

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 104

## October 1988

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## Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It was a most unexpected letter and one I read through a second and third time with mixed feelings. Feelings of pleasure and joy, and of doubt. Pleasure, for being thought suitable for the task; joy, realising I had been so readily accepted into the family of those of like precious faith, and then doubts crept in. Was I the right person for the task asked of me? Could I do what was expected? Why Me? And so it was a week or two before I wrote back to Evelyn and Harvey Linggood saying I was willing to accept the task of producing the Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter, and now, here I am, endeavouring to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before.

First of all I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to Evelyn and Harvey for all their work in issuing the Circular Letter so consistently and conscientiously. Their devotion to the task has been evident in every issue and I feel sure I am speaking for all in saying their work has been much appreciated.

Do you have any suggestions for the Circular Letter? How about a Questions and Answers section? Also, if you have a particular passage of scripture, or a hymn or a poem that has special meaning for you and you wish to share it, please do write to me and if possible please tell us why it is so special.

Over the last few weeks I have been considering a special issued of our Circular Letter for circulation amongst our Christadelphian friends setting out the alternative views and exhorting those who will to consider again their doctrines and give reasonable thought to the views we offer. It is our Heavenly Father who is calling out a people for His Name, and our position is to help, encourage, comfort and support those seeking a better understanding of the Atonement. “If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine” is the promise of Jesus we do well to keep before us when we so often find ourselves in opposition to our Christadelphian friends and be ready to give the reason for the hope that is within us.

World news is so full of disasters our senses tend to become dulled by the enormity of it all. On the one hand we rejoice that the coming of our Lord, so longed for, is very close, and on the other hand we are saddened by the awful knowledge that the state of things in the world is to get much worse yet. Habakkuk, in seeing this vision, cried out “O Lord, in wrath remember mercy.” May it be our prayer, too.

With Love to all, in the Masters service, Russell Gregory.

## Letter from Harold Dawson:

Dear Brother Russell,

Today I received the Circular Letter from Bro. and Sister Linggood which contained the announcement that you are to take over the Editorship of the Circular Letter and I would like to thank you for doing so, and also extend a vote of thanks to Harvey and Evelyn for the very worthy dedication they brought to the task of Editorship for a considerable period of time.

The standard of the Circular Letters has been quite excellent and they were always both interesting and encouraging to me and I am sure to other members. So thank you Russell, we look forward to the encouragement your pen will bring to us all. And thank you most sincerely dear Harvey and Evelyn for a challenging task undertaken and fulfilled so well. Let us all realise that we can offer articles and even brief comments to the Circular Letter through our new Editor so he can then compile each issue into a meaningful exchange of ideas and experiences in our wider realisation of the truth as we have been blessed to come to understand it.

I think a wider breakthrough of the Truth about the meaning, the real meaning of the Sacrifice of Christ is taking place in Christadelphian ecclesias and there is not that much more time. If the Lord remains away another ten years the number of Christadelphian ecclesias will be greatly reduced and the age of our own membership will be similarly a factor in the survival of the Nazarene Fellowship beyond that period of time. The Lord, of course, knows all about this issue and the factors I refer to. Let us pray, each of us, then for His return to implement the Kingdom, to replace the failure of Human government with Divine success; when Jerusalem becomes the Capital of the world and the City of Jesus Christ, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father and The Prince of Peace.

May we then be called to His presence that He may, in knowing our weaknesses know and acknowledge also our strengths, that we strove to correct a wrong comprehension of the price He paid for our redemption in spending His riches (His unforfeited life) to redeem His brethren. We all long for this do we not? The valley levelled and the rough places made smooth refer, I believe, not to the shape of the earth's surface but to the removal of sin and misunderstandings, such as exist between Christadelphians and the Nazarene Fellowship. How deeply sad the present situation really is, but the work of Christ includes the correction of all wrongs and the eradication of sin by the end of the millennial reign of Jesus.

May we then each receive a crown of righteousness which will never fade away and be granted those things that God has prepared for those that love Him.

Sincerely your brother in Christ, Harold L. Dawson.

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## DEFIANCE and REPENTANCE.

When thinking of defiance two people who grossly defied God come to mind. Balaam and Pharaoh. Let us first look at Balaam. His fault was that the prospect of fame and monetary gain made him "bent on getting his own way, whether it was God's will or not. He was so determined on that futile mission trying to curse the Children of Israel that God had to intervene forcibly. We know what happened. His ass saw the angel of God. But when trying to save Balaam "by turning out of the angel's way, Balaam thought the ass was stubborn and smote her. This happened three times until Balaam eventually himself saw the angel. Now to be honest with ourselves, when we badly want something, not necessarily money or material possessions do we always ask ourselves whether our wishes are in accordance with the will of God as recorded for us in the Bible? Do we always pray to God before taking any important decisions in our lives and ask whether it is His will? And if our wishes do not materialize, being unfulfilled, do we gracefully

accept it as God's will, realizing that there is a reason for it which we may only discover years later, perhaps only after the resurrection.

