

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 272

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"Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create:
for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy." Isaiah 65.

Editorial

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

It is generally accepted that the Bible we have today was completed by A.D. 96 with the writing of the Book of Revelation which Jesus gave to the Apostle John while he was held prisoner on the Isle of Patmos.

Many years before this the Apostle Paul, towards the end of his ministry warned, "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:25 to 29.)

To what was the Apostle referring when he said "grievous wolves shall enter in not sparing the flock"? History has given us the answer for during the next three or four hundred years corrupt teachings set in by way of various church doctrines until the Gospel was hardly recognisable. No longer was the love of Jesus proclaimed but man's greed and selfishness endeavoured to make monetary gain from preaching their version of salvation. The Church teachings became mixed with pagan beliefs and pagan festivals were also introduced. Large church buildings were established, ministers were well paid and congregations warned of fearful things if they failed to do what the ministers said. The first two commandments – 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' – were overlooked and the Church came first. Within the Church administration arguments and disagreements proliferated and were resolved by the formulation of creeds based on a majority decisions which were not necessarily based on Bible teachings. It was not until the fourth century that the decision was made to accept the Trinity doctrine but this decision was won by a very small majority.

The Trinity - God the Father, God the Son and God Ghost - was explained as three distinct persons forming one Godhead. This was declared a mystery as it made little sense. Again the teaching that Mary was the Mother of God also makes little or no sense. Eternal torment in Hell is another (one has to be alive to suffer torment, not dead), while heaven going at death for righteous souls is unknown in the Bible. The idea

of a 'fallen angel' becoming the Supernatural Devil is still widely held but this belief requires that God can take immortality away from immortal beings. And so the list of false doctrines grew.

It is not my purpose here to say more regarding these claims but I wish to refer to positive teachings which we find in the Gospel as taught by Jesus and His Apostles.

Here, then, is what we believe to be true: -

We believe that God is the creator and designer of the universe, and that He cares about the welfare of humankind.

We believe that God gave the Old Testament Scriptures to the Israelites through Moses and the Prophets and the New Testament Scriptures to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

We believe the Bible to be the only source of knowledge of God's will and purpose with the earth; of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We believe Jesus will return to set up His Kingdom on the earth to rule the world from Jerusalem.

We believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Saviour; miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem; He grew up in Nazareth, and at about 30 years of age He began His ministry of preaching and healing.

He was executed by crucifixion by the highest religious authority, the Sanhedrin; and the highest civil authority, the Roman governor representing the Emperor. After the crucifixion He remained in the tomb until the third day when He was raised to eternal life in an incorruptible body.

We do not believe that Jesus existed before His conception and birth, nor that He became God incarnate nor that He is the second person of the so-called triune godhead. We reject emphatically the trinity doctrine, which was fabricated in the third century AD., and adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in the fourth century by a narrow margin of votes.

God's word existed in the beginning, then in the Apostle John's time God's Word was incarnate in the Jewish man Jesus, and the world beheld His glory. Though He was God's only-begotten Son, He did not have divine nature, but normal human nature during His earthly ministry.

We believe that the death of Jesus was a voluntary substitution for Adam and therefore for us as Adam's descendants. In other words Jesus voluntarily paid the penalty of inflicted death which passed upon Adam for eating the forbidden fruit, but which God remitted so that Adam could live out his life. This penalty/debt, in due time, would be paid by God's sinless Son. We do not believe that Jesus' death was a punishment inflicted on Him by God so that we might be forgiven: and we reject categorically that Jesus death was necessary for His own salvation.

We believe that baptism must be by total immersion when we come to a belief in Jesus, and have a desire to make a commitment to Him and His teachings. Baptism is a declaration that we accept Jesus as our Saviour and as we go down into the water, it is a sign that we die to our old worldly way of life, and we emerge from the water to a new life in Jesus.

We believe that the committed Christian should be involved in prayer, bible study, righteous living, and witnessing wherever possible; always ready to give a reason for the hope within us.

We feel totally unable to concur with the theological concepts of popular churches, that we have immortal souls that after death go to a paradise in heaven beyond the skies; that there is a fiery hell where sinners will suffer eternal torment; that baptism is valid by sprinkling or pouring on babies or young children or unbelievers.

While we do not consider this to be our Creed, it is nevertheless an outline of our present beliefs which we have always been prepared to change if ever we were to see an error in them or if ever we were shown a better understanding.

Above all, let us follow Jesus example when He said “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

We pray God’s blessing may be with all our readers as we await the return of Jesus to establish His rule over all the earth.

Love to all in Jesus Name, Russell.

A thought-provoking explanation of Matthew 11:11 and worthy of attention.

Greater than John The Baptist

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

This statement contained in Matthew 11:11, seems to be but badly understood by many otherwise well acquainted with the teachings of the Spirit.

I do not attach the same importance to a proper solution of this passage as I would do to having a correct appreciation of the Nature and Mission of the Christ, or to being well instructed in the doctrine of the Resurrection, or the like.

Nevertheless, as “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is useful” in some particular way, I believe it is impossible for the Scripture student to derive the proper benefit from a passage he does not comprehend the meaning of, and thus, I shall briefly state what I believe to be the proper solution to the passage referred to.

Jesus says, “Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he”

The most popular idea seems to be that the least in the Kingdom will be immortals, and as John was then but mortal, this would account for the difference. But this does not seem good reasoning. The passage seems to refer to parties then living, and the prophets of bygone years, “He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven IS greater than he.”

In either case, if mortality or immortality was meant at that time or now, everyone alike is mortal; and in the Kingdom every approved one will be alike immortal. Jesus was accrediting all honour to John, but, in so doing He spoke of a greater, and if among those born of women, there has not risen a greater than John, with that one exception, the exception is easily found.

John, being in prison, had sent his disciples to enquire of Jesus if He really was the Christ. Then, as on many other occasions, the answer of Christ was not direct. He gave them certain things to judge from and decide for themselves. Then He addressed Himself to the multitudes to whom He had been preaching the Gospel, some of whom had received it. Not that they were in actual possession of the Kingdom preached; but their acceptance constituted them heirs. But, in general, the people would not give the attention to the message of the great Salvation, and Jesus shows them how they had slighted both Himself and John, and showed their culpability in refusing the greatest that ever appeared in human form.

In Matthew 12:41,42, Jesus says, “the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”

They despised John the Baptist, and also a greater than John the Baptist is here – The Only Begotten Son of God.

