

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 205

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings to you all.

Water is a precious commodity and vital to life. Our bodies are 70% water and although we can survive many days without food we cannot survive for long without water. In Britain we are blessed with a climate that allows a plentiful supply of water for our use all the year round. We think little of it each time we turn on the tap or water the garden. But in many parts of the world people are not so fortunate and women, in particular in parched areas of the globe, spend most of their time and energy each day fetching and carrying water long distances for their families' every day needs.

We are not told how far the Samaritan woman had walked to draw the water she needed from Jacob's well when she came across Jesus resting by it, tired from his overnight journey from Galilee at 6 o'clock one morning. She was clearly taken with the idea of the living water which Jesus offered her if it meant she would never be thirsty again and so have to keep coming to the well to get water. She was obviously a woman with a good mind, if rather relaxed and questionable moral attitudes as far as marriage was concerned, because she certainly held her own in the conversation with Jesus that followed and which is recorded in such interesting detail in John's Gospel. She told Jesus that she expected Messiah and that when he appeared he would "tell us all things," Then Jesus says something truly amazing to the woman of Samaria, a person with whom a Jew was supposed to have absolutely no dealings; for Jesus says to her, "I that speaketh to thee am he." What a moment! Jesus has told his disciples to tell no one who he is and yet he reveals all to this woman. No wonder she forgot all about her errand, put down her water-pot and hurried off to tell others who she had met and what he had said to her. "Come see a man" she says "who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

The very first miracle that Jesus did was turning water into wine at what was probably his sister's wedding. Water is an essential to baptism, and not just a sprinkling of it but a total immersion in it, in order to properly signify dying, going down into the grave and then rising up out of the water again to a new life in Jesus Christ, with all past sins forgiven and thenceforth the promise of forgiveness whenever it is needed and begged for. So in a sense as our natural lives are preserved daily by our intake of water so also our spiritual lives are saved by it in baptism.

Water is a blessing and a gift from God and those of us who understand how we are saved by it physically and spiritually have reason to be mindful of it and especially thankful for both its qualities.

“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.” (Psalm 31:24).

Love to all. Helen Brady.

We have recently received several letters each of which has asked for enlightenment on our beliefs and that we should give scriptural reasons for them. This Circular Letter has been designed to provide many of the answers and we look forward to correspondence relating to these matters.

The first letter we report fairly fully:-

“Dear Mr Gregory,

For some time you have been sending me your Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter; thank you very much. I cannot now remember how I came to hear of your group but my original motive in requesting your publication was to have an understanding of your beliefs and how these were distilled from Scripture, so that I could compare them with my own as a Christadelphian in the Central Fellowship

I have read many of your articles but to date I do not understand what your beliefs are and how they differ from my own. This needs an explanation.

I well understand that you believe that the BASF is flawed and that Christadelphians do not understand God’s way of redemption through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; naturally you believe that your understanding is correct. However, to the best of my knowledge, you have never set out in simple straight forward words just what it is that you believe and where and how that differs from the beliefs of those in the Central Fellowship.

It may be that you have written of your beliefs in your Circular Letters and your booklets, but not in an educative or exhortational way. It seems to me that you are so concerned to criticise or ridicule Christadelphians, either individually or as a group that this then fogs or even distorts any Scriptural or factual content.

May I make a suggestion? That you include an article (or articles) in your Circular Letter which sets out and explains your beliefs and shows where you differ from Christadelphians.

For example you could:

- explain what the beliefs are
- include scriptural references
- explain your reasoning and the implications
- explain how they differ from Christadelphian beliefs
- deal with ‘difficult’ passages in an open and discussive way
- explain your technical comments. For example, you refer to “the loins of Adam” – what does this mean and imply? And similarly from time to time you comment on the ability of a believer to not commit sin; why is this a difference between us and what are the implications? And I suspect that there are others.

The value of such an article would be greatly enhanced if

- it does not indulge in criticising or mocking others - an effective distraction from the truth.
- it keeps to the point.

I am not suggesting an exhaustive description of everything but rather a concise, straightforward and helpful explanation of your beliefs.

You may feel that this letter is rather negative but it isn't meant to be; I am a busy person and I see no point in wasting your time or mine by carping. I hope that it is helpful. Above all, I want to understand as well as I can God's plan and purpose in creating a people for His Name through His Word and through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus."

Another correspondent has asked us to give our views on a number of topics such as our understanding of the trinity, the devil and the so-called fallen angels, demons, evil spirits, especially in the context of Ephesians 6:12 - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

This writer also says "I do not accept the concept of baptismal regeneration - not in this particular administration, i.e. the Pauline administration of grace, Paul was sent not to baptise but to preach the gospel. (1 Corinthians 1:17)."

Quite obviously it will take time to deal with all the matters raised so by way of answering some of these we are commencing in this Circular Letter extracts from "The Devil and Hell of the Bible" which we have found particularly helpful in the past and are grateful to The Megiddo Mission Church for publishing it. In due course we will also reprint an excellent article on the Trinity written by Anthony Buzzard.

We thank our correspondents for their letters, the first for his frankness in telling us we are guilty of criticising and ridiculing Christadelphians, and even of mocking them, and the second for his challenging questions.

We are aware that some readers have been offended by criticisms in our booklets but we are not going to change what authors have written whenever we may reprint or quote from their writings, but would ask our readers to overlook, as far as they feel able, those occasions where they consider offence may have been given and concentrate on the scriptural message the writer is endeavouring to bring out.

Regarding my time as editor, I do not think I have been unduly critical at any time and where it was felt criticism was called for I have always expressed an alternative argument in an endeavour to make any such criticism constructive. It is not the person we criticise but the lack of reason and thought that is evident from their writings.

So what can we say to these charges? We can only apologise to all those who have been offended by them and say that no offence was meant but that all has been written for the sake of truth and the love of Jesus.

If ever we should make unreasonable claims we would be most grateful if they are pointed out to us. In recent years many thousands of booklets have been sent out on the back of which is written "The Nazarene Fellowship has no constitution, creed or statement of faith outside the pages of the Bible. It has reached its present understanding by reading and discussion of Scripture and study of any and every variety of opinion, past and present. If or when anyone feels that he can show that any point is in conflict with reason or revelation, we are glad to discuss it, for if we are wrong our chief aim is to get it right, but we do not attach much value to tradition." We feel this is only fair and right.

Russell Gregory

We now start by giving an outline of our beliefs:-

Natural Death Is Not The Wages Of Sin

What follows is in no way to be considered a Statement of Faith but an assessment of the current understanding of some of our beliefs. It is perhaps needless to say that these beliefs haven't changed much

in the past 130 years; nevertheless we are always prepared to consider other people's views and welcome correspondence in order to help everyone come to a better understanding of Scripture teaching. If change is necessary, may we be the first to make it.

1. From the beginning God made the natural animal creation as we see it today, that is, one of birth, growth to maturity, reproduction and death.
2. God gave Adam a law requiring perfect obedience. There was no offer of forgiveness at this time.
3. Death as a result of sin was judicial death, that is, of being put to death "in the day that thou eatest thereof." This is the "law of sin and death."
4. Adam was spared the judicial death when the animal was slain to provide him with a covering.
5. Adam's transgression was condemned, not his flesh. His flesh remained "very good" as God had first made it.
6. Adam's sin was not forgiven so there remained the debt of one unforfeited life owing to the Law.
7. Adam's life was now under pledge to the Law as a debt, and this debt was imputed to all his progeny who being in his loins when he transgressed made their redemption necessary for salvation.
8. The death Adam experienced some 930 years later was a natural death; that is to say that it was not the punishment for his sin, but simply the consequence of being made with a natural animal body.
9. Cain and Abel were instructed in offering sacrifices for sin, no doubt by their father whose life had been spared when the animal was slain.
10. Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable to God because it did not involve the shedding of blood by the inflicted death of the animal.
11. Instruction regarding acceptable sacrifices was passed down from one generation to the next as we see from Noah's response to God's mercy and deliverance.
12. Under God's law given through Moses we see the same principles in sacrifice given in more detail. In this Law we again see that all the sin offerings, like Adam's, foreshadowed the One who would offer Himself for the sin of the world.
13. All these sacrifices were substitutional. That is, the animal died so that the sinner could continue to live.
14. Before the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, that is, throughout the Old Testament, all sin offerings covered over sin; however, in Jesus sin is taken away.
15. Jesus, being the Son of God received His life direct from His Father even as Adam had done.
16. Therefore Jesus life was free of the condemnation passed down from Adam, and placed Him in the strong position of being able to give His life in place of Adam's.
17. It was Adam's debt of life which Jesus paid by voluntarily laying down His own perfect, unforfeited life.
18. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins and it was the shedding of Jesus' blood that enables us to be forgiven.
19. Baptism into the death of Jesus Christ is necessary in which one symbolically dies with Him and rises again in newness of life.
20. When Jesus died on the Cross He laid down His natural life and rose again in Spirit life.
21. When Jesus returns the faithful will be raised in Spirit life, and the living faithful will be changed.

22. They will appear before Christ at the Judgement-seat for the receiving of gifts to be enjoyed in everlasting life.

* * *

The foregoing is, basically, the gospel message but we need next to develop and explain from the Scriptures some of the matters touched upon.

