

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 255

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## In This Issue:

Page 1	Editorial	Brother Russell Gregory
Page 4	Ambassadors	Brother Leo Dreifuss
Page 8	Veritas and His Friends	
Page 10	Note on the Federal Principle	Brother Ernest Brady –
Page 10	Who Jesus Is	“Cloudberry”
Page 16	The Heart of Man	Brother Phil Parry
Page 18	The Prophecies Respecting Jesus.	“Palsy’s Evidences”
Page 18	From an old Circular Letter	Brother Ernest Brady
Page 20	The Body of Sin	Brother Edward Turney
Page 22	“Israel Will Not Cede Jerusalem”	Prime Minister Netanyahu

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## Editorial

Dear Friends, Sisters and Brethren,

For well over one hundred years all Christadelphian exhortations, public addresses, articles for publication and all Bible class studies etc. had to be in harmony with the Statement of Faith and any deviation was treated as false doctrine and dealt with accordingly. One very small example in which I was involved - - shortly after the so-called reunion between the Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street fellowships a small group at our ecclesia wanted to discuss the scriptures more freely and decided to hold an extra midweek discussion group where anything scriptural could be discussed informally and without censure. This was held in the homes of the five or six people involved. After only a few weeks we were called to account for holding a clandestine gathering and were told to stop. While we received an apology for the description “clandestine” we still had to give up holding our meetings. Why this was so was never stated but I can only suppose it was because we might discuss topics not in harmony with generally accepted beliefs which was, of course, what we had in mind, and why not?

It is sad that leaders feel they have to bully in order to maintain authority; and even while each ecclesia was said to be autonomous this was never really the case for if any ecclesia was thought to be out of line with others, news of the fact was quickly circulated with suggestions that the ecclesia in question should be avoided or isolated until an agreed unity was settled and if it wasn’t settled a new division occurred.

While there have always been challenging voices, some of these matters have changed in recent years because the Internet has brought the opportunity for any one who wishes, to voice their thoughts and one has only to visit the many Christadelphian forums to see numerous dissenters expressing widely varying views. Almost anything goes and there is diminishing distinction between Christadelphians and some other denominations.

The basis for fellowship has always been the Statement of Faith (BASF being most widely used) but there are many thousands of Christadelphians who now openly reject it yet continue to consider themselves to belong to the Christadelphian community. It is a good thing to reject the BASF with its unscriptural teachings and this in turn will reduce the number of disfellowships as the BASF where it is no longer used as a weapon for this purpose.

On visiting many forums one matter stands out above all else and that is the great discontent and even revulsion of most brethren and sisters at the practice of disfellowship and the harm it has done to families,

splitting them apart. Stories abound on various facebook sites telling of all the injustice, hurt and distress caused to communities and friendships which dis fellowship brings with it. And for what good cause? Supposedly to keep the purity of Christadelphian doctrine - - but the cost has been enormous.

History shows that the sole purpose for drawing up the Statement of Faith (BASF) at that time was to oppose the understanding of Edward Turney who was following on were Dr John Thomas left off by consolidating his findings. It seems it was not so much that Robert Roberts objected to these views for he had himself acquiesced to them for a while, but that he feared his leadership was under threat from an older and more capable man than himself; certainly he was at a disadvantage regarding a working knowledge of Hebrew and Greek for Dr Thomas and Edward Turney were well up in their knowledge of both languages, but, for whatever the reason we see that he, Robert Roberts, did a somersault with his beliefs, going back to ideas that Dr Thomas had of late rejected. Consequently we see more than ninety percent of the BASF was designed to oppose Edward Turney, and while a few other matters were also thrown in to show it was not only Renunciationists he opposed but a few general Church teachings too, these were not dealt with in anything like the thoroughness with which he opposed Edward Turney.

On these grounds alone I strongly recommend Christadelphians throw away the BASF with its blasphemous 'sin in the flesh' doctrine. Sinful flesh has never ever been proved from the scriptures and Robert Roberts had no God-given right to inflict this restriction on everyone else. In Ernest Brady's booklet "Recognition - By Whom" the writer deals with Re-union and in particular with the Addendum to which certain ecclesias in Australia were asked to agree. Cyril Cooper and John Carter had earlier sent a joint letter to the Adelaide Conference in which they wrote, "Dr. Thomas was instrumental in reviving the gospel from the traditions in Christendom. Those traditions had held sway over the minds of men as the result of the corrupting influences of teachers who had overlaid the truth of God with human theories"; so while we can agree to some extent with this statement the important point is that Dr Thomas only reached this final objective at the very end of his life and this fact was not appreciated by Robert Roberts who ignored or reversed his final efforts to find the truth. One of the important issues is that not all the traditions which 'held sway over the minds of men as a result of the corrupting influences of teachers who had overlaid the truth of God with human theories' was done away with; Rome's Doctrine of Original Sin was restated in the BASF as Clause 5 and briefly referred to as 'sin in the flesh', but it is a God-dishonouring doctrine which is as foreign to the scriptures as is the Doctrine of The Trinity and far more distasteful. Why ever would God want to make human flesh, which He created very good, very bad? Adam transgressed while he had very good flesh, so why make it bad so that none of his offspring could ever hope to remain sinless? Such a doctrine makes God responsible for our sins - and then to punish people for what could not help doing would be a gross injustice.

In commenting on Dr Thomas' last writings I pointed out that he (Dr Thomas) would have opposed the BASF, and indeed, he never would have allowed it. Also in my comments I expressed the hope that we may one day see ecclesias which claim to be non-BASF. It seems as if that day has come now that the authority of the BASF is being well and truly undermined.

But while sin in the flesh is widely rejected there seems to be all the usual prejudice and opposition to the teaching that Jesus laid down His life in place of Adam's life. It is argued that the sacrifices for sin in the Old Testament were metaphorical.

Seeing this idea being put forward on a Christadelphian forum I was prompted to ask "Did Jesus sacrifice His life or not?" to which I received the reply:-

"This is a good question. Just how much support is there for this idea in the New Testament? Given that the concept is glaringly missing from each of the four gospel records one has to wonder if this concept was deemed to be core gospel in the first century.

Paul uses the expression in Ephesians 5:2 of Christ, but also of himself in Philippians 2:17 and of all believers in Romans 12:1. If we must give our bodies as a living sacrifice – how can Christ’s sacrifice be substitutionary? Who does our sacrifice substitute for?

The writer to the Hebrews refers to his (Jesus’) sacrifice twice (Hebrews 7:27 and 9:26). Whoever the writer was, he or she was writing to the Jewish community and it was fitting for them to frame this argument within the well understood metaphor of sacrifice. So what benefit was the sacrifice as described in Hebrews? - it was once and for all so that animal sacrifices need not be offered. Did Jesus come to save a million bulls and goats from being sacrificed? There is not generally a lot of support for this concept in the New Testament.

I think that it is important to realise that the sacrifice – as a ritual – is not a reality. God doesn’t want or need a sacrifice to forgive – it was just a way of people coming to understand the darkness of sin of them to gain a sense of forgiveness. It made no difference to God – just to those offering the sacrifice. We may have, according to the metaphor, been sold to the personification of the abstract concept of sin – but no one was really paid anything. In the same metaphoric way we may consider ourselves bought out of sin – but no one was paid anything.”