But it might be asked, why could He be called the least in the Kingdom of God? I answer, the kingdom was only preached, and accepted or rejected, (not certainly set up); but among the few whom He had specially chosen as some of its aristocracy, He says (Luke 22:25-27), “The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as one that serveth.”

We have the idea well brought out in Philippians 2:7-11 where it is said, “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is, above every name; that at the name of Jesus every, knee shall bow, of those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

John and all the prophets were born of woman and through Adam as their father were heirs of sin and death.

Jesus was also born of a woman but having God as His Father was “without sin,” and although “making Himself of no reputation,” and “becoming obedient unto death,” yet it was through His death that John, or the greatest of the prophets, could attain to life everlasting.

“He (Jesus) was rejected, and despised of men,” yet, although He was the ‘Stone’ rejected by the builders, was nevertheless, the foundation and chief corner stone of the House of God.

Much more might be added, but I think this will be sufficient to shew my meaning.

If anyone thinks he has sufficient reasons for dissent from my theory, these remarks may lead him to give others the benefit of his discovery; in the meantime, and until the contrary is proved, I will believe that the meaning of the passage in plain language would be, “Among them that are born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; and, behold, a greater than John the Baptist is here,” as in the case of verses 41 and 42 of chapter 12 already referred to.

Brother A.H. (From an old Circular Letter – full name not given)

GETHSEMANE

Dear Brethren and Sisters, Loving Greetings in Jesus’ Name.

I wonder how many of us who understand the Scriptures can read this account of our Lord’s suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane without being deeply moved. It seems that this moment was the greatest struggle He had with the flesh, His weakest moment, His greatest trial of faith and, thanks be to God, His greatest victory.

We read in Luke's account that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What a great strain He must have been under! This moment was almost the end of His great struggle against "sin" and the weakness of the flesh.

I think we should meditate much more than we do upon the tremendous responsibilities our Lord and Saviour took upon Himself when He decided to do His Father's will. He was just flesh and blood as we are, and His only source of help was the same as ours, yet He was able to say to His enemies, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" What a wonderful and beautiful thing to say but do we ever consider what a tremendous struggle He must have had to live this sinless life?

When we consider how He was despised and rejected by all whom He came to save and deserted by all His friends in the end, it makes me marvel at His wonderful faith in God. There was no allowance made for Him for the weakness of the flesh as was made for all other human beings, both before and after Him. He must not sin or all is lost!

I doubt whether we can really understand this tremendous responsibility. Is it any wonder that He spent sometimes all night in prayer to God; "watch and pray," He told His disciples, "lest ye enter into temptation." How He depended on prayer in His battle against the flesh!

When we also understand that He knew from the beginning everything that was going to happen to Him, it makes His great faith and will power all the more wonderful. All these things our Lord Jesus took upon Himself that we, and the rest of the world from the creation to the end, "might have life, and have it more abundantly" if they would only believe and accept. How much He had to do and suffer; how little we have to do and suffer!

In the 2nd Corinthians 5:19 we read, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." How wonderfully and beautifully everything fits in! In the first chapter of Hebrews we find great joy and consolation in reading of the great honour God has bestowed on His dear Son for all He went through, when in due time He saw the "travail of His soul," and was satisfied.

Coming back to Gethsemane again, if we turn to Mark 14:33-34 we read how tired and weak He was at this time. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death." There was His desperate prayer to be relieved from the fatal hour, and His immediate recovery to the will of His Father.

Dear Brethren and Sisters, so much is taken for granted that this great trial of our Lord Jesus has become "just another story." Let us make sure that we fully understand what our salvation cost our dear Saviour in blood, sweat, and tears, that our hearts may be lifted up towards our dear Lord who suffered so much that we might have life and have it more abundantly and let us never cease in our grateful thanks and gratitude to our God and His dear Son for their great love and mercy towards us.

With fond Love to all Brethren and Sisters, Your brother in Christ. A. Hodge's.

BIBLE REDEMPTION.

BIBLE redemption is presented to us under three heads or essential points, which must be clearly understood and distinguished before the scheme as a whole can be discerned. These points are - 1st, those to be redeemed; 2nd, the redeemer, and 3rd, the ransom or price.

First, those to be redeemed. Those embraced in the Divine scheme are the descendants of Adam, one and all, himself included; because all, without exception or distinction, were involved in the sin and consequences of one transgression. The consequences of one transgression are defined by the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In the absence of any scheme of redemption, it is manifest that Adam and all his posterity would have returned to, and eternally remained in dust. There was no eye that could pity or power that could save from the just sentence of Almighty power.

The only one that could meet the case of the guilty pair was the Almighty Father Himself. His goodness, power, and wisdom were equal to their circumstances. He therefore devised and resolved upon a plan whereby He could be just, and the Justifier of everyone who accepted of His favour. The evidence of the Father's determination to redeem is found in the statement He made before passing sentence, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." While in making coats of skin to cover them, He illustrated to their senses how He would effect their redemption. The promise given, and the illustration of its fulfilment in covering them with the skins of animals, which He either slew himself or caused to be slain, clearly shews that redemption was not simply a promise, but a promise typically fulfilled. It seems fair, therefore, to conclude that in these transactions the Almighty typically redeemed the human family, so that they henceforth stood before Him as covered from their transgression. He did not any more look upon their nakedness, but upon their coverings, which had been worn by innocent victims, whose blood had been shed for them. The Redeemer, therefore, was none other than He who caused the animals to be slain, and made their skin into coverings for the transgressors of His law.