Now the case of Pharaoh. He broke his promise to let the Children of Israel go free nine times. But the ninth time proved once too often. God was very patient with him, considering how he defied Moses and Aaron. And Pharaoh mistook God's patience for slackness, assuming God did, after all, not mean what He said. He mistook God for one who just made empty threats. Now none of us openly defies God to this pattern. But we all have our weaknesses in one direction or another. We all sin in many ways, then regret it and ask God for forgiveness. And we sincerely mean it at the time. But unfortunately we often commit the same sin again. I often ask myself how we are trying God's patience when we do the same wrong repeatedly. But let us never be guilty of Pharaoh's mistake of misinterpreting God's patience for weakness. It could easily be done, not intentionally like Pharaoh, but unconsciously, because the punishment does not always immediately follow the misdeed. Think of a child who does something he shouldn't. Father threatens punishment "Don't do this again, or else..." But some are more patient and easy going than others and allow the wrong to go through a few times, though threatening repeatedly. The child then thinks he is getting away with it, mistaking father's patience for sheer bluff, very much like Pharaoh's attitude towards God, though in a much smaller way and not really intending direct defiance. But if he is a caring father heeding Solomon's proverbs about a loving father chastening his son betimes, the time will come when the child will do it once too often only to discover that father meant what he said after all. He will then discover the hard and painful way the difference "between patience and slackness of keeping promises. And we when we sin and the evil consequences do not appear immediately, do not let us think we got away with it. Sin is sin. But God in His mercy and through the intercession of our High Priest forgives the repentant sinner. Let us never slacken in our efforts to do "better next time. It is easily done when we apparently and only apparently, we do not experience any evil consequences. But let us be conscious of God's mercies, undeserved on our part, & beware of avoiding Pharaoh's mistake of taking unfair advantage of it.

I now want to turn to the very opposite: sincere repentance. Here again there are two examples: David and Paul. The former committed adultery and then tried to cover it up. But in doing so, he committed another sin, murder. No matter how much he tried to hide it God did not let him do so. He eventually confessed to God, and his prayer of repentance is recorded in Psalm 51. Trying to cover wrong doing by rulers and people in authority has, is, and will be until the return of the Lord, a common feature. We have an example of it in I Samuel chapter 15 when Saul failed to carry out God's command to destroy utterly the Amalekites and all their possessions. And he had to admit it. But he tried his utmost to persuade Samuel to come with him just this once so that the people should not find out. Of course it became known eventually that God had rejected Saul and appointed David in his place.

How different from the case of Paul. Paul, unlike David, did not transgress the law. He was guilty of a misguided zeal in persecuting the Christians. But one outstanding feature in his character is his open admission in public, both in front of the Jewish teachers and in front of the Roman authorities, that he was wrong. Just think of it: a teacher of some fame, an authority on the law of Jewish tradition, held in high esteem by Gamaliel, a religious leader at that time, admitting his error in public, unashamedly. Not what we find of leaders and statesmen of our day, is it? What can we learn from this? Let us for a moment not look on doctrinal matters of his epistles, but just at the repentant Paul. Of course Paul's repentance was brought about suddenly through God's intervention. Our own conversion did not come about as drastically as this. For most of us it came about through reading literature, or a friend showing us the way of truth. But like Paul we all had to admit some time in our lives that the faith we were brought up in, or the faith we embraced later in our lives was wrong. Not necessarily in public, but nevertheless to some close friends, and it took some courage. But with all our faults, we can at least say that we let God lead us and were not defiant like Pharaoh and Balaam. We resolved at the time of our conversion to serve God to the utmost of our ability. Let us continue in this path. If we have failed, as we all do at times, let us renew our resolve. It is never too late. God is patient and merciful.

Only let us not fall into Pharaoh's way and take unfair advantage of it. Then we shall find that God will never leave or forsake us.

Bro. Leo. Dreifuss.

## NEVER LOOK BACK

There Sodom and Gomorrah stood, two wicked cities on the plain  
Whose dwellers, rather than do good, so often took God's Name in vain.  
They loved the pleasures of the day, the fleeting joys that license brought;  
They ate and drank, and rose to play - God was not in all their thoughts.

For many years God's mercy flowed, but they continued deep in sin,  
And failed to show their gratitude by striving to be clean within,  
Till God said they should flaunt no more their wickedness, or be employed  
In seeking pleasures by the score; for they were doomed to be destroyed.

But there was one, righteous Lot, whose soul was vexed from day to day  
By what he witnessed: He would not take part with them in any way.  
To him two angels came one night, and, warning of disaster near,  
Said, "To yon mountain, take your flight, with every one you hold dear."

Then Lot went to his sons-in-law, and warned them that they, too, should flee;  
But with a saddened heart he saw they would not listen to his plea.  
He seemed to them as one who mocked, so calloused were their hearts, and seared;  
And so they shrugged his kind words off, and revelled while disaster neared.

At dawn the angels gave command to Lot, his wife and daughters, too,  
And, taking each one by the hand, they bade that wicked place "adieu"  
Saved by a just and righteous God, they pressed ahead, until Lot's wife,  
With heartstrings where her kin abode, looked back and thereby lost her life.

The record of events long past, all kept for our instruction now,  
Will aid us if we will hold fast the angel's hand, and not allow  
The things of earth to interfere, lest we should make a crooked track;  
For once again destruction's near, and we must never once look back.

