

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 83

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

As we daily listen to and read about world news it becomes increasingly obvious to the Bible Student that we have undoubtedly reached the stage in History spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24. 5-14: Luke 21. 7-11.and 25-28: To most of us these scriptures are very familiar;

There is an increase in natural calamities such as earthquakes etc., also calamities brought about through man's inadequacy and inventions which are not of God; men's hearts are failing them for fear for what is coming on the earth, and seeing no hope take to drugs and alcohol etc., the suicide rate is increasing world wide, all these happenings make us realise how blest we are to have hope of a better time through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus and to be able to look forward to His soon coming return to usher in a New Era of Righteousness and Peace, our daily prayers are toward that " time of refreshing " which shall come through Christ's Presence.

We thank all those who have corresponded during the past month and have supported us in any way.

This month we have an exhortation by Bro. Leo Dreifuss entitled "Gods Ambassadors" and an article on "Redemption" by Bro. Ernest Brady and a letter to Bro. Fincher by Bro. Phil Parry. "The Personification of Sin" by E. Brady.

We send our best wishes to all. With sincere Love in the Masters Service.

Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

Full many a Gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

God's Ambassadors.

I Kings 18: 56-58

II Corinthians 5: 20

In Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, the disciples of Christ are referred to as ambassadors. Paul says "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did "beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, "be ye reconciled to God." This description as 'ambassador' of a disciple of Christ applies to all of us who have taken His Name upon ourselves. So it is worth our while to consider just who an ambassador is, what his work is, as this will enable us to understand more clearly what Paul implied when he described himself and the other disciples of Christ as 'ambassadors.' An ambassador is a person who by the government of his own country is sent to some foreign country, there to be responsible for all matters of business that pass between his own people, and the people of the country he is sent to. While there, it is his duty to look after the interests of his own country, and everything he says and does has to be governed by what he considers best furthers the welfare of his people.

We, as ambassadors of Christ, are sent into the world among the unconverted, the ignorant of the will of God. And our constant duty is also to govern our actions and our words such that God's matters are in the foreground. It is our duty to make known God's word, His will and His plan with the earth and with man. An ambassador, while away in the country of his mission, is expected to conform with the laws and customs of that country. But there is always the "one limitation beyond which he cannot go:- he cannot conform to laws and customs of the land into which he is sent, which violate the interests of his own people at home. We as Christians are to conform to the laws of our country in which we happen to live. But if they happen to be contrary to the laws of Christ, there comes a time when we have to make a decision for our Master who bought us to be His servants, and if necessary have to take the consequences. Although an ambassador mixes freely with the people among whom he is sent, he is, after all, not a native of that country. His features, his appearance, his accent, his general demeanour cannot fail to make it apparent that in spite of his efforts to be like the people among whom he has to mix, he is not one of them, but a 'foreigner' to them.

We are ambassadors of God to the world. We come in contact with the people of the world. But there is something wrong with our Christian life if we mix with the world to such an extent that it is no longer evident that though in the world, we are not of the world. We may mingle with the people, as indeed we must, if the gospel is to be spread. But if this mingling with the people causes us to take part with them in their sins and in practices contrary to the commandments of Christ, then we have exceeded the limit to which we may go as His ambassadors. One of the greatest endeavours of an ambassador is to be on friendly terms with the people to whom he is sent. To this end he tries to make as many friends as he can "by establishing contacts with people. The Christian must show himself friendly. He must conduct all his dealings with people with love and charity. He must, as Paul exhorts us, give no offence and as much as lies in his power live peaceably. A good ambassador will show some sympathy for the people among whom he is sent in their natural sorrows as well as in their joys. When some national disaster befalls them such as the death of a monarch, or president, he will send his message of sympathy, and if possible come to the funeral. If some disaster such as an accident, a flood, or an earthquake befalls the country of his mission, he will advise his own government to send some help. We Christians must be ready to help. We are not to stand aloof to anybody's sorrows, even though it may be difficult at the time to find the right words of comfort. We are to pray for their guidance and comfort in their time of trial. This is the least thing we all can do. But on the other hand, an ambassador need not keep away on occasions of rejoicing. Every nation has some national holiday, such as Independence Day in America, or Bastille Day in France, or Empire Day in this country. There is nothing to prevent, a foreign official from taking part in celebrations, if he is invited, as long as he does not say or do anything which could get his own country into trouble. Christ Himself went to a wedding feast, indeed "His first miracle was performed there. And He told His disciples to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that do weep." There is nothing wrong for a Christian to show his joy, yea, a Christian has cause for joy. There is nothing wrong with merry-making on appropriate occasions, provided we do not let ourselves be carried away to such an extent that we transgress the commandments of Christ. It is regarded as very bad manners for an ambassador, to get mixed up with internal politics of the country of his mission. He

