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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings

As we go forward into another new year we all hope and pray that this will be the year Messiah returns to us.

I am still reading about William Tyndale and the following extract is from the book about him: -

"The opening chapters of Genesis that Tyndale produced are the first translations - not just the first printed, but the first translations - from Hebrew into English. This needs to be emphasized. Not only was the Hebrew language only known in England in 1529 and 1530 by, at the most, a tiny handful of scholars in Oxford and Cambridge, and quite possibly by none: that there was a language called Hebrew at all, or that it had any connection whatsoever with the Bible, would have been news to the ordinary population. Religion was in Latin: the Mass was in Latin: all the other services, like baptism were in Latin: everything the priest did was in Latin: the Psalms in the Mass were in Latin; the Bible readings in the services, such as they were, were in Latin: the Bible when visible was a big Latin volume: some priests and most laymen had only a few words of Latin, if that. The Bible was thought of only by a very few as a whole and complete thing, referring throughout, backwards and forwards, not just to itself from Genesis to Revelation, but also from the Creation to the end of history - an entity.

Now here in 1530 was a Genesis, from the Hebrew, in English, in a form that fitted the pocket. So here instead of the unfathomable Latin "*faciamus ei adiutorium simile sibi*" the reader of Tyndale finds "I will make him an helper to bear him company." Those stories of Adam and Eve, and of Cain and Abel, of Noah, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, some of which would have been in part familiar in outline, by different routes, from references in sermons, from stained glass windows, and sometimes from the mystery plays of the guilds, could now be read in full, in a way which made the text speak. So could all the other less familiar parts of Genesis. But more importantly, Genesis was followed by the rest of the Pentateuch, so that more of the whole story from Creation to the discovery of the Second Law (the literal meaning of

Deuteronomy) was available and not only the older and newer laws themselves, but a full rounding-out of the meaning of the covenant made by a nation with God, as all five books could be studied complete.

We note again that the interrelation of Bible books was for the reformers, an essential part of the reading of Scripture. Genesis, of course had always been understood as standing in a special place, starting as it does with the God-given accounts both of the Creation and the Fall of Man - both of them the very foundation of theology. Moreover, as the first book in the world (as it was thought to be) by the world's first author, Moses, it can express something important about Scripture, that is, about religion with a book at the heart.

Genesis had always been pre-eminent, and whole libraries of commentary were written, almost on every word, as scholars of Milton are aware. But in the Hebrew Bible, Genesis is followed by Exodus and Leviticus, with some narrative (of Moses and Pharaoh, the plagues and the exodus principally) but long stretches of given laws, most comprehensively in Leviticus. That book is followed by Numbers, introduced by Tyndale with "In the second and third book they received the law. And in this fourth they begin to work and practise." The last book is Deuteronomy, this time introduced by Tyndale with the words: "This is a book worthy to be read in day and night and never to be out of hands. For it is the most excellent of all the books of Moses. It is easy also and light and a very pure Gospel that is to wete, a preaching of faith and love: deducing the love to God out of faith, and the love of man's neighbour out of the love of God."

For Jews, the five books together make up the Torah (literally 'teaching'), the Law, that unique relationship between God and His people, 'the children of Israel;' the point at which everything begins. For Christian readers, the law is also the essential starting point, but now under a new covenant in Christ (the 'New Testament'). In His teaching, Jesus Himself insisted on the keeping of the Law (see Matthew 5) "I am not come to destroy... but to fulfil...", though the significance of His work as well as His words extends far beyond the children of Israel. That beating heart of Christian theology, Paul's justification by faith, is located in a body which has been re-born, as Paul makes clear, from an imprisonment in the God-given Law to the full daylight of the new God-given redemption in Christ. For the Christian, Tyndale insisted, it is essential to be able to study the whole of the Hebrew Law in order to understand what Christ did with it. Tyndale understood how much Hebrew there is in parts of the New Testament, and not just when the Gospel writers or Paul or Peter are quoting the Old."

I think it is clear from what David Daniell has written about William Tyndale, particularly from the last ten or so lines that they both grasp what Christadelphians are unable to, that Paul teaches in Romans, to wit, his situation before his redemption in Christ, as an unregenerate Jew. These are the verses that Christadelphians insist prove that Paul had sin-in-the-flesh and was unable to control his behaviour. A disposition passed on to all humankind since the sin of Adam.

I shall hope to return to the subject of William Tyndale and his tireless labours in the future, in the meantime...

Love to all.

Helen Brady.

In November last my wife and I took a two-day break to escape from the turmoil of renovation of our home. While we were away we met Mr and Mrs Holley who are Jehovah's Witnesses and at the end of December I received the following letter from them:-

Dear Russell, You may remember us. We stayed in the same guest house as you in November. We hope you enjoyed your break as much as we did ours. And that when you returned home to your house it was still standing. The reason I am writing is because I said I would write and let you know our thoughts on the literature you left us, entitled "Understanding the Sacrifice of Christ."

We both enjoyed reading through your work. It is nice to see others searching through the Scriptures for the truth. As Jehovah's Witnesses we meet so many people today that do not have an interest in the Bible or in finding out the truth about why we are here and where we are going.

We found a lot to agree with and liked the comparison made between Jesus and Moses - that just as Moses was not a slave in Egypt so Jesus was not a slave to sin. There were some side points (e.g. mention of the Cross, and prospects of Adam's being forgiven) that, we did not agree with. But over-all it was a well thought out and presented discussion of the sacrifice of Christ.

We feel like you that we need to understand the Bible and break away from any tradition that is not scriptural (1 John 4:1). And I am sure you would agree that if you found enough evidence to prove the Bible had been altered because of a tradition you would take steps to remove spurious texts. In view of this in your work in the third paragraph you said "To fulfil His purpose God is calling out a people for His Name..." How do you feel about the fact God's name has been taken out of the Bible thousands of times?

In our travels we find some Bibles have left God's name in it at Psalm 83:18 and Exodus 3:15 but only because the text would not make sense if it was taken out. We feel using Jehovah's name is as important as asking for forgiveness of sins. And there are a number of texts that show the importance of using Jehovah's name. Ezekiel 38:23 says in part "They will have to know that I am Jehovah." The apostle Paul also showed the importance when he quoted from Joel 2:32 by saying "Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Even Jesus shows the importance when He said "I have made your name known to them and will make it known..." (John 17:26).

Please don't think that because we use the name Jehovah we count Jesus and what He has done for us as of little importance. We know that we cannot approach Jehovah unless through Jesus and that Jesus is our Saviour and with joy look forward to His thousand-year reign (John 14:6; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 20:4). And apart from looking at creation, Jesus is the best way to know what Jehovah is like (John 14:9).

In view of our theme "Calling out a people for God's name" do you feel that God has a people for His name today? After the first century the foretold apostasy developed unrestrained (Acts 20:29,30; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). For many centuries the lamp of true Christianity burned very low. Yet in an illustration Jesus indicated that at the conclusion of the system of things there would be a clear distinction between the "wheat" (true Christians) and the "weeds" (imitation Christians). The wheat (or chosen ones) would be gathered into one true Christian congregation, as in the first century (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; 24:31). Jesus also described the anointed members of that congregation as "the Faithful and Discreet Slave," and indicated that in the time of the end they would be dispensing spiritual food (Matthew 24:3,45-47). That Faithful Slave would be joined by a "Great Crowd" of true worshippers out of all nations (Revelation 7:9,10. compare Micah 4:1-4).

So what I am trying to say is, although Jehovah's Witnesses have made mistakes in the past, we, like you, are always trying to understand the Bible better. Even the apostles were not above the need for correction. We need to be humble, willing to accept discipline and when necessary, make adjustments in order to bring our thinking closer in harmony with God's (Acts 17:11).

So the question we need to ask ourselves is "Is any one Christian organization meeting Scriptural requirements?" Is any one organization neutral from politics? (John 15:19; 6:15). Is any organization preaching the good news of the Kingdom? (Matthew 24:14). Does any organization believe that the entire Bible is the inspired word of God? (2 Timothy 3:16). Which organization stays separate from the world and its vices, and its false Christian celebrations? (1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 10:5,11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). And which organization shows that it has love amongst itself? (John 13:34).

We feel that Jehovah's Witnesses qualify on all these points and we hope that this brief discussion will move you, not just to look at what we teach, but at how our organization is run. And how 5.6 million of us, all shouldering our individual responsibilities to preach and teach the good news of the Kingdom, in 232 lands around the globe, are fulfilling the Scripture at Matthew 24:14.

You are looking for the truth and we sincerely feel, without bragging or speaking out of terms, that we have found the truth. So you will appreciate how eager we are to show to you the things we have found. In

fact, as lives are involved in knowing the truth, we have a responsibility, so as not to be blood guilty, to try to tell others this news (John 17:3).

We hope you have enjoyed reading this letter and that you will look up the Scriptures we have cited. If you wish to discuss anything further, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. And as the Scriptures say, we hope you "Go on growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Warmest regards, Mr and Mrs B.A.Holley.

The following in my response to Mr and Mrs Holley's letter:-

Dear Mr and Mrs Holley, Thank you for your kind letter of the 17th December. We remember you well and I enjoyed our conversations as far as they went, yet I have forgotten your first names! My poor recollection of names has caused me much embarrassment all my life; all I can do is apologize.

Our house was still standing when we arrived home but two or three weeks later the foreman stole his bosses van with some equipment and hasn't been seen since. This hindered the work schedule on the house and still it is not finished'

But to more serious thoughts! While I appreciate your kindly intentions I have considered the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses since childhood and have seen many of your magazines and other publications, some of which I have on my bookshelves. Every denomination, sect or organized religious body has some kind of statement of faith or creed which they say they have reasoned out from the Scriptures and to which all their members pay tribute or at least meet together under the banner of that declared belief.

In the Scriptures we read, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). The law and the testimony Isaiah was referring to has been replaced by creeds and statements of faith by leaders of all denominations and if any of their members speak not according to such declared beliefs they are excommunicated; their leaders say "it is because there is no light in them" - and out they go.

On the other hand our heavenly Father says, "Come now, let us reason together..." and this is His plea to each one of us individually and this does not involve us in belonging to any organizations devised by man, for their leaders take authority to themselves and presume to do our reasoning for us and tell us what we should think and say. I have heard it said "Greater minds than mine have worked it out and I accept what they say" - this surely is deplorable!