There is no real substance in any of the above objections; Jesus crucifixion was not metaphorical, it was a true sacrifice. The main support used by the above writer is the misstatement that: - “in writing to the Jewish community... it was fitting for them to frame this argument within the well understood metaphor of sacrifice.” This the opposite of the truth; it was well understood in Israel and clearly demonstrated in the Law of Moses that the sacrifices for sin were substitutionary to release the sinner from the demand of the law of sin and death, and all these sacrifices were types of the one Great Antitype to come, which was Jesus and that Jesus sacrifice was the ransom price paid for our redemption. The Apostle Peter said “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (way of life) received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18,19). The fact that the redemption price was not paid to anyone does not mean the price was not paid. To us this is clearly taught for how else could Jesus be our Redeemer except by paying the Ransom Price? The truth of the matter is that Jesus said “the Son of man came to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28) and “I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:15). And Paul said, “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” (1 Corinthians 5:7). We ask, what is the point of baptism into the death of Jesus if it does not bring us into the New Covenant relation with God through Him? And what hope is there for anyone not under the New Covenant? The New Covenant was instituted by Jesus sacrifice for our salvation and not ours only but for the salvation of all repentant sinners from the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to the time when death will be abolished.

We read in Leviticus 17:11 - “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” The idea of sacrifice and bloodshedding may be distasteful to our modern world but the Christian religion is rooted in the Jewish past and our hope of salvation rests on foundations that were laid down by God in the Mosaic Law and those who reject the principles are rejecting the Words of Life.

What God did was to send His Son into the world to save sinners - He gave Him to the world. And what did the world do with Him? Wicked men of their own will and volition and out of envy and hate put Him to death. It was not God, it was men. The fact that with foreknowledge God knew what would happen and that if Jesus was left in their hands He would be put to death and that if Jesus found the courage and faith to carry out His Father’s purpose He could save the human race from eternal death must not be transformed into a doctrine that denies His crucifixion was a true sacrifice demonstrating His unbounded love for the faithful.

With Love to all. Russell Gregory

Psalm 138:2-3 “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

# Ambassadors

## 1 Kings 18 and 2 Corinthians 5.

In Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians the disciples of Christ are referred to as His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) — "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

This description as 'ambassador' of a disciple of Christ applies to all of us who have taken His name upon ourselves. So it is worth our while to consider just who an ambassador is and what is his work as this will enable us to understand more clearly what Paul implied when he described himself and the other disciples of Christ as ambassadors.

An ambassador is a person sent to some foreign country by his own government there to be responsible for all matters of business that pass between his own and the people of the country he is sent to. While there it is his duty to look after the interests of his own country, and everything he says and does have to be governed by what he considers best furthers the welfare of his people.

We, as ambassadors of Christ, are sent into the world among the unconverted and ignorant of the will of God, and our constant duty is so to govern our actions and our words such that God's matters are in the foreground. It is our duty to make known God's Word, His will and His plan with the earth and with man.

An ambassador, while away in the country of his mission, is expected to conform to the laws and customs of that country. But there is always the one limitation beyond which he cannot go - he cannot conform to laws and customs of the country of his mission which violate the interests of his own people at home.

We as Christians are to conform to the laws of our country in which we live; but if they happen to be contrary to the laws of Christ, there comes a time when we have to make a decision for our Master who bought us to be His servants, and if necessary have to take the consequences.

Although an ambassador mixes freely with the people among whom he is sent he is, after all, not a native of that country; his features, appearance, accent, and general demeanour cannot fail to make it apparent that in spite of his efforts to be like the people he mixes with he is not one of them - he is a foreigner to them.

We are ambassadors of God in the world; we come in contact with the people of the world - but there is something wrong with our Christian life if we mix with the world to such an extent that it is no longer evident that though in the world, we are not of the world. We may mingle with the people, as indeed we must if the gospel is to be spread, but if this mingling causes us to take part with them in their sins and practices contrary to the commandments of Christ, then we have exceeded the limit to which we may go as His ambassadors.

One of the greatest endeavours of an ambassador is to be on friendly terms with the people to whom he is sent - to this end he tries to make as many friends as he can by establishing contacts with people. The Christian must shew himself friendly; he must conduct all his dealings with people with love and charity, and he must, as Paul exhorts us, give no offence and to as much as lies in his power live peaceably.

A good ambassador will show some sympathy for the people among whom he is sent in their natural sorrows as well as in their joys. When some national disaster befalls them, such as the death of a monarch, or president, he will send his message of sympathy and, if possible, come to the funeral. If the disaster is an accident, flood, or earthquake, he will advise his own government to send some help.

We Christians must be ready to help; we are not to stand aloof to anybody's sorrows, even though it may be difficult at the time to find the right words of comfort - we are to pray for their guidance and comfort in their time of trial - this is the least thing we all can do.

On the other hand, an ambassador need not keep away on occasions of rejoicings - every nation has some national holiday, such as Independence Day in America, Bastille Day in France, also, there is nothing to prevent a foreign official from taking part in celebrations if he is invited as long as he does not say or do anything which could get his own country into trouble.

Christ Himself went to a wedding feast, indeed His first miracle was performed there. He told His disciples to “rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that do weep.”

There is nothing wrong for a Christian to show his joy, yea, a Christian has cause for joy. There is nothing wrong with merrymaking on appropriate occasions, provided we do not let ourselves be carried away to such an extent that we transgress the commandments of Christ.

It is regarded as very bad manners for an ambassador to get mixed up with the internal politics of the country of his mission. He must be careful in all he says not to drop any remark which may lead him into controversy with some people.

We must always realise that in the present age we have here “no continuing city, but seek one to come.”

It is not for us to take part in the politics of this world; we are subject to our respective government, true, but not part of it. It is God who promotes and disposes of the rulers of this world according to His plan; our part in the administration of the earth will come when Christ sets up His Kingdom on earth - but it is not now.

When an ambassador misbehaves himself it goes immediately against his country; when we misbehave ourselves it goes against the Church: we have failed as ambassadors of Christ and the Church, as well as ourselves, become evil spoken of thus we have the responsibility to uphold the honour of God by our conduct, just as an ambassador by his conduct has to uphold the honour of his country.

It happens frequently that things go wrong; misunderstandings arise between governments and peoples, with each blaming the other side, and if the government thinks that its ambassador has failed in his duty on such occasions he is called home for talks to give on account of his actions, and if he is found incapable of doing his job he loses it.

Some of us do not find it difficult to live peaceably with other people; in this respect, perhaps, our task is even harder than that of an ambassador of this world, for even if we do not quarrel we still have other faults, all of us. None of us is free from sin, and we still must give on account, whereas an ambassador is only called to account when things got completely out of hand.

When relations between two countries become strained there is an opportunity for the ambassador to smooth things out; but sometimes he fails, perhaps truly through no fault of his own; then diplomatic relations between the two countries are broken off and these Ambassadors are called home, this time not merely to give an account but for good - or at least until relations become more friendly again: this is usually next door to war.

It is very regrettable; he has to leave friends behind, people who were not personally involved in politics and against whom he has no personal grudge. This is one of those things that happens, and will happen, as long as human governments rule. We, too, sometimes have to make a hard decision — many of us had to at our own conversion; we had to abandon friendships, not because of personal quarrels, or because any blame fell on them, but on conversion, our interests change, and we just find that the friendship with this world is enmity with God.

There is a limit to which we may go; showing ourselves friendly and helpful, in the world but not of it; not taking part in its sins, in its politics, but subject to the laws of the land, giving no offence.



All prophets and all the early disciples of Christ were of course God's ambassadors; but there are two of the ancient prophets specially, Samuel and Elijah, besides Moses, whose life seemed, to emphasise their being God's ambassadors. Samuel, having been given to the service of God by a vow of his mother, carried out some works in connection with divine service from early childhood; his lot or mission included the anointing of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David.

