

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 222

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Editorial.

For those who do not have access to the Internet we would like to mention "Wikipedia." This is a free encyclopaedia that anyone can add to and edit!

Since its creation in 2002, Wikipedia has rapidly grown into the largest Reference Web site on the Internet and at present contains nearly 1,500,000 articles in English and this is increased to around 2,000,000 world-wide when some fifty languages are taken into consideration. The content of Wikipedia is free and is written collaboratively by people from all around the world

I was not aware of this Web site until a few weeks ago when I received an e-mail from someone who had been looking for information about 'clean flesh' and a friend of this enquirer suggested she "would find more details in the Wikipedia article about the Nazarene fellowship." The Wikipedia article gives a report of our beliefs and an account of our history which, though shortened, contains information not included in our own Website. (You can see this on page 17). However, it contains a direct link to our Web site, and as a result this enquirer was able to go to it and down-load some of our booklets to read.

Our enquirer is instrumental in running a forum and naturally wanted to share some of her newly found understanding with others on her forum. So after a few days she wrote the following article, which she has very kindly given me permission to reproduce here, and posted on her forum:-

"Dear All,

Often when we find some of the answers that we long for and wonder after become clearer, other questions and lines of enquiry from the Lord open up. It's never static - we never completely arrive. However we can still trust in the Lord to guide us and to provide us with what we need. If He were to give us everything at once, I'm sure we would just expire from the shock. He knows what we are ready for and what we can handle at any given time.

My purpose for writing is to tell about some of the things that I have been considering of late; how it is that our loving and graceful God has saved us through Jesus Christ - in fact, the gospel:

Genesis 1:1 - 5 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep and God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night."

The sun, moon and stars hadn't been made yet. I wonder if this original separation of light and darkness is related to the light close to God and the darkness away from Him. The light was good and was separated from the darkness. This is the foundation of God saying "I make the light and the darkness. I create weal and I create woe. I the Lord do all these things." The good news however is that God did not create us for woe. He created us for blessings and for light.

When Adam and Eve were created, they were without sin. They enjoyed a relationship with God that was without sin and was bathed in the light. There was still law in that world though. The law they were given was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were allowed though to eat of the tree of life because they were allowed everything in the garden apart from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they had remained inside the will of God by obeying His one law, they would have continued in the light. However, they broke the law (in the spirit of Lucifer which is the spirit of wanting to take for ourselves the high things). God had said that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, certain consequences and results would happen. Gen 2.16 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'" However, beginning with the serpent, then to Eve, and then to Adam, the "crossing over" of Adam and Eve occurred. They indeed get to know good and evil, but it didn't make them like the gods. Instead they were taken out of the light and moved into the darkness. Everything had been good but now it had become evil - with all the attendant consequences. Eve received pain in childbearing, desire for her husband to have him rule over her. Adam received cursed ground because of what he had done - thorns, thistles - sweat of hard labour just to eat. Dust, to become dust again.

They had followed the dark way - the serpent way - the way of separation from God, through attempting to take for themselves for their own glory, through the acts of disobedience. They were now "owned" by darkness and woe. Darkness and woe are death's way - "in the day that you eat of it, you shall die." The judgement for sin. The consequence of taking oneself out of the light of God into the hands of law. Law is not partial. Sinners die. That law was made by God. The law itself is holy because it sets apart the light from the darkness and makes the distinction known to us. It is our disobedience by which we break it and then cross over into its hands.

However, God is a loving and graceful God, and right from the beginning He made provision for the salvation of those who had disobeyed. He didn't cast away the law (the law is still with us today), but He provided a way that still upheld the law but released the sinners. That way is Jesus Christ.

The legal judgement on Adam was "in the day you eat of it, you shall die." However Adam and Eve didn't die. Death occurred, but it wasn't theirs. An animal was slain instead. They lived, the lamb died. God covered them with the blood of the lamb. This was a temporary covering and gave them life to beget children. Otherwise none of us would have been born and there would be no human race. No future for us. However the consequences of "crossing over" were still with them, and are still with us today. The struggle to survive, the pain of childbearing. The thorns and the briars are still with us. But now though, through the grace of God, Adam and Eve endured in hope. Their day of judgemental death was put off and they lived out their lives to die in old age - covered by the blood of the lamb slain in their place.

As we know though, the blood of animals does not save. The sacrificial law was a "holding" or a "keeping" until the One came - our Redeemer.

As history went on, God kept a covenant people. He called Abraham out of Ur and through him and the chosen descendants, the promises which find their "yes" in Jesus, were kept alive. The covering of the slain lamb still kept them from the fate that had almost overcome their father Adam. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - all "in" Adam - all under the same condemnation - all sinners, yet covered by God's grace. There were not many of them - the opposition from the darkness was huge. Their own sins, the pressing down of the peoples around them - the wickedness of the religious and political systems of those whose love was the disobedience of God's law.

However, through all this turbulent time, God still kept the way open. He kept the way open by continuing the system of the sacrificial Law of Moses. More animals slain as coverings. Priests who had to continually sacrifice - to keep the people covered - to keep them safe from the overall law "the wages of sin is death" "in the day you eat, you will die."

Then we had the One - the Only One - who could save. The One whom the prophets and the law had testified to. The One for whom the whole creation had been laid up in hope. Jesus. Son of God. Not born of a human father, but born of God. Made in every respect as we are but without sin. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled.

If a man in the condemned line of Adam could have offered, God could have chosen one of them. He could have chosen Moses to pay the price, or David whom He declared was a man after His own heart. He could have surely chosen Stephen who forgave his enemies as they were killing him. But God provided His own Son to be the second Adam. The covering of the slain lamb that died on that day in Adam's place, became a reality in the death of Jesus. Jesus offered for our sake, to have the "wages of sin is death" lifted from us. He paid that law with His own death. He died for us. He made full, by the reality of His own sacrifice, the temporary covering of slain animals.

Rev. 5.1-5 "And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals'."

Jesus was not under that initial judicial law of Adam because God was His Father. Otherwise his offering would be like ours would be. We would die and be dead and so would everyone who came after us. Our lives were already owned by sin and death. Jesus' was not. Jesus was free. He was not bound under the condemnation of Adam - he wasn't "in Adam" as we were. He willingly offered to die in Adam's place, and give His free life to uphold the judgement in Adam, so that the debt could be paid. He died to save us, not Himself. He wasn't under the Adamic judgement - it had no hold over Him. He could have lived His sinless life on earth, died an old man and taken His place with His Father. He offered for us. He bought us. He paid for us with His life. We are now out of the way of Adam, and into the Way of Christ. Jesus went in through the flaming sword that guarded the gate of Eden, paid for us with His life, and took of the fruit of the tree of life to give to us.

Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they who wash their robes that they might have the right to the tree of life and that they might enter the city by the gates... I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star. The spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price'." Revelation 22.

Love, Linda."

A day or so after posting her article, Linda sent me an e-mail saying she was surprised at the hostility with which it was received. It seems a shame that what brings such great joy to us can bring out such a reaction from others who say they too follow Christ.

I have taken the liberty of publishing one reader's comments:-

"Your view has God unable to forgive, remit, overlook, absolve, acquit, exonerate, pardon - any of these words - the one sin of Adam, because it was an immutable decree and one which would arbitrarily be imposed on all his descendants too. Then Jesus is supposed to be free from the

condemnation, because he had no human father, as if only the male line carries the inheritance, and he volunteers to die instead of Adam. The immutable decree has been carried out and God is able to forgive without condoning the original sin, without compromising his moral and legal order. Do you really think that such a mechanistic, law-bound God is the God who is love?"

It is not easy to remain passive on receiving such disparaging comments and it is to Linda's credit that she says she stands by all she said in her article.

* * * * *

One of the accusations levelled at the Nazarene Fellowship is that we are 'Legalists' but it appears that Legalism means different things to different people and dictionaries do not give a very clear definition of just what it is. So again I went to Wikipedia for more information. Here is what I found:-

“Legalism, in Christian theology, is a term referring to an improper fixation on law or codes of conduct, or legal ideas, usually implying an allegation of pride and the neglect of mercy, and ignorance of the grace of God. Legalism may also be alleged, in Christian theology, in criticism of theories which are perceived to be excessively dependent upon legal concepts. It represents the opposite extreme from antinomianism, the claim that moral laws are not binding on Christian believers. Simply put, legalism is belief, stated or supposedly implied that law, not faith, is the pre-eminent principle of redemption. Legalism is often used as a pejorative term.”

After giving this definition, Wikipedia gives several pages of how legalism is used and where we can see it in the New Testament, in later Christian theology, and as a label for adherence to manmade rules, from which I have attempted to extract some helpful notes: -

Some of the harshest words of Jesus were directed at the Pharisees, with their scribes and lawyers who were the guardians of the ritual law of Judaism, for they did in fact follow the ritual laws but at the expense of the spiritual meaning behind those laws. Matthew 5:20 Jesus said “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Again in Matthew 23:1, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say but do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers...”