Regarding the calling out of a people "for His Name" we are of course referring to God calling out a people to live in His presence - "called to glory and virtue... to be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3,4) - a people who strive and reflect His character as did Jesus Christ. Whether we use the name Jehovah, Lord or God we know we are referring to the Almighty, the Great Creator of the universe who is perfect in all His ways and the only One to whom effectual fervent prayer can be made. Personally I see little merit in using the name Jehovah in preference to other titles. It is our hearts sincerity, known only to God for which we are heard.

The Greek word "*kurios*" is translated "Lord" over 700 times in the New Testament as for example in Matthew 22:42-45 where it occurs 4 times - "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord (*kurios*), saying, The Lord (*kurios*) said unto my Lord (*kurios*), Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord (*kurios*), how is he his son?" This is cited of course from Psalm 110:1 where two different words are used - "The Lord (Yahweh) said unto my Lord (*Adon*), Sit thou at my right hand until..." However the Greek only uses "*kurios*."

Again, the Greek word "*Theos*" is translated "God" over 1,300 times in the New Testament and we might expect Jesus Christ to use the name Jehovah on occasions such as in His prayer recorded in John 17:3 - "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God..." but He uses the Greek "*Theos*." Again Jesus said, in verse 6 - "I have manifested thy name..." but the only names He used for His Father were "*kurios*," "*Theos*," "*El*" or "*Pater*" and this last name was the one used by children and is equivalent to our

use of “Daddy” today! This is used some 250 times in the New Testament for our heavenly Father. Apart from the above we find in Mark 14:36 Jesus used the name “Abba,” the Aramaic form of “Father.” The Apostle Paul uses “Abba” twice - Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. Nowhere in His ministry do we find Jesus Christ using the name Jehovah. Even in His last prayer while in the agony of crucifixion He addressed His Father as “El” - “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* (using the Hebrew language). That is to say, My God (*Theos*), My God (*Theos*), why hast thou forsaken me?” - Matthew 27:46. Indeed when we look at the New Testament we see no occasion when the name Jehovah is used. However, I see it occurs in the Emphatic Diaglott very occasionally in places such as Matthew 23:39 - “For I tell you, you shall not see me from this time, till ye shall say, Blessed be he who comes in the Name of Jehovah” (“*Theos*”). When we consider the word “*Theos*” is translated “God” over 1300 times I feel it was not like Benjamin Wilson to be so inconsistent in his work as to translate it “Jehovah” on just three or four occasions and I suspect these are alterations made by the Watchtower Committee.

We must take great care when considering spurious or suspect texts, for many texts have been rejected for no good reason other than that they don’t suit preconceived ideas. I use the King James Version as this is the one most commonly available (though I have about a dozen other versions with me) and with very few exceptions this is the one I quote from.

The translation is a great achievement and I feel sure the translators were guided by God in order for the Gospel of salvation to be found by the God-fearing few. This does not mean it is entirely without error but errors and inconsistencies become evident to those who are prepared to exercise prayerful study in seeking the Truth.

The Apostle John says “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4). I am sure all denominations are the offspring of Rome and are the harlot daughters condemned of God. All declarations of belief or statements of faith, or creeds whatever they are called are divisive and exclude the God-fearing who accept the Scriptures wholeheartedly and whose hearts are open to instruction from God.

The organization behind the Jehovah’s Witnesses makes claims which I find unacceptable and seriously question much of their interpretation of Scripture. You mention that “although Jehovah’s Witnesses have made mistakes in the past they are always trying to understand the Bible.” This on the face of it is a commendable claim but hardly supported by the fact that in many cases what they used to teach as truth is by them no longer considered truth. I feel there are many more adjustments to be made “in order to bring their thinking closer in harmony with God’s.” Scripture has not changed but the understanding of it by the Jehovah Witnesses organization changes all too often. You say you feel you have found the truth but I wonder for how long will it be ‘the truth’?

Peter warns against others assuming authority over the disciples - “... neither as being lord’s over God’s heritage” - 1 Peter 5:3. You must surely admit this is typical of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organization. I have seen amongst my young friends how they have been very badly treated by parents who wished for them to join the Jehovah’s Witnesses and been driven from their homes. Hardly compatible with the claims of a loving community but rather the sad result of over zealous and over bearing leaders lording it over their flock.

As an example of a false claim made by the Jehovah’s Witnesses I quote from a Christadelphian publication, “Wrested Scriptures,” by Ron Able:-

Isaiah 43:10 “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen...”

The Problem: Jehovah’s Witnesses interpret this prophecy in a spiritual sense to apply to the Watchtower organization. In a convention of J.W’s. at Columbus, Ohio, 1931, a resolution was proposed and passed in which the following was stated:-

“...to make known to the people that Jehovah is the true and almighty God; therefore we joyfully embrace and take the name which the mouth of the Lord God has named, and we desire to be known as and called by the name, to wit, ‘Jehovah’s witnesses’.” Isaiah 43:10-12; 62:2; Revelation 12:17.”

However. 1) The witnesses of this passage (in Isaiah 43) cannot be the self-styled Jehovah's Witnesses for the following reasons: -

a) The witnesses of this passage are ransomed by the price of Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba (verse 3). J.W.'s claim to be ransomed by the body of Christ.

b) The witnesses of this passage are condemned: "Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, but you have been weary of me, O Israel!... But you have burdened me with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities." (Isaiah 43:22,24 R.S.V.) When have J.W.'s merited this description?

c) The witnesses of this passage are condemned for not bringing sheep for sacrifice or honouring God in their sacrifices (verse 23). This verse cannot apply to J.W.'s since they have never offered animal sacrifices.

2. The witnesses of this passage are unwilling witnesses. They witness to the truth of God's prophetic word (Isaiah 41:22,23) in their persecution, scattering and regathering. (Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26; Jeremiah 32:37). But the J.W.'s claim that one who is not a willing witness is "not with the organization."

3. Similarly the "new name" of Isaiah 62 is "Hephzibah" (verse 4) and not "Jehovah's witnesses." It is the name of a city "Jerusalem (verse 7), not an organization.

4. The following is a useful piece of information to be found in the writing of John Thomas in "Elpis Israel" (written in the 1840's):-

"The pre-adventual colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return thither in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. I know not whether the men who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled by events soon to happen to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt."

The fact that this was written 100 years before the establishment of the State of Israel indicates the part Israel has played in God's divine challenge in Isaiah 41:22,23. The "spiritualizations" of the J.W.'s nullify the position of the real witnesses in this challenge. Surely one can hardly use language too strong in condemnation of this Scripture whittling practice."

Your understanding of the parable of the wheat and tares is open to question. This is not a reference to any "one true Christian organization" of today. I can agree that the wheat represents the true Christians and the tares the false Christians; I see also that they are so alike in their growing that they are allowed to continue together until the last moment when it can be seen that the tares have not borne good fruit at the time of harvest. This harvest time is close at hand but it has not yet come. The imitation Christians follow the false doctrines of their leaders and what can we do about it? Nothing! Paul says "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), and Peter says, "to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). The Lord knows who are His.

In some ways the true Christians feel like Elijah when he said "I alone am left..." and to boast of large numbers is incompatible with "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8), which inference tells us there will be very few faithful and true Christians.

There are other points in your letter I could discuss and so many matters over which we could challenge the Watchtower organization beliefs but feel sufficient has been said for the moment and so will close by thanking you for writing and trust you will find food for thought in this reply. If you will I look

forward to hearing from you again as there is an opening through the pages of this Circular Letter for you to reach many Bible students, all of whom are seeking truth.

My Very Best Wishes to you both, with Love in Jesus's Name, Russell Gregory.

* * *

In view of the foregoing letter I thought this would be a suitable occasion to reproduce the following from a leaflet circulated many years ago by Brother L.J.Gates of Weston-super-Mare. The leaflet contains no indication as to who compiled the information only that it had previously been sent out as a supplement with "The Logos" magazine in March 1952

Names and Titles of the Deity

The Authorized Version Rendering's with the Hebrew Equivalents, and their Usage and Significance

English form found in the Authorized Version	Hebrew Equivalent	Significance
God	El	Might or Power
	Eloah	Mighty One
	Elohim	Mighty Ones
	Tzur	Rock or Strength
LORD GOD or Jehovah	Yahweh	He who will be (manifested)
LORD or Jah	Yah	An abbreviated form of Yahweh
	Adon	Lord or Ruler
Lord	Adonai	Lords or Rulers
Almighty God	El Shaddai	Might of the Powerful Ones
Most High God	El Elyon	Supreme Might
Lord God	Yahweh Elohim	He who will be Mighty Ones
Lord God	Adonai Yahweh	He who will be Rulers
of Hosts	Yahweh Tz'vaoth	He who will be Armies

Note: It will be seen that "God" is indiscriminately translated for as many as five different Hebrew words.

El (pronounced Ail, rendered "God"). "As often as this word passed before the mind of the Hebrew, the idea of Power, Might, Strength, stood out in bold relief" - Dr. Thomas. "It always presented to the Hebrews the idea of strength and power" - Gesenius. "El" stands for the great First Cause, for Power increate, the substratum of all creation, and the means whereby the angels (Elohistic messengers) performed their duties, and the Lord His miracles. "It is El that girdeth me with strength," declared the Psalmist (Psalm 18:32).

Eloah (rendered "God") Signifies Mighty One; one whose might is derived from El; thus Deity in specific manifestation. See Job 19:26; Habakkuk 3:3, where the word is used of Christ, the manifestation of the Father (the latter references should be in the future tense - "shall come")-

Elohim (rendered "God"). Plural form of the above; Deity in multitudinous manifestation. The word, though plural, is often used with a singular verb, indicating that though the Elohim may constitute a multitude, one Eternal Spirit motivates them all thus revealing Deity in manifestation, e.g. Psalm 95:7, "He (Yahweh) is our Elohim (Mighty Ones). The angels were the "ministers of Yahweh" excelling in His strength (Psalm 103:20-22). "For Yahweh is a great El, and a great King above all Elohim" - Psalm 95:3. "Elohim" comes from a word "Alah" to swear, to bind oneself by an oath, so that though a multitude that no one can number, the Elohim act as a single unit; they are united together and with Yahweh with ties that are indivisible. The word is translated "angels" in Psalm 8:5 and "judges" in Exodus 21:6; 22:8,9; 28 because the latter revealed Yahweh's law and judgments to the nation (cf. John 10:34-36).