L.L.S.

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## WORDS.

Many words in the Scriptures are used to convey different things, either direct or by inference, such a word is FIRE. It is brought to our notice early in Genesis chapter 5 and continues to come before us on numerous occasions until the 20th chapter of the Revelation. Fire can represent warmth; trial; acceptance; rejection; warning; preservation; destruction. If we look at and consider the context in which the word appears we shall soon realize under which heading or purpose the word is used. Let us look at just a few instances. Adam having disobeyed God's word was cast out of the Garden of Eden. We read in verses 25 & 24 of Genesis chapter 5:

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life".

Here fire is used as a means shall I say to prevent Adam and Eve from entering again the garden for their own material comfort. But all was not lost. They had been cast out by God but were not kept out for all time. God had provided the means of reconciliation for them whereby their sin was covered by sacrifice, the lamb provided by God seen in its fullness in Jesus Christ. Then we look at v. 9 of the 20th chapter of Revelation where we read:

“And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them”.

Here we are brought to the time in history when those nations who would not accept what may appear the political side of the Kingdom of God but gathered together in battle to resist, they had encompassed the saints and the beloved city but fire brought their destruction. Another example of fire is brought before us as a softening element in Genesis 4:22, wherein we have Tubal-cain mentioned as an artificer in brass and iron which required the use of fire to make it pliable to be able to work the metals to the required shape. This reminds us how the fire of tribulation softens and fits us for God’s use in His purpose. See Acts 14:22. We next look at fire in association with blood sacrifice and the result as seen in Genesis 8. After the flood waters were assuaged Noah when back on dry land took of every clean beast and fowl and offered a burnt (fire) offering on the altar he had built. A thank offering. God’s acceptance and pleasure is recorded in the words:- “The Lord smelted a sweet savour.” We now turn to the time of Abraham during whose life we have many examples of the use of fire recorded. God had made promises to Abraham, which on the face of them seemed could not be fulfilled. Father of a mighty nation Abraham was to be , in number as the stars of heaven and the sand upon the sea shore, yet in Genesis chapter 16 we read “Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children.” This being so Abraham naturally asked whereby shall I know this thing will take place (in no way do we think Abraham doubted the word of God). Full details as given by God are seen in Genesis xv. vs. 8-11, and at verse 17 we read:”

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking (fire) furnace, and a burning lamp (fire) passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram...”

In this instance, Abraham received God’s assurance by what we may regard as confirmation by yet another aspect of fire. Now we pass on to the time of Sodom and Gomorrah where Abraham saw another demonstration of fire; this time it was judgment & destruction. The cry of Sodom & Gomorrah was great and their sin is very grievous says God... the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven, later Abraham looked... and he saw as the smoke of a furnace.

Let us now move forward some 200 years or more to the time of the birth of Moses which was the time when Pharaoh’s instructions to the midwives if the birth was a male child, ye shall kill him. When his mother saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. Very early in his life fire had played a part, when his mother could no longer hide him we are told in Exodus ii v 5 “...she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime & pitch & put the child therein...” the latter material required preparation and softening by a process which needs the use of fire. While in the household of Pharaoh’s daughter he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren and he killed the Egyptian. When he found the event had come to the knowledge of Pharaoh and that Pharaoh sought to slay him he fled to Midian, where he kept the flock of his father in law Jethro. A great work lay before Moses, in the solitude of the wilderness he would ponder on many things. Fires in such surroundings would be a common occurrence and taken for granted. Yet it was a fire which was to bestir Moses. A bush on fire yet it was not consumed, this was so unusual that Moses said “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” Here we see fire used by God to draw Moses to the initial stages of his great work for God on behalf of the Hebrews whom he was to lead from the Egyptian bondage. Such was the work that it would require him to return to Egypt, surely this would be the last place Moses would wish to return to in view of past events. But the purpose of God is sure and steadfast and brooks no excuses for man’s non compliance. In the third and fourth chapters of Exodus Moses was told by God, “I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.” Moses reply (or rather an excuse) was “I am not eloquent... I am slow of speech,” but God sent Aaron along with him saying “I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do. So Moses returned to Egypt and stood before Pharaoh, saying:- “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go...” Before Israel were to go the power of the God of Israel was seen & felt by the Egyptians, as seen in the plagues, in one of which we see fire was an element Exodus 9:25,24:-

“And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground... So there was hail and fire mingled with the hail very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land...”

Next we come to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt followed by the journey through the wilderness. Having been told by Pharaoh:- “Rise up, and get you forth from among my people... And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste...” Israel left in haste, the Egyptians followed them no doubt having realized their position without the slave labour force who they felt sure would be trapped by the Red Sea. But not so. In Genesis 14:15 we read:-

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever”.