Jesus warned His disciples against this 'legalism' and called them to do righteous acts and follow after righteousness from an inward love for God.

Today, throughout Christian churches there is such diversity of teachings it is little wonder that we again find legalism in some of the “stricter” sects where personal merit or ritual purity applied by a theological position or religious attitude is considered to be of value for salvation rather than the Gospel of faith and grace of a new life in Jesus.

Anywhere an excess of severity in the imposition of, or overly scrupulous conformity to any rule of piety, may be charged with legalism; where the adherence to certain manmade rules is necessary for moral or spiritual righteousness and full acceptance into that sect. Jesus quoted Isaiah in Mark 7:6,7, in this regard - “This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

In summing up this section we read “Additionally, the Bible does not give believers the right to allow others to act as their judges in these matters (Colossians 2:16). Plus it warns believers that such legalisms (manmade rules) are utterly useless in achieving morality or spirituality (Colossians 2:23), and that those who make a habit of submitting to such rules have defiled minds and consciences. (Titus 1:14-16).

As legalism represents the opposite extreme from antinomianism it is worth a look at that too and here is how Wikipedia defines it:-

“**Antinomianism** (from the Greek *αντι*, "against" + *νομος*, "law"), or lawlessness (in the Greek Bible: *ανομια*), in theology, is the idea that members of a particular religious group are under no obligation to obey the laws of ethics or morality as presented by religious authorities. Antinomianism is the polar opposite of legalism, the notion that obedience to a code of religious law is necessary for salvation.

The term has become a point of contention among opposed religious authorities. Few groups or sects explicitly call themselves “antinomian,” but the charge is often levelled by some sects against competing sects.”

From further notes we learn it is claimed by some that Paul teaches that salvation is simply by believing that Christianity is valid; that believers are saved by the unearned grace of God; that he places emphasis on right belief rather than on right practice (not by our own good works lest anyone should boast). In this way enlightenment is salvation. Some say Paul taught this when he insisted that Gentiles need not adhere to the Law of Moses. Acts 21:21 “And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.”

Some claim that Jesus rejected complete adherence to the law as in Mark 2:23-28, “and the disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.” When the Pharisees challenged Him He pointed to the biblical precedent and declared that “the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath

In James 2:14 and 26 we read “What doth it profit a man, my brethren, though a man say he have faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” – “For the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” So those Protestants who claim that faith is all that is needed for salvation say this is a forgery along with Romans 2:6.

It is easy to see why the Roman Catholic Church charges Protestantism with antinomianism for believing in salvation by faith alone simply by citing James 2:24 “Ye see then that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone.”

Typically, charges of antinomianism imply that the opponent’s doctrine leads to various sorts of licentiousness and chosen in order to further a career of dissipation. In practice however, the austerity of life among groups such as Anabaptists or Calvinists suggest that these accusations are used for rhetorical effect.

Legalism and antinomianism then, are the two extremes of the same polar axis on which all Christian denominations have their place. How is it we are considered to be legalists for claiming to be in covenant relation to God through baptism into Jesus death and are now under the Law of Christ?

It is not a charge that can be laid against us for any good reason.

With Love to all, Russell.

Letter from Brother Phil Parry to a Christadelphian friend:

Dear Brother A,

For such an High Priest Jesus became for us at the Right Hand of God, who is holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners, needing not as those High Priests on earth to offer first for his own sins (for Jesus had none at anytime to offer for, nor could he be a Priest on earth. (Hebrews 8).

The Levitical priest did not die, but the sacrificial animal did, for the people, that they might remain alive. This is the correct teaching of Substitution. If anyone doubt that Jesus was a true Substitute for the people and nation of Israel, the words of Caiaphas (not his own knowledge and understanding but by the

Spirit of God) prove that Jesus died for all, even the world; that is, the Adamic Sin of the world which Jesus came to take away on the Tree of Calvary (not the personal sins committed at the present time, that work is confined to those who are of his household who recognise Him as their Mediator and High Priest).

“It is expedient that one man die for the people and the whole nation perish not,” - the word of God through Caiaphas – “God so loved the world” He created “that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Words of Jesus received from His Father directly. John 3:16.

I myself do not doubt John 3:13, “And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” as literal fact.

Later on in John’s account we read of his mentioning Caiaphas as being that he said “It is expedient that one man die for the people...” John added no more to it but declared that his record was true, thus clamping the lid on the well known Christadelphian version of Hebrews 7:27 of Christ offering “sacrifice first for His own sins, and then for the people’s:” this being the equivalent of a sinner committing himself to suffer on his own account for himself and all others, a penalty due.

Robert Roberts rejection in 1873 of what he and Dr John Thomas believed in 1869 that there was no change in Adam’s physical flesh as a result of his sin and the enforcement upon his community of erroneous teaching in their accepted Statement of Faith compiled by him, made the sacrifice of Jesus of no value at all for Redemption and freedom from the Law of Sin and Death; the authority of Jesus given to Him of the Farther is totally ignored as recorded by John – “All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

None of the foregoing is unconditional but on the principle of Faith exhibited by works.

“This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Think of the many false creeds of men these words of Jesus destroy!

At this season of the year the main focus is on commercialism in using children and adults for the presentation of gifts. But the very child this idea is adopted from is a grown man and a glorified High Priest interceding for His household and awaiting His coming to judge the world in righteousness.

The iniquity of Israel and the world will still be come in and God will send His Son at the appointed time, and as a snare it will come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth, even on them who think it will not.

The Holy Land! Is it? Instead of the Feasts of the Lord there are now festivals of gays or homosexuals declared in the Jewish scriptures to be an abomination to the Lord. Also spoken of by St Paul in Romans 1:25-29.

There will probably be some people of the Jews who will accept Jesus as the Messiah who had already come but as to whether they understand what He taught and why He laid down His life could be a matter of doubt. For from what I have heard some Messianic Jews look upon established Christianity as the doctrine of Jesus whereas there is a vast difference – and yet in Israel if were true they have the same views as we Nazarenes of 1873 origin and openly witnessed to it, they would come under persecution by the present Israeli government who do not accept Jesus.

There are people in Israel who are preparing stones for the building of a Temple which in my view will never happen for, as St Paul said, “The Most High dwelleth not in Temples made with hands.” And of the Corinthian believers, “Ye are the Temple of the Living God,” quoting God’s word in support.

The ‘years old’ Christadelphian idea of the Temple Vision and measurements shown to Ezekiel with the rituals of the Law of Moses is totally unacceptable as a Temple of the future; the very description of its Levitical rituals do not fit and cannot attach to something that has been abolished. Take the veil from your

eyes and read 2 Corinthians 3:13 you who think Ezekiel's vision is still future when in fact it was about the Temple of Solomon which was re-built in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and financed by King Cyrus.

John, by revelation of Jesus says, "And I saw no Temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it" Revelation 21:22.

Stephen also facing his false accusers declared unto them (and the young man Saul of Tarsus may have heard him), "The Most High dwelleth not in Temples made with hands."

The Temple vision of Ezekiel was type and shadow as was that of Solomon with all its sacrificial rituals which, under the Law of Moses make nothing perfect as a study of Ezekiel 40 and onwards will show. "The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin," but the blood of Jesus did.

Study more closely what is said and performed in the Temple Ezekiel was shown from Chapter 40 for it was firstly a plan of the Temple to be rebuilt by those who were returning from the captivity in Babylon, the pattern having been lost possibly during those years.

The measurements and pattern of the Temple was for Ezekiel's time when literally completed, but when walking through the waters and seeing the trees on either side of the river with their leaves for the healing of the nations, pointed to what is stated in Revelation 21 and in Zechariah 14:1-21.

Please note it is a feast of Tabernacles (tents); how can all these nations worship in a Temple of the size shown to Ezekiel? And if as some people have said, the sacrifices will be retrospective of those under the Law of Moses which Jesus ratified with His blood to make them effective for the people who offered them, is Jesus expected to die again to ratify by His blood that which He has already done once for all? Those who believe it are under a strong delusion and I am sure of my ground – the Word of God.

May our Lord soon come and fulfil all that has been written concerning Him and His Kingdom.

Brother Phil and Sister Rene Parry.

We have been asked again to include more items of exhortation but as we have so few writers in our midst we have decided to repeat some from earlier Circular letters:

EXHORTATION

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Loving Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus.

The task of all loving servants of the lord Jesus is to fight the good fight of faith. "To be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." This warfare of God requires strength for it is a struggle between principles and ideals; a struggle of light against darkness, truth against error, righteousness against evil. The warfare is dual, we have foes within and foes without, and it is also constant for it lasts for the rest of our lives. This fight demands strength, a strength which is not built in a day, it is a product of development. We have to pull down strongholds and cast out imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of our Lord Jesus. This strength can only come by our association with The Word of God, and our desire to do His Will, and fervent prayer to our God, from Whom we obtain all things. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His. The Spirit itself bearest witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now we all know we are not robots, each one is different physically and mentally, therefore Salvation is a matter between God and the individual person, and the responsibility rests with that person alone; he must believe on his final interpretation of all things concerning the Truth.