It grieved Samuel at first when Israel asked for a king; they wanted to be like the nations around them. They failed to realise that God's people were to be different, so that it can be recognised that they are not of this world. This is one of our great temptations too – the desire to be like everybody else, failing to realise that an ambassadors of Christ we are not part and parcel of this world. After Samuel has anointed Saul to be king, Samuel was God's messenger towards Saul.

In the early days of his reign Saul did the will of God and Samuel went with him wheresoever he went, but when Saul broke God's commandments Samuel left him. It must have been a grief to leave a person who by that time must have become a close friend, yet look where you like in the Bible you will see that when a person forsakes God, God forsakes him and leaves him to his own devices – and that applied to individuals as well as communities – and this applied to Saul. In the early days of his reign Saul, while he had done well, cut off all that had familiar spirits - it shows how low he must have sunk after God forsook him for his sins, when at to end of his life he himself sought after a witch, yet, after God forsook Saul, Samuel as a faithful messenger also left him. It must have been a hard decision for him.

All the ancient prophets were men of prayer, and again this finds special emphasis in Samuel and Elijah. Samuel constantly made intercession for his people: he said, "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you:" while the mission of Elijah shows perhaps best how the work as God's messenger and man of prayer go together. At his time idolatry, worship of Baal, was so widely practised in Israel that many hardly knew the true God; it was for Elijah to declare Him and show by visible signs that He of whom he testified was indeed a living God and quite different from the dumb idols then worshipped. First, he prayed that there should be no rain — there was no rain; so the people should have realised that there was a living Intelligent Being who heard Elijah. In spite of the hardships of a 3½ years drought the people had not learned that lesson so he gathered them to Mount Camel.

We know what happened there? They agreed that the God who answered them by fire to consume their sacrifice was the true God. Baal's priests unsuccessfully tried to get an answer from Baal whom they thought was God; then Elijah called them together – his was a simple prayer. God does not hear people for the amount they speak and being straight to the point He showed visibly He was God and none other like Him. He sent a fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifice. Elijah then, after slaying the idolatrous priests, prayed a third time for God to end the drought - and there was rain.

Yes, Elijah was the true and typical messenger of God. He was also God's messenger to the woman of Sidon, where he dwelt during the drought in the land of Israel, and while there her son died and Elijah prayed that his life might be restored - again God heard him. So through Elijah, as through all other messengers or God, He manifested Himself by visible signs and wonders.

What is our position as ambassadors for Christ? It might be said, that because the extraordinary powers of the Holy Spirit have been withdrawn, and because that at this age God does not intervene openly in the affairs of man, until the second coming of Christ, we are at a disadvantage compared with the ancient prophets and early disciples. This may be true up to a point, but there are still many ways in which we have our opportunities to shew whose we are.

As we said earlier, we shall fail as ambassadors for Christ if we cannot be picked out as different from the people who know not God - and this difference should shew clearly that we manifest the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, meekness, gentleness, etc. A brother of Christ is generally discernible among people by his lovable manner, his politeness and warm-heartedness, his conscientiousness at work. In brief his general deportment distinguishes him, and this is as it should be.

One of the worst things an ambassador for a government of this world can do to bring his country into discredit is to commit a wrong in the country of his mission; the surest way to bring discredit upon the

Church, the body of Christ, don't forget, is for a professing person to misbehave himself. Better not to mention religion than to talk about it, to profess to be Christ's brother and then to do wrong.

Apart from merely being discernible, there are occasions when we have to do something more than just that; we must always be ready to talk when an opportunity is given us. Talk to an unbeliever; make known God, His plan and the gospel of the Kingdom.

We are commanded, to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh" us "a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 5:15). This is, after all, the best way of making God known, it is not always as easy as it looks - by no means. Giving the facts in a straightforward way is one thing, but answering questions is another.

Some of the questions asked can be quite difficult if they are thrown at us unawares. It is true some questions asked by totally ungodly persons may be designed to ridicule - these are best dealt with by answering a fool according to his folly, but some are quite serious questions and really show a genuine desire for knowledge on the part of the enquirer. The only way to have an answer ready is to be well acquainted with the Word of God, and once acquainted, to keep it fresh in memory - hence the necessity to read the scriptures daily.

Surveying our position as ambassadors for Christ it may well be said that it is easy and at the same time difficult. It is easy because there is nothing spectacular we are likely to be called upon to do; nothing likely as hazardous as, for example, what Daniel had to do when he was thrown into the den of lions, or what Jeremiah had to go through while in a dirty dungeon.

At the same time it is difficult because we have to be on our constant guard not to do or say anything that will cause offence to the ultimate discredit of the Body of Christ.

Just as an ambassador has to have the interests of his government in his mind all the time, in all his actions, decisions and utterances, so we have to have the interests of God in our minds.

We have constantly to ask ourselves: If I do so and so, can it cause the Truth to be evil spoken of, or does it set a bad example to some doubtful people who are not yet sufficiently established strong believers? Or had I better say so and so instead of the other, as it shews more clearly whom I serve?

Such are the considerations that have to govern our lives.

Brother Leo Dreifuss

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We continue with...

## **VERITAS AND HIS FRIENDS.**

"That is exactly what I want you to grant me; I desire nothing more," said Veritas; "for I know I can show you that the testimony you require exists, that is, that God intends to make the earth the residence of a happy and immortal race."

"But what has this to do with the historical confirmation of the scriptures that we were talking about?" inquired Pietas.

"Well, it will lead us to consider what God has been doing in preparation for such an end, and will call our attention to Jewish history, and what is written in the prophets concerning "the times of the Gentiles" and the latter days." Comparing all this with the acknowledged facts of history, and the condition of the world to-day, we shall be convinced (or we ought to be) that the Bible is a revelation from God "

"What do you mean by 'the times of the gentiles?'" asked Pietas; 'I know it is a Biblical expression, but I have never fairly understood it.'

“If you will refer to Daniel 2, you will see that is universal history is spaced into five successive periods, in which ‘times’ different powers are in the ascendant. The first four ‘times’ show us men attempting to rule themselves; in the fifth, we see the kingdom of God established. The former periods are the times of the Gentiles, during which the Gentiles will exercise dominion, proving effectually how utterly impotent human government is, and so preparing for the setting up of kingdom of God in the earth.”

“All this sounds rational enough,” said Dubitas, “I only wish it were true.”

“Wait awhile,” said Veritas, smiling “perhaps the conviction will grow upon you that it is true when you have studied it as the subject deserves to be studied.”

“Oh, I used to rack my brains pretty well ten years ago on these things, but I never could make anything of Them. They are interesting but I grew tired of them at last.”

“Just so,” said Veritas; “the mistake just lay in racking your brains, which has been the mistake of men universally. If instead of this futile effort to solve the subject of the purpose of God by your own uninstructed mind you had allowed it to solve itself in the neutrality of your understanding, the result would have been different perhaps.”

“Possibly,” was the ironical reply “but now let’s have your line of proof that God is going to carry out the purpose you have referred to.”

