

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular No 262

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Editorial

Dear Brethren, Sisters and Friends,

This Circular Letter sees the completion of twenty-five years as joint editor and co-producer of the Circular Letters and recently I have been pondering over how it all came about.

It started for me in July 1985 when at a Questions Evening my question was drawn from the hat. From memory I believe I asked “Did Jesus have to die for Himself?” and I had hoped for some thoughtful and helpful discussion. How naïve I was! I could not have anticipated where such a question would lead me, but with hind-sight I can see that there had been one brother (?) who had been ‘gunning for me’ for some time. So instead of discussion I was accused of causing trouble and challenged over my understanding of the sacrifice of Christ and disagreement ensued leading to further refusal to discuss the subject and me being asked to meet with the Arranging Brethren where I was given two choices. The first was that I should accept the BASF (the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith) in its every word. This was an unreasonable request on two counts; the first being that I was never asked to accept the Statement of Faith when I was baptised and they were very pleased to accept me into fellowship then, but now they had ‘changed the goal posts’ - and secondly, there is not a single Christadelphian who accepts the BASF without serious reservation and personal interpretation. Indeed, such has been the disagreement within Christadelphia throughout their history because of their Statement of Faith, causing dozens of divisions, endless arguments, breakup of families, ill feeling and even hatred, so that there are today more Christadelphians who reject it than agree to it. But still it is there and the Editors of many Christadelphian publications have bound themselves not to allow the subject to be discussed in their magazines! The reason for this is not so they can uphold Bible teaching but so they can uphold the BASF!

The second choice was that I could stay in fellowship (?) if I agreed not to discuss my views on the subject of the Atonement unless a member of the Arranging Brethren was present! What a ludicrous suggestion! My own brethren and sisters of forty years standing said I wasn’t going to be allowed to speak openly about the most important scriptural subject! Would they behead me so that I couldn’t speak? All because, over a hundred years before, some overbearing, unreasonable and dictatorial editor of the Christadelphian Magazine boasted he was the one who knew best!

There was a third alternative - that I should be disfellowshipped, and so to be true to my faith in and love for God and Jesus I handed in my resignation.

I felt no anger or bitterness towards my ecclesia; rather I felt sorrow towards them for they were ignorant of the gospel. I felt they had been misled and had not understood the nature of man. My last lesson in Sunday

School had been on the Atonement and Brother Frank Hadley was my teacher. He explained quite clearly that Jesus died only for us because we needed His forgiveness. I thought that everyone in the ecclesia was like-minded. The ecclesia had been a family to me and now, at the age of 58 years the Arranging Brethren voted against me and directed the whole ecclesia accordingly when all I wanted to do was discuss the most important doctrine in the Bible. If I was wrong, would they please show me; if I was right why were they so against me? Was there any feeling of self-importance on my part? Absolutely not. I just wanted to discuss the subject of the atonement with Bible in hand and this they refused to do. Not that I knew all the answers, for unknown to me there were many strong arguments which at that time I was not aware of and would not have been able to answer. So it was well that it happened this way as by leaving the Christadelphians I was able to discover so much more and with prayer my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures grew rapidly. I have often used the expression that while I was in Christadelphia I was paddling about in their murky waters unable to see clearly where the truth lay, but once I left them I quickly saw there was a great clear ocean of truth, the extent of which I could not have anticipated.

By chance, or was it providence, I was told the Nazarene Fellowship held my views and so it made sense that I should contact them. What a joy it was too for I was accepted with open arms and met with Brother Ernest Brady a couple of times not realising just how poorly he was for within a few months of first meeting him he died. It is a great blessing he left so many excellent writings, the like of which no Christadelphian has ever matched for clear commonsense reasoning.

After receiving the Circular Letters for about two years I was asked if I would take over their production. This came as a complete surprise to me and I hesitated not knowing whether I should or not. It had to be a matter of prayer of course - and so I agreed.

Shortly after this and unknown to me at the time J.J.Hadley, the oldest son of Frank Hadley (grandson of the J.J.Hadley who wrote two well known Christadelphian books) and a member of the ecclesia I had left, told the members there that my disfellowship by them was providential and he had the courage to let them know that he believed as I did. However, no action was taken against him, perhaps because he was not in the best of health and not a regular attendee.

About a year later I found there were several of the Nazarene Fellowship who felt we ought not to have any association with Christadelphians and they ought not to be sent our Circular Letters; I disagreed with this and had in fact added many new names of Christadelphians to our mailing list. I am pleased to say that I was not alone in wishing to continue our association with Christadelphians because the extra production had put our funds into the red and I was not sure what I ought to do. I mentioned my concern to Sister Helen Brady and she said "Leave it to me, I will see what I can do." She must have mentioned it to several of our regular contributors and during the next two weeks almost every post contained money – sometimes just a five pound note, others sizable cheques, most from the U.K. but by the end of the first week I started receiving money from abroad too. Some letters contained messages such as, "There is more if you need it" and one or two telling me "never let this happen again!" Some of this generosity came from Christadelphians too, saying, how they appreciated the Circular Letters. I was overwhelmed and near to tears.

But it was not always so rosy. There had been numerous occasions of offensive correspondence from Christadelphians and to a certain extent this offence went both ways. But what was the point? If we make anyone unhappy by our comments how do we expect them to make us happy by listening and trying to understand what we say?

In my simplicity I had thought it would be sufficient to show sincere Christadelphians what we believed and why, and they would willingly accept such commonsense understandings. However, they just didn't believe me and I soon found them telling me that what I believed was nonsense and when I discovered what they thought I believed I agreed with them! And then I discovered the lies I was told I was supposed to believe went back to the days of Robert Roberts and his confrontation with Edward Turney in 1873. Apparently it was believed by most people that Robert Roberts book "The Slain Lamb" answered all the teachings of Edward Turney when in fact, once I studied it, I found it answers not a single one.

In correspondence with a Christadelphian in 1996 I had occasion to write: -

“It is very sad indeed that this type of reporting has continued for so long by Christadelphian writers. They deceive themselves and their readers and seem interested only in upholding Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts even when shown to be in error, than in seeking the Truth of Scripture. Robert Roberts in writing “The Slain Lamb” misrepresented what Edward Turney was contending for. As one small example will show; Robert Roberts stated that Edward Turney believed Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. He knew this was not true, yet he wrote it! This lie is still being said of the Nazarene Fellowship today. For years we have endeavoured to put the record straight but have made very little progress against the defamatory remarks made against us and fostered by so many leading Christadelphian writers. Whenever Christadelphian writers face squarely our teaching regarding the Atonement they are unable to counter it with reasoning from Scripture, and if they were able to show our teaching was not in accordance with Scripture, we would change it without hesitation.”

I think there is a lesson to be learnt here. When, as a youth, I wanted to know the answer to what I saw as a problem I would ask someone in the ecclesia whom I thought would show me the answer - but every time I was fobbed off with, “Go and read what Dr Thomas wrote in such and such a book” or “What Robert Roberts wrote” or maybe some other author long dead but who had written some book or other. As a youth I reasoned from this that if Dr Thomas, Robert Roberts or anyone else for that matter, had reasoned out their understanding by reading the Bible, then so could I and this I resolved to do. I avoided reading any Christadelphian literature from that time on in case I was biased by it! After a few years experience as a Presiding Brother I would include a request in my prayers that our knowledge of the scriptures may be increased, that God may open our understanding of them and that we should be blessed with wisdom to see and teach the truth of them.

I was 18 years old when I started teaching in Sunday School though not yet baptised. In fact for two years I was teaching in two Sunday Schools, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. In all I taught in Sunday School for about forty years. One good thing that came out of this for me is that I learned to express myself in straight-forward terms. This also helped me see when speakers or writers were using circumlocutionary rigmarole, and especially in more recent years when in correspondence with those who opposed our views.

