

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 225

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## In this Issue:

Page 1 Editorial	Sister Helen Brady
Page 2 A Latter Day Warning	Brother Phil Parry
Page 4 The Body of Christ - An Exhortation	Brother Leo Dreifuss
Page 5 Did Jesus Eat and Drink the Emblems of His Own Flesh and Blood?	Brother Edward Turney
Page 8 Romans 7 and the Flesh of Original Sin	Brother Phil Parry
Page 10 Psalms 38,39 and 40, An Exhortation	Brother A Hodges
Page 10 "Let all the men of war draw near" – Joel 3:9 - News from The Middle East.	Compiled
Page 11 A Commentary on Brother Richard Pursell's book – "Christadelphians – The Untold Story"	Brother Russell Gregory

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## Editorial

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings.

I read a piece recently by Paul Johnson, who incidentally wrote an excellent book "A History of the Jews." His writings often have a spiritual aspect to them and on this occasion he was speculating about time and its relation to us in our natural state and while I did not agree with all he wrote I have adapted some of his interesting thoughts more into line with my own thinking.

We are imprisoned in time and space and there appears to be no obvious way of escaping from them. Indeed if, like Richard Dawkins and other neanderthals, we do not believe in a non-material world, there is no escape at all. As individuals we have no significance, no more meaningful past, present or future than a piece of rock or a puff of dust. Nobody else is significant either and nothing matters. When we die, darkness closes in and we go out like a light on the switched off television set, dwindling and then vanishing utterly, for ever.

Paul Johnson suggests that a good term for death or dying would be 'clocking off,' because at that point we leave time. For everyone, as Shakespeare put it, 'time must have a stop.' We are conditioned by time-consciousness, so imprisoned in it mentally as well as physically that we cannot think except in time terms. Time can have no meaning for those who have died and for those who awake at the coming of Jesus. To them there will be no sense of how much time has passed while they have been waiting. They closed their eyes and it will be as in a twinkling of an eye when they awake. Happy thought!

Bible students know how this present order of things will eventually end and the speculation amongst scientists and the like as to how it all began and how we arrived here is still exercising 'great' minds. Some favour the Big Bang theory and this may be a neat explanation of how the universe came into being, but it immediately raises the question: who or what detonated the Bang? And what was there before the Bang? There are no present answers to this question, and is hard to see how there ever can be, so long as you rule out God. Another notion is that Big Bangs, though at immensely distant intervals of time, are a permanent repetitive feature of existence. It still leaves unanswered the question: how did the first Big Bang happen?

The Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein in his writings on ethics asks: "How does it happen that every fact of experience can be brought into a relationship with what is shown by a clock?" But like Pilate when he asked "what is truth?" Wittgenstein does not stay for an answer. Once you have space you need time to allow things to happen. So the universe had to be created in time.

Having created time, God does not exist in it and is not a prisoner of it as we are in our present natural state. God is spiritual not material. He exists outside space and time and therefore not definable by any words we can use. We are created; we are tested and as a result accepted or rejected. If accepted we shall move eventually, when Jesus returns and all is concluded, into a situation completely unshackled by time and the clock. We shall be free of time in the Kingdom and free indeed.

In his play *The Tempest*, Shakespeare speaks of this earthly life as ‘revels’ and the character Prospero speaks the following lines:-

“These our actors  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

So we can look forward to a timelessness when all things shall be made new, and we shall renew our strength, and mount up with wings as eagles: we shall run and not be weary, walk and not faint.

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Love to all. Helen Brady.

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## A Latter Day Warning

There can be no doubt that to understand the record of John’s Gospel chapters 5 and 6 one has to be taught of God which is what Jesus quoted from the Holy Scriptures and fulfilled in Himself as “the Word made flesh” when the fullness of time had come when God sent Him forth immune from the condemnation of Adamic Sin exposed by the Law of Moses that He might redeem them that were under the Law. - Romans 5:20.

Jesus said, “I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me.” This cannot apply to Jesus as a formation in the womb of His mother Mary; He would know nothing at that Time. But here He is relating the experience of a responsible adult who has received a mission from His Heavenly Father. If He came down from Heaven with that mission impressed in His mind then He must have ascended to heaven to receive it even as Moses went up into the mount to receive God’s word.

Jesus said “and no man hath ascended into Heaven save He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven” (“I am in the Father and the Father in me”). Is this too much for some people to accept? Did not Jesus say “all things are possible with God”? “How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you.” “I am the bread of life that came down from Heaven and giveth life to the world.” The bread of life is the Word which was made flesh or manifested in the flesh of Jesus that all who desired Truth might feed upon it.

In reading much of the statements of Jesus it is essential that the reader rid himself or herself of Trinitarian theories for as St Paul stated "The head of the woman is the man and the head of the man is Christ and the head of Christ is God." Three heads consecutively superior to each other. Again, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before..." If Jesus ascended up to heaven He ascended up as the Son of man - a corruptible man of flesh and blood and could not be a son of man pre-existent with the Father and of the seed of David according to the flesh. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth (giveth life), the flesh profiteth nothing (Jesus)."

When the Scriptures speak of death it should be read in the correct context; in the legal sense, the physical sense, and in some applications, the spiritual sense of darkness and light. This is what is found in the chapters mentioned in John chapters 5 and 6 and also in Paul's epistle to the Romans which has been sadly misunderstood and misinterpreted.

What Jesus is teaching in John chapters 5 and 6 is the same theme of doctrine Paul taught in his epistles especially Romans - a passing from death to life without experiencing death by physical decay which incidentally was God's appointment before Adam sinned, so that when Paul says "By man came death" he refers to a judicial death by sin which can be remitted through the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, making him free from the law of Sin and Death. Or, as Jesus said, "He that heareth my words and believeth on Him that sent me shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death to life." Dr Thomas explained this in Eureka as "a passing from under the sentence of death to a sentence of life."

Genesis records no 'sentence of death' upon Adam but a continuance of his 'natural living soul' to the limit of his created capacity - 930 years in Adam's case but no mention of Eve.

Moses is said to be the writer of the Genesis account but I find nothing in that account resembling what I or any Christadelphian was meant to believe and recorded in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith Clause 5 and I challenge anyone to prove it to me. The federal teaching of Genesis is that Jesus died that Adam might not die the inflicted death by blood-shedding incurred by sin; not to prevent him dying the death common to his nature. The same applies to all who accept His teaching and recognise that His death was not a substitute for natural death but for the death that came by sin. Unless this is understood the atoning work of God in Christ will not be understood and the words of Jesus will still ring true both of the Jews and of the present day professors of Christian teaching ~ "I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." John 5:43).

Many names will come to mind who have drawn disciples to their teaching, all claiming to be the teaching of Christ in His name when it is found to be in their own name and to a certain extent misunderstanding of what is truth. The majority have never explained John chapters 5 and 6 because of the general belief that the common death by decay was the penalty for sin passed upon Adam and imputed to all in his loins. If this were the case Jesus could not have stated what He said in those chapters, neither could Paul have taught what he did addressing the Romans in chapters 5 and 6, which has been wrested to convey what he does not in fact teach. And Dr Adam Clarke D.D. was not so blind that he did not understand Romans chapter 7 and poured scorn upon those who were responsible for disgracing the Gospel of Christ with the false teaching of sinful flesh and condemned nature instead of condemned character.

The teaching of John chapters 5 and 6 and Romans chapters 5 and 6 demands the belief that natural death as the penalty for Adam's sin is not so; if you believe it is then when you die naturally the penalty is still unremoved for as Robert Roberts said in Clause 5 of the B.A.S.F. this natural death penalty was transmitted to Adam's posterity. If it had been removed then obviously he would not die.

What think ye?

Brother Phil Parry.

# The Body of Christ.

## 1 Corinthians 12:4-15 and 26-51

Many illustrations are used in Scripture to describe the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and His plan of salvation for the saints in Christ. One such illustration particularly to the point is what we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which Paul compares the Church with the human body.