must be careful in all he says not to drop any remark which may lead him into controversy with some people. We must always realise that in this present age, we have here “no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” It is not for us to take part in the politics of this world. We are subject to our respective government, true, but not part of it. It is God who promotes and disposes of the rulers of this world according to His plan. Our part is the administration of the earth which will come when Christ sets up His Kingdom on earth, but it is not now. When an ambassador misbehaves himself, it goes immediately against his country. When we misbehave ourselves, it goes against the Church. We have failed as ambassadors of Christ, and the Church, not only ourselves, become evil spoken of. Thus we have the responsibility to uphold the honour of God by our conduct, just as an ambassador, by his conduct, has to uphold the honour of his country.

It happens frequently that things go wrong. Misunderstandings arise between governments and peoples, with each blaming the other side. And if the government thinks that its ambassador has failed in his duty on such occasions, it calls him home for talks. There, he has to give an account of his actions to his own government over him, and if he is found incapable of his job, he loses it. We must all one day give an account. We all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Some of us do not find it difficult to live peaceably with other people. In this respect, perhaps, our task is even harder than that of an ambassador of this world.

For even if we do not quarrel, we still have other faults, all of us. None of us is free from sin, and we still must give an account, whereas an ambassador is only called to account when things get completely out of hand. When relations between two countries become strained, there is an opportunity for the ambassador to smooth things out. But sometimes he fails, perhaps truly through no fault of his. Then diplomatic relations between the two countries are broken off, and their ambassadors are called home, this time not merely to give an account, but for good, or at least until relations become more friendly again. This is usually next door to war. It is very regrettable. He has to leave friends behind, people who were not personally involved in politics, and against whom he has no personal grudge. This is one of those things that happen and will happen as long as human governments rule. We, too, sometimes have to make a hard decision. Many of us had to at our own conversion. We had to abandon friendships, not because of any personal quarrel, or because any blame falls on them. But on conversion our interests change, and we just find that the friendship with this world is enmity with God. There is the limit to which we may go: show ourselves friendly and helpful, in the world, but not of it. Not taking part in its sins, in its politics, but subject to the laws of the land, giving no offence. All prophets and all the early disciples of Christ were of course God’s ambassadors. But there are two of the ancient prophets specially, Samuel and Elijah, besides Moses, whose life seemed to emphasise their being God’s ambassadors, Samuel, having been given to the service of God by a vow of his mother, carried out some work in connection with Divine service from early childhood. His later missions included the anointing of Israel’s first two kings: Saul and David. It grieved Samuel at first when Israel asked for a king. They wanted to be like the nations around them. They failed to realise that God’s people were to be different, so that it can be recognised that they are not of this world. This is one of our great temptations, too: the desire to be like everybody else, failing to realise that as ambassadors of Christ we are not part and parcel of this world. Then, after Samuel had anointed Saul to be king, Samuel was God’s messenger towards Saul. In the early days of his reign, Saul did the will of God, and Samuel went with him wheresoever he went. But when Saul “broke God’s commandments, Samuel left him. It must have “been a grief to leave a person who “by that time must have “become a close friend. Yet, look where you like in the Bible, and that applies to individuals as well as communities and nations: When a person forsakes God, God forsakes him and leaves him to his own devices. And this applied to Saul. Saul in the early days of his reign, while he had done well, cut off all that had familiar spirits. It shows how low he must have sunk after God forsook him for his sins, when at the end of his life he himself sought after a witch. Yet, after God forsook Saul, Samuel as a faithful messenger also left him. It must have been a hard decision for him. Yet we too, have to take similar decisions occasionally. If a person commits a grave sin, we, as a body, may be obliged to withdraw. On this point, Paul’s epistles are clear. The Corinthians were on one occasion commanded to “put away that wicked person.” But whatever the sin may be, at the time it may cause grave disappointment and sorrow of heart, but it has to be done. For righteousness has nothing in common with unrighteousness, and one who commits a really grave sin has defiled the Temple of the Lord. Yet, as faithful ambassadors we have to separate ourselves from such a person, just as an