The deliverance which the children of Israel were about to experience, the like has never been seen since. It was to involve fire. Under normal conditions fire produces smoke which slowly passes into the atmosphere, fire smoulders dies and returns to the earth, and is then forgotten about. But we are about to see a marvellous work by the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel. The full details are to be read in verses 19 & 20 of this xiv chapter of Exodus. The angel which came between the camp of the Egyptians & the camp of Israel took up a fresh position, so far the angel stood before Israel and gave them light to enable them to complete the journey through the Red Sea, considering their numbers and the fact that they were either on foot, man and beast even though wagons may have played a part in their transport we feel it must have taken them a full 24 hours, day and night; but now the angel worked a marvellous work, from being a pillar of fire before Israel it was removed to behind them and to the Egyptians it appeared as cloud so that neither came near to each other. We must now note that freed from the Egyptian hosts from following them. Fire was still to be part of their experiences, whether kings, prophets, priests or the massed congregation as they journeyed through the wilderness toward the Promised Land. When they were brought into the Promised Land and appeared settled fire still comes before us, being used to show forth many of the varied representations listed earlier. As Israel journeyed under Moses examples are many which portray in various forms, God. Remember Deut. 4:24 - “For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God” and when Moses asked of God as in Exodus 33:18, “...I beseech thee, show me thy glory”, but the reply of God is seen in verse 20 “...Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.” Such is the consuming glory of God. Moses when he later returned from the Mount Sinai after his visit to hear and receive the commandments on stone the skin of his face shone we are told in Exodus 34:29, such must have been the intensity of the glory of God, although no doubt it was shaded from Moses while he was in the mount. Before Moses was called up to the top of the mount, Israel were fearful for again we are told “mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.” During their journey everything was ordered both in daily life and in the tabernacle worship. If any went out of line they were punished as we see in the case of Nadab and Abihu of the sons of Aaron for they “offered strange fire before the Lord. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, & they died before the Lord.” We have further instances of destructive fire as seen in II Kings chapter 1 where Ahaziah enquired of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron as to whether he would recover. But his messengers were rebuffed Elijah who said “is it not because there is not a God in Israel that they went to the god of Ekron? Two companies of 50 with their captain were destroyed by fire, as evidence that the prophet was of God. The 3<sup>rd</sup> captain no doubt realized the folly of Ahaziah in going to Ekron and not to the God of Israel in the first place saved him and his men from fire's destructive element. In the next chapter of 2 Kings we have the parting of Elijah from earth along with the request of Elisha who asked for a double portion of thy spirit. Seen in chapter 2, yet again fire played an important part. Elisha knew Elijah was about to be parted from him. Verse 11 of the chapter records. “And it came to pass, as they still went on, & talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire & horses of fire, and parted them asunder.” Here we have as it were confirmation of Elisha as a prophet of the Lord to continue the work of God. Before the times of the Kings & Judges we have such instances of that of Achan's trespass which was punished by stoning & fire as seen in Joshua 7:24 & 25. While in Judges 6:14-25 we have another example of fire being used to show Gideon there was work before him: To save Israel. “Go in this thy might, and thou shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites” verse 14. Like Moses when he was given a commission to bring out the Israelites from Egypt asked for signs, so Gideon asked for a sign that the man before him (the angel) was sent from God. The details of evidence as to what was about to take place are given in verse 21 of this 6<sup>th</sup>

chapter of Judges, which when Gideon saw, then he realized he was an angel of the Lord, for "...the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand.....and there rose up fire out of the rock..."

Another incident involving fire as a decisive factor comes before us in I Kings chapter 18. Many of the children of Israel had gone astray and worshipped Baal; the time being during the reign of Ahab who was a Baal worshipper. The incident is well known to all and recorded in verses 21-39. The followers of Baal cried out "O Baal hear us" but there was no voice, nor any that answered. But Elijah cried out "Hear me O Lord... the fire of the Lord fell, & consumed the burnt sacrifice"; when the people saw it they cried out, "The Lord, He is the God." This incident was indeed a grand climax to the recorded miracles of God by the hand of Elijah. We now turn to the prophet Jeremiah 25:29 where we read, "Is not my word like as a fire saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Yes the word of the Lord through Moses in the wilderness caused water to gush from the rock so that Israel could have drink. Returning to an earlier chapter in Jeremiah we read that Jeremiah said (20:9), "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." He could not keep quiet any more than could Isaiah when he had to reprove Israel as in the first verse of chapter 58 "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Like many worthies of old, in both the new and old Testaments we in our day are enthused with a burning (fire) passion when the word of God is called in question or misrepresented, specially on such subjects as the Atonement whereby man's Salvation is seen to be in jeopardy as the result of false doctrine being propagated. It is then that today the fire of God's word eats us up. Again the words of Ezekiel come to mind "thou shall hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me." Ezekiel 33:7. Now we turn to the New Testament and we see the word fire can represent the same varied use according to its association with other words. James in his epistle at chapter 5 equates the tongue with fire, where we are shown such extremes.