Let every man be satisfied in his own mind. To his own master he standeth, or falleth. Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, to win and to do His good pleasure. Then we read in Romans 14:13, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more. But judge rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brothers' way." All the works of our Lord, and His Apostles, emphasise the fact, that in our dealings with other honest searchers for the Truth, much patience is needed. In this world of advanced education especially, much care is needed, for it seems to me that the essential humility has been crushed out by worldly wisdom. Again we have to remember that it is the will of God that all men should be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth. I think that if we put together Romans 14:13, 17-19, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" then chapter 15 verses 2 and 3, we sum up the whole matter; "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written; the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me." Although this chapter 14 deals mostly with meat and drink, it applies also to almost everything else, and I think there is much to learn from it concerning our dealings with others.

Let me conclude with Ephesians 4:32. "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ' sake hath forgiven you."

Your brother in Christ, A.Hodges.
August 1957.

Continuing our Extract from **CHAPTER XVI**

“The Temple at the Time of Jesus Christ”

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

The Goat shown to the people.

The lot having designated each of the two goats, the high-priest tied a tongue-shaped piece of scarlet cloth to the horn of the goat for Azazel - the so-called 'scape-goat' - and another round the throat of the goat for Jehovah, which was to be slain. The goat that was to be sent forth was now turned round towards the people, and stood facing them, waiting, as it were, till their sins should be laid on him, and he would carry them forth into 'a land not inhabited.' Assuredly a more marked type of Christ could not be conceived, as He was brought forth by Pilate and stood before the people, just as He was about to be led forth, bearing the iniquity of the people. And, as if to add to the significance of the rite, tradition has it that when the sacrifice was fully accepted the scarlet mark which the scape-goat had borne became white, to symbolise the gracious promise in Isaiah 1:18; but it adds that this miracle did not take place for forty years before the destruction of the Temple!

The Confession of Sin and the Sacrifice.

With this presentation of the scape-goat before the people commenced the third and most solemn part of the expiatory services of the day. The high-priest now once more returned towards the sanctuary, and a second time laid his two hands on the bullock, which still stood between the porch and the altar, to confess over him, not only as before, his own and his household's sins, but also those of the priesthood. The formula used was precisely the same as before, with the addition of the words, 'the seed of Aaron, Thy holy people,' both in the confession and in the petition for atonement. Then the high-priest killed the bullock, caught up his blood in a vessel, and gave it to an attendant to keep it stirring, lest it should coagulate. Advancing to the altar of burnt-offering, he next filled the censer with burning coals, and then ranged a handful of frankincense in the dish destined to hold it. Ordinarily, everything brought in actual ministry unto God must be carried in the right hand - hence the incense in the right and the censer in the left. But on this occasion, as the censer for the Day of Atonement was larger and heavier than usual, the high-priest was allowed to reverse the common order. Every eye was strained towards the sanctuary as, slowly bearing the censer and

the incense, the figure of the white-robed high-priest was seen to disappear within the Holy Place. After that nothing further could be seen of his movements,

The Mercy-seat.

The curtain of the Most Holy Place was folded back, and the high-priest stood alone and separated from all the people in the awful gloom of the Holiest of All, only lit up by the red glow of the coals in the priest's censer. In the first Temple the ark of God had stood there with the 'mercy-seat' over-shadowing it; above it, the visible presence of Jehovah in the cloud of the Shechinah, and on either side the outspread wings of the cherubim; and the high-priest had placed the censer between the staves of the ark. But in the Temple of Herod there was neither Shechinah nor ark - all was empty; and the high-priest rested his censer on a large stone, called the 'foundation-stone' * ⁽¹⁾. He now most carefully emptied the incense into his hand, and threw it on the coals of the censer, as far from himself as possible, and so waited till the smoke had filled the Most Holy Place. Then, retreating back-wards, he prayed outside the veil as follows: * ⁽²⁾ 'May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that neither this day nor during this year any captivity come upon us. Yet, if captivity befall us this day or this year, let it be to a place where the law is cultivated. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that want come not upon us, either this day or this year. But if want visit us this day or this year, let it be due to the liberality of our charitable deeds. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that this year may be a year of cheapness, of fullness, of intercourse and trade; a year with abundance of rain, of sunshine, and of dew; one in which Thy people Israel shall not require assistance one from another. And listen not to the prayers of those who are about to set out on a journey. * ⁽³⁾ And as to Thy people Israel, may no enemy exalt himself against them. May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that the houses of the men of Saron may not become their graves.' * ⁽⁴⁾ The high-priest was not to prolong this prayer, lest his protracted absence might fill the people with fears for his safety.

1. There is no need for here entering on the legends connected with this so-called 'foundation-stone.'

2. We give the prayer in its simplest form from the Talmud. But we cannot help feeling that its form savours of later than Temple-times. Probably only its substance dates from those days, and each high-priest may have been at liberty to formulate it according to his own views.

3. Who might pray against the fall of rain? It must be remembered that the autumn rains, on which the fruitfulness of the land depended, were just due.

4. This on account of the situation of that valley, which was threatened either by sudden floods or by dangerous landslips.

The Sprinkling of the Blood.

While the incense was offering in the Most Holy Place the people withdrew from proximity to it, and worshipped in silence. At last the people saw the high-priest emerging from the sanctuary, and they knew that the service had been accepted. Rapidly he took from the attendant, who had kept it stirring, the blood of the bullock. Once more he entered into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkled with his finger once upwards, towards where the mercy-seat had been, and seven times downwards, counting as he did so: 'Once' (upwards), 'once and once' (downwards), 'once and twice' and so on to 'once and seven times,' always repeating the word 'once' which referred to the upwards sprinkling, so as to prevent any mistake. Coming out from the Most Holy Place, the high-priest now deposited the bowl with the blood before the veil. Then he killed the goat set apart for Jehovah, and, entering the Most Holy Place a third time, sprinkled as before, once upwards and seven times downwards, and again deposited the bowl with the blood of the goat on a second golden stand before the veil. Taking up the bowl with the bullock's blood, he next sprinkled once upwards and seven times downwards towards the veil, outside the Most Holy Place and then did the same with the blood of the goat. Finally, pouring the blood of the bullock into the bowl which contained that of the goat, and again the mixture of the two into that which had held the blood of the bullock, so as thoroughly to commingle the two, he sprinkled each of the horns of the altar of incense, and then, making a clear place on the altar, seven times the top of the altar of incense. Thus he had sprinkled forty-three times with the expiatory blood, taking care that his own dress should never be spotted with the sin-laden blood. What was left of the blood the high-priest poured out on the west side of the base of the altar of burnt-offering.

The Cleansing completed.

By these expiatory sprinklings the high-priest had cleansed the sanctuary in all its parts from the defilement of the priesthood and the worshippers. The Most Holy Place, the veil, the Holy Place, the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering were now clean alike, so far as the priesthood and as the people were concerned; and in their relationship to the sanctuary both priests and worshippers were atoned for. So far as the law could give it, there was now again free access for all; or, to put it otherwise, the continuance of typical sacrificial communion with God was once more restored and secured. Had it not been for these services, it would have become impossible for priests and people to offer sacrifices, and so to obtain the forgiveness of sins, or to have fellowship with God. But the consciences were not yet free from a sense of personal guilt and sin. That remained to be done through the 'scape-goat.' All this seems clearly implied in the distinctions made in Leviticus 16:33, 'And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.'

The Scape-goat

Most solemn as the services had hitherto been, the worshippers would chiefly think with awe of the high-priest going into the immediate presence of God, coming out thence alive, and securing for them by the blood the continuance of the Old Testament privileges of sacrifices and of access unto God through them. What now took place concerned them, if possible, even more nearly. Their own personal guilt and sins were now to be removed from them, and that in a symbolical rite, at one and the same time the most mysterious and the most significant of all. All this while the 'scape-goat,' with the 'scarlet-tongue,' telling of the guilt it was to bear, had stood looking eastwards, confronting the people, and waiting for the terrible load which it was to carry away 'unto a land not inhabited.' Laying both his hands on the head of this goat, the high-priest now confessed and pleaded: 'Ah, JEHOVAH! they have committed iniquity ; they have transgressed ; they have sinned - Thy people, the house of Israel. Oh, then, JEHOVAH! cover over (atone for), I intreat Thee, upon their iniquities, their transgressions, and their sins, which they have wickedly committed, transgressed, and sinned before Thee - Thy people, the house of Israel. As it is written in the Law of Moses, Thy servant, saying: "For on that day shall it be covered over (atoned) for you, to make you clean from all your sins before JEHOVAH ye shall be cleansed.'" And while the prostrate multitude worshipped at the name of Jehovah, the high-priest turned his face towards them as he uttered the last words, 'Ye shall be cleansed!' as if to declare to them the absolution and remission of their sins.

The Goat sent into the Wilderness.

