

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 220

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Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends,

Are scientists really on the verge of explaining the enigma of existence as some of them claim? We are not at the moment thinking of life but of matter; how did something appear out of nothing – why is there anything at all in space? We read recently of the claim that “unified theories of physics, when combined with refined versions of the big bang model, will soon provide us a so-called ‘theory of everything’.” We wonder if those who believe this is about to happen find the prospect exhilarating or perhaps somewhat frightening, even chilling, to imagine there is nothing more to find out. “The theory of everything” is too big a claim!

The big bang theory itself is a paradox once we ask what went bang. It brings scientists no closer to the creation of matter yet it is supposed to represent a profound insight into the history and structure of the cosmos, but it does not tell us why creation occurred in the first place. ‘Particle physics’ theorises that space is full of ‘virtual particles’ which spring into existence and are able to vanish just as quickly in the same way, speculating that the entire universe might be a kind of ‘virtual particle.’

There are other scientists who admit there appears to be no reason why there is something rather than nothing, and that before anything could be, there must first have been some force in operation to cause it to be – a force which made an organised creation possible.

The physicist Steven Weingerg writes:

“Why does the universe look this way rather than some other way? Why does it adhere to these laws of nature rather than to some other laws? Altering any of the universe’s fundamental parameters would have radically altered reality. For example, if the universe had been slightly more dense at its inception, it would have rapidly stopped expanding and collapsed into a black hole. If the universe had been a smidgeon less dense, it would have flown apart so rapidly that there would have been no chance for stars, galaxies and planets to form.”

After the creation of matter there came life; another ‘impossibility.’ Richard Dawkins, the biologist, wrote that life “is a mystery no longer.” But this seems a silly thing to say because ‘life’ is just as mysterious as ever despite evolutionary theories, or modern biological theories regarding genetics or molecular biology. There is no scientific theory explaining why life appeared on earth and neither has it been found to exist in any other part of the universe despite ill-founded assertions. Researchers, with all their tools of the modern biotechnical laboratories have tried in vain to give life to matter. What would they do with that life if they were successful? With man’s record for messing things up the prospect is too dreadful to contemplate.

Francis Crick affirms that “the origin of life appears to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have to be satisfied to get it going.” Once life had begun, other scientists tell us that for some 3 billion years there were only single-celled organisms on the earth. So why did the first, simplest multi-cellular organisms develop into multi-celled organisms? And not in billions of years but in a mere few million from single-celled organisms to the complex multi-celled plant and animals organisms of today?

And when scientists have answered all these questions, doesn't it all seem so pointless if they are unable to tell us why?

All scientists have ever done is to examine the things God has created and this has in turn helped us to marvel at His Creation. And while they may go much further in discovering more of nature's wonders, they have yet to discover what makes the brain work, i.e. how it thinks. How do we reason? How do we understand? What is intelligence?

It seems scientists have a long way to go before they can even consider themselves to be on the verge of explaining the puzzle of existence of matter, or of life, or of thought. Then, if they can, they will need to produce a reason for everything when all they see is here today, and gone tomorrow. So what is the purpose of it all?

Science reveals the wonders of God's Creation, and we marvel at what we see but only knowledge of God's Word can reveal His purpose with the promises of the future. Science can tell us nothing of this, nor can science, being dispassionate, tell us of God's goodness, mercy and loving kindness.

How unique is the Bible! How we ought to treasure it above all else.

The origin of life is indeed a miracle. How else can we explain the incredible complexities of the world around us, not to mention the differences, abilities and complexities of every human being who lives or has ever lived? It all suggests a creator of unimagined capabilities and propensities, furthermore a creator with a deep concern and interest in his creation.

The odds against all that exists and all that we ourselves are, having evolved by blind chance or by a “big bang” are surely greater than the odds against a whirlwind blowing through a scrap-yard and assembling a perfect Boeing 747.

We rest our case.

With Love to all in Jesus Christ. Helen and Russell

A Reply to a Christadelphian Circular

“The Importance of Reading The Bible”

The importance of reading the Bible is to begin at its first Book and chapter, taking heed to the context. The context being centred on He who created the heavens and the earth and planned all things associated for the habitation of man (Isaiah 40:28; 42:5; 43:18).

It is written “The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.”

Was he not then beforehand a body of clay inanimate? So, if God stated “The life is in the blood” then it is the blood coursing through the veins which gives natural life to the body. Which cannot be said of the Angels, for they are ministering Spirits who can make themselves visible and invisible according to their

choice under certain circumstances when sent forth by a power superior to themselves. It's obvious then that Adam the first man was not of this nature yet in like shape or image as themselves.

As a formed foetus in the womb of the virgin Mary through the overshadowing of the power of the Highest it was said of that 'process growth' of Jesus, "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels but he took on him, the seed of Abraham" and scripture says that Abraham was judged according to his faith not by the state of his physical flesh falsely stated by Mr R. Roberts, a Christadelphian pioneer.

Abraham said of himself, "I which am but dust and ashes have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord." Where did Abraham receive that information? Was it not handed down to him through Adam's descendants such as Seth, Enoch, Noah and those who survived the flood? In which all in whose nostrils was the breath of life died? Is it not scripturally correct that if Adam had been under the same circumstances of natural calamity in water or earthquake "sinless" and unable to swim or breath, would have died?

Why not admit the truth of St Paul's teaching from Genesis and also from Jesus Himself, "First that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual, there is a natural body of man and a spiritual body," this he said of Jesus in writing to the Corinthians chapter 15 and the Thessalonians but of a separate nature from the two, no evidence. Yet in my association with Christadelphians teaching the terms mortal and immortal were used as synonymous with corruptible and incorruptible, but the former relating to the legal position and the latter to the natural condition. Please note: Position and Condition. Creation governs Condition; Law governs Position.

I was therefore told through their ineffective reading of the Bible that Adam at Creation was neither mortal nor immortal but very good but so was all the animal creation whom Mr Roberts classed as the beasts which perish, yet he said of Adam's penalty for sin, "It required what men call a miracle to depress to the level of the beasts that perish the noble creature made in the image of Elohim."

These ignorant and presumptive confused statements are found in Clause V of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith upon which their teaching is based for Fellowship with themselves and mark you, not with God and His Son, Jesus.

But not only is Clause V a gross error but also is their Clause IX which says that Jesus rose after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God which they believe as Clause V a process of decay, death and return to dust through corruption, which Jesus did not experience. So it is plain enough that Jesus suffered the death Adam would have suffered if Jesus had not been a willing victim in the foreknowledge of His Father. "He that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me" said Jesus, therefore if you reject substitution as in Scripture logic, you cannot receive Jesus or His Father.

It has been argued by certain people that if Jesus died as a substitute He ought not to have risen from the dead and we ought not to die, but the Substitution we are referring to has nothing to do with natural decay and death; it has to do with the "death by sin" incurred by Adam, and which God passed upon all men (by imputation not guilt) that the Righteousness of Jesus Christ might be imputed to all by faith in His atoning sacrificial death by the shedding of His blood. The mistake is mixing the legal with the physical. All who are truly "in Christ," He is their life, for they have passed from death to life, a legal and moral position.

What people fail to accept is that Genesis 2:17 was a statement made to a man who was corruptible and already capable of dying by natural means like us who have descended from him. Tell a Christadelphian that man has an ever-living soul and he will soon direct your attention to Adam's creation as a living soul and he will also quote from Ezekiel 18, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" but of course in its proper context this meant death by infliction, not dying naturally, and this is the context of Genesis 2:17 which is ignored.

The important point then is that if Adam had died by his sin he would have remained in the dust as a sinner. Jesus took Adam's place and suffered inflicted death which is the only penalty incurred by Adam for his sin, but Jesus, not being a sinner was, through the justice and righteousness of God, raised from the grave.

What is said in Genesis 3 is the aftermath and result of the provisional covering of their sin and the fact that we also owe our existence to the typical and Antitypical Lamb of God. All that took place after the exit from the Garden of Eden were things caused by the environment of that dispensation including good and evil conduct. But this was not the penalty Adam incurred nor was it the death by sin stated by St Paul in Romans 5:12-21.

The statement by the late C. C. Walker “If Christ be a substitute we ought not to die evolve from his incorrect view that natural death is the penalty for Adam’s sin and which passed upon us, but the death passed upon Adam was a legal sentence of inflicted death in the literal day and moment when he ate of the fruit. So the fact remains that through Christ’s death as a substitute we do not have to die a judicial death by infliction but by symbolic death by baptism. Thus it can be said truly “That while we were without strength Christ died for the ungodly.” If that is not substitution according to the Scriptures one must be stubborn and deliberately blind not to see it.

It is the condemned flesh doctrine of R. Roberts which has brought this misconception of Hebrews 7:27 to a type of Jesus, making a Priest after the order of Melchizedec a Priest after the order of Aaron and offering his unclean flesh because he was sinless and could not be said to offer for His own committed sins. Thus if He had offered to cleanse Himself on account of His nature the Christadelphian argument is that Jesus represented those of condemned nature by destroying it Himself through death and therefore could not be a substitute. The fact they miss is that Jesus was not a Priest on earth and that He offered Himself on earth as the scriptural Lamb of God for the people once only.

Phil and Rene Parry with other Nazarenes.

“The Iranian Threat”

We thank Brother Julian Shipley for sending in this item. He writes: “A Christian friend of mine sent me this, and it is very interesting. Just shows that we are not the only ones who understand the end times”:-

Conditions for Removal of Israel Are at Hand by Ezra HaLevi

Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, clearing up any ambiguity in previous calls to “wipe Israel off the map,” uses an Arabic word for the removal of body hair to describe his plans for Israel.