Shaddai (rendered “Almighty”). From the root “shadad” - to treat with violence, attack, invade, plunder, lay waste, destroy, thus signifying omnipotent power for good or ill (see Amos 3:6; Jeremiah 44:27; Isaiah 45:7). Shaddai is plural, signifying Powerful Ones. Their power to destroy was exhibited in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. El Shaddai (God Almighty) signifies “The Strength of the Powerful Ones. Abraham worshipped El –The Powerful Increate, not Shaddai who were but the medium of the manifestation of that strength (Exodus 6:3).

Tzur (rendered “God” in Isaiah 44:8 and “Mighty God” in Habakkuk 1:12). Usually translated “strength” or “rock,” it signifies a strong foundation upon which one can build with confidence. Firmness, durability, and stability are implied by this title.

Adon, Adonai (both rendered “Lord”). The singular and plural forms of the Hebrew word signifying “Master,” “Owner,” “Ruler,” “Sovereign,” etc. Yahweh is Adon of all the earth (Joshua 3:11,13), the Possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis 14:22). Adon signifies Deity in specific manifestation as ruler, owner, etc. Adonai signifies Deity in multitudinous manifestation (cf. Revelation 5:9,10).

Elyon ‘The Most High, teaching by implication that there are others of the heavenly host inferior in status (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:5,6).

Yahweh, Yah (rendered LORD GOD in small capitals, occasionally Yah and Jehovah). The Memorial Name of Deity (Exodus 3:15; Hosea 12:5) signifies “He Who Will Be.” It compresses in a word, Deity’s purpose to manifest His glory in the earth; firstly in an individual (Matthew 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19), secondly in a community (1 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 14:1; Romans 5:2,) finally in all the earth (Numbers 14:21; 1 Corinthians 15:28). The full implications of the Name were first revealed to Moses when Deity was about to act on behalf of Israel in remembrance of His Covenant to Abram; and it is proclaimed as “his memorial unto all generations” (Exodus 3:15). The Name is prophetic of the future intentions of Yahweh (Revelation 1:8), when He Will Be manifested in the earth. This manifestation will be revealed through the Ecclesia which consists of individuals who have accepted the Divine invitation to separate themselves from the Gentiles, a people for the Name (2 Corinthians 6:17,18; Acts 15:14). Yahweh is occasionally condensed into Yah, and in this form finds its place in the Hebrew form of Jesus - Yahshua (Yah will save - 2 Corinthians 5:19). “Jehovah” is a corrupt form of the Name.

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh “ I Will Be Whom I Will Be.” The declaration at the bush (Exodus 3:14) is incorrectly rendered “I Am That I Am.” The correct rendition, supported by the R.V. margin, expresses the purpose of Deity to manifest Himself in individuals of His own choosing who will then constitute the Elohim (Mighty Ones or approved Seed, Galatians 3:26) of Abraham. In this declaration “Whom” stands for the multitude of the redeemed in whom Yahweh will ultimately be revealed (2 Peter 1:4), and whose standing in “the Name” is the result of Divine election and grace. It thus refers to a plurality of glorified ones who, when developed, will be the manifestation of the Eternal Spirit. “Ehyeh” rendered “I Am,” should be rendered “I Will Be,” in accordance with general usage of this verb, in similar grammatical position, throughout the Old Testament. Yahweh is from the same root as Ehyeh (see R.V. margin).

Yahweh Elohim Israel (rendered LORD God of Israel). “He who shall be the Mighty Ones of Israel.” See the following references for the future Elohim or Mighty Ones of Israel – Luke 20:36; Romans 9:6; Ephesians 2:12; Revelation 5:9,10. It is in and through these that Yahweh will manifest Himself to the world during the Millennium. The Law centred around this title (Deuteronomy 28:58) for its commands were designed to morally rejuvenate Israel and reveal the character of Yahweh in the nation. This is now the privilege of Gentiles called to Israel’s Hope (Matthew 5:16). Let Yahweh be mentally and morally revealed in such and a fit basis is established for a physical manifestation of Deity, by a change of nature, at Christ’s return. This glorified host will then constitute “Yahweh Elohim of Israel.”

Yahweh Tz’vaoth (rendered “LORD of hosts”). “Tz’vaoth” signifies “hosts” or “armies,” and this is the militant title of Deity. Throughout the ages the heavenly Elohimic army has revealed its strength on the behalf of Yahweh’s people (Joshua 5:13-15; Psalm 34:7; Romans 9:29; James 5:4), but as this title is prophetic there is yet to come a similar revelation of Divine Power (Revelation 19:11-21; Isaiah 55:4; Psalm 149; Haggai 2:6-8; Isaiah 9:7). Christ is today recruiting individuals for this Divine army of the future (2 Timothy 2:3,4).

A People for His Name (Acts 15:14) This is the Apostolic designation of the Ecclesia. Its significance is revealed by the Divine titles above. See particularly the notes on “Yahweh Elohim Israel.”

The beauty of the Hebrew originals is not found in the Greek translations, so that the above titles apply to the Old Testament only.

Sister Helen Brady received the following letter from Brother Ronald Coleman:-

Dear Sister Helen, I responded to the invitation to receive Nazarene Fellowship literature because I had read your father's booklets and while I felt that his criticisms of the standard Christadelphian doctrine of the Atonement were fully justified, his own solution had difficulties. I was interested to see whether the passing years had enabled further thought to be devoted to the subject. I am sorry to have to say that this does not appear to be so. I write to try and widen the horizon.

My interest in the Atonement goes back to the early forties for it was then that I encountered C.J.Cadoux's book “A Pilgrim's Further Progress” (I was attracted to it because of his “The Early Christian Attitude to War” (1919) in which he advocated pacifism). Cadoux was a Congregationalist who was critical of a number of aspects of orthodox belief, including the various doctrines of the Atonement. My interest was further quickened when my step-father's brother, Frank Adam's, was expelled by the Belfast Ecclesia for what were held to be incorrect views about the Atonement and I have, over the years, read and bought numerous books on the subject.

Cadoux's criticism of orthodox beliefs was of what he called “transactional views.” He defined these as a belief that the “saving power of the Cross is represented as resulting from its having been a mysterious but Divinely-ordained transaction, by virtue of which God was enabled to forgive sin.” These beliefs could mainly be grouped under three heads:

a) a ransom type in which the atonement centres round the idea that a ransom was paid to the devil for man's release from his power.

b) a satisfaction type in which God's wounded sense of honour must be “satisfied,” this being accomplished by the voluntary death of His Son. This satisfaction was more than was required to satisfy God's honour, the extra being available merit for transference to Christ's followers.

c) a penal type in which Christ dies to meet the claims of God's justice which demands that penalties must be paid before forgiveness can be granted to anyone.

Cadoux rejected all three and this has been followed by the majority of subsequent writers on the subject.

In place of them Cadoux proposed a fourth, a moral type, which has since become the standard explanation of the Atonement. (Cadoux was not the first to put forward this idea but his original book “The Message About the Cross” (1924) was one of the early ones). His “moral” view was that “the Cross opens the eyes to the reality and hideousness of sin, and to the suffering which it must needs cost God. Looking at the Cross we are first struck by the sin and folly which put Christ upon it; and then we are made aware of our own sin and folly. From that we are led on to see that Christ's agony is the revelation in time and space of the sorrow laid on God's heart by the alienation of His children from Him.” (It was for holding this view that Frank Adams was disfellowshipped).

Robert Roberts' belief falls under category (c) above. God cannot forgive sin until the fallen nature of man is demonstrated by the crucifixion of His Son. While Jesus did not sin, He inherited man's fallen nature and it is this which is condemned, the more clearly by contrast with His sinless life. This brings the penitent believer to appreciate his own fallen nature. Your father was fully justified in his castigation of this wrong-headed belief. But when we consider Edward Turney's alternative it can be seen that it too falls under

category (c). “Law is the basis of the Divine Plan. The will of God is that we should not perish but have everlasting life, even though because we are all personally sinners we cannot earn it, God wishes to be merciful and show His love towards us, but He will not do so at the expense of the supremacy of law... Many sincere believers... think we can be saved by the simple exercise of unconditional forgiveness, but this can never happen because it would not establish the high principles of justice and law which must, prevail...” (You will doubtless recognize the source).

Unconditional acceptance of the truly penitent sinner however lies at the heart of Jesus’ preaching. Jesus went about accepting people, including many who were rejected by just about everyone else - the leper, the harlot, the renegade, the cheat, the beggar, the outcast, the pauper. By that acceptance He was not condoning anything that they had done that was morally wrong; He was making it clear that nothing they had done had cut them off from the love of God. All are welcome in the Father’s Kingdom but especially those that had previously rejected it. All the sheep are at home in the Shepherd’s fold, but especially the one that had been lost. Like the father of the prodigal, watching the road and waiting to welcome with open arms his foolish and wayward son, God actually seeks us out.

For Jesus, forgiveness was the key that could break down the moral log-jam of history. Law, ritual, penalties and judgment had failed to break down barriers, heal wounds, or bring peace of mind. But in what Jesus said and what He did, most tellingly in His death, opening Himself to the wounds and sorrows of others yet clearly and unambiguously against all forms of evil, did mark a turning point in history.

However, as I read Edward Turney, God was unable to forgive sin unless a sacrifice was offered. This comes out particularly in his treatment of the Genesis story in which he supposes that Adam and Eve repented and God offered a sacrifice so that they could be forgiven and need not die immediately. This was shown by the animal skins which were given to them as clothing. Apart from the fact that it was not necessary for the Creator of the Universe to have to kill animals in order to have animal skins, this was not a sacrifice offered by Adam and Eve. It did not cost them anything. Not surprisingly, for his day, Edward Turney accepted the Genesis account as being literally true. It was not a parable of how man first took tentative steps along a path away from God, but to him a complete disruption of God’s purpose with the earth. It did not seem to him that no great moral issue was involved in Eve’s eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, or that it was a simple act of disobedience, excusable in the circumstances.