We want to make a few comparisons between these two bodies to see just how well this comparison was chosen by God. All actions of the organs of the human body are controlled by the brain and are subject to our will. The head of the Church is Christ who controls all activities of His different assemblies - and not only that but every believer's individual life. Everybody is subject to the head, and to His supreme will.

All muscles and organs of the human body have their own functions. No two organs are alike; look alike, or are even equipped alike; they are all quite distinguishable from one another. Every member of the Church is a different person, with different features, different gifts and abilities. Every one has his own task within the Church according to his or her abilities, yet just as all the members of the healthy human body work together as a well organised team, so also the members of a healthy Church co-operate for the Master's task such as preaching the Gospel, caring for the sick, and so on. The Church thus appears as one body, or should appear so, with no member unduly in the foreground to emphasis his own personality, nor unduly in the background and not using his abilities that might be of service to God.

Then we are told if one member suffers all suffer with it. We all knew from our own experience that when something is wrong with one organ we feel generally ill, and it has an effect on all the other parts of our body. So also when one member of the Church is sick or comes to some other personal grief, all the others try to comfort that member and show a general concern for him and by prayer ask God to heal him or, as the case may be, to ease his burden and strengthen him. In a healthy body all members respond quickly and instantaneously to the will of the mind. If I want to raise an arm, or to turn my face to look at an object, the muscles act as soon as I decide what I want to do.

So in a healthy Church the members will respond quickly and with readiness if work for Christ has to be done. All muscles and organs are equipped with some special gift of strength or some ability that distinguishes them from, the others, and they make use of their gifts from the general well-being of the body; furthermore, by contributing of their strength for the common good of the body, they derive more strength themselves. So all of us are blessed with some special gift, may be something we possess, or some ability we have.

Let us be sure that we don't use any such blessing just for our own selfish ends but, if possible, for the good of our service for the Master- if we use our talents according to His will He will bless us and we shall receive more gifts: for we have the Master's assurance that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance" - and also the warning that "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

If we want to move a muscle it has to get some extra energy to do its task. This energy comes from the food we take in; but it is by the action of the brain, the head, that this energy is fed to the right muscle at the right time. Our spiritual food is the word of God which by regular study of the Bible we take in and Christ, the Head of the Church, gives us the necessary strength for what He wants us to do just at the right moment, that is what He knows is the right moment, even if we don't understand it at the time.

If we have to face some special ordeal in the course of the Master's work we can rely on Him to be with us and to strengthen us at the time; and don't let us forget that we need His strength for the ordinary daily tasks as well as the special trials, just as the organs of the human body require some strength to live all the times, not merely when we require them for some special effort.

In a healthy human body the movements and actions of its parts are perfectly timed and perfectly organised. The activities of the parts of the human body are thus like those of a well disciplined

organization; there is also discipline in the Church, though not the sort of discipline which we know in a world organisation.

In the world the governments, the fighting forces, and even teachers at school maintain discipline by instilling the fear of punishment; but in the Church it is rather the discipline brought about by the willing response of people of one mind and a common purpose in view.

There is a unity of purpose and of mind between Christ and the Church; but there is an even greater and, until Christ's return, a more perfect unity between Christ and His Father. This really is a model of co-operation and like mindedness.

As all the members of the human body fulfil their task with a keen response and readiness, and as the members of the Church fulfil theirs, so Christ fulfilled His mission with an even greater readiness.

Like in a disciplined body of believers His actions were not determined by fear at punishment, nor yet in order to get a reward like a young child doing the will of his parents, although He knew that He would rise to the glory of the Father after three days; but His actions were determined out of pure love for His father and for man.

Out of love to do the will of His Father He resisted the temptation to call to His aid twelve legions of angels; and He gave His life out of love for you and for me, for all believers of all generations -past, present and future - and He did that while we were yet sinners, before our conversion, while we were of this world, completely astray from God and His will.

It is because of this love that we are meeting here.

Let us, then, take our example from this ready response to do the Father's will at all times, for the sake of doing it and out of love for it, and not merely with the reward at Christ's return in view, nor yet out of fear of punishment.

One of the first things where we can show our readiness to do His will is in the love for our fellow man and the other Brethren and Sisters - for God is love

The apostle John tells us, more than any other, how important it is to love our neighbour - he goes as far as to tell us that unless we show such love we are not of God, though we may profess to be. He says, (1 John 5:14), "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren."

Only when we practise that love can the Church fulfil its task like a healthy body - each member being concerned in the welfare of another, not a busy-body like curiosity, not probing into the affairs of other people, but a discreet and yet sincere and warm-hearted concern for one another and a readiness to help.

Let us close with another message from John - (1 John 4:21); "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

G. L. Dreifuss.

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## **DID JESUS EAT AND DRINK THE EMBLEMS OF HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD?**

This question is much more easy to ask than to answer in a satisfactory manner. Whether we reply in the affirmative or in the negative, proof should be given, otherwise the answer leaves the mind unsatisfied. Hundreds of persons who read the accounts of the "last supper" given by the three evangelists, think that the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup was the keeping of the Passover by Jesus and His disciples. We hardly need say that this an erroneous impression arising from inattention to what is repeated several

times in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as to the proper mode of observing the Passover. The food eaten at the Passover was bread and flesh, and bitter herbs, the bread was unleavened. No mention is made of wine, or any other kind of drink, and the Israelites were forbidden to use any water in the preparation of the lamb or kid. But the food eaten at the "last supper" was simply bread and wine. This is sufficient to prove that the "breaking of bread" was not the Jewish Passover.

It is not our object at this time to speak of the Passover in its details; but only to make such allusions to it as may appear useful for the better understanding of our remarks on the "breaking of bread." Of this ordinance John makes no positive mention. The writers who treat of it distinctly are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul. In turning to their testimony it will be instructive to notice what they do not say, as well as what they do say. "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover? And He said, go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith, my time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me." Matthew 26:17-21.

Thus far Matthew speaks exclusively of the Jewish Passover. Whether this Passover was kept the day before, in anticipation of the feast to be held on the following day by the Israelitish nation, or whether the Passover was that year kept both on Thursday and Friday, as some writers' think, we shall not now attempt to determine. The point we wish just now to point to is that Jesus gave commandment to His disciples to make ready the Passover, without saying a word about anything else, and that He sat down to eat it with them. Of course He would keep it as prescribed by Moses. It was customary for all at the table to help themselves from the same dish. Harmer says the Jews to this day make a kind of thick sauce to represent the clay which they worked in Egypt.

It is not improbable that the man at whose house the feast was held was one of Christ's disciples.

Now Matthew says: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to His disciples, and said, Take eat, this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you I will not drink hence-forth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This bread was undoubtedly unleavened, for at that season the Jews were forbidden to have leavened bread in their dwellings. But this unleavened bread does not seem to have any importance in regard to what is commonly called the Eucharist. Paul, for instance, in enjoining the Corinthians to keep the ordinance as he had "received of the Lord," does not specify that the bread is to be leavened or unleavened; though of the unleavened Passover bread he in another place makes a beautiful and instructive figure. The institution of "breaking of bread" seems to have been established immediately after the Passover had been eaten; that is to say, as soon as the lamb had been consumed, and while bread remained on the table. Of the Passover Jesus did undoubtedly eat with His disciples; but Matthew does not say that He partook of the bread and wine which represented His body and His blood. As far then, as Matthew goes, if we abide strictly to what is written, we dare not affirm that Jesus partook of His own body symbolised by the bread, and of His own blood symbolised by the wine. It may, however, be said that the words "henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine" implies that Jesus drank of it then. Be this as it may, no allusion is here made to the bread. And the word 'henceforth' is hardly strong enough to be taken as proof that Jesus himself drank. It may be that He only intended to say that after this time until such a time I will not drink, without meaning that He drunk then. We cannot regard the word 'henceforth' as conclusive evidence that Jesus partook with His disciples. The common idea that this supper was a meal may render it somewhat less easy to look upon Jesus blessing and distributing it, but not eating and drinking Himself. But that the "breaking of bread" ought not to be looked upon at all in the light of a meal to satisfy the natural appetite is plain from Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians: "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" The breaking of bread is a sign of spiritual participation with Christ.