- v. 5 "...how great a matter a little fire kindleth;"
- v. 6 "And the tongue is a fire... so is the tongue among our members".
- v. 8 "But the tongue can no man tame... it is full of deadly poison".
- v. 9 "Therewith bless we God... therewith curse we men"

But now let us look on the brighter side. The Scribes and the Pharisees with their associates who prided themselves in the fact they were the literal descendants of Abraham, for some reason came along to John the Baptist just as to why we are not told but John reminds them that his was only a baptism of water for repentance, but there was a greater baptism to be had from one greater than he, for John told them "I indeed baptise you with water... he that cometh after me is mightier than I... he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matthew 3:7 & 11). Now we turn to the Acts of the Apostles where we see a literal fulfilment of John's words concerning Jesus; who by now had been Himself baptised with the fire of tribulation & the Holy Spirit having risen from the grave with Spirit Life. In Acts 1 when Jesus was assembled with His disciples as in 5:4:-

"And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

In the very next chapter this prophecy was fulfilled as we see in verses 1 to 4. Surely this is one of the great instances in the Scriptures where we have the Holy Spirit upon men and confirmed by the witness of God using fire as His approval. Last we come to the Revelation in which we have John's vision of Christ in Glory. Chapter 1 v 14 "His head... His hair, as snow... His eyes as a flame of fire." In the message to the church in Thyatira, again is repeated the same "The Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire." And yet again in 19:12. Soon after the creation man had caused God to repent that he had made man because of the thoughts of men's hearts were evil continually. The flood was the method God used to wipe out the wicked. But never again will God use a flood. Fire is to be the final destruction of men who will not have God's Son to rule over them.

God's final judgments upon the wicked are seen in Revelation, as in 8:7, 9:17, 16:8, 18:8, 20:9.

Bro. E.H.Linggood.

# FOR THE HONOUR OF GOD, HIS SON AND HIS WORD

## APPLES OF GOLD IN PICTURES OF SILVER

The reason for writing this article on the collection of Christadelphian Statements is to show why we left that body and why we continually send out our literature. We agree with every one produced and we “believe if they were taken according to their logical conclusions the many divisions existing among the Household could “be reconciled; also the lukewarmness and indifference would give place to a much more brotherly spirit, not only among themselves but also to their neighbours, so that the love of God in Christ would not fail in its manifestation, not only in preaching the Gospel of Christ, but in our manner of living as a labour of love.

While we believe the following doctrines, we cannot make them of none effect by man-made constitutions and inconsistencies as we hope to show.

Bible Inspired; God One: The Holy Spirit the Power of God: Man created out of the dust: The Promises; Redemption: Second Coming of Christ and His reign on Earth: Hell (the grave): The devil (sin personified): Baptism: Resurrection: and all others which are necessitated by them.

While there are different interpretations on some, our first concern is to be consistent upon the plain, simple truths. Here is one example, viz., the Judgement. The general idea of this is that when Christ returns there will be Court Trial when each responsible person will give account of every good and bad deed done during their lifetime. This would take some forty years after the type of the forty years in the Wilderness to see whether each person was worthy to enter the anti-typical Promised Land. Without going into details, we have no fear in saying that if we have forgiveness of sins NOW (and there is no doubt if we confess and forsake them) there is no need for this supposed prolonged trial. This idea reduces God and His word to less than the inconsistencies of mere men. The Judgement covers a wide field - past, present and future, not only with the saints but with the nations, and not fully revealed in detail.

Why should there be a hard and fast rule which makes people confess something they cannot know nor understand? I know from experience that many believe as we do but have confessed that they dare not say so openly for fear of excommunication.

“Redemption is release for a ransom. All who become God’s servants are therefore released from a former Lord by purchase. The Purchaser is God; and the price or ransom Paid, the Precious Blood of the flesh... of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and without blemish. 1 Peter 1:19. See Eureka, page 50.

Here is a gem of the purest ray. It is our basic foundation upon which we build the whole structure of God’s plan of salvation as centred in Christ Jesus. This meaning of Redemption cannot be put more plainly nor concisely. It expresses our belief in such a way that we do not wish to add, alter, take away, nor even qualify one word. We believe if this was studied the basic idea of Redemption would be solved. Much could be commented upon here but we await your opportunity.

“But we must remember that Jesus could, and did, say ‘My Father’, while He taught His disciples to say ‘Our Father.’ He never joined with them in the use of ‘Our Father,’ thereby maintaining the difference between their sonship and His, for He was Son in actual fact, but they are sons through Him - sons by adoption,” J. Carter.

“Jesus was the subject of a change of nature from the human to the divine... But He was never the subject of ‘A change of status...’ As to ‘adoption’ - still less does this term apply to our Lord.” C. C. Walker.

“As regards His moral relation to the Father, He was under no curse whatever. He was not in the position of guilty man, who is outside Eden, and can approach the Father only with a petition for forgiveness. His relation to the Father was not that of one alienated from Him as was Adam and all his descendants. He was from the beginning Holy (Luke 1:55), a beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased.” J. J. Hadley.

These three extracts could not express our belief more satisfactorily. All knew that Jesus is the Son of God as the records plainly show; but when His nature is considered all sorts of ideas are given which overwhelm the basic principle. Why this is so, is only because they will not for one moment consider that Adam’s nature was the same before and after the fall. We cannot say Jesus was Son of God and Son of Adam at the same time. Either God was His Father or Joseph. Adam was son of God by creation. Jesus was Son of God by begetting of His Spirit. Further comments are not necessary if this distinction of relationship be observed.

“Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is NO evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his organisation... The phrase ‘Sin-in-the-flesh’ is metonymical. It is not expression of a literal element or principle pervading the Physical organisation. Literally sin is Disobedience, or the act of rebellion.” - R. Roberts.