One piece of advice I came across many years ago and feel well worth passing on is this: - “We say to all who would know the truth on any question: attend to what your opponent says as well as to the opinions of your friends. You may probably know one side of a question pretty well: listen to them, and then you will be acquainted with the other. After that your conclusions will be doubly sure.”

Since the introduction of the Internet things have changed dramatically. Many Christadelphian sites openly discuss varying views expressing beliefs which would not have been tolerated just a few years ago. Disfellowship is now a practice which is widely condemned as unchristian and rightly so. No longer can the rank and file members be silenced or ignored. Several websites have appeared, run by and for disfellowshipped Christadelphians containing hundreds of heart-breaking stories. All this is good as far as it goes and good works are emphasised too, but nowhere do I see the need mentioned for us to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

But the whole of Christendom - including Christadelphia - has been built on a foundation of false doctrines introduced into the early Roman Catholic Church based on misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and personal bias. For Christadelphians, their misunderstanding of Romans 8:3 leads them to believe in a Christ who needed to die for Himself because it was supposed by them that He had sin dwelling in His flesh inherited from Adam. We ask, Did God condemn Adam’s sin or did He condemn Adam’s nature? The Christadelphian answer is that God changed his nature to a nature full of sin making everyone sin further. This is a serious matter and we do not wish to fail to do as Jesus said we must, and that is found in John’s gospel, chapter 4 verses 23 and 24, “ True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

There are no other false teachings as serious as this one, but we would mention a couple for they are stumbling blocks. It is commonly believed that our natural death, or the common death of all men, is the result of Adam's sin in Eden. It is not. The "wages of sin" as the Apostle Paul expresses it, is the second death as we read in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The appointment "unto men once to die" is the same for all the animal creation as we read in Ecclesiastes 3:19 and 20, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

Again, the common understanding of what the Judgment Seat of Christ is and who will be there is due to not reading the Bible effectively. We say it is for those called to be with Jesus when He returns for we are told "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: 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." (Revelation 20:6). These are deemed righteous in God's sight and by His grace and they come before Jesus Christ to receive their rewards. This judgment seat is not a place of condemnation for there is no condemnation for those "in Christ."

But all the time we find Christadelphians feed their flocks with stones for bread and so we continue our work to encourage those who have ears to hear and who seek for further knowledge and understanding of the scriptures.

With love in Jesus to all, Russell.

This Body of Sin

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 (i.e. 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 new 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"?

The matter is put succinctly by Brother Edward Turney in this way: -

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 is 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?

Compiled.

Correspondence:

Dear bro Russell

I was sorry to learn of the passing of Helen Brady in the recent CL. She seems to have been a lady of some character, and a daughter to make her father proud.

I have received CL’s now for some years, together with the regularly included tracts on various subjects but, prompted by the mailing list update notice in the last think the time has come for me in fairness to request removal from future mailings.

Whilst I have generally appreciated receiving and reading both magazine and tract, and have gained a much broader appreciation of your [Nazarene] beliefs by doing so, I must confess I have not been swayed by them. I have been a ‘Christadelphian’ by label since I was baptised in my mid 20’s in 1968, coming from a non-church-attending Protestant upbringing. My wife & I were baptised together (in 1968), she being from a staunch Catholic background.

Although remaining in the Christadelphian community I have difficulty in accepting many of the BASF clauses as they stand and have been interpreted, and hold my own opinions. We were actually part of a group of NSW brethren disfellowshipped by a number of conservative elements in the so called ‘Central’ Ecclesias here in the early 1970’s.

I agree that the early writings of Dr Thomas (Elpis Israel, anor.) and other ‘pioneers’ reflect Augustinian teaching of a sinful flesh that you rightly point out and challenge. John Thomas was on his own journey of and into faith, as we all are, and his writings and opinions changed over the years, and contain many other speculations, inconsistencies and inaccuracies both within themselves and as subsequently proven with the passing of time. But he was an impressive student of the word to whom our larger yet fragmented community owes a great debt. There are very few to match his stature and dedication today yet are content to sit back and criticize his errors.

When I first became a ‘Christadelphian’ I did not have the knowledge, maturity or experience then to discern the subtleties; all I could see was the chasm between the Church’s understanding and the

Christadelphian position on issues such as immortal souls, heaven & hell, the devil and so forth; and that was enough.

However, in my view, Nazarene interpretation of the scriptures and teaching is also invalid. You [they] build an entire doctrinal edifice based on an interpretation of the Genesis creation story dialogue and events that are just not there supported. You attempt to draw an artificial distinction between an 'ordinary' [natural] death and a coined non-scriptural supposed 'judicial' [imposed] death. Tracts short and long go to great lengths seeking to justify your position whilst condemning the Christadelphian one based on this interpretation. The logic of the argument is indeed sound, but if the premise is flawed, then so is the conclusion.

Whereas Christadelphian doctrine contains the leaven of 'Original Sin', Nazarene doctrine smacks of 'Original Judgement'. Both portray the Father as Judicial first and foremost, loving second; both provide a distorted image of His righteousness, both are legalistic at base, and neither, in my view, is sound, or truly reflective of God's character as revealed throughout the scriptures as a whole.

As at the outset, I have appreciated receiving CL all these years, though I have been disappointed that the general content is almost always, invariably and incessantly negative, attacking the Christadelphian position. Little if any positive or uplifting content for its own sake, little outreach to the larger secular world in need of light, it's always a duel of cut, thrust and parry [not Phil]. In the end, disheartening and dreary.

My critique is meant to be instructive rather than de... Perhaps some good may come of it, though it's doubtful. One of the most expensive things a person can own is a mind locked into concrete, and I have read nothing in your publications over the years which would convince me that this is not the case with the Nazarenes.

You are welcome with permission to publish this epistle, in full, but not so, extracts or in any way edited.

Sincerely, Richard Bradley. 19/4/2013

In reply I wrote: -

Dear brother Richard,

Thank for your above letter and the kind words you express about Helen Brady. She touched the hearts of so many people and will be greatly missed by them.

While you say you have not been swayed by our understanding of certain scriptures you mention one matter which causes you disquiet and in which you believe we are in error. You say we "attempt to draw an artificial distinction between an 'ordinary' [natural] death and a coined non-scriptural supposed 'judicial' [imposed] death" and I wish to write a few words, not only in our defence but to provide some explanation.

In 1 Corinthians 15 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

This is not a legalistic position, which requires 'salvation by legal means', for salvation is by grace.

The law here referred to, I think you will agree, refers to God's commandments which He asks us to keep and the breaking of which is sin. As law is involved then this must be a judicial matter and as the wages of sin is death, then this death has to be judicial death.

I don't see any alternative. Judicial death is a putting to death for sin.

But mankind in general do not die this death but they nevertheless die as a result of such things as old age, illness or accident and this is what we would call ordinary or 'natural' death. I believe it is what Moses called "the common death of all men" in Numbers 16:29 and it does not apply to judicial death.

This common or natural death is the end of all natural life on this planet and is referred to in Proverbs 3:18-20, - "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

These are but two illustrations, the one of judicial death and the other of natural death and there are many more can be shown in the scriptures. The belief that this natural death is in anyway the result of Adam's transgression has no foundation in the Bible. I believe such references as Ezekiel 18 show this to be so. Here we find the fate of the righteous and the wicked discussed and we must consider that in this life, whether righteous or wicked, all die; it is in the resurrection that the judgment is given and the wages of sin is imposed on the wicked in the second death. Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment".

In conclusion then - we believe our natural death at the end of our lives is not the consequence of sin, either Adam's sin or our own sin.

Adam was warned "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" and this does not mean he will eventually die. He was warned of a putting to death in the day of his transgression. A death penalty which he did not receive. There are about a dozen proof texts if only we read the Bible effectively.

Where is there a single verse which supports the idea that natural death is the punishment for sin? We have yet to be convinced of one.

With Love in Jesus, Russell.