The numbers used below correspond with those above:-

1. All we are told is that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein. It is an assumption to say that death was unknown in this creation. We are indeed told that God pronounced it "very good." He did not say that it was perfect, but nevertheless it was very good for the purpose for which it was created,

2. Perfect obedience was possible for Adam, and the Law gave Adam the opportunity of building a good character and showing how much he loved his Creator.
3. The gospel is all a matter of law. Sin is transgression of law. God required perfect obedience to His Law and disobedience incurred a judicial punishment, which in the case of Adam was death “in the day thou eatest thereof.”
4. Natural death is not a punishment. For the faithful; it is a resting from ones labours as in Daniel 12:13 - “Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days,” or a sleep as in John 11:11, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”
5. Had the sentence of death been carried out upon Adam there would have been no sacrifice of an animal. Because the animal died, Adam didn’t - the animal skin was used for a covering - symbolic of having his sin covered over.
6. It is always sin that is condemned, sin being the transgression of law. God never condemns flesh. Nowhere in Scripture can such an idea be found. The notion of sin literally dwelling in man’s flesh is not taught in the scriptures.
7. As there was no forgiveness offered prior to Adam’s transgression his offence had to be “paid for,” Adam could not do this himself as he no longer had the means. This is because his life was “sold under sin” as Paul explains it in Romans 7:14. The payment of a forfeited life was not the equivalent payment for an unforfeited life, and so Adam’s life needed to be ransomed by someone with the means to do it - with an unforfeited life, i.e. a life not “sold under sin.”
8. Adam was now under condemnation to die unless a ransom could be found to redeem him from his sin. He was now considered as the slave of Sin as of a King reigning over him. All his offspring were considered to be under the same bondage as per Law of Moses. The laws of slavery under which the children of Israel lived show us how God deals with us as slaves to sin. See Leviticus 25:25 for example.
9. and 10. We can reason the fact of Cain and Abel having received instruction by the way they each were dealt with by God who never has punished the innocent.
11. There is much we would wish to know about this period but we are not told specifically though some ideas can be formed which must be in keeping with what we know of God and His love for mankind. Noah pleased God as we read in Genesis 8:20 to 22.
12. A great deal has been written on the sacrifices required under the Law of Moses but the one point worth emphasis is taken from Leviticus 1:4 where the offerer is required to place his hand upon the head of his offering thereby symbolically transferring his sin to the offering which dies in his stead.
13. This was the fundamental belief of the Israelites as confirmed by such writers as Dr Edersheim - “The fundamental idea of sacrifice in the Old Testament is that of substitution, which again implies atonement and redemption... The life of the sacrifice for the life of the sacrificer.”
14. We have such expressions as casting sins behind God’s back, or saying that they are as far as the east is from the west but it is not until the New Testament that we find sins our take away completely by Jesus Christ.
15. This is an important point. Life is counted as being passed down from father to child, never from mother to child, though of course it requires a mother and a father to conceive. In the case of Jesus, His Father was God and not a man therefore His life did not come from Adam. This made Jesus the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), and as such He was as free from condemnation as was the first Adam at creation, i.e. before the fall.
16. Jesus by remaining sinless all His life was able to ransom or purchase His people. 1 Corinthians 6:20. 7:23. 1 Peter 2:1. 1 Peter 1:19. That His sacrifice was a life for a life is seen by Jesus use of the Greek word “*anti*” in “an eye for (*anti*) an eye” and “a tooth for (*anti*) a tooth.” Matthew 20:28, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his live a ransom for (*anti*) many.”
17. Nowhere in the Scriptures are we told that Jesus laid down His life for Himself. Many times we are told that He died for us. He gave His life for the sheep etc... Also we have the example of Paul which we read in Philemon 18 - “If he... oweth thee ought, put that on mine account... I will repay it.” Here we have Paul offering to pay a debt owed by another and this is just what Jesus did for Adam and from which we all benefit.
18. This is stated in Hebrews 9:22 - “without shedding of blood is no remission” and as “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” - Hebrews 10:4 - and as all these sacrifices foreshadowed the one great sacrifice of the Son of God then it follows that forgiveness is only possible through Jesus Christ.

19. This is the message of Jesus to Nicodemus in John chapter 3 - "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God,.. except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

20. Jesus said "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John 10:11). The Greek word for life here is "*psuche*" and refers to natural life. The word is repeated again in verses 15 and 17 of this same chapter. In contrast to this we see in verse 10 Jesus said "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly" and here the Greek word is "*zoe*" and refers to spirit life, or the life we have in Christ from the time we are baptised into Him. Jesus rose from the dead in "*zoe*" life as is confirmed by Him in Revelation 1:18 - I am he that liveth (*zao*) and was dead; and behold, I am alive (*zao*) for ever more."

21. 1 Corinthians 15 - "How are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?... that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die... It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption... it is sown in weakness; it raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body..."

22. Romans 14:10 - "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "Judgement-seat" here is the "throne" (Greek "*bema*"), and is not necessarily a place for judicial judgment as is widely believed in Christadelphia. It is the place where the faithful will hear the words "Well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy if thy Lord"- Matthew 25:21. Revelation 20:6 - "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

In the above we have endeavoured to epitomize 130 years of Nazarene Fellowship teaching into 22 short statements with the briefest of explanation. If there are any matters which any reader would like explained further, or should anyone wish to oppose, object to, or challenge anything in the above we look forward to hearing from you.

Next we consider one or two other matters. You ask us to: "explain your technical comments, for example 'the loins of Adam,' what does it mean?"

The expression "in the loins of his father" is taken from Hebrews 7:10 where we read of Levi having paid tithes in Abraham some 400 hundred years before he was born, for he was in fact in the loins of his father at the time Melchisedec met Abraham. Levi, being Abraham's great grandson, was born about 400 years after Abraham paid the tithes mentioned.

It is this idea of being in the loins of ones forefather that has been used to show that all of Adam's descendants were in his loins at the time of his transgression in Eden and are consequently under the condemnation in which Adam was placed, this same condemnation having been passed on to us. And of which Jesus was free.

Condemnation is perhaps not the best word to use here and I think the word 'judgement' is better (the Greek word '*krisis*' is used for both) for there is no sense of punishment involved but rather it is used as a blessing in that we can all come out from under this condemnation, or judgment, by baptism into the death of Jesus Christ John 3:17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn (*krisis*) the world; but that the world through him might be saved." All are counted as being in Adam for the purpose of salvation through one - Jesus Christ. This is in keeping with Paul's argument - "as in Adam all die" - 1 Corinthians 15:22. We emphasise our need to be reconciled to God in order for this condemnation or judgment to be lifted from us. This is done at baptism into Christ when we come out of Adam and into Christ - as Paul says in Romans 8:1 - "There is therefore now no condemnation (judgment) to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death."

The other point we emphasise when using the expression "in the loins of Adam," is that Jesus' life was not passed down to Him from a son of Adam, that is, He was not in the loins of Adam, but His life came direct to Him from God, therefore Jesus was born without the condemnation which was passed down through all generations from Adam. (See 15 above).

Next, you say you have seen from time to time that we comment on our ability to not commit sin; and you ask why is this a difference between us and what are the implications?

One of the Christadelphian tenets is that because of sin in the flesh no one is able to help committing sin, albeit occasionally; that a person will commit sin inevitably, and in spite of the fact that he cannot avoid sinning altogether his sin is yet his fault and he is therefore guilty.

This view is horrible because it makes God a monster of injustice. In the first instance God will never find anyone guilty for doing what he cannot help, and secondly this view denies the fact that Jesus condemned sin by proving that perfect obedience was possible in the nature we all share with Him. Jesus did not condemn sin-in-the-flesh; He condemned sin when He suffered in the flesh. Compare Romans 8:3 and 1 Peter 4:1,2.

There is much more we would like to say on these matters but we hope this will suffice for now and we hope to continue with more points in our next Circular Letter. In the meantime we hope correspondents will write and let us know their views.

Russell Gregory

In our last Circular Letter we included two chapters of a book entitled “Balancing The Book” by Len Richardson sent to us by Brother John Stevenson from Australia. At the end of the article I asked for comments and we are very pleased to enclose the following from Brother Phil Parry:

Comments on

“BALANCING THE BOOK.”

Some comments arising from Chapter 13 and chapter 16 of the book by Len Richardson:

As these are the only chapters sent to our brother Russell Gregory from our brother John Stevenson in Australia I can deal only with them.

If this is the same Len Richardson, a Christadelphian living in the village of Blakeney, Nr, Lydney, Gloucestershire in the year 1983, then he is the man I wrote to on biblical doctrine, and drawing attention to the errors in which I had been taught and involved as a former member of that community of which I knew him to be a member - though I had never met him in person. His reply was that he did not wish to be involved in any correspondence or controversy on such matters (I regret I have not kept his letter), yet it appears from the above chapters that he can accept some of the doctrine on account of which many have been disfellowshipped from his community, most of his chapter 16 being an example to which I will refer later. But please note that if the author is the man I wrote to about 20 years ago has changed his views in 1990, then praise be to God for this improvement.