ambassador of a government of this world, when diplomatic relations are broken off, has to separate from his friends which he made in the country of his mission. All ancient prophets were men of prayer, and again this finds special emphasis in Samuel and Elijah. Samuel constantly made intercession for his people. He said: "God forbid that I should cease to pray for you." The mission of Elijah shows perhaps best how the work as God's messenger and as a man of prayer go together. At this time idolatry, worship of Baal, was so widely practised in Israel that many hardly knew the true God. And it was for Elijah to declare Him and to show by visible signs that He of whom he testified was indeed a living God and quite different from the dumb idols then worshipped. First he prayed that there should be no rain. There was no rain. So the people should have realised that there was a living intelligent being who heard Elijah. But in spite of the hardships of a 3½ years drought, the people had not learnt their lesson. So he gathered them to Mount Carmel. We know what happened there. They agreed that the god who answered them by fire to consume their sacrifice was the true god. Baal's priests unsuccessfully tried to get an answer from him whom they thought was god. Then Elijah called them. It was a simple prayer. God does not hear people for the amount they speak. And it was straight to the point: that God would show visibly that He was God, and none like Him. And then God manifested Himself, in that He sent fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifice. And then Elijah, after slaying the idolatrous priests, prayed the third time, this time for God to end the drought. And there was rain. Yes, Elijah was the true and typical messenger of God. He was also God's messenger to the woman of Zidon where he dwelt during the drought in the land of Israel. While there, her son died, and Elijah prayed that his life might come back, again God heard him. So through Elijah, as through all other messengers of God, God manifested Himself by visible signs and wonders. What is our portion as ambassadors for Christ? It might be said that because the extraordinary powers of the Holy Spirit have been withdrawn, and because in this age God does not intervene openly in the affairs of men, until the second coming of Christ, we are at a disadvantage compared with the ancient prophets and early disciples. But there are still many, perhaps less spectacular ways, in which we have opportunities to show whose we are. As we said earlier, we shall fail as ambassadors for Christ if we cannot be picked out as different from the people who know not God. This difference should show clearly that we manifest the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, meekness, gentleness etc. A brother of Christ is generally discernible among people by his lovable manner, his politeness, his warm-heartedness, his conscientiousness at work, in brief his general deportment distinguishes him, and this is as it should be. One of the worst things an ambassador for a government of this world can do to "bring his country into discredit is to commit a wrong in the country of his mission. And the surest way to bring discredit upon the Church, the body of Christ, don't forget, is for a professing person to misbehave himself. Better not to mention religion than to talk about it, to profess to be Christ's brother and then to do wrong. But then apart from merely being discernible, there are occasions when we have to do something more than just that. We must always be ready to talk, when an opportunity is given to us. Talk to an unbeliever. Make known God, His plan and the gospel of His Kingdom. We are commanded to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear" (I Peter 5:15). This is after all the best way of making God known. It is not always as easy as it looks, by no means. Giving the facts in a straightforward way is one thing. But answering questions asked can be quite difficult, if they are thrown at us unawares. It is true some questions asked by totally ungodly persons may be designed to ridicule, those are best dealt with by answering a fool according to his folly, but some are quite serious questions, and really show a genuine desire for knowledge on the part of the enquirer. And the only way to have an answer ready is to be well acquainted with the Word of God, and once acquainted, to keep it fresh in memory. Hence the necessity to keep up our daily readings.'

'Surveying our position as ambassadors for Christ, it may well be said that it is easy and at the same time difficult. It is easy because there is nothing spectacular we are likely to "be called upon to do. Nothing likely hazardous, as for example what Daniel had to do when he was thrown into the den of lions, or what Jeremiah had to go through while in a dirty dungeon. But at the same time it is difficult because we have to be on our constant guard not to do or say anything that will cause offence to the ultimate discredit of the Body of Christ. Just as an ambassador has to have the interests of his government at the back of his mind all the time in his actions, decisions, and utterances, so we have the service to God at the back of our minds. We have to constantly ask ourselves: " If I do this can it cause the Truth to be evil spoken of, or does it set a bad example to some doubtful people who are not yet sufficiently established strong believers"? "Or had I better say this instead of that, as it shows more

clearly whom I serve”? Such are the considerations that have to govern our lives. And do not let us forget to pray for our fellow-beings in trouble. We may not all be able to give active help in an emergency. We are not all of a sufficiently calm temperament to be of much use in an emergency. But we can all pray in faith that God’s will be done and that He may guide those who are attempting to deal with an emergency.