This brings us to the consideration of the ransom. The typical ransom was the life of a lamb or lambs without blemish or spot. The real or atypical ransom was the Lamb of God, or, as expressed by Peter, in writing to his brethren, "Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." The ransom must be the property of the ransomer or redeemer, otherwise the purchase could not be effected. It believed Jesus, therefore, to be the exclusive property of His Father in the matter of disposing of Him in any way He pleased. That such was the case is demonstrated by the pre-ordaining promise of a son given at first, and by the repeated after amplifications of it, detailing the time, manner, cause, and place of his birth, not one of which could have been either arranged or accomplished by any other being but the Almighty Himself. Jesus was not His own father. He did not preserve Himself from the jealousy of Herod; He did not educate Himself; He did not please Himself nor keep His own interests before His Father's. The ransom being neither a dumb animal, which knew nothing of the reason for which it was put to death, nor silver and gold, but a living, intelligent man, who had during his whole life pleased His Father, He could not be put to death by His Father as an act of justice. No clause in the Mosaic Law, or any other, commanded a son to die simply because his father wished him. Jesus Himself said, I have power to lay down my life. He did not lay down His life reluctantly as a matter of duty, but, as a freewill offering. He delighted to do His Father's will, because He knew that nothing short of His voluntarily giving up of His life could put away sin, or atone for the guilt of the first man. While Jesus had absolute power to allow or prevent men from taking His life from Him, He had no power to raise Himself from the dead. This was an act of favour on the part of the Redeemer similar to the act of His begetting in the womb of Mary. Hence, the Father said to Him on the morning when He raised Him,

"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." These three steps form the three-fold cord by which the Almighty kinsman has perfected His scheme of redemption, viz., His promise of a seed or Son to the woman. His word, or promise, made flesh when a child was born, and His begetting from the dead of this Son, who is consecrated for evermore the only name through whom any son or daughter of Adam can obtain redemption from sin and all its consequences, and become heirs of the eternal life promised before the foundation of the world.

Redemption is a gift. We cannot suppose of a compulsory gift. The Father was not compelled to give a son; neither, after having one, was He compelled to give Him up to death nor, after being dead, was He compelled to raise Him up again. These separate acts of favour have one source – the favour of God. Jesus Christ was not compelled to give Himself up to death for us. He freely gave Himself. Compulsion implies the power to enforce a demand. If the Father had compelled Jesus to give Himself up, or even backed His expressed will with a threat in case of non-compliance, the value of His self-sacrifice would have been destroyed. The act of Jesus, therefore, was a free-will offering. Jesus could neither demand nor compel His Father to raise Him from the dead. To demand is to assert a right. This Jesus could not do, inasmuch as He voluntarily gave up His life for those who deserved to die. While lying in the grave, He lay there in vindication of His Father's honour, and for this voluntary act of submission, God has exalted Him, and given

Him a name which is above every name, that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is the Lord (possessor of the earth, with all its peoples and nations) to the glory of God the Father. From what has been written, it is manifest how God can be just, and also the Justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus as His ransom for the salvation of His sons who have rebelled against Him. He will not compel men to be saved any more than He compelled Jesus to die the just for the unjust, but He wishes the salvation of all, and has given ample evidence of power to do all His good pleasure.

Concerning this matter, the Apostle says “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit – that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The last phrase in this quotation illustrates the perfect character of God’s scheme of redemption. God is reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The world is in trespasses, but God does not impute them. This shows that they have been sacrificially removed, and that all that is necessary on the part of the world is, to know what He has done, and accept of His reconciliation. For He hath made Him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The elliptical phrase “Made Him sin,” has given rise to the idea that Jesus Christ was made sin by being born of a woman. A more unreasonable construction of the Apostle’s words could scarce be conceived. Human nature is not sin; neither is it a sinful thing to be born; and, besides, it was after Jesus had passed with success through trial that he was made sin. This clearly shows that He was made an offering for sin, or a sin-offering, but to have made Him sin in the manner supposed, would have defeated the purpose for which He was born.

Brother William Ellis.

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God,
and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him.
Exodus 15:2

The Need For Baptism

John’s Baptism for the remission of sins

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (John 1:6).

This introduces John the Baptist to us who was baptising in Jordan because there was much water there. Now John’s baptism was the “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” and was for the Jews only; those who were already in covenant relationship with God through the Law of Moses, and many Jews came to John confessing their sins and were baptised by him.

At that time John made a public proclamation to the people, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand”, or, as we read in the Emphatic Diaglott, “Reform! because the Royal Majesty of the Heavens has approached” (Matthew 3:2).

When John saw Jesus coming to him he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water” (John 1:29-31).

But John was hesitant to baptise Jesus “and forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:14,15).

When Jesus submitted to the Baptism of John He had no sins to confess, nor defilement from which to be cleansed, but by it He typified His own death, burial and resurrection, and I believe His baptism was also an act of consecration and dedication prior to His work of preaching the gospel and then taking away the sin of the world by the free-will sacrifice of His own life. Is it too much to draw a parallel or a similarity between the Passover Lamb being set aside three days before the Passover with Jesus' baptism three years before His sacrifice for the sin of the world? - Matthew 26:2. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" - 1 Corinthians 5:7. The sacrificial lamb had the sins of the people laid on it before it was slain. And it was so with Jesus – "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" - Isaiah 53:6.

Ye must be born again

Early in Jesus' preaching, a ruler of the Jews, named Nicodemus, came to Him one night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" - John 3:1.

Here we see Jesus preaching baptism, though it was His disciples who baptised the people. John had said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" - John 3:30 and John 4:1,2 - and it was not long before John was imprisoned and baptised no more.

But let us go on ahead to the time when Jesus had finished preaching to the nation of Israel and when He met with His disciples in the upper room to share the Last Super. But this occasion was different than any other for when super was ended Jesus "took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19). This is the very beginning of the New Testament or New Covenant which replaced the Old Covenant which had been inaugurated for the nation of Israel when they were driven out of Egypt and led by Moses into the wilderness.

A few hours later in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus was praying to His Father the night before He was crucified, He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" - John 17:4. The work which God had given Him was now complete but Jesus saw the need for one supreme work which only He could achieve and this He chose to do – it proved to be the greatest act of self-sacrifice that any man has ever made and only Jesus was in the position to make it - to give His life "a ransom for many." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." - John 15:13, 14.

At the end of the forty days after His resurrection and before His ascension into heaven Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). And so it was that the eleven apostles, no longer disciples but teachers, having all things brought to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said, and having their understanding opened, were renewed and strengthened, and they responded according to their faith.

We now find that the Baptism which the Apostles preached was to be into the death of Jesus (Romans 6:3), which was very different to the baptism preached by John in two important aspects. First, we saw how John's baptism was for those who were already in covenant relationship with God through being under the Law of Moses, but this covenant relationship ended with Jesus crucifixion when the veil in the Temple was miraculously torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). Jesus had fulfilled the Law of Moses and, it being ended, there was no longer a covenant under that Law, nor were any of its rituals and ordinances of any value to those who continued to observe them. From the time of the crucifixion of Jesus there was the New Covenant and all those who will come to God have to come into this new covenant relationship with Him through Jesus Christ by baptism into His death and this new covenant was extended beyond Israel to all the world, to as many as were and are called.