Back then to chapter 13; “Son of God and Son of Man,” I think Len has got things in the wrong order in the references to Hebrews 1:4 and Hebrews 2:7-9. Neither reference cancels Jesus from the title Son of God, but the title Son of Man makes him a little lower than the angels for a specific reason and that was, “for the suffering of death,” not as a penalty, but for the very reason Jesus quoted of Himself as Son of Man in Matthew 20:27-28, “And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. in doing this we are told he was crowned with glory and honour that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. So the apostle John declares of Him before the crucifixion “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Not full of defiled ‘inclination to sin as I was taught some years ago as a Christadelphian to believe. This was the motive of a Christadelphian member in choosing a subject to be dealt with by a certain named speaker at Bible Class but that speaker did not fall for it but said he would speak of Jesus as Son of God. He like myself, had become more aware of the views concerning the nature of Christ as being condemned flesh through descent from Adam and would not therefore please the member or his motive of the degradation of Jesus as a man born of condemned flesh derived from Adam’s nature through transgression. BASF Clause V.

It does not say of the Elohim in Genesis, "Let us make man in our nature" but "in our image." So Adam was created in their image but in the corruptible flesh and blood nature which was styled man. So in this relationship and nature from the dust Jesus chose to call Himself the Son of Man especially in taking upon Himself the form of a servant. Philippians 2:6-8, despite the fact that He knew He was the Son of God, not Son of Adam as direct progenitor. The author, Len Richardson, says that any attempt to define the relationship of God the Father to His Son Jesus Christ is fraught with difficulties, and almost inevitably leads to more verbal strife..." Here is where I disagree with him for was it not the views and teaching of Len's accepted pioneers which failed to define the relationship, one of them rejecting in 1873 the help of a certain man who with the inspired Word of God was able to define that very relationship? Truths that I had expressed by letter and literature to Len when living about 6 miles from me of which I said earlier he did not want any involvement.

It is the erroneous views of Len's community which have been the cause of the strife that has existed among them all these years of their history. The doctrine of original-sin (changed flesh), Jesus dying to cleanse His sinful flesh, all this degradation of our nature and that of Jesus - misrepresentation of claims that Jesus was not sinful flesh by endeavouring at all costs to brand Him as possessing it, and labelling it unclean through gross ignorance of scriptural terms on the subject.

We note that Len accepts the virgin birth of Jesus and His divine inheritance as the heir, if that heirship is retained, but he does not explain the real reason for His unique birth as I have come to understand it with others of my fellow believers, the fact that He was free-born, deriving His life from God as did Adam at creation, a nature no different from Adam's, corruptible and subject to decay and death if left to himself without any improved modification to that of the angels. However, most people who know of the Nazarene views are aware of this, probably Len himself.

Len speaks of there being two aspects of the nature of Christ but I think he is confusing nature with relationship. His relationship to His Father was continuous from His birth through Mary, which was flesh and blood wherein was life direct from God, not through Adamic male line under the Law of Sin and Death. So when Len goes on to speak of "The Supremacy of Jesus" and stating the letter to the Christian Hebrews is an exposition of the supremacy of all things in Christ over the things of the Law of Moses, he admits that everything is better and I commend him for it, but it must be noted that the writer to Hebrews gives the various stages and degrees of the term 'better' in the proper order whereas Len does not.

At least Len admits the blood of Jesus speaks 'better things' than that of Abel, and what he writes in the whole paragraph under the heading "The Supremacy of Jesus" is true and based on the Scriptures, the priority being the 'blood' and supreme sacrifice of Christ in laying down His life in the blood for Adam and all in his loins imputed as members of his body before he sinned and after he sinned. Len appears to agree that Christ's blood speaks better things than that of Abel as quoted from the writer to the Hebrews, which I readily and thankfully endorse, but how can this harmonise with what Robert Roberts writes in "The Ambassador" for March 1869 of the blood of Jesus: - "The sentence of death ran in the blood which he inherited from Adam through Mary. He was therefore, in the days of His flesh, as much under its power as those He came to save, it is testified that He was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). As He was not of sinful character, this only could apply to His physical nature, which drawn from the veins of Mary, was made "Sin."

Does this viewpoint of an accepted Christadelphian Pioneer from 1869 to 2003 make the blood of Christ better than that of Abel's which was shed by Cain? How, Len Richardson, do you balance the book in this situation? Either you are in fellowship with the Robert Roberts definition of the BASF on this subject of the sacrifice and atoning work of God through the blood of His Son, or you are a Christadelphian with a licence to write anything unchallenged.

By the way, I should say that if the apostle meant Abel's shed blood or the shed blood of the typical lamb Abel sacrificed, the blood of Jesus did speak better things than both but not according to R.Roberts.

"THE HUMANITY OF JESUS." Here again Len does not speak of the humanity of Jesus as the beginning of his mission but speaks of the glory of the Son being entered into and made possible by way of the cross; he then quotes Hebrews 1:3 but we find the apostle John speaking of the glory of Jesus before the

crucifixion and all to do with His manifestation of the Father in conduct and preaching, John declares, "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." On one occasion Philip said to Jesus. "Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us, Jesus said, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Indeed He was then "the express image of the Father" in all His various attributes as declared to Moses in the Mount. We are told "In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Proof of this was prefigured on the Mount of transfiguration when the same voice said that was heard at the Jordan was heard also to declare "This is my Son, hear Him."

No matter in what order of description Len uses, we cannot detract from the fact that Jesus exhibited the glory of His Father in doing His will, especially in willingly laying down His life for all, for if it had been for his own redemption and salvation as some people believe and insist, then God would not have raised Him from the tomb, for His resurrection witnessed to the fact that His natural life was the purchasing price in His blood by which God was able to redeem and reconcile us to Himself. Therefore Jesus was all that Hebrews 1:3 says of Him prior to urging us from our sins and sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

I agree with Len where he writes of Jesus having to be in the nature of His brethren to fulfil the mission for which He was born, which covered Adamic sin and sins under the Law of Moses. Len goes on to say, "To effect this deliverance and salvation for the human race, however, the Son of Man would have to die; and only in his conquest of death..." I stop at this point, "conquest of death." What death did Jesus conquer? Surely not the inflicted death of the cross for Himself, He suffered death - He tasted death. His resurrection did not alleviate His suffering on the Tree. No, His conquest was the legal sentence of death under which Adam and all were concluded through his sin in Eden, this being death by bloodshedding in the day of transgression - Genesis 2:17.

There is a difference between the death Adam experienced at the age of 930 years and the inflicted death by Sin he incurred by breach of Law, This is a necessary fact to understand before talking of Redemption and Salvation from Sin and Death. In Len's comments in his chapter 16 this has to be recognised or it becomes nothing. I do not know whether Len understands this important difference but if he does not then all he says on the subject of present status of eternal life will not make sense to the reader. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" - John 5:24 and confirmed in 1 John 3:14.

A pity Dr. Thomas believed the Law of Sin and Death to mean physical death by decay as the penalty of sin, but he did express this either in "Elpis Israel" or "Eureka" which could not be correct, in that Jesus as previously quoted from John 5 spoke in the present tense of a passing from death to life which in a physical sense of death would be impossible without dying and rising again which in this case does not happen, only in symbolic terms belief and faith.

Paul has shown that the Law of Sin and Death is a legal position under which God has concluded mankind through Adam's sin and is a position from which men can be made free through the purchasing power of the blood of God's Son. A Son who was free from the Law of Sin and Death so that Paul could say of himself as a convert to Christ, "For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death." He had evidently at that time (not prospectively) passed from death to life, or as Dr. Thomas puts it in "Elpis Israel," chapter 2, page 32, "By the obedience of faith, he passes from under the sentence of death to the sentence of justification of life eternal."

As Len has pointed out this is a status attained by faith but is not a condition of spirit nature like the angels; this latter takes effect in the words of Jesus, "And I will raise him up at the last day."

I am sorry to have burdened you with such lengthy comments but at first glance I thought the author's views were in harmony with those of the Nazarenes but thinking he was the Christadelphian I contacted when he lived a few miles from me it made me more cautious in reading some of the views he expresses which do not harmonise with the general Christadelphian views so I thought I would try to help the readers to "Balance the Book" against the Book of Books, the Bible.

May the Lord continue to prosper His Word and our knowledge and understanding, for it is life eternal to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

P.Parry.
18.12.2003

Extracts from

THE DEVIL AND HELL OF THE BIBLE

By The Megiddo Mission Church.

INTRODUCTION

When we think of fundamental Christian religion as accepted by the average church, we think of God and His opponent, the Devil. Our subconscious mind, if educated by traditional beliefs, divides creation into three parts; heaven, world, and hell: heaven the dominion of God, world the dominion of man, and hell the realm of the Devil.

Various religious groups and individuals accept these traditions at various levels of seriousness. But as God-fearing men and women desiring to know the truth of the Bible, we cannot accept a belief merely because it belongs to tradition. We must have evidence, Bible evidence.

We invite you to investigate with us the meaning of the terms devil and hell, as these words are used in the Bible. Who or what is the devil? A person or a principle, a being or a spirit, a fallen angel or a vicious monster? And what of hell? Where is it? What is it? Who is there? Who is destined for its torments?