Let us constantly endeavour to walk worthily of Him by whose Name we are called.

G. L. Dreifuss.

Kind Remembrance.

PRAISE God for LOVE that ceaseless flows
From that great source Divine;
Which reacheth down to earth and cares
For thy dear life and mine.

The love expressed through His dear Son
Who died for us and everyone,
Upon this TRUTH our faith doth rest
Assurance comes and thus we’re blest,

THANK God for LOVE: the love from hearts
Whose ties of friendship binds
Which comforts us and links us all
To loyal kindred minds.

This LOVE betokens victory
And breathes of fair eternity,
O may this LOVE for ever dwell
In thy blest soul and, mine as well ;

I John 4. 16.

I. John 4. 9

Redemption - A Mangled Metaphor

“It is indeed a sad thing to see Christadelphians of to-day spending their strength to pull down good and sound work built up by the labour and study of Christadelphians of yesterday, and in their misguided efforts to defend errors destroying the very roots of the Truth. It is their own fault! They have rejected prophets who were sent to them! They have burned and suppressed books! Warned their followers against controversial reading; closed their eyes and ears rather than face the unpleasant fact that some at least of the things they have inherited are lies; have made the Word of God of non-effect by their traditions and have dishonoured the name of the Son of God. They should have remembered the words of Jesus: “Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.” This is the only explanation I can see of the way in which Christadelphians are lately losing the understanding of truths which were regarded as fundamental a generation ago. Soon they will have nothing of any worth and will find themselves amongst the busy, prosperous people doing wonderful works to whom Jesus will say: “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

The foregoing was the concluding paragraph of a leaflet written in protest against an article in "The Christadelphian", November 1952 by L.G.Sargent. It is severe but certainly not too severe as an indictment of Christadelphianism. The purpose of the article was to attempt to prove that the death of Christ is not to be regarded as a sacrifice made on behalf of others, as when one person pays a debt owed to another, or as when one person sacrifices his life to save the life of a loved one.

The Nazarene Fellowship hold the belief that Scripture emphatically and plainly teaches that Jesus voluntarily suffered the death incurred by sin in order that sinners might not have to suffer it. This view is abhorrent to Christadelphians; they label it "Substitution." They say it is "too commercial;" they say it implies "punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go free." It has been proved in our literature that none of these objections are real and they will be dealt with again briefly in the course of this article; but whether they like it or not, whether they accept it or reject it, the truth is as expressed by Peter: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

We do not believe that anyone ever has or ever can make this anything other than that Jesus died in our stead. We believe and accept it thankfully as the greatest demonstration of self-sacrificing love which the world has seen, and we can feel only pity for those who find themselves obliged to search for an alternative explanation.

The writings of Robert Roberts and the Statement of Faith which he drew up have committed the community to the belief that the condemnation of man in Eden changed human nature from the "very good" of Genesis 1:31, to the very bad "flesh full of sin" which it is now said to be. Their explanation of the death of Christ is that as a condition of forgiving men their sins, God required (in Robert Roberts' words) "the ritual destruction of sinful human nature in a morally sinless bearer thereof." How there could be a morally sinless bearer of the nature which is affirmed makes sinlessness in us an impossibility we shall never know, nor how it could serve the ends of mercy, justice or truth to require the ritual destruction, of one who succeeded in living sinlessly. The Christadelphian method of dealing with these and similar questions is to assume an air of profound reverence and tack together an assortment of texts, relating generally to other subjects, with a quotation or two from the Doctor or Robert Roberts. We never find an explanation in plain simple English because it would be seen to be too obviously outrageous. If as we suspect their inner minds are often more than a little uneasy, they conceal the fact and comfort themselves with verbiage.