“All the conditions for the removal of the Zionist regime are at hand,” Ahmadinejad told an Arab Conference of Iraqi Neighbours meeting on Saturday. For the first time, he employed the Arabic word ezaleh, which is used to describe the irreversible removal of body hairs. “Nations in the region will be more furious every day. It won’t take long before the wrath of the people turns into a terrible explosion that will wipe the Zionist entity off the map,” Ahmadinejad told the foreign ministers of Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Bahrain and Egypt. The heads of the Arab League and the Islamic Conference were also present, in addition to a special United Nations representative.

None of the foreign ministers present, including Jordan, Egypt or Turkey - commonly regarded as Israel’s friends in the Arab/Muslim world - objected to the call for annihilation. Instead, the following statement was issued: “The Arab foreign ministers participating in today’s Tehran meeting expressed their strong condemnation of this continuing and increasing aggression against the Palestinian people.” The Iranian president went on to blame all of the region’s troubles on the Jewish state: “The basic problem in the Islamic world is the existence of the Zionist regime, and the Islamic world and the region must mobilize to remove this problem. It is a usurper that our enemies made and imposed on the Muslim world, a regime that prevented the progress of the region’s nations, a regime that all Muslims must join hands in isolating worldwide.”

He ended with a call on all nations to cease their support of Israel: “[All nations] should realize that their support for the illegitimate, usurper, Zionist regime is a mistake. The waves of fury of Muslim nations will not be confined within the boundaries of the region, and the people who close their ears to the cries of the Palestinians and blindly support this regime will be responsible for the consequences... I tell them to dissociate themselves or face the terrible consequences.”

Since Ahmadinejad’s call to “wipe Israel off the map” last October, some academics have claimed the Iranian leader was mistranslated or misunderstood. “Ahmadinejad did not say he was going to wipe Israel off the map, because no such idiom exists in Persian,” left-wing University of Michigan professor Juan Cole told the New York Times. “He did say he hoped its regime, i.e., a Jewish-Zionist state occupying Jerusalem, would collapse... Since Iran has not attacked another country aggressively for over a century, I smell the whiff of war propaganda.”

Jonathan Steele of the British Guardian newspaper also told the Times: “The Iranian president was quoting an ancient statement by Iran’s first Islamist leader, the late Ayatollah Khomeini, that ‘this regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time,’ just as the Shah’s regime in Iran had vanished. He was not making a military threat. He was calling for an end to the occupation of Jerusalem at some point in the future. The ‘page of time’ phrase suggests he did not expect it to happen soon.”

Neither of the two have responded to Ahmadinejad’s latest clarification and call to action, which were translated and distributed by the Iranian state-run IRNA news agency. The Iranian leader’s threats are particularly significant as the Islamic Republic continues to pursue nuclear technology and world bodies continue to pursue diplomatic means of inducing Iran to give up its nuclear aspirations.”

My friend who has followed end time prophesy for many years added this: “Everything is falling into place. Only thing missing is Russia. If Russia comes into the mix as “leader” of these countries, we will see the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. To those who are sceptical all I can say is watch and see what happens.”

Julian says: “If this is not one of the most important signs of the times, then I don’t know what is!

We have received a most welcome letter from Australia. The writer, who, with his family, continue to attend their local Christadelphian ecclesia, asks not to be named. In view of this request we have left out those parts of his letter which may identify him:

Dear Bro. Russell, I have often wanted to express my heartfelt thanks to you and all the Nazarenes, for your circulars and booklets. I am endeavouring at every opportunity to disseminate same, and would use this opportunity to request that mail be sent to another ‘amenable’ Christadelphian...

The first Nazarene publication I was introduced to was that monumental little booklet “Too True To Be New” by Brother Brady. Upon reading its pages I was horrified to think that I had ever entertained that transmogrification of God’s Truth known as Robertsism, averring that Jesus had to die for himself because of the indwelling of sin in His flesh – The Word was made sinful flesh... that holy thing born of God. How undermining of God’s Grace towards us, that we were only a secondary afterthought!

A milestone for me, in the evolving hermeneutics of the Atonement, was the reading of Brother John Stevenson’s definition of the word Mortal. One of the greatest pleasures I have had over the past 20 years has been (and only on rare occasions) to influence (a certain brother’s) thinking on the Scriptures. It took a lot of debate for us to come to an agreement on the differentiation between corruptible and mortal, which he had always considered synonymous.

This subject prompts me to remark that your editorial statement at the top of page 3 of the May/June Circular rang a discordant bell with me. I can only comprehend your words concerning Jesus’ sacrifice, “that we might have natural life” in the context of 1 Timothy 4:10. If not for God’s immediate initiation of His Grace in Jesus, Adam, and therefore all mankind, would have forfeited the opportunity to have

continuance of natural life, when he sinned. (B'Yom Muth Temuth). If we have vicariously died with Jesus in baptism, i.e. Figuratively surrendered our *psuche* lives, and at the same time become morally/spiritually amenable to God's ways, then we now have the prospect of reigning with Jesus in incorruptible *zoe* life.

At this point I would like to make a few remarks about Alfred Edersheim's interpretation of the red heifer sacrifice, in his unrivalled work 'The Temple: Its ministry and Services.'

Not long before his death, I questioned a brother as to which of the substitutive Mosaic sacrifices he thought was the most representative of the antitypical Jesus. In his opinion it was the scapegoat(s).

However, I feel Edersheim uncannily, and in a sense unwittingly, describes the red heifer sacrifice in terms that are compatible with our understanding of the Atonement. What I have to say has probably been far more ably and comprehensively stated before, but I have not been privy to anything written by the Nazarenes on this subject.

Edersheim states that the red heifer was "the most intense of sin offerings and was wholly burnt outside the camp, while others were only partly so." This he says "signifying in the theocracy there was no one who by his own holiness, could bear or take away the sin imputed to these sin offerings." "Spiritual death (the legal death at being mortal in Adam) as the consequence of the fall, personal sinfulness, and personal guilt lay beyond the reach of the Temple provision, and pointed directly to Him who was to come." The writer emphasises the limitation of the scapegoat to remove only personal guilt – "not their theocratic alienation from the sanctuary." And further, "The ashes of this sin offering mixed with living water (another allusion to Jesus) and sprinkled with hyssop, symbolised purification from that death which separates between God and man (in its ultimate sense – the bondage of sin and death in Adam)."

Edersheim directly relates the red heifer sacrifice to that superior sacrifice of Jesus, expressed in Hebrews 9:13,14, "to purifying your conscience from dead works to serving the living God."

In making the distinction of the scapegoat nullifying the conscience of personal sin only, I interpret the red heifer foreshadowing the purifying of our evil conscience, by Jesus, from that overriding legal condemnation inherited through Adam.

Apart from the mandatory unblemished physical qualities of all the Mosaic sacrifices (which prohibits Jesus!) the red heifer was uniquely female. R. Roberts erroneously contends (Clause 10. BASF) that being born of a woman, Jesus had a condemned nature. Edersheim eruditely describes this most intimately representative heifer sacrifice as symbolising "fullest life... spring of life... a once for all sacrifice (as long as the ashes lasted)", and along with the burning of cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, symbolised imperishable existence; freedom from corruption, and fullness of life." In Jesus was *zoe* life.

Jesus was the seed of both the "Eve" woman and a virgin chosen by God, so that He (Jesus) could bruise the head of the serpent and overcome the "evil" of this world: not to inherit sinful flesh. He was sent by His Father when there was no one else to do so.

Relative to these thoughts, there is, I feel, a more recondite meaning behind 1 Timothy 2:15 "notwithstanding she (Eve) shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with sobriety." The natural fecundity inherent in "woman" prefigures God's gift of re-birth into eternal life (*zoe*), through faith in the One born of woman (First that which is natural...) Paradoxically, Eve, who aided and abetted man's 'fall; would indirectly produce a seed who could save her and all mankind who looked to Him in faith, because of His direct Divine begettal.

I'm probably getting a little unintelligible at this point, but would like to make one more parallelism which to me, ties everything together.

Taking the premise that Jesus, by Divine begettal had a "free life", I see an analogy here to the prerequisite for the red heifer's requirement of one "upon which never yoke came." Is it stretching the similitude too far to say that Jesus was the One upon whom never yoke came? The yoke of Adam's

bondage. Jesus' yoke, if availed of, substitutes our servitude to Adam's yoke, for His yoke of righteousness and life, for Jesus our Master's (Federal heads) are substituted.

When Jesus says, in Matthew 11:29,30, "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" He is assuredly in its immediate application, appealing to His fellow Jews to be relieved of the onerous burden of the Mosaic Law's Pharisaical minutiae.

Spiritually, however, the interluding Mosaic dispensation was a microcosmic representation to highlight the Jews' need for a Saviour to free them from the yoke of the inexorable, universal, macrocosmic penalty of the wages of sin and death, binding both Jew and Gentile alike through Adam's breaking of the Edenic Law.

Mankind were without strength and hope, but this is the Love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not a grievous yoke. All this was made possible because Jesus was the Son of God by direct begattal, and not a son of Adam.

Before signing off, I would just briefly point out the need for clear definitions. Bro Phil Parry, at the bottom of page 5 of your latest No 219 Circular, correctly in my opinion, says Scripture proves this to be a result, not a penalty for his sin."

However, on the last page, in your reply to bro A. you also rightly repudiate the official teaching of the Christadelphians is that natural death was the result of Adam's transgression." Result and penalty need to have a clear delineation.

I hope Sister Helen Brady has made a quick recovery.

Your Brother in Christ Jesus, X.

* * *

In reply:

Dear Brother X, Thank you for your letter. I was indeed sorry to hear of the passing away of Brother Y.

I have searched for (Brother Y's) original thesis and so far have been unable to find it. I make up a new folder for every issue of the Circular Letter to hold all the relevant documentation and this is where it ought to be... Having failed to find it there I then looked through other folders of correspondence but again without success. This is disappointing and I will have to look again.

Brother Y wrote a comment on (another matter) which was published in the next C.L., then again a few months later we published (one of) his articles... and finally in (another)C.L. he answered a query of a Sister. From these we gained insight into his understanding of the Scriptures and the manner of walk before God which filled us with the highest regard for him and we can see something of how the loss of his companionship would be felt by his family and friends. Will you please pass on our condolences and our love to all concerned.