It is our conviction that the devil and hell of theology do not exist. The devil is not a spirit, not an influence, not a force, not a personality, not a natural or supernatural being, but simply a term applied to evil men and women as they perform acts of evil. Devil is the name that the Bible assigns to any agent of evil, anyone who opposes God and His will.

Why do we believe this? Let us investigate:

CHAPTER ONE

WHO IS THE DEVIL?

Is there a devil, a real being with an individual personality? If so, who created him, and why does an all-powerful God of righteousness and love permit him to exist? Or is the devil a spirit of evil influence, a force that continually inspires evil and devises mischief? Could such an influence exist without personality?

Exactly who or what is the devil?

Many persons through the ages have pondered these questions and many answers have been offered. Some believe that the devil is a hideous-looking homed creature whose cloven hoofs and spiked tail assist him in presiding over the torture of the wicked dead. Others believe him to be some unidentified agent of evil whose chief business is to defame God, attack righteous men, and stir up evil men against God. Others believe him to be a disobedient fallen angel who long ago was cast out of heaven because of his rebellion against God. Still others hold to a rather vague feeling that the devil is a personality or a spirit of evil or a demon, continually opposing God and all that is good.

But we are convinced that none of these views is correct and that none of them is wholly and solely Bible supported. How does the Bible use the term devil? Jesus addressed His apostles: “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70); not, “one of you is possessed with a devil” but “one of you is a devil.” On another occasion Jesus spoke similarly to Peter: “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me.” (Matthew 16:23).

THE SOURCE OF EVIL

What, according to the Bible, is the source of evil if it is not the workings of a literal devil? Jesus strikes at the very root of the matter: Evil proceeds from the depths of the human heart. The evil thought allowed to conceive and brings forth sin is the defiling agent to mankind. “For from within, out of the heart (or mind) of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23). These are the words of Jesus, and the language is too plain to be mistaken. How can you or I claim to be pure in heart unless we put away all these thirteen evils which Jesus said defiled the man? When we have put away these evils, we have killed the only devil that we need fear.

James the servant of God was close enough to the source of divine knowledge to have known what he was talking about, and he declared: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:13-15). The merciful God never tempts any man to evil. And He never created a devil to lure us away. The writer witnesses that he never once experienced any such influence in his entire life. “Every man” - no exceptions - “every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.” Here is a devil that is present in every human being.

The man who steals does so because he lusts to possess that which does not belong to him. The liar lies because it is to his interest to suppress the truth. He wants to save his face, to hide his true identity lest the facts about him be disclosed and his reputation be caused to suffer. The proud man or woman is proud because self-importance is natural, and he or she does not make the necessary effort to control it. It is the development of an uncontrollable taste for intoxicating liquor that brings the alcoholic to a state of degradation almost worse than death itself, and not the influence of a personal devil that operates against the man’s will. The immoral man is immoral because he lacks self-control. It is easier for him to give way to his base passions than to banish them. Lust conceives and brings forth sin, but in every case it is the offender himself who is the culprit. And the same is true of anger, malice, jealousy envy, insensitiveness, and every other sin that defiles.

THE DOCTRINE OF DEMONS

Where did belief in a devil such as is accepted by popular theology originate? The answer is simple: in the imagination of man himself. From more than seven thousand years of human history on this planet have emerged a multitude of ideas, superstitions, and philosophies. Men have thought and dreamed, rationalised and reasoned, feared and imagined. By nature men crave security and fear harm.

To satisfy his cravings and explain his fears, primitive man early developed polytheistic faiths which included spirits and demons and devils of every description. He thought of every healthful breeze, every green tree, every solid rock, every rain-filled cloud as being possessed with a living spirit that blessed him; sometimes he called it “god” and worshipped it. The lightening that shattered his home and set fire to his forest, or flood that destroyed his crops, or the disease that threatened his life, all were evil spirits, or demons, or devils, spirits to be ameliorated - if possible - or charmed, or driven off.

Firm belief in demons and devils has been current in every society. Among the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians, superstition was rife; the demonic world was so prolific that its inhabitants were divided into classes, or orders, according to the imagined power of each.

From the most ancient times the spirit world lay very near to the average China-man. Good and evil spirits were objects of religious worship or superstitious fear. Egypt had such a vast array of demons and

spirits, it is said, that a definition of each was impossible - every object and every being was possessed with some kind of “demon” or “demons.”

The Celtic people (early inhabitants of Great Britain) combined beneficent and maleficent dispositions in their demons, which were magical in their behaviour and supernatural in their endowments. The influence of such demons, it was thought, could be resisted by enticing them with piety and virtue.

Even the reasoning Greeks tempered their rationalism with superstition, believing that at death the soul of man went to the heavenly Elysium, but the “shade” went to the underworld, where it lived in shadowy, semi-conscious existence. The ghosts of the dead, they believed, tragically sought vengeance on the living. One had to pass their tombs in silence or attract their fury. Illness and insanity were explained as demonic possession.

Aristotle believed that all men have demons which accompany them during the whole period of their mortal existence. The Stoics were firmly convinced of the reality of demons, which having like passions with men, and responding to their desires and fears, superintended and directed their fortunes.

Outstanding in demonology was the faith of the Persians. They thought of the world as controlled by a dual power of good and evil. These opposing forces were engaged in constant warfare until the last millennial cycles of the world preceding a day of judgment when perfect man shall, by the aid of the heavenly hosts, overcome the power of evil for ever. The Persians conceived of these present forces of evil as under the leadership of their creator Ahriman, who brought them forth to wage war against heaven and earth. These demons, equal in activity to the divine forces created by the power of good, were thought of as spirits or bodyless agents who gathered as aides about the standard of Ahriman and formed the council of hell.

The Romans regarded the spirits as helpful to mankind if correctly approached and held in honour; but they feared the larvae, a species of ghosts, for they were the souls of wicked men and now wandered about at night in the dreaded form of spectres.

Where, then, is the source of belief in demons or devils? Not in the Bible, but in paganism.

It seems ridiculously inconsistent to suppose that a God of infinite wisdom would stoop to such nonsense as to ask His children to believe in demons or evil spirits. But in the early centuries following the ministry of Christ, the belief crept into the Christian church as it apostatized from the teachings of Jesus. And today nearly all major religious groups hold some form of this belief. Leading commentators all take for granted the existence of demons or a devil.

THE DEVIL OF CHRISTENDOM

Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics informs us in part:

“The earliest Fathers of the Church, acquainted with the angelology and demonology of Scripture and of Jewish apocalyptic literature, all affirm or imply the existence of spirits of good and evil... Opposition to Gnostic speculation led earlier writers to insist on the fact that angels and demons were created beings, while some writers refuse to allow to the former any part in the work of creation... The earlier writers more usually identified the “sons of God” with angels... The legend of the fall of the angels, and the person of Satan especially, led later writers to indulge in speculation as to the problem of evil and the relation of evil spirits to God. It would appear that the majority at least of later writers held the view that angels were capable of sinning, being possessed, like men of free will.”

(We will discuss the capability of the angels to sin in a later chapter). The idea of the devil was founded not in Bible but in the thinking of such Alexandrian writers as Clement and Origen. And in the second century, Justin Martyr forged the legend (suggested to him by Genesis 6:2) that Satan and his devils were once good angels, who had been deposed for having committed carnal sins with the daughters of men. Justin called them “angeli fornicatores.”

John Milton, the blind poet and theologian, in his epic “Paradise Lost” formed into symbolic poetry the thinking of the Protestant world in the seventeenth century, picturing a war in the high courts of heaven where dwells the Almighty; and from which once pure, bright angels were ejected and cast to earth where they have henceforth waged a mighty conflict against God and man.

What was the source of this belief? Let us repeat: not the Bible, but paganism. Persians, Romans, Teutonics, Tibetans, Jains, Japanese, Indians, Moslems, and almost any ancient people you can mention - all recognised spirits or powers of evil.

But the Bible does not.

MODERN BELIEFS IN DEVILS

Even today, the Catholic Church, together with many Protestant denominations, believe at least nominally in the existence of a devil. We quote from The New Library of Catholic Knowledge, Volume 1; “Preparing the Way” by M.E.Odell;

“Intelligent beings created by God have only two fundamental choices: they choose to love God and serve Him... or they can turn away from God and aim only at pleasing themselves. In the latter case they cut themselves off from his goodness and love, and therefore they become evil. The good bright glorious angels who deliberately turned away from God became hideous and evil spirits, and Lucifer, the light-bearer as he was called, became Satan, the worst of them all.”

Even the Radio Church of God believes in a literal devil. We quote from “The Plain Truth.” April 1968:

“There was a super-archangel, a cherub named Lucifer, created with great knowledge, wisdom, beauty, trained at the very seat of God’s Throne of the Government of the Universe. Thoroughly trained... Lucifer was placed on a throne in Eden, on this earth, to administer the Government of God over angels who then populated this earth. Under God’s government, the earth was filled with happiness, abundance, joy. But this Lucifer allowed himself to be filled with vanity, envy of God’s supremacy as Ruler of the whole Universe, and a self-cantered desire to get, take, have. He organised a rebellion, A third of the angels followed him. They swept on up to attack Almighty God on His Throne of heaven - to seize power over the Universe. But God’s Power is supreme. Lucifer and his angels ‘fell’ back down to earth. Lucifer was renamed Satan, and his angels became demons.”