The sacrifice of Christ is certainly the most important single event in the world's history. It is equally certainly the vital fact and central theme of Scripture. A simple person reading the many references to it would unquestionably come to the conclusion that Jesus suffered death for sinners; in other words that He gave up His life for us. We have no doubt that one who holds that simple belief and is baptised into Christ in accordance with it is in the way of Salvation. But the sad thing is that such a position is impossible for a Christadelphian, because of the implications of other doctrines held. For example, believing that Jesus' nature was defiled and unclean leads to the conclusion that His death was inevitable and therefore necessary for His own Salvation. Such belief is quite incompatible with His death being a voluntary sacrifice and in complete conflict with its purpose according to Scriptural evidence. Similarly the belief that natural death is the wages of sin destroys the present reality of Salvation, according to John 5:2-4, and John 15:31 etc., because believers still die, the same as unbelievers.

In the early part of his article on Redemption, L.G.Sargent admits that the primary meaning of the term "to redeem" means to buy back, but he affirms that to regard it as having that sense when used in connection with the death of Jesus "vitiates thinking." We who were once Christadelphians know quite well why it is necessary for them at all costs to avoid any suspicion of there being anything in the nature of a payment in connection with Jesus' sacrifice, but no one should know better than L.G.Sargent that a first principle of Bible Study is that its terms must be interpreted consistently and with due regard to their derivation and idiom.

If the principle of redemption in the Old Testament is correctly illustrated, as he admits it is, by the requirement of a literal payment of a half-shekel for every soul of Israel that was redeemed, then, since it is spoken of as for our redemption it is right to look for the same principle in Jesus' death.

Surely if there is any vitiated thinking it emanates from the man who can produce an article with the object of proving that there is nothing in the nature of a commercial transaction in the principles upon which God speaks of Himself as our Redeemer. Have we been bought with a price? (1 Peter 1:18). Is the church purchased with His own Blood? He may not like the idea. He may not be able to see how the principles of a commercial transaction can have an appropriate place in the plan of Salvation but his brain must be addled to imagine he can make something else of these Scriptures.

The best and simplest explanation of the purpose of His death is that given by the Master Himself (Matthew 20:28): "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The idea of ransom is not as familiar to us as it would be to ancient peoples but it can be understood and applied in accordance with well-established principles. Jesus' words seem so clear and simple that it is difficult to imagine how any community can have bound itself by a Statement of Faith which affirms that His life was taken from Him because He was of sinful nature; that He was born under condemnation and therefore Himself included in the many for whom He died.

Yet such is the case, and L.G.Sargent feels himself under the obligation of explaining away what to any reasonable person is the simple and obvious meaning of Jesus' words. Referring to the passage he says: "It is the act of giving which He (Jesus) emphasises." Even if this fairly stated the case, we quite fail to see how it in any way helps the argument that Jesus' death was not a sacrifice made solely on our behalf; for if He in any true sense gave His life, then it was impossible that He could have been as Christadelphians assert, under an obligation to do so. For could there have been any circumstances which made His death necessary on His own account. A man who pays a bill which he owes does not speak of giving something of his to benefit someone else; nor does a man who is justly under sentence of death claim to be suffering for his brother.

It is true that Jesus emphasises the fact of His giving, and well might He do so, for reason insists that if His life was forfeit for any cause whatsoever, then His death could not have been a sacrifice. But He does very much more than this. He not only says "The Son of man came to give His life," but He tells us why He gave it; He gave it as a ransom.

If, as L.G.Sargent says, Jesus was only concerned with emphasising that His life was given. He had already said so; what purpose was served by Him adding the explanation that He gave it as a ransom? This word ransom, like redemption, has a clear and precise meaning, and its use by Jesus in relation to His sacrifice shows the complete failure of Sargent's argument and presents Christadelphians with another problem which they cannot solve.

The word in the original is "*lutron*," a price; redeem in the original is "*agorazo*," to acquire at the forum or in the market by purchase; thus a ransom is a price paid over for the redemption or a purchase back of something which has become alienated from its original owner. Its application to the sacrifice of Christ is appropriate for very good reasons which will be explained. God has based man's Salvation upon the principle of purchase and not of unconditional forgiveness of sins. That is why our faith must be based, not upon baptism as a washing, and a woolly hope that we may scrape through the day of judgment, but upon the knowledge that we belong to Christ now because He has bought us with His own blood, and for that reason, even though we shall be unworthy, we shall be in no wise cast out.