“With pleasure,” responded Veritas; “I have given you two or three passages already. Just read what it says – Revelation 4:11 and connect it with Genesis 1:31 and you will see that this earth is a creation in which God finds delight. That is one point which you will find abundantly illustrated through this Book. Then we learn that God is glorified by his manifestation in these his works. This subject supplies the matter and the inspiration for some of the loftiest strains of Hebrew poetry. Read Psalm 19 and 148, Nehemiah 9:6. The highest idealizations of God’s glory are obtained by reference to these works: infinite power is seen to revel in them and the grandeur of Deity is thereby expressed. Then consider again that the earth has been made FOR Christ (Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2 Romans 11:36. These passages show that Christ, is the moral cause of all things, not giving actual physical origin to them but standing related to them as moral cause, or cause in reason so that if Christ had not been, nothing would have been.”

Mentor pricked up his ears at this last remark and Pietas cried,

“Ha, Ha! I must put a question or two here.”

“Not now” said Veritas with a gentle deprecation of his hand, “bye-and-bye; this will come up again; let me go on to point out that Christ is constituted the HEIR of all things, and that this earth is his patrimony. Remembering what is said in Daniel about the kingdom of God succeeding and abolishing the kingdoms of men, read now the 2nd Psalm, and then turn to Revelation 11:15. Here Christ is in possession of the earth and in a hundred ways I shall be able to show you in the course of our conversation how Christ and the earth are bound up together. If God’s purpose centres in Christ it also locates itself in the earth for there finally is Christ, and there for ever.”

“A little further attention,” Veritas went on, “will show us that Christ will inherit the earth as the promised seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). A consideration of this fact in the abundant light of the Scriptures will lead us to the very centre of the Divine purpose concerning mankind. The announcement of this purpose is rightly called GLAD TIDINGS, and this glad tidings is summed up (Galatians 3:8) in these words, “In thee (Abraham) shall all nations be blessed.” If we ask how this is to be brought about we find it is in this way. Abraham has been appointed as the (head of a chosen people) “heir of this world” (Romans 4:13). This promise will be fulfilled when he is raised from the dead (Luke 20:37), and constituted with all his seed the ruling power of the earth (Galatians 3:29, 1 Corinthians 6:2). The “salvation” which will result to the world from this Divine arrangement will be a salvation “world without end” (Isaiah 45:17). It will lead up to the complete extinction of sin and evil, the abolition of death, and the permanent establishment of a holy and immortal race of beings, whose moral beauty and blessedness will be a reflection of the glory of God.”



While Veritas was saying this, he turned to the various texts on which his argument rested, and read them each aloud. A considerable interest seemed to be created as he did so, for they formed a class of texts which did not usually arrest and command attention. A new sphere of thought seemed to be opening up; things sprang into reality and distinctness which had never been seen before, but which once seen, fascinated the mind.

Dubitas was especially interested; a novelty suited him: Pietas seemed much interested, but perplexed.

Veritas saw this, and said, "I dare say I am turning your thoughts into chaos rather than contributing to their clearness and certainty, but this will necessarily arise from the fragmentary way in which I have hinted at things rather than traced them out to you."

"I confess," said Pietas, "to being in the dark about much that you have been saying, and as for the texts you have read I have never been detained much by them; at least the most of them."

"I can quite believe that," replied Veritas; "your belief did not need such texts, and though there (pointing to the book) they did not much distress you. A needle may be in your flesh for years, without giving you, even occasionally, a prick, so these texts may remain in your reading without giving you much concern."

"But at any rate," Veritas said, after a pause, "you will now see the grounds on which I accept and trust the scriptures. I do so because they describe God purposing to establish a kingdom in the earth, and history shows me how this purpose is being realised. There is scarcely an important event that has happened in the earth since the first advent of Jesus Christ, but its close connection can be seen with this plan of God. The very existence of this present seemingly insoluble Eastern question, is one of the many proofs that God's scheme is hastening to its fulfilment."

To be continued...

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## The Federal Principle

Sin brought condemnation to Adam, and if we were treated as individuals placed under a law requiring perfect obedience it would bring condemnation to us. But for the purpose of salvation we are not regarded as individuals, but as the family of Adam, who is our Federal head. If we perish with the world it will not be because we are being punished for our personal sins but because we are without God and without hope. This is what is meant by the statement "the scripture hath concluded all under sin", and not as some suggest, that all men are sinners (which may be true) or God foresaw that all would sin (which is not true, for infants are incapable of sinning, yet they die) and condemned them in advance. All are concluded under the one sin, the sin of the world "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." The sin of the world is the sin for which Jesus made vicarious atonement and this represents all the sins of all mankind. If we were not all scripturally included in the one life of Adam which he forfeited by his disobedience, we could not be the subjects of the one act of deliverance accomplished by Jesus when He gave His life to pay Adam's debt, a life for a life, a ransom for many, the Just for the unjust. In the final analysis, sin brings condemnation, but if we were each initially held responsible and accountable before God, if we were to have any hope of salvation under the redemptive principle - and there is no other - we would each have required an individual righteous saviour who would be willing to give his life for us. The hidden wisdom of God brought in The Federal principle, under which a multitude can be saved out of the race by a simple legal transfer - requiring not perfection of life and a faultless obedience as under the Law but belief and obedience.

Brother Ernest Brady.

Cloudberry continues her research...

## Who Jesus Is

I would like to elaborate more on some of the verses that I've already posted, to give a more detailed reason for believing as I do.

One is 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6. In this chapter, I will start with verse 4... It is explaining that "...an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."

We see here what most believe, that God is one. Where some differ is how He is one. In 1 Corinthians 8:6, we are assured that there is one God, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Here in verse 6, we are assured that this one God, that is declared to be one in verse 4, is the Father as it says in verse 6 "...But to us there is but one God, the father....." What we do not see it saying is that Jesus is also this one God.

Verse 4 establishes that idols are not gods. Verse 5 says many are called gods, which are not Gods, only called gods, and verse 6 says that there is one God, the Father.

This is the one God...the Father, the Father of the Son Jesus, as is said in John 20:17, "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God," and in John 17:3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. "

This Father is the one that is God. This Father is the only one that is God, as the above verses show. And most believers do not believe that the Son is the Father. And these verses show that God is the Father, and do not show that Jesus is this only God the Father, but His Son. These verses show that the Father is the only true God, and that Jesus is the Son.

And now for John 1 beginning at verse one... "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

I would like to make the point that this isn't the only way it is translated, that in centuries past, it was translated a little differently. Here is an example of John 1:1-3 in Tyndale's New Testament of 1530 AD,

"In the beginnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God: and the worde was God. The same was in the beginnyng with God. All thinges were made by it, and with out it, was made nothinge, that was made."

Obviously, in the past, in this translation, the use of "it" was considered an accurate translation; and when one considers the "in the beginning" of the verses in Genesis 1, we see there that God spoke when He created, that He created by His spoken word. And this in John 1:1-3 appears to be referring to Genesis 1 in which God spoke. We see in John 1:3 that it says "...All thinges were made by it, and with out it, was made nothinge, that was made," is likely about the creation of all things in Genesis. Therefore in John 1:1 the word is God's spoken word which He used in His creation of all things in Genesis, being mentioned here in John 1. Also, verse 1 in John, being translated as it is in Tyndale's New Testament, is more likely correct, as John here is saying that it is God's spoken word that is with God in the beginning, and was with God and was God. In the beginning of what? In the beginning of the creation of Genesis. It seems to be more in context with this understanding.

And another example is in The Geneva Bible of 1560AD.

"In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it was made nothing that was made."

Here again we see the use of the word “it.” It seems that it is in more modern translations that we see the word “it” being replaced with the word “him.”