Then a strange scene would be witnessed. The priests led the sin-burdened goat out through 'Solomon's Porch,' and, as tradition has it, through the eastern gate, which opened upon the Mount of Olives. * ⁽⁵⁾ Here an arched bridge spanned the intervening valley, and over it they brought the goat to the Mount of Olives, where one, specially appointed for the purpose, took him in charge. Tradition enjoins that he should be a stranger, a non-Israelite, as if to make still more striking the type of Him who was delivered over by Israel unto the Gentiles! Scripture tells us no more of the destiny of the goat that bore upon him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, than that they 'shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness' and that 'he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.' (Leviticus 16:22). But tradition supplements this information. The distance between Jerusalem and the beginning of 'the wilderness' is computed at ninety stadia, making precisely ten intervals, each half a Sabbath-day's journey from the other. At the end of each of these intervals there was a station, occupied by one or more persons, detailed for the purpose, who offered refreshment to the man leading the goat, and then accompanied him to the next station. By this arrangement two results were secured: some trusted persons accompanied the goat all along his journey, and yet none of them walked more than a Sabbath-day's Journey - that is, half a journey going and the other half returning. At last they reached the edge of the wilderness. Here they halted, viewing afar off, while the man led forward the goat, tore off half the 'scarlet-tongue,' and stuck it on a projecting cliff; then, leading the animal backwards, he pushed it over the projecting ledge of rock. There was a moment's pause, and the man, now defiled by contact with the sin-bearer, retraced his steps to the last of the ten stations, where he spent the rest of the day and the night. But the arrival of the goat in the wilderness was immediately telegraphed, by the waving of flags, from station to station, till, a few minutes after its occurrence, it was known in the Temple, and whispered from ear to ear, that 'the goat had borne upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.'

5. The Talmud has it, that the foreign Jews present used to burst into words and deeds of impatience, that the 'sin-bearer' might be gone.

The Meaning of the Rite.

What then was the meaning of a rite on which such momentous issue depended? Everything about it seems strange and mysterious - the lot that designated it, and that 'to Azazel;' the fact, that though the highest of all sin-offerings, it was neither sacrificed nor its blood sprinkled in the Temple; and the circumstance that it really was only part of a sacrifice - the two goats together forming one sacrifice, one of them being killed, and the other 'let go,' there being no other analogous case of the kind except at the purification of a leper, when one bird was killed and the other dipped in its blood, and let go free. Thus these two sacrifices - one in the removal of what symbolically represented indwelling sin, the other contracted guilt - agreed in requiring two animals, of whom one was killed, the other 'let go.' This is not the place to discuss the various views entertained of the import of the scape-goat. * ⁽⁶⁾ But it is destructive of one and all of the received interpretations, that the sins of the people were confessed not on the goat which was killed, but on that which was 'let go in the wilderness,' and that it was this goat - not the other - which 'bore upon him all the iniquities' of the people. So far as the conscience was concerned, this goat was the real and the only sin-offering 'for all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,' for upon it the high-priest laid the sins of the people, after he had by the blood of the bullock and of the other goat 'made an end of reconciling the Holy Place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar.' (Leviticus 16:20). The blood sprinkled had effected this; but it had done no more, and it could do no more, for it 'could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.' (Hebrews 9:9). The symbolical representation of this perfecting was by the live goat, which, laden with the confessed sins of the people, carried them away into 'the wilderness' to 'a land not inhabited.' The only meaning of which this seems really capable, is that though confessed guilt was removed from the people to the head of the goat, as the symbolical substitute, yet as the goat was not killed, only sent far away, into 'a land not inhabited,' so, under the Old Covenant, sin was not really blotted out, only put away from the people, and put aside till Christ came, not only to take upon Himself the burden of transgression, but to blot it out and to purge it away. * ⁽⁷⁾

6. For a full discussion, we must refer to works on Biblical Antiquities and on the Types of the Old Testament.

7. May there be here also a reference to the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades?

The Teaching of Scripture.

Thus viewed, not only the text of Leviticus 16, but the language of Hebrews 9 and 10, which chiefly refer to the Day of Atonement, becomes plain. The 'blood' both of the bullock and of the goat which the high-priest carried 'once a year' within 'the sacred veil,' was 'offered for himself (including the priesthood) and for the errors (or rather ignorances) of the people.' In the language of Leviticus 16:20, it reconciled 'the Holy Place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar,' that is, as already explained, it rendered on the part of priests and people the continuance of sacrificial worship possible. But this live scape-goat 'let go' in the wilderness, over which, in the exhaustive language of Leviticus 16:21, the high-priest had confessed and on which he had laid 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,' meant something quite different. It meant the inherent 'weakness and unprofitableness of the commandment;' it meant, that 'the law made nothing perfect, but was the bringing in of a better hope;' that in the covenant mercy of God guilt and sin were indeed removed from the people, that they were 'covered up,' and in that sense atoned for, or rather that they were both 'covered up' and removed, but that they were not really taken away and destroyed till Christ came; that they were only taken into a land not inhabited, till He should blot it out by His own blood; that the provision which the Old Testament made was only preparatory and temporary, until the 'time of the reformation;' and that hence real and true forgiveness of sins, and with it the spirit of adoption, could only be finally obtained after the death and resurrection of 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' Thus in the fullest sense it was true of the 'fathers,' that 'these all... received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' For 'the law having a shadow of the good things to come,' could not 'make the comers thereunto perfect;' nor yet was it possible 'that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.' The live goat 'let go' was every year a remover of sins which yet were never really removed in the sense of being blotted out - only deposited, as it were, and reserved till He came 'whom God hath set forth as a propitiation... because of the passing over of the former sins, in the forbearance of God.' * ⁽⁸⁾ 'And for this

cause He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that, death having taken place for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first covenant, they which have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.’ (Hebrews 9:15).

8. Romans 3:25. We have generally adopted the rendering of Dean Alford, where the reader will perceive any divergence from the Authorized Version.

This is not the place for following the argument further. Once understood, many passages will recur which manifest how the Old Testament removal of sin was shown in the law itself to have been complete indeed, so far as the individual was concerned, but not really and in reference to God, till He came to Whom as the reality these types pointed, and Who ‘now once at the end of the world hath been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ (Hebrews 9:26). And thus did the types themselves prove their own inadequacy and insufficiency, showing that they had only ‘a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves.’ (Hebrews 10:1). With this also agree the terms by which in the Old Testament atonement is designated as a ‘covering up’ by a substitute, and the mercy-seat as ‘the place of covering over.’

The Term ‘Azazel.’

After this it is comparatively of secondary importance to discuss, so far as we can in these pages, the question of the meaning of the term ‘la-Azazel.’ (Leviticus 16:8,10,26). Both the interpretation which makes it a designation of the goat itself (as ‘scape-goat’ in our Authorised Version), and that which would refer it to a certain locality in the wilderness, * ⁽⁹⁾ being, on many grounds, wholly untenable, two other views remain, one of which regards Azazel as a person, and denoting Satan; while the other would render the term by ‘complete removal.’ The insurmountable difficulties connected with the first of these notions lie on the surface. In reference to the second, it may be said that it not only does violence to Hebrew grammar, but implies that the goat which was to be for ‘complete removal’ was not even to be sacrificed, but actually ‘let go!’ Besides, what in that case could be the object of the first goat which was killed, and whose blood was sprinkled in the Most Holy Place? We may here at once state, that the later Jewish practice of pushing the goat over a rocky precipice was undoubtedly an innovation, in no wise sanctioned by the Law of Moses, and not even introduced at the time the Septuagint translation was made, as its rendering of Leviticus 16:26 shows. The law simply ordained that the goat, once arrived in ‘the land not inhabited,’ was to be ‘let go’ free, and the Jewish ordinance of having it pushed over the rocks is signally characteristic of the Rabbinical perversion of its spiritual type. The word Azazel, which only occurs in Leviticus 16, is by universal consent derived from a root which means ‘wholly to put aside,’ or, ‘wholly to go

9. Thus the book Sifra paraphrases it; ‘a rough place in the mountains.’

away.’ Whether, therefore, we render ‘la-Azazel’ by ‘for him who is wholly put aside, that is, the sin-bearing Christ, or ‘for being wholly separated,’ or ‘put wholly aside or away,’ the truth is still the same, as pointing through the temporary and provisional removal of sin by the goat ‘let go’ ‘in the land not inhabited,’ to the final, real, and complete removal of sin by the Lord Jesus Christ, as we read it in Isaiah 53:6: ‘Jehovah hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him.’

The Carcasses burnt ‘outside the City.’