The rest of your letter was a joy to read. I will indeed add Brother A's name to our mailing list and send him a few back numbers of the Circular Letters as well.

Yes, I understand your concern regarding my statement that Jesus gave His life "that we might have natural life." I also agree with all you say regarding God's Grace in His promise of eternal life through faith in His Son. My view is that Jesus, in laying down His life freely, purchased the whole human race – good, bad and indifferent. This was the substitutionary sacrifice – a *psuche* life for a *psuche* life. Jesus natural life in place of Adam's natural life. None would have natural *psuche* life had not Jesus given His *psuche* life in place of Adam's forfeited *psuche* life. But it also follows that only the faithful will receive the benefit, i.e. free gift, of eternal life, *zoe* life.

I think Dr Edersheim's book "The Temple: Its Ministry and Services" is a superb work. I have a copy presented to my mother in 1914 as a Sunday School prize and I value it very much. After reading your letter I am prompted to publish more of this work starting with this C.L. – the chapter dealing with The Day of Atonement, and then chapter 18 dealing with purifications. Regarding the Scapegoat, I think we should look at the two goats, which selected at that time, as one sacrifice, the one slain representing Jesus crucifixion and hence His work of taking away the Sin of the World, releasing the faithful from the condemnation of the law of sin and death; and the other, the scapegoat, representing the work of the Risen Lord in forgiving our individual sins without the need for further shedding of blood in sacrifice. I notice this is not the view of Dr Edersheim so this could lead to some discussion.

I am not aware of any Nazarene writings on the 'Red Heifer' sacrifice but note what you say on this matter and no doubt, if I follow the proposed course, we shall have opportunity for further correspondence in the Circular Letters.

I am happy to suppress your name as you wish. My father did just the same and published articles without a name attached. Three out of four of his children were baptised and remained in Christadelphia and it was not until after he died that I, and my brother and sister left the Christadelphians. This must have been his dearest wish but he never saw it in his time.

Thank you for writing. May I ask if you have any articles we could publish? It would be so good to have some 'new blood' contributing to the Circular Letters. We do tend to 'go on a bit' continuing to be 'a thorn in the side' of the Christadelphian body!

With Love in Jesus. Russell.

What Think Ye of Christ, Whose Son is He?

Dear Mr Parry, Thank you for your letter of 19th May. The Christ you write about is certainly not the Christ of the scriptures. It is a great pity that your 50 years study has only produced "another gospel" as warned against by Paul, Gal. 1 v 6/9. Had you studied without the biased mind of those following the very evident heresy of E. Turney, you would perhaps have been helped to see clearly as it is written that Christ's nature was like ours, "but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Galatians 4 v 4, and condemned under the law - "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree:" Galatians 3 v 13. Because, unlike us, He was without sin He was saved from corruption and is held up as the example for us to follow with the same reward. If He had not been of our condemned, nature He could not have been used for the purpose intended by God. This is the purpose seen throughout the scriptures,

Regarding your idea that John Thomas would have listened to the E. Turney heresy, here are a few quotes on John Thomas's view of the matter:- "Jesus of Nazareth, in the days of his flesh, was the reflection of the Moral Attributes of the Deity; as likewise are all his brethren who walk in his steps." "However perfect and complete the moral manifestation of the Deity was in Jesus of Nazareth, the divine manifestation was nevertheless imperfect as concerning the substance or body of Jesus. This was what we are familiar with as the flesh. It was not angel-flesh or nature but was common to the seed of Abraham styled by Paul - flesh of sin." Eureka Vol.1 pages 105/106.

Writing of the 2nd John v.7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ." John Thomas says "They confessed not that he whom they called Jesus Christ was a man in the flesh common to all mankind which is sin's flesh Romans 8 v 5. They maintained that he had another kind of flesh which was pure, holy and immaculate. They confounded his immaculate or spotless character with his maculate flesh. This was a fatal heresy; for if Jesus was not crucified in the flesh common to us all then sin was not condemned in the flesh as all the apostles taught, and there has been, as yet, no sacrifice for sin, and consequently there are no means of remission of sins extant." Eureka vol. 2 page 624.

On considering the above letter, Brother Phil was prompted to write:-

While looking through some booklets in my drawer I came across the above letter in reply to one I must have sent on the 19th May 1988 to someone of the Christadelphian community. But seeing it is not signed I am at a loss, some 18 years latter to remember who it could be and the fact that I have written so many to various people of the same ignorant and false traditions this person is, or was heir to, for it is plain to me and my fellow members in Christ Jesus that he/she had never read, or if so, never understood what Edward Turney taught in his lecture "The Sacrifice of Christ" but was content to believe the false accusations of R. Roberts who corrupted the words of the Apostle John to refer to E.Turney's belief when E.Turney held no such doctrine.

In the first place I never knew Edward Turney neither had heard of him, so it is untrue that I followed any biased minds other than I took the advice of an old Christadelphian not to believe all that Dr. Thomas, R.Roberts and others of that community stated or wrote without testing it from the Scriptures. He says the Christ I wrote about is not the Christ of the Scriptures, but it is the Christ not of the Scriptures which he believed in and his members; a Christ of condemned nature, and worse still, a Christ born condemned by the Law. I can pity his ignorance and blasphemy against the Son of God, and I pray that it may not be left to his charge alone.

We know for a fact there was no B.A.S.F. in the time of Dr.Thomas and Edward Turney for it was the result of E.Turney's lecture and R.Roberts reply to it which brought is into circulation to prevent the correct views E.Turney was expressing. When I was immersed at the Elwood Ecclesia the old Christadelphian I mentioned who was the Recording Brother, did not hand a copy of the B.A.S.F. to me and I found out later that it was not his policy to bind people to a man-made document compiled in anger and strife by a man whom E.Turney stated to his face in front of a crowd of witnesses, that he (R.Roberts) did not understand the subject. My critic in writing what he accuses me of is in much the same position of ignorance, sad to say many at the present time still are. They confess not that Jesus Christ came in the same flesh Adam was at Creation and Eve with him, the same flesh and styled by Jesus, "What God hath joined together," twain, one flesh. See Matthew 19:3-6 and Acts 17:24-26).

In quoting Dr. Thomas my correspondent is imputing the Creator to be Sin by saying that Paul styled the flesh of Abraham as 'flesh of sin' or sin's flesh' but Paul is not describing the flesh substance, but the owner or possessor of it, personified as a Bond master. Dr. Thomas uses both terms 'Flesh of Sin' and 'Sin's flesh'; but sadly in some parts of his writing he destroys the very teaching of St Paul by using the incorrect translation of Romans 8:3. God could not send His Son in a nature or flesh owned by a Bond Master but the flesh of Jesus was the same likeness as Sin's Slaves.

Joseph was sold for a slave into Egypt but his flesh did not change as a result. If my correspondent relied on Dr Thomas' understanding in quoting him from Eureka, how is it that he did not read his explanation of the meaning of redemption also written in Eureka Vol.1 page 30 as follows: "Redemption is release for a ransom; all who become God's servants have been released from a former Lord by purchase. The Purchaser is God and the ransom paid is the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot or blemish." And don't anyone tell me this latter refers to the character of Christ; it refers to the body of the lamb legally clean under the Law and not subject to death by Law, even as Jesus, its antitype. Did not Jesus address His critics "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"

It is time people learned the difference, that temptation is not sin, and where no law is there is no transgression. Paul in Romans says "I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me." What law is it he has found to cause the knowledge of evil to be present when elsewhere he pronounces it to be Holy, just and good? Personating himself as an unregenerated Jew unconverted to Christ he speaks of the Law of sin and death which was added under Moses that the offence committed by Adam might abound, showing that until dying through Christ unto the ownership of Master Sin, no matter how much good he wanted to do, it profited him nothing, being still under Sin. (See Galatians 3:22, but Romans 8:1,2).

If, as Dr Thomas mistakenly thought and taught in Eureka Vol. 2, that sin was in the physical flesh common to all men and taught by all the Apostles, I would like to know where it revealed itself in Jesus in

order for it to be condemned. I repeat again that if Dr. Thomas had not died in 1871 and had associated himself with Edward Turney, he would not have been so confused with the subject, but its more than strange that he did not believe in 1869 that Adam's transgression brought about an element of Sin in the flesh, but that the change was moral not physical.

I also challenge any modern day Christadelphian to show me or quote me any Holy Scripture which states that when Adam transgressed his flesh and blood nature was changed. O yes, you can quote it to me from the B.A.S.F. and confirmation as stated in most Christadelphian literature and Logos-type magazines of the various divided Ecclesias but the Christ of the Holy Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles is not among them.

My correspondent may be off the scene and cannot reply to these comments but they may be some help to those people who are privileged to read them. I pray so for as I feel now, this may be my last effort in the cause of the Truth which so many Nazarenes past and present have witnessed to.

Brother Phil Parry.

We reproduce below correspondence between Brother Jim Granter of Australia and ourselves, (the attached documents referred to can be found on pages 21 to 28):

Dear Nazarene Fellowship Brethren,

About our Society: We are a small Christadelphian Society established 4 years ago. We :

- a) seek to expound the scriptures faithfully without reference for interpretation to any human writings, Acts 17.11, 12;
- b) make the basis of interpretation, CONTEXT; THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF WORDS; APOSTOLIC EXPLANATIONS; and RATIONALITY, Acts 17.2;
- c) provide many studies on the scriptures on that basis – a list can be provided upon request;
- d) seek to draw the much divided Christadelphian community into one harmonious whole, based on Ephesians 4.1-6 i.e. a sufficient, sound understanding of the essential of Bible teaching..

The writer has been receiving your literature and Circular Letters for some years now – many things (but not all) I would agree with you on. Many thanks for your “labour of love.”