The older translations show, that it may have been considered, in the past, that John 1:1-3 is speaking of the word of God, His spoken word, and only His spoken word. And that it is in more current translation that it is thought that this is speaking of Jesus. Yet it isn't until verse 14, that we see the word becoming flesh - “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”

Here is the list that was given to me awhile back, do not recall by who, and probably isn't the complete list of Bibles that use the word “it” for John 1:1-4.

The Geneva Bible – 1560, “In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, & without it was made nothing that was made.”

Tyndale's Bible – 1525, “In the beginning was that Word, and that Word was with God: and God was that Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and without it, was made nothing: that made it.”

Tyndale's New Testament – 1530, “In the begynnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God: and the worde was God. The same was in the begynnyng with God. All thinges were made by it, and with out it, was made nothinge, that was made.”

Matthew's Bible – 1537, Used “it” instead of “him” in John 1:3-4.

Coverdale's Bible – 1539 & 1540, “In the begynnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God, and God was ye worde. The same was in the begynnyng with God. All thinges were made by the same, and without the same was made nothinge that was made.”

The “Great Bible” of 1539 used “it” instead of “him” in John 1:3-4.

The Bishop's Bible – 1568 used “it” instead of “him” in John 1:3-4.

The King James Version, John 1:14-18, 27, 30. “14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

For me what this is saying is that the word of God, His gospel, is to be given as a message to the people, by the Christ, His son, Jesus, in the flesh; that is born as a man. I do not see it saying that Jesus was the word in a pre-human existence, or that it is saying that Jesus is God. And no where in this verse do I see it saying that it is God that came in the flesh. Jesus was born and brought man the gospel of God. This is all that it is saying, as I see it.

Verse 15, “John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.”

As we see, it is John baring witness of him, (Jesus) and saying that he (Jesus) who comes after him is preferred before him. While reading this I see John speaking of being preferred, and not about when Jesus came into existence. When John says “for he was before me” he is still saying that the one he is baring witness of is preferred before himself. Also read verses 27 and 30 which supports this view.

Verse, 16 “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

In verse 18 it says that no man has seen God. I see no contradiction here, as if we read this verse carefully, we will see that it does not say Jesus saw God, only that the Son hath declared Him (God). I think that being in the bosom of the Father here means that Jesus is loved and preferred by God, not that he

literally was God or part of God or saw God, or had a pre-human existence.

Verse 27, "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Verse 30, "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."

Again these verses support that what John was saying is that Jesus is preferred before himself; and is not about when Jesus came into existence, or that Jesus is God, or that Jesus was the word before his birth as a man.

This is how I see it reading. I know most do not agree, but thought that it is important to consider the views of others who do not see it in the usual understanding.

1 John 4:9 "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."

Here we see that it says God sent his Son. Not that God the Father sent His God the Son. No mention whatever that the Son is also God, but only that he is the Son.

Verse 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

And again we see that He, God, sent His Son. And not that the Son is also God.

Verse 11 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Here we see it say that the Father sent the Son, and we just saw verses that say God sent His Son (see 1 John 4:10 above), which supports that Jesus is God's Son, the Father's Son (verse 14); and being that God can dwell in the Son, (see John 14:10,11 below) and can dwell in us, and we in Him (see 1 John 4:12,13 above), and being that this does not make us God, there is no reason to think that it means that Jesus is God either when Jesus said he and the Father are one (see John 10:30 below), or that the Father dwells in him, or that he is in the Father and the Father is in him.

John 14:10 "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

John 10:30 "I and my Father are one."

Let's see what Nathanael says....and also Jesus as to who he is.

John 1:49 "Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

And now Jesus...

John 10:36 "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

Jesus himself said that he is the son of God; Nathanael says the same. I have found no where that he says he is God, and no where that he is God the Son; but many verses that say he is the Son of God.

Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

And this says it all...the God and Father of our Lord Jesus...it is obvious that Jesus is the Son, and not God.

It was claimed by a friend that I was having discussions with on another forum, that Jesus is both God (root of David) and man (offspring of David). (See Revelation 22:16). He claimed that root of David means that Jesus is God.

I looked up a few things and still haven't changed my mind as to what I think the root and offspring of David means. I checked on Hebrews 1:3 and it says Jesus is the express image of His (God) person and that He upholds all things, but it also says He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty. There is nothing here that explains the meaning of Jesus being the root and offspring of David, or that Jesus is God as my friend claimed. And neither does Revelation 22:16 say that being the root and offspring of David means that He is God, which my friend also claimed.

I also looked up John 5:23 during this discussion with him, and it does speak of honouring the Son “even as” they honour the Father. I think that “even as” doesn't actually or necessarily mean “as the same,” but that as we are to honour the one, we must honour the other; that is to do both, otherwise we are not honouring either. Nothing there saying it is to be actually the same, to honour Jesus as being God.

We should honour Jesus for who the Bible says he is... the Son of God, the risen Christ and Savior of repented man. We should honour the Father for who and what He is, God, the God of Jesus and the God of us. It is not dishonouring either of them, to honour them for who they are.

Some seem to focus more attention on Jesus being God, than on Jesus being the offspring of David, the root of David, the biological descendant of David, and the Lord and saviour of David. Is God a descendent of David? I have not found any Bible verses that says He is.

As for 1 John 1: 2-3, I see here in verse 2 that it says “...which was with the Father” and later in verse 3 it says “...and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. This isn't speaking of Jesus being the root and offspring of David, as my friend claimed these verses do; or that it means Jesus is God; but actually shows that they are not one and the same; one is the Father, the other His Son.

Some may not have a problem calling Jesus, God, but I would, as although some of the titles that are applied to Jesus are applied to others also such as Nebuchadrezzar and Artaxerxes as they are both called “King of Kings” and “Lord of lords” in the Scriptures, this does not make them God; neither does it make the judges or Moses, and us in Psalms 82:6, God. So why does it have to mean that Jesus is God when called any of these titles. I don't believe that it does when there are so many verses that call Jesus the Son of God and not one that says he is God the Son. Here are several....

Matthew 3:17 says, “This is my beloved Son...”

Mark 15:39 says, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

John 1:34 says”....the Son of God.”

John 10:36 (Jesus is speaking here) “...I am the Son of God?”

Hebrews 1:3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person...”

Where in the Bible does it say that only God could express Himself fully and exactly, and therefore Jesus must be God? God does not need to be His own image. Jesus the Son is the express image of God, as the Bible says, but that does not mean that He is God because He is the image of God. It means He is the image of God, just as it says. Also, we who do not believe that Jesus is God, are not downplaying Him, as my



friend claimed, because we believe that He is who the Bible, and God, and He Himself, say He is...the Son of God. Is God downplaying Jesus when He calls Him the Son of God? I don't think so. We as Unitarians do not see Jesus as a little god, nor do we water Him down. We honour Him for who He really is, the Son of God, the Christ.

In John 10:36 Jesus says, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God?" The verse isn't saying that He is one of the three persons of God, but that He, Jesus, is the Son. This chapter needs to be read in context, which so many do not do.

In John 5:18 the Jews said that He made Himself equal with God; they said that, Jesus did not. In verse 25, He calls Himself the Son of God, "25...when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God..." He corrected them; He did not claim He was equal to God here.

These verses above do not support that Jesus is God.

No one can see God, and scripture backs that up. Moses was told to turn his back so as not to see God, so why would God appear in person to Abraham? He didn't. His representatives, the three men, did. The Bible verse there says that there were three men. Men are often messengers (angels) for God, as also Angels are messengers. But God can not be approached, which is also supported by scripture.