Where is the Bible evidence for such a tale? Would a reasonable God expect us to believe that?

Other religious persons and groups define the devil less literally, as a symbol or representative power of evil; but their beliefs are often confused and inconsistent. For example, they give to a symbolic devil or power of evil physical, human or beastly qualities and abilities, i.e. the devil tempts; the devil defiles; the devil lures into sin. How could a spirit or influence or unembodied personality have any of these abilities?

No such inconsistencies are the product of the Divine Mind. Let us go to the Bible for the invariable truth of the subject.

To be continued...

Letter from John Stevenson, dated 13th May 2002 to Les Boddy, Editor of The Endeavour Magazine for publication in that magazine:-

Dear Les, Sometimes I feel like mounting a soap-box and screaming to the Brotherhood, “The Immortal soulists and the Trinitarians will enter the Kingdom before you.” Brother Steven Cooper’s letter in

the last edition (E106) was very good and I agree with much of it, but I must take issue with him for a couple of comments, particularly the issue that he regards as “an argument about words.” If any readers are interested in following this up with due care, I would like them to look up E104 (December 2000) and read the leading article by the editor, and the first page of Rosalind Lomas’ review on page 35, and the first and concluding pages of my letter on pages 56.59 and 60. Also note that on page 48 of the last edition (E106) Brother Bill Davidson refers to “our community’s distinctive doctrines, which are detailed in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, our ‘Credo’.”

I have a book entitled “Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions” (Nashville, 1961), 830 pages, in which it is stated that “The Bible is the only Christadelphian creed.” But plainly this is not true, because if any member discovers a mistake in the B.A.S.F. they are summarily disfellowshipped, regardless of their knowledge of the Bible, or their character, or dedication to the ecclesia. The Nazarene Fellowship also claims to have no creed but the Bible and with better justification, there is no formal statement of faith. I am familiar with the beliefs of the Nazarene Fellowship, being one of their number, and I contend that since that fellowship consists mostly of excommunicated Christadelphians, this is not just “an argument about words.”

In my letter in E104, 18 months ago, I discussed the only description of Judgment Day by Jesus Himself (Matthew 25), in which there is noticeably no reference to theological dogma. The sheep and goats are judged only on their behaviour, on respectful compassionate living only. So I agree with Brother Steve that to insist that extreme positions of theological dogma are essential for salvation is quite mistaken, but I must assert that disfellowshipping on the grounds of theological points is arrogant and sinful. I acknowledge that correct doctrine is important for our spiritual health, but that is not what we shall be judged on.

Because I know the teachings of the Nazarene Fellowship I can emphatically deny that we are guilty of “still zealously flogging a long-dead horse.” Victorian assumptions have nothing to do with the dispute. You cannot legitimately denigrate our teachings unless you have studied them. Likewise you cannot insist that the B.A.S.F. is free of mistakes unless you diligently examine our literature and prove from the Bible that we have got it wrong. We contend that all Christadelphian Editors and leaders have consistently clung to the mistakes that Robert Roberts enshrined in certain clauses of the B.A.S.F. We would like you to prove us wrong.

Sincerely yours in the Hope of Israel,

John Stevenson, Australia,

* * *

Reply from Les Boddy, to John Stevenson, dated 1st November 2002:-

Dear John, My apologies for this late response to your letter of 13-5-02. It arrived too late for inclusion in E107 as you will have seen. I have seriously considered including it in E108, having gone as far as eliciting a response to it from Steve Cooper (enclosed), but have finally decided not to do so. This letter it to explain my reasons for not including it.

Firstly, I am currently receiving more than I can publish in the magazine and so have to ask some contributors to wait until the next issue. You will see in E108 contributions from some new writers whom I did not wish to put at the back of the queue. Also, to avoid increasing distribution costs, i.e. postage, I am having to set 56 pages as the maximum size for the moment at least. These factors have all contributed to my decision. However, there are other reasons too.

Your heart-rending cry to consider that others “will enter the kingdom before you” needs to be aimed at the vast majority of the Central Fellowship and not just at the minority of Endeavour supporters who, for the most part, are sympathetic to your cause. Most of us have severe criticisms of the BASF and feel that it needs a long-overdue overhaul. (George McHaffie’s booklet made a significant contribution to the debate. But is there a debate?). This includes those sections referring especially to the atonement. We have done our best to highlight the injustice of the expulsion of Edward Turney and others for supposed false teaching on this issue. Ron Coleman wrote his booklet “The Most Important Doctrine of All” about this very matter, Have you read it? I believe Ron has tried his best to do what you ask for at the end of your letter, to be shown from the Bible that you have got it wrong. He gives good reasons for seeing the BASF as a misrepresentation of the truth but also gives good reasons for seeing the Nazarene response as equally

deficient. He deals with the matter again in E108, in an article entitled “Eden - The Difficulties of Literality.” So I have to say that we have tried to engage in Bible-based discussion of the problem but we do not get much response from the Nazarenes. Both Ron and Steve have tried to engage in discussion with Helen and Russell, in private correspondence and in the pages of the Nazarene Circular, but all to no avail. I have to say that my impression is that all they wish to do is reiterate the arguments of the 19th century with the aim of trying to get the Central Fellowship to admit its mistake and apologize. Most of us would be delighted to see that happen. But even if it did, most of us would not therefore want to adopt the Nazarene solution to the atonement problem.

Now when those who are well disposed towards you and supportive of your pleas for justice also point out that your own arguments are not much better than those in the BASF, with which you take issue, is it not time to perhaps admit that there is a need for a radical rethink? It may not be the case that either this is right or that is right and we all have to choose between the two options. It is perfectly possible for both to be partly wrong and partly true and this needs serious consideration.

There will be no possibility of agreeing if all we do is stick to already entrenched positions without being willing to make a fresh start. The result will only be a repeated exchange of words, reiterating the same old arguments, leaving all with a feeling of intense frustration which led Steve to say that it is all “an argument about words.” And so it is when no one is really listening to the other with any sign of seeking to learn from the other. We are too interested in proving the other wrong. If the Central Fellowship needs reforming - and so it does - then so does the Nazarene Fellowship. George McHaffie and others with him and after him have made and are making a brave attempt to encourage reform in the Central Fellowship. Is anything similar happening among the Nazarenes? Our God is a God of fresh beginnings and this topic in Christadelphia certainly needs one. Too much damage has already been done in God’s name over this matter. The cross should unite us not divide us. This will only happen if we are all prepared to admit that, whatever understanding we may have of how the cross achieved God’s purpose, the essential thing is that we rejoice in its results, fellowship with the Father and the Son and with one another. Our own view of how it was achieved may not be helpful to others as their view might not be to ourselves. Can’t we all accept this?

To a large extent, given the writings of George, Ron, Steve and others on this issue, I feel that the ball is in your court. We have openly criticized the BASF in your favour but are equally unhappy about your proposed solution. What is your response to the suggestions they have made? It would be good to hear of some serious rethinking going on in your midst instead of the slavish repetition of old arguments - “arguments about words.” The Circular shows no evidence of creative research and thinking on this issue. Although the Nazarenes maintain that they have no Statement of Faith all the evidence is that they are tenaciously attached to an unwritten statement which has just as much a hold on them as does the BASF on members of the Central Fellowship. My own view, for what it is worth, is that both parties lay too much stress on particular interpretations of the early chapters of Genesis which are not mentioned, never mind confirmed, in the vast majority of the rest of the Scriptures. This ought to alert us to the possibility that we are overemphasizing what happens to suit, our own viewpoint.

With Love in the Lord, Les Boddy.

Reply from Steve Cooper in reply to John Stevenson’s letter of 13th May to Les Boddy:-

Dear Brother John, I have every sympathy with disfellowshipped Nazarenes, having been forced out of the Central Fellowship myself by a similar ‘kangaroo court’ process to the one that I understand to have been employed by Brother Roberts against Brother Turney. I am thoroughly unimpressed with the BASF, especially the DOCTRINES TO BE REJECTED, and the total lack of any mechanism for reform. My conclusion has been, after four years “in the wilderness,” that since the Christadelphian community lacks the will to reform, and its basic priorities, e.g. salvation by doctrinal correctness, are not of God, that it is better left alone to die, enriching other churches in the process. I also think ‘clean flesh’ is wrong, but as irrelevant as the hypothetical argument also presented by ‘unclean flesh.” (What would have happened if Jesus had done other than he did?).

I seem to be in sympathy with your views. However, I have received the impression, rightly or wrongly, that many Nazarenes are as isolationist and correctness obsessed as Christadelphians - e.g. page

after page of bros. Gregory and Mansfield accusing each other of being Catholics was not edifying - and such material as that which has crossed my path seems obsessed with banging on about one doctrine (Atonement) to Christadelphians who aren't listening, rather than preaching the gospel to a needy wider world. Perhaps I am only seeing a limited picture.

With love in the Lord Jesus. Steve Cooper.

