that the animal slain in Eden for the covering, was slain instead of Adam and Eve. That is to say that Adam and Eve were allowed to continue living out their life span because the animals were slain in their stead. Link this with Revelation 13:8, speaking of Christ, that He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” we see then the animal slain in Eden typified the greater sacrifice by which all sins are covered; that Jesus, in fact, died instead of us as even as the lamb slain in Eden died instead of Adam and Eve.

Further on you write - “There is however, condemnation in a newborn babe in a legal sense, He is legally constituted a sinner by no fault of his own but simply by a misfortune.”

This echoes the teaching of Dr Thomas which I believe was built on the teaching of Paul in Galatians 3:22 - "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin." I feel it is a teaching that has got out of hand. The purpose of being concluded under sin is to bring all under the federal head of Adam, and in this we agree with Dr Thomas, but the purpose of concluding all under the sin of Adam was so that those who believe can leave that federal head and be concluded under Jesus Christ by baptism into His death – Jesus Christ being the other Federal Head. There is no fault or misfortune in being concluded under sin in the first place, for Paul continues in that verse 22 - "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Where now the misfortune? Had we not been placed under a federal head then each sinner would have needed a separate Saviour in order to be redeemed - or else Jesus would have needed to die over and over again for each one of us! See Hebrews 9:24-28. No, it was not and is not a misfortune to be concluded under sin, but a blessing for which we should be thankful that one sacrifice could save all.

My final comment concerns your observation - "Are not children inclined to resist the laws of parents just as we are inclined to resist the laws of God," Well, yes, but there is a difference. Children do resist our rules, or laws, but this is how they learn. Children are not articulate and cannot formulate the questions to ask, so they have to do the only thing they know - they push parents as far as they can until the parent says, no more, no further. They then know where there boundaries are, they learn what, is acceptable and what is not. It is not being "naughty," it's wanting to know. Unfortunately for many children it's the parents who mess up this arrangement of things.

Very sadly, I have known well meaning Christadelphian parents, believing in sin in the flesh, who have ruined their offspring's childhood by repressing what they believed was their child's "badness." The consequences of such ignorance can be tragic.

Once we are of age (after baptism) there is not the same relationship between ourselves and God as there is between parent and child, for we know from God's Word what is right and wrong and there is not a comparable trial and error approach to our learning.

But let's look at the other side too, at how children do so want to please their parents. Even when they are rebuffed, they will bounce back time and again. Yes, they do so want to do what is right, and Oh, how they try so hard to please! And Oh, why can't we be more like them?

"Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3.

With Kind Regards, Russell.

We have been sent a photocopy of Michael Ashton's editorial for the March issue of "The Christadelphian" magazine entitled "Made Like His Brethren." We have come to expect some strange things from the pen of this editor and once again we have not been disappointed! Under the heading "At One with Those Being Saved" he has this to say:-

"This tells us of the absolute physical identity between Jesus and the rest of mankind. There was no other way that sin could be vanquished; the victory had to be achieved on sin's territory. Erroneous beliefs about Christ's sacrifice arise when attempts are made to separate him from those he came to save. Orthodox beliefs about his alleged incarnation, for example, rob his sacrifice of its reality. If he was "very God" any assumption of humanity was nothing more than play-acting; an elaborate hoax with no real value or purpose.

Equally demeaning is the notion that Jesus was born with the same nature as Adam's in the beginning, and without any of the effects that were introduced into the world following Adam's sin. This view occasionally arises, even in the brotherhood; in the nineteenth century it was called the "Renunciationist theory" because the brother who propounded it renounced what he first believed. More recently it has been known as "clean flesh" teaching, because it denies that Jesus' nature was subject to sin and death in the same way as every other human being."

This is appalling stuff and Michael Ashton should know better than to make such claims. I am sorry to say it but in this short extract I see more untruths than truths. However, I will say no more as I have asked Eric Cave, who has known Michael Ashton personally for very many years, to comment on the editorial as a whole and so here are his observations:-

Eric Cave writes:-

“I have been asked to comment on the March editorial in “The Christadelphian.” I can only conclude that what Michael Ashton has written in that editorial is just a re-arrangement of Christadelphian errors and suppositions with the heading “Made Like His Brethren” in an attempt to justify his understanding of our Lord’s sacrifice as it was expounded by Robert Roberts in the infamous BASF. Perhaps if he had included a mention of that document in the article it would have been skipped over by the majority of readers so many of whom now realise its shameful history.