I believe that Yahweh is only the name of God the Father, that the Son of God the Father Yahweh, is Jesus; and the Holy Spirit is the active power and spirit of God. I believe that this is what the Bible says. I do not feel that honouring God for who He is; and honouring Jesus for who he is, the Son of God, is dishonouring Jesus, or downplaying Him, as some will say and as my friend claimed, but is honouring both for who they are, God and his Son. The bible does not teach a trinity.

I've heard it said that Jesus was God even while a man on earth; yet here in John 3 verse 2 Nicodemus said to Jesus "...we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." We see him referring to Jesus as a teacher, and that God be with him, but not that he thought Jesus was God. Having God with Him does not mean that Jesus is God, but only that God is with Him, as they are in unity of thought and purpose, the presenting of the gospel and salvation for believers.

In John 3:16 we see it saying that Jesus is His Son and not that Jesus is His God the Son, or one of a trinity. We see that Jesus Himself says that He is the begotten son. The verse says that God, not one of a trinity, but God gave His only begotten son. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So if one believes this, that God gave His Son, that if we believe in Him (not in that Jesus must be God) that we should not perish, that we would have everlasting life. This is what it takes for salvation ...believing that Jesus is the Son and Savior, and died for our sins, and was raised by God as is said in Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Obviously, believing that Jesus is God, a member of a Trinity, is not needed to be saved, and in fact it not a teaching of the bible.

In verse 3:17 we see again that it is God that sent forth His Son; not that He sent forth another god, or a member of a Trinity, or a God the Son, but only His Son that was sent forth. John 3:17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Notice again it is through the Son that we might be saved, and not belief in a Trinity.

In verse 18 it says that if we believe on Him we are not condemned, but if we do not, we are already condemned. That we have to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Not in a god made up of three co-equal persons. To me it is saying that we are to believe in God's Son, to be saved, not that we must believe that Jesus is God, or that He is one of a trinity, or that He is the God the Son, but just that He is the son. That is what we are to believe, these are words of Jesus. Can one say they are a follower of Jesus if they do not take Jesus' word for who He is?

In John chapter 3:34-36 we see that the one God has sent, which would be His Son Jesus, speaks the words of God, and the Father loves this Son, and gave all things into His care. Do these verses give the impression that Jesus is God or one of a trinity? Again it says that we are to believe on the Son to have everlasting life, not that we must accept that Jesus is a co-equal, co-eternal god with his Father.

John 3:34 “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”

3:35 “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”

3:36 “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

We also see in these verses that the Father and God are one and same, but not that Jesus the Son is one and the same with God the Father.

In John 4:23, 24 we see that we are to worship the Father, and that it is the Father that seeks us to worship Him, and worship Him in spirit and truth. Do we see it here saying that we are to worship Jesus as God? Not that I see. These are the words of Jesus; if we are to be followers of Jesus, we need to heed his words, and not those of others.

John 4:23 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

4:24 “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

In John 5:19 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

Could someone who is God be unable to do anything except what He sees the Father do? Or can do nothing of himself? And must do only what He see another God do? Obviously not. Jesus is not God but the Son of God, and there is no explanation that can be given to make sense of the trinity belief. Again it is Jesus in this verse that can only do what He sees the Father do, that can do nothing of himself. He obviously does not claim to be God. He is subject to God. This is how I see it. Many will not agree, and see it differently, but I see Jesus saying that he is the Son, and not that he is God. Thanks for listening.

Cloudberry

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## THE HEART OF MAN

### Use and Misuse of its Biblical application.

The Hebrews look upon the heart as the source of wit, understanding, love, courage, grief and pleasure. Hence are derived many ways of speaking. An honest and good heart; that is, a heart studious of Holiness, being prepared by the Spirit of God, to entertain the word with due affections, dispositions, and resolutions. (Luke 8:15). We read of a broken heart, a clean heart, an evil heart, a hardened heart, a liberal heart, a heart that does an act of kindness, freely, voluntarily, with generosity. To incline the heart to God; to beseech him to change our stony hearts into hearts of flesh; to love with all ones heart etc. Indeed the first and great commandment to Israel included One God, and loving Him with all the heart, soul, mind and strength.

There are hundreds of references and applications concerning the heart of man in the Holy Scriptures, but sufficient has been said to show that the heart is not to be considered as the brain and mind of the body in

the physical sense, but in the sense of its importance, as the pump which continues the supply and circulation of the blood wherein is the life of the flesh, and without which the brain and other parts or members of the body cannot function. When the mind is exercised by the indwelling word of the Spirit a person becomes transformed by the renewing of the mind, and the disposition of that person is love toward God and a desire, to please Him.

In the Hebrew 'idiom' this implies to have a good heart, and the opposite in the case with the person opposed to Gods' Will, and this is said to be an evil heart, therefore we should discriminate when we are reading the scriptures in their reference to the heart of man and realise that they are not describing a physical quality of this very important organ of the body, but the fact that it is the source of supply and life to a person of evil disposition or good disposition. As an organ of the body the heart is designed to cope in the supply and demand of the body under its various stresses and strains and it does so automatically in its best and healthy state, through the design of the Creator, as the Psalmist declares, "Fearfully and wonderfully made", but the brain also controls the nervous system, sending out its messages, so that every member does its work. We submit then that the brain is the source of intellect, and will not function if the heart ceases to beat, so we conclude that the scriptural allusions to the heart of man are merely figurative language and that it is not the source of intellect and cannot be styled in the physical sense, "deceitful and desperately wicked." The latter words of the prophet Jeremiah were not used to describe the quality of man's flesh and heart in the physical sense, but he was describing in the figurative sense a nation whom God had chosen for Himself and who were rebellious and stiffnecked, deceitful and desperately wicked in their ways. A similar description of men devoted to wickedness is found in Genesis chapter 6:5 and 6, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart". In other words "It vexed His Holy Spirit" – (Isaiah 65:10).

When there are alternatives for good or evil according as a man thinketh in his heart, it is shameful to quote indiscriminately and out of context the ninth verse of Jeremiah chapter 17 as complete and positive proof that the Prophet is describing man in general and without any control over his disposition and free-will, making him the man with a tendency only to sin; but sadly this is the quotation most often used by the believers of sin-in-the-flesh to the exclusion of the words of Jesus Himself whom they profess to believe, and of the prophets and apostles, through the Spirit of God that gave them utterance. One of the latter believers quoted Jeremiah's words to me while in conversation in order to justify mans so-called bias towards sin, I asked him why Jesus who was of our identical nature and possessing a similar heart, could not be convicted of deceit and wickedness? I also quoted some of the sayings of Jesus, i.e. "Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart" Matthew 11:28 and 29. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit", (Matthew 12:33-35). If we are asked to accept that human nature is wholly evil and the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, with no reservations or discriminations, then why should Jesus the great teacher of divine things make such a statement or ask such a question in verse 48 of this chapter? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say"? Did not Jesus say also, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light, if ye choose to take it upon you"? I have learned not to study the Bible upon the basis of other peoples indiscriminate and dogmatic assumptions, but as the Apostle exhorts "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good," and this means to discriminate and rightly divide the word of Truth, not make it fit pre-conceived theories. The Biblical and figurative use of the heart is derived from the fact that all the members of the body are dependent upon it for active life, intellect and movement, it is therefore considered as the central force behind the brain and all activities of the person whether good or evil, depending on the state of the mind, and when our minds are Spiritual, in harmony with the mind of Christ, then our hearts are considered to be good and pure in the sight of God. When we read, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" it does not mean that He altered or changed its composition but that He created circumstances whereby Pharaoh changed his mind by refusing to let the people of Israel go, and here is portrayed to us the Biblical meaning of a heart of flesh and a heart of stone. So Paul says in Corinthians to the believers "Ye are the Epistle of Christ ministered by us with the Spirit of the Living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" - 2 Corinthians 3:3.