* * *

John Stevenson to Les Boddy - 4th November 2002

Dear Les, Thank you for your reply. I understand and accept your reasons for not publishing my letter, including the practical issues of priority and limited size. I assure you that I admire the Endeavour Group's open and honest way of tackling very real problems of understanding every aspect of the gospel. It is too easy to see prejudice in our opponent's point of view, and can be very difficult to recognize our own prejudices.

I have not read Ron's book but I read his articles in the magazine and also corresponded at length with him. We ended up having to agree to differ. After all, we grow up with beliefs which become increasingly hard to change as we get older. Many Trinitarians would say that when Jesus said "I came down from heaven; I am going back where I was before," that is conclusive proof that He was God incarnate, and we would never convince them otherwise. The human failing of stubbornness enters the equation also, and many people can't be bothered to look at another interpretation that might be more accurate.

However we of the Nazarene Fellowship have some incontrovertible facts in our favour. No-one before or since the Netherton Debate will take us on; they will debate with orthodox Christians but not with us. Even after the Netherton Debate our opponents reneged on their agreement to publish the proceedings. We see all Christians (with the single exception of the Nazarene Fellowship) making the same mistake with what Ernest Brady called the very first step, in presuming that Adam's nature was changed from very good to intrinsically sinful, when he ate the forbidden fruit. The Bible does not say so; no scripture supports that idea (except a misreading of Romans 7 & 8). Physical flesh is neither sinful nor righteous. Metaphorically living "in the flesh" means allowing our selfish lusts to rule our lives; living "in the spirit" means paying attention to God's Laws. Correct understanding of the fall is essential for correct understanding of the Virgin Birth and the Atonement. God did not punish Jesus in order to let us free; we all agree that that is quite wrong. But, we say it is even more wrong to believe that God put Jesus to death as our representative, to show that sinful flesh was rightly related to death. When we discard those two erroneous interpretations, what else is left? Nothing else will stand up to scrutiny except our understanding; i.e. that God did not kill Jesus; the servants of the devil (King Sin) killed Him. God gave Jesus to the world but the world turned on Him because it could not abide His message. We must confess the guilt of sin; the world will not admit to the guilt of sin, so by wicked hands they killed the Prince of Life. So Jesus was the sacrifice offered by God to redeem us from the power of the devil, and set free all who are willing to turn to God. The concept that the contemplation of Jesus on the cross should convince us to repent and turn to God is an intrinsic part of the Atonement. Now, if Jesus had sinful flesh or a defiled nature or was under Adam's curse. He would be unfit for the sacrifice to redeem us, because the Law requires that the sacrificial victim must be a perfect specimen of its kind. He did not have sinful flesh or a defiled nature, and He was not estranged from God as we all have been because He was not descended from Adam; He was born of a woman, the Virgin Mary, and God was His Father, thus He alone of all men was eligible to be our redeeming sacrifice. To us this understanding is straightforward and logical, but I can appreciate how it does not appear so to many brought up with contrary concepts.

Anyway keep up the good work, and may we unite in prayer for better understanding of the deep things of the Gospel and the Saviour,

Best Wishes to you all, in the Hope of Israel. John Stevenson.

The State of Israel

What is “The State of Israel”? It is a section of the land promised to Abraham stretching further than the land occupied by Jews and Palestinians at the present time.

What is termed “The State of Israel” consists of Jews under a political government, and of parties elected by the Jewish residents - they are not of one mind as would be the case if elected of God. Furthermore the land is not theirs but is still the Promised Land to those people ‘(Jews and Gentiles) who are the elect of God, the people whom He foreknew and predestinated (Romans 1:2) (Romans 8:28-34).

Why is it then that when I read the literature and magazines by certain people who profess to be in Christ I am faced with two covenants when there is definitely one only for true believers who are the subjects by faith in the Redeeming and Atoning blood of Christ Jesus and are no longer “in the flesh” but “in the Spirit” under the new Covenant which since the death and resurrection of Christ is spoken by the writer to the Hebrew believers in the present tense? (Hebrews chapters 7 and 8).

I have noticed also the verses 31 to 34 of Jeremiah 31, being incorrectly quoted as pertaining to a time yet future to the present and also relating it to the second coming of Christ using Romans 11:25-27 as proof, while in fact Hebrews 8:6-13 shows it to have been fulfilled and being fulfilled in the Atoning work of Christ and the shedding forth of the teaching of the Spirit Word. See 1 John 2:24 to 29, the result being in John’s words, “Ye need not that any man teach you” (v-7). The same apostle John in chapter 3 speaks of God’s love bestowed on himself and those he addresses as believers baptised of the Holy Spirit, taught of God, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world (antichrist Jews) knoweth us not;” why? “Because it knew him not.” As Peter declared (Acts 3:17), “And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did your rulers.” Paul likewise in Acts 13:27 confirms John’s words, “For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.” What then was the voice of the prophets? Surely it had to do with the One they rejected. He who was and is “The Hope of Israel”! It is clear from Paul that the Romans authority did not bind him with a chain on account of his faith and hope in Jesus Christ; no, it was due to his teaching that Jesus was the hope of Israel that the rulers of the Jews caused his arrest and his consequent appeal unto Caesar in fulfilment of the words of Jesus in Acts 22:11, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou has testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also in Rome.

As events and circumstances have now begun to unfold it can be certainly said that non- Messianic Jews have no claim to what Paul witnessed of Jesus as Israel’s hope; they are waiting for a man of flesh and blood to arise out of their midst to fulfil their expectation of the Messiah of Israel. In view of the troublous state of Israel which the political and religious section are proving powerless to settle, how can they expect a person of like nature, flesh and blood, to do it? Jesus said after His resurrection, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” therefore only one of incorruptible nature with Spirit Power from God can bring righteousness and peace on the earth.”

Where is this ‘nation’ which people refer to as Israel? I do not see it in Palestine, yet Jesus, speaking to the people who should have been a Holy Nation, Royal Priesthood, a peculiar people related to the Kingdom of God, informed them that because of their misdeeds and rejection of Messiah the Son of God the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to “a nation” bringing forth the fruits thereof. As prophesied, the Redeemer came out of Zion and turned away the ungodliness from many and took away in His death the Sin (not sins) of the world by Adam. This was God’s covenant for the sin in Eden and the transgressions under the Mosaic Covenant; no more sins remembered on the day of Atonement under the Mosaic Law but a time of Grace under the New Covenant to the “Israel of God” - the few chosen of the many called, both Jew and Gentile. As spoken in Hebrews 3:1, “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus...” Here is witnessed a change of Law and Priesthood with Christ as a Son over His own household - the House of Israel - as said Gabriel, “He shall reign over the house of Israel and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

Thus said of Jesus of an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.”

As I said in my earlier remarks, we should look upon Romans 11:26 as referring to a work of Christ which has already been fulfilled for I believe that at His second coming it will be from Heaven not out of Zion.

The dead asleep in Him will be raised incorruptible and the faithful alive in Him at the same moment will be changed to incorruptibility and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, not to some invented theory like Mount Sinai for judgment to decide on a worthiness of an inheritance incorruptible as believed and taught by a certain community of whose views and teaching some of you are quite aware. Does not Paul confirm what is written in Hebrews 6:17 to 20 that Jesus as the forerunner entered Heaven itself that others in the race for life might also enter? Disagree if you choose, but know this that we have not come unto the Mount that might be touched (Sinai)..., but unto the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and so we follow Him, the forerunner, and run with patience the race set before us that we may obtain the prize.

It involves what Paul quoted by revelation from Christ, that which was written by Isaiah in his chapter 64, verse 4, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” We find the same message in the words of David, Psalm 31:19, “O How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!”

I am not unmindful of the fact that a conversion of Jews and Gentiles to Christ Jesus began after the crucifixion and His resurrection when it proved difficult to change from much of the traditions under the law of Moses especially on the subject of circumcision which in fact was operative through Abraham before the Law. But the trouble started with a section of the Pharisees who had accepted Christ but could not break from tradition. I find it interesting to read the account in Acts 15 and of a decision reached on certain matters including how God had called out the Gentiles using Peter for that purpose. Chapters 15 v.14 – “God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.” Then James declares, “and to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,” quoting from Amos chapter 9 concerning a remnant of Jews who might seek the Lord and all the Gentiles, “upon whom my name is called” v.12. See also Isaiah 11:10 and speaking of a rest for the people of God, Hosea 2:18 is interesting in regard to the beasts, the fowls and creeping things - God’s covenant with them.

I find Micah 2:12,13 very interesting in regard to Paul’s words “And so all Israel shall be saved.” But this will be at the time spoken by the prophet Zephaniah, chapter 3 verse 9, “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.” The result of this is worth reading further to the end of the chapter.

Paul declares “It is not as though the word of God has taken non effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children;” that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (Romans 9:6- 8). In his epistle to the Galatians Paul endeavoured to show the difference between Israel after the flesh and Israel after the Spirit. Chapter 6 verse 15 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

It appears from Paul’s teaching that all Israel (that is the Israel of God) will be saved and this will be completed at a certain time in God’s purpose, and please note. God is taking out of the nations a people for His Name. Paul says, “For I would not have you ignorant brethren of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” At this point all Israel will be saved as a result of what has already been achieved through the work of God in His Son (Romans 11:27).