Secondly, when Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" He was speaking of a new life – a spirit life – in the new relationship with Him. "Born of water and of the Spirit." We all received our natural life from our parents or more exactly, from our fathers, for life is passed down from father to offspring. This life has been

passed down throughout all generations from Adam to the entire human race (Malachi 2:10) with the exception of Jesus who was born of a virgin and received His life from His Father and not from Adam. No one ever had two fathers!

There are two distinct words used in the Greek language for 'life' and they are 'psuche' for our natural life passed down from Adam, and this is never used as meaning spirit life; and 'zoe' for the spirit life which leads to eternal life which we receive from God when we are 'born again'. Whenever we read of eternal life throughout the New Testament we find the Greek word 'zoe' is used exclusively. It is unfortunate that this important distinction is lost in the English translation.

And so at baptism we receive a new life – our 'zoe' life, or spirit life. When Jesus said, "I am come that they may have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), he used the term 'zoe' thus showing that we have been given spirit life now, along with our psuche or natural life, and that we might have our spirit life more abundantly at the resurrection, when the faithful receive eternal life and natural life is ended.

Brother Russell Gregory

“THE 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 - or rendered powerless - that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans iv. 6. What is this body of sin; is it our natural body of flesh and blood?

We answer in the negative. The literal living 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's ransom as soon as applied to the head and heart. A living body is capable of producing 'the old man' or 'the new' according to circumstances, but the living body itself is neither the one nor the other.

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. A character bad in the sight of God is cast away, and a character good in the divine estimation is assumed. These constitute the old man and the new man. It is preposterous to contend that a man's real body is "the body of sin" Paul speaks of, if it were, how in this present time could it be said to be "rendered powerless?" The apostle's expression is evidently figurative; his language in this instance will not admit of a literal construction.

Brother Edward Turney

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Hebrews 13:5,6.

THE BURIED CITY.

Far away from the highways of modern commerce, and the tracks of ordinary travel, lay a city buried in the sandy earth of a half-desert Turkish province, with no certain trace of its place of sepulchre. Vague tradition said that it was hidden somewhere near the river Tigris; but for a long series of ages its existence in the world was a mere name – a word. That name suggested the idea of an ancient capital of fabulous splendour and magnitude; a congregation of palaces and temples, encompassed by vast walls and ramparts, - of “the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me;” and which was to become “a desolation and dry like a Wilderness.” (Zephaniah ii. 15, 13).

More than two thousand years had it lain in its unknown grave, when a French savant and a wandering English scholar sought the seat of the once powerful empire, and searching till they found the dead city, threw off its shroud of sand and ruin, and revealed once more to an astonished and curious world the temples, the palaces, and the idols; the representations of war and the chase, of the cruelties and luxuries of the ancient Assyrians. The Nineveh of Scripture, the Nineveh of the oldest historians, the Nineveh - twin sister of Babylon - glorying in pomp and power, all traces of which were believed to be gone; the Nineveh in which the captive tribes of Israel laboured and wept, and against which the words of prophecy had gone forth, was, after a sleep of twenty centuries, again brought to light. The proofs of ancient splendour were again beheld by living eyes, and by the skill of draughtsmen and the pen of antiquarian travellers, made known and preserved to the world.

The immense mounds of bricks and rubbish which marked the presumed sites of Babylon and Nineveh had been used as quarries by the inhabitants of the surrounding country from time immemorial, without disclosing to other eyes than those of the wild occupiers of the soil the monuments they must have served to support or cover.

A great many erroneous opinions (according to Botta) have been disseminated with regard to the actual conditions of the ruins of Nineveh: they have been represented as a mine in constant requisition for supplying bricks and stones for the creation of the houses of Mosul, and thus assimilated to the ruins of Babylon, which have for ages furnished the necessary building materials for the surrounding towns. “Such however,” says Botta, can scarcely have been the case at Nineveh at any period, and very certainly it is not so in the present day. The reason is plain. All that exists of the ruins of the ancient city boundary walls, and mounds, is formed of bricks which were merely baked in the sun; these bricks have been reduced by age into an earthy state, and consequently cannot be used again. There can be no doubt but that in the construction of these ancient buildings more solid materials, such stones and kiln-burnt bricks, were sometimes employed, and this accounts for their being accidentally discovered; but, they were merely employed as accessories - the mass of the walls was composed of unburnt bricks. Thus, in this particular, there is not the least similarity between Nineveh and Babylon; the ruins of the latter only offer an immense quantity of excellent bricks; they have, consequently, been capable of being used as quarries. But the masses of earth which are the only remains of Nineveh, could not be employed for a like purpose. . .

Among the remarkable discoveries made by Layard at Nimroud, was a vaulted chamber, built in the centre of a wall, nearly 50 feet in thickness, and about 15 feet beneath the surface of the ground. The dimensions of this vault were 10 feet in height by 10 feet in width, and the arch over it was formed of kiln-burnt bricks; but there was no apparent entrance, nor could Layard divine to what use it had been applied. The discovery, however, of so large an arch turned in baked bricks and built into the solid mass of the mound, is a convincing proof that the ancient Assyrians, like the ancient Egyptians, were acquainted with the principle of the arch, although they both evidently refrained from using it in their larger structures, or where the abutments were not secure, from a knowledge, as we are assured by this discreet use of it, of the inherent self-destroying principle of the arch. We could have wished that the discoverer had informed us whether the bricks were of the usual form, whether they were wedge-shaped, or whether, as in some Egyptian brick arches, pieces of tile were inserted to keep the bricks apart at the top.

Another curious discovery was, that tubular drain tiles were used for removing the rain water that fell through the openings in the roofs on to the pavements of the several apartments, and that there was under the

pavement of the mound a main drain, the invert formed of kiln-burnt bricks, and the upper part covered with slabs and tiles.

He noticed, also, that a thin layer of bitumen passed under all the floors and slabs, to preserve them, doubtless, from the damp which would otherwise have arisen from the earth underneath.

The Tigris is navigated by means of rafts constructed of pieces of wood, which are supported by inflated skins. These rafts (which are called by the natives, kellek) are well adapted for descending the stream, which in summer is very shallow; but they are of no use for going up. When the rafts have arrived at Baghdad they are broken up, the wood sold, often at a profit, and the skins brought back to Mosul, to serve again for the same purpose. Such were the means that Botta successfully employed for transporting the sculptures down the river towards the sea - the rafts of the required solidity being secured by the use of timber of a large size cut in the mountains, and the number of skins proportioned to the dimensions of the raft.