If we read Genesis 2,3 carefully we shall see that it is much more consistent, and that many of the difficulties disappear if we think of it as a parable, or moral tale, of how mankind, set on the road to immortality, took a wrong turning. It is incredible to suppose that God created the earth (and the rest of the universe) and then entrusted its entire future to the decision of a single individual, on a single occasion. Moreover an individual who had not been given any moral instruction, who was under strong external pressure to make the wrong decision, and who was given no opportunity for repentance. As James Barr has said:

“In the result, the motivation is less that of aspiration to divine status, still less of rebellion against God; it is more a measure of physical attraction and insouciance or inadvertence. It is as if you have in the house a large red switch on the wall with a notice saying “This switch must on no account ever be touched” and then one day there comes along an imposing official in uniform with gilded cap, and you ask about the switch and he says, “Well, of course they say you mustn’t touch it, but they are just saying that: of course you can throw the switch and no harm will be done, indeed your electricity will probably run all the better if you do.” So of course you throw the switch and Bang! up goes the house in smoke. (“The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality,” p. 14, SCM, 1993).

This is much more convincingly an account of a parting of the ways than a catastrophic fall and the introduction of death, for it is clear that death was already in the world that God created and nothing is said to suggest that man was initially exempt from it. The death to which Adam was finally to fall victim is not in itself a punishment. We can see this if we consider how God treated Eve and the serpent. Eve was just as much involved in the disobedience as Adam, but nothing is said about death for her; only that she was to find increased pain in childbirth and domination by her husband. Nor for the serpent: it was to eat dust, crawl on its belly, experience the unremitting enmity of man, but nothing else. And even as regards Adam,

his “returning to dust” was part of his future agricultural life. After a lifetime of struggling with unrewarding land he would be swallowed up in it and become part of it.

I mention all this in order to show that Edward Turney, in founding his alternative explanation on a literal reading of Genesis, built, as Robert Roberts did, on a very insecure foundation. It is interesting that nowhere else in the Old Testament is Eden mentioned as the origin of sin and death. The Old Testament teaching about life and death can be summed up as follows:

- 1) God is the Author of life and death.
- 2) Death is the completion and fulfilment of life.
- 3) Proper burial is necessary.
- 4) A man’s “name” is perpetuated in his descendants.

Nor is there much in the New Testament. It is confined to the Adam-Christ typology of Romans 5, and 1 Corinthians 15. In this connection it must be pointed out that typology does not require the type to be literal. Melchizedec was not literally “without father, mother, descent, nor beginning of days nor end of life.” The writer to the Hebrews says this because nothing is said about them in the Genesis account. Something similar could be shown from some other instances of typology.

I’m sorry if this all sounds to be negative, but it does seem necessary to clear some things out of the way before a positive approach can be developed. I hope you will find such an approach in the attached copy of an article I wrote six years ago.*

Sincerely your brother,

Ron Coleman.

* (Editor’s Note: This article has not been included here though referred to in Helen’s reply which follows)

* * *

In reply Sister Helen Brady’wrote:-

Dear Brother Ronald Coleman. At last I am replying to your letter dated February 12 1997. I apologize for the long delay which has been unavoidable. I can only hope you still have a copy of your original letter to me to refer to.

First of all I must tell you that you completely misrepresent Edward Turney’s view of Jesus on page 21 of your piece “The Most Important Doctrine of All.” 19 lines from the top “...His divine parentage on His Father’s side enabled Him to reject consistently and completely the temptations to sin.” This falsehood is what Christadelphians believe and teach. Edward Turney certainly did not write it, believe it, or teach it. Neither did my father, and nor do I believe it, or those who believe as I do. No strength was available to Jesus that is not freely available to the rest of us. I also believe with Edward Turney that Adam and Eve were real people. I think it is vital to accept that basic fact in order to fully understand the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus did not die for a metaphor but for a human being just like Himself. A life for a life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Obedience to God and His commandments is a matter of choice and free will for each individual and temptation is not sin. I reject utterly your view that it is a “universal experience that we are inclined to evil.” Whoever Geo McHaffie is I am with him. Who have you asked about this universal experience? In my experience it is most peoples instinct to want to do the right thing. If you are asked a question does a lie immediately spring to your lips? Are you presented with moral dilemmas every other day to which you always give in, in the wrong way? Which of the 10 commandments is it impossible to obey? Of course there are people who give in to their baser instincts at every turn, but they choose to, they don’t have to. I am familiar with the nature and nurture arguments and they have some merit and undoubtedly we would all benefit from a good upbringing, but in the main I think Eysenck is a crackpot. But what about a God fearing family that produces one evil member and vice-versa? Doesn’t that suggest choice and free will to you?

I don’t believe in sin-in-the-flesh or original sin or whatever you want to call it. There is nothing the matter with human nature. Jesus proved that beyond any reasonable doubt. It is possible to do right as He

did. He said, be ye therefore perfect... Some of His followers were and are perfect and God knows who they are. I can see from what you write you don't like the idea of sin-in-the-flesh yet your phrases and vocabulary prove that you do in fact believe it. "Jesus and His lower nature" (Page 22). When and how did He manifest this? "Adam's genetic taint" (Page 23). As God was Adam's father this is a bit of a facer for you isn't it? But I forgot, you think Adam was a metaphor - with a genetic taint - that is stretching credulity a little far I think. "Nature, error prone, distorted" (Page 23). Something, in your view, is evidently producing all these error prone and distorted people getting worse with each generation and the passage of time. What a disagreeable picture. I think people are as they always have been, good, bad and indifferent by choice. It only took one generation to produce the first murderer. Or was Cain a metaphor too? I think he was a man like his father Adam and like Jesus. Cain chose to murder his brother. He could have controlled his impulse and behaved himself just as we all can when faced with right or wrong.

I was surprised to read the paragraph "It is incredible to suppose that God created the earth (and the rest of the universe) and then entrusted its entire future to the decision of a single individual on a single occasion. Moreover an individual who had not been given any moral instruction." This brings to mind the clay saying to the potter, why have you made me like this? It may seem incredible to you, but it is God's world, His creation, His plan of salvation, and it has certainly produced food for thought for generations of people from the beginning down to you and I. So insofar as it has provided spiritual food, exercises for the mind and an explanation as to why we are all here, I would say God has done a remarkably good job and achieved His purpose. The fact that so much devolved on the decision of our first two parents, Adam and Eve, shows to me at least how important we are to God in this present natural scheme of things and how much it matters to Him how we react to Him and His offer of grace and salvation. We cannot be sure Adam and Eve lacked moral guidance, but in any case how much moral guidance would it require, once you were told not to eat the fruit of a certain tree on pain of death? I think you are too sophisticated for your own good here.

There is little point in me going on as clearly we are divided on fundamental principles but thank you for writing. Your ideas did not strike me as negative as you suggested, but rather they seem straining to be modern and trendy. I don't think God's plan for us and the world has much to do with modernity and trendiness. Salvation is about life and death, free will, judgment, blood, suffering, sacrifice and redemption, things of an elementary and primitive nature. We try to be "up-to-date" in these eternal things at our peril.

I send my regards and good wishes,

Helen Brady.

Brother Phil Parry writes in response to "The Future Work of Elijah" by Brother Ray Gregory:-

Dear Brother Russell, Thank you for the Sept/December Circular Letter. While I agree with Brother Ray's opening remarks on page 7, fourth paragraph down under the heading "The Future Work of Elijah," I am sorry to have to disagree with some of the views he puts forward and before I make my comments and views on the subject of Elijah I would point out that the salvation of Israel does not begin in my own opinion with the destruction of the northern invader of the promised land. (Page 9, top of page). Brother Ray has already quoted from Jeremiah 31:33 when the salvation of Israel commenced, and this was begun with John the Baptist in preparing the way for their Messiah who would take away the Sin (singular) of the world and their past transgressions under the first covenant through Moses, in that the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins. I am of the opinion that Zechariah 13:8,9 - "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" - refers to the result of the persecution of Jews and Gentiles converted to Christ from the time of John the Baptist onwards. Zechariah 13:7 - "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones" - gives the commencement of this when God speaks of the smiting of His Shepherd, and verse 8 confirms Romans 11:5, - "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace," - and verse 9 describes what Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:6,7 - "Wherein ye

greatly rejoice, though for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

This was the time of John the Baptist’s mission to Israel of his day “Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” As saith the prophet Esaias, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight.” Their Messiah was come, it was now their responsibility to accept Him as John proclaimed “And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:2-10). Judgment indeed had begun at the house of God, which Peter stated to the Elect according to the foreknowledge of God. 1 Peter 1:1-25 and 1 Peter 2:1 to 25 both chapters are worth reading since they have a bearing on Romans 10 and 31-

I am satisfied at present that Zechariah 13:8 took place in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and of which Jesus warned His followers.

There is too much to answer in the whole of Brother Ray’s article which speaks much of what I and many more were brought up to believe. But I must say that in our Fellowship, where freedom of thought and speech is allowed on the basis of Holy Scripture, I have come to the point of having to discard much which has not harmonised with the Scriptures teaching and this subject of Elijah is one, so I will make my views known on it.

The physical likeness of Elijah and John the Baptist cannot be disputed neither their characteristics in many respects. The description of Elijah is found in 2 Kings 1:7,8 and that of John Baptist, in Matthew 3:4. We know that many questioned John the Baptist as to who he was by suggesting one out of three people he could be - The Christ, Elias, or that Prophet? John confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that Prophet? and he answered, No.

I wonder what Prophet were they referring to that John should answer No? Were they expecting the promised Prophet like unto Moses? (Deuteronomy 18:17-19) not realizing the Christ (Messiah) would be one and the same? And was John’s negative reply in regard to being Elijah in the sense of not being him in the physical and literal sense which they expected? He was not even the literal voice of God, but the Word of God through the Holy Ghost which was upon him from his mother’s womb; Isaiah 40:1-8 “prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Read Luke 1:13-17, - verse 17, “and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people for the Lord.” Also Luke 1:67-80. The contents are most important to the subject.

As I said in a previous article, some have been taught the idea of a Kingdom of God being established with great observation, but Jesus spoke differently - Luke 17:20-37, - verse 37, “And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither wilt the eagles be gathered together.” The Body is Jesus Christ - the Eagles His members. 1 Thessalonians 4:17, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

We read in Mark 1:14 “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel.”