Mark describes the last Passover substantially the same as Matthew, but not exactly in the same words: "And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare, that Thou mayest eat the Passover? And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water;

follow him, and wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, the Master saith, where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared, there make ready for us. And His disciples went forth and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them, and they made ready the Passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take eat, this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:12-25). In this we have several interesting particulars omitted by Matthew; but both writers very clearly show that the “breaking of bread” in commemoration of Christ’s death did not take place till after the Passover had been disposed of; and both are equally silent as to Jesus himself partaking of the bread and wine. It would seem that Judas did not break bread, but arose and went away as soon as Jesus exposed him by saying, “it is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish,” that is while they were eating the Passover. He had previously bargained with the priests, and now being unexpectedly unmasked, he rushed off to inform them that no time was to be lost, and quickly returned with a band of soldiers. The account of the Passover given by Luke is so nearly in the language of Mark that it need not be fully translated. We learn from it that Peter and John were the two disciples sent to prepare the feast. This fact is not brought out either by Mark or Matthew. Of the cup Luke writes: “And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, take this, and divide it among yourselves, for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.” Then Luke repeats the ceremony beginning with the bread. “This is my body, which is given for you.” And of the cup. “This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you.” The words “I will not drink” scarcely leaves room to conjecture that Jesus drank with His disciples. And the other words also, “divide it among yourselves,” would indicate that the wine was intended exclusively for the twelve. A like import seems to attach to the saying concerning the bread: “This is my body, which is given for you,” and “this is my blood which is shed for you,” as much as to say, I now appoint this ordinance to be kept by you in remembrance of me, it is not for me, but for you. My body is not broken for me, my blood is not shed for me, but for you, it is therefore not for me to eat and drink, but for you. It is clear enough from several passages that the disciples did not then understand the meaning of the newly appointed institution. They were ignorant of the necessity for the death of Jesus, and did not know that He should rise from the dead. It would then only be after their minds had been enlightened by the occurrence of the facts that they would understand the intention of the breaking of bread, besides the ordinance was appointed specially to keep Jesus in their remembrance – “this do in remembrance of me” while Jesus was present there could be no remembrance, so that though appointed during His life it was only after His death and departure that the disciples would fully realise the significance of it.

The remark that John had made no distinct mention of the Passover, nor of the “breaking of bread” subsequently established, will be seen to be correct by reference to the narrative of a supper between Jesus and His disciples, in the 13th chapter. “I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another doubting of whom He spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then (at meals they reclined on couches on the left elbow, feet from the table) lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, he it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.” It will be noticed that all this was done secretly. There was no asking all round, “Is it I?” as on Passover night. The text says, “Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake to him. For some of them thought because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said to him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast.” That was the feast of the Passover, a plain proof that the supper that John was speaking of was before the Passover. On this occasion, as well as on Passover night, Jesus warned Peter that he should deny Him. It should seem that Jesus knew perfectly what Judas was plotting in his heart; and the sudden revelation of this treason not to the whole of the guests present, but only to John and Peter, caused him to complete the murderous sale of his Master. “He then,” says the beloved disciple, “went immediately out and it was night.” The next and last history of the supper is that by Paul, “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said. Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he

took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." 1 Corinthians 11:25-26. We should think if the Lord Himself ate and drank, the apostle would in this, the only place he describes the ceremony, have mentioned it. But like the three preceding historians, he is silent on that point, while, like them also, he emphatically specifies that the eating and drinking were for the disciples, "This is my body which is broken for you." In 1 Corinthians 5th chapter, Paul teaches that the slaying of Christ was the killing of the Christian Passover: "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." The eating of this Passover was indicative that the eaters were members, in a spiritual sense, of Christ's flesh and of His bones; that they were taken out of His side after the pattern of the first bride; and that they are at a future time to be presented to Christ in marriage, when they will be made literally like Him. All this would appear to signify the need on their part only to eat the Passover, that is, His body. He is not to be made like them, they are to be made like Him. He was made like them in His first appearance in the world; they eat and drink of Him now in sign of their present mental and moral likeness, and also of their future physical assimilation to His nature, that is, the divine. We do not at present gather from these considerations that it was imperative for Jesus to eat the bread. If our eating of it signifies that we eat His body, had He ate of it would not that be equivalent to eating His own body? We are at a loss for a reason why he should eat symbolically of His own flesh; He said to the disciples: "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." But how could this apply to Himself is not easy to see.

As regards the Jewish Passover, it may be alleged that that was prophetic, or typical of Christ's death, and assumed that as Christ ate of it. He might in like manner eat of the supper which typified the same event. But it is not quite correct to say that the supper was established as a type of the death of Christ. It would be better to describe it as a memorial of His death, for He evidently designed it to bring His death to remembrance. A type foreshadows an event, a memorial refers back to it. The Jewish Pascal lamb must be eaten by Jesus, for He was a Jew; if for no other reason than to bring to memory thereby the grand deliverance of the nation from Egypt. If, however, it could be confidently affirmed that Jesus ate and drank His own supper, the sense in which He did so could not be altogether the same as that intended for the disciples then and since. It could only, we think, be in a typical sense, foreshadowing His death by violence, not as partaking of His own flesh and blood. This matter is now, and until He come, the import of the supper; and during all this time He abstains from the fruit of the vine - performing the vow of a Nazarite unto God. Still even of this typical eating we fail to see any proof. But in drinking the wine new in the kingdom of God with His resurrected and glorified brethren, it will be a glad memorial, "a feast of fat things a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined:" it will be a joyous feast; the saints will shout for joy; the children of Zion will be joyful in their King; a grand celebration after two thousand years of the slaying of the Lamb of God, and the sprinkling of their hearts, by faith, with the blood thereof, delivering them from the vengeance of an eternal grave.

Edward Turney

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## **Romans chapter 7 and the Flesh of Original Sin**

Most people think the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans to be a most confusing subject, yet in its introduction it is such a plain explanation of what constitutes the old man and the new by Law and by faith without any physical change in nature.

Paul's address to the Roman believers implies that at the time of writing neither he nor they were in the flesh; how can this be so seeing he was a living body of flesh and blood physically even as they also were? Paul had not died physically and risen from physical death neither had they, so how do we explain his words "When we were in the flesh"?

Did not Paul say, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." Romans 8:8-9.



Jesus said of Paul that he would bear witness of Him in Rome, this is the result of that witness; those that were baptised into the inflicted death of Christ by water and Spirit understood what he was teaching in this 7<sup>th</sup> chapter because they were ordained to eternal life. It is the same at this present dispensation, the Truth is in the word and available to those who are willing and eager to accept it. Jesus reminded the Jewish rulers of this fact and much proof of this is found in Old and New Testament records, but they reviled Him for it. We have the recorded words of Jesus while in the synagogue at Nazareth of Elijah being sent to a woman of Sarepta during a severe drought when it rained not for three and a half years, and also of Elisha being sent to Naaman the Syrian. He says there were many widows in Israel but Elijah was sent only to that one, also many lepers in Israel but Elisha was only sent to a Syrian. (Luke 4:25).

The Apostle Paul was sent to the Jews of the circumcision but they would not hear but “judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, therefore we turn to the Gentiles and they will hear it.” Acts 13:46. The Apostle Paul received direct revelation from Jesus and was chosen to preach to the Gentiles the Gospel of salvation, not the doctrine of Original Sin as it is mistakenly believed by Christendom due to the inability to rightly divide the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans where he speaks of the Law of sin in his members which could not be so when as a New Creature in Christ he had the members of Christ.