“Death and corruption then, with reproduction, is the fundamental Law of the physical system of the six days... From these premises it will be seen that we dissent from our correspondent’s notion that All creation became corrupt, by which we understand him to mean, ‘constitutionally impregnated with Corrupt ability at the fall. We believe that the change was moral not physical.” - Dr Thomas.

Here is another fundamental foundation stone. While this is so it is the greatest stumbling stone to the right understanding of the loving Sacrifice of Jesus. These statements from the pen of R. Roberts and Dr Thomas must be accepted before the Scripture can be understood, and not on one point only, but several. Here are a few. If Adam was not flesh and blood, he could not have sinned, nor could the death penalty be carried out. Why put Adam under law if he did not have a free will? Why put him under trial or probation for a higher nature if what he had was not capable of it? How was character to be developed? How could God fill the earth if reproduction was not an essential order of creation? Could Redemption, “Without the shedding of Blood” be operative on the basis of a life for a life, if blood was not the life of the flesh? If these principles were examined all error of a supposed changed nature and what it involved could be made one harmonious whole.

“The animal nature will sooner or later dissolve. It was NOT constituted so as to continue in life for ever independent of any further modification. We may admit, therefore, the corruptibility, and consequent mortality, of their nature, without saying that they were mortal. The inherent tendency of their nature to death would have been arrested.”

This reference from Elpis Israel on page 72 is only one of the many that can be produced. There is no reflection upon God whatever. The whole structure is based upon the natural order. It is our recognition in faith that our characters are formed. Corruption or animal nature is not the bar to eternal life. That many evils have developed since the fall is easily understood when we see Israel who were commanded to teach their children the moral law. This was neglected, hence the spiritual depravity of the nation who had all the means at their disposal. This is in harmony with the previous statements and the lesson to us is that transgression of law, either spiritual or natural, will bring its own reward. The second half of this statement should not be overlooked; we have dealt with it at some length in our literature. We say in brief that this cannot “be understood if you apply the physical idea of the word “mortal”. Try the legal and you find it in agreement with the facts of the case.

Dr Thomas - “passing through the grave cleanses no one. They who emerge thence come forth with the same nature they carried into it, and therefore their coming forth is a resurrection.” Eureka, Vol 5, page 587.

If passing through the grave cleanses no one, what does? The scriptures answer in a two-fold sense - The Blood of Christ, 1 John 1-7, and the Word of God, John 15:5. That the flesh and bone of Jesus was the same is recorded in Luke 24:59. His life in the Blood being poured out. The idea that Jesus destroyed human nature and desires by His death is thus contradicted. He destroyed The Sin of the world which held all in bondage by His sacrifice for sin. The violent death of Christ is the answer. Redemption takes place before resurrection. God condemned sin, not our nature.

“‘One Yahweh’ - the one Eternal Spirit multitudinously manifested in the Sons of Eternal Power. When these become apparent at THE Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of the Body - the ‘One Body’ then will be revealed the Mystical Christ.... This occurs at the epoch of the resurrection, termed by Paul, ‘the redemption of the body’ - the ‘One Body.’” Phanerosis, page 51 and 45.

Why have we produced this statement? In our fight for the Truth we have had all sorts of ideas brought to our notice with quotations of Scripture, wherein is no proof whatever. Romans 8:23 is brought to prove that we are not redeemed until we receive an incorruptible body. Our contention is that redemption is as Dr Thomas said in paragraph 1. Resurrection is the outcome of Redemption. We are released from Sin’s claim when we believe and are baptised. Resurrection is only necessary for those who have fallen asleep. The living saints will be changed, but this is not resurrection. Redemption must take place, whereas Resurrection to Life Eternal only affects those who have been redeemed and have fallen asleep.

We suggest that the word “deliverance” is the word to use, Romans 8:25. If you will compare Hebrews 11:55 you will find that they, like us, would not refuse the Redemption that is in Christ; but did refuse Deliverance from the punishment and death which they were subjected to for the sake of Christ, rather than deny Him. Some believe and understand the Dr. that this body consists of a multitude of bodies which will be “delivered”. Romans 8:21.

Listen to Dr Thomas in Phanerosis, pages 45 and 44: “If they had they would have understood that it was the Spirit that had come down, and was to ‘ascend where he was before’, that the Spirit claimed the Cherub Born of Mary as His flesh, because it was prepared for Him.”

We have, from time to time, tried to show the false interpretation of Romans 8:5, When we have stated that Christ was God’s Property or God’s Flesh, we have been asked, Where do you get this new-fangled idea? We promptly reply, From the very verse which you get your supposed sinful Flesh. God sent His OWN Son, His own Property, His own Flesh. It is very strange that they who profess to admire the Dr. do not know this beautiful truth which has been given them. We admire and appreciate this ‘new-fangled’ idea. As the previous statements prove, Jesus was never the Son of Adam nor Sin’s Son; He was the ONLY begotten Son of God.

“Now the blood of Jesus was more precious than the life-blood of any other man. If it had not been so, it would, have been inadequate to the purchase of life for the world.... The blood of Jesus was the only blood of all the generations of Adam that had not been generated by the lust of the flesh; Jesus was an unblemished man without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; for ‘He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.’” Dr Thomas. Eureka, Vol. 1 page 278.