I see a difference between the Gentile fullness coming into the New Covenant, and the Gentiles of Luke 21:24 who tread down Jerusalem in the political and covetous sense of power-sharing which will end in their

judgment and destruction. I could be wrong of course and welcome comments and correction in a constructive manner based on Holy Scriptures.

Despite therefore what I have expressed in writing, we can be sure that the faithful listed in Hebrews 11 and all of like faith, will be involved in the promises centred from the beginning in the Seed of the woman, Jesus the Son of God, begotten through Mary, which promises in Him are Yea, by His blood. So we wait in faith for His appearing.

Even so, Come Lord Jesus,

Brother Phil Parry

We again reproduce two articles written by our late Brother Ernest Brady, the first is his reply to an article appearing in The Logos for April 1956. The second is an Editorial for March 1962.

REPLY TO ARTICLE IN “THE LOGOS” APRIL 1956

An anonymous writer in the above indulges in what he describes as “plain speaking” concerning the teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship. Whether the unknown author is the editor (H.P.Mansfield) or another we do not know, but he is perhaps wise to hide under the cloak of “Logos Committee” and thus escape personal responsibility for the ignorance he displays and the falsehoods he disseminates.

The principle ingredients of the article are a mixture of misleading hearsay and half-truths and an impassioned appeal to Christadelphians in Australia not to read the so-called Clean Flesh literature and to stand fast by the teaching of Robert Roberts. The thing about our writings which hurts our anonymous friend worst appears to be what he calls “scandalous denunciation and vilification of the alleged inconsistencies of one (R.R.) who is not in a position to defend himself.” It would indeed be a grave fault in this writer or any other if he had been guilty of such bad behaviour, but we have yet to learn that there is anything scandalous or vile in the process of submitting the work of past writers to the test of reason and Scripture. Indeed, it was by this very process that Christadelphians have arrived at such measure of truth as they have today. The Logos writer would have served his readers and his cause better if he had used his space to submit our work to that same process, instead of composing a diatribe emanating from hurt feelings and helpless incapacity.

Under the heading “The Attack Refuted” the writer says “It is not our purpose to reason the pros and cons of this theory.” If the Logos is what it claims to be and if it lived up to its declaration on the front that “We dare our opponents to hear us, and compare what they hear, etc.” surely this is exactly what it ought to have done, instead of merely denouncing us for having gone out from them. We have met their challenge; we have heard them and we have compared what we have heard “with the things written in the word of God” - and we find where the nature of Christ and the purpose of His sacrifice is concerned that the two things do not agree. Furthermore we have written out our reasons and shown from the word of God and from the writings of their own leaders, that some of the things the Logos stands for will not bear examination. Dare they hear us? Do they stand or fall by this test? Do they direct us to “The law and the Testimony”? Indeed no, they recommend their readers to study “The Slain Lamb” and “The Blood of Christ” by Robert Roberts. This is known as “passing the buck” and if it is the best he can do in the way of refuting the attack, it is small wonder that there are those in Australia as there are in England and in America who are rendering us timely help in getting the truth before the community.

Surely “Logos Committee” should have the sense to realise that in advising his readers to study the work of Robert Roberts he is simply making himself look foolish to complain if we draw attention to the inconsistencies in those same works. If the fact that their author is dead is to debar these works from critical examination, then you must cease to advance them in support of your doctrine. But intelligent people do not even apply that rule even to Scripture itself – they follow the injunction to “prove all things and hold fast the good.” It implies no reflection on the character of R. Roberts nor any personal feeling on our part if, for example we draw attention to the fact that in “The Slain Lamb,” he says on page 3 “they (that is we) believe that Jesus did not come in the flesh,” while on page 6 he says, “The Renunciationist heresy (us) makes him a mere man.”

If it is irresponsible condemnation of R. “Roberts to point out this self-contradiction, then we deserve chastisement; but it appears to us to be a simple matter of fact which is of sufficient importance to demand the consideration of thinking brethren, since it indicates the state of mind of its author at a very vital moment. The Logos writer mentions that for R. Roberts the opposition to Edward Turney was “almost a single-handed battle.” Does it not occur to him to wonder why this was so, if all truth was on R. Roberts side and E. Turney was so patently in error? Does it not also occur to him to ask why this battle resulted in a serious breakdown in health and confinement in a Sanatorium? Perhaps the mental condition revealed by “The Slain Lamb” has some bearing on his confinement. Perhaps the anonymous Logos Committee is still suffering from the Psychological effects of a schizophrenia induced by an intolerable tension in his mind. At any rate, they raised the point.

The gentleman who has no better taste than to criticize our literature as “Some sheets of poorly duplicated scandal” would have used his talent better if he had applied some of his time to show how he himself would propose to defend the existence in a book he recommends to his readers of a contradiction which stultifies its whole argument. The short answer to him and to R. Roberts is that we neither deny that Jesus came in the flesh, nor do we make Him a mere man. Any honest person who has read anything of our work would be ashamed to utter such a slander. We believe that Jesus was the same flesh and nature as all human beings, but that because He was the Son of God therefore His life came from God direct, placing Him in a different legal position from us, whose life comes from Adam.

As to the quality of our publications; we are comparatively humble folk with limited means and we have used such methods as are within reach to advance our beliefs, but we are not aware that it necessarily follows that there is less of truth in it for that reason. We can recall when the Logos itself would have come under the heading of “poorly duplicated sheets” but we did not condemn it for that reason. At any rate, what we have done we have done at our own expense and distributed it world wide without charge. Nevertheless, whether or not it be a legitimate argument, the charge is a lying charge and he knows it to be so, since he has received and read “The truth about Clean Flesh” which is a presentable book of 84 pages which cost our fellowship about 2 shillings (10 new pence) per copy to produce. Unlike Mr Barling’s work (which has been answered in “My Life for the Sheep”) which is offered at the price of 2 shillings and probably shows its sponsors a profit which they appreciate but ought not take, ours has been sent for nothing to anyone who asks and to many who might prefer not to have it, because we believe that thirsty souls should be permitted to approach the spring without money and without price.

The “Logos Committee” says that he believes, quoting from memory, that the present writer had been thoroughly defeated in debate. No self-respecting editor would make a statement of this character on hearsay. Who says we were thoroughly defeated? Was the writer there? Did he hear what was said? Has he read the report? No. He says “He subsequently learned it while in England.” Who did he learn it from? Obviously from the very people who were most concerned to spread the falsehood he retails. Did he also learn that the conditions of the debate provided that the Netherton Christadelphian Ecclesia undertook to publish a verbatim report? Did they tell him that an independent firm of reporters recorded the debate? That for nearly two years the Netherton Ecclesia shuffled and prevaricated in order to avoid publishing it themselves and put every obstacle possible in the way to prevent us doing so? And does he know that when finally we informed them that it was our intention to publish it ourselves, they produced what they called “A compiled report” by W.F.Barling which had been edited to present the Christadelphian side in a better light? Does he know that even this was eventually suppressed? These facts do not suggest quite the confidence in victory that our friend who calls himself “Logos Committee” has been led to understand.

Does he know furthermore that we have published the correspondence which bears out the foregoing account and which must make every honest-hearted Christadelphian blush for the shame of their brethren? Does he know also that we have produced and circulated nearly one thousand copies of the said verbatim report and that some zealous members of the Netherton Ecclesia were so incensed at the exposure they had received that a gang of them set upon the writer and manhandled him away to prevent him distributing a leaflet. Finally, does anyone suppose that these or any other facts will deter the man who masquerades as a committee from propagating his malicious falsehoods. Not likely.

No one can be so naive as to suppose that the Christadelphians in Britain would not have published the report of the debate if it had been the triumph they profess, when our literature is shaking that community to its foundations. It is sad indeed to see a man making such an exhibition of ignorant prejudice in a magazine claiming to devote itself “to spiritual advancement.”

A very significant feature of the article is the evidence it affords of the real state of mind of the person who wrote it. On page 192 he says “We are not afraid of the doctrines advanced.” Why does he say this? Who has suggested that he is afraid? Certainly not us, though it has long been evident that leading Christadelphians are more than reluctant to deal with our literature or to permit it to be discussed or studied. When he says “We are not afraid” he is admitting that there is something to be feared, though he himself is determined to keep his courage up. We may remind him that there are occasions when “The wise man feareth... but the foolish rageth and is confident.” But his actions do not bear out his boast. If he has no cause to fear that our literature might open the eyes of his brethren, why does he head his article “Beware of this literature”? If it was the libellous scandal he says he would advise his readers to examine it and judge for themselves. But no, Christadelphians in Australia who have deemed it right to disregard the prohibitions of the leaders and have circulated our literature are termed “Traitors to the truth” and exhorted to become thoroughly ashamed of the part they have played.” This is the exact type of Papal denunciation which we thought had been swept out of the Protestant free world centuries ago. These are not the words of one who is genuinely not afraid to face up to the facts - on the contrary, they suggest a mind in a state of extreme fright, and this is the only excuse we can find for the manifest falsehoods he writes. How otherwise can we account for him saying of us “The principle of God-manifestation is rejected.” It is simply not true and in our book referred to above from which he professes to quote our views we have stated categorically what we believe to be the true principle of God-manifestation, viz., that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth and He manifested His Father in His words and works. Any Christadelphian who affirms more than this of Christ is more than half a Trinitarian and an antichrist because he is making Him a different nature from us.