Did he not say, “Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot?” 1 Corinthians 6:15). Again, “Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.” (1 Corinthians 12:2). Again, “Ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new.” (1 Colossians 3:9). “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away and all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17). “As the body is one and hath many members so also is Christ.” (Romans 12:12). Judge for yourselves “If the Law of Sin” was in Paul’s members he must have been speaking in the past tense not as a new man in Christ prepared to live and follow Christ’s example even to the death. “How to perform that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18). How can you believe that of Paul? Even Jesus knew Paul was capable of doing good and that certain men were capable of good if they put their hearts and minds to it. “A good man out of the good treasures of his heart bringeth forth good things.” (Matthew 12:35). So the heart of a good man is not deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. (See Jeremiah 17:9). Why then misconceive Paul’s words and say “In the flesh dwelleth no good thing” when he is in fact speaking of himself in the past tense as the old man not in Christ?

When Adam sold himself to Sin together with all in his loins he and they came under the Law of Sin, the bondmaster. Thus Adam was styled “The body of Sin,” or belonging to Sin with its many members, all serving Sin until made free. The only wages for service rendered to Bondmaster Sin was all that he had to offer, whereas the gift of God was redemption, freedom from Sin and eternal life through Jesus Christ. Instead of being members of the old man Adam when he sinned and before his typical redemption in Eden, having put on the new man Christ Jesus we become members of His body and His servants by grace, not of works but serving righteousness.

The Law of Christ is therefore in our members not the Law of Sin, for as Paul said, the body belonging to sin has been destroyed (made powerless). See Romans 6:11 and onwards and you should understand why Paul’s words in Romans 7:22 are in the past tense when he was unconverted to Christ, sold under sin. His final words that Christ has delivered him from such a wretched position, not telling the Roman believers or any other people that he was a wretched man who could not, because of his physical flesh perform that which is good.

Jesus was flesh and blood like Paul and it could not be said of Him He did not perform that which was good, for He was just and righteous and pleasing to His Father. To say as some do that His nature was “condemned flesh” is a lie not found in the Holy Scriptures, nor that He or ourselves have condemned flesh. The words of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15,16 are said to be worthy of all acceptance “that Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.” But to say as some do that Jesus died on Calvary to demonstrate what was due to human nature or the physical flesh is a doctrine of man uninspired; not of Paul nor of Jesus Christ. Therefore, please hold fast that which is good and worthy of all acceptance while there is time and the oil we are offering free to those whose lamps are not burning.

Yours in the patient waiting for Christ Jesus. Phil and Rene Parry.

## **Psalms 38, 39, 40.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Loving Greetings in Jesus Name.'

I think the Book of Psalms is very beautiful reading. Nowhere in the world can we find such beautiful reasoning, admonition, advice, and wonderful comfort as in this portion of the Word of God.

It always seems to me, when reading the Scriptures that so few words cover such a multitude of our troubles and trials. Surely, the writers were inspired, for no man of the world could write like these men.

David was a man much like ourselves; he experienced all kinds of emotions; he had all the troubles and trials that we experience, and felt sometimes almost hopeless - yet he never once lost faith in his God.

No one knew better than David, that "in God he lived, moved, and had his being," and he never once looked elsewhere. He knew that no matter what condition he was in, or whatever the seemingly hopeless situation was, his God could and would put things right, so long as he believed and put his trust in Him.

We, too, are like David: we have our trials and troubles, sickness, and disappointments. When we are beset by these things let us, too, look to our Heavenly Father, as David did, and have the same solid faith. To Him, to whom we look, and pray, nothing is impossible.

Your Brother in Christ, A Hodges. (December 1955)

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### **"Let all the men of war draw near" – Joel 3:9**

In our last Circular Letter we reported King Abdullah 11 of Jordan had said in a radio broadcast that the chances for peace in the Middle East were dwindling and that efforts should be made to seize this "last opportunity for peace for all of us." Since then it appears this "window of opportunity" has firmly closed.

The Middle East picture is complex indeed. In Israel there is unrest since the publication of the Winograd Committee Interim Report on the Second Lebanon War in which the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, was severely criticised. The report was set up due to strong dissatisfaction and deep disappointment at the way the campaign was conducted.

Despite broad support for going to war with Lebanon it appears there were some serious failings in some of the decisions made and the responsibility for these failures are blamed on the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff. Briefly, the army was not well prepared for war. There had not been a war for 25 years and while Israel had concentrated on defending themselves against invasion, they had not prepared themselves to be the invader. The Prime Minister "failed to clearly set out the goals of the campaign" and there was little discussion as to "how the goals should be attained" and when it became clear that the expectations of Israel were not going to be met the "Prime Minister did not adapt his plans" accordingly.

"The Minister of Defence had no knowledge or experience in military, political or governmental matters" and "little knowledge of the basic principles of using military force to achieve political goals." Added to this he did not ask for advice from the Israeli Defence Force nor heed their concerns regarding "their preparedness or fitness."

The Chief of Staff is said to have “responded impulsively” and “did not alert the political leaders to the complexity of the situation and did not present information, assessments and plans that were available to the Israel Defence Force at various levels of planning and approval.”

It is not expected that Ehud Olmert will stay in office much longer and is already promoting a successor. This uncertainty and unrest in Israel has encouraged the Palestinians to increase their rocket attacks from Gaza. However, as a result of these increased attacks Israel Air Force responded with aerial strikes based on intelligence provided by their Security Agents.

This in turn has enraged militant Hamas forces in the Palestinian Authority. The more moderate Fatah militia are calling for calm, saying that to increase attacks on Israel will cause loss of life amongst themselves. So Hamas has turned on Fatah and persuaded many preachers in their mosques to deride Fatah followers and support Hamas. This has resulted in civil war between the two factions. Time and again a cease-fire is called only for fighting to begin again the next day.

Many Hamas leaders have gone into hiding for fear of being assassinated by Israel forces. Apparently it is not the Hamas leaders who are in charge but “Hamas terror groups” whom the senior military officials say are out of their control and over whom they have little influence.

The Lebanese army is at present pre-occupied with unrest at a Palestinian refugee camp where Fatah Islam gunmen have been attacking their armed forces. 32 Lebanese soldiers have been killed in the last 12 days. The Fatah Islam terrorist group has ties with al-Qaida and has the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon extremely concerned. The Lebanese army is being backed with military equipment airlifted to Beirut from the United States and is ready to raid the camp at any time.

Officially, a Hizbullah chief announced last weekend that he planned to stay out of the present conflict. But Hizbullah is inciting civil war in Lebanon and while the Lebanese army is concentrating on the militants in the refugee camp Hizbullah is rebuilding its infrastructure in south Lebanon and has started to recruit guerrilla fighters and now claims to be at full combat strength equal to prior to the Second Lebanon War and with more weapons and ammunition.

An Israeli spokesman warned not to be fooled by the lack of Hizbullah outposts in southern Lebanon since the group has underground bunkers near Israel’s borders. Bunkers are very effective places to conceal weapons and rockets and Hizbullah is better prepared to face an attack by Israel if it should be attempted.

In any event it is worth noting that Hizbullah, Hamas and Fatah are all paid by Iran.

Compiled from Internet sources.

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## **Christadelphians – The Untold Story**

**A few months ago Brother Richard Pursell sent me his book entitled “Christadelphians – The Untold Story.”**

In reviewing this work another Christadelphian wrote:-

“Of particular value is Brother Pursell’s ability to assess and define the terminology associated with division and reunion, words commonly thrown about such as sin, alienation, clean flesh, Andrewism, etc. His presentation of “clean flesh” in view of and in relation to Edward Turney’s “Renunciationism” and Allen Strickler’s “Out of Darkness into Light” teachings is a must reading for anyone who uses the term.”

This would be alright if Brother Richard had presented Edward Turney's teaching correctly but it is again our duty to make corrections, and so the following letter:-

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Dear Brother Richard Pursell,

Thank you for sending a copy of your treatise, "Christadelphians, the Untold Story." It is obvious to any reader that you have invested a great deal of time and effort in obtaining material over many years (about thirty I believe) and researched this thoroughly in order to write such an in-depth manuscript dealing with five divisions, four Christadelphian plus the Renunciationists.