EDWARD TURNEY AND THE NAZARENE FELLOWSHIP

**A Biography
Compiled by Allon Maxwell**

Biographic information about Edward Turney has been quite difficult to locate. Sources for the information contained in this short biography are listed within the body of the article.

If anyone reading this, finds errors, or has additional information, please email the writer at the address shown at the end of this article.

Introduction

I am not, and never have been, a member of the Nazarene Fellowship. (more about that word "member" below) However, over the last 50 years or so, I have been in friendly contact with some of them, and regard them as my brethren in Christ. Matt 10:32.

I spent the first half of my life amongst the Australian Christadelphian "*SHIELD Fellowship*". This group was dis-fellowshipped by the "*Birmingham Central Fellowship*", in the early years of the 20th century. In the late 1950s, negotiations were in progress for reconciliation between the two groups. Naturally many of us were wanting to know more about the doctrines which were being discussed in an endeavor to achieve reunion, and it was at this time that I was introduced to Edward Turney's writings.

The cause of the dis-fellowship was that the "*Shield Group*" shared some of Turney's beliefs about the nature of Christ and so-called "*Clean Flesh*". Since 1958, while many do still retain their "*Clean Flesh*" beliefs, it has become increasingly unpopular to express them in public. The current generation in Australia knows little

about what really happened in 1958, and you can now be dis-fellowshipped for believing what used to be the reason for their existence as a separate group. Your “*Clean Flesh*” candle has to be kept hidden under the bushel. (Matt 5:14-16)

Edward Turney is mentioned frequently in the Christadelphian Magazine. From 1864 (when it was still called “*The Ambassador of the Coming Age*”) up until 1873, this was always in glowing terms. It would appear that at that time he was one of their most respected and influential members. He was highly praised for his outstanding ability as a speaker. He was a member of the Nottingham Ecclesia, but was much sought after by other Ecclesias, as a visiting speaker. The back-issues of the Christadelphian Magazine contain regular reports of his lectures on various subjects, as well as several of his articles.

However that all changed in 1873, when he came into controversy with Robert Roberts over the subject of the Atonement and the Nature of Christ. Following a lecture in Birmingham, on the subject of “The Sacrifice of Christ”, he suddenly became “the enemy”, and praise was replaced by rejection and vilification.

Any biography would be incomplete without some mention of that history. It changed the course of the Christadelphian movement. Although his “Substitutionary Atonement” was not widely accepted, his other teaching **against** “*inherited sinful nature*” (commonly also called “*sin in the flesh*” amongst Christadelphians, and “*original sin*” in the mainstream Churches) was taken up and widely promoted, especially by leading brethren in USA and Australia. From the divisions which followed, new branches of the Christadelphian movement arose. In particular, in Australia, in the early 1900s, it gave birth to what became known as “The Shield Fellowship”, named after the “Shield Magazine”, published by John Bell. The English Christadelphians used the term “*Clean Flesh*” as an epithet, to describe the difference, but in Australia the Shield Group wore it as a “badge of honor”!

In a unique way, all of this has a special personal significance for me. Directly as a result of their conversion from Anglicanism to Christadelphianism, I was born to parents who were members of the Shield group.

The Turney Family

The Turney family was descended from a Flemish family who were refugees in England from Spanish persecution in the 17th century. (Christadelphian Magazine Volume 76, 1939 Page 132)

Several of Edward’s siblings attended the funeral of one of his sisters, Mary Randles, (Swansea) in 1902. Edward was long dead by this time, but two brothers, Sir John Turney (Birmingham), and Fred Turney, (Brussels) and two sisters, ?? Crawley (London), and ??Hipwell, (Birmingham) are mentioned. (Christadelphian Magazine, 1902 page 140)

It seems that the Turney “extended Family” was quite large. Back Issues of the Christadelphian Magazine contain many references to quite a few individuals with the surname name “Turney”. It is probably reasonable to assume that they were siblings, or uncles, and aunts, and nephews, or cousins.

In 1939, the Blackburn Ecclesia reported the death of Samuel Turney at the age of 95. (The Christadelphian Magazine Volume 76, 1939 Page 132). Samuel was Edward’s cousin. It is reported that he had met Dr. Thomas at Old Lenton (Nottingham) on his first visit to England in 1848. Of course he would have been only 4 years old at the time, but the incident serves to indicate the length of the Turney family association with Christadelphians.

John Turney, one of Edward’s brothers, was knighted in 1888. (See below under the heading “LEATHER WORKS)

Basic Information About Edward Turney

Birth

I have not been able to find a birth record for Edward Turney. Official English birth records do not exist for that time. There has been a suggestion that he was born in 1820. However his “official” death record (see below) says that he was aged 43 when he died in March 1879. This would mean he was born sometime in 1835 or 1836.

Marriage

Edward married Susanna Longmate, on October 8, 1867. She was reported to have been baptized “sometime previously.” (*The Christadelphian: Volume 4*. 1867 Page 326, ECCLESIAL INTELLIGENCE NOTTINGHAM).

According to English Marriage records at the Free BMD Web Site, <http://www.freebmd.org.uk/>, the marriage took place at Islington.

Death of Edward Turney

Edward died at his home in Alexandra Park, Nottingham, on Tuesday, March 18th, 1879, from “tumour on the kidneys”, after a long illness. (Christadelphian Magazine 1879 Vol 16 page 176)

In this death report, the Editor has gone out of his way to comment on the past controversy, attempting to justify the action taken against Turney, and virtually consigning him to the fire! One is left with the uncomfortable feeling that Turney has been “*judged before the time*”. (1 Cor. 4:5) The wise will carefully avoid entering into judgment of this kind, especially at this great distance in time.

His Occupation

At the time when he made his will, he described himself as a “Leather Dresser”. However this information comes from the record of the “proving” of his will, which doesn’t say when the will was made.

His Will

From the document recording the “proving” of his will:

Personal Estate under £10,000.

10 September. The Will with a Codicil of Edward Turney late of the Town of Nottingham Leather Dresser who died 18 March 1879 at the said Town was proved at Nottingham by Frederick Nicholson Turney of the Town of Nottingham Leather Dresser the Brother one of the Executors.

“Clean Flesh” - The Reason For Edward Turney’s Dis-fellowship by the Christadelphians

It is commonly reported by Christadelphians that Edward Turney was dis-fellowshipped for believing that Jesus had a different “nature” to other men. This is simply NOT TRUE!

Turney believed that ALL MEN (including Jesus) have an identical human nature. (i.e. flesh) He did however, deny that “SIN IN THE FLESH” existed as a physical element of the flesh. (for ALL of us including Jesus) That is where the term “Clean Flesh” comes from. (Robert Roberts used the term “Sin in the Flesh” in a way that borders closely on the Mainstream Church doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN!)

Following on from this, Turney taught that, since Jesus did not have a “*condemned nature*”, and never sinned, he did not need to make any sacrifice for himself. Instead he emphasized the Scriptures that say it was all “for us”. (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:21) And that leads to his view of “*substitution*”.

You can confirm that for yourself by an HONEST reading of Turney’s writings.

The Nazarene Fellowship

The Nazarene Fellowship is the name of a group which came into existence following the dis-fellowship by Christadelphians, of Edward Turney, in 1873, when he “*renounced*” his former acceptance of Robert Roberts’ teaching about the Atonement, and the Nature of Man.

Amongst the 19th century Christadelphians, almost from the beginning, Turney’s followers came to be labeled as “*Renunciationists*”. This was a term coined by Robert Roberts. In the lecture which brought the controversy to a head, Turney said “*I have renounced the Papal myth of “sin in the flesh,” by which, Mr. Roberts is yet bewitched,.....etc.*” (The Sacrifice of Christ, page 32). (Hardly designed to win Roberts’ friendship!) In the September 1873 issue of the Christadelphian Magazine, Roberts took the word up in a disparaging way, and subsequent editors perpetuated the use of the term.