Man originally belonged to God but by disobedience became the bondservant of sin, earning sin's wages, death, as a debt owing. But Jesus, not a servant of sin, paid the debt Himself and thus secured man's deliverance. The objection, often made and echoed by L.G.Sargent that in this case there is no one to whom the price is literally paid is a mere quibble and if people are foolish enough to be misled by such will-o'-the-wisp into rejecting the real purpose and meaning of Jesus' death they deserve little sympathy. If a man breaks the law and has to pay a fine, no actual person benefits; the money goes to satisfy the claim of law personified in the State. If a man has to do six months hard labour, no one benefits from

his imprisonment, but no one would be so foolish as to deny that he had paid his penalty simply because no one had received the price!

In the series of articles "Redemption in Christ," W.F.Barling made much of this point, and because we spoke of personification of sin (as does the Apostle Paul) and referred to Jesus' death as the payment of our debt, he went so far as to charge us with belief in a personal devil.

We pointed out that our view was in perfect accord with "Eureka," but Barling disclaimed Dr. Thomas' teaching and implied that it was no longer accepted as authoritative. It was therefore rather a surprise when we came across a pamphlet by the late C.C.Walker called "A Ransom for All" which was printed as recently as 1920, and which quoted verbatim from "Eureka" Vol. 1 page 20 as follows:-

"Paul reminds the saints in Rome that they were all the servants of sin once; but thanks God on their behalf that they had been free from sin and were now the servants of righteousness, having obeyed from the heart a form of teaching, into which they were delivered (Rom. 6:17). They obeyed a form of teaching which emancipated, liberated, or set them free from the Lordship of Sin." *(note below)

* Note this, in contrast to J. Carter's teaching dealt with in an article on Baptism in the C.L. Nos. 80 - 82

To be continued next month.

Reply to Mr B. Fincher

Over a period of time, discussions have taken place between Mr. B.Fincher a Christadelphian and Bro. A. Woodhouse of the Nazarene Fellowship in which Bro. P. Parry has also joined. These have been by letters and Tapes. Mr. Fincher has put forward the usual B.A.S.F beliefs supported where possible by the writings of Dr. Thomas and R.Roberts.

The following is a letter by Bro. P. Parry dated 21-5-86 in reply to Mr. Fincher and the Christadelphian beliefs of a 'change of Adams nature after he sinned': 'Mortal Resurrection': and 'Judgment.'

Dear Mr Fincher,

As a lover of the Truth of God - the hidden treasure which must be sought in His Holy Word spoken by men empowered by His Spirit and not by the precept, of men - I would ask you to consider this fact before making blatant unscriptural statements like some I have listened to on your tape to Albert Woodhouse. I do not disagree with everything you say by any means, neither would I stoop as low as to call things (you express by an unenlightened mind) as rubbish, that is in regard to what Albert believes. I feel sorry for you because your premises are faulty from the beginning and this is also true of the great majority who believe as you do without the scriptural evidence, that Adam's nature was changed after he sinned. You made this statement on the tape. "...Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts stated there was no evidence in Scripture for believing this but that the Scriptural evidence was opposed to such reasoning... Paul also opposes your belief I Corinthians 15:44-49 where he speaks of The first man Adam was made a living soul etc., a description in physical terms of exactly what man is now, but omitting his relationship which was changed by sin, a legal not a physical matter, which both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts accepted before the Apostate doctrine of original-sin got hold of them as it has you. You take hold of Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 7 as support for this Apostate doctrine, yet even Dr. Thomas could see from the context that Paul was looking back upon himself as an unregenerated Jew and unconverted to Christ and boasting in a law that could never make him free from the slavery under the bondage into which he had been sold by Adam. You say yourself that the context is all-important to an understanding of the teaching of the Spirit, why then deny what Paul says of himself and the converted to whom he was

writing in Romans chapter 6. Why deny that Paul was one of the greatest examples of doing good and following Christ, by taking out of context what he says in Romans 7:18 and by so doing believe in effect that Paul was stating his ignorance of Christ's teaching which he had received by revelation, and did not know how to perform that which was good? Cannot you grasp that the term 'in the flesh' is descriptive of those alienated from God by Adam's sin and the term 'in the Spirit' descriptive of those who are in Christ by virtue of passing from death to life as stated in Romans 6 and confirmed in Romans 8:1 and 2? This is the justification Albert Woodhouse is drawing attention to - he knows as I do that we are justified from our alienated position by faith and Baptism into the death of Christ but we shall not be morally justified at His coming unless we finish the course and hold fast the faith and even then eternal life is not by virtue of our own works, but is the gift of God.