I have studied this work in some depth and find it to be a revelation in many aspects, though, I am sorry to say, not at all helpful in portraying the teaching of Brother Edward Turney from 1873 and the Renunciationists/Nazarene Fellowship from that time on. It is this aspect of your book that of course interests us most and these notes concentrate on these matters.

It is our observation that whenever a Christadelphian wishes to know something about the Nazarene Fellowship and what they believe and teach, they will invariably go to another Christadelphian for their answer. In this way the false stories started by Robert Roberts and embellished by others ever since have given rise to some fanciful ideas to which we do not hold.

It is especially sad because since our first contact with you in February 2002 when, at your request I sent you copies of Edward Turney's books and ever since you have been receiving our Circular Letters together with the many booklets setting out our beliefs, that you too have failed to notice what are our beliefs and teachings. Also in your Acknowledgements you say I provided you with first hand information about "Renunciationists." But some of the information you have told your readers about renunciationists is not from me.

Hence the need for this letter.

What is the answer? You have distributed your treatise and readers will think it is accurate information. How are they going to find out it is not? If or when you do a reprint will you correct the errors in your work regarding Brother Edward Turney and the Renunciationists?

It is certainly to be hoped so.

And are you going to put an explanation 'flyer' in with any future posting of your book until a reprint is called for?

You have given Sister Helen Brady's name and address and also mine with my e-mail address at the end of your work, but please will you include our website so that others can find the truth of our teachings without depending on the false reports of Christadelphians that are included in your work?

The main theme throughout your treatise deals with the Atonement and how the different divisions have understood it and so you continue –

"While other subjects have come and gone, it is the doctrine of the atonement, 'sin and sacrifice,' that keeps coming up time and time again... Strangely enough it is akin to the theme that began in the early Church of Rome between theologians Augustine and Pelagius some 1600 years ago. Augustine believed the human race inherited a fallen nature in need of reconciliation with God. Pelagius did not."

This is true. Here is the great difference between the Nazarene Fellowship and Christadelphians. Christadelphians go along with Roman Catholics in their teaching that the human race has fallen nature in need of reconciliation. The Nazarene Fellowship is with Pelagius in this regard in teaching it is not our

fallen nature that needs reconciliation but the person. Christadelphians are much closer to Roman Catholics than they are to the Nazarene Fellowship.

This chasm between our understandings of bible teaching could be sorted out if only the Christadelphian body could once and for all prove their claim that human nature is fallen. They have been constantly challenged on this ever since 1873 when Edward Turney opposed Robert Roberts on this very point and never has there been a Christadelphian who could prove their claim from scripture.

For this reason the Nazarene Fellowship should have been included under the heading of non-Christadelphian at the end of your book but you have included it as a Christadelphian group.

I think many readers, especially the younger generation of Christadelphians, will be surprised to find that Christadelphians have come down on the side of St. Augustine who was determined to bring new ideas into the Roman Catholic Church from his pagan background.

Later in your Preface you say,

“We Christadelphians have been, and still are, entangled in the greatest struggle the world has ever known. The enemy is human nature, the curse of sin.”

Is this true? We will look at this more closely as we proceed.

I have quoted some portions at length in order to give as clear a picture as possible bearing in mind that the Nazarene Fellowship casts very serious doubts on Christadelphian doctrines on the Atonement whichever division they belong to.

In you Preface you write,

“Knowledge is power and the metaphorical rudder of our lives. When ignorance prevails we are vulnerable to the whims of others and unable to be decisive concerning our own destiny.”

I agree with this, so naturally I wonder where you are going when you continue by saying,

“This book is intended to provide Christadelphian readers with power and understanding to direct their lives and make doctrinal choices in light of the successes and pitfalls of some of our ancestors. Unless we arm ourselves with information concerning our community’s historical mistakes, we are not equipped to avoid their repetition.”

How true this has proved to be!

In chapter one you rightly say that we are not at liberty to compromise fundamental doctrines for the sake of unity. Then you refer to your diagram illustrating five fellowships, four of which are still called “Christadelphian,” the odd one out being the Nazarene Fellowship which stemmed from Robert Roberts antagonism towards of Edward Turney in 1873. The four Christadelphian fellowships are 1) Old Paths. 2) Central. 3) Berean. 4) Unamended. You note that all the divisions were after the death of Dr Thomas in 1871 and were all centred on the one basic doctrine – “Sin and Sacrifice.”

Your second chapter shows how these four major Christadelphian fellowships have viewed each other over the years often accusing each other of beliefs they do not hold or of misrepresenting the beliefs they do hold - a practice which makes for division rather than reconciliation. So its not just the Nazarene Fellowship they misrepresent!

In chapter three you quote from Elpis Israel, page 126, 1958 edition, under the heading of “The Constitution of Sin,” as follows:

“The word sin is used in two principle acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, *“the transgression of law”* and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh *“which has the power of death”* and is called *sin*, because the development, or fixation, of the *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled *“sinful flesh,”* that is, *“flesh full of sin”* so that *sin*, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called *man.*”

Of this quote from the pen of Dr Thomas you say,

**“It is absolutely imperative that each reader grasp the substance and meaning of the above quotation.** It is either scripturally true or false, and depending on how it is viewed, will largely determine how one will relate to the various Christadelphian fellowships, divisions, and reunions discussed.”

Next we come to chapter four headed “Renunciationism – “Free Life.”

I wish to quote from your first paragraph:-

“It was argued that if flesh was ‘sin,’ (as described by Dr Thomas), a premise which had been ‘renounced,’ then any possessor of ‘sin’s’ flesh would be, as a consequence, sinful, and guilty of its possession. Since such a conclusion was untenable, especially as applied to Christ, it was denied by the Renunciationists that Christ inherited any condemnation at all; hence a “free life.” Briefly stated, this group ‘renounced’ that man’s nature became ‘sinful flesh’ as a result of Adam’s transgression.”

Though Christadelphians may believe that to possess sinful flesh makes them sinful and guilty of its possession, this is not at all the reason given by Edward Turney or the Nazarene Fellowship for denying that man’s nature became ‘sinful flesh’ as a result of Adam’s transgression.

Here you refer to man being a “possessor of ‘sin’s’ flesh,” however this cannot be. Sin is the possessor, as Paul says – “sold under sin.” How can we be the possessor of our possessor? It is Sin, personified as a kind by Paul that possesses us. And how are we to expect to present the truth of the matter if we put Paul’s teaching back to front?

The reason why we do not believe that man’s nature became ‘sinful flesh’ as a result of Adam’s transgression is because such a doctrine cannot be found in the Scriptures; it is the assumption of men since the third century when it was promoted by the Roman Catholic Church and her harlot daughters since that time. It was St Augustine who introduced the notion that there was something wrong or bad about man’s flesh from his Manichean background and when ‘converted’ to Christianity found passages in Scripture which appeared to give support to the idea, but these passages are wrested out of their true meaning. Nowhere in Scripture do we find that man’s flesh is condemned. Sin is condemned, of course, also mankind is under the condemnation brought about by Adam’s sin and this condemnation is a legal matter, not physical. It is of interest here to note the 9<sup>th</sup> of the Thirty-nine Articles in the Prayer Book which states:

“Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil.”