At Havre, at the close of the year 1846, was landed the first collection of Assyrian antiquities that had ever been brought to Europe. They now form one of the greatest attractions in the noble museum of the Louvre.

Nineveh and its Palaces, by Joseph Bonomi, F.R.S.L.

The Archbishop of Canterbury on the End of the World

Written in 1874...

The Archbishop of Canterbury who holds the pagan doctrine of the soul's immortality, has clearly pronounces himself in favour of the complete destruction of the material earth. He tried to cause his readers to infer this catastrophe from known great changes, as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

But do those physical changes support that idea? We think they give it no force whatever. It is a fact that no disaster has destroyed any part of the earth, but on the contrary, the earth has for the most part, been improved by the great physical revolutions that have taken place.

It seems therefore, that in so far as any inference can be drawn from these things, it is against the idea that the earth will one day be blotted out of existence. This prelate talks as though the death of the body is a sort of analogical proof. Because a healthy man feels as if he should be always so, but is suddenly overtaken by death, so the earth, which appears solid and permanent, may just as suddenly and unexpectedly be destroyed.

In reality, however, there is no parallel.

Man knows by experience that he must die, and may die at any moment; but there is no such knowledge or experience to lead us to look for the annihilation of the globe. Strangely enough, the head of the church bases his conclusion on the words of the Apostle Peter, and joins this dreadful event to the coming of Christ "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Would he really have us believe that the return of Christ will be "the end of the world" in that sense?

If so, how are the numerous prophecies to be fulfilled which speak of the earth becoming the everlasting inheritance of the Saints?

The previous destruction of the world, by water is no sign that a future destruction by fire awaits the earth. It was the ungodly who were drowned, and at the prediction of a fiery destruction applied to a future event, it could not be fairly argued that the physical world was to be burned up. The archbishop had got his school notions before his mind instead of reasoning fairly from the Scriptures.

In so far as his Grace of Canterbury represents the national religious views on the nature of the human soul and the destiny of the earth, England is clearly at variance with reason and the Word of God; but we suspect that archbishops make it their business to maintain, for the most part, what they found on being raised to position.

The time is surely drawing nigh when, in relation to these questions, either archbishops will be out of fashion or out of harmony with current belief.

Brother Edward Turney

“Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:28 to 31.

Correspondence between Brethren Frank Williment, and Ernest Brady:

Wellington, New Zealand

May 4th 1957

Dear Ernest Brady, Greetings.

In a copy of a fraternal circular sent to me, which I have just opened, is the publication of two letters – Viner Hall’s to you and your reply to him, both of which I have read with interest.

So many varied views are expressed from time to time upon Biblical matters that the results are fairly bewildering; some insist that Adam was made immortal – others mortal, both parties emphasise their own view is right and salvation dependent upon one’s accepting it.

Out of this conflicting welter my own faith – New Testament Judaism – was, in God’s great mercy, born. This position enables one to form opinions between contestants and yet expend time and labour on other spheres of service.

With some of the Nazarene views I can agree, the Federal position of the two Adams in their respective relations to our race gives no difficulty (Romans 5:17-19); 1 Corinthians 15:22). That Christ was in the exclusive moral position to act as a ransom sacrifice for His fellows (Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:26) is, if I understand you correctly, another.

We are told, however, by the Spirit in Hebrews 4:15, that Jesus was tempted in all points apart from sin, though James says the reverse. God cannot be tempted of evil. Where, then, did Jesus obtain a nature that was capable of temptation? Was it a constituent of the life you say He received from God, or did He derive this faculty for suffering (Hebrews 2:18) from the imperfect Jewish mother? If God cannot be tempted, and Jesus could, and was, the exaltation from fleshly to spirit nature (Philippians 2:9) of the latter, provides evidence that Jesus benefited from His own death, which, I gather, is a fact you deny.

The fact that He, the only one of Adam’s race who could say “I overcame” (Revelation 5:21), indicates, I submit, in what way the ransom was provided. Jesus laid His spotless character in the scales.

Your varied images of death, too, in the Magazine puzzles me at times; death is the cessation of being (Psalm 146:4, 89:48). Does it matter as to its cause? You say Adam’s death, 930 years after his crime, was “natural” death, the real sufferers being the animals slain to provide coverings. Is there anything to show he was under sentence to die before his transgression?

The appalling position of the nations, Adam's children, lusting for wholesale annihilation, makes your apologies for the ravages of sin-conceived lust (James 1:15) difficult to follow.

Perhaps at your convenience you would be kind enough to write to me.

With kind regards, Frank Williment. New Testament Jew, (late Christian).

* * *

Response: from Ernest Brady:

Halesowen.

11th June, 1957

Dear Brother Frank Williment,

Thank you for your letter of May 4th and other letters you have written me.

I cannot recall if I have replied to you before but if not I would like to say that I appreciate your letters, but as you have usually been content to outline your own beliefs without much reference to the doctrines we put forward, I deemed it unnecessary to open an argument with you by correspondence as our literature is familiar to you.

However, you ask me to write to you, and therefore I am sending you a few comments on what you say.

It is perfectly true, as you say, that there are many conflicting views expressed on various points, but I do not think we should despair of deciding where the truth lies, for is it not the purpose of God to reveal it to those who seek?

I have much sympathy with your faith which you describe as New Testament Judaism which is a true aspect of the Gospel, but I gather that while you (correctly) emphasis this point, you are in other respects fairly orthodox Christadelphian in your views. If my impression is correct you will know where and why I must disagree with you and I need not recapitulate. At least I am pleased to learn that you understand the Federal Principle, and our relationship to the two Adams; in this you are far in front of present-day Christadelphians.

You say that if you understand us correctly we teach that Christ was in an exclusive moral position to act as a ransom for His fellows. I should disagree with your use of the word "moral" here and substitute the word "legal". He was in an exclusive moral position certainly, being the only one without sin, and this enabled Him to be our saviour, but it was not His moral position which He sacrificed – it was not (as you say later) His spotless character which Jesus laid in the scales – it was His life; not the life He lived but the life which was in the blood.

He could not sacrifice His character – that was His, and neither He nor anyone else could separate Him from it. His perfect character made His life of value – or I should say, preserved the value it had when it was begotten – but it was His *psuche* that He laid down as a ransom.

No other, however good he had been, could have done so, because of his legal relationship to Adam, whereas Jesus' legal relationship was to God.