What “fulfilled time” was Jesus referring to? Was it not Isaiah 40:1-8? - verse 1, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord. Speak ye comfortable to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned...” And also Galatians 4:4-7, - verses 4,5 “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son... to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons..-” and Genesis 49:10, - “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”? And from this time, are not Jews and Gentiles being translated into the Kingdom of God in the sense of manifesting righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit?

It is obvious that the Kingdom of God is to be an everlasting Kingdom which cannot be destroyed; therefore the constituents of this Kingdom must have everlasting life, a nature incorruptible, for as Paul says "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God neither can corruption inherit incorruption."

We have been told by some that the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Israel restored; such an assumption being on the basis of Acts 1:6 when His disciples asked Jesus "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" This Jesus could not do at that time because the Kingdom of God constitutes Jews and Gentiles made one in Christ and are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. The Gentiles had not been brought into the New Covenant so Jesus answered "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." The Apostle James said, "Hearken my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5). See John 7:46-52, "Never man spake like this man." The prophet like unto Moses - God said, "I will raise them up a Prophet like unto thee (Moses)." If a Prophet like unto Moses, why should it matter what part of the land he arose from? It was the rulers and Pharisees who were deceived - except for Nicodemus who had heard words of authority from Jesus; "Except a man be born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." John the Baptist preached the latter in his message.

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet? No, Jesus was not born in that part, but in Bethlehem and some time had elapsed from His being brought out of Egypt to dwell in Nazareth. Nevertheless Galilee of the Gentiles did witness to Jesus the Light of the world for upon them the Light shone (Isaiah 9:1,2) (Matthew 4:12-17). The Scribes and Pharisees were the people in darkness and therefore Jesus said of them regarding John the Baptist, "Elias is come already and they knew him not." No matter what our views or suppositions may be, Jesus appears to put a limit to any future appearance of the Old Testament Elijah as we find in Matthew 11:11-15. Verse 13, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." No further. "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

Luke seems to be the only one to record that Moses and Elias spoke to Jesus of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, but all writers agree with Jesus that it was a vision only. I could suppose that they could have told Jesus of the hard tasks they had experienced with Israel and the lack of faith, and encouraged Him in the fact that all Israel's salvation depended on His mission and sacrificial death. That when His disciples suggested making three tents, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias, that the voice from the excellent Glory proclaimed there was no more necessity for Moses and Elijah, their work was done, "This is my Beloved Son, Hear Him."

That message still stands. And it reminds me of the time when Paul and his company came to Antioch in Pisidia and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down (Acts 13:14,15). And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them saying, ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Not a policy of certain religious sects of our day I must say, yet we of the Nazarene faith welcome any to give their views on why they profess to be true Christians and yet in bondage to a set creed ordered of man. We can only use Paul's words in addressing and asking their attention. "Ye that fear God, give audience."

I feel satisfied at present that Malachi 4:5,6 was a message through John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah, warning those who had ears to hear to escape the judgment of God in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, for if they listened not He would smite the earth with a curse. See Luke 21:17-24. Many heeded the warning and escaped.

Jesus said, "Elias shall first come and restore all things." We know that John the Baptist came to prepare, not to restore. Peter speaks of a time of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began, and that at this appointed time He will send Jesus, and there will be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

At this point I would like you to consider the meaning of the name Elijah. Alexander Cruden gives it as "God the Lord;" or "The Strong Lord." We can quite understand and agree that the Spirit and Power in both Elijah and John the Baptist was the same power which worked in Jesus and which is still in Him, therefore if he can be understood as "God the Lord" or "The Strong Lord" then he can be understood as

Elijah restoring all things - the man whom God hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised him from the dead. The words of Jesus as they came down from the mount of transfiguration, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead." (Matthew 17:9-12). The assurance of the coming.

We are informed that there remaineth a Rest to the people of God, and that those who believed not, entered not the land of promise through lack of faith. Ezekiel 20:37 does speak of a similar time of passing under the rod which infers after the purging out of the rebels, a remnant of ten per cent Holy unto the Lord (See Leviticus 27:32). If they abide not still in unbelief. God will graft them in at present and in future.

In conclusion I draw your attention to Jeremiah 23:5,6 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Brother Phil Parry.

In December Brother Phil Parry sent me some articles which had been published several years ago which may be timely to reprint as they could be helpful to those who are hesitant to make up there minds as to the truth of substitution in the Atonement. He writes;

"Having read again the "Testimony" article on "The Nature of Christ" by Harry Tennant, and reading the Nazarene Circular Letter for 1967 edited by our late beloved Brother E.Brady in which he refers to an address given at Watford by the same Harry Tennant, I marvel that Brother Brady let him off so lightly in describing him thus:

"Here is the first article in the current issue of "The Christadelphian" (August 1967) by Harry Tennant. This man is very far from being a stupid blunderer and he does not resort much to cream puff. I have never met him personally but I think I recall Brother Fred Pearce telling me that he was in some way related to him and he (F.J.P.) had a rather good opinion of his ability. He thought he knew the weight of our teaching but preferred the seats of honour."

I myself have been given the impression that the latter is true of him and the things he has written to the "Christadelphian" and "The Testimony" magazines do not credit him with an ability to explain the Gospel and the Atoning work of God in Christ, but the very opposite. Our late Brother Brady's comments in this August issue of the Circular Letter, 1967 will show this, also only a few of his expressions in "The Testimony" article makes it clear to people who know the truth that he does not know what he is talking about nor realizes that he is charging God with injustice and foolishness."

Below is the article from "The Testimony" magazine and the remainder of Brother Phil's comments follow:-

A Christadelphian View of THE NATURE OF CHRIST By Harry Tennant

A touchstone for most of our (Christadelphian) doctrines is to be found in the nature of Christ and his work of atonement. If we misunderstand his nature we are almost certain to fail in our understanding of the atonement. Similarly, if we fail to grasp the true nature of mortal man we shall not comprehend the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We speak of the nature of Christ and not of his natures. This is to avoid entanglements with the orthodox teaching that Christ pre-existed as God the Son. The orthodox doctrine of the two natures of Christ in one person derives from and is part of Trinitarian teaching. For the same reason it is better for us to avoid

using such terms as “the humanity of Christ” and “the divinity of Christ,” even though careful and precise usage might be consonant with true teaching. Since Scripture does not employ those phrases it is wiser for us not to do so.

Christendom’s beliefs about the nature(s) of Jesus arise from other erroneous beliefs or from misuse of Scripture. These are:-

- 1) teaching concerning his personal pre-existence;
- 2) teaching that man survives death (which leads to the neglect of belief in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth at Christ’s return);
- 3) failure to distinguish between those Scriptures which apply to Christ after his glorification and those which applied to him before his death.

We too must avoid the pitfalls created by item 3 above. Our study commences with the nature of Christ before his death.

Stepping stones to understanding. Useful stepping stones to our understanding are to be found in verses which tell us of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at his first coming: -

“He shall save his people from their sins” Matthew 1:21.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” 1 Timothy 1:15.

“...made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” Hebrews 2:9.

“,...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” Hebrews 2:10.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” Hebrews 2:14.

These verses relate also to our own condition. We are sinners who will die. The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins and from death. This was to be accomplished by the grace of God, a gift which was totally unmerited on our part. In order to bring about this great work Christ was to share our nature, by which means he would be able to destroy the devil and thereby provide a way to release us from death.

The Battle Ground. The battle ground was thus to be fought on the territory of sin and death, and not remotely in some other way. Furthermore, it was no mechanical achievement brought about, by effortless work. It was to be accomplished by Christ’s being touched with our infirmities and tempted in all points like his brethren (Hebrews 4:15), by his humbling himself (Philippians 2:8), by suffering, strong crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7), and by his becoming obedient even unto death.

Jesus experienced the things of the childhood of a Jewish boy: he was circumcised, he was subject to Joseph and Mary, and he increased in wisdom as he grew older. As an adult he knew joy and sorrow, compassion and anger. He knew what it was to be under stress, to weep, to need friends, to be hungry and tired, to be alone and to be heartbroken.

There can be no doubt that the Lord was a man of fellow feeling. He was “in all things... made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17), he was “from among (his) brethren” (Deuteronomy 18:18) and was truly of “the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16), “of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3), and thus was descended from Adam (Luke 3:38).

Some Problems. From time to time some brethren, whilst giving ready assent to this teaching, have held back from its deeper implications. All of the experiences we have described were possible because Christ was mortal. This being so, would he not also share those things which the Spirit has expounded in such expressions as “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;” “a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me;” “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind”

(Romans 7)? All of these things are summed up in such well-known words as “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), and “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

We have all inherited the downward pull of the flesh towards sin and death. Indeed, this has been the great dilemma of mankind, the impasse from which man had no escape. All men have cried, with Paul “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24.)

It appears to have been from a mistaken regard for the person of Christ that some brethren have shrunk from applying these words to Jesus; or, if they have applied them, they have sought to redefine “sinful flesh” by saying that we do not inherit a bias towards sin. We believe that this is to misunderstand both the nature of Christ and the nature of his atoning work. It is to confuse the character of the Lord Jesus Christ with the background against which it was achieved. In fact, it diminishes the magnitude of the victory of Christ and the glory which now attaches to him.

On the other hand, there have been those who wholly accept the teaching concerning “sinful flesh,” and are prepared to say that the Lord fully shared this infirmity; but they want to go further and say that all mankind is subject to some additional condemnation or uncleanness simply because of the flesh we bear; and that this would rest also on Christ. The Truth is set out in our Statement of Faith:

Clause V - That Adam broke this (Edenic) law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken – a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.”

By birth we suffer from no legal impediment or guilt other than that which we physically inherit. This was true also of Christ.

Error complicates doctrine. All erroneous teaching complicates doctrine and makes even the refutation of it a matter which is far from easy. The truth is simple; as a result of his transgression Adam was condemned to die; his “very good” nature became evil. We physically inherit the results, but not the guilt, of that condemnation. When we sin we come under personal condemnation, and deservedly so. The condemnation in our physical natures cannot be removed by baptism, by faith, by law or by anything other than a change to immortality at the hand of Christ should we be found faithful. The condemnation because of sin, however, can be removed by forgiveness through faithful baptism into the death of the Lord Jesus.