The lesson we must learn then from the Biblical and figurative use of the heart is that all we do in God's service is with our whole heart and not half-heartedly which is a common English everyday expression. Thus Paul could say to the Romans now in Christ' "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of Sin (PAST TENSE), but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." This is to say that they had imbibed the true doctrine and message of Paul and being transformed by such renewing of the mind and all it involved for salvation, it could rightly be said in the figurative language of the Scriptures, "Ye have obeyed from the heart." Paul continues his discourse in Romans 10:6 to 11 "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:), or who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead:) but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shall be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." This is what Paul considers positive belief and faith, from the heart of those whose minds, have been regenerated and activated through the word of faith preached by Jesus and his apostles. Alternatively the prophet Isaiah uttered by the spirit the words of God concerning those of Israel whose heart was not right with Him. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

We are told in connection with a successor to Saul king of Israel, that man looketh on the outward appearance but God looketh upon the heart, and this was why he chose David. Out of all the descriptions of people whose motives were in opposition to the Will of God and where the heart is used in the figurative sense, the scriptures also abound with the opposite case, so why take an isolated statement and description, which must of necessity be figurative, completely out of its context and make it a physical description of the heart of every living person? There can only be one answer. Those who do so have an axe to grind, but they have certainly picked the wrong stone to sharpen it. When Jeremiah says "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? We have the answer from the man to whom God imparted wisdom, and from Jeremiah himself. Proverbs 12:20. "Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil" and "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings". Jeremiah 17:10. If a wicked and deceitful heart is a physical compound of the body it would be well for those who believe it to consider Ecclesiastes 10:2 and find out also if medical surgeons have found this to be so in the literal and physical sense, it may also help to prove that sin is not a literal and physical element of the flesh, "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left."

How important then it is, when reading the Bible to discriminate, whether it be to do so with the heart or any other subject, for we must be sure that we are quoting the inspired word spoken by Holy men of God as they were moved to do so by His Holy Spirit Power, and that what is recorded and written is what they said, and is considered to be the scriptures profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Take for example the book of Job; Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite; these men were not speaking by the spirit of God and they were not God's prophets so that anything of their utterances must be read with discrimination, for though it is recorded in the Bible as we know it, it is not the inspired word of God. The fact it is recorded in Job 42:7 "The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job." Yet the words of these three men whom Job describes as forgers of lies and physicians of no value, have been used in an indiscriminate manner past and present in contending and defending erroneous theories as though they were the inspired word of God and merely because they are found written between the covers of the book we call the Bible.

We are told there is a time for everything that is done under the sun. The judge standeth at the door. This is a time for self examination. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Those with good treasure in their hearts and those with evil treasure. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (I John 5). "Let not your

hearts be troubled” said Jesus. “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, saith the prophet, all ye that are upright in heart.”

And may the Lord direct our hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 5). Amen.

Love to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, Brother Phil Parry.

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## THE PROPHECIES RESPECTING CHRIST.

To any man, who knows nothing of the history of Christ, and reads the Old Testament prophecies relating to Him, it would appear impossible that any one person should ever arise, in whom these prophecies should all meet their accomplishments, so strangely do they seem to combine together things the most dissimilar and incompatible with each other; circumstances of the greatest possible meanness and humiliation with all that is glorious and splendid; a manger with a sceptre, a cross with a crown, contempt, poverty, and want, with honours, riches, and a kingdom! How forcible is the argument hence resulting, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the book in which His singular history was thus minutely foretold, so many ages before his birth, was written by inspiration of God.

Palsy’s Evidences, Vol. II. chap. 1.

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### **The following item is from an old Circular Letter but I feel it is relevant to much of this present one. - Editor**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Loving Greetings to you all in Jesus’ Name.

Here are a few selections from the articles produced by Bro. Broughton.

In one issue he deals with a question we are often asked by those who believe that Sin is a physical property of human flesh. “How did Jesus bear our sins in his own body on the tree, if it was not by bearing our sin nature?” Bro. Broughton answers the question as follows:

Jesus bore our sins by suffering the punishment they deserved, and he quotes the following texts illustrating how in Scripture sins are thus “borne.”

Leviticus 20:20. “They shall bear their sin – they shall be childless.”

Leviticus 24:15 “Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin - he shall surely be put to death.”

Numbers 30:8-15 “...The Lord shall forgive her (but her husband) shall bear her iniquity.”

Ezekiel 14:10. “They shall bear the punishment of their iniquity.”

Ezekiel 18:20. “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the fathers.”

Ezekiel 25:49. “Ye shall bear the sins of your idols.”

Lamentations 5:7 “Our fathers have sinned, and we have born their iniquities.

This selection of passages amply illustrates that to bear sin means to suffer the punishment due to sin, either one’s own or as can be seen from one or two of the texts, the sins of others.

I remember years ago a Christadelphian advancing Ezekiel 18:20 as proof that it was impossible for Jesus to have suffered for the sins of others, but if, as Bro. Broughton shows, the idea of sin-nature or the need for atonement for sin-nature, is entirely foreign to Scripture; if Jesus did not bear the punishment of the sins of others, He died in vain.



The fact is that Ezekiel 18:20 is intended as a prohibition of the practice of punishing the innocent instead of the guilty; a thing which no just person could tolerate. To use it for the purpose of discrediting the sacrificial death of Jesus is blind perversity. Jesus was not punished instead of the guilty. He voluntarily bore the punishment due to sinners in order to set them free and show Divine Love. A person - and there are such - who claims to be unable to see the difference does not deserve to share the benefits involved.

Bro Broughton goes on to show, by a literal example from Scripture, how Jesus bore our sin. He quotes Matthew 8:17. "...He cast out spirits... that it might be fulfilled... himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." He says, "Now Jesus took their infirmities by taking them from the people he cured: yet, he himself did not take the evil spirits into himself. He bore our sicknesses like, leprosy, blindness, lameness, the palsy - not by becoming leprous, blind, lame, or palsied, - but by curing those who had such diseases. In like manner Christ took upon himself our sins when God "laid upon him the iniquity of us all" by removing them from us.

But, he adds, there is a difference in the manner. A devil, i.e., a deranged mental state or a disease, could be removed as an act of mercy, pure and simple, by the exercise of Divine power; whereas sins could only be removed by transferring the penalty to himself. And so he suffered, the Just for the unjust, on the Tree, bearing our sins, i.e. the punishment of them, and so God's mercy and forgiveness now abounds to all men.

I think that is a very reasonable answer, and taken in conjunction with the laws of sacrifice in the Old Testament, provides a complete explanation of how Jesus' death took away sins.

Brother Ernest Brady.

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Recently Brother Pearce sent me a letter he had received from a Christadelphian who is studying our teaching concerning the Sacrifice of Christ, and he raised a question which bears on the subject and which will interest you.

He quotes Jesus' question to the scribes: "Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'thy sins he forgiven thee' or to say, 'Arise and take up thy bed and walk'." And he comments: "I have always previously thought that this passage meant that sickness and disease was the direct result of sin at the beginning. What do you think?"