Purpose of this e-mail:

I would be most interested to know if you would be able to share your fellowship and worship if one of attached documents were generally offered to Christadelphians of all fellowships, of which there are about 35+ around the world.

I realize you reject all human statements of faith. However there is a case for a fairly simple, entirely scriptural one as alone having the ability to gain general acceptance and unity. We believe, with you, that the BASF is seriously deficient in “speaking as the oracles of God” and cannot be used as a unity document to gather “the children of God that are scattered abroad.”

The main problem that divides brethren is the nature of man as a result of sin and sentence, and therefore of Christ and the atonement of God in Him. Since my retirement I have written 4 e-books addressing problems of interpretation of them (No. 3. ‘*Guide to Bible Problems*’ deals specifically with them). Also, what doctrines or understandings would you consider essential to be accepted for your fellowship because critical to salvation. Please express your views clearly, simply and provide the supporting scriptures.

Yours in Christ by faith, Jim Granter.

* * *

Reply to The Bible Lovers International Society:

Dear Brother Jim, Thank you for your enquiry regarding the possibility of sharing fellowship and worship if one of your attached documents were generally offered to Christadelphians of all fellowships. Also for your request for what doctrines or understanding we would consider essential to be accepted for fellowship because critical for salvation.

First of all I wish to say that my first reaction on receiving your e-mail was one of joy at reading of your desire to –

- a) seek to expound the scriptures faithfully without reference for interpretation to any human writings.
- b) make the basis of interpretation, context; the original meaning of words; apostolic explanations; and rationality.
- c) provide many studies on the scriptures on that basis.

However, when I read –

- d) ‘seek to draw the much divided Christadelphian community into one harmonious whole, based on Ephesians 4:1-6,’ I see this as impossible arising from the fact that the body mentioned in Ephesians 4:4 which you referred to is the body of Christ, and is not the Christadelphian body or that of any other church. It should be obvious that this is not our work but the Lord’s. Even bringing together the jumble of 35+ incongruent Christadelphian factions into a harmonious whole could not possibly achieve any comparable body such as Paul refers to – it could never become the body of Christ.

You say in your e-mail that you agree with much of what we believe, and you will no doubt have read what we print on the back cover of all our booklets regarding how we have come to our present understanding. Do you feel there are points that we need to revise or do you feel that we are close enough to Christadelphian teaching as makes little difference?

Many brethren and sisters have asked for clearly and simply expressed views with supporting scriptures and while this may be very desirable, it is not possible for anyone to produce them. Proverbs 25:2 comes to mind – “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” If matters could be put clearly and simply there would not be two thousand or so denominations in the world today.

Nevertheless, we all try to show our beliefs and understanding, and to this end I have posted you a copy of “Why Jesus Christ Chose to Die” an article I wrote several years ago (and now feel it needs more emphasis on the importance of baptism in order to show the Federal principle – that we have to come out of Adam in order to be in Christ). There are of course other subjects we do well to agree on, such as the judgment and immortal resurrection, but I do not see these as essential for our salvation.

I forwarded a copy of your proposal to several of the Nazarene Fellowship and am now able to give you a summary of their thoughts on the matter. Although I have not received responses from some to whom I sent copies I feel the following is a fair assessment of those who have replied:

Regarding the “ACSF,” please see pages 19 to end of this C.L., which appears to be a revision of the B.A.S.F., it is generally felt there is little improvement and certainly not enough improvement in the things that matter. One writer has said that the scrapping of the B.A.S.F. is the only solution and that further study of the Scriptures in comparison with Nazarene views is needed. It appears that some of the views of their (your) former Editor, John Bell, which were in keeping with Nazarene Fellowship views, have now been rejected in favour of Christadelphian error.

You say, “The main problem that divides brethren is the nature of man as a result of sin and sentence.” We sat it is Clause V of the B.A.S.F. which has caused almost all the problems, with R. Roberts opposing the

view of Dr Thomas who said two years before the end of his life that the nature of Adam was not changed by his sin.

“If Jim Granter,” writes one correspondent, “has read much of our literature and Circular Letters I wonder what the “not all” consists of which he does not agree with?”

You speak of a house of prayer being rebuilt and quote Ezekiel 37:20-28, but it says “My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” This is what St Paul says of the Corinthians, “Ye are the Temple of the Living God and He will dwell with you...” But St John, in Revelation says, “I saw no Temple therein for the Lord God and the Lamb are the Temple of it.”

Another writes, “I am afraid Jim Granter has not discarded much of Christadelphian theories and traditions and has left it rather late to gain “a unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” before our Lord’s return. If, for all these years, the Christadelphians have denied having the gift of the Spirit, how can they unify it at all? Not only so but I have heard them quote Jesus as saying, “When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?””

Here are some comments regarding the statements in the “ACSF”:-

- Statement 4. Comment:** Not natural death. This was a fact of creation, not by sin.
- Statement 5. Comment:** “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surly die.” This is the Law of Sin and Death
- Statement 6. Comment:** The sentence was as above – to die in the day of transgression. But God in His mercy provided a way out. The result of His mercy was continued life outside of Eden. However, there seems to be confusion here as to the understanding of “mortal.”
- Statement 7. Comment:** Let’s be consistent – Jesus was the Redeemer from the Law of Sin and Death. This redemption took place when Jesus was crucified. Redemption is past. Deliverance is future. The same word is used in Greek but in English we recognise that redemption requires a price to be paid for deliverance.
- Statement 9. Comment:** In 6 above Adam became mortal when he transgressed. Here you say Jesus was born mortal, so what was the purpose of the Virgin Birth? Jesus was never condemned under the Law of Sin and Death. His victory was for us.
- Statement 10. Comment:** If Adam was made mortal after he transgressed in Eden, why should Jesus as Son of God be born mortal? You agree mortal means subject to death by Law and that Jesus never broke the Law. We say Jesus was born of God to be in the same position as Adam at his creation. He was never concluded under the sin of the first Adam and therefore not mortal. If Jesus was concluded under the sin of Adam he could not redeem Himself or anyone else. We are redeemed from being concluded under the sin of Adam. That’s what Jesus came to do for us.
- Statement 11. Comment:** You say “He suffered like all others, in the effects of Adam’s sin – suffering and death.” No! God does not impute the sins of the fathers to their children. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.” (Ezekiel 18). The first effect of Adam’s sin was to have been judicial death, which he didn’t suffer and this Jesus suffered in his place. Natural death and return to dust were from creation and for the faithful are a rest from ones labours.
- Statement 13. Comment:** You say “Jesus offered to God his sinless life unto death upon the cross as “an offering for sin”.” We say it was not His sinless life which He offered in sacrifice but His life in the blood as befits the types. God tells us in Leviticus 17:11 “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for your soul.” On the cross Jesus sacrificed His life in the blood and this was the blood of the New Covenant as Jesus declared at the Last Supper – Matthew 26:28, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The animals that were sacrificed for sin did not lay down sinless lives.

Again you say, “God can justly forgive the sins of those who come unto Him through Jesus in the appointed way.” No! God grants forgiveness mercifully and graciously for Jesus sake, but not justly.

Statement 14. Comment: The Truth makes free. What are we freed from? It cannot be natural death as we all die that death. Jesus did not save us from natural death. We are freed from the legal sentence of the Law of Sin and Death (Romans 8:1).

Statement 18. Comment: The gospel consists of one element – forgiveness through Jesus sacrifice.

Statement 21. Comment: The Christadelphian teaching on the judgment-seat of Christ is not Bible teaching.

Statement 27. Comment: The unfaithful will receive the second death at the end of the millennial reign! If raised with the faithful at Jesus return, will they live another thousand years before receiving the just reward for sin?

Statement 30. Comment: The faithful only of all past ages will be resurrected at Jesus return. During the millennial reign there will be many who never die. The unfaithful will be raised at the end of the millennium to die the second death. Your ‘general’ resurrection appears to be at Christ’s return.

Statement 31. Comment: You say “God’s great plan for the earth... (was) temporarily delayed because of sin...” But this is not the case at all. The Laws of God for man to live by were for the building of character. This was necessary in order to establish a population of righteous people for the Kingdom of God. There was no delay but a steady continuation of God’s plan throughout.

Regarding your list of “The First Principle of Revealed Truth” we find the following:

Sections 1 and 2 are good. **Section 3** “About God’s Spirit Miracles of healing have continued to happen in answer to prayer, besides which the Gift of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily refer to miracles of healing, for we read that John the Baptist was “filled with the Holy Spirit from birth” “Yet John did no miracle.” At baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit. This is not different to the Spirit of Christ.

4 b & c. We question why you word your views so badly? **b.** Why not say, ‘God gave Jesus life’ and **c.** you say “God did not send Jesus to live a sinless life”; but we say, “Jesus chose to live a sinless life.”

5 j. Why does Jesus need the assistance of approved faithful disciples of all ages to hand over the kingdom to God?

6 a. No! God did not “sentence them to a slow, but sure death in His judgment of sin.” This is misunderstanding of scripture. Adam and Eve were not warned of any such death. “Dying thou shalt die” means the certainty of death in the day of transgression. This did not take place because Adam and Eve were redeemed when the animal/s was slain to provide them a covering. “Dying thou shalt die” is an expression used about a dozen times in the Old Testament and it never means a slow or natural death – it always, I repeat, always refers to judicial death – a slaying or putting to a premature death.

6 b. Again, No! Natural death was already in the world. Man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts of the field, as one dieth so dieth the other. It was always so from creation of all life. Natural death is not the wages of sin. The second death is the wages of sin.

6 d. The term mortal cannot be used of Christ. Mortal means subject to death as required by breaking the Law of Sin and Death. The word ‘mortal’ is used very loosely nowadays but in scripture it carries the meaning of ‘subject to death per law’. This is how it was used by theologians during the time of Dr Thomas.