All are agreed of course that our Lord was truly “made like his brethren” in physical nature, for He was born of Mary and shared her flesh and blood nature and could be tempted to sin and even suffer death just like you and I (but whereas we are all “in Adam” because we were all in Adam’s loins when he transgressed and sold the human race to King Sin, for “his servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey”), that was emphatically not the situation with Jesus Christ, for God was His Father, and no man ever had two fathers, which was why He claimed “I am from above, ye are from beneath.” His life derived from God, not from the “will of the flesh” as is the case with the rest of mankind and He was exempt from that Adamic condemnation and needed not the redemption as we do. His Paternity left Him untouched by our constitutional situation of being in bondage “In Adam.”

Consequently it is simply untrue when in the second paragraph of Michael’s editorial he asserts that “There was no other way that sin could be vanquished, the victory had to be achieved on sin’s territory” (a phrase he has borrowed if I am not mistaken from a similar failed attempt by brother Harry Tennant). Surely to teach that the nature of Jesus was “sin’s territory” is blasphemy indeed.

Extrapolating from this falsehood and combining it with the equally false Christadelphian teaching that God implanted into Adam’s nature a ‘bias to sin’ (though why God should want to do so when Adam quite competently sinned whilst in his ‘very good’ nature is for Michael to explain) he then in the next paragraph declares that

“Equally demeaning is the notion that Jesus was born with the same nature as Adam’s in the beginning and without any of the effects that were introduced into the world following Adam’s sin.”

What were those consequences? The scripture says that Adam was warned “In the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.” The Hebrew B’Yom refers to an evening morning day of 24 hours and the doubling of the word ‘die’ is an idiom for ‘certainty’ or ‘surely.’ Had that sentence been carried out there would have been no human race to populate the world, but “mercy rejoiced against justice” and God instituted the principle of blood sacrifice, instead of the blood of Adam and Eve, God accepted the blood of an innocent lamb or lambs, whose skins in addition covered the bodies of the guilty pair, for “God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity” and Adam was permitted to live out his natural span of 930 years whilst Eve was informed, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee;” additionally the ground was cursed and hard labour would be the rule for them throughout those 930 years as they strove to grow the food they required. The sin was covered, but not taken away, that would await the true Redeemer, and the curse on the ground lifted when Noah proved himself obedient and faithful (Genesis 8:21).

Having got so far on the false track Michael then proceeds to falsify history and continue the Christadelphian pastime of suppressing facts. Edward Turney was the man who opposed Robert Roberts when following the death of John Thomas the latter performed his doctrinal somersault and introduced into the Christadelphian community the church doctrine of “original sin.” Neither John Thomas nor Robert Roberts himself originally taught that there was any change in the nature of Adam when he sinned. John

Thomas wrote in “The Herald of The Kingdom and Age to Come” for July 1855 (5 years after he published “Elpis Israel”) and in response to an enquirer:-

There was no miracle wrought in executing the sentence under which Adam and Eve placed themselves. That is to say, there was no new physical principle infused into their nature that was not there before they transgressed... We believe that the change consequent upon that calamity was moral, not physical. The natural system was the same the day before the Fall as the day after... A palace, though destructible by time or any other cause, may nevertheless be “very good” when its building is completed, so also our terrestrial system, though susceptible to deterioration, was physically “very good” after its kind. Adam and Eve were innocent and undefiled but without character. They became immoral; and the practice of vice has made their descendants what we see.”

Robert Roberts likewise in “The Ambassador of The Coming Age” for March 1869 wrote:-

“Our friend imagines that there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatsoever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely the other way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker, but not of his organisation. What are the facts? He was formed from the dust a “living soul” or “natural body.” His mental constitution gave him a moral relation to God. He was given a law to observe; the law he disobeyed and sentence was passed that he (the disobedient living soul) should return to mother earth. What was the difference between his position before disobedience and his position after? Simply this, that in the one case he was a living soul or natural body on probation for immortality, and in the other, he was a living soul or natural body under sentence of death. He was a living soul or natural body in both cases.”

With these original views of both John Thomas and Robert Roberts we are in entire agreement and so was Edward Turney even though both John Thomas and Robert Roberts contradicted themselves later on, and after the death of John Thomas, Robert Roberts invented the terms “Renunciationist” and “clean flesh” to describe Turney’s teaching. It is quite untrue of Michael Ashton to say that Nazarenes deny that Jesus’ nature was subject to sin and death in the same way as every other human being and Michael knows this very well, but as with almost every other Christadelphian editor uses every opportunity to suppress the Truth in favour of the BASF.