While the scape-goat was being led into the wilderness, the high-priest proceeded to cut up the bullock and the goat with whose blood he had previously ‘made atonement,’ put the ‘inwards’ in a vessel which he committed to an attendant, * ⁽¹⁰⁾ and sent the carcasses to be burnt ‘outside the city,’ in the place where the Temple ashes were usually deposited. Then, according to tradition, the high-priest, still wearing the linen garments, * ⁽¹¹⁾ went into the ‘Court of the Women’ and read the passages of Scripture bearing on the Day of Atonement, viz. Leviticus 16; 23:27-32; also repeating by heart Numb. 29:7-11. * ⁽¹²⁾ A series of prayers accompanied this reading of the Scriptures. The most interesting of these supplications may be thus summed up :- Confession of sin with prayer for forgiveness, closing with the words, ‘Praise be to Thee, O Lord, Who in Thy mercy forgivest the sins of Thy people Israel;’ prayer for the permanence of the Temple, and that the Divine Majesty might shine in it, closing with – ‘Praise be to Thee, O Lord, Who inhabitest Zion;’ prayer for the establishment and safety of Israel, and the continuance of a king among them, closing ‘Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, Who hast chosen Israel;’ prayer for the priesthood, that all their doings, but especially their sacred services, might be acceptable unto God, and He be gracious unto them, closing with – ‘Thanks be to

Thee, O Lord, Who hast sanctified the priesthood;’ and, finally (in the language of Maimonides), prayers, entreaties, hymns, and petitions of the high-priest's own, closing with the words: ‘Give help, O Lord, to Thy people Israel, for Thy people needeth help ; thanks be unto Thee, O Lord, Who hearest prayer.’ * ⁽¹³⁾

10. Lightfoot [De Minist. Templi] erroneously states that the high-priest immediately burnt them.

11. But this was not strictly necessary; he might in this part of the service have even officiated in his ordinary layman’s dress.

12. Maimonides gives a curious Rabbinical reason for this.

13. In regard to these prayers we refer the reader to our remarks in a previous chapter. The view there expressed about the wording of the prayers holds also good in regard to those on the Day of Atonement.

The High-priest in Golden Garments.

These prayers ended, the high-priest washed his hands and feet, put off his ‘linen,’ and put on his ‘golden vestments,’ and once more washed hands and feet before proceeding to the next ministry. He now appeared again before the people as the Lord’s anointed in the golden garments of the bride-chamber. Before he offered the festive burnt-offerings of the day, he sacrificed ‘one kid of the goats for a sin-offering’ (Numbers 29:16), probably with special reference to these festive services, which, like everything else, required atoning blood for their acceptance. The flesh of this sin-offering was eaten at night by the priests within the sanctuary. Next, he sacrificed the burnt-offerings for the people and that for himself (one ram, Leviticus 16:3), and finally burned the ‘inwards’ of the expiatory offerings, whose blood had formerly been sprinkled in the Most Holy Place. This, properly speaking, finished the services of the day. But the high-priest had yet to offer the ordinary evening sacrifice, after which he washed his hands and his feet, once more put off his ‘golden’ and put on his ‘linen garments,’ and again washed his hands and feet. This before entering the Most Holy Place a fourth time on that day, * ⁽¹⁴⁾ to fetch from it the censer and incense-dish which he had left there. On his return he washed once more hands and feet, put off his linen garments, which were never to be used again, put on his golden vestments, washed hands and feet, burnt the evening incense on the golden altar, lit the lamps on the candlestick for the night washed his hands and feet, put on his ordinary layman’s dress, and was escorted by the people in procession to his own house in Jerusalem. The evening closed with a feast.

14. Hebrews 9:7 states that the high-priest went ‘once in every year,’ that is, on one day in every year, not on one occasion during that day.

The Mishnah.

If this ending of the Day of Atonement seems incongruous, the Mishnah records (Taan, 4:8) something yet more strange in connection with the day itself. It is said that on the afternoon of the 15th of Ab, when the collection of wood for the sanctuary was completed, and on that of the Day of Atonement, the maidens of Jerusalem went in white garments, specially lent them for the purpose, so that rich and poor might be on an equality, into the vineyards close to the city, where they danced and sung. The following fragment of one of their songs has been preserved: * ⁽¹⁵⁾

‘Around in circle gay, the Hebrew maidens see;
From them our happy youths their partners choose.
Remember! Beauty soon its charm must lose –
And seek to win a maid of fair degree.

When fading grace and beauty low are laid,
Then praise shall her who fears the Lord await;
God does bless her handiwork - and, in the gate,
“Her works do follow her,” it shall be said.’

15. The Talmud repeatedly states the fact and gives the song. Nevertheless we have some doubt on the subject, though the reporter in the Mishnah is said to be none other than Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, Paul’s teacher.

The Day of Atonement in the Modern Synagogue.

We will not here undertake the melancholy task of describing what the modern synagogue has made the Day of Atonement, nor how it observes the occasion - chiefly in view of their gloomy thoughts, that on that day man's fate for the year if not his life or death, is finally fixed. But even the Mishnah already contains similar perverted notions of how the day should be kept, and what may be expected from its right observance. (Mish. Yoma, viii). Rigorous rest and rigorous fasting are enjoined from sundown of one day to the appearance of the first stars on the next. Neither food nor drink of any kind may be tasted; a man may not even wash, nor anoint himself, nor put on his sandals. * ⁽¹⁶⁾

The sole exception made is in favour of the sick and of children, who are only bound to the full fast - girls at the age of twelve years and one day, and boys at that of thirteen years and one day, though it is recommended to train them earlier to it. * ⁽¹⁷⁾ In return for all this 'affliction' Israel may expect that death along with the Day of Atonement will finally blot out all sins! That is all - the Day of Atonement and our own death! Such are Israel's highest hopes of expiation! It is unspeakably saddening to follow this subject further through the minutiae of Rabbinical ingenuity - how much exactly the Day of Atonement will do for a man; what proportion of his sins it will remit, and what merely suspend; how much is left over for after-chastisements, and how much for final extinction at death. The law knows nothing of such miserable petty misrepresentations of the free pardon of God. In the expiatory sacrifices of the Day of Atonement every kind * ⁽¹⁸⁾ of transgression, trespass, and sin is to be removed from the people of God. Yet annually anew, and each time confessedly only provisionally, not really and finally, till the gracious promise (Jeremiah 31:34) should be fulfilled: 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' Accordingly it is very marked, how in the prophetic, or it may be symbolical, description of Ezekiel's Temple (Ezekiel 40-44) all mention of the Day of Atonement is omitted; for Christ has come 'an high-priest of good things to come,' and 'entered in once into the Holy Place,' 'to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.' (Hebrews 9:11,12,26).

16. Only woollen socks are to be used - the only exception is where there is fear of serpents or scorpions.

17. Kings and brides within thirty days of their wedding are allowed to wash their faces; the use of a towel which has been dipped the previous day in water is also conceded.

18. For high-handed, purposive sins, the law provided no sacrifice (Hebrews 10:26), and it is even doubtful whether they are included in the declaration Leviticus 16:21, wide as it is. Thank God, we know that 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin,' without exception.

Following on from the correspondence reported in the last two Circular Letters, Brother Phil Parry sent the following letter to Brother Jim Granter:

Dear Brother Jim,

Having read your comments about my letter to you in which you say I was offensive, I did not mean to be but was merely stating the plain facts as the Scripture teaches and this is what you desired – SCRIPTURE.

I could quote from Ezekiel chapter 18 - "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and you will agree it is Scripture, but what does this mean unless you know the context? What type of death is involved? The people to whom this was stated are already dying whether they sin or don't sin under the Mosaic Law.

I have known for years that to a Christadelphian death means that experienced by decay and age as ordained by the Creator – a corruptible body with limitations unlike that of the angels. But when I say to them, "This was not the penalty Adam incurred" they quote Romans 5:12 and say "This is Scripture."

Yes, it is Scripture written by St Paul or on his dictation, but it is also his teaching confined to "The Federal Principle" of man's position under Divine Law; it is not a description of the flesh and blood nature of man when he was created from the dust, nor does Paul mean it to be. Death by sin – and Death ordained or appointed by the Creator are diverse in this case.

Consider Romans 5:15 - "For if through the offence of one, many be dead," - this must be the legal imputation, not a physical state of death – the many referred to being unborn physically.

See also John 5:39,40, "In the scriptures you think you have eternal life – and they testify of me and ye (Jews) will not come to me that ye might have life." Confirmation that they were legally dead – concluded under Sin – See Romans 3:9 and Galatians 3:22. "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin..." THE SCRIPTURE must be rightly divided wherever it is read – the context must be observed.

In contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the saints, one is bound to be on the offensive against opposition in some cases or the term 'contend' has no meaning. My letter to you, Bro. Jim. was on that line not personally and I cannot add much more to it and hope you will have seen the import of The Federal Teaching of St Paul which is lost to the people who believe natural decay and death by creation to be the penalty upon Adam and his posterity.

We send our Love and Kind Thoughts to you and all concerned.

Phil and Rene Parry.

As I said in the Editorial, Wikipedia is an encyclopaedia, which anyone can add to or edit, and we have no idea who is responsible for the additional information which appears in the entry under "The Nazarene Fellowship," or for the additional section regarding "Renunciationists." We reproduce both entries below.