I think you should be more careful in using the scriptural terminology 'The Flesh,' especially when you accuse people of putting confidence in the flesh when in fact the context is in reference to 'the mind of the flesh' or the natural unregenerated man un-renewed by the Spirit of Christ. We put no confidence in the 'mind of the flesh' but we have to admit honour to God that we are capable as creatures of His Creation, flesh and blood, of doing what He asks of us after our conversion to Christ and a renewed spirit governed by His Word. You admit yourself we have to be answerable for sins committed. We admit sometimes we fail, this is the reason for God's provision of Jesus as our High Priest in order that in the words and desire of the disciple Jude, He might keep us from falling and present us faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy. This is the work which is taking place now, and the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are His and let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity - this is possible, and pleasing to God - but we have to be in Christ now, members of his Body. How then can you say that sin is in our members when we are the members of Christ? You are not taking into account the context. Your premises are faulty from the beginning. You say the B.A.S.F. is irrelevant yet you support its theory of changed nature. Many more Christadelphians are of the same mind when faced with the facts because they are unable to explain the clauses in the B.A.S.F. The changed nature theory is an obstacle to all and therefore the 'Atonement' is beyond their explanation and is therefore omitted and never taught.

This matter of the Sacrifice of Christ must be understood and accepted, the death He died was an unjust death on our behalf 'The just for the unjust' to bring us to God, the penalty for Adam the sinner was Judicial, he was already corruptible and capable of dying at creation therefore God found a substitute in the animals slain typifying Christ who in God's foreknowledge would be willing to give a life unforfeited and un-alienated by Adam's sin to purchase out of bondage those whom God concluded under that one sin on the Federal principle. I have included a loan of the matter by H.C.Gates "How are the dead raised etc." I have already written one some time ago refuting the process theory of Dr. Thomas which you prefer to Paul's definition by the Spirit, but I regard this one by Gates as covering most of the ground so I would like it returned at your convenience. Our view of Christ and his nature is that he was the same flesh and blood nature as we are now and as Adam when created. The difference between Adam and Jesus is only seen in relationship and ownership after reading of Adam's transgression - he became Sin's 'bondservant and therefore styled "by Paul in the proper Greek rendering 'Sin's Flesh' no difference in the quality, merely the ownership. Jesus was in nature like Adam at Creation and like Adam - Son of God - Jesus retained his sonship and could therefore be termed God's flesh or flesh belonging or related to God and not owned by Master Sin as a slave. Adam's sin did not alter his flesh, it altered his legal position because he had violated God's Law, therefore he was guilty and under a sentence which could end his natural existence if put into effect, he was in fact legally dead and all in his loins were in danger of non-existence. Paul explains this in Romans chapter 5 and natural death is not the subject of this chapter, this is where almost the whole of Christendom is astray and cannot explain "The Sacrifice of Christ", the Christadelphian effort being the most blasphemous and unacceptable of all. I say this in all sincerity having travelled that road myself and realised that the Love, Justice and Mercy of God is absent from their efforts in their explanation that Christ had to die for his own cleansing from sin- nature etc. I hope you will excuse me mentioning again your belief that the resurrection of the just and unjust are simultaneous at the appearing of Christ, and building your theory on much of Dr. Thomas. I would remind you that Dr. Thomas said of both classes "Their coming forth is a resurrection from the dead"; let us consider the words of Him who is the resurrection and the Life. Luke chapter 20 v 55 shows beyond doubt that a certain class are considered to be worthy of the world to come before the

resurrection to that glorious state because they are the children of God and made equal to the Angels and cannot die any more - Jesus mentions Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as representative of that class and for identification of Abrahams children you can do no better than read Galatians 5:26-29. Those who are 'in Christ' live through Christ being now in the 'likeness' of His resurrection; not incorruptible of course - but will be at His appearing as John says, "Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." What happened to Saul of Tarsus when he saw Jesus? He could not behold or see Him as He is he had to depend on the voice. Saul was corruptible and could not see Him as He is. John says, "We shall be like him when he appears, not when we appear; and will see him as he is." This is only possible in incorruptible Angelic nature. John is not concerned with a judgment seat of assize like unto a court of law where someone is under prosecution. Paul says "What is our joy and crown of rejoicing, are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." If judgment is to determine whether I am worthy of eternal life by my works then I am a hopeless case, but I rest on the Love and Mercy of God who freely delivered up His Son for us all and will with Him freely give us all things. Because He came to do His Fathers will to die for us.