Sinful flesh is flesh inherited from the sinner, Adam. It is flesh in which the consequences of his sin are working towards death, and in which “the motions of sins” (Romans 7:5 or “sinful passions” - RV, RSV, NIV) are at work. The promptings and urgings of the flesh are not themselves sin until they are yielded to, and then they bring forth sin. This is the difference between temptation and actual sin (James 1:14,15). Every man before and since Christ has sinned; that is, has been overcome of sin and is personally a transgressor.

Why was Christ Victorious? If this is so, and it is, how was it possible for Christ who was fully of our nature, to be different from all other men by remaining sinless? Did he do what other men could have done had they gone about it the right way? In other words, was the difference in Christ solely a difference in what he achieved but not in anything else?

The answer is that no man other than Christ could attain unto perfection. Christ was provided to do what no one else could do. The hopelessness of man is set out in a variety of places. Take for example, the stated truth, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. God sending His own Son... (Romans 8:3). The law was holy, just and good, but it could not work salvation because of the weakness of the flesh. This must be true of any law. There was not a law which was ordained unto life, “For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law” (Galatians 3:21 NIV). Man could not keep law, and therefore righteousness could not come by law.

Divine begettal. We have now come to the heart of the matter. Salvation came from God. The Lord of the vineyard sent His only Son. This was the only way. Here are the critical Scriptures:

“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3);
“God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4),
“the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

The uniqueness of Christ. No other child has ever been born in this way; Christ was God’s only begotten. The Holy Spirit was the power which overshadowed Mary and caused her to conceive (Matthew 1:20). The Son of God did not exist before he was born of Mary; he was born of her. He was “made under the law” and not outside of or above it.

Nevertheless, he was truly God’s Son; God was his Father. It was for this reason that he is said to have come down from heaven. There would have been no Son of God had not God moved. His Word, His Divine intent hitherto made known in mighty promises, was now made operative by His Spirit, and Christ was conceived, “not...of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

It must be made clear that Jesus was not called Son of God because of things external to his person, the circumstances around him, for example; he was Son of God in his actual being because he was begotten of the Father by the Spirit. There are those who would wish to call him Son of God because of his response to the Word of God, and because of God’s care for him in his Divine education and the circumstances of daily life. Certainly these things were special, but they were not what was meant by the words, “therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” There had never been such a child from conception to birth.

How can this be? Others have wanted to define precisely how Christ was the Son of God, and have entered into genetic explanations to make their case. This is to presume that we have knowledge which in fact has not been vouchsafed to us, and any such speculation or supposed understanding has no sure foundation. Brother Roberts wrote wisely when he said:-

“When we are asked to sanction some definition of “how” (as a matter of literal scientific, metaphysical process) this dayspring from on high hath visited us, we are at once in the region of the incomprehensible and impracticable; for not only can we not know, but even if we could, it would be of no practical value. It is not the comprehension of Divine modes, but the doing of His will that commends us to God. We cannot know the Divine modes. When He works, it is sufficient to believe that He works. It is bootless to trouble ourselves as to the “how”” (Seasons of Comfort”)

A better question. We are however, entitled to ask a different question: not how did God work the miracle of the birth of Jesus, but why did He do it? The answer is that it was the only way in which to provide a man who could and would conquer sin. There had to be help from God in order to provide a deliverer and redeemer.

This too, has caused some to stumble. In seeking to ensure that the Lord Jesus was truly one of us they have found it difficult to consider how he could have been helped. If he received help by virtue of his being God’s Son, they say, how then could he be truly like us? Once again Brother Roberta’s advice not to seek to find out “how” but to accept the fact of the case, is sound and helpful.

We are told that he was “the son of man whom thou madest strong for Thyself” (Psalm 80:17; “a body... prepared” (Hebrews 10:5). Isaiah adds, “the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him... and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2,3).

Jesus was helped by his birth, and by the blessing of God during his life, to bear a burden which no other man could bear. He was not a substitute for us in his life, any more than he was in his death. He was not doing what anyone else could have done had they gone about it the right way; he was doing what no one else could possibly have done, and in that he needed help. The help he received did not remove in any way the fact that Jesus was like unto his brethren. It provided him with the means whereby, despite being like us,

he could overcome the mastery of sin in human flesh, if he submitted himself by the surrender of his own human will.

In ways beyond our experience he knew altogether what was in man, and that included a knowledge of himself as man. His mind was the battle ground between the law that was in his members and those things which were of his Father. These were not two separate persons within him, two separate parts; they were ingredients of his one nature. The stress he bore is beyond our comprehension. Something had to yield, and in the final agony of blood-like sweat he said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42). He refused to yield himself to sin, and instead committed himself totally to his Father. The Christ who surrendered was the whole man, the "I myself," as Paul describes himself, victorious over sin. John does not write that the Word was made flesh, and we beheld the glory of God; he wrote (of Christ) that "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). God's glory was made manifest in the Son, who was made in our nature.

A final question. There is one further aspect to consider, and it is vital to our salvation. What is the Lord's nature now? He now bears the "name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9): "All power...in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18) has now been committed to him; "All things" are "in subjection under his feet" (Hebrews 2:8), for "God... hath highly exalted him" (Philippians 2:9). Certainly he is the Lord the Spirit, and he is a partaker of the Divine nature, but he is also man made perfect; man clothed upon with immortality; and he is still, even after his glorification, called "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). The victory of Christ is complete: first over sin whilst he lived, and then over death and corruptibility by dying sinless, rising again, and receiving immortality from his Father.

We are left to wonder at the wisdom and knowledge of God. The Lord God has perfected a son of Adam, even though the first Adam brought all men to sin and death; and He has perfected it righteously in accordance with His own judgments on the heinousness of sin. He has accomplished it in grace and love. He brought redemption despite our unworthiness and without compromising His utter abhorrence of sin. The one who redeemed us was the one who condemned sin on its own ground, even our sinful nature. Christ was one of us in nature, but was altogether not of us in his sinlessness. Thus he was the perfect Son of God and the perfect Son of man. Christ the righteous, the Holy One of God, commended the love of God to us as sinners, and by his redeeming work we now have hope of life everlasting.

* * *

Brother Phil Parry continues his comments:-

"The positions of Adam and Jesus were totally different apart from their physical nature being the same. The position of Adam in the Garden of Eden under God's Word was not of works but of restraint from violating that Word which would have proved his respect and his faith.

The position Jesus was under was one of ministration and moral conduct (see Matthew 20:28). A moral conduct to show it was possible in Adamic nature to remain sinless, thus justifying God's condemnation of Adam's sin, and not the flesh in which the sin was committed. But Harry Tennant contends that due to God causing in Adam's nature a further inclination to commit sin, Jesus having that same nature needed help from God to overcome the inclinations of His sinful nature which God was responsible (according to him) for, in changing Adam's nature and the ability to transmit sin as an element to his posterity – Clause V. - B.A.S.F.

Howbeit, there is no evidence in Scripture that Adam's nature was in any way affected by his sin, only his relationship which caused his alienation as a Son of God and his need for redemption and reconciliation which no man born in that same position could bring about even with help from God. See Ephesians 2:1-3, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Was Jesus a child of wrath - or Son of God?

The Law came by Moses, but though born under its dispensation, Jesus was not under its dominion, for it was added because of transgression, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ, and for this cause He is the mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Moses), they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. - Hebrews 9:15.

Therefore without the shedding of the blood of Christ, the animals offered under the Mosaic Law for sin would have been invalid. Can anyone therefore conceive of Jesus offering for personal sin under the law, or involving Himself as needing Atonement by animal blood when never by birth or sin, alienated from His Father? Harry Tennant talks as though Jesus did not have a free will of His own being human, and despite being like us He needed help from God to overcome the mastery of sin in human flesh by submitting Himself by the surrender of His own human will.

I think Harry should consider the words of Jesus in John 4:32,34, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of... my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." In John 17:4 we read "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Hebrews 10:7-10 "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God- Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will. O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." John 19:30, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." When? Harry, in your false contending, will you repent and say, "It is finished"?

Brother Phil Parry.

* * *

I feel it may be helpful to extend Brother Phil's comments and draw attention to specific verses which have been misused by Harry Tennant, but first of all I wish to quote further from the Circular Letter for August 1967 as Brother Brady has expressed some valuable thoughts.

At the time of writing Brother Brady had received a letter from a sister in which she wrote:

"...I think the stumbling block is the word, "substitution." To those brought up as Christadelphians... it is a dirty word and personally I think it is best not to use it. The very mention creates a bias and I find one can teach its truths without actually using it."

In answer to this point Brother Brady wrote,

"As regards the instant and automatic hostility which is aroused in Christadelphian breasts by the word "substitution" I am obliged to agree with her and she may indeed be right in her judgment that it would be best not to use it, but I am not sure. Personally, I feel that if it is a word which properly conveys what we mean then we ought to use it where it is appropriate and not be over-concerned with their reaction to it. My own experience indicates that when people are really interested in finding out the truth they are not going to be offended or put off by a word whatever its overtones. When I use the word "substitution" I am always careful to explain that Jesus was a substitute in the sense that He suffered Himself to be put to death in the stead of Adam; that this is in accordance with the sacrificial principle, and that we do not believe in substitutionary punishment. God was not punishing the innocent in order to free the guilty; He was giving, in and through His own Son, a life of His own for a life that was lost. This is the principle of redemption, buying back for an equivalent price and as long as they regard natural death as the penalty of sin and fail to appreciate that what was lost in Eden was the legal right to life, people can never understand the Atonement. If they would only see, instead of the implantation of sin in the flesh, a sentence of death; instead of the imposition of corruptibility, the condemnation of life, they would realize why Jesus Christ had to have life in a sense which we do not; that He retained His right to His life by perfect obedience and then chose voluntarily to give it as the price of redemption; and they would not stumble over the word substitution.

It is pathetic in the extreme to see the lengths to which Christadelphian writers are prepared to go in order to avoid admitting the obvious - that the death of Jesus, the giving up of His life, and that alone, brought us hope of salvation.