Clause 5 of the B.A.S.F. says the same:

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

Now to quote Edward Turney on this:-

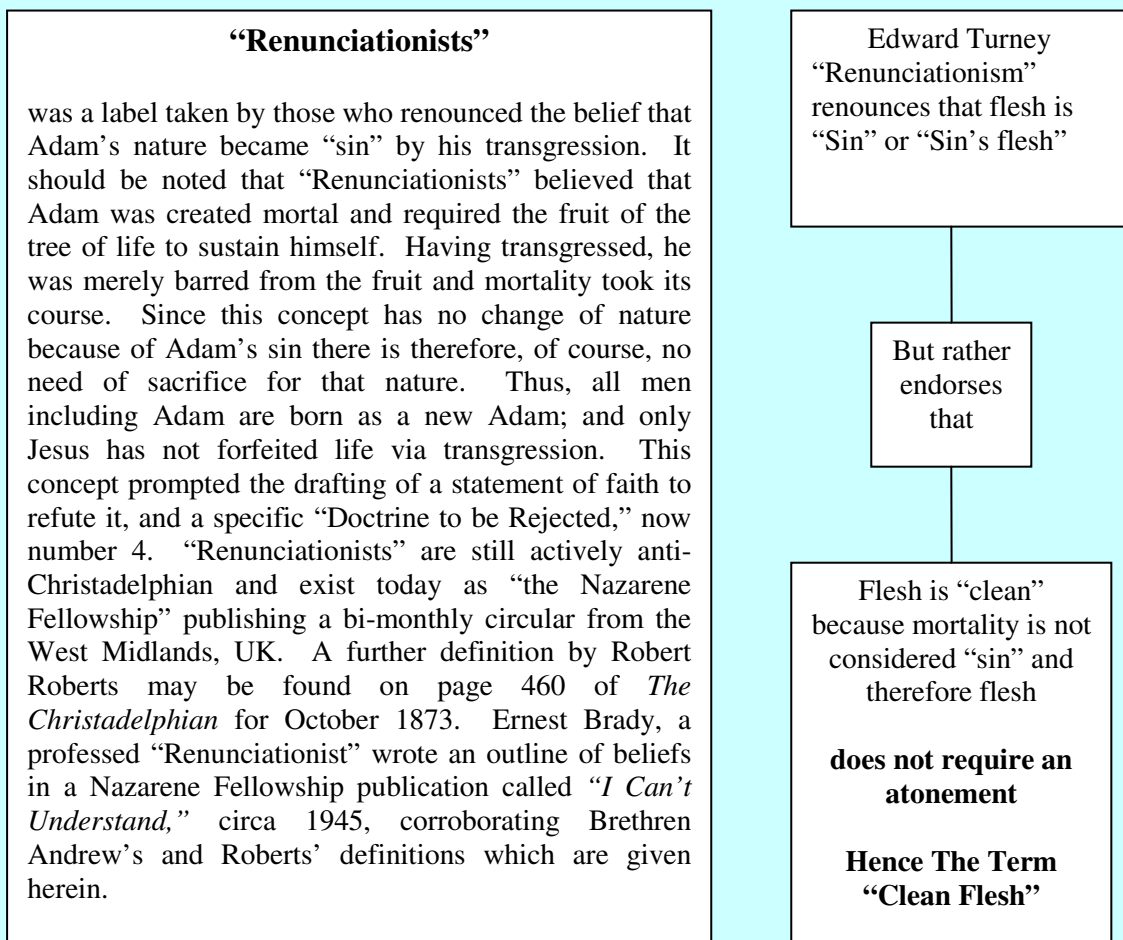
“I am convinced that there is no such thing as flesh full of sin, and never was, nor can be. I am perfectly aware of Romans 8:3 but that does not disprove the fact, as we shall see.

The adjective “sinful” occurs only some seven or eight times in the whole of the Scriptures. We find it used in this way - “Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.” Numbers 22:4; Isaiah 1:4; Amos 9:8. Ask yourself, does this mean that every particle of flesh of these people is full of sin? Of course not.

And what of “O righteous nation” as in Genesis 20:4; Isaiah 26:2. Are these people full of righteousness as an element in their flesh? Is the flesh of a righteous nation different from the flesh of a sinful nation? We see how ludicrous it is to say sinful applies to the flesh. Sinful applies to character not to flesh.

Again, let us imagine we have two sheep and one of those sheep belongs to “Sin.” I am now required to produce a likeness of that sheep which belongs to “Sin.” Well, the other sheep doesn’t belong to “Sin” so I point to the second sheep and say that it looks like the other. That is how I understand the matter of “likeness” in Roman’s 8:3. Paul says God sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, or “Sin’s flesh.” This flesh of Jesus was precisely the same as ours. Adam’s children belonged to sin. Jesus did not. Adam’s children are under sentence of death. Jesus was not.

Next I reproduce page 18 of your book and wish to comment on each box in turn.



### **“Free Life” – In His Own Words**

“...the last Adam, the Christ, came into the world as free as the first Adam, not under condemnation to death. There was a life as free as Adam’s was when he sprang from the ground a living soul.” With a “free life” Christ needed not to “offer for himself.” - Edward Turney, *The Sacrifice of Christ*, 1873 page 9.

#### **“Free Life” Defined by a Contemporary**

A portion of a letter by a D. Welsh as published in *The Christadelphian*, August 1890, seventeen years after the Renunciationist controversy:

“by ‘free life’ they mean that Jesus, though possessing an earthly organism like Adam’s and ours, needed not to offer a sin-offering, or a sin-sacrifice, that he might live for ever; that is, the nature of Jesus was free from condemnation, and needed no sacrifice (shedding of blood) to cleanse that nature and enable it to live for ever.”

In the box under the heading “Renunciationists” you state that “Renunciationists” are still actively anti-Christadelphian and exist today as “The Nazarene Fellowship” publishing a bi-monthly circular from the West Midlands, UK.” We are indeed anti-Christadelphian teaching with its blind adherence to unscriptural doctrines as we are to any group who does the same.

Some of us were Christadelphians once and have family members and close friends amongst them still and most of our readers are Christadelphians. Apart from the financial support we receive from them we also receive encouraging correspondence from them “to keep up the good work” of showing where Christadelphian doctrines are in error and in putting a much better and scriptural understanding in its place. These Christadelphians are amongst those whom you say experience what you call the “Elijah syndrome” as well they might, but they would much rather share their knowledge and understanding freely with their Christadelphian family and friends; these ties require loving patience, example and prayer.

It is the errors in Christadelphian teachings we continually oppose and will oppose as long as the Lord gives us the strength to do so, not as enemies but as friends. “Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee.”

You next refer to Ernest Brady (please note spelling – ‘earnest’ is an adjective but Ernest is a proper name) who wrote the small booklet “I Can’t Understand” of which you say it corroborates “Brethren Andrew and Roberts definitions which are given herein.” But it doesn’t. Robert Roberts did not appear to understand Edward Turney’s views but seriously misrepresented them, not corroborate them as you say.

In the three boxes to the right of the page under the heading “Edward Turney” you tell your readers that “Renunciationism renounces that flesh is “Sin” or “Sin’s flesh.” But these are two different things.

We certainly say that flesh is not “Sin” but to add as you do “or Sin’s flesh,” is not warranted. Had you used the term “Sinful flesh” instead of “Sin’s flesh” there would have been no call for comment, but to confuse the two expressions as though they meant the same thing cannot be right. The expression “Sinful flesh” as I’m sure you know, is not to be found in the original manuscripts. Its one occurrence in Romans 8:3 is not what Paul said but the result of ‘Romish’ translators wanting to support their Augustinian theological error. What Paul said was “sin’s flesh,” meaning “flesh belonging to sin” and this is very different from ‘flesh full of sin.’ The Bible does not teach that flesh is ‘Sin’ but that flesh is the possession of ‘King Sin,’ ‘flesh’ being used to mean the descendants of Adam, or mankind in general. But this excludes Jesus as He was begotten of His Father. So in Romans 8:3 Paul is telling us that God sent His own Son in the likeness of “Sin’s flesh.” That is to say that Jesus was sent in flesh the same as ours but He was not the possession of ‘King Sin’ but the possession of His Father. And Jesus was never alienated from His Father.