Jesus had a life direct from His Father and not from Adam. Adam sold himself to sin and all in him. Jesus belonged to God and He never sold Himself to sin. He could lay down His life because it was His own to give for the sin of the world. It was the Virgin Birth that placed Jesus in this strong position; His life was His own which He laid down for us of His own free-will.

6 e. The law of sin and death is over all mankind from birth. (“In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” is the Law of Sin and Death). However, it does not apply until one has knowledge of it. Where there is no law there is no sin.

8 b. As the second death takes place at the end of the thousand year’s reign of Jesus, are we to assume that the unfaithful who are sentenced to return to the earth will live through the thousand years reign? It makes good sense to believe that only the elect are raised when Jesus returns and they are raised immortal as we are told in Corinthians.

This, I believe is a good summary of the views and comments of the Nazarene Fellowship. It may be disappointing to you in some ways, as we know you are looking for unity within the Christadelphian brotherhood. However, we can only reply as we see these things and feel our more urgent need is to seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and pray for His Kingdom to come.

Indeed may Jesus come quickly. With Love in His Name. On behalf of The Nazarene Fellowship –
Russell Gregory.

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Response from Bro. Jim Granter:

Dear bro. Russell, This replies to yours of 17th May

I regret to note that your reply to my two main questions seem to be:

1. **'No. We cannot accept the documents offered'**. Yet very little reasonable criticism is offered.
2. **'We prefer not to list the doctrines that we Nazarenes believe are essential for fellowship and salvation'**. Why is that?

P.1 – 5th para. Re d).

The Body of Christ comprises those of all ages, nations, people and tongues who have believed the gospel of Acts 8.12 and been baptised into Christ – whatever might have been their denominational name, Rev 5.9; 7.9: Gal.3. 25-29. God is concerned with eternal realities not human limitations. If Rev. 5.11 is to be taken literally then the redeemed will comprise very few who had the name Christadelphians, or Nazarenes, and comprise many more than we like to think! But they will all be Heb2.9-13 – all, if faithful, “the Body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4.4 is the Body that Christ will acknowledge as His own. They have fulfilled **His** terms of inclusion into it – a scriptural faith made perfect by good works, Mark 16.15, 16. They will **all** have His Spirit. I prefer to accept all brethren of whatever faction, or group including you Nazarene brethren on the basis that we all believe the same, simple, essential fundamentals – the Gospel and baptism. We are at variance largely on crochets created by traditional doctrines, and crotchety brethren. But if we put them to one side and just have the scripture before us we would largely, probably wholly agree with the great things of God. Some would perhaps insist on this or on that – which can only be entertained if it is **ESSENTIAL, REVEALED GOSPEL**. That’s what my earlier document sent you was all about. I attach another, even simpler, which I have just sent to my ecclesia for consideration for use in ‘outreach.’

Each member of the Body of Christ considers others better than themselves and therefore “receives one another” without arguing about doubtful things – and certainly not excluding over shibboleths of man’s making – Romans 15.1-7.

It does seem that bringing 35+ groups into one harmoniously whole seems impossible given the often critical and separatist nature of some. But what is impossible with man is possible with God – provided we can get brethren to be reasonable and scriptural, Acts 17.2, and prefer the other rather than themselves after the spirit of John Baptist. It will be I’m sure that ALL of the 35+ fellowships will be at the Judgement Seat and each one belonging to those different fellowships will be judged on the same basis – belief and obedience to the Gospel – not whether they have a card, or ‘letter of commendation’ – or kept separate from others they consider unfaithful.

So, The Body of Christ is **THE** ideal that we **all** want to belong to, and be recognised as; and we “examine ourselves” to see if we are what we claim. We do not (or at least ought not) reject one another or other fellowships thinking “we have no need of thee” or, ‘you are beyond the pale’.

6th para. 1. Nazarene brethren appear to have a Substitutionary Christ, an ‘other Christ’; not a Representative one, a ‘same Christ’. 2. That “on the day” meant on the very same 24 hour day (when “day” can and

probably did mean a much longer period). 3. God bought back Adam and Eve from immediate, literal, violent death the exact day they sinned by the blood of the slain lambs; and we are bought back, purchased by the blood of Christ on the cross.

God meant what he said and when they disobeyed he carried it out by removing them from the Garden, presumably on that very day. Then “dying they (began to) surely die” though it was not accomplished nine hundred or so years later! They were denied that, which as corruptible beings, kept them alive day by day. It may have been the tree of life, as bro. Harvey believed. It may just have been unpolluted water, air and food. We are not precisely told. Denied the perfect “very good” environment of the Garden they slowly but surely died – just as we are ‘born to die’ and are ‘dying daily’. There was NO change of nature, just change of environment and life-style with attendant toil and sorrow. Much more than just ‘a lost status.’

7th para. It IS possible to Eph.4.3 else the apostle would not exhort to it. That he then goes on to enumerate the 7 great principles of that “unity” – which must indicate the apostles had some such simple agreed basis.

P. 2 1st para. ‘Little improvement’ .

You’ve got to be joking! I have written a critique of both the BASF and the Oz Unity Agreement – and both leave much to be desired. Not having bro. John Bell’s views at hand I cannot assess if his and Nazarene are the same. Agreed that ‘Shield’ views have largely been swamped by traditional Central which lean toward ‘Old Paths’ views, such as,

sin-in-the-flesh; sin inevitable; Jesus’ nature a sin-nature; God was right in crucifying that sin-nature because by his death sin was condemned in the flesh; Adam and Eve’s sin made the whole race sin-prone; God changed their nature from a non-mortal nature to a mortal nature – and some other fallacies like everyone who knows God’s will will be resurrected even if they have not been in a covenant with God.

However, if any one claims to have ‘all truth and no error’ they make a very bold claim indeed.

4th para. Just as during the Mosaic era there was a literal Tabernacle then a literal temple; whilst at the same time God dwelt with and in living people as his spiritual temple, so it will be in the Kingdom. An “house of prayer for all nations” plus God’s living house or Temple His faithful people. Now, of course there is only the second whilst we await the King of Glory.

5th para. WHERE has ‘Jim Granter not discarded much of Christadelphian theories and traditions’? The studies do not quote ONE Christadelphian author or work. Are they not scripturally reasoned and proofed?

p.2 – 5th para. ‘the gift of the spirit’ is not one of the miraculous gifts given the first century believers which ceased, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. It is whatever gift or talent of service God has given us equipping us to serve the brethren. E.g., my gift seems to be in writing about the scriptures but I am a poor administrator and poorer committee man.

Agree with all the comments except where already further commented upon and hereafter.

We all inherit from Adam and Eve the natural death of “dying you will die.” That was made effectual because of Adam’s sin. They were created corruptible but that was arrested whilst in the Garden. Outside it they “surely died.” We die because we are born to die; and because we have ourselves sinned and are worthy of its wages.

“Mortal” just means ‘subject the death’ or ‘certain to die’ – the ‘by Law’ has been added and is correct insofar as “Law of nature” in that death is what God has determined for all flesh – animals and humans in fact everything out of the ground. Everything has its ‘use by’ date!

Yes Jesus was not condemned flesh. He never sinned so couldn’t have been under condemnation. But like us he was born mortal and suffered the effects of Adam’s condemnation, “dying you will die.”

The angel Gabriel used God's Holy Spirit-Power to effect Jesus miraculous conception. It is NOT implied otherwise as is suggested.

The making of a 'judicial death' and 'death by law' as different to natural corruptibility made certain to die is a manufacture.

We believe the 'federal principle' of Romans 5 – Adam the federal Head of sin and Death; Christ the federal Head of Righteousness and life. But our documents are first principles for baptism, so more difficult concepts aren't essential.

Was Jesus not born a mortal baby? Would he not have died sooner or later? Jesus' life was not direct from the Father for the conception was not of that nature. Jesus was son of God by origin but the son of man by Mary. Origin from God was necessary for God was not giving another man's son BUT HIS OWN! And part of the necessary conquest of sin was to establish a Father-Son relationship. Jesus knew his origin was God – not Joseph.

The law of sin and death is not gained from birth. It is gained only when one sins and by his sin becomes worthy of its wages. It must be read in context following Romans 7 where the operations of the law of sin and death are autobiographically revealed in the experience of Saul of Tarsus, who only came to know sin and the fear of death "when the law came" to his adult consciousness, v. 9.

Yes, I am very disappointed. It suggests the kind of response I will get from most, if not all fellowships – including my own:-

'Sorry. Leave us alone were happy as we are – we don't want to know anything knew or different. We may have it wrong, may have to reconsider our special views and we might have to change a little for the purpose of spiritual unity. So we must regretfully ignore Ephesians 4:1-6 and hope the Lord will forgive us, for He is gracious. My place in the Kingdom is more important than uniting the seriously divided Body of Christ and joining with the Lord in his John 17 prayer.'

All the best for the future. Your brother in the Body of Christ, Jim

* * *

Reply from Phil Parry:

Dear Brother Jim Granter,

Re page 2 (of your letter): The Gifts of the Spirit. Please note Paul mentions certain Gifts but also of the One Spirit and the Truth is that valid baptism is of water and Spirit. Note Jesus to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" so the Old Man is substituted for the New Man – "Passed from death to life" – John 5:24.

St Paul says to the Corinthians, "I would not have you ignorant brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud and passed through the sea, and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." This was an introduction into the covenant under Moses, not under Jesus. In His death we are baptised into One Spirit, the Spirit of Life. See Romans 8:1 to 15 and please note verse 13 for is it not a fact that if you are righteous and Christ has not returned you will die a natural death?

On the above subject I could write much more if my sight was better.

Now let us discard any adding to God's Word and taking away from it when difficulty arises in answering correctly under circumstances that seem to be an obstacle but is the result of not rightly dividing the Word of Truth – God's Word.

Was not Genesis written by a person of the same language which Adam would have known and spoken through the knowledge and understanding he received of the Creator? If as you agree Adam was corruptible, a dying creature with a limited span of life, then to cut short his life is an interruption of the process of decay and death which Paul describes as "the death by sin," - an inflicted death.