The Wikipedia entry regarding the Nazarene Fellowship:

Nazarene fellowship

The **Nazarene Fellowship** claims to have no constitution, creed or statement of faith outside the pages of the Bible. It has reached its present understanding by reading and discussion of Scripture and study of any and every variety of opinion, past and present.

History

The Nazarene Fellowship is an offshoot of the Christadelphians, being founded in 1873 by Edward Turney (1820 -1879) of Nottingham and David Handley (1822-1886) of Maldon. They were sometimes called Renunciationists by Christadelphians as they had renounced Christadelphian teachings concerning the nature of man and the nature of Christ.

Edward Turney was the editor of *The Christadelphian Lamp* (later renamed *The Christian Lamp*). In 1873, two years after the death of Dr Thomas (founder of the Christadelphians), Edward Turney and Robert Roberts (editor of *The Christadelphian magazine*) fell out over their understanding of the theological significance of the death of Christ. Roberts, without the assent of his "managing brethren" or the Birmingham ecclesia, unilaterally announced in *The Christadelphian* that he "withdrew fellowship" from Turney and all who held his beliefs. Andrew Wilson in *The History of the Christadelphians 1864-1885* (Shalom Publications 1997) commented that "By this action, Roberts established a precedent for dealing with doctrinal dissidence... However, a stirring deep in the sensitivities of Robert's brethren was the impression that this type of action was altogether too summary and abrupt amongst a congregation of *brethren*. In 1885, many Christadelphians reacted to a repetition of Roberts' conduct of 1873 by forming an entirely new sub-sect, known as the 'Suffolk Street' fellowship'." (p.144).

The fallout for Christadelphians was significant. In 1872 more conversions to Christadelphianism (as baptisms) were recorded in Nottingham as a result of Turney's preaching than in Birmingham where Roberts was based. A similar situation occurred in Essex where all the baptisms prior to 1873 occurred at Maldon as

a result of Handley's preaching. After 1873 the number of baptisms in Nottingham and Essex dropped off sharply, and the Christadelphian ecclesias in these areas never regained their momentum. Wilson noted that "Apart from the Inspiration Controversy, which came to a head in 1885, no other schism appears from official figures to have influenced the Christadelphian movement so much as the 'Clean Flesh' heresy" (by which he means Renunciationism. p. 345).

Edward Turney's main writings (still in print) were "*The Sacrifice of Christ*" (transcribed from a very long lecture delivered on Thursday 28 August 1873 in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham) and "*The Two Sons of God*." Robert Roberts's response to what he saw as Edward Turney's error is found in his booklet called "*The Slain Lamb*".

David Handley while being a leading figure in the division later returned to Christadelphianism and was re-baptised by Christadelphians in London in 1881.

Other prominent figures in the Nazarene fellowship included **Fred Pearce** who was a miner from South Wales, and a very prolific writer. He communicated his thoughts to the Renunciationists through the *Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter*, inviting correspondence and freely discussing Bible topics unhindered by sectarianism.

In the 1950s **Ernest Brady**, who had been a Christadelphian from his youth, came to the view that some Christadelphian doctrines were not supported by Scripture. He was turned out of that community but wrote more strongly than ever before through the medium of the *Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter* which, following the death of Fred Pearce, he edited for many years. Brady wrote extensively in opposition to Christadelphian teachings on the atonement, sin-in-the-flesh, God-manifestation, mortal resurrection, judgment and baptism, and he produced a large number of booklets dealing with these and other controversies. *The Nazarene Circular Letter* continues to this day with its main readership being among the Christadelphian community, many of whom quietly support it. In his "*Thinking It Over*" (Birmingham, 1963) Brady noted from his discussions with Christadelphians on a private basis that "a large proportion of Christadelphians" were in agreement with Nazarene views. His works include "*Doctored Christadelphianism*" (1974) and "*the Gospel that is Never Preached*".

Beliefs

- That God is the creator and designer of the universe, and that He cares about the welfare of humankind.
- That God gave the Old Testament Scriptures to the Israelites through Moses and the Prophets and the New Testament Scriptures to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ and His Apostles.
- That the Bible is the only source of knowledge of God's will and purpose with the earth; of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- That Jesus will return to set up His Kingdom on the earth to rule the world from Jerusalem.
- That Jesus is the Messiah and Saviour; miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem; He grew up in Nazareth, and at age 30 He began His ministry of preaching and healing.
- That He was executed by crucifixion by the highest religious authority, the Sanhedrin; and the highest civil authority, the Roman governor representing the Emperor. After the crucifixion He remained in the tomb until the third day when He was raised to eternal life in an incorruptible body.
- Nazarene fellowship does not believe that Jesus existed before His conception and birth, nor that He became God incarnate nor that He is the second person of the Trinity. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity, which they believe was fabricated in the third century AD, and adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in the fourth century by a narrow margin of votes.
- That God's word existed in the beginning, then in the Apostle John's time God's Word was incarnate in the Jewish man Jesus, and the world beheld His glory. Though He was God's only-begotten Son, He did not have divine nature, but normal human nature during His earthly ministry.
- That the death of Jesus was a voluntary substitution for Adam and therefore for Adam's descendants. They believe Jesus voluntarily paid the penalty of inflicted death which passed upon Adam for eating the forbidden fruit, but which God remitted so that Adam could live out his life. This penalty/debt, in due time, would be paid by God's sinless Son. Nazarene fellowship does not believe that Jesus' death was a punishment inflicted on Him by God so that we might be forgiven: and they reject the Christadelphian teaching that Jesus death was necessary for His own salvation.

- That baptism must be by total immersion following a belief in Jesus, and a desire to make a commitment to Him and His teachings. Baptism is a public declaration that one accepts Jesus as their Saviour and as they go down into the water, it is a sign that they die to their old worldly way of life, and emerge from the water to a new life in Jesus.
- That the committed Christian should be involved in prayer, Bible study, righteous living, and witnessing wherever possible; always ready to give a reason for the hope within them.
- Nazarene fellowship does not concur with the popular theological concepts of immortal souls that after death go to a paradise in heaven beyond the skies; that there is a fiery hell where sinners will suffer eternal torment; or that baptism is valid by sprinkling or pouring on babies or young children or unbelievers.

Also from Wikipedia there is an explanation of the term “Renunciationists”:-

The term *Renunciationists*

Edward Turney wrote and published a book called *Diabolism* in 1872, prior to his leaving Christadelphianism. On page 41 he wrote:

“In the first place, it should be remarked that Jesus was not made in the nature of angels, but in that of ‘flesh and blood.’ Paul says “it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.” This likeness was of sin’s flesh, in which “dwells no good thing.” - (Rom. viii. 3 ; vii. 18.) In Paul’s teaching, sin is identical with human nature. As the Christ was foreordained to be an effectual sin-offering, it was imperative that he should be invested with a sinful body, in order that sin might be condemned in sinful flesh. Had not the flesh of Jesus been the same as that of Adam, the sin contracted by that flesh would not, by the offering-up of Jesus, have been removed therefrom. The victim, to be efficient, must needs be brought under the curse. Bulls and goats were offered for sin, according to the rites of Moses, but still “it was not possible that they could take away sin;” because it was not a bull or a goat that had sinned, but a man. Hence the apostle’s statement in 2 Cor. v. 21: “For he hath made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” If it be asked what Paul means by “made him sin,” he replies ‘flesh and blood,’ or ‘sin’s flesh.’ **It is undeniable, then, that sin was an element of the flesh of the Son of God, unless we, had rather take the apostasy than Paul for our guide in the matter. The doctrine that Jesus was immaculate renders him of no service at all as a sin-offering.** The Logos was made flesh of Mary’s substance and, like her, obnoxious to the penalty of death. In it was ‘no soundness’ or enduring principle. It was ‘filled with a loathsome disease,’ which is sin, and the inevitable end, death. The redeeming power was the divine character resident in the Son of Man.”

In 1873 Turney *renounced* this paragraph and so began a division between Turney, his followers and other Christadelphians. Hence they became known as *Renunciationists*.

Of Jesus – Not a Part of The Trinity.

John Baptist said “This is he of whom, Moses and the prophets said “A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, and unto him shall ye hearken, or be cut off (Moses).

John Baptist said “I am not that Light but I came to bear witness of the Light. That was the true Light which lighteth everyone that cometh into the world.

And I knew him not but that he should be manifest unto Israel. And the same said unto me, “Upon whom thou seest the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he.” And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God.

He came unto his own and his own received him not.” Proof that Jesus did not pre-exist in Heaven with God, and therefore God was not his Father until begotten of the same nature as his brethren and his mother Mary. The false doctrine of the Trinity therefore is destroyed.

Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world, not of this present world is John meaning but of The Sin of Adam which affected the world on the Federal principle; a world concluded by the Creator under that Sin, but by faith in Jesus, to be concluded under Righteousness.