Later in your book (page 51), you misuse Romans 7:23 by equating “Sin in our members” with Romans 8, “Sinful flesh,” and I must correct you here for in Romans 7:23 Paul refers to the law of sin which is in our members and does not say as you do that there is “sin in our members.” Having Adam as our father we are



concluded under his sin for the purpose of receiving a blessing if we will accept it, but Jesus had His life direct from His Father, a new life free from Adamic condemnation and through whom the blessing was to come, as we read in Galatians 3:22, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." This is hardly "our misfortune" as Dr Thomas said and which you quote on page 80. I do not know how Nazarene Fellowship understanding can be put any clearer than Paul states.

In the next two boxes you continue by saying that our understanding -

"rather endorses that flesh is clean because mortality is not considered "sin" and therefore flesh does not require an atonement."

To say that flesh is clean or unclean is Christadelphian gobbledygook and a teaching not found in Scripture. Clean and unclean is used to describe people's characters or minds, or animals used or not in sacrifices, or in reference to illness or disease but it is not used in the Christadelphian sense as an attribute of our flesh nature which they say needs atoning. Our flesh is as God made it in the beginning. Atonement for our flesh is nonsense.

Your quote from "The Sacrifice of Christ" correctly shows Edward Turney's belief that,

"...the last Adam, the Christ, came into the world as free as the first Adam, not under condemnation to death... There was a life as free as Adam's was when he sprang from the ground a living soul." With a "free life" Christ needed not to "offer for himself."

Herein lies the reason and purpose for the virgin birth. Adam was "free" until he sold himself to "Sin" and so became Sin's possession. But Jesus, having a new life direct from His Father received the same "free" life as Adam at creation and Jesus never lost His "free" life by transgression. This understanding does away with the Christadelphian notion of Jesus having been given extra help to overcome temptation by having God as His Father; a notion which denies Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. If it were the case that Jesus had extra help to overcome temptation and we are not given the same opportunity through lack of similar help then it is a contradiction to say that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are. And worse than this, it doesn't leave much honour or credit to Jesus for overcoming all temptation if He had extra help, and again, if Jesus had extra help then how can it be said that He is our Exemplar. Again, how could it have been possible for Jesus to have learned obedience by the things that He suffered if He had strength given to Him of God. It is our belief that we can have help from God to fight against temptation even as Jesus had. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The quote from Dr Welsh's letter to 'The Christadelphian' needs no comment.

On page 19 you say that -

"While Bro Roberts clearly opposed the "free life" teachings, and commented thereon, his personal convictions regarding "sin and sacrifice" relative thereto do not appear to have yet been fully developed..."

I'm sure you are right. On Page 29 of "The sacrifice of Christ," Edward Turney said, (you will appreciate that Robert Roberts was in the audience listening to this address):-

"I shall show you that our friend (Robert Roberts) does not know what he is talking about, the verse reads:- "Who needeth not daily as the High Priests to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people, for this He did once when He offered up Himself.

Now the question is this, when, and where did Jesus offer up Himself? What I said a few minutes ago shows clearly that Jesus offered Himself, not on the Cross, but in Heaven. He did not, like the High Priest offer Himself often, but once He appeared to put away sin-offering by the sacrifice of Himself. Do not forget that there had been no sacrifice until He had been offered, or presented to God."

Again, R.Roberts and Dr Thomas believed and taught that the physical principle of corruption pertained to all living creatures from creation and, in fact, David Handley was refused baptism because he (David) believed a change of nature had taken place. It is evident, then, that Robert Roberts had not at this time thought his subject through. He then did a complete somersault of his understanding when agreeing with Dr Thomas in 1869 for no other reason than to oppose Edward Turney. Odd as it may seem, it was Robert Roberts who at first took on the views of David Handley, then David Handley vacillated between the two views but eventually forsook his earlier convictions and ended up alongside Roberts, both having rejected Dr Thomas - and R.Roberts seemed blithely unaware of his own contradictions. However, it is good to see that you acknowledge Brother Roberts “mis-statements of fundamental principles...” and that “he also vacillated with serious contradictory statements in a lecture during the renunciation controversy, 1873.”

On page 24 you quote from an article by Edward Turney, “written in 1872, the year prior to renouncing it all.” I hope, and think readers will have the common sense to realise that Edward Turney did not in fact renounce all that you quote. Let us look at the first part where Edward Turney 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... (Romans 8:3)...”

Edward Turney did not renounce this and it is of particular note that even at this early time in Christadelphian history, he had the right understanding of Romans 8:3 for he correctly states “sin’s flesh” and not “sinful flesh” as Roman Catholics and most Christadelphians would have people believe.

On page 30 you are considering the teachings of J.J.Andrew, and quote from an open letter dated 1954 from Brother P.O.Barnard of Australia, part of which reads:

“...Brother Andrew’s line of argument in which he skilfully represented his denial of the accountability of enlightened rejecters to the judgment seat of Christ as the logical outcome of the fundamental doctrines regarding sin and sacrifice – doctrines that he and Brother Roberts had staunchly defended in 1873 when Brother Edward Turney renounced them in favour of the ‘free life’ theory now taught by Nazarenes.”

It is difficult to follow this line of reasoning on the part of Brother P.O.Barnard and space forbids me to quote the several pages of argument between Brother Andrew, Brother Fry and Brother Roberts which you present. May it suffice to say here that Nazarenes believe that enlightened rejecters will be judged, not at the return of Christ but at the end of the thousand years reign of Christ as taught by Jesus in Revelation 20:6, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (i.e. at the return of Jesus): on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years.” It makes good sense to use later scripture to clarify and enlarge upon earlier prophecies rather than use earlier prophecies to cloud and befog later declarations. I don’t know of any plainer teaching than this regarding the two judgments – the reward of the righteous at Christ’s return and the reward of the unrighteous a thousand years later.

I now wish to quote what you say on page 52 under the heading of,

### **The Difference Between Turney and Strickler**

“While these two concepts share a denial of a need of sacrifice for “sin nature,” they differ in how they arrive at their conclusion. Here is the difference. The “free life” concept, “Turneyism,” says Adam was created mortal, his nature being “very good,” and not changed to “sin nature” and therefore NOT in need of a sacrificial offering for it. “As Bro. Turney wrote in *The Two Sons of God*, 1876, “It was not to remedy any inherent or contracted defect of nature that the scheme of atonement was designed...”

The Strickler variation of the “clean flesh” concept, however, does admit that because of Adam’s sin, his nature was changed to a state called “sin’s flesh,” and only needs CHANGING to

immortality, denying an “atonement” for “sin” nature that it MIGHT be changed. In a personal interview with Brethren Edwin Hill and George Waite, August, 20, 1923, Brother Strickler clearly acknowledged this difference from Renunciationism, saying, “It is by God’s decree that man is mortal.” So, although the Turney and Strickler concepts differ in their respective bases, they both deny the need of “atonement for sin nature,” and therefore deny that Christ “offered first for Himself” in respect to his nature.

It is also interesting that Bro. Strickler drew a distinction between “sin’s flesh” and “sinful flesh.” The former he understood to be a result of Adam’s transgression, providing us with the ability to transgress, and the latter he believed to be a result of our own. In this regard, Jesus possessed the former, but not the latter. He wrote: “We have no right to say that Christ’s individual flesh was ‘flesh full of sin’ or ‘sinful flesh.’... The most casual reader of the epistles of Peter would never dream... he thought of sin in a secondary or derived sense, or sin as a physical concrete thing.” (Out of Darkness, p84). On page 85 there was a further denial of the secondary aspect of “sin”: “It is a marvellous thing that such a theory should ever have been invented, as that of the bearing of physical so called sin.” Turneyism and Stricklerism therefore share in common the denial of “atonement for sin-nature,” and are both therefore called “clean flesh” doctrine. This was illustrated on page 51.