I haven’t found any information about exactly when they first began to call themselves “**The Nazarene Fellowship**”. Nor have I been able to confirm that the name originated with Edward Turney. However it seems to have been in regular use in the first half of the 20th century, under the leadership of Fred Pearce.

I can’t remember the exact date when I first heard the name of Edward Turney. It would probably have been sometime in the 1940s, during my teenage years. Few knew much about the details, but he was remembered then as an English member who had been dis-fellowshipped sometime in the 19th century, because he taught that Jesus died as a substitute for sinners. Christadelphians are not allowed to believe that, on pain of dis-fellowship. In the Ecclesia in which I grew up, we were taught to say that “*Christ died for us, but not instead of*

us". We were taught to say, that he was "*our representative, but not our substitute*". And I can clearly remember thinking as I said it, "*but what is the difference?*" And of course, in the dictionaries, the difference doesn't really exist!

Following Turney's death, although the group never completely disappeared, the number of followers diminished dramatically. Many simply "*confessed they had been in error*" and returned to the Christadelphians. Others remained as scattered individuals, mainly in England. The group underwent a revival in the early 1900s under the leadership of Fred Pearce, but has never been very big. Pearce published a regular "circular letter", to help keep the widely scattered members in contact with each other. They now call themselves "*The Nazarene Fellowship*". When Fred Pearce died, the editorship of the "*Circular Letter*" was taken over by Ernest Brady. Later, when Brady was unable to continue due to failing health, it was transferred to Harvey and Evelyn Linggood. When advancing years made it too difficult for them to continue, they asked Russell Gregory to take over, and he still publishes it to this present day.

Numbers

They have never been a large group. Initially, there were probably about 200 of them who left with Turney. Russell Gregory thinks that there were probably many more, (possibly as many as one third) who privately agreed with Turney, but chose to stay in their ecclesias. Russell thinks that many of those would have felt that, even though they might have agreed with Turney's beliefs, it was wrong to split the Christadelphian body in two over the issue.

Over the next few years, most of those who left, seem to have returned to the Christadelphian fold. Russell Gregory thinks that many of those who did return, would have done so in the hope of influencing the Christadelphian body from within rather than from without. However, it should be noted that normal Christadelphian dealing with such cases, would have required them to formally "recant", before being accepted back.

The few who remained steadfast in their convictions, eventually gave birth to what is today called "The Nazarene Fellowship".

"Numbers" can be a confusing term. They have never considered themselves a sect or denomination to which they can "belong". And many of their writers and contributors belong to other denominations. However, in practice, there is certainly a "core group" who would willingly identify themselves as "members of the Nazarene Fellowship". Although they use this name to describe themselves, there isn't really any "political organization" to belong to. There is no formal constitution. There are no elected officers. There are no Church buildings. Nor are there any groups holding regular meetings in any one place. However some of them seem to be in regular private contact with others.

Although they publish a list of "*things commonly believed*", they are careful to maintain that they do not have a formal "creed" or "Statement of Faith". All of their literature carries the following statement:

"The Nazarene Fellowship has no constitution, creed or statement of faith outside the pages of the Bible. It has reached its present understanding by reading and discussion of Scripture and study of any and every variety of opinion, past and present. If or when anyone feels that he can show that any point is in conflict with reason or revelation, we are glad to discuss it, for if we are wrong our chief aim is to get it right, but we do not attach much importance to tradition."

Although the "core group" is relatively small, their "Circular Letter" and other published literature seem to be widely circulated to all continents, especially amongst Christadelphians, where it seems to have a significant impact. There would be many, who privately endorse much of their teaching, but prefer to remain where they are.

There aren't many of them left. There are no "official" numbers, but if I was asked to guess, the number who would openly profess "membership" of the Nazarene Fellowship is probably more than 50 and less than 100. Many of them are quite elderly, and they don't seem to have a significant "up and coming" younger generation. I met some of the English members, during a visit to England in the early 1980s. They were all quite elderly, and most of those would probably now be long dead. I also met a few of the Australians, (a couple of them I think in the late 1970s, and another in the 1990s. To the best of my knowledge, only one of them is still alive) Also in the early 1970s I did correspond with one in Canada, a few times, but I think he would also now be long dead. I suspect there may still be a few others in Australia, but I don't know who they are.

The Relationship between Roberts and Turney

It has been suggested that the style of language used by both parties, was “normal for the era”, and does not necessarily reflect personal animosity. However, that is difficult to discern from the words themselves.

For 21st readers who only have their writings to go by, neither party appears as well disposed toward the other, and this is frequently reflected in the aggressive and “unbrotherly” language which they used about each other. There are plenty of “grievous words to stir up anger” and few “soft answers to turn away wrath”. (Prov. 15:1) For me personally, THAT is a bigger issue than their theological differences! From this great distance in time, it is of course impossible to judge motives or feelings. (Matt. 7:1-5) The most that it is prudent to say here, is that if the attitudes which seem to be reflected in their writings were perceived to exist by a less obviously partisan ecclesial world, one would hope that they would be “dealt with”, and BOTH parties held accountable for the pursuit of peace! (Matt. 18:15-17) Jesus sets **very high** standards for this.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (Matt. 5:9)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Rom 12:18)

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17)

The Leather Works and Sir John Turney

www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk/themes/leather.htm

In 1861 two brothers, Edward and John Turney, built a tannery and began to make leather on a site next to the River Trent and the adjacent canal. Turney Brothers, Leather Works, was a landmark on entering or leaving Nottingham for over 100 years. The factory closed in 1981 but the front of the building remains and the land has now been converted into housing accommodation. This year, 2011 would have been their 150th anniversary.

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/monographs/nottingham1927/nottingham19.htm>

Two years later Edward Turney left, and John Turney carried on the business.

In 1861 John and Edward Turney opened a tannery in Nottingham on a site known as Sneinton Island, to provide material for the fancier end of the leather and glove trade. The tannery prospered with John Turney becoming the sole proprietor as Chairman and Managing Director. He was a member of Nottingham Corporation for 46 years, acting as Sheriff in 1878, then Alderman and in 1886-8 Lord Mayor. He also served as a justice of the peace. He became the chairman of a number of other companies, including Raleigh (Mellors 1924 343-4). Until he moved to Gedling House in 1907 he had lived at a house called Springfield in Alexandra Park, Mapperley, a neo-Elizabethan house designed by Thomas Chambers Hine in 1857, one of Nottingham's most distinguished nineteenth century architects (Brand n.d..16).

The name of John Turney appears several times in back issues of the Christadelphian Magazine, but most of these would refer to his father and/or nephew. There is no confirmation that he was a baptised member. The only positive reference to Sir John in the Christadelphian Magazine, is in 1902 page 140, where he is recorded as attending the funeral of his sister, Mary Randles

THE NAZARENE FELLOWSHIP- BOOKS AND ARTICLES

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.” (Prov. 18:13)

If you want to know more about the Nazarene Fellowship's teachings, you will have to read it for yourself.

They have a Web Site which has a good selection of their writings online. There is also a selection of other printed material which they will post on request, free of charge.

Their Web Site is at:

<http://www.thenazarenefellowship.co.uk/>

If you have additional information, or want to suggest corrections, send email to - amaxwell@pacific.net.au

Continued from previous Circular Letter...

VERITAS AND HIS FRIENDS.

It was hardly possible but that Dubitas, who had been closely scanning John 3:13 in the new light which Veritas had thrown upon it, should, when his eyes were at liberty, fall upon the first chapter containing the discussion of “the word.”

He waited patiently till Pietas had subsided into reflection, which he usually did after a few ineffectual struggles with the exposition of Veritas, and then drew attention to the opening words of John’s testimony.

“Yes,” said Veritas, “if you will bear in mind the Scripture representation of this “word,” scattered up and down the book, you will have no difficulty with this verse, nor in seeing that Jesus was not in any partnership of Deity. But let me ask, first, what is a word, in the general sense of the term?”