Like David, "I shall be satisfied to awake with his likeness." Your view in regard to David Psalm 17 and Daniel, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" implies that all who appear before the judgment seat of Christ are asleep until the verdict is given, whereas they awake to either everlasting life or corruption according as they have sown. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap - to the Spirit Life Everlasting - to the flesh corruption. In his process Dr. Thomas speaks of the responsible dead "being raised to stand "before the judgment seat of Christ in re-created bodies like that of Adam when created, and those responsible who are yet alive and remain so unto the coming of Christ also stand before Him with those who have been raised. In view of your statement that Adam's nature was changed from what it was when created, what nature do these resurrected people have in order to differentiate, seeing you believe in a corruptible resurrection and a non-change of those who are alive and remain? Surely on your own assumption there are people of different natures from one another standing and awaiting a verdict whereby those natures remain, or are changed. Can you therefore explain what the nature of Adam was at creation if it was not corruptible and capable of death? If you can then you are a cleverer man than the Apostle Paul and the man who was moved to write the Genesis account. Perhaps you should pause and think as to whether many of the things you believe might be rubbish. In conclusion, I believe much in a similar vein as you do in regard to Israel after the flesh - that they are not the people of God and are not in the land ready for Christ.

You seem to be rather dogmatic on Resurrection and Judgment. I am convinced there is more evidence in the scriptures to oppose your view. If raised incorruptible before judgment is correct, then according to our faith be it unto us. You according to your faith will be raised corruptible if raised at all, I shall be raised incorruptible if I have obtained a good report through faith. Hebrews chapter 11. May these few words help to remove dogmatic assumptions, I am sure Albert meant it this way.

I respect your sincerity and am yours in the same.

P. Parry, an Ex. Christadelphian.

The Personification Of Sin.

Those who scoff at the idea of the personification of sin ought to remember that this is the Divine appointment to enable simple people to perceive more readily the operation of the Federal Principle and to realise the absolute necessity of understanding the scheme of redemption. Having become by transgression 'the servant of sin,' sold by his own act into bondage, Adam became sin's possession. No provision for reprieve or remission was made in the Edenic Law and Adam could do nothing to obtain it. Repentance, sorrow, tears, would all be unavailing apart from a merciful intervention from the one whom he had disobeyed. Having become the lawful possession of another (sin) there was no honourable means

by which he could be released from this bondage except by redemption, necessitating that the equivalent price of what he had lost (life) be paid for his freedom. How could this be done in a way to uphold justice and in harmony with the attributes of the Almighty is a problem none of us could ever have thought of, but it is worked out for us in the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Of one flesh and nature with all other men, tried and tempted as they have been, subjected to evil and persecution, yet proving by a life of perfection that Adam could have obeyed, and ought to obey, and when we sin and displease God it is because we do not try hard enough - as hard as Jesus did - to do what we know to be right. When we speak of the ransom effected by Jesus in His death as the purchase of man back to God by the payment of the exact price forfeited in Eden, some are apt to poke fun at the idea of such a commercial view. Let them get on with it. When they can get away from the principle of purchase and redemption in scripture, and when they can put forward an explanation which meets the facts on any other basis, we will take notice of them. Till then we prefer the teaching of scripture.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PURCHASE.

A thief... should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then shall he be sold for his theft.

Exodus 22:5.

I am carnal, sold under (into the power of) sin.

Romans. 7:14

After that he is sold, he may be redeemed again, one of his brethren may redeem him.

Leviticus 25:48

The Lord... bought them.

II Peter. 2:1

Ye are bought with a price.

I Corinthians 6:20

Redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ.

I Peter. 1:19

Purchased with His own blood.

Acts. 20:28

Redeemed to God by thy blood,

Revelations 5:9

E. Brady.