The same language God used to Adam, God used to Abimelech – Genesis 20:3, “Thou shalt surely die,” meaning an inflicted death by some means. In Adam’s case we believe it would have been by the shedding of his blood, but legally he was already as was Abimelech, “thou art a dead man.” Adam, Romans 15. Abimelech, Genesis 20:7. If through the offence of one many are dead, it cannot mean they are dead physically but legally, as in the case of Abimelech, until he did what God told him – “Restore the man his wife.”

To Adam a literal day comprised the evening and the morning and we have no authority from God to say it was a thousand years.

Where also was the need for Adam’s limited nature toward ultimate natural cessation of life to be arrested while in the Garden for such a short period in any case when after his exit he lived around 900 years with no access to the Tree of Life? To call this “Dying thou shalt die” is mere assumption and not what the penalty “Surely die” and “Dying thou shalt die” means as synonymous terms. Both terms apply to inflicted death.

As I have seen it for years and see it at present, “As long as Adam remained in the Garden he had right to eat of the Tree of Life and was not in a position of alienation from the Paradise of God until he ate of the forbidden fruit and lost that abiding place. He was barred from restoration to the Garden but the way to the Tree of Life was kept open in a typical and provisional sense through the acknowledgment of the blood of the Lamb of God that spared the lives of Adam and Eve that they might fulfil God’s purpose of reproduction unto the coming of Jesus to ratify by His blood all the promises of God in Him. The Cherubim with flaming sword turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life. There was no climbing up some other way for us as Jesus said – “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Did not Abel learn this from Adam and offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain in the blood of the firstling of the flock? And was it not accepted through the Cherubim who represented God?

What Able did has been demonstrated through men of faith from Eden to Calvary as typical of the sacrificial death of Jesus in the place of Adam or we would not have existed.

It is through the Grace of God and His Son that we can have hope of eternal life (not of works) yet some fail to grasp that the Federal Principle taught by St Paul in Romans is the key to the whole matter of Salvation by Grace and the shedding of blood of a willing victim “The Prince of Life.” They that worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth, one cannot do this unless one has the Spirit and Truth, therefore I do not accept that anything of that power died with the Apostle especially as Paul includes miracles in the Gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:28. This also in the Body of Christ. If one quotes natural death as being the wages of sin then the Gift of Eternal Life is not available, you have completed your service to Sin personified as a Master and accept his wages as natural death - which is not the true context of what Paul is teaching. You do not need to serve any master to experience natural death; it is an appointment of man’s nature from creation. Again, the reason the flesh of Jesus was not condemned, you say is because He did not sin, but nowhere in Scripture does it teach that the flesh was condemned.

Yet it is Christadelphian teaching in the BASF that Jesus was raised up in the condemned line of David and Abraham and wearing their condemned nature and a sinless bearer of it making Him in effect a physical man with a separate man inside having two fathers. The Scripture styles Him the Seed of the woman and Mary the Seed of David according to the flesh but the Seed of Eve was not condemned.

You say, “We die because we have sinned.” This is not the Federal teaching of Paul in Romans, for even when made righteous in Christ Jesus, we still die a natural death.

We were not even born when Jesus died on the Cross so He could not be said to have died for our personal sins, but His death does have its effect on us for good when we have died in symbol with Him by valid baptism.

I have always taken it that Son of man means Jesus was of the same nature as Adam at Creation, therefore condemnation of flesh nature does not come into it. When Jesus was born of Mary this did not

make Him unclean and Mary was only unclean legally and after offering the requirements of the Law she was legally clean, her physical flesh was unaltered. I remember writing on the subject of equality, the justice and equality of which God speaks in Ezekiel in the context of the Law of Moses where a certain act brought the penalty of death by infliction, for example, stoning. The equality of God's way is mentioned in Ezekiel 18 and I did emphasise that the penalty upon Adam for breach of God's Law was equal, whereas natural death is not; some people die in pain and agony, whether wicked or righteous, this is not what the Law required. The penalty must be just and equal. It was so with Adam's sin, but Jesus met the requirement Adam had incurred, a natural life in the place of a natural life. Return to dust was not a part of the penalty on Adam but a result of his redemption and having to wait the appointed time of the resurrection if approved of God.

I do not know whether you are aware that a true statement by Dr Thomas in "Elpis Israel" (in reference to Jesus as the "Substitutional Testator" – Page 213 in the original edition) was altered in a later edition because it supported Jesus as being a substitute, which, to all Christadelphians of the BASF was at one time an ugly term, yet they, with yourself should know that this is the teaching of God Himself and shown to be so in the ritual types and sacrifices in the Law of Moses. It was so important that people were to refrain from drinking the blood wherein was the life of the flesh, for as God said to those under His covenant, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls," this has never been altered up to the present time. Reject it and you reject God's offer of salvation in the Gift of His Son and the Apostle Paul stated of Gentiles (not Jews), "The Gifts and calling of God are without repentance," as with Isaiah 53 mainly addressed to the suffering of Christ and Israel's rejection of Him. The latter part speaks of Gentiles as the many under Adam's sin and their included justification, "My righteous servant shall justify many." (verse 12).

I have read so much error by Dr Thomas in both his books, "Elpis Israel" and "Eureka" even that the animal creation had sin in the flesh and were not as Adam was – under Law after being placed in the Garden.

You appear to believe you only have redemption at the second coming of Christ, but this is contrary to the statement of Peter to the believers who were already the subject of redemption through the blood of Christ, "Ye have not been redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ."

I sincerely hope that God will bless your understanding to the end that if your friends do not come to a full realisation of the truth of the Gospel, you will see it yourself and take the step of removal from the environment of erroneous doctrines causing strife and seditions leading to continual disunity which already exists in Christadelphia in general.

I do not wish to offend you, but when you want unity of Christadelphia and remain one, I can only say that when a person professes to the title Christadelphian, it is acceptance of all the errors of doctrine under that banner because I know their whereabouts having had 17 years experience. I will now end with some important advice and warning from Jesus seeing that the Word of God is still available - Revelation 22:10-12. This is the finality, for as a snare will his coming be to those who rejoice only in the pleasures of this life.

Our motive is to enlighten to The Truth not to personally attack people whom God has not yet given His light in all its fullness.

Sincerely Yours in the patient waiting for Christ.

Phil and Rene Parry with other Nazarenes.

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A CHRISTADELPHIAN STATEMENT OF FAITH (ACSF)

A 2006 revision of THE BIRMINGHAM AMENDED STATEMENT OF FAITH (BASF), 1908 – offered to all Christadelphians of all fellowships with a view to our gaining, before the Lord’s coming, the commanded “unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Foreword

Because “without faith it is impossible to please God” and “faith comes from hearing the word of God”, it is essential that everything believed be founded on the Word of God itself. Therefore scripture references are supplied after statement items to prove their veracity.

The apostle Paul commended the Thessalonian brethren because they received God’s Word rather than the word of men, 1Thessalonians 2:13. He so spoke and wrote that the Corinthian brethren’s “faith stood not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”, 1 Corinthians 2:5. Scripture itself commends the Berean Jews who became brethren of Christ because they “heard the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were so”, Acts 17:11,12.

We are wise to follow these examples so that, with God’s blessing, both the content and the quality of their faith may be ours. “Without faith it is impossible to please God”, Hebrews 11:6. But with faith, because God is faithful to His promises, “the just shall live by his faithfulness, Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.

1. THE FOUNDATION. - The Bible is the only present source of knowledge concerning God and His purpose. It was wholly given by inspiration of God and is without errors except those of transcription or translation. I Corinthians 2:12,13; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

2. The only true God revealed Himself by angels to Israel’s fathers; and most clearly in our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the ONE FATHER who dwells in, and is light in heaven. By His Spirit power He is everywhere, and knows all things; and created all things. Deuteronomy 6:4; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5.

3. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin Jewess, Mary. At his baptism God anointed him with The Holy Spirit without measure. Matthew 26:63, 64; John 20:31; Romans 1:1-4.

4. The coming of Jesus became necessary because man’s first parents brought “sin’s entrance into the world and death by sin”. Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:9, 10

5. Our first parents were Adam and Eve. God created Adam from the dust of the ground, and gave him the breath of life to become a living soul or being. He was “very good” in nature and circumstances in a garden in Eden, God created Eve from a rib from Adam’s side, granted their union in marriage and commanded they “be fruitful and multiply”. God gave them one law to continue to obey for continued life and to avoid the threatened death for disobedience, Genesis 1:31; 2:7, 17-25.

6. Eve, then Adam broke God’s law. Eve was sentenced to much sorrow in conception and childbirth, and subjected to Adam’s over-rule. Adam was sentenced to sorrow in hard work, a ground cursed, and to slowly die and return to the ground. Thereafter all his descendants, by the physical law that ‘like begets like’ are born mortal. Genesis 3:1-19.

7. In His goodness and merciful kindness, and before sentencing them, in the Covenant in Eden, God promised a Redeemer who would die, but who would become mankind’s Redeemer from sin and from death. By Him God would rescue the race from destruction. By those who believe God, He would populate the earth with righteous immortals. Genesis 3:15.

8. God's plan for human redemption was further explained in His covenants with Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, and David, King of Israel. Greater details were afterwards provided by the prophets of Israel. Genesis 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:17-21; 17:3-8; 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:10,16; Luke 24:25,27.

9. All of God's covenants about a "seed" referred to Jesus Christ. He was to be raised up by God out of mankind in the line of Adam, Abraham and David. Like the people He came to redeem, he would be entirely a mortal, temptable human. But by being perfectly obedient to all the will of God, even to death upon the cross, Jesus would be victorious over sin, and so also over death, for God would raise him, All who believe and baptized into Christ, are made "free from the law of sin and death", for they become related "in Christ" to righteousness and life. Galatians 3:16; 4:4,5; Hebrews 2:9-18; 4:14-16; Romans chs. 3 to 8.