The quiet and unobtrusive Mentor replied to this question by saying that a “word” was a written or spoken symbol of our thought.

“Yes,” said Veritas;” it is that which makes (for purposes of communion) thought vocal or visible. Now, with this in our mind, let us see what the Scriptures have to say about ‘the word of God.’”

Veritas turned to 1 Sam. 3:21, and read, “And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of th Lord.” “I need not tell you,” said Veritas, “that this ‘word of the Lord’ was that which was the source of all revelation and instruction to all the prophets; the oft-repeated expressions. ‘And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying’ - will be well in your memory. Now the question is whether this ‘word’ which revealed God to man, was ‘the son,’ or whether it was the spirit of God?”

Pietas broke in by saying that it was that which “was made flesh.”

“True; but not too fast,” answered Veritas; “it does not say, the son of God was made flesh, it says the ‘word,’ and now we are enquiring whether this ‘word’ was what you call ‘God, the son,’ or what the Scripture speaks of as the ‘spirit’ of God. That it was not the son, is proved by Hebrews 1:1, where God, having spoken to us by his son, is restricted to ‘these last days.’ This passage proves that God did not speak ‘in time past’ by his son, and so the son was not what the Scripture intends by the ‘word’ of God.”

Dnbitas looked baffled.

“Now we are told that the spirit which was in Christ ‘without measure,’ and which constituted him the Christ, and made him the light of men, was the spirit which rested on the prophets of old, communicating to them the mind of God. In 1 Peter 1:11, this spirit (which is called the spirit of Christ, because it was the very same spirit that made Christ what he was) is said to be ‘in’ the prophets. We are expressly told (2 Ephesians 1:21) that the prophets spake ‘moved by holy spirit.’ “

“Then, do you understand,” asked Pietas, “that John is here speaking of holy spirit when he makes such frequent mention of the ‘word?’“

“Yes ; the ‘ word’ is that which reveals the father, just as to us a word is a symbol or expression of thought; now that which reveals the father is every where spoken of as the ‘spirit’ of God, which invested the prophets in measure and the son of God ‘without measure.’“

“Then you make Jesus to be the spirit of God,” said Dubitas, evidently hard-up for an observation.

“I make Jesus, when he was Christed by the spirit, to be the human embodiment of the divine power, wisdom, and grace; so that he could truly say to Philip, He that hath seen me hath seen the father’.”

Dubitas lightly flung away the book.

“Nay, nay;” said Veritas, warmly, “fling away your old ideas and accept the teaching of the book. What is it that offends you?”

“Offended?” replied Dubitas, mistaking his friend’s meaning. “Not I, mystified, old fellow; mystified. Who could be offended with you? I like” (with a tone of unusual sincerity) “to look at your earnest eyes and hear your voice tremble now and then, as you plead for what you think true, but I can’t understand you, much less believe with you.”

“Well, can you understand the orthodox contention, which makes Jesus to exist as a Christ before he is born ; which makes an office into a person, and a purpose into an accomplished fact; which now amalgamates its ‘trinity’ and then divides it; which gives the ‘personal’ name of son to two ‘natures,’ but affirms there is but one person; which says the ‘son of God’ was one person, existing before Jesus was born, and that another person, the ‘son of man’ began to exist when Jesus was born, but that the union of these produced but one person: is this the kind of thing you can understand?”

“It is all a hopeless muddle to me,” said Dubitas

“But is it the same hopeless muddle to say that the spirit of God, which is the personal power of God the father, was in the man Jesus, who became thereby the Christ, and that this spirit which became flesh, was the ‘word’ spoken of by John ?”

“I cannot understand spirit being made flesh or the divine being embodied in the human,” was the reply.

“You may not be able to comprehend the process” answered Veritas, “but there is nothing incredible in the fact; nothing incredible, I mean, arising from the fact contradicting that which you already know. The facts of nature elude your understanding, as Christ pointed out to Nicodemus, but that argues nothing against them; they are not therefore incredible. You cannot understand how vitality lays hold of dead things and transmutes them into living. If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how will ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?”

“But I can verify the earthly things, whereas I cannot verify what you call heavenly things,” Dubitas remarked.

“Can you not?” asked Veritas. “Does not Christ stand before you to be verified? You said something a little while ago about your reverence for his character: what was it that created this reverence? A myth; a fictitious story, or a wondrous life that has filled the centuries with its aroma? What is ‘verification,’ pray, but the assigning of some seen result to an adequate producing cause?”

“Yes; that would be sound verification, I admit.”

“Well, then, is it not more natural and easy to explain the Christ by a divine spirit resting upon him or dwelling in him, than by assuming that he had no more connection with God than you or I have?”

“As a hypothesis, I admit it might be easier,” said Dubitas, “but a faith such as yours requires something more than a hypothesis to rest upon?” “Yes,” said Veritas, “but remember that this hypothesis does not stand alone, but fits in with many others until a whole circle is completed, which circle becomes more than a hypothesis, even a belt of strong reason, which gives unyielding support to faith.”

Here Pietas entered again into the conversation by asking how it was, if the ‘word’ were the spirit of God, that it could be written as in verse 1, “and the word was with God,” and again in verse 2, “the same was in the beginning with God.” “This,” said he, “looks very much like the idea of co-partnership.” “Remember,” said Veritas, “though I have said the ‘word’ here is the spirit, I am not saying it would be suitable to substitute ‘spirit’ for ‘word,’ and it is only by such substitution that your difficulty exists. In this verse, though the underlying and, indeed, pervading idea of ‘word’ is ‘spirit,’ it is as a revealing spirit that it becomes truly the ‘word.’ A word is a sound, but it only becomes a word as it is an expression of thought; so the spirit is the ‘word,’ but it only becomes the ‘word’ as it contains (whether spoken or on the divine lip) a revelation of God. Now it is to this fact of revelation that the expression glances, when it says, ‘the word was with God.’ The revelation, as a thought or a purpose, or a mystery of his will (his good pleasure purposed in himself), was with God from the beginning, as several testimonies will prove. So that it is not as abstract spirit that the ‘word’ is said to have been ‘with God,’ but as charged with a revelation, holding and hiding a purpose, which purpose was with him from the beginning.

“THEN, I understand you to believe,” said Pietas, “that Jesus was constituted God to us, though you do not think he was God by nature?”

“Yes; ‘God manifest in the flesh,’ by virtue of the spirit of the Father resting upon him.” Mentor observed that the only fault he found with this view was, that it shewed too much of an effort to put into the exactness of a formulated definition, what was the unfathomable consciousness of a great and good man.

“But that ‘consciousness’ must have had some explanation, must it not?” asked Veritas.

“Oh, no doubt,” replied Mentor; “but who can tell how God manifested himself in Jesus? He may have manifested himself in others besides Jesus; in fact, I am inclined to think that in all great religious movements there have been men who have been the media of a divine communication to mankind.”

“I used to think so myself, once,” said Veritas, “but I have since changed my mind. I admit (to go back to the point) that it would be useless to speculate how God manifested himself (some of my inquisitive friends err in this direction, I know, going to the length of indecency in their babblings); but this does not make it improper for us to take what is written on the question, especially as it hangs together so well.”

“I must say,” said Pietas, “that I admire your habit of rigidly confining yourself to what is written. I admit that most of us are guilty of eking the thing out, in the course of which we invent and introduce a good deal.”

“I am glad to hear you make that admission,” Veritas replied. “Well, then, if we are permitted to take what is written, we shall believe that in some real sense the Father dwelt in the man Jesus by his spirit, which constituted him the Christ, and which made it that it could be written, ‘All are-yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is GOD’S’ (1 Corinthians 3:22); and in another place, ‘The head of the woman is the man; and the HEAD of Christ is GOD’ (11:3).

“Your teaching simplifies the matter very much,” said Pietas, as he stroked his beard; “but, dear me, how can the clergy and learned men have gone astray through all the centuries on these things? And why has providence permitted sincere and truth-loving men to be misled so?”