I cannot see any difficulty in your point that God cannot be tempted of evil, whereas Jesus was tempted. You ask where, then, did Jesus obtain a nature capable of temptation – was it a constituent of the life He received from God, or did He derive it from His imperfect Jewish mother?

I would reply: Tell me where Adam obtained a nature capable at suffering temptation?

Adam had no imperfect Jewish mother, yet he was capable of feeling temptation.

Is it not evident that a capacity for experiencing temptation is the consequence of mankind having been created with free will and reason and placed under law?

It is true that we deny that Jesus benefited from His own death, in the sense laid down by Christadelphians in their Statement of Faith, that He needed redemption in the same way as we do.

If you argue that Jesus' exaltation from fleshly nature to spirit resulted from His death I could agree, but this is quite a different matter, and if, as I suspect you are seeking to find a justification for some measure of adherence to the Christadelphian position. I hope you will be honest enough to admit that this does not provide it.

Is there any reasoning to prove that there is no way in which flesh can be transformed to spirit except by dying and being raised?

Does not 1 Corinthians 15:51 prove that there is another way? And does not reason tell us that having proved Himself perfect, had He not chosen for our sakes to take the path to Calvary He could have taken the other?

I think John 12; 23 proves it.

Our varied use of "death" – it is Scripture that has this varied use, not us. We seek to apply and harmonise, and I think we have succeeded. There are 4 or 5 different usages, and while you ask: Does it matter as to its cause? Surely, as a "New Testament Jew," I do not need to remind you of, for example, Hebrews 10:26-31.

There is nothing to show Adam was under sentence to die before he transgressed but this does not mean to say he was not corruptible – capable of dying.

I recognise fully the "appalling position of the nations" but I do not attribute this to Adam's sin but to their own greed, intolerance and foolishness.

I do not apologise for the ravages of sin – I just say I do not believe that anything that God has put into man or allowed to develop in him as an inheritance from his ancestors, makes him incapable of ordering his life and his neighbours, in accordance with the commandments of Christ.

I see no reason to charge the wickedness of the world on man's nature, on God who made it as it is, or on Adam who disobeyed a simple command, and brought in the reign of sin and death: I believe that the words of the prophet are sufficient today to put the world right, if they were applied, without any change of nature.

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."

I am sorry you disapprove of Bro. Pearce filling up our circular letter with odd quotations from people like Fosdick; true, some of them hold very erroneous views, but this should not prevent us picking out some of the wheat amongst the chaff – after all, we are not children, and can be expected to use a little discrimination.

With Very Sincere Regards and Good Wishes in Jesus' Name. Ernest Brady.

"Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you;
he will never permit the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22

Some Ramblings from the Past

In God's purpose with the world He formed Adam and Eve with a free will giving them the choice to obey Him or not, which of course meant that God also gave them instruction as to what His will was; and for obedience to His will they were promised the great reward of eternal life for perfect obedient (see Titus 1:2).

The law they were asked to obey was simple enough and so was obedience - "The tree which is in the centre of the garden, thou shalt not eat of it" – simple, yes, except that temptation comes to all of us in unexpected ways, and for Eve it seems to me that she was reasoning in her own mind, just as we all do. God had called the forbidden tree, "The Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil" and Eve on reflection reasoned that God did not want them to eat of it in case they learnt too much and would be more God-like, and that is something she thought was a good thing; besides which, if she knew good and evil then she would not die as God had said but would be more like the angels with whom she and Adam conversed in the garden.

Alas, she didn't stop and reason it through as she might have done. She ate of the tree and gave to Adam and he too, ate of it.

God knew they would transgress and already had a fresh plan to hand so there was no need for Adam and Eve to die that day.

In one sense, however, they did die for they were created 'living' 'souls' and the two words both refer to 'life' – 'chay' = 'living' and 'nephesh' = 'soul' or 'life'. Both 'chay' and 'nephesh' are frequently translated 'life' so we see that Adam and Eve were given living lives as it were. It is my belief that 'chay' refers to spirit life and 'nephesh' refers to our natural life and so when Adam and Eve transgressed I believe they lost their spirit life and were allowed to continue with their nephesh or natural life.

However, the main point is that natural life is not meant to continue for ever but spirit life is. Our natural life is contained in the blood and we find that when we come to the matter of animal sacrifices for sin God tells us that "the life (nephesh) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (nephesh)" – Leviticus 17:11.

Now that Adam and Eve had failed their probation it was necessary that they be redeemed or bought back from their failed position. They had forfeited their right to (nephesh) life and in order to make an atonement for them God slew an animal or animals in Eden the skins of which Adam and Eve had to wear as a symbol of their forgiveness – as a covering over of their sin. But the sin was only covered over and not taken away; this had to wait until the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, for Jesus was the One who took away the sin of the world and it is through Him that we are cleansed from all sin. It is Jesus who redeemed mankind in buying us back from the bondage to sin in which we are all born.

We quote from the works of Dr. Thomas - "Redemption is release for a ransom; all who become God's servants are released from a former lord by purchase, the Purchaser is God and the ransom price paid, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish."

Now it should be obvious to all students of Scripture that the need for redemption is the legal position of Adam and all his descendants, a position brought about by his transgression in Eden when he sold himself to Sin as a master. It was a legal change because it involved law. Adam's sin changed his relationship to his Creator from being a Son of God to being a servant of Sin, bringing about the alienation of himself and all his posterity. That God has thus concluded all under the sin of Adam did not transfer blame, nor make us guilty, or responsible and neither is it our misfortune; it was for our blessing.

There is no hint of changed flesh or nature in this legal and moral position.

It is a simple plan and perhaps too simple for the many who seem to prefer complication and mystery and so bring in the supposed sin in the flesh, but it is our sin that God condemns, not our flesh, and Jesus Christ condemned sin by being obedient to His Father's will, proving that obedience is possible, for He was tempted

in all points as we are. When we sin then we alone are to blame; we are never forced to commit sin. Can anyone point to a sin they have committed and say that they had to do it? Never. To suppose oneself to be so weak that one could not help but sin is false humility - and false humility is hypocrisy. To blame the weakness of the flesh which God has given us is wrong and insulting to Him. No one is tempted above that which he is able to bear. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.

While browsing through an old "Christadelphian" magazine for December 1993, I came across an Editorial in which Michael Ashton said that Jesus Christ "did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth." True, Jesus Christ did not have to make an offering for the nature He received at birth. Nazarenes have been saying it for years, and some Christadelphians have been disfellowshipped for saying it.