Brother Phil Parry

More ‘posts’ placed on a Christadelphian forum –

Before reporting the following posts I am very grateful to Brother Phil Parry for pointing out a mistake I made in one of the ‘posts; reported in the last C.L. on page 18 where I wrote: - “Re your post 15: I had always thought that when the Pharisees said to Jesus ‘Thou wast altogether born in sins’...” But this was not said to Jesus; it was addressed to the man born blind as we read in John 9:34. I should have known better. Sorry. - Russell.

About the time I sent out the last Circular Letter I posted the article “Muth Temuth and B’yom” on Julian’s forum. Here, once again is one side of the ensuing “conversation” –

Dear Mike, You wrote, “Once we understand that it is in the ‘action of Adam, if we act the same way,’ that we ‘all die,’ then we are starting to understand the reason behind how Jesus ‘covered’ the head of the snake (Gen 3).”

Perhaps I am a bit dull but could you please explain what you mean? With Love in Jesus. Russell.

Dear Mike, Yes, Adam’s sin condemned Adam - and it alienated him from God. However, the Apostle Paul explains the expression “In Adam” as being, not a curse, nor a misfortune as I have heard Christadelphians say, but a blessing of opportunity. 1 Corinthians 15:21,22 – “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

The death which came by Adam’s sin was not natural death for all creatures were created with natural life spans, including mankind. The death that came by Adam’s sin was judicial death - the “death by sin” (see Romans 5:12) - but this was not inflicted on Adam because the animal was slain instead.

“The judgment was by one man (Adam) to condemnation” (Romans 5:16) and all Adam’s descendants have this ‘condemned’ life passed down to them.

This ‘condemnation’ did not make Adam’s descendants sinners, nor did it make them more inclined towards sin, but in His mercy and love for the human race God provided a way back to Him from the alienation/condemnation position which Adam brought about by disobedience.

Romans 5:15, “For if through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

These early chapters of Paul’s letter to Romans explain the Federal Principle very well - of how we can come ‘out of Adam’ to be ‘in Christ’ and so free us from this ‘condemnation’ as Paul tells us in Romans 8:1 – “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ.”

We must not dismiss being ‘in Adam’ lightly anymore than we can lightly dismiss being ‘in Christ.’

With love in Jesus. Russell

Dear Mike, You say “The whole idea of the one sin that condemned all is ludicrous and unbiblical, as you already know.”

No, I don't already know any such thing. The one sin of Adam did put all under condemnation. This fact is not ludicrous and neither is it unbiblical.

The one sin of Adam meant that his life was forfeited and he should have died in the day he transgressed God's commandment. Although Adam was allowed to live on, his life was always under condemnation and it is this life he passed on to all his offspring. All Adamic life is under condemnation. It is surely obvious that had Adam died in the day of his transgression then we would never have lived. Our life has come down to each of us from Adam; it is Adamic life; under forfeit to Sin as a master as Paul explains in his letter to the Romans.

Hence the need for the virgin birth. Jesus did not receive His life from a human father but a life direct from God, as Adam did at his creation.

Adam lost his right to life; Jesus did not.
Adam lost his freedom by selling himself to Sin as a master. Jesus did not.
Adam by sinning was in bondage to Sin. Jesus was never in bondage to sin.
Adam became alienated from God. Jesus was never alienated from His Father.

Jesus therefore had a life which was free of condemnation and this same freedom He has promised to the faithful. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” (Romans 8:1). Once again we see the reason for baptism and the federal principle.

As I have said before “the one sin of Adam did condemn all” - not as a punishment for something we did; not as a curse for something Adam did, but for the purpose of a blessing in God's plan of redemption in Jesus Christ.

Do you deny this?

With Love in Jesus. Russell.

Dear Mike, I was going to answer this in detail but as I have said, I would post "How Many Deaths Are There?" in a new thread and as this will cover all the points I wish to make. Here I will confine myself to just one comment:

I write of ‘condemnation’ as explained by the apostle Paul but you respond by talking of the “curse” as used by Christadelphians. This supposed “curse” was supposedly on the flesh and called “sin in the flesh”. As there is no such thing your response causes only confusion for everyone.

The doctrine of Original Sin places a curse on all humanity. Christadelphians include Jesus in this curse, but Trinitarians do not. The Roman Catholic Church invented the Immaculate Conception in order to exclude Jesus. Of the two, I prefer the Trinitarian position. But both are wrong. I repeat - both are wrong.

The supposed curse they speak of is a change of nature when Adam transgressed. I think you agree that no such change ever took place?

With love in Jesus. Russell.

Dear Mike, Of course you are correct in saying that a curse, as outlined in Deuteronomy 28 is incurred by disobedience and a blessing for obedience. But that was not a curse on or in our flesh.

You are also correct in observing that God does not punish sons for their father's sins. Ezekiel 18 shows this clearly.

But once again I have to say that I am NOT talking about these things.

What I am taking about is the effect one persons sins can have on others. As one simple example - sons can be affected by their father's sins where, say, the father is put in prison for some misdemeanour and his family is forced to live under changed circumstances and may well have to suffer hardship as a result. Not as a punishment, but as a consequence.

If we next consider slavery under Mosaic Law we find from Leviticus 25:45,46 that regarding bondservants who were not in covenant relationship with God, if they bare children then they were also in the same bondage as their parents – in perpetuity. The only way this could change would have been for individual bondservants to convert to Judaism. Then they would be considered under a different system.

Now let us look again at the position of Adam. We are told that he sold himself to 'Sin' as a master - that is, he became the bondservant - with 'Sin' as the Bondmaster.

To say that Adam was punished with natural death as a curse which was passed on to his offspring is to teach that the sin of Adam was passed down as a curse on his children and is the teaching of Christadelphia (amongst many other Churches). This teaching is denied by the Nazarene Fellowship. Natural death is not the punishment for sin. Natural death is the natural end of a corruptible body. Judicial death is the punishment for sin – the death by sin. (See the post "How Many Deaths Are There?").

Adam, having sold himself to Sin as a Bondmaster was now out of covenant relationship with God, nevertheless he was allowed to continue his natural life and beget children, and these children were born into the same bondage to Master 'Sin' – not as a punishment, not as a curse, but as a consequence. A consequence which allowed the earth to be populated; a consequence which allowed the blessing of God to come upon the faithful through the righteousness of One man, Jesus Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

We read that by one man sin entered the world and death by sin - as a sentence passed upon Adam and all in him on the federal principle as Paul explains in Romans. "But not as the offence, so also the free gift. For if through the offence many be dead much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners (i.e. not made sinful, but concluded under sin), so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

In your remarks in the previous post you were referring to things that concerned those in covenant relationship with God – the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28, etc.

However, due to God having "concluded all under sin that He might have mercy on all," He placed all Adam's offspring out of covenant relationship with Himself in order to make it possible for faithful people of all ages to come into covenant relationship with Him.

In our day and age this covenant is entered into by being baptised into the death of Jesus who took away the Sin of the world as stated by John the Baptist. This "sin of the world" being the one sin of Adam by whom all were put out of covenant relationship with God.

Those who are thus baptised are new creatures serving God, having died to sin and no more under its ('Sins') dominion. So that when natural death brings ones probation to an end, one cannot be said to have shared in the death that came by Adam's sin, for Jesus has already suffered that for them – the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." (John 8:51). "He that believeth on the Son of man hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed

from death unto life.” (John 5:24). “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten son into the world that we might live through Him.” (1 John 4:9).

All these things are possible only if we accept the legal aspects of being either ‘in Adam’ or ‘in Christ.’ Those who deny the legal covenant of being ‘in Christ’ still belong to ‘Master Sin’ and are still under condemnation not even having seen the starting point for running the race.

As Dr Thomas wrote: “Redemption is release for a ransom, all who are God’s servants have been released from a former Lord by purchase; the purchaser is God; the ransom price being the precious blood of Christ.”

The blood of Christ was precious because the life is in the blood and, because of the Virgin birth, Jesus life was never forfeited through Adam’s sin – Jesus life was not concluded under sin – and Jesus was therefore free to offer it in accordance with God’s will as the redemptive price.

Any other view and Jesus need not have been begotten of the Father but could just as well have been the son of Joseph.

With love to all in Jesus who died that we might live. Russell

Dear Mike, I wrote – “If we next consider slavery under Mosaic Law we find from Leviticus 25:45,46 that regarding bondservants who were not in covenant relationship with God, if they bare children then they were also in the same bondage as their parents – in perpetuity.”

Your response was, “If we ignore that slaves themselves were not ever “perpetual.” The “time of release” granted them such if they chose it. So their “condition remains within their own power to stay or leave. Again, the period did not go on ‘forever.’

No Mike, you need to read Leviticus again. It refers to those who are not in covenant relationship with God - you mention the “time of release” but this does not apply to foreign slaves.

You wrote:- “As I said, it is not the ‘type of dead’ that is of concern, since all bring cessation of life, but the length of time dead, that is of concern. Again, if eternal, the death is judicial, if one is raised to life, it was not...”