They realize that their teaching that Jesus died as a representative destroys any sacrificial element in His death and they adopt a variety of ways of concealing the fact. Which they know is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. There is the traditional method of plainly stating what they believe to be the actual fact - that Jesus died for Himself, as "a ritual condemnation of sinful flesh in a sinless bearer thereof." This approach is exemplified in the writings of men like Fred Barling, who says that for a Christadelphian human flesh is wholly evil and therefore there was no injustice in God requiring His death, or like A.D.Norris who said that the devil hung dead on the Cross. This crude approach is getting increasingly unpopular now that our writings are better known and people are asking themselves how such teaching can be harmonized with Divine justice. All the same there are many who still think the Bible teaches that sin is a physical principle in human flesh. Then there is what I call the "cream puff" method. By the use of a lot of fancy language an appearance is given of depth and cleverness which is really only superficial and when analysed vanishes into almost nothing. Like cream puffs, very attractive to look at but with little food value and soon sickening... Quite a lot of Christadelphian writing on the Atonement is of this kind but there is a newer school which is adopting the modern techniques of "the big lie." This is the tool of the propagandist which has proved that if a thing is said often enough and with sufficient emphasis and air of authority people will believe it even though they know that it is contrary to the facts. The trick is that the facts are not concealed or suppressed but admitted, but they are so skilfully distorted or glossed by the propagandist that readers are made to think exactly as he wishes.

Probably if I left the matter there most people would think this was a gross exaggeration and that no religious writer would resort to such methods. Very well then. Here is the first article in the current issue of "The Christadelphian" (August 1967) by Harry Tennant. This man is very far from being a stupid blunderer and he does not resort - much - to cream puff...

The article is an address given at Watford at Easter... Its theme, in the rather odd expression of its author is that "The whole of Jesus is bound up in his atoning work." As if Jesus could have made a sacrifice of only a part of Himself! It's real purpose is to show that The Atonement consisted not specifically in the death of Christ but in His example, His lifetime of obedience and "all the names and titles of Jesus."

He writes:- "Lest we should place undue emphasis on one element of redemption by suffering, life by death, the Scriptures are equally at pains to distribute our understanding over as wide an area as possible."

When he says "the Scriptures are equally at pains" does he mean equally to Harry Tennant? Or what? Up to this point all he has done is to outline his own proposition and quote five passages of Scripture- Each of these, so far from distributing our understanding focuses it upon one fact - the dying of Christ. Here they are:-

- 1) "The Lord's death." 1 Corinthians 11:26
- 2) "The Cross of Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:17.
- 3) "The Son of God who loved me (and gave himself for me)." Galatians 2:20
- 4) "Boldness by the blood of Jesus." Hebrews 10:10
- 5) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us." 1 John 1:7.

These are the premises on which he bases his assertion that Scripture is equally at pains to distribute our understanding over as wide an area as possible. He is quite evidently at pains to do something with our understanding - and that is to deflect our attention from the dying of Christ as the crucial issue, but the Scripture is rather more at pains to do the exact opposite. However he has stated his objective - he is warning us against placing undue emphasis on one element of redemption by suffering - life by death, and he adds "No one part should deny the validity and underlying truth of another." This sounds fine and we now expect to be shown these other parts or areas over which our understanding is to be distributed. What do we get? Another eleven passages of Scripture. Here they are:-

- 6) "Ye are made nigh...by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:16.
- 7) "Having made peace by the blood of his cross" Colossians 1:20.

- 8) "Reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." Ephesians 2:16.
- 9) "You hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh." Colossians 1:22.
- 10) "The sufferings of Christ." 1 Peter 1:11.
- 11) "Christ also suffered for us, the just for the unjust." 1 Peter 1:21.
- 12) "With his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:4.
- 13) "To give his life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45.
- 14) "He laid down his life for us." 1 John 3:16.
- 15) "That by the grace of God he should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:9.
- 16) "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

Now if any honest person can read these further eleven texts and find in them - or in even one of them - anything other than the one vital point of the dying of Christ I will eat this Circular Letter. It is expressed as the blood, the cross, the sufferings, the stripes, the life, but these are only different ways of speaking of His death. Every single text which he has quoted concentrates our view upon a single fact; that it was the death of Christ or the sacrifice of His life which brought salvation. Each and every one is a negation of his proposition, yet he has the impudence to conclude:-

"It is pointless therefore to look for a magical moment as though by some divine alchemy there was in the very drops of blood an infinite potency or in the actual instant of death the precise time of redemption."

The writer's object is clear - at all costs to play down the importance of Jesus' death and to get away from the idea of sacrifice, because he cannot explain it in harmony with Christadelphian doctrine. "Magical moments," "infinite potency" and "divine alchemy" are typical examples of cream puff writing - they have no real meaning and certainly no application to the terrible death of our Saviour; but what he is doing is something very far worse than fancy writing or obscurity. It is cool, calculated wresting of Scripture. He quotes texts which are clear and unambiguous and draws from them a conclusion which neither they nor his argument sustains. The tragedy of it is that many of his readers will be simple enough to think that what Harry Tennant says these Scriptures imply is what they actually say, to their bewilderment."

I will leave the writings of our late Brother Brady there and agree with Brother Phil Parry that Harry Tennant was let off very lightly. The tragedy of it is that over the years Harry Tennant has not seen fit to check the Scriptures to find out what they really mean and say.

The article by Harry Tennant reprinted here was written in 1988, that is ten years ago. His earlier article commented upon by Brother Ernest Brady was written 21 years before that. Time enough to discover that Paul never wrote anything about God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, nor that He condemned sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3 in the Emphatic Diaglott reads; "For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent his own Son in the form of the flesh of sin even (by an offering) for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." And here I would point out that the last phrase "condemned sin in the flesh" is ambiguous and should be understood to mean that Jesus Christ condemned sin while He was still in the flesh; that is, before His crucifixion, when He said "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." John 17:4. The work He was given to do was to condemn sin, and this He did by showing to the world that there was nothing wrong with flesh and blood nature and that anyone who cared enough and sought God in their lives as He did could live in a perfect, sinless manner.

Romans 8:3 is the only place in Scripture where this expression "sin in the flesh" occurs and I am amazed it should still be used by Christadelphians to promulgate their shameful doctrine that flesh is an abominable thing in the sight of our Creator. I knew the correct meaning of this verse as a young man, perhaps 50 years ago and if a right understanding of this one verse would be taken on board by Christadelphian leaders then their statement of faith would have to be re-written and their very foundation would be considerably strengthened thereby from sand to rock.

The Greek words translated "sinful flesh" are "*sarkos hamartias*" and they mean "flesh of sin" in the sense that it is "flesh belonging to sin." When Adam sinned he sold himself into the bondage of sin and everyone born since then, with the exception of Jesus, has been born into that bondage. This is the concept which Paul is at pains to explain in his letter to the Romans. God has never condemned flesh, but sin which is transgression of His law. It was the transgression of Adam which alienated him from God and this

alienation resulted in all his offspring also being alienated. It was in God's plan and purpose from the very beginning to redeem the faithful back to Himself. Adam and Eve were foretold this as we read in Genesis when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel," this signifying the crucifixion of God's Son by the seed of the serpent (at the hands of Godless man) - the bruise to the heel, but the destruction of the law of sin and death by Jesus Christ - the fatal bruise to the head.

Harry Tennant says, "By birth we suffer no legal impediment or guilt other than that which we physically inherit." This sort of language is the result of false understanding of God's ways. He did not set up sinful flesh like an "Aunt Sally" to be destroyed by the crucifixion of His own beloved Son. This is what the Christadelphian teaching claims and if it were true it cannot be called just. It would be grossly unjust. Once a right understanding is accepted there is no place for changed flesh, only changed relationship. Robert Roberts once had it right when he wrote, "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."

Once we know the Gospel we can choose to be either "in Adam" or "in Christ;" we can choose to be either under the law of sin and death or under grace. If our baptism is to be valid this is the choice we make to be in Christ and so become sons of God by adoption into His family. Jesus Christ never needed adoption as He was Son of God by begettal. He was therefore never born in bondage to the law of sin and death and when we read in Galatians 4:4 that He was born under the law, that is true, but I sometimes think this verse is deliberately misunderstood. We are all under the law of the country in which we live but that does not mean we have broken the law and are in prison for it, Jesus Christ was under law like anyone else and this gave Him choice like anyone else. He was determined to obey - "I and my Father are one;" one in will and purpose "to bring many sons to glory." Adam sinned and his life was forfeit. All his descendants share that forfeited life. Jesus Christ had a new life direct from His Father, and this put Him in the very strong position of being able to save us. We were in bondage; Jesus paid the price of our redemption and freed us from that bondage. Had Jesus been in the same bondage as us He would not have been strong to save but would have been as weak and helpless as we are.

The next reference misused by Harry Tennant concerns "the fall." Genesis 2:16,17, "And the Lord God commanded the man... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Law gives choice. Obey or transgress. Transgression alienates from God. It does not change our flesh. The changed flesh theory is an invention of the Church of Rome and is accepted by orthodox Christians everywhere though there is no scriptural basis for it.

The warning to Adam was that if he transgressed he would be put to death that same day. The word used for "day" is "*B'yom*" and means that very day. There is no justification to suppose this referred to a day of a thousand years or that he would begin to die from the day he sinned for there are many places in Scripture where the same expression is used and it cannot mean anything other than a day of twenty-four hours. Death is what Adam and Eve expected when they hid themselves from the Lord after they sinned. The expression "*Muth temuth*" translates to "dying thou shalt die." The repetition of the word "die" emphasizes the certainty of the matter. This is a type of expression seen frequently in Scripture and we find such phrases as "eating thou shalt eat," meaning "thou shalt certainly eat;" "killing thou shalt kill," meaning "thou shalt certainly kill." Jesus used a similar expression when He said just before His crucifixion "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you." He was emphasizing the certainty of His desire. He greatly desired. And when God said to Adam "thou shalt certainly die" He meant what He said in plain speech and if we don't know why Adam was spared then we shall never understand why Jesus Christ was not. These two facts are inseparable.