Not surprisingly, the editor's claim was questioned and he attempted an explanation in the April 1994 magazine as follows:-

"Perhaps the difficulty with the phrase "He did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth," arises because, for the purpose of the exposition about baptism, the Lord's moral and physical needs were being separated. In its context, the phrase was referring to Jesus not having any moral imperfections for which an offering had to be made. Atonement always implies the covering of moral impurity, just as alienation is moral and not physical; we are "alienated from God... by wicked works." (Colossians 1:21). As we have considered, Jesus had no sins which needed covering. He bore no moral guilt and was not morally unclean as we are when we sin. He was not alienated from the Father, though his nature meant that he was physically separated from Him. In order to enjoy full fellowship with the Father Jesus' mortal nature needed changing; he needed saving "out of death" (Hebrews 5:7 margin). As he was specifically sent by God to be our Saviour, the only way this could be accomplished was by his obedient sacrifice. The Father's response was to raise him from the dead and glorify him, and he became the firstfruits of them that slept. By these means, the Lord benefited from his own sacrifice."

So these are the facts the editor presented:-

Jesus Christ "did not have to make an offering for the nature he received at birth"
"Jesus had no sins which needed covering"
"not having any moral imperfection for which an offering had to be made"
"He bore no moral guilt and was not morally unclean"
"He was not alienated from the Father"
"Atonement always implies the covering of moral impurity"
"We are alienated from God by wicked works"

Congratulations to Michael Ashton! But wait . . . he then goes on to say - "His nature meant that He was physically separated from Him."

Just when we thought Michael Ashton was beginning to see the light, he quickly draws the curtains to shut it out again. Jesus Christ, physically begotten by God and physically conceived by Mary, then physically born nine months later, with physical nature provided by the Creator of all, then grew up to full stature of manhood in that same physical nature, did not have to make an offering for that nature, yet Michael assures us Jesus Christ was separated from His Father because of His nature! How does he know this amazing thing? Yes, we are alienated from God by our sins but Jesus Christ was not alienated from Him by any sin. Not only would it need divine inspiration to make such a claim, but Michael then makes it the grounds for Christ's crucifixion...

"The only way," he says, that Jesus could be saved out of death "was by His obedient sacrifice."

For people like you and me who are sinners, if we are still alive when Jesus comes, can be changed and given eternal life without dying, but for Jesus Christ the sinless One, He must needs die a cruel death by wicked hands in order He should receive the same. Dear Editor of the Christadelphian magazine, where are you leading your readers? You no longer believe that Jesus Christ had sinful flesh, so please come clean and state clearly what you do believe. "Thinkest thou not" said Jesus, "that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). Would that mean then, that by accepting the help of the angels to save Himself from the injustice of the authorities, He wouldn't have been given eternal life; that He would have died anyway? Would it have been a sin for Him not to die by crucifixion? If you answer, yes, then please consider how it could be that God and the angels would have been a party to that sin!

The benefit Jesus gained from His crucifixion was that He "brought many sons to glory" and "He saw the travail of His soul and was satisfied."

While we are pleased to see that Michael Ashton does not believe Jesus Christ had to die for sinful flesh, we wish he and all Christadelphians would keep to Scripture only and not teach false doctrine. But it seems ever needful to invent complication and mystery and add it to Bible teaching. The simple facts to keep ever in mind are that law gives choice and sin is transgression of law. Keep these facts in mind and there is no need to bring in silly doctrines which in the end dishonour our Creator - our loving Father and Jesus His Son who laid down His life for us.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."
- Luke 18:16,17.

Some years ago in earlier Circular Letter we reproduced a page from an early edition of "Elpis Israel" showing where Dr. Thomas wrote of Jesus Christ being the "substitutional testator," but which, in 1910, C.C. Walker claimed that Dr. Thomas had made a mistake which he felt should be corrected and so replaced the phrase with "mediator" which forgery has been reproduced in later publications; so we were pleased to hear that the Logos committee have now:-

"reproduced the volume according to the original penmanship of Bro. Thomas. In the preface to his fourth edition, which we have used for the text, he wrote: "in reviewing the original, the author was agreeably surprised on finding he had so few corrections to make... the emendations made will place this revise in accord with the author's latest work; so that he considers this revised edition is the best."

Graham Mansfield continues, "With pleasure we comply with the principle of maintaining the manuscript as originally produced, according to the form and style of the author... It is not that we consider Bro. Thomas inspired or infallible, as some unkindly and mistakenly claim. However we do uphold him as a providentially selected, remarkable teacher, whose voice sounds clearer through his pen than do his detractors through their antagonism."

We here reproduce the 'LOGOS' Publisher's Notes of January 1910 Edition of "Elpis Israel" in which C.C.Walker says he "is indebted to an esteemed fellow-labourer for valued help in the revisions here noted." All the following illegitimate revisions we trust will have been removed in the Logos publication:-

PUBLISHERS NOTES.

THE Publisher has not hesitated to make such emendations as he believes the Author will approve on his reappearance in the land of the living.

These emendations and changes are, however, very slight, and are here mentioned only for the information of the community that so justly value Elpis Israel and its Author; and also "to cut off occasion" from some who would not be slow to accuse the publisher of "tampering" with the work of the deceased.

The changes made, in the main range themselves round two or three heads as follows:- Improved translations; improved expositions due to increased knowledge; expunged errors; notes on the Author's wonderful political prevision.

With regard to TRANSLATIONS, it must be admitted that Dr. Thomas sometimes altered "the Authorised Version," as it is called, without improving matters, illustrating somewhat the remark of Mr. Fowler, the phrenologist; who said that he would sometimes "use rather extravagant language" in his expositions. The present edition of Elpis Israel restores the A.V. rendering of 2 Tim. iii. 16 (pages 5 and elsewhere), "All Scripture is given by inspiration." The R.V. rendering will not be defended by those who know the truth of the matter. On page 9, "word" has been substituted for "will and testament," as defining the Lord's purpose, the reason for which appears in another note. On page 65, the A.V. translation of Rom. xiii, 1-5 has been restored. On page 69, the Hebrew idiom should not be lifted into the English. The foot-note illustrates the matter. Some mistaken expositions have arisen out of this; hence it is here mentioned. On pages 132-33 "justification" has been restored, and "pardon" deleted; also "in" has been restored, and "by" deleted in the expressions "in the name of Jesus," etc. On page 181, the usage of Elohim in the singular is referred to in the foot-note, and the suggestion that it should be rendered "gods" throughout Genesis is deleted.