We have been told that we have some mysterious idea about the life and nature of Jesus. Well, as we entirely agree with the Dr. you charge him also. 1 Peter 1:19 says the blood of Jesus was precious. Wherein was Jesus RICH and. we POOR? 2 Corinthians 8:9. We ask you to examine Acts 20: 28 and see if it cannot be said of the blood of Christ as the Dr. says of His flesh. As God was His Father and God was strictly the Redeemer. See what you can make of what Dr Thomas says in a footnote of Phanerosis, page 59, on the word “*Goail*”.

R. Roberts says, “When he passes into Christ his Relation to the whole Death dispensation which Adam introduced is put off. ‘The (genuine) Declaration’ Baptism is the means of the present (Legal) union with Christ. There is a passing out of Adam into Christ.”

Finger Post No 26. "Such put on the Name of Christ in the act of baptism (Galatians 5:27) and stand legally covered."

Elpis Israel, Page 205. "The legal distinction between clean and unclean was done away."

These three statements should be quite enough for anyone to see that the word "legal" is used by those who condemn our use of the word. There are many places in Scripture which cannot be understood without some qualifications. Is the condemnation legal or physical in Romans 8:1 and John 5:24? We defy anyone to show that it is physical, being impossible to harmonise this with Scripture.

"Make His death a penalty due to Himself personally, and you destroy both aspects of His loving obedience, for there can be NO virtue whatever in submitting to a penalty legally due to oneself." - H. Fry. Echoes of Past Controversies, Pages 59-60.

Could anything be plainer or more beautiful? We believe not. In our words. Could anyone in any sort of bondage free himself much less any other? Let these words enter into your heart with the sweet knowledge that Jesus was without sin, the Just dying for the unjust.

The prophet Isaiah voices a lamentation which has been sadly misinterpreted: -

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away." In popular Christianity, which is a lie pure and simple, has propounded demoralising doctrine concerning Righteousness. But it will be said, There is the prophetic phrase. "What then does it mean? The answer in the very words of the context is "our iniquities", that is, the iniquities of the pious frauds of the nation, who professed righteousness and practised iniquity." – Ministry of the Prophets, Page 757-8.

Sin is transgression of Law (1 John 3:4) and the context shows (Isaiah 64:5-7) that this was the sins of Israel. We never have sinful flesh described as "filthy rags" so it is for Christadelphians to explain what C. C. Walker said in "The Atonement." C. C. Walker classes Popular Christianity as a lie, pure and simple, but he does not see that his own doctrine of Sinful Flesh is a lie, pure and simple.

While we believe works of righteousness is part of our loving duty (without which no man shall see the Lord) we would have you remember that Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves a long, long time ago, before works of righteousness could commence. If there is only half a truth in Popular Christianity there is not half a truth in the Sinful Flesh theory that Jesus had to die to cleanse Himself from His filthy flesh.

"A man cannot 'honour God' more than in believing what He promised, and doing what He commanded. Men have not learned the lesson that all they are called upon by God to do, is to believe His word and obey His laws." Elpis Israel, pages 75-87.

We believe this and therefore reject the two-fold idea believed amongst Christadelphians. Firstly they believe that no man can keep the commandments in face of all that is said upon it. Secondly, they teach that Jesus had extra power (of Holy Spirit) to help Him overcome what no other man could do, and thus rob Christ of His honour. We ask you to consider Hebrews 11 and see what these worthies accomplished through faith, whereas Adam failed with a supposed better nature and not such a severe trial. See Hebrews 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 10:15.

"In the animal man there dwelleth no good thing. The Apostle affirms this of himself considered as an unenlightened son of 'the Flesh.'" Elpis Israel. Page 92.

They that are in the flesh cannot please God, This must mean in Adamic Relationship as Paul said, "Ye are not in the flesh," and this cannot mean the literal flesh. "What has the wicked to do in declaring My statutes?" To say that Paul affirmed this of himself as a regenerated man is to deny the facts to the contrary. Christadelphians rest upon this as an excuse for their shortcomings to justify their sinful flesh theory. Paul said. He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. (Philippians 4:8,9,13).

“This blood-Shedding had two significances, related one to the other, and both declarative of a fundamental principle in the relations between God and man, and illustrated in the death of Christ, who was slain for us. The first is that death is the penalty of sin. The blood is the life (Lev, 17:11-14-), and the shedding of the blood was , therefore, typical of death; but it was typical of more than death, it was typical of a Violent manner of death.” R. Roberts 1875 and E. P.C. page 99.

Here again we are in entire agreement and feel a sorrow of heart that Christadelphians cannot see their own inconsistency. The truth of this is seen from Eden to Gethsemane and solves practically the whole plan of Redemption. This gives the death knell to natural death being the wages of sin and confirms the saying, “Without the shedding of Blood there is NO remission.” (Hebrews 9:25).

We do not require forgiveness for ‘Our Nature’ but for the transgression to which that nature inclines us, and because we fail to keep it under control. (H. Fry. “Echoes of Past Controversies” page 98).