“We have already talked of this, you remember, last night,” said Veritas, “and I doubt whether it would be wise in me to push my views any further on that point. I will just remind you that the Scriptures foretell the very fact which seems so incredible to you; also, that the gross perversions of theology are not the findings of a free, present-day investigation, but things which had their origin in an age when interpretation was nowhere; when the truth was living in adultery with philosophy; when the greatest nonsense that ever caused laughter to hold both its sides was being written by the sages of the ‘church,’ that these perversions have been embalmed and worshipped through centuries of ignorant tradition, and that now men generally fear to touch them; and, lastly, there is not a single error but what, at one time or another, has been protested against, and exposed with as much learning as has ever been displayed in support of it. As for your ‘sincere and truth-loving men’ whom providence permits to be misled, I confess that (present company always excepted) I don’t believe the article is often to be found. We are a bedevilled race; passion sits upon us like fate; and if a solitary instance can be found of a heroic heart, willing, prepared to bleed out its life upon a cross rather than forsake the truth, that man is known throughout a world, and is quoted for evermore; ‘he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man.’”

The words were spoken with that strong, low tone of conviction which always most successfully leaves impression on the mind. The speaker was beginning again, when, observing the late hour (it was far into the night) he, and then the others rose, and after a renewed invitation to meet again on the following evening, they parted.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOD.

THE BIBLE.

The Bible is the most unique book in the whole world, the sale of which reduces the number of all others to insignificant proportions: its claim being that God is its Author.

Jesus, agreed by the majority as being the greatest man that ever lived and who is the central theme of the New Testament, confirmed the writings of the Old Testament, both by the events which transpired, and also by word of mouth. In prayer to His Father He said, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8), and those words He testified as being spirit and life (John 6:63). "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me" (John 7:16). During His ministry He endorsed the words of Moses, saying, "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me, but ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:45,46).

There are many such passages confirming Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Men of faith and belief were amazed and marvelled at the gracious words which fell from His lips, which caused them to exclaim, "never man spake like this man", and although questioned by crafty and cunning enemies in order to trap and convict Him by His words, His answers by their supreme wisdom always left them speechless. David could say, "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy Name" (Psalm. 153:2). Peter informs us "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Paul adds, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and the words "Thus saith the Lord" are a frequent repetition of its writers.

Considering the apostles were unlearned men, drawn to their Redeemer from their humble walks of life, and simple trades, fishermen, etc., and observing the wisdom which they recorded, are we in any position to doubt that they were Godly inspired? Can we, with all our present day learning and education of the various sciences, find, any fault with their writings? No other book exists, or can even be compared with the Bible, the writings of which by different persons spreading over hundreds of years, nay, thousands, harmonise and inform us of God's plan with the earth and man upon it. If this was not written, as it were, by the finger of God, then discrepancies would be both obvious and numerous. No other book has had so many books written about it - so marvellous and supreme are its contents, and the wisdom contained therein is inexhaustible, more than sufficient for a lifetime study. No other book reveals to us such high moral standards, whilst at the same time informing us of the debasing and corrupt acts of which man is capable of committing.

It furnishes us with the only reasonable explanation of the creation of man, which is opposed to the blind chance of the Evolution theory. It informs us that there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds, and this fact cannot be denied or altered by the theory of Transmutation of the species. The result of Cross Breeding between the horse and the ass produces the mule, and then we can go no further because of the sterility of such an offspring. Dr. Etheridge, the famous fossilologist of the British Museum, one of the highest authorities in the world, said, "nine-tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation, and wholly unsupported by facts. In all this great museum there is not one particle of evidence of the transmutation of the Species." Professor Virchow, of Berlin, a naturalist of world wide repute, said, "the attempt to find the transition from animal to man, has ended in total failure. The middle link has never been found and never will be. It cannot be proved by science that man ever descended from the ape or any other animal".

Such extracts of famous notabilities could be multiplied: suffice it to endorse their conclusions by the mention of the revelation concerning the wicked falsity of the 'manufactured' teeth of the Piltdown Skull.

The Patriarch David realised he was fearfully and wonderfully made (see also Psalm 159:14), and he knew that if God was to withdraw His Spirit and His Breath all flesh would perish and return again to the dust (Job 34:14,15). There is no denying that to this end man proceeds and finishes; is it so very foolish to believe that from such he was originally formed?

The evolution theory eliminates design, mind, and God, and deceives the simple with such phrases as "natural selection". The man of faith is satisfied with God's Word which reveals that "God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (or creature)

(Gen. 2:7). “For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent”. “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:19-21).

This same Word which was made flesh in the person of Christ could say, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” (Luke 10:21).

Design is one of the most prominent features of the Bible, and we cannot have design without a designer. “For Adam was first formed and then Eve” (1 Timothy 2:13). “Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed, it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Romans 9:20,21).

Reader, consider the wonderful workmanship of the brain, which can enlighten us to good or evil; think of the delicate mechanism of the eye, which can distinguish colour, focus on objects near or far, has a lid which wipes and closes it in sleep; ask yourself: have these things developed, through the countless ages from blind chance, or rather, do they not cry out for a designer? Consider the wonderful properties of a seed in plant, animal, insect, human, or any other life; a potential reproduction of its kind; ask yourself: is not the statement contained within God’s Word both simple and true, “so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them” (Genesis 1:27). “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Within a tiny seed lies the mystery of the potential life of its kind, a tiny thing, but a living miracle, beyond the power of the cleverest of men to create or destroy; in fact, man with all his wisdom can neither create nor destroy one single thing; “for the earth bringeth forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” (Mark 4:28). “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all” (Ecclesiastes, 11:5).

As the apostle Paul asked King Agrippa, “why should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). If, as we sincerely believe, God created Adam from the dust of the ground why, indeed, should it be thought a thing incredible that He should raise the dead? Man, generally, is of a very doubtful mind and apt to disbelieve without any actual demonstration of power which he can behold with the eye - such demonstration of power he fails to see, because of the familiarity and ready acceptance of the everyday things that are part of the one life he has ever known. Each morsel of bread that enters his mouth, by reason of daily habit, does so without a thought about the miraculous grain of wheat from whence it came - just so with the very atmosphere which we inhale without, which we should very soon cease to exist.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

In such like things, which are beyond the wisdom of man, the man of faith discerns the power of God, “for the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Romans 1:20). “The Heavens declare the glory of, God and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

Reader, would God have any reason to be pleased with man if he had, at creation, been endowed with infinite wisdom to enable him to understand and accomplish all things? If this had been so, then there would have been no need of faith. Is it not rather perceived that we should live, by God’s wisdom, in a state where faith is essential, in order to render to Him a loving obedience which shows by its actions that He is supreme? “Those that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him”. (Hebrews 11:5). “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb 11:6).

This faith is increased and strengthened from the only source - the Bible, His Word, which meets the need of all classes, milk for the babes, and meat for the strong. The more it is studied, like nature, the more wonderful and beautiful it becomes, and despite the many attacks and efforts to ridicule it by some, throughout

the ages, it still stands impregnable. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 24:25). "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and making it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10,11).

No attempt by man can either hurry or hinder the Word of God. Time is a factor which is similar to His attributes, infinite, and the many prophecies recorded and come to pass over hundreds of years are so convincing that no room for doubt is left in the mind of the serious thinker that this Word is Divine.

Consider the Jews, who were the chosen people of God, of whom Paul says that "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1); read the whole chapter of Deuteronomy 28, where they are promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience: and then observe the fruits they have reaped for their folly. "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies, thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:25); they would be scattered to the four winds of heaven; they would be an astonishment, and a proverb, and a byword among the nations.