10. God's plan for the redemption of repentant sinners required that the Redeemer be "born of a woman, born under the Law to redeem those that are under law"; and also redeem Gentiles outside the Law. Because it is impossible for man to redeem himself, it was necessary that God both initiate and complete the great work of redemption. He initiated it getting an angel to use His Holy Spirit to generate conception, without Joseph, in the womb of Mary, his human mother, so making him at the one and same time both "the son of man" and "the Son of God". Being "the man Christ Jesus", he was born mortal as we all are. But being "the Son of God", having God as a perfect Father, Guide and Helper, Jesus could, if he chose to surrender his own will to that of God's, be a sinless bearer of our identical nature, living in a sinful world. Galatians 4:4,5; Ephesians 2:11,22; Romans 8:3,4; Luke 1:26,35; Matthew 11:19; John 20:31; 1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 26:39; Hebrews 10:5-14; 2 Timothy 1:9,10; 1 Peter 2:21-25; Romans 5:12.

11. Jesus fully co-operated with God, His Father, and so knew, loved and obeyed God's Word that he became "the Word become flesh" - the morality of God and the predictions of the prophets living in a man. Such were His words and works that Israel, and we, following His example, become assured that by him God is with us, Immanuel. He so reflected the character and will of His Father that He could say, "Who has seen me has seen the Father" and "I and my Father are one". Yet He suffered, like all others, in the effects of Adam's sin - suffering and death - for he was of the same identical nature as those he came to redeem. John 1:14; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; John 10:30; 14:10; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 2 John 7.

12. Jesus' message from God to Israel, and now to us, was to repent, or change one's life from selfishness and sin to God. He preached "the gospel of the kingdom of God" illustrating its certainty and power, and his Messiahship by the many miracles he wrought. By many teachings and parables Jesus showed the faith necessary to attain that Kingdom, predicted by all the prophets, when it comes. Matthew 4:17,23; chs.5 - 7.

13. "He came to His own domain, but His own people received him not". Though at first very popular and appreciated, Jesus became "despised and rejected of men and acquainted with grief. Israel's spiritual leaders, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and lawyers were jealous of Jesus and felt threatened by his popularity. So they turned the feeling of the people of Israel against him by many false accusations, so seriously damaging his reputation. At last they got Judas, one of Jesus' own disciples, to betray him to them. Then they condemned him, and handed him over to the Romans demanding his death by crucifixion. Unknowingly, they all combined together to fulfil the predictions of the prophets. God used their hated and evil deeds to effect what He wanted done - to provide the Son of His love as man's Redeemer and to show the world His great love for it, despite its sins. After his resurrection and ascension to heaven Jesus, offered to God his sinless life unto death upon the cross as "an offering for sin", and to believers in Him as an example of what God can do in one who wholly trusts Him, Jesus' obedience pleased and honoured God as Sovereign Father. The problem of sin was condemned in the person of one who could have sinned but chose not so to do because of His love for God. God's just requirement that man be obedient to him having been proved to be just, God can justly forgive the sins of those who come unto Him through Jesus in the appointed way. They must believe the Gospel, be baptised into Christ, repent and turn away from their sins, and ask God's merciful forgiveness "in Jesus' name". In a figure of speech, "Jesus blood cleanses from all sin", i.e. when God's people try to copy Jesus' sinless life of selflessness and surrender, God forgives and purifies them. John 1:11; Matthew 27:18; John 11:48; 13:2; Mark 15:13,14; Matthew 27:35; John 3:16,17; Isaiah 53:10; 1 Peter 21-25; Romans 8:3, 4; Mark 16:15,16; Hebrews 4:16; John 14:14; 1 John 1:7.

14. The third day after Jesus death, our Sunday, God raised Jesus from the dead. He has exalted him to sit at His right hand as “Mediator between God and man.” Having been a man like us, he can empathize with the feelings of our infirmities, and help us in all our needs. Since his exaltation God has continued to “call out of the nations a people for His name” by their belief and obedience of the truth. Luke 24:46; Acts 2:33; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14,16; Acts 15:14; Romans 1:15; 16:26.

15. As God’s high priest over God’s house, Jesus does not intercede for the world or for those who profess the truth, but deny its power to correct, convert and change. He intercedes for his brethren who have erred but who confess and forsake their sins. John 17:9; 1 John 5:16; Titus 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:5; 1 John 1:9.

16. Jesus sent forth his apostles to preach the kingdom of God and proclaim that Jesus Christ is “the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 4.12.

17. The promised salvation will be for those who believe “the things concerning the Gospel of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ”, are baptized by immersion in water, so taking on the name and service of Christ, and thereafter continue patiently in the observance of all things he has commanded. He will recognize none else as his brethren, and at His judgment, approve none else. Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:12; Romans 2:7; John 15:14.

18. The gospel consists of two elements: i) the things about the Kingdom of God; ii) the things about Jesus Christ. Acts 8.12; 28.31

19. The things about the Kingdom of God is the main theme of the Old Testament; whilst the main theme of the New Testament is the things about Jesus Christ. Both Testaments of course teach both, Daniel 2:44; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; 7:27; Micah 4:8; Romans 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15; 8:9.

20. God will set up His kingdom on this earth, and change the many kingdoms of men into “the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ”. Daniel 2:44; 7:27; Revelation 11:15.

21. “In the latter days” at the end of “the times of the Gentiles”. God will send Jesus personally back to this earth to Judge the saints and set up the Kingdom in Jerusalem, Israel. Luke 21:24, 36; Acts 6-11; 3:19-21.

22. The Kingdom will be the kingdom of David and Israel restored in the land promised by covenant to Abraham and His seed - Christ, the saints, and converted Jews. Acts 6:11; 2:29-36; Daniel 7:14,18,22,27.

23. After converting the Jews in present Israel, Jesus will send Elijah to ingather into Israel the remainder of God’s chosen but still largely scattered people, the Jews in other nations, Jerusalem and a “house of prayer for all nations” will be rebuilt as “the throne of the Lord” and “the city of the great king”- the capital of the world-wide Kingdom of God on earth. Romans 11:25-32; Zechariah ch. 12; Ezekiel 34:11-16; 36:6-15; 37:20-28; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 3:17; Matthew 5:35.

24. The Kings and priests of that Kingdom will be the resurrected and approved brethren of Christ, comprising faithful Jews and gentiles of all ages, generations and nations. They will collectively be “the seed of Abraham” by which “all nations shall be blessed”. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Revelation 1:6; 5:9,10; 7:9,10; Galatians 3:8, 26-29; Genesis 12:3.

25. Jesus will establish a universal law of faith for the instruction in righteousness of all nations which will be rigorously enforced if not voluntarily accepted. The result will be “peace on earth and goodwill towards all men”; the abolition of all war, disease, famine, poverty, corruption, sin and eventually death. The earth will be “filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea”. Zechariah 14:16,19; Luke 2:14; Psalm 46:9; 1 Corinthians 15:24,26; Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14.

26. When Christ comes, and before he establishes the kingdom, he will judge his people, living and dead (who will be resurrected) and will give them “according to their works” causing them to “receive in body as they have done, whether good or evil”. His people are all those of every age who have made a

covenant with God in the appointed way. In our day, that way is by belief of the Gospel and baptism into Christ. Psalm 50:1.6; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Mark 16:15,16.

27. The unfaithful who have not obeyed God by keeping Christ's commandments will receive "the second death" - a return to the ground in eternal death. The faithful, who have obeyed God by keeping Christ's commandments will be changed "in the blinking of an eye" into immortality and given honour, glory and an eternal place in Christ's kingdom as his "kings and priests", and to "inherit the earth" and "delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Revelations 20:14; Romans 2:6-13; Revelations 5:9,10; Matthew 5:5; Psalm 37:11.

28. The Kingdom of Christ will last 1,000 years during which all enemies, rebellious humans, disease, sin, poverty and death will be gradually removed. Isaiah 35; 1 Corinthians 15:24, 26.

29. During the Kingdom the nations of the world, commencing with Israel, will "learn righteousness". They will come to know God and His way of faithfulness to God and His Word unto salvation. All people will be offered the opportunity to believe and obey God so as to relate themselves to eternal life on earth in God's kingdom, Isaiah 26:9; Hebrews 8:11; Romans 16:26; Mark 16:15,16.

30. At the end of The Millennium, or 1,000 years reign of Christ there will be a general resurrection of all who have died in covenant with God through Christ. If found faithful they also will be given immortality. All the wicked will be destroyed. Revelation 20:5; 1 Corinthians 15:24 ("the end" should be "the rest", speaking of the Kingdom believers).

31. Our Lord Jesus Christ will then hand the kingdom over to God, The Father that He might manifest Himself as "The All in all" - all things in all people. His supremacy, sovereignty and great loving kindness balanced with perfect Justice will be known and appreciated by all. He will meet and live with His vast eternal family on earth forever and "the earth will be filled with glory of God." God's great plan for the earth in the development of a divine family from among mankind begun with Adam and Eve, temporarily delayed because of sin, will be wonderfully accomplished to the praise and the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 15:28; Revelation 21:1.4; Numbers 14:21; Genesis 1:16; Psalm 8; 150:6.

32. To sum up, for us to gain God's salvation, God requires that we believe His promises and obey His commands. His promises are contained in the Gospel, defined as "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ." His commands are that we repent of our sins; be baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and for induction into God's "new covenant" - the covenant of true faith and forgiveness unto salvation; and lives of self-denial, love for God and for our fellow man. Acts 8:12; 28:31; Mark 16:15, 16

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The First Principles of Revealed Truth

It is thought that the ideal statement of first principles of revealed truth should be as brief as possible to:

- i) avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and argument, leading to disunity;
- ii) allow those of limited intellectual ability or capacity to agree and have a means of worship and fellowship. Even though such may, in some case have "infirmities of weakness" they may be received, supported, and edified, Romans 15.1-7.
- iii) allow, consistent with essential revealed truth, the widest possible 'outreach' for faith and fellowship to all who God is "calling out from among the gentiles a people for His name." Acts 15.14.