His next paragraph is headed “Made sin for us” taken from 2 Corinthians 5:21, yet Michael knows perfectly well that the passage should read “made a sin offering for us,” and that the Greek hamartia here translated “sin” is used over 100 times in the LXX to mean ‘sin offering;’ which Old Testament translation in Greek was the only scripture possessed by the Gentile Corinthians at that time to whom Paul was writing and most versions indicate this fact in a marginal note. John Thomas slipped up here when he asserted that “sin is a synonym for human nature.” If that were true we ought to be able to read the passage in 2 Corinthians as “He hath made him to be human nature for us who knew no human nature” and Michael was made aware of that absurdity in 1998 yet deliberately repeats the same falsehood that “To be ‘made sin’ is another way of saying that Jesus partook of flesh and blood.”

“Oh what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.”

Jesus was made a sin offering for us because He was without sin, “holy, harmless and undefiled” the “lamb of God” “spotless and undefiled” as was that first sacrificial lamb in Eden. “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” and yet to agree with Robert Roberts’s untruths he concludes the editorial with the outrageous falsehood that “In the process of saving us, the Lord too was saved.” How many times do we have to remind the “Christadelphian Establishment” that Jesus had no need of redemption?

He died for our sins.
He died for our transgressions, our iniquities.
He gave his life for the sheep.
He was delivered for our offences.
He was sacrificed for us.
He tasted death for every man.
He suffered for us, the Just for the unjust.

Daniel prophesied of Him, “Messiah shall be cut of but not for himself.

Not one single verse in scripture ever says that Jesus saved Himself. Did not the mob taunt Him on the cross “Save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross”? Not one verse ever says that Jesus died for Himself, or that He was included amongst those for whom He died, or that He needed redemption, or that He was constitutionally “in Adam” to need redemption as we do. He was the Heir who always did that which His Father approved.

Certainly Michael does not go as far as did the editor of “The Testimony” when in a personal letter to the writer he declared that it was sound Christadelphian doctrine for his contributor, one C.Maddocks, to declare that “Jesus had the diabolos within himself” and that “Jesus was a sinner who needed to sacrifice for himself.” Surely the time has come to abandon that “Christadelphian Establishment policy of suppressing and ignoring the slightest suspicion of criticism of the BASF which one member described to the writer as being “Saddled with a Victorian relic which we can freely call fallible but may not criticize” and is a “mockery of truth.”

Brother Eric Cave

Analysis of Islip Collyer’s

“MEANING OF SACRIFICE”

On reading through friend Islip’s pamphlet, I was disappointed at the absence of a technical definition of the term ‘Sacrifice,’ since the sacrifice of Christ is the most important event that ever transpired on earth.

We can afford to dispense with definitions, but I strongly advise the reader to refresh his mind by a scan over the ‘definition,’ and candidly ask himself if Christ were under sentence of death on account of His (supposed) sinful flesh, or condemned nature, could that death be a sacrifice? Ask himself if there ever was a man on earth or an angel from heaven who could sacrifice his own debt? Ask himself if it is possible to exhibit two more antagonistic terms. Does not the very term ‘debt’ blaspheme the term ‘sacrifice’?

“Understandeth thou what thou readest?”

There never was under the canopy of heaven such a freak as “sinful flesh’ nor ‘condemned nature,’ because God alone is responsible for these. The only sin recorded in God’s book which changed the flesh is that of Lot’s wife.

This eternal confounding of flesh with character, the legal with the physical, and possession with the quality of the flesh is that intoxicating cup of her who has charmed all nations. Sin cannot exist apart from Law.

“Where there is no law there is no transgression.” Jesus says; “If I had not done amongst them the works which no other man ever did, they had not had sin.” Your assumption turns the Master out of court here.

“The sting of death” is not your supposed condemned flesh but positively condemned character. “The sting of death is sin,” not flesh, “and the strength of sin is the law.” (1 Corinthians 15:56). The law scrutinizes not the quality of your flesh but that of your character. Does our law hang a man for the quality of his flesh or that of his character? Ponder this - “There is nothing unclean of itself” and “every sin man performs is outside the body.”

Paul is grievously misunderstood due alone to this pagan sinful flesh assumption. Peter specially warns us against wresting Paul's words to our own destruction. (2 Peter 3:16). Indiscrimination of Paul's metonymy, that abridged figure of speech peculiar to Paul alone, when literally construed, admirably satiates the creed hunter and none more so than the sinful flesh glutton. "Give us flesh to eat"!

Paul, addressing the brethren, says: "Ye are not in the flesh." Did he mean they were not flesh and blood? Even the phrase "The body of sin" fails lamentably to prove sinful flesh. In English it means, the body belonging to sin. The Greek ever uses the genitive form of possession. So it is in Romans 8:3. The adjective 'sinful' is not there. Thus friend Islip's very criterion vanishes into oblivion.