How true! What country can we, within reason, select and say: No Jew will be found here? "The Wandering Jew" is, no doubt, a title which is in harmony with his history. How is it that he, despite his dispersion into many countries, after many generations, still retains his nationality, whilst emigrants from other countries soon become absorbed into the nationality of those amongst whom they have settled? Surely once again the hand of God is visible to him who walks by the eye of faith, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11).

What nation has suffered like the Jews and still remain a prosperous people? A full end of the Jew has not, and never will be made, although millions suffered torture and death in the gas chambers of Hitler during the war, whose policy, like so many others before him, was to exterminate the Jew whom he hated and for whom he had no mercy; see how futile was his fanatical dream - it was only instrumental in furthering the Divine plan. Millions of Jews were displaced by the upheaval of the last war, many of which have found their way back to the land of their Fathers.

"The most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; His ways in comparison with ours are as the heavens are higher than the earth. Ignorance regarding His Word only results in the furtherance of His purpose. "Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say He that scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jeremiah 3:10).

Many are the prophecies informing us of a regathering; "therefore say, thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezekiel 11:17).

The eye of the Lord has been upon them throughout the ages - could these prophecies reside within the Bible if its Author was not Divine? Here, in our day and before our very eyes, we have a proclaimed nation of Israel. Reader, we are also told in the same Book, that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, evidence that the persecution of the Jew and the subjugation of his land have reached an end. "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Luke 21:31-33).

Seeing that the former prophecies regarding the Jewish race are true to the very letter, is there any sensible reason why these words of Jesus should not be so? Consider also the power and pomp of that flourishing kingdom of Babylon, and the use that God in His providence had made of it. "Babylon hath been a golden cup, a rich and glorious empire, a golden city" (Isaiah 14:4); a head of gold (Daniel 2:58), filled with all good things

as a cup with wine, she had been a golden cup in the Lord's hand. He had filled and favoured her with blessings. He had made the earth drunk with this cup; she also was God's battle axe when the prophet Jeremiah was told to utter these words: "Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, and without an inhabitant" (Jeremiah 51:37).

What of Babylon today? Nothing but sand covered ruins. Could such a thing be prophesied thousands of years ago and still remain true today, unless, yes, unless God had directed it? Look up the history on Babylon and see what has been written on her downfall - you will be amazed as to its accuracy.

In the time of Ezekiel Tyre was a rich and flourishing maritime power - this prophet wrote of her: "it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 26:5). Today it is a fisherman's colony, where nets are spread. Ezekiel could not have spoken so accurately unless God had informed him - the present time furnishes us with the truth of God's Word.

Egypt in the days of her glory was no less powerful than Babylon, but, unlike Babylon, still exists as a nation. It was prophesied regarding her: "it shall be the basest of the kingdoms" (Ezekiel 29:15); "there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt" (Ezekiel (30:13), "the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away" (Zechariah 10:11).

This, again, is remarkably true; at the present time Egypt has no king, and the last one was not an Egyptian. Volumes could be written on many other prophecies, equally convincing, that the truth thereof proves the source to be God's Word - but perhaps none so important as those which foretold, and also foretell, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, both at the first and second advents, to the earth. "In the volume of the Book it is written of me" (Psalm 40:7) (Hebrews 10:7).

The apostle Paul could say, "but those things which God before hath shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled" (Acts 3:18)

Many are the prophecies regarding the Lord Jesus Christ; He was to be the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15). "When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18). He was to be a Jew (Genesis 12:3-7), fulfilled (Galatians 3:16). His mother was to be a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), fulfilled (Matthew 1:18-23); His birthplace, (Micah 5: 2), fulfilled (Matthew. 2:5-6). He was to be rejected of Israel (Isaiah 53:3), fulfilled (John 19:15). He was to suffer a violent death (Daniel 9:26), fulfilled (Matt. 27:55). His hands and feet were to be pierced (Psalm 22:16), fulfilled (23:33), and the reason for His death (Isaiah 53:5), was fulfilled (Galatians 3:13).

Thousands of years before, at the institution of the Passover, a lamb was killed and eaten in each Israelitish household, and the command was that a bone thereof was not to be broken - this being just prior to the release of the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians. When the Lord Jesus Christ was made manifest to Israel, John the Baptist spoke of Him in these words: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:56). Although the legs of the malefactors which were crucified, one on either side of Jesus, were broken before being removed from their respective crosses, when the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they "brake not His legs" - this being just prior to the release of the spiritual Israelites from the bondage of sin. Could such harmony and foreshadowing have come to pass by any human element? Or does not each prediction bear the Divine stamp?

Considering that these prophecies have been fulfilled to the very letter, is there any reason to doubt those which appertain to the future? Some of these inform us that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again to the earth to establish the Kingdom of God. Christ Himself declared: "I will come again" (John 14:5). The angels who appeared to the disciples as they witnessed the ascension of Jesus said, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). His own words, again, are "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His Glory" (Matthew 25:31). Yes, this throne of glory is none other than the throne of His Father David, which the Lord God shall give to Him, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Lute 1:32-33).

This coming reign of Christ to execute judgment and justice in the earth, contradicts the popular mistaken belief of a reign in heaven; His rule is to be in the midst of His enemies (Psalm 110:2). Could we imagine

Christ having enemies in heaven? The Bible teaches no such thing as heaven-going, but rather “blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5).

When God has condescended to reveal to men by His Word those things which concern eternal life, then the infallible advice is: read the Scriptures daily. We, like Paul, “commend you to God and to the Word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those that are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“The Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15). “Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them” (1 Timothy 4:15).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Brother T. Gettliffe.

Genesis Chapter 2.

“And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul”.

We of Nazarene Fellowship believe this statement of Scripture, no more no less, and all our literature is in harmony with it.

Adam was created with the natural impulses to obey or disobey his Creator - to do good or evil. He belonged to the animal creation, flesh and blood, which in itself is corruptible, which means capable of death. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:50 tells us, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” Here Paul shows that man, apart from any given law of God, was not created with the present capabilities to live for ever; flesh with blood flowing through the veins was never intended by God to do so.

Paul’s statement applied to Adam when created, i.e. before he was placed under law. In fact, it would appear very sound reasoning to say that God created Adam in a state capable of death, because it was absolutely necessary for the purpose of probation. Adam certainly could not have been put to the test without the free will and capabilities to obey or to disobey, to please or displease His Creator, leaving God with the prerogative, the right to carry out the sentence or to forgive.

God declared, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die”, so are we to believe that God was anything else but disappointed in Adam’s failure to comply with His wishes? “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life”. This could only mean one thing: that Adam was forgiven, and that he did not pay the price or penalty for his sin.

What Paul expresses in the First of Corinthians is no new doctrine but one that is proved in Genesis and is the reason for the words of John in Revelation 13:8, “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world” for was not the typical lamb slain by God instead of Adam, proving beyond all doubt that man could have, and would have been slain but for the great love, mercy and forgiveness of God.

The lamb slain in Eden, unlike Adam, was free from any law, yet bodily was of the same make-up, so it would have been foolish to suggest that the lamb or any other part of the animal creation would have lived for ever apart from the sin of Adam. The Bible teaches the opposite is the case. Blood is the vehicle of life for a corruptible creation, not merely of man but of the whole animal creation. This doctrine is emphasised throughout the Old Testament and confirmed in the New.

Jesus taught that the New Creation would be flesh and bone energised by Spirit without blood, and without the need for it. Man, however, in his created state, cannot live without blood; if he loses it he dies and

corruption sets in, and unless during his lifetime he has been enlightened by God and been redeemed by Christ and reconciled, he will never know what it is to really live.

There is significance in the fact that at the crucifixion of Jesus He lost His blood when the Roman soldier pierced His side and out gushed blood and water. Did He have need of it again? Certainly not. Yet according to the beliefs of some Jesus was raised in a mortal state, and, whether they realise it or not, “mortal” is a legal state of being subject to death. This is certainly not in harmony with Scripture. He could not give His life for the sheep and receive the same back again. Read verse 14 of Hebrews, chapter 2, and you will see that He was made flesh and blood so that He could, although obedient, be put to death - “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ...”