Again, Harry Tennant misuses Romans chapter 7 by failing to take into consideration the context in which Paul was writing and takes a very superficial view of the seventh chapter in isolation. However, in chapter 6 Paul speaks of our present position as believers as being made free from sin and no longer servants of sin. Harry Tennant's understanding of the seventh chapter negates all that Paul has said in the sixth. When in chapter 7 Paul says "I am carnal sold under sin" he must be referring to a different situation to that of chapter 6 where he has stated that he is "dead to sin" and "made free from sin." The answer is that in this

seventh chapter Paul was speaking of himself as an unregenerate Jew before his conversion on the road to Damascus - to the time when he was without Christ.

There are other expressions used by Harry Tennant by which he seems determined to convey wrong ideas and one such is where he said "We have all inherited the downward pull of the flesh towards sin and death." The downward pull towards sin is in fact, temptation, and this is not inherited. It is the choice given us by God's good law - which we can obey if we want to, and thereby build our characters well pleasing to God.

I do not know the circumstance in which Robert Roberts advised "not to seek to find out 'how' but to accept the fact of the case," but it is not advice which is "sound and helpful." I do not think Harry Tennant is honest here but is ducking the issue because he knows that to claim that Jesus was given extra help to overcome all temptation, help which is not available to any of us, then He could not have been tempted in all points as we are. Harry Tennant may be very good at talking all round this topic in a pretence of dealing with it but really, who is he kidding?

Regarding "cream puff" - there is a basinful: - "No mechanical achievement." "Effortless work," "under the law and not outside of or above it." "Jesus was not called Son of God because of things external to his person." "There were not two separate persons within him... they were ingredients of his one nature." "The Christ who surrendered was the whole man."

A final point - Harry Tennant wrote. "Since Scriptures do not employ those phrases it is wiser for us not to do so." If he took his own advice and avoided unscriptural phrases he would write very little, but surely it would have to be nearer the truth - free of Aunt Sally's and cream puff.

Over the past 125 years we have published articles on all the controversial verses in Scripture dealing with Sin-in-the-flesh, Mortal or immortal resurrection, Judgment, and all aspects of The Atonement. If anyone would like booklets dealing with any specific verses we will be very pleased to supply them, and if anyone would like to make an honest challenge to any of our claims we would be delighted to hear from them.

Brother Russell Gregory.

Christadelphianism in Crisis in 1965

What then of their Position now in 1998?

The doctrine of The Atonement and of the resurrection are important subjects linked with one another, the latter being most important to the ratification of the former. "For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins and your faith is vain; then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" - 1 Corinthians 15:16-18.

The implication here is that those not in Christ perish, and that the judgment at Christ's coming does not determine this, but the fact of belief, understanding and acceptance of the Biblical teaching of the atoning sacrifice of Christ to the end of probation. The name is either then in the Book of Life or has been blotted out during probation. So Jesus says, 'At my coming I will reward every man according as his work shall be.' Eternal life is a gift through faith, not a reward for works. Example: the parable of the Lord of the Vineyard - See Matthew 20:1-15. Therefore as Paul declares, "In Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming" - not after the Judgment Seat - at His coming. It cannot be taught plainer than this.

Now at this juncture I wish to draw attention to a leaflet on the subject of resurrection in relation to the dead in Christ, or asleep in Him, which is entitled, "How Are The Dead Raised?" which is an answer to, and a contradiction of "Anastasis" by Dr. Thomas, as to its reliability on the basis of Scripture; and to a booklet entitled, "Christadelphian Crisis 1965", by Ernest Brady, relating to the conflicting issues of doctrine in

“The Christadelphian” magazine issue of March 1965 in which J.Wilkins of Downend contributes a letter to the discussion about the resurrection nature of Christ. Further on he gives an honest declaration of the general belief of the Christadelphian Body as agreed by all who accepted fellowship on the basis of the teaching of Dr.Thomas and R.Roberts.

I quote two short extracts from his letter which can be verified if you read “Christadelphian Crisis” by Ernest Brady who, despite what you may have been told, was a very sincere and honest writer.

“The devil, human nature, sin In the flesh, we know to be synonymous terms.” - J. Wilkins.

That is the first extract, and most Christadelphians would endorse it; it is what they have always understood and believed. The next is:-

“It was necessary for the devil, sin in the flesh, human nature, to be condemned and destroyed. This Jesus has done by means of death by crucifixion. Jesus knew that the bronze serpent signified sin’s flesh, human nature, which he bore and which he knew he had to crucify in himself. We do not think it would be possible for human nature to be more powerfully and more significantly condemned than by crucifixion. Jesus destroyed his human nature because he knew that it separated him from God... Jesus condemned the human nature he received from his mother... it was our nature he had to condemn and destroy and to do this he had to share it.”

Again, few Christadelphians would find fault with this, at least not publicly. It is the explanation of the Atonement given in Christadelphian works and by Christadelphian speakers and writers for nearly a century. The identification of Jesus with the brazen serpent was made with complete assurance by W.F.Barling in “Redemption in Christ Jesus,” published in the “Christadelphian” magazine in May 1946, without any word of editorial dissent, and many others have written similar things. “The Logos” magazine in Australia printed an article entitled “The Leper Wail,” referring to the last words of Jesus from the Cross - he Jesus the leper, wailing to God because of uncleanness!

This circulated here and overseas without any outcry or protest because it is standard Christadelphian teaching. Now comes the staggering development. In the same issue, commenting on Wilkins’ letter, the Editor positively refutes the whole thing. He denies the basic premise that human nature is synonymous with the devil and sin, and thus invalidates the reasoning about the Atonement which is based upon it. Here are his actual words:-

“Human nature is not “sin,” human nature is not “the devil.” It was not human nature that was condemned but sin in all its manifestations and wherever it had sway.”

This is clear enough of itself, but lest anyone might still imagine that somehow there is nevertheless something in our nature which one may loosely describe as “sin,” he says, - “Sin is lawlessness.”

Now the Nazarene Fellowship have been saying exactly this since 1873, when Edward Turney made the same declaration and was charged by Robert Roberts with having renounced the truth and so he coined the term “Renunciationist Heresy” to denote what we believe.

We think in fact that the view of human nature and the explanation of the Atonement given by J.Wilkins are abominable and shameful, but there is no doubt whatever that they are the authentic Christadelphian views. But the Editor says that when the reality of the death on the Cross is recognized, “the structure of Brother Wilkins’ argument falls to the ground.”

Christadelphian Crisis? Yes indeed!

There is much more in the booklet you may read, including Ernest Brady’s letter to the Editor, L.G.Sargent,, and where John Carter the previous Editor has been heading in the same direction as his successor regarding sin-in-the-flesh (Read “Outrage On Justice”) for confirmation.

I mentioned earlier "Anastasis" written by Dr.Thomas, the originator of the appellation "Christadelphian" whose members subscribe to his teaching of human nature being synonymous of sin, etc., etc., described by J,Wilkins but refuted by L.G.Sargent in 1965, A leaflet was printed by the Nazarene Fellowship and entitled "How Are The Dead Raised?" and reproduced from "The Student" by N.McKain. Stamped in red on the cover is:-

IMPORTANT:-

Issued to warn you of the implications and conclusions of the "Gradual Resurrection" theory advanced by L.G.Sargent in the Christadelphian, May 1944.

On the back cover of this leaflet is a heading "Is It A Sign Of The Times?" I will quote 2 paragraphs as follows:-

"In the article "Short Studies on Judgment" in the Christadelphian" for May 1944, L.G.Sargent seeks to explain away Paul's statement that "the dead shall be raised incorruptible" and he advances the theory that rising is a gradual process.

The arguments, subterfuges and authorities (?) he employs to accomplish his design will lead thoughtful brethren to wonder how soon "The Christadelphian" will be petitioning for recognition at Canterbury."

Was Paul wrong when he compares the resurrection of the faithful sleepers in the dust and the faithful alive in Christ at his coming as to take place in a moment - in the twinkling of an eye? or has L.G.Sargent bitten off more than he can chew?

Read the reply to "Anastasis" in "How Are The Dead Raised?" and you will find both J.Wilkins and Dr.Thomas have - not only so, for if the J.Wilkins doctrine of Dr.Thomas and Robert Roberts has fallen to the ground which L.G.Sargent asserted, then in all these years, who among their assemblies have attempted to pick them up with the sword of the Spirit but those so-called Renunciationists?

A Crisis in 1965? - What of 1988 Christadelphianism?

I have requested answers from Christadelphian leaders and writers but none seems to be forthcoming. So-called Truth in that community has evidently, in the words of L.G. Sargent, "Fallen to the ground" This is but a simple introduction to the two subjects linked with the doctrine of the Atonement and the Resurrection of believers.

Brother Phil Parry

Brother Blackstone writes:

Dear Brother Gregory, Greetings in the Name of our Redeemer. We have been visiting our daughter in London and while there I saw a copy of your (booklet) "A Collection of The Evidence For and Against Matthew 28:19," displayed in the ecclesial Hall. I borrowed this to read and have to say that you have not left much room for disagreement, not that I am intending to challenge this in any case. I have no facilities to even check all the quotes you make and have no intention of trying to beat this background information.

One small point I will mention - an article in "The Christadelphian" (March 1997) - "The Turning Point" - page 93, seems to quote from Brother Thomas's own words. The words recorded are:- "Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, I baptise you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

I did notice in your booklet that you mentioned Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:6-8 as being the only sources of this strange doctrine. I enclose a summary I did of the passage on John's epistle from various versions. You will see from my comments that there is a total unwillingness to even begin to admit that an error might have been made; indeed without careful reading the cover-up would not even be suspected. Perhaps this will be useful?

In our Master's service, Stanley Blackstone.

I thank Brother Blackstone for his kind letter and the summary he sent to me.

It is always our wish to get things right and have a good understanding of our heavenly Father's will and purpose. After all, Jesus said "Ask, and k shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7,8).

I wish to thank all who have written to me over the past few months. I have been unable to reply as quickly as I would wish but please accept this as acknowledgement of your letters and I will write to you all as soon as I am able.

In the Last Circular Letter I said that our financial position was several hundred pounds in the red but I was not unduly worried because I knew the generous spirit of the Nazarene Fellowship and others who receive the C.L.s. I am pleased to say that within two weeks of sending out the last C.L. our funds were several hundred pounds in credit! My thanks to you all for your generosity.

Russell.

* * *

"The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you... Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded... For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

- Taken from 2 Chronicles chapters 15 and 16.