So it is the type of death that is of concern - either judicial death or natural death? Or do you believe that natural death was the result of Adam’s transgression? What of Hebrews 9:22 – “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

You say “It is so much simpler to just acknowledge that those that ‘do as Adam did; thought as he did, etc.,’ are ‘ben’Adam”,’ sons of Adam, and those that do their best not to be ben’Adam, but rather Ben’Elohim, sons of God, following the one that did it first, Jesus, that they are the ones that will become part of Olam ha’ba, the world to come.”

Well, it may be simpler to express, but it’s certainly not the Gospel. It is essential to come ‘out of Adam’ by baptism into Christ before we can ever hope to obtain eternal life. This teaching is set out in detail for us in early part of Paul’s letter to the Romans. Baptism is our first ‘death’ - a simple ‘death’ which is all that we are asked to undertake to spare us from judicial death which we become subject to upon enlightenment to the Gospel. (Needless to say here that a life spent well pleasing to God is also required - having been ‘graft in’ we do not want to be ‘cut off’).

Jesus suffered judicial death in our place and all we are asked is that we acknowledge this fact in baptism – “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?... planted together in the likeness of his death... if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

One cannot ignore the legal aspect of the Gospel.

With Love in Jesus. Russell.

Dear Mike, After Adam sinned by eating of the forbidden tree we read that God said to the serpent “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

It is obvious this refers to the work of God in Christ in purchasing back to Himself the human race with the precious blood of Jesus; when redemption took place on Calvary; when Jesus laid down His life as a ransom for many; and when He took away the sin of the world.

Yet at no time have you given a clear reason for the crucifixion apart from saying it was an example of obedience which we should be so moved by that we are persuaded to follow the same path. But this is not the gospel for two reasons: first, we do not and cannot follow the same path and second, supposing we did then it would mean we earn our salvation by works. And while it may provide a reason for the death of people who are ignorant of God’s law and those who reject God, it does not allow any reason for the death of innocent people such as babies and young children.

You said regarding death “if eternal; the death is judicial, if one is raised to life, it was not...” In the news this week we have the report of a depressed mother who set fire to her infant’s bedroom; is God going to consider this child’s tragic death as judicial?

Neither have you answered my question regarding the death that came by Adam’s transgression. Is this why people die?

While you reject the abominable Christadelphian doctrine that there was a physical change of Adam’s nature as a result of sin which was passed on to all mankind including Jesus so requiring His crucifixion, what you have put in its place is little better because it is quite inadequate in showing how all the types of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the one great Antitype, Jesus.

The Nazarene Fellowship view is that the Atonement is the redemptive sacrifice in which Jesus Christ gave His life voluntarily as a ransom payment to buy us back to God; knowing, of course, that “By grace are ye saved through faith” – faith in the Atoning work of God in Christ Jesus.

With Love in His Name. Russell.

Dear Mike, I said that you had at no time given a clear reason for the crucifixion... to which you replied that you had given several including, “To whom much is given, much is required.”

This is not a reason, is it?

And when I said we do not and cannot follow the same path as Jesus, you go on to say that:-

“This disturbs me; for... you sound as if you are saying that Jesus demanded an impossibility (“take up your cross and follow me”). If we cannot follow, how can we be “obedient”?”

But Mike, it should be obvious that Jesus, by going to His death by crucifixion had a work to do which only He could accomplish. In reference to His pending death, He prayed to His Father “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But it was not possible for “the cup” to pass from Him if His work of Redemption was to be accomplished. There was no other way. It was for this purpose that God brought His Son into the world, and if willing, Jesus was the only One who could indeed accomplish it. Jesus was willing because He loved the world as His Father did, and it was for the joy set before Him in so bringing many sons to glory that He courageously faced the terrible ordeal on Calvary. No one else can possibly follow Jesus in this! No one else can be the Messiah!

You quoted Psalm 49:7, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious.” That Psalm is true. However, Jesus did redeem His brother and gave to God a ransom for him. No one else could have done this because they were all in the same condemnation as Adam – all concluded under sin. Only Jesus was in the strong position of being able to do these things

You have repeatedly said, and quite rightly, that God hates human sacrifice. Of course He does. The blood of anyone concluded under the sin of Adam, which excludes Jesus through the Virgin birth, is of no more value than the blood of bulls and goats in taking away sin because it is not the equivalent price to the life which Adam forfeited. That is why Psalm 49 says that “the redemption of their soul is precious.” Their soul could not be bought or redeemed with something that had no value.

(It is worth noting that ‘soul’ in the Old Testament is ‘nephesh’ and is equivalent to ‘psuche’ in the New Testament and refers to natural life as distinct from zoe or eternal life).

But we have not been redeemed with something that has no value, 1 Peter 1:19, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world.”

This proves my first point that we do not and cannot follow in the same path as Jesus. It also proves my second point that supposing we did then it would mean our salvation is by works. And regarding this second point you wrote:-

“Not at all. If each follows as he is given strength to, the rest is forgiven by reason of mercy (we do our best, but in so doing, we only demonstrate that we truly believe what we say, not that doing is of any credit to us).”

Well really, Mike, this is the wishy-washy stuff of churchianity! *“If each follows as he is given strength to, the rest is forgiven...”* Do you not believe Paul when he told the Corinthians “there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”? You say “we do our best” but Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect.” Do you not believe we will be given the necessary strength if we turn to God in prayer? Jesus also said “When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.” We are offered all the strength we need to do our duty and we need not fail.

I took you up on the point you made about death when you said ‘If eternal, the death is judicial; if one is raised then it is not judicial.’ In response to this I mentioned the sad case of a child who died in a fire and asked if you considered this to be judicial. You answered that “It is not mine to make the judgment.” Which is true, but you already had passed a judicial judgment of eternal death on this child and that is why I challenged you. Then you say that “God is the Judge” which again is true, but the point is that you should have known the answer from Scripture for no one is responsible to the Law until they know it; those who die not knowing the Law remain dead, but this is not judicial death because it does not fall under the ‘Law of Sin and Death.’ Further than this we are not told though some would speculate.

I quoted “By grace are we saved through faith” to which you added: - “It is by this that we find favour or not, by grace, not by exchange, not by substitution; to tell God He must have a substitute and cannot forgive without it, is shortening God’s arm.”

Mike, is it really necessary for me to point out that no one is telling God that He must have a substitute? It is entirely the other way round. From Genesis to Revelation God is telling us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins and we learn that the only blood that is efficacious is that of His Son – “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Just before His crucifixion the Holy Spirit tells us that it is expedient that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. (See John 11:50). Paul confirms this in 2

Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which love should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." You cannot get the idea of substitution out of these two quotations and there are many more besides; neither is it possible to remove the substitutional meaning from all the sacrifices for sin throughout the Old Testament.

You say "I am sticking to the same "guns" Jesus did, as he says many times, asking them if they had "read the scriptures;" the only ones available at the time, to give them knowledge of what to look for when seeking Messiah."

May I respectfully draw your attention to the fact that the New Testament gives us tremendous insight into the Old Testament which was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The apostles were given much to open peoples' eyes to truths which had been kept secret. As one illustration, Paul explained the Federal Principle in the early chapters of his letter to the Romans. It is difficult to see how this could have been discovered by anyone sticking to the same "guns" as Jesus, as you express it, yet for the disciples it is essential to the understanding of the reason for baptism. Personally I would go so far as to say that without a proper understanding of the federal principle, ones baptism holds little value.

With Love in Jesus. Russell

Dear Mike, I wrote, "It should be obvious that Jesus, by going to His death by crucifixion had a work to do which only He could accomplish." You replied, "It is not obvious. From where does this come? It is not in the Tanakh anywhere concerning the Messiah."

So now I need to ask what part of my statement is not in the Old Testament?

I said: "This proves my first point that we do not and cannot follow in the same path as Jesus." You said: "Then you have again skirted the question, why did Jesus ask us to 'follow him' if we could not?" Well Mike, Jesus asks us to follow Him in loving one another as He loved us; He did not ask or expect us to redeem others. Only He was ever in the position to do that.

I quoted: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

You responded: "If you then believe you are perfect, we have nothing further to speak on."

Mike, this is not very helpful is it? I am not perfect and never have I hinted at such a thing.

You said: "Even Paul said he struggled daily, 'not able to do the good he wanted to do'." I say you misunderstand the second part of Romans 7 where Paul is talking of his position before conversion to Christ. Dr Adam Clarke puts it well:-

"It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that the Apostle speaks here of his regenerate state; and that what was, in such a state, true to himself, must be true of all others in the same state. This opinion has, most pitifully and most shamefully not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character, it requires but little knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel, and of the scope of this Epistle, to see that the Apostle is here either personating a Jew, under the Law and without the Gospel, or showing what his own state was when he was deeply convinced that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified; and had not as yet heard those blessed words, Brother Saul, the Lord that appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Previously you had said "Paul spoke thusly: 'Imitate me even as I imitate Christ'." So which is it to be? Either Paul is able to imitate Christ or he is unable to do the good he wanted to. You can't have it both ways.

With Love in Jesus. Russell.