Would you say Adam was created any different, or would you say that the same impulses were not felt by them both, the difference being that Adam failed whereas Christ overcame? It may be suggested that Christ had no partner to tempt Him, but we should be wrong, for the disciples will constitute His bride and future wife, yet Peter tempted or tried Him and received the rebuke: “Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God but of men”.

None of us with a knowledge of Scripture would deny the importance that is placed on blood through out the Old Testament Scriptures. What is the reason for it? Is it not that which I previously stated, that it is the vehicle of life? It carries the life through the body of a corruptible being, which means one that is capable of dying, though not necessarily one who is subject to the law of sin and death, for such was the position of Adam before he transgressed, under no law but never intended to be a finished creature, that is, perfection was something he must attain to and receive through probation. Never does the Scripture teach or imply that man was any different physically before or after he had sinned.

If Adam had received what was his due he would have suffered the violent death which the lamb suffered in his stead. He did not, however, suffer the wages of sin, otherwise Eve would never have given birth to sons and daughters and Creation would have come to an abrupt end as far as man was concerned.

But even though this did not happen, it could not alter the fact that the Law had been broken and that the unborn race in the loins of Adam had been sold under sin.

What did the love of God do under these circumstances? It made provision through the lamb. The shed blood is the emphasis of violent death, whether we like it or not. This is how the lamb died, and also the Son of God whom it foreshadowed and which John declared to be The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

O foolish people - will you die? How could God have saved anyone through a Son if Adam had received what was his due? There would have been nothing left to save; no mother to give birth to a son. Yet some say that Adam received the wages of sin 930 years later when he died a natural death through old age. But they are not consistent in their beliefs, and much less in harmony with the Bible doctrine and it is quite easy to see why they distort the facts in this manner. It is, however, like a person who has told a lie and is forced to tell a hundred more to make his lie ring true. They have to keep Adam alive long enough to produce the human race through sons and daughters. Ask them, if Adam was forgiven and they say, “we cannot be certain; he will be raised from the dead and appear before the judgment seat of Christ before he knows.” What bunkum! Even the Jehovah’s Witnesses are more consistent in their doctrines and beliefs than this; they teach that Adam died without hope, which although not according to Scripture, is necessitated by their other beliefs. Even Dr. Thomas, whom Christadelphians claim as their originator, admits that Adam, if he had not sinned, was not created in a physical state that could live for ever without a change. He agrees in his writings that Adam was created flesh and blood, with the same impulses within him to obey or disobey the Divine Law, the same impulses that now govern our lives and which are influenced, one way or the other, by the extent of our knowledge of God’s laws and how we respond to them.

Dr. Thomas, like ourselves, arrived at this conclusion - though I know later on in his life he somewhat modified it to his own disadvantage – through logical deductions from the Scriptures by reasoning things out and comparing Scripture with Scripture, and we are ready to accept them as such though they are not found

written in black and white word for word. Yet because we make similar deductions by the same method, which prove to be in harmony with all other doctrine of Scripture, we are criticised for doing so.

Christ died for us, the just for the unjust. Did He not die in our stead? Did He not die the judicial death like the type before Him, the lamb slain in Eden - the type of Him who was slain from the foundation of the world? Who would rather speak of Him as a representative and so place Him under the same condemnation as those He came to save?

Moses represented the children of Israel; but when they worshipped the golden calf Moses, although their representative, could not, although he offered, become an effective ransom for them, even had he not sinned. But R. Roberts, said, "had there been a Jew living, that is apart from Christ who could have kept the law he could have done what Christ did." The Scriptures prove this theory wrong. How can a man who is already sold under sin give something that does not belong to him as a ransom for others, even if he does live a life without sin? He has still been sold under sin from birth because he received life passed down from Adam. Robert Roberts did not see this distinction for he thought Jesus was a son of Adam as well as a Son of God - but no man ever had two fathers!

Moses had nothing to offer as a ransom for the children of Israel, for had he died or his request to be blotted out of the Book of Life on their account been carried out, it could not have saved anyone and besides, they being faithless would have never received eternal life. God, however, had made arrangement for Moses because he was a faithful servant, through the prefigured judicial death of Christ, the Lamb of God without spot and without blemish, one who was not like him sold under sin.

Christ, unlike Moses, was born of the Holy Spirit; He was the Son of God, not of Adam and as such was undefiled, separate from sinners, and did not come into the same condemnation as those He came to save, as some would have us believe. He was in the unique position of being able to make the supreme sacrifice for all time, the anti-typical Lamb of which we have referred and of which John spoke.

While we are repulsed by "violent death" surely the Old Testament Scriptures are emphatic in showing that this, and this alone, is the way of Reconciliation and Salvation. Nothing could be clearer than this, yet the blood spattered door posts and lintels in Egypt meant little to the faithless generation who fell in the wilderness without seeing the Promised Land.

Is it not a fact that most believe that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and that in order for this blood to be shed life has to be given? It is, in fact, the giving of life that is meant in Scripture terms by the shedding of blood; this is proved by the words in Leviticus 17:13-14, where it plainly declared that the blood is the life of all flesh. Why is this so? Because the blood conveys oxygen throughout the body by means of the heart, thereby maintaining life.

The punishment for sin is the sudden bringing to an end of the individual who has sinned, and in the terms of Scripture the shedding of blood without which the animal creation cannot live - not a natural death through diseased organs or old age or even accident, though in the latter case the result would be similar and the suffering practically the same. One must, therefore, realise that as Adam died from natural causes he did not suffer the penalty for sin; neither is it anywhere taught in Scripture that natural death is the wages for sin - the opposite is the case.

Adam was therefore, under these circumstances bound to have received forgiveness, the lamb being a substitute for him; if this were not so, one must admit creation of man would have come to an abrupt end. Here, then, comes the word which again seem very distasteful to some - "substitution". Christ died the death which was Adam's due. Why could not Adam have suffered it himself? He could have done but if Adam had paid the penalty we should not be here writing or talking about it - herein lies the mercy and unending love of God, something which we fail to fully understand or appreciate as we ought. Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us: we have, therefore, been reconciled unto God, redeemed by His blood. What does this expression mean? It means that the debt has been paid and sin is no longer imputed to us.

Adam confessed that he had partaken of the tree. Are we to believe that God was any different in His attitude toward Adam than He is today? If we confess our sins God is righteous and just to forgive us; yet we

find there are those who teach something altogether different when speaking of Adam. They do not even believe that we are already redeemed, and that we are now awaiting final deliverance from the power of the grave. Read Psalm 72:14 and see if redemption is not present rather than future; “precious shall their blood be in His sight” and Psalm 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” –

Again in Revelation 14:13 and many others but “praise the Lord all ye nations, praise Him all ye people for His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever”. (Psalm 117).

Brother Edward Parry

Headline News of Israeli Post for July 1st 2013

Two flags are displayed during Knesset caucus on ending the Israeli-Arab conflict

For many years those who have been watching for the signs of Jesus return were looking for the fulfillment of Paul’s prophecy in 1 Thessalonians 5: - “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them...”. Because this ‘Peace and safety cry’ did not seem possible it was then thought to be a cry for peace and safety rather than a cry of peace and safety.

While there will be no peace and safety in the world we believe this prophecy applies strictly to the nation of Israel who have been threatened with being wiped of the face of the world by their Muslim neighbours.

This latest round of talks between Israelis and Arabs encouraged and promoted by the USA seems to be taking on a different note to previous efforts in their determination to find a lasting solution.

The Arab world is so divided that it seems possible, even likely, for this prophecy to be fulfilled with Israel and her immediate neighbours agreeing to terms of lasting peace, and this followed by the more extreme elements of Islam waging an attack on Israel.

Here is Paul’s 5th Chapter to the 1 Thessalonians, verses 1 to 11 :-

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”