When two nouns come together, it is a case of possession, except however it be a noun of apposition as 'John the Baptist,' meaning the same person. We, in English do not use the Greek genitive form of possession unless the possessor be neuter, as 'the roof of the house.' We do not then say 'the house's roof.' (The following is a riddle to many - If Moses were the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was then the daughter of Pharaoh's son.") Paul's Greek genitive case converted me to Christ.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked/' but don't forget that the pure in heart alone shall see God. Whence this transformation? Would you advocate a surgical operation? Again, "let not sin reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Here our opposing friends imaging this clenches 'sinful flesh.' Permit me however to point out that the first thing staring us in the face here is the imperative or commanding mood. Something we are divinely prohibited from doing. If our physical system be a compound of three fourths sin and one flesh, will you please inform me how to proceed? Must I resort to anatomy?

In my Paul's inverted elliptical figure of metonymy (meta = change; nomen = the name), he speaks of "sin that dwelleth in me." If you force the literal into the former, you are irrevocably bound to force the literal into the latter.

Let us hear James: "Every man..." - this included Adam in Eden, who, when he saw that the forbidden tree was pleasant to the eye and to be desired. But we must not condemn Adam for the God-implanted natural desires until he tastes the forbidden fruit. Why then condemn dear Jesus, who ever subordinated His legitimate, natural desires to the will of His Father? "Not my will, but thine be done." But let the Apostle proceed - "Every man, when he is tempted, is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

I have now the utmost pleasure in transcribing Brother Zilmer's Deductive Analysis of the scripture and Paul's metonymy. He says:-

"Lust conceived, bringeth forth sin- Although there may be a desire for some forbidden object, yet sin does not become a fact until lust hath conceived. What is this conception of lust? In the ordinary sense of the term conception comes from the union of two elements, the male and the female. In the case with which we are dealing, there is a union between two mental faculties; and there are two mental processes. The first of these is the judgment. Man as a rational being ordinarily engages in actions which his judgment approves. By this we mean that he sometimes justifies such acts as right. Once judgment approves, one more element is necessary to effect the conception, that is. the will. When the Judgment approves and the will resolves to carry the desire into execution, then the union is complete, conception takes place and sin, as an act of transgression against the divine Law, is the child that is brought forth."

Was R.Roberts anything behind the above when he declared:-

"The phrase 'sin in the flesh' is metonymical. It is not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading physical organisation. 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."

I ask, is it possible to exhibit purer divine harmony among any other three men on earth - the Apostle, Zilmer and R.Roberts? But allow R.Roberts to finish:-

“The impulses which lead to this existed in Adam before transgression as much as they did afterwards, else disobedience would not have occurred.”

I here ask, was Adam, therefore doomed to death on account of his being created with natural desires? Absurd! Is it not therefore wild deduction to condemn Jesus for possessing natural desires? But let us hear R.Roberts finish:-

“Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatsoever and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker but not in the nature of his organisation.”

I ask therefore how have our Christadelphian friends become flesh-changers and ignorantly misrepresented us across the broad earth of being guilty of that pagan delusion?

On page 2, paragraph 3 our friend Islip says,

“It is as though the prophet was anticipating this controversy when he wrote, ‘Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten, and afflicted of God. But he was wounded for our transgressions...’“

But please observe the prophet does not say “He was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded and bruised for what friend Islip is pleased to term “His own unclean, sinful, condemned flesh nature.”

Reader, think for yourself. Ask yourself candidly if that idea could honestly be read into that glorious declaration of the prophet?

We agree with friend Islip when he says,

“Jesus was the Son of God, the beginning of a New Creation, and that it is by His righteousness (and faith in His shed blood alone) we can be saved.” [Parenthesis mine - A.L.W.]

But when at the top of page 3 he says, “God made His Son strong for the work of overcoming and condemning sinful flesh,” then we are forced to part company. Because this idea reduces Christ to a mere machine, reduces His trial to a mere sham fight and positively robs Christ of all merit.

We verily believe that God made His beloved strong for our redemption, but we denounce the idea that His strength lay in His hair like that of Samson. This supposed infinite strength idea is forced by the sinful flesh delusion, which alone is the father of the thought. God tries no man above what he is able to bear, who every time makes a way of escape that he may be able to bear it. His commandments are not grievous. His burden is light.

Jesus was truly the beginning of a New creation, in whom alone was life. This is wherein His strength lay. The prince of life, the way, the truth and the life. Who poured out that life blood unto death. No sham fight here. No concocted yarn of receiving infinite strength to strangle His supposed sinful flesh or condemned nature. This monster of all delusions.