The understanding of this point is absolutely critical to understanding the issue and the meaning of the term “clean flesh.” All Christadelphians seem to agree that “this mortal must put on immortality” and that our physical nature is, therefore, in this sense, “unclean.” But understanding the need for a change of nature is not the same as admitting a need for a sacrificial offering because of that unclean “sin nature.” The Bereans affirmed a necessity of a sacrificial offering for “sin nature,” while Brother Strickler denied it. The logical extension of this denial is that baptism is for personal moral considerations only, and not at all related to our fallen inherited Adamic nature. One can see then, why Bro. Strickler “wholly opposed” Bro. Thomas’ section in Elpis Israel, “The Constitution of Sin,” as he had freely admitted in an interview that was reported in the Berean, June 1923.

There are some very important errors here, Richard, which need correcting. First is that Edward Turney neither believed nor taught Adam was created mortal. Let me quote from “The Sacrifice of Christ” page 21:-

“The nature in Eden had no sin inhering in it. It was corruptible and relatively imperfect as compared with Angelic nature. There was no sin in the “nature” after it had transgressed. No, what was there then? There was mortality. What does that mean? Death... There was mortality. There was man destined to die...”

So here, Edward Turney stated that there was mortality after transgression, not before.

While this may not be clear to those who believe mortal and corruptible to be synonymous terms, we find a little later Edward Turney plainly shows his understanding where he says:-

“You may call them ‘mortal’ if you like, in a general or loose sense; but it is more strictly correct to style them ‘corruptible’ because ‘mortal’ means destined to die through breach of law.”

In reading through your book I believe you stated several times that Edward Turney believed Adam was created mortal, or that Turneyism says Adam was created mortal; but this is not so as the above quotes show; Edward Turney did not believe or teach that Adam was created mortal and neither do “Nazarenes.” The important point to note is that “mortal” means “destined to die through breach of law.” This being so Adam could not become mortal until he breached the law. In Elpis Israel, (page 72, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1958), Dr Thomas said that Adam was created neither mortal nor immortal but became mortal when he transgressed: -

“We may admit, therefore, the corruptibility, and consequent mortality of their nature, without saying they were mortal... in this sense, therefore, I say, that in their novitiate, Adam and his betrothed had a nature capable of corruption...”

This was the understanding of both Dr Thomas and Edward Turney.

I wish all Christadelphians could see that mortal and corruptible are two very different matters and must be used correctly as in Scripture. If we cannot understand the meaning and use of “mortal” in scripture how can we claim to understand subject? To use the term “mortal” when referring to “corruptible” is inexcusable. It is this looseness in using the correct terms that causes confusion and generates more heat than light.

Going back to page 52 you say a little lower down the page that,

“In a personal interview with Brethren Edwin Hill and George Waite, August 20, 1923, Brother Strickler clearly acknowledged this difference from Renunciationism, saying ‘It is by God’s decree that man is mortal.’”

But where is the difference, for Renunciationism also says that it is by God’s decree that man is mortal. This does not “clearly acknowledge” the difference when ‘clearly’ they are the same.

You then go on to say,

“It is also interesting that Brother Strickler drew a distinction between ‘sin’s flesh’ and ‘sinful flesh.’ The former he understood to be the result of Adam’s transgression, providing us with the ability to transgress, and the latter he believed to be the result of our own.”

The obvious question regarding this strange concept is to ask, if it was necessary for us to have sinful flesh in order that we should have the ability to sin, how was it Adam could sin without it? And if Adam could sin without it why is it necessary for us to have it? Apart from this absurdity I would repeat that the concept “sinful flesh,” meaning “flesh full of sin” is not to be found in the Bible and every attempt at deducing it from Scripture runs into like silliness.

Towards the end of this section you write,

“The Bereans affirmed the necessity of a sacrificial offering for ‘sin nature’ while Brother Strickler denied it. The logical extension of this denial is that baptism is for personal moral considerations only, and not at all related to our fallen inherited Adamic nature.”

While we, along with Brother Strickler, deny the necessity of a sacrificial offering for “sin nature” we cannot agree with you that “the logical extension of this denial is that baptism is for personal moral considerations only.” Baptism is a legal requirement. By it we change allegiance - no longer servants of “Sin” but servants of God through Jesus Christ. We are no longer under the law of sin and death but under the law of Grace. These are legal matters. Baptism is not primarily for the forgiveness of sins but to restore our relationship to our Creator; to remove the alienation introduced into the human race when Adam transgressed; to go from Sin as our Master and establish God as our Master through faith in Jesus. This is what Jesus did for us in giving His life for us. It was not for Himself as He was never estranged from His Father, having been born of a virgin and so escaped Adamic condemnation. Baptism brings us into the “new covenant in my blood.” Once in this new covenant we can have forgiveness of sins by the grace of God. By grace are we saved.

There never was such a thing as a sacrificial offering for ‘sin nature.’ Such a concept is not to be found in the Word of God. It is a serious matter for it is both an adding to, and a taking away from the Word of God. It adds a doctrine that is not found in the Bible and it takes away from the real purpose of baptism.

On page 79 you quote Brother T. Williams as follows:

“We,” (the Unamended Christadelphians) “believe that in baptism there is a transition from a state of alienation in Adam to a state of citizenship in Christ, and that through it we shall ultimately be freed from the physical effects of Adam’s sin – mortality. We are not personally responsible for Adam’s personal sin, and are therefore not baptised for it in that sense; but federally we are

baptized to remove the condemnation which came thereby, and to place us in Christ reconciled to God. Since it is known that we believe we are baptized for our personal sins, it is needless to state it.”

The Nazarene Fellowship also believes “that in baptism there is a transition from a state of alienation in Adam to a state of citizenship in Christ,” but what are the physical effects of Adam’s sin? You say mortality. But this is naïve statement. You do not say here what the physical effects of Adam’s sin are but we know from Christadelphian teaching elsewhere it refers to sin dwelling in the flesh, and as there is no such thing as sin dwelling in our flesh then you will not need to be ultimately freed from it. But this has nothing to do with mortality.

And you end this paragraph by saying, “Since it is known that we believe we are baptized for our personal sins, it is needless to state it.” This is very misleading; I have said above the primary need for baptism is to bring us into covenant relation with God through Jesus Christ – Romans 6:3, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” And Jesus said, “This is the new covenant in my blood.” It is once we are in this covenant we can seek forgiveness.

On page 89 you repeat yet again that Renunciationism teaches that man was created mortal: –

“As I said before, however, it is important to recognise a difference between “Renunciationism” and “Stricklerism” even though both have been dubbed as “clean flesh.” “Renunciationism” denies that man’s nature is fallen, because it teaches that man was originally created mortal, and that there was no change. And since, in this paradigm, there was no change, obviously there is no need of atonement for that created ‘very good’ nature.”

And so we repeat, - Renunciationism does not teach that man was created mortal but mortal appears in scriptural context as a legal term and Adam became mortal as a consequence of his transgression – i.e. he became subject to death for breaking God’s commandment. This does not involve a change of nature; it does not mean that Adam had sin in his flesh thereafter. Yes, Renunciationism denies that man’s nature is fallen or that there is such a thing as sin dwelling in our flesh. But we see ‘mortal’ as a legal term in scripture.

Christadelphians have always prided themselves on their superiority to other denominations as Bible students. So it is a puzzle and a shame that they continue to believe unscriptural doctrines in that they attempt to digest and preach the stones of sin-in-the-flesh, and are in utter confusion over the terms mortality and corruptibility, hence a false belief in natural death as the wages of sin. Scripture tells us that the wages of sin is judicial death.

The Bible and Nazarenes offer bread. The truth that flesh is neither clean nor unclean, simply the stuff of which we, as part of the natural creation, are made. The Sin in Eden affected Adam and all his descendants legally not physically. It resulted in alienation from God.

But God in His loving mercy offers us a way back to Him through the sacrifice of Jesus, who died as a substitute for Adam. When we recognize this redemption, so dearly won for us by our Saviour, then through baptism we are saved. Not yet immortal but with Jesus as our “Tree of Life,” we are still corruptible waiting for the second coming and incorruption and immortality, striving in this present world to follow Him with thankful hearts.

Russell Gregory