If the Logos Committee will expound his own beliefs we will be pleased, if they are different from the above, to show him where he is wrong, as will a great many of his own brethren who are not painted with this metaphysical foolishness.

Again he says, we claim that Jesus was “a mere man, developing the perfect character he revealed by his own unaided efforts.” This again is a subtly false accusation. Jesus was a man of flesh and blood like ourselves, but He was not therefore a mere man for the reason that God was His Father and He was therefore by His birthright the heir of all things created. But again, if the Logos Committee will tell us what is wrong with the affirmation that He developed His perfect character by the exercise of the same faculties and sources of inspiration and strength as are available to us, we will undertake to show him that he is by his tradition making of non-effect the Scripture which saith “He was made in all points like His brethren, yet without sin.” We have many times pointed out that anyone who teaches that the purpose of the origin of Jesus was to give Him special power to overcome a supposed sinful nature is robbing Him of His honour and charging God with foolishness.

It is not irresponsible condemnation of Robert Roberts to point out that his confusion and contradiction on these points is a serious flaw in his work; nor is it scandalous denunciation to say that some of his statements - as for example that the flesh of Christ was unclean and that sin ran in the blood He inherited from His mother - are thoroughly objectionable, and it is surely unreasonable to go on quoting his works as the authority and at the same time to claim for their exemption from criticism on the ground that he has been in his grave for over fifty years and cannot defend himself. Certainly his account is closed, but so long as the Logos contents itself with parroting his words as if they were inspired and recommending his works as if they had the same authority as Scripture itself, so long must those who value truth above names of men, and Scripture above creeds continue to subject those words and works to critical analysis in the spirit which the Logos prints on its cover but does not live up to.

Ernest Brady

EDITORIAL FOR MARCH 1962

Loving greetings to all. During the last few years it has seemed in this country as if we were up against a brick wall in our effort to forward the spread of the true understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God who gave Himself for sinners, in opposition to the Christadelphian view of Him as the unclean representative of an unclean race, whose death was required for His own deliverance from sin. Our successes - and they have been few enough - seemed to come from abroad. We have had many kind letters and enquiries from places like Australia, yet in this country where there are far greater numbers of people who should be concerned we have seen comparatively little response. It has often been said that Britain has declined in the world, politically and economically and is no longer a first class power. Whether this is so or not we need not concern ourselves with, but one can hardly doubt that it is no longer of much importance in the religious world, and it seems evident that the apathy and lukewarmness applies equally to those to whom we address our efforts.

However, it is cheering to be able to say that the picture has changed greatly in the past year. An active group has come into being in Lincoln, as a letter from Bro. Allen indicates, and larger one in Devon. For the information of those who are not in direct touch with any of those concerned except via this Circular Letter, the following account of recent development is given.

For many years Bro. Skinner and later his daughter were in isolation in Devon and were recently contacted by several members of Torquay Ecclesia who had had occasion to question the soundness of the Christadelphian doctrinal position. In due course they satisfied themselves that we had a better understanding and they were baptised - not into the Nazarene Fellowship, as Bro. Williams quite rightly reminded me in a recent letter - but into the true faith of Jesus Christ.

Many people seem unable to face life unless they belong to a group and have a set of rules to observe, and while it is helpful and convenient to associate and work with those who think as we do, the only fellowship that matters is that we are members of the Body of Christ. May God preserve us from the organization, the creed-making and the tradition which almost inevitably overtakes religious communities!

The Torquay members now number about a dozen and they have been making their presence felt to some purpose. They have circulated leaflets drawing attention to various of the doctrines we reject, and have made several approaches to the A.B. in the district suggesting discussions with a view to the enlightenment of the members of the ecclesias, but their advances have been studiously ignored. This is more than strange, as one of those actively concerned behind the scenes is T.J. Barling - a Christadelphian of considerable reputation whom one might expect to be in a position and anxious to defend his faith. I recall that many years ago as a very green convert to the faith I now rejoice in, I was invited to his house at Leamington for a discussion with about 15 or 20 Christadelphians. It seems evident that I was not able to shake his faith in an unclean representative whose death God required as the condition of our forgiveness, but one would have thought he should be capable at this stage of giving a reason for the faith he has.

The most recent development is that our brethren have taken the initiative and booked a meeting room and sent out an invitation to the local Christadelphians to come and discuss the subject and ask any questions they desired. This duly took place on March 8th and a copy of the circular sent me by Bro. Skinner - happily now fully recovered from his recent operation - put before them the proposition: "The issue is really a very simple one. Does it really matter what we believe? Then, are the Christadelphians right or wrong when they teach that the Holy One of God was basically unclean and needed to die just as much for His own salvation as for those He came to save?"

I cannot do better than quote from the letter Bro. Williams wrote me;-

"Some 18 members of Torquay came, and with 2 from Exeter and our own members made about 30 in all - but NO Barlings although invited. Bro. Rowley outlined the origin of the controversy and showed the "natural" progress Dr. Thomas made as evident from his reasonings in Eureka as compared with Elpis Israel. He demonstrated how at his death Dr. Thomas had reached a spiritual maturity quite remarkable from his early days. He showed that whilst Dr. Thomas was

alive R.Roberts adhered to and subscribed to his later conclusions but that after his death he reverted to the earlier teachings in Elpis Israel and insisted on unclean flesh and sin as a fixed ingredient of flesh. He (Bro. Rowley) showed how the Statement of Faith was modified deliberately to include these nonsensical theories and that Edward Turney contended with R.Roberts for the truths brought out in the closing years of Dr. Thomas's life. The result - the majority followed R.Roberts and a minority Edward Turney.

I (Bro. Williams) followed with the doctrines as it comes from the source and showed how failure to understand is inevitable when people use the scriptures to reinforce their own reasoning instead of allowing it to enlighten them. It is a folly to tear extracts from their setting and use them irrespective of whether or not they apply to the subject under discussion. This is the way of orthodoxy, leading to belief in a personal devil, heaven-going and the natural immortality of the soul, things they accept without proof and then set about justifying from the Bible.

I took apart Christadelphian "reasoning" in regard to unclean flesh and showed how they take 3 passages in Job 14:14,15:14, 25:4 and strung them together and say "to be born of a woman is to be unclean." Hence, they say, since Jesus was born of a woman He must be unclean, etc., etc. This "theory" I said was false and was 'father of the thought' that there must have been a miraculous debasement of Adam's nature from very good to very bad. I explained that flesh is neither clean nor unclean, but neutral in condition and that the flesh we possess to-day is identical in its construction to Adam's both before and after sin entered. When the Christadelphian theory was applied to Christ it contradicted all that is revealed concerning Him as Holy, Pure, undefiled, etc., etc. I explained that Adam died a moral and spiritual death on the day he disobeyed (perfectly true of course but perhaps in relation to the Atonement the term 'legal death' applies more precisely - E.B) and lived out the predetermined life cycle of 900 odd years, later reduced by God to 120 and then to 70 years, on the same principle that a butterfly can only live so long or an elephant so long. I showed that spiritual death was the death that really mattered and so all Adam's posterity were dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the LIFE OF GOOD by the ignorance that was in them and as the result of sin. Man's will was enslaved, his intellect beclouded, his natural feelings and emotions debased and prostituted and for these reasons he was separated from God and needed the cleansing and enlightenment from above. He was never estranged because he was flesh - this Christadelphian doctrine is an abortion of truth which would make God hideously unjust, for He made Adam what he was. The theory was a negation of the long-suffering, pity and love of God and none could understand it, whereas, on the other hand, as what we know is the truth we could understand it and by it are drawn to God, who stands in the shadows keeping watch over His own. I asked them which they preferred and there was a murmuring of assent to the obvious.

Well, we had a wonderful reception. Many questions were asked, and naturally some concerned other doctrines as e.g. present possession of Eternal Life, the sinlessness of believers from union with the clean and sanctified Saviour and so on. We tried to put the emphasis where it belongs - they must come to Christ with an honest and good heart. Christadelphianism is full of intellectual dishonesty and hypocrisy and there is woeful ignorance as the natural result. Christ does not reveal Himself to His critics. We hope and pray that having sown the seed and shown them the way to reason and the road to follow that God will overrule their circumstances and Christ will so quicken their hearts that they will receive Him as He was. God made visible in flesh, full of grace and truth. By starting from God downward, as opposed to from man upward, the mind is conditioned to accept the truths intended, viz. that the Lord Jesus was the agent of Divine self-expression - infinite love in corporeal and tangible form, as distinct from an abstract theory."

I am sure all of us will commend this excellent effort and associate ourselves with Bro. Williams' prayer that the blessing of God will follow.

This letter has already gone to greater length than usual, so I shall allow the remainder to speak for itself- all I can do is to thank the various writers of letters and articles for their work and hope that it will interest and encourage us all.

Your brother in Jesus Christ,

Ernest Brady