Jesus was the property of God alone. Do you know what that means? If you will point out where the adversary and God had equal shares in the Christ we will proclaim peace tonight. We must not violate God’s fundamental law of private ownership and force co-operation with the sinful flesh butcher. Did Jesus sacrifice His own debt? Did He say, This is my sinful body which must be slain for myself?” This do in remembrance of me? Horrid idea!”

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

(A.L.W. has almost exhausted himself in his endeavour to shout loud enough that they may be enabled to hear). Parenthesis by L.W. - copyist.

On page 3 bottom, friend Collyer says, “We recognise that it was in character and not in nature that Jesus differed from us.”

This declaration we thoroughly endorse. But it evades the main point at issue and tacitly renews the false charge of our having changed the nature- Is it not a deplorable fact that changed nature with friend Islip and his adherents is a forgone conclusion. His cherished criterion which forces him to saddle the wrong pony and mutilate the word of God to uphold. This fact alone exhibits the actual flesh changers. Will friend Islip point out to us in God’s book, where Jesus stood in a relation condemned to death on account of his sinful flesh or condemned nature? And then define sacrifice? A duty he hitherto positively has failed to do.

We do not accuse him of wilful indulgence, in subtil, hidden, undercurrents. It is his own sinful flesh bias which prevents him spitting out and speaking plainly. Friend Islip has become so much the slave of phrases that he has lost all capacity for meanings. No amount of reasoning in a circle will to eternity settle this question. This supposed change in the flesh of Adam is a will-o-the-wisp against which Robert Roberts declared

“There’s no evidence whatsoever, and the evidence and presumption are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker but not in his physical organisation.” Why then change the flesh?

The Spirit portrayed that, prior to the close of the age, there would be “cage of full fledged, unclean and hateful birds.” Reader, do you belong to that cage? We therefore patiently await friend Collyer’s definition of sacrifice.

Dr Thomas held that Christ was raised in mortal nature. (See “Echoes of Past Controversies,” page 80). This means, raised doomed to death. Peter declares, “He was quickened in spirit.” Paul says “Not after the Law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” We must not violate God’s Law regarding the Passover Lamb. “None of it shall remain over until the morning.” “If God raised His own Passover Lamb in Mortal Nature on that glorious resurrection morn, does not the assumption force God to violate his own Law? We must not believe all we hear but prove all things. Because there never was a greater babble of tongues.

“When I see the blood I will pass over.” This was the great stumbling stone laid in Zion. The great majority neglected the sprinkling of the door posts of their hearts and sought deliverance by mere works of Law. Works of Law could not redeem life. Hence “by works of Law shall no flesh be justified.” This demonstrates-that Jesus was in a justified relation toward His own Father before works of Law could count. His fidelity to the divine Law merited His reward of immortality by retaining His Justified relation towards His own Father.

Here then, stands one “mighty to save.” Before accepting His merited reward of immortality if He now “pour out His soul (life) unto death,” my salvation is eternally solved. Did my Lord do this? “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”

“Greater love hath no man than this.” That life blood has perished for ever. “He was quickened in spirit.” His merited reward according to the oath of God, viz. “This do and thou shalt live.” This is my meaning of sacrifice.

Sinful flesh is top dog throughout friend Islip’s booklet. Page 7, top, he says, “The racial tendencies are a part of our physical nature.” Do we deny this? Were they not in Adam also, prior to transgression? Genesis 1:28. Did God hold Adam condemned for natural desires which God alone implanted? Horrid deduction”! Friend Islip continues:

“For Christ to have been free from all desires of the flesh to please itself, would have involved a miracle of divine energy for the express purpose of making His nature different from ours”

Here again is a subtle implication which forces changed flesh and condemned nature with a vengeance. Demonstrating to the hilt that friend Islip is the flesh-changer who on page 3 forces God to a miracle of

divine energy, imparting to Jesus infinite power for the overcoming and condemning of this supposed changed sinful flesh.

If friend Islip would but leave off stewing Rome's sinful flesh and accept the word of God that there is nothing unclean of itself, it would save him from involving God in a miracle of divine energy to save man from what never existed on earth, viz. sinful flesh.

How long will they saddle the wrong pony?

A.L.Wilson. 2nd June 1928.

The real test of whether human nature has been changed is to ask the question,

“Was Adam capable of experiencing temptation and committing sin while he was in his original very good state?”

The answer is obviously yes, otherwise he could not have sinned.

That disposes of the suggestion that people sin because their flesh or their nature predisposes them to do so.

Ernest Brady - “What God Hath Cleansed” page 9