The following attempts that:

Copies may be obtained from and improvements may be offered to: Bible Lovers' International Society
Email: blis@optusnet.com.au

1. ABOUT THE BIBLE

- a.** THE HOLY BIBLE, Old and New Testaments, is the word of God, It was given by God's inspiration in the writers, and except for minor mistakes in translation, is wholly reliable, and able to develop faith in the careful, prayerful reader.
- b.** God's people are to refer only to it's teachings for determining all matters of faith, morals, fellowship, questions and troubles.
- c.** God' Word asks God's people to live lives of "faith, of hope and especially of love".

2. ABOUT GOD

- a.** GOD is one, a unity. He is loving, merciful and gracious, the Creator of heaven and earth and "our Father in heaven".

3. ABOUT GOD'S SPIRIT

- a.** God's Spirit is His great power by which He created, is the foundation of, sustains, and knows all things.
- b.** His Holy Spirit is His power specially given to angels, to Jesus and others to perform miracles and to write the Bible.

Since the completion of the Bible, and its ability to develop Christian love, the Spirit gifts to perform miracles are not given to believers. But it will be given to all the approved, glorified faithful in the Kingdom of God, when it is established.

The Spirit of Christ of faithful obedience in love, God desires to give to all His children that ask Him, Lk11, 13.

4. ABOUT GOD'S SON, JESUS CHRIST

- a.** Jesus Christ, born of Mary his mother, is "the son of man",
- b.** Conceived by God's Holy Spirit and also in showing God's character, Jesus is also "the Son of God," Romans 1:1-4.
- c.** God sent Jesus to live a sinless life as our Example and to die to save repentant sinners from their sins, and from the death that sin deserves,
- d.** Jesus was crucified by the Jews and the Romans on a cruel cross, died and buried. But God raised him from the dead after three days.
- e.** God gave Jesus immortality, an undying and glorious nature (so bringing the possibility of immortality to mortal believers "through the gospel"), and made him both "Lord", or Man's Ruler and "Christ", or the Messiah, the Anointed King of Israel.
- f.** God took Jesus to heaven to be believers' High Priest, "there to appear in the presence of God for us". He helps us, through the ministering of the angels, in all our needs.
- g.** God will send Jesus back to earth to set up "the kingdom of God" in Jerusalem, over Israel, and then all nations.

5. ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM

- a.** The setting up of His kingdom on earth was God's plan in the creating the earth and our first parents, Ge1.26.

- b.** God called Abram from Babylon and gave him great promises of a blessing, a family (the Jews), a special descendant (Jesus Christ) and a land (all Israel), from “the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates”.
- c.** God delivered the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt and made them, conditional upon obedience, His special people and kingdom. He gave them the Law of Moses to teach them to become “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation”.
- d.** God gave the children of Israel (the Jews) the land of Canaan (Israel) from the wicked Canaanites. He later made them His Kingdom under David, Solomon and their descendants of the tribe of Judah.
- e.** Israel continually disobeyed God’s law. It divided into two, with Israel going into idolatry and Judah remaining, albeit only temporarily and intermittently faithful. After many years and under mostly faithless kings, all turned largely to idol worship, which His law forbade.
- f.** After many warnings from the prophets he sent to Israel, and many punishments, which they refused to heed, God finally decided to overthrow the kingdom and scatter the people “until he come whose right it is and God would give it to him”, that is, Jesus Christ. First Israel, then Judah were overthrown.
- g.** The children of Judah were restored to the land but remained under the rulership of the Persians, the Greeks then the Romans.
When Jesus came to them to restore them to true faith in God, he was Despised and rejected” with the leaders arranging his crucifixion by the Roman governor, Pilate.
When the Jews rose up against the Romans, the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, the Herod built Temple, and scattered the people to all nations, where they largely still are to-day.
- h.** When Jesus comes back to the earth he will “restore again the kingdom to Israel”. It will be at the end of “the time of the gentiles”, believed to be very soon, and bring all the promised blessings to Israel and to all nations and lands.
- i.** Jesus will reign for 1,000 years during which time he will overcome all opposition, sin, disease and death.
- j.** At the end of Jesus’ 1,000 year reign, assisted by approved faithful disciples of all ages and from all nations, Jesus will hand the kingdom over to God that “God may be all in all” for ever. Then the whole world will be established in the friendship and fellowship of God.

6. ABOUT GOD’S ATONEMENT IN CHRIST

- a.** Man’s first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned against God. They attempted to become like God disobediently, instead of obediently accepting His Sovereignty, as Creator over all things, and waiting on Him. As He warned them would happen, God sentenced them to a slow, but sure death in His judgment for sin, “dying you will die”, which happened 900 years later.
- b.** By their sin, and God’s sentence that they “return to the ground”, sin and the universal certainty of death came “into the world”. All are born with corruptible natures so all die. Since then all the responsible “have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. Still now, “The wages of sin is death”. Sin is rebellion of His laws, or “lawlessness”.
- c.** Before sentencing them to die, God first made the promise of a Redeemer, the son of a woman by whom sins could be covered or forgiven, and all sin and death removed from the earth. But He would die by the hands of sinners in the process - Gen3.15.
- d.** That Redeemer is Jesus Christ. Though born with, and possessing our identical nature that is mortal and temptable, he was “tempted in all points just as we are.” Yet Jesus didn’t sin, but remained faithful to God, even under much provocation and suffering. He found strength to do God’s will by surrendering to it, and by trusting in God’s help at all times, and all seasons, He was obedient to death even to the cross. Sinful, evil men crucified him, but God raised him from the dead because his sinless life did not warrant death,

e. By Gold's demonstrating in Jesus the feasibility of obedience, God is able to righteously forgive His children from their sins, now "in Christ by faith". He delivers them from the "law of sin" (which has come into them through their sin - not because they were born with it) and from eternal death. They are freed from "the law of sin and death" and related to righteousness and life. By God's grace and their faith in that grace, they are empowered to live holy lives "without which no man shall see the Lord". When, Jesus returns to earth he will judge his people of all ages and grant them "according to their works".

f. The way Jesus' disciples are "freed from Sin" is to believe the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, confess to God and turn from their past sins unto God, be immersed into God's Son, Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, and thereafter walk in a new life of faith - reading and meditating on God's Word, personal prayer to God in Jesus' Name, and living lives of worship along with other believers, faith, hope and love - taking Jesus as their great Example.

g. Because they believe His promises and obey His commands, God forgives them their sins. They have believed the gospel of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" and been baptized into Christ's death to sin, and accept Jesus as their sinless Example and try to "follow in his steps".

h. So God treats them as His family, having adopted them as His children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus. He considers them His house and Temple, where He dwells with them and in them, and as being the Body of His Son, Jesus, their only Head. He forgives and helps them for Christ's, His sinless Son's sake. He has not compromised His holiness in any way. Rather he thus shows that his character is balance between "justice and mercy" - judgement for unrepentant sinners; mercy for repentant sinners who are in His Son by faith and baptism.

i. Baptized believers of the Gospel come into God's "new covenant". On their part they seek to write God's Word on their hearts for true faith; and on God's part He is sometimes used in forgives and grants merciful help to them when they repent of sins committed and return to "the obedience of faith".

7. ABOUT SIN, THE DEVIL & SATAN

a. Sin is lawlessness. It is that human state of living where one is ignorant of, and or rebellious to God's law. Sin takes various forms: by fear, by weakness; by ignorance; by omission or commission; that are repented of when known and forgiven; and that are not repented of, though known, but are proudly continued in "unto death".

b. The word figuratively:

- i)** in personification for King Sin, the ruler of the world of sinners;
- ii)** as an abbreviation for 'sin-offering';
- iii)** in metonymy for an idol.

c. The word "sin" is not used to describe human temptability and weakness, nor for the habit of sin that comes as a result of when we first sin (called "the law of sin in the members"), Ro7, The phrase "sin in the flesh" Ro.8.3 is not to be hyphenated to mean something resident in the natures God has given us. The apostle is assuring believers of the fact that God in His sinless Son, Jesus, has done what no one else ever did - overcome sin. God condemned King Sin in Jesus His Son, who had the same nature of man that normally sins (human flesh, or nature). Jesus obedience in overcoming sin is set forth for God's people to emulate, also by trusting in God, Ro8.4.

d, "The devil" means 'the false accuser' and in the context where found refers to the official who misrepresents or traduces God, His truth, or His people. The devil is always a sinner who sins by false accusation, which is condemned by God's Law.

e. “Satan” means ‘adversary’ or ‘opponent’. It refers to anyone, good or bad, who opposes another. The original Bibles usually have the definite article ‘the’ in the text so the word should be “the adversary” or “the opponent”. Then it is always a bad person or power opposing God, His truth or His people.

8. ABOUT RESURRECTION & JUDGEMENT

a. When Jesus returns to earth he will raise the responsible dead of all ages, and call with the responsible living to His judgement Seat.

b. They will all be judged “according to their works” or the conduct of their lives.

Those who have been faithful to the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles will be granted “glory, honour immortality”. They will be changed from “this corruption unto incorruption and this mortal unto immortality”.

Those who have been unfaithful will be sentenced to die and return back to the earth. This is “the second death,” from which there will be no escape.

c. Those responsible to judgment are those who had a covenant relationship with God. This comes by knowing His promises and His revealed will and committing themselves to whatever covenant was operative in their day. In our day it is “the new covenant in Christ”-see 6 i. above; 1Co15:22.Ps50.1-6.

9. ABOUT THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

a. At their baptism God’s children become ‘brethren in Christ’ for Jesus is not ashamed to call them that.

b. They walk “in newness of life” determined in God’s strength, to “crucify the flesh with its (lawless) affections.”