Here we are taken back to Eden. If this was studied, the above statement would be more appreciated, (a) Sin is transgression of law; (b) and this with the nature they then had; (c) Adam was responsible for his sin but not his nature. Here we have a three fold cord which cannot be broken in the very beginning, without the least idea of putting the blame on Adam for our present nature.

We will now leave you to consider these truths and decide as to whether we have not taken them to their logical conclusions. We know that we are among the few and that we are reproached in many ways; but we also know that we could not be faithful witnesses for Christ if we did not testify these things, and no one can testify the Truth without dealing in matters of controversy. A faithful testimony consists of attack upon all error which includes inconsistency of its own teaching. No man can love God and Christ who does not understand and believe the scriptural doctrine of Christ. A faithful believer will not fail to declare, with trumpet-tone and sledge hammer blows, that it is imperative that it demands their surrender to its teaching.

People think this “rather strong”. It requires strong things to arouse the people in these days (even Christadelphians) who think they are the people of the Lord; they imagine they are accepted and the only ones that have the saving truth. They are, therefore, difficult to bring to a sense of their true position. It may seem very disagreeable to do this, but there is no alternative.

The duty of God’s servants has, in all ages, been the same. When a man preaches the Real Gospel of the Son of God, it is at the risk of bearing reproach and contention. In this warfare there can be no cessation nor compromise. Not only the Gentiles will have to admit “Our fathers have inherited lies and vanity wherein there is no profit,” but also Christadelphians, who are really modern Jews which make of none effect the Word of God by their man-made constitution and their inconsistency and contradictory teaching of these Gems of truth out of their own mouth,

Please let this article appeal to yourself and examine yourself to see if you are really in the Faith and prove all things and remember that “There is a principal which is a bar against all information which is proof against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - his principle is contempt prior to examination.” Dr Paley.

So come now and let us reason together, that we may study the scriptures and these sayings; that we can show ourselves approved of God and teach the love of God in Christ, as workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and that we may receive the “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter the joy prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” where the Lamb was Slain in type and who bore away the Sin of the world on Calvary that we might sing the song of the Redeemed.

F. J. Pearce.

# COMMENTS RELATING TO THE SERPENT in Genesis chapter 5

The role played by the serpent recorded in the above scripture has always been a subject for speculation, was it literal, or allegorical? There are difficulties with either of these two extremes in harmonising with other relative scriptures. If the literal view is taken we are faced with the unlikely phenomena of “a beast of the field” (verse 1) with apparent equal intelligence in conversation with the woman, but even if this were so, verse 6 intimates that the human pair were together at the time so why did it not address them both? We know that the lower animals have varying degrees of intelligence and some are able to mimic various spoken words but, they are normally dumb and devoid of the reasoning power invested in God’s highest creation (man), they are not moral responsible creatures. Paul’s reference in 1 Corinthians 11:5 lends no real credence to the literal view of the case because ‘subtlety’ is not limited to speech, it is a characteristic which can be manifested in actions and ways, which is only possible in the case of dumb creatures. Nevertheless, the presence of a literal serpent cannot be ruled out if any sense is to be made out of Eve’s excuse “the serpent beguiled me” etc. Could she not have been deceived by what she saw the serpent do? It is quite common in countries where snakes abound to see them in trees where they have a vantage point in catching their prey.

It is quite likely that our first parents had been tempted by the forbidden tree before that fateful day, because, to the natural mind that which is prohibited appears more attractive and arouses the curiosity more than that which is allowed. I therefore submit as a possible explanation that the serpent was in the tree ‘touching it’ (verse 5) and the woman, noticing that no harm came to it by so doing, might she not have been emboldened to do likewise? While the seeming conversation with the beast was nothing more than the reasonings of her tempted mind - it would be as though the serpent had said ‘thou shall not surely die’ etc., although its part in the event was entirely passive, it was only doing that which came naturally to its kind, no outside tempter was necessary to cause the first sin. The testimony of the Apostle James was as true then as now (chap. 1 verse 15-15), ‘enticement’ comes in various ways - by what we see, hear, feel, etc. We do not take the ‘conversation’ between the Devil (Satan) and Christ in the wilderness temptation to be literal so why in the case of Eve? It was evidently auto-suggestion in both cases, though some may still favour the idea of a speaking serpent on the grounds that God caused Balaam’s ass to speak (Numbers 22), but that was most certainly a miracle for the sole purpose of preventing the madness of the prophet ‘who had been hired to curse Israel.’ The only record in the Old Testament scripture and confirmed in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:15) of a dumb creature speaking in man’s voice. 1 Timothy 2:14 states that “Adam was not deceived (presumably by the serpent) but the woman, being deceived was in the transgression.” A possible reason why Eve was deceived could be her failure to take into account that the ‘Tree’ forbidden on pain of death applied only to them as morally responsible and not other creatures, so it follows that the subsequent curse on the serpent recorded in Genesis 5:14 must be understood in a figurative sense only, as the following verse is predictive and concerns mankind not a literal serpent and its seed, obviously. To sum up then, we may say that because the literal serpent was involved (however unwittingly) in the temptation and fall of man, God made it to be symbolic of sin and death, the ‘enemy’ destined to be finally destroyed.

Sister S. E. Linggood.

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“Finally, “brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Philippians 4:8.