Other changes in translation are very few and are too unimportant to mention. The publisher is indebted to an esteemed fellow-labourer for valued help in the revisions here noted.

With regard to IMPROVED EXPOSITIONS due to increased knowledge the following notes may suffice. In the section on "The Sabbath" the author speaks of "the first day of the week" as "the Lord's day." But it is never so styled in the Scriptures, and the author in Eureka, Vol. 11, p. 159 (a later writing), himself more forcibly draws the true distinction between "Sunday" and "the Lord's day." The latter phrase has therefore been deleted from this edition of Elpis Israel,

On page 50, the reference to the nature of the resurrection-body on its emergence from the grave is corrected, in harmony with the author's preface to the fourth edition, and Anastasis, a later work on Resurrection and Judgment.

On page 167, the publisher has ventured to suggest in a footnote that the scriptures do here and there suggest reasons for the expression of God's will in His appointed "principles of religion. He believes that his impressions on this matter are derived from Dr. Thomas' other expositions.

On page 234, the author speaks of the Lord's "covenant with Abraham; "and a footnote gives the publisher's reasons for retaining this scriptural term and rejecting "will " and "testament " in the argument following.

For the expression "substitutional testator" (page 239), the publisher has substituted the term "Mediator," which is the true equivalent of the inspired original. Those who choose to closely compare the old and new editions of Elpis Israel in these pages, will see that the author's argument gains in lucidity and force by the change.

On pages 357, 358, paragraphs indicated, which were either lacking in clearness, or rendered erroneous by lapse of time, have been re-written on the basis of later expositions by the author.

'There are very few EXPUNGED ERRORS. Among these the erroneous paraphrase of Christ's reply to the thief on the cross (omitted in this edition from the exposition on page 60), and mentioned here only because it has, unfortunately, gained considerable currency.

On page 294, the erroneous supposition that Ex. xvii and Num. xx, refer to one and the same incident (the smiting of the rock by Moses), is corrected by a slight change in the wording. The first incident was before the giving of the law in Horeb, and the smiting was in obedience to a command of God. The second incident was nearly forty years later, at Kadesh, about 150 miles north of Horeb, and smiting was not commanded—only speaking to the rock.

From page 307, the table of Chronology to the Captivity has been omitted. The period is dealt with in Chronikon Hebraiko, which is appended to this edition of .Elpis Israel; but further light on some points is still to be desired.

From pages 361 and 414, some erroneous anticipations that the efflux of time has manifested concerning the end of the age, have been omitted as a matter of course.

A more agreeable class of notes is that referring to the author's wonderful POLITICAL PREVISION on the basis of the prophecies. A mere reference to some of the footnotes in this edition will suffice for illustration. See pages 115, 333, 374, 376, 382, 383, etc. Also the paragraph at the end of the preceding "Biographical Notes."

A few more "Notes" on the progress of the world, as anticipated by Elpis Israel fifty years ago, will be found in the Appendix at the end of the book.

Birmingham, January. 2010



It is pleasing to see that Dr. Thomas is recognized by the Logos committee as being fallible and we have always seen him as a remarkable man, sincere and prayerful and used by God to bring a great amount of truth to light, though the last light he brought to light was extinguished by Robert Roberts immediately Dr Thomas died.

But this new light was not completely lost for people like Edward Turney continued where Dr. Thomas left off, sorting out his earlier contradictions and developing his views in a well-reasoned, sensible and prayerful manner.

R.Roberts, on the other hand was known at times, to be intemperate in speech and conduct, like a spoilt child afraid he may not get his own way. He changed course with regard to some important doctrines which Dr Thomas wished to make more widely known, causing untold confusion and division which fostered much ill-feeling in the Christadelphian brotherhood and his divisive Statement of Faith is perhaps the biggest mistake he ever made.

In a recent Logos magazine we are told that many misunderstand Clause V of the B.A.S.F. where sin in the flesh is spoken of. Quoting from an earlier "Logos" they write,

"We never appreciated the full force of these words until recently when our attention was drawn to what some had in mind when they (some Christadelphian ecclesias) opposed the theory of "sin-in-the-flesh." It appears they thought Clause 5 taught that when Adam sinned, God injected into him a literal, physical element styled "sin-in-the-flesh" which defiled the flesh and caused him to sin. They were outspoken in repudiation of such an idea.

They were quite right to repudiate this idea. It does not express the meaning of the term used by Paul in Romans 8:3. They were quite wrong, however, in thinking that the Statement of Faith was designed to express this idea.

". . . A correspondent states: "it is a tremendously different thing to say the sentence defiled him (which simply means that God inflamed him). It is abhorrent to teach that God implanted, or inflamed Adam with - or so that he must - sin. This is the objectionable part of Clause 5 and ought to be completely eradicated, and speedily, too." Our comment at this stage was: "If the B.A.S.F. taught what our correspondent apparently imagines it does, we would agree with him. We fail to see, however, how it is possible that such reasoning - that God forced Adam to sin - can be read into Clause 5."

The same article quotes from another Christadelphian source:

“This phrase is being erroneously treated as though it should be hyphenated and read, sin-in-the-flesh, a literal entity. Concerning this error it has been well said that “The phrase sin in the flesh is metonymical; it is not expressive of a literal principle or element pervading the physical organisation” (R.Roberts). It is not something that was planted there and that works like an imaginary evil spirit. That which was imposed on our first parents was the law of death, the “dying thou shalt die” sentence which defiled and became a physical law of their being...”

While we are pleased to see that defilement is meant to be understood and used in the ceremonial sense, as in John 18:28, “They themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled,” we find all this confusion and controversy so unnecessary, for if the truth were really understood it would be seen that there was no such defilement as Clause 5 states.

A proper understanding of Romans 7 ending with verse 1 of chapter 8, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” should settle the matter. The condemnation, or what Clause 5 states as “defilement” is removed when one is in Jesus Christ and so makes it impossible for such “defilement” to “become a physical law of his being” as Clause 5 claims.

This same article claims that:

“What we inherit from Adam is the mortality that came by sin. This is our misfortune, not our crime. And God holds nothing against us because of it.”

In reply we would say it is not our misfortune but our blessing, as Paul explains in Romans 5:18. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid... But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” - Galatians 3:21,22. Great blessing indeed!

With love in Jesus Christ to all, Russell Gregory.

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

John 14:27,