I don't know what Brother Pearce answered, but when I wrote I said I thought these words of Jesus were intended, like many others of His questions, both to reveal and conceal, to make things plain to those who were willing to see, and to make them difficult for those who were wilfully blind. The power of healing which Jesus used was not an end in itself, otherwise he would have made it his main purpose to find and heal the sick wherever they were. It was a sign, evidence of his authority and origin, and he used it for that purpose. His power to heal was proof of his authority to forgive sins. Thus, when he was faced by hostile scribes it was immaterial whether he said, "Thy sins be forgiven," or "Arise and Walk." The words and the result of the one were no more difficult than of the other - but the effect of the healing was evident, whereas no one can see when a man's sins are forgiven. On another occasion they asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" They also thought that sin was always the cause of disease. Jesus replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

I think that the chapter from which this passage comes (John 9) contains some of the very few instances in Scripture where there is an element of humour - the encounter between the man whose sight had been restored and the Pharisees. They knew that Jesus had healed the man, but they dare not face the meaning of it. They tried to find a loophole by questioning his parents, but they were wary - "He is of age - ask him." Then they tried to overawe the man himself, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." (Does this attitude of the Pharisees remind you of anyone?). But the little man had a stout heart, and was not to be terrified by their pomposity, and used his commonsense. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." After some further questioning and illogical

reasoning they got sick of the whole thing and concluded, "As for this fellow we know not whence he is." But the little man had not yet finished - another dash of cold commonsense. "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings... With these and a few other biting cracks, which make as entertaining a bit of reading as there can be anywhere in literature, he showed that his mental eyes were as wide open as his literal eyes, and utterly exposed the foolish self-importance and arrogance of the Pharisees. Their last word put the finishing touch to their own defeat. "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" And they cast him out.

Their descendants are with us today. In spite of what Jesus says they still tell us that we are altogether born in sins. And when they cannot stand up to logical reasoning and the evidence of commonsense, they follow the example of the Pharisees - and cast us out. Here is one of the gems of that chapter which is worth recalling again; "now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." This is good enough proof for the poor blind, man that Jesus was not a sinner, and I vote Brothers and Sisters, that is good enough for us.

With Sincere and Affectionate Greetings,

Your Brother, Ernest Brady.

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## The Body of Sin

### Extracts from "The Sacrifice of Christ":-

This is a phrase of Paul's, and it deserves to be studied. The connection of it is as follows, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed - or rendered powerless - that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 4:6. What is this body of sin? Is it our natural body of flesh and blood? We answer in the negative. The literal body is just as powerful for sin after baptism as it was before; all its inclinations exist still, every impulse which leads to transgression is present as long as the body lasts in health and vigour. But "The body of sin is rendered powerless, crucified, put off as "the old man with (all) his deeds." What is this? We understand the apostle to mean by "the body of sin" or "the old man," the former character and standing in Adam. This is put away by the Christ the ransom as soon as applied to the head and heart... To talk of putting the new man upon the old, as if the two could be conjoined, is unmitigated nonsense. "The old man" must first be "put off" from the literal person, and then, "the now man" must be put on. It is preposterous to contend that a man's real body is "the body of sin" - if it were how in this present time could it be said to be "rendered powerless"?

I say, then, that "sinful" is not a proper adjective to qualify the noun "flesh," but it qualifies the noun "character." A sinful man is a man of bad character not of bad flesh. Sin is an act (1 John 3: 4), not a fixed principle (1 Corinthians 6:18). It seems to me just as appropriate to speak of "long" noise, "green" music, "tall" tunes, etc, as to speak of "sinful" flesh.

But so ignorant was I upon this subject that I thought I should have no difficulty in finding this adjective used in connection with flesh, and betook myself to the concordance and also to the scriptures but the only place in which I could find the phrase "sinful flesh" was in Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." That is the only place in which sinful flesh occurs and in that place it is no translation at all. The Greek words are "EN HOMOIOMATI", SARKOS - HAMATIAS which in English is "in the likeness of flesh of sin." But in good English we don't say "the hat of John" but John's hat, and so we must say for SARKOS - HAMATIAS "sin's flesh." This is a scriptural phrase, and it sets forth a scriptural doctrine.

Let us look at it a little. You all know what is meant by the possessive case, if means “possession” or ownership, as John’s book, that is the book that belongs to John. Change the name then, and put in the word “sin;” “sins” book. The book that belongs to sin.

Let us take another figure, a figure of flesh, the horse, for instance, “Sin’s horse.” The horse which belongs to sin, which is his property. Do you think now that sin’s horse is necessarily a horse that is made of “sinful flesh”? I think you will all see the absurdity of this conclusion. Well, let us again change the figure “sin’s man,” that is a man belonging to sin. Is the man’s flesh necessarily full of sin because he belongs to sin? Certainly not. Take yet one more figure - here are two sheep they both belong to one shepherd, one strays away, the other remains in the care of the shepherd. The stray sheep wanders over a boundary line and becomes the property of a person whom we will call “Sin,” for sin is personified in the scriptures as a ‘king reigning’, etc.

Now please observe, here is the other sheep where they both were at first. Do you think the wool, do you think the skin, do you think the flesh of the stray sheep are at all changed? Do you believe that its wool, skin and flesh have become in any way different from those of the sheep which remain with their Master?

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Another point of great importance in this controversy is the fact that the words “sinful flesh” on which so much stress has been laid, and which are so frequently on the lips of those who hold what may be called “the condemnation the cry of Christ, are not found in the scriptures. It is true that the phrase “sinful flesh” occurs in the Authorised Version, but no such phrase was ever written by the Apostle Paul.

The form of sound words used by him was a likeness of “Sin’s Flesh,” predicating “property” or “possessions” and not “quality.” This is the rendering of the original, and it is certain no Greek scholar can call it in question. It is sound speech which cannot be condemned, and harmonises perfectly with the entire record concerning the Anointed Saviour.

Let this particular form of words be studied and it will be found that there is very much involved in it. The confounding of “sin” with the impulses which lead to sin has introduced an element of confusion into the question which should be carefully avoided.

It is a figure of speech peculiar to the Apostle Paul, it shortens or abridges discourse, in fact conveys the “maximum of thought into the minimum of words.” “Meta,” = to change; “NOMEN,” = a name.

The important distinction between “sin” and “sin offering” is still another point calling for attention which cannot be too strongly enforced. The right understanding of this at once removes a great difficulty.

Brother Edward Turney

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## **Netanyahu: Israel will not, it cannot cede Jerusalem**

Monday, May 21, 2012 | Ryan Jones

In his Jerusalem Day speech on Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared emphatically that he will never divide Jerusalem, a key Palestinian peace demand. Speaking at Ammunition Hill, site of a key battle for Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War, Netanyahu explained that, contrary to Palestinian claims, dividing Jerusalem will only lead to more conflict.

“There are those who believe that if we only divide Jerusalem, and that means giving up the Temple Mount, they believe we will have peace. I am doubtful, to say the least, that if we deposit that square of the Temple Mount with other forces, that we won’t quickly deteriorate to a religious sectarian war,” said

Netanyahu. At any rate, for the vast majority of Israelis, dividing Jerusalem is a red line they are not prepared to cross after their people's millennia of hoping to again inhabit and control the holy city.

"Israel without Jerusalem is like a body without a heart. And our heart will never be divided again," Netanyahu promised. "A nation willing to sacrifice its heart will convince its enemies that it is willing to give up on everything."

The Palestinian Authority insists it will not make peace with Israel unless it receives the eastern half of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, as its capital. When the Palestinians point to "Jewish settlement activity" as an obstacle to peace, they are also talking about the large Jewish neighbourhoods in eastern Jerusalem.

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"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD." - Jeremiah